danish society for
marxist studies

DANISH MARXISM

past, present, future

problema

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copenhagen 2025

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[Danish] Scandinavianism is enthusiasm for the brutal, sordid, piratical, Old Norse national traits, for that deep-rooted inner life which is unable to express its exuberant ideas and sentiments in words, but can express them only in deeds, namely in rudeness towards women, perpetual drunkenness and wild berserk frenzy alternating with tearful sentimentality.

– Friedrich Engels, "The Danish-Prussian Armistice,"
Marx-Engels Collected Works. Vol. 7: Marx and Engels 1848
(London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977), 422.

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PREFACE

The Danish Society for Marxist Studies [*Selskab for Marxistiske Studier* (SMS)] has experienced a growing international interest in so-called "Danish Marxism," sparked by our annual conferences, which have grown larger and larger, and established a growing international network, the highly successful works by founding members such as Søren Mau and Dominique Routhier, as well as the various memes about "Danish Marxism" that have taken on a life of their own on social media.[1] The executive committee wanted to accommodate this interest and celebrate the tenth annual conference by compiling this English-language volume, which provides an overview of the historical development of Danish Marxism, outlines some of its contemporary tendencies and developments, and reflects on our experience organizing the annual conferences over the past decade.

SMS is an independent academic society that consists of early career scholars with an interest in Marx, Marxism, critical theory, and related critical research traditions. Over the past ten years, SMS has worked to promote research in and about these fields at Danish universities and research institutions, and to establish connections with similar research communities internationally. SMS understands "Marxism" in the broadest possible sense of the term, as a critical tradition that departs from Marx's thought in its entire historical and theoretical breadth and depth. It is not committed to any one particular theoretical or political position. Rather, it is animated by the shared conviction that a Marxism open to the insights of critical

1 Søren Mau, *Mute Compulsion: A Marxist Theory of the Economic Power of Capital* (London: Verso, 2023); Dominique Routhier, *With and Against: The Situationist International in the Age of Automation* (London: Verso, 2023).

theory, feminism, postcolonial critique, radical ecology, and other related traditions, remains indispensable for grappling with the realities of capitalism today. SMS therefore welcomes critical scholars and students of all stripes, colours, and traditions.

SMS's main activity consists in the organization of the annual conference, where researchers, students, and others can assemble to present their research and engage with one another. Over the past ten years, these conferences have grown into a vibrant, dynamic, and popular platform for critical research on a wide array of contemporary topics, fostering high-level interdisciplinary dialogue and engagement with the latest international currents and developments in the field – drawing participants from near and far. Keynote speakers have included a number of internationally renowned thinkers, and the participants have ranged from first-year BA-students to retired professors, activists, and independent researchers. Across ten years and hundreds of presentations, we have had the privilege of witnessing new and highly dynamic research milieus and networks emerge around the conferences.

Nonetheless, it may still seem somewhat eccentric and perhaps even pretentious to compile a massive volume to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of a small informal academic society organizing annual conferences on the outskirts of Europe. Perhaps it is. But we believe that the outstanding research and researchers that we have hosted throughout the years warrant precisely such a celebration. We have long dreamt of showcasing some of the brilliant contributions, ideas, and debates from the conferences by turning them into some sort of edited volume, but we have consistently lacked the time and resources. This volume does not quite manage to do that, but it does document the breadth and extremely high level of original and critical research across various disciplines – from art history to political economy – that has been presented and discussed at the annual conferences, which we believe is a worthwhile endeavour in its own right.

The title is not meant to suggest that SMS can or even wants to define or claim the mantle of Danish Marxism; we offer one perspective, among many possible perspectives, on what research on Marx, Marxism, and critical theory in Denmark has been, is becoming today, and might develop into in the future. We do not pretend to speak for Danish Marxism as a whole. We do not even believe that Danish Marxism exists as a coherent or self-contained tradition. We have consistently insisted that Marxist scholarship in Denmark has

to develop through interactions and exchanges with broader international tendencies, developments, and movements, which we have sought to facilitate through the annual conferences. We only added the additional moniker "Danish" to our English self-designation so as to conceal the illusions of grandeur implied by our original Danish name "The Society for Marxist Studies" [*Selskab for Marxistiske Studier*] and the term "Danish Marxism" started as a joke on Bluesky.

Thus, in spite of the title of the present volume, we do not want to fetishize the provenance of the Marxist research that has been presented at the conferences in the territories formally and practically defined by the Danish nation state. On the contrary, we hope to resist the slow sedimentation of geographic and linguistic boundaries into epistemic and political ones by making the insights presented and developed there available beyond these confines in the hope that they might transcend them: the purpose of *Danish Marxism* is, in this sense, to transcend its national form.

* * *

SMS was founded more than ten years ago by a handful of young graduate students with a shared interests in Marx, Marxism, and critical theory, who found themselves more or less isolated in their various departments at universities across Denmark. They frequently encountered ridicule and even outright hostility towards their research. Marxism had been effectively shunned at many departments after the backlash against its alleged dominance in the seventies and eighties, and it had not recovered since or experienced a revival in the wake of the financial crisis akin to the one that had taken place across the rest of the world. These graduate students' common interest emerged from participation in social movements, study circles, and studies abroad, and they intersected in various ways in Danish universities around 2014, where they first began to discuss the possibility of creating some sort of forum to pursue and legitimize their research interest.

In their first official meeting they decided to found an informal organization that would be identical to the voluntary executive committee that would also be responsible for organizing the conference that they were hoping to put together, but whose name "Society for Marxist Studies" signalled a much larger and more serious organization. The conference would be called "Marx Now" [*Marx Nu*], which

was supposed to signal the contemporaneity of Marxism and bring together any and all Marxist researchers in Denmark, provide an overview of the field, and give them a chance to meet and discuss their research and develop new ideas.

The initial conference took place 9-10 September 2016 at the Institute of Culture and Society, Aarhus University and was organized on a shoestring budget. The conference consisted of seventeen presentations of ongoing research and there were approximately ninety participants. The members of the executive committee considered this a huge success – in spite of the numerous problems that also characterized the conference – and declared that "the Marxist turn" had finally reached Denmark. They decided to make the conference an annual event that would move from university to university across the country.[2] The rest is, as they say, history; a history that we hope to document in this volume.

* * *

The volume is divided into two parts: "Reflections" and "Conferences." The first part contains five essays of varying length that analyse and outline the historical and theoretical constitution of Danish Marxism, as well as the organizational dimensions of our work, an essay on its personal and political significance, and a bibliography of recent Marxist research in Denmark. The second part is by far the largest, and gathers all of the original Calls for Abstracts and the accepted abstracts for each of the conferences (as printed in the programmes), in order to document the highly original research that has been presented and discussed at the ten conferences.

The opening chapter, "Reading Capital in Danish" by the historian Bertel Nygaard offers a rich overview of how *Capital* has been read, translated, and interpreted in Denmark since Marx first sent a copy of the French edition to the leader of the Danish social democrats Louis Pio, who had recently been freed from prison. In this history one can also discern central features of the Danish left's efforts to understand and change the world. Nygaard charts the publication history and reception of Marx's magnum opus and its relation to the political struggles of the labour movement, the Social Democratic

2 Selskab for Marxistiske Studier, "Beretning fra Marx Nu 2016," *Danish Society for Marxist Studies*, 22 September 2016, https://marxistiskestudier.com/2016/09/22/beretning-fra-marx-nu/#more-37 (accessed 23 March 2025).

Party, and the Communist Party of Denmark, as well as the New Left of the 1970s. Nygaard places particular emphasis on the political and theoretical transformations of the Danish left across successive generations, showing how the reception was bound to the political struggles of its time. The result is not a history of *Capital* as a stable text, but of *Capital* as a means of political mobilization and a site of ideological contestation.

The second chapter, "What Is Alive and What Is Dead in Danish Marxism?" by the philosopher (and founding member of SMS) Søren Mau, reflects on the resurgence of Marxist research in Denmark since the 2010s, and the peculiar discontinuity that separates this "Marxist turn" from its immediate predecessors in the 1970s. Mau highlights how the absence of institutional continuity has shaped the new wave of study circles, conferences, publications, and university courses and has enabled an encounter with Marx unmediated by inherited orthodoxy, shaped instead by a combination of contemporary political struggles and various international tendencies. His chapter emphasizes the contributions of feminist, ecological, and anti-racist struggles to the development of contemporary Marxist research in Denmark. The essay is both a sharp critique of earlier moments and an articulation of how Marxist research might develop in the future.

The third chapter, "From a Ripple to a Wave" by historian (and founding member of SMS) Esben Bøgh Sørensen, is a shorter, programmatic text originally published as an op-ed in the conservative Danish newspaper *Berlingske*. It was written in response to a series of alarmist articles warning of a Marxist resurgence at Danish universities. These articles referred to our 2021 conference in Aalborg and the recent publication of Søren Mau's Mute Compulsion [*Stum Tvang*] in Danish. Sørensen's essay explains that Marxism remained marginalized in Danish universities, although some of us were working to change that. It also addresses some popular anti-Marxist tropes and outlines an alternative understanding of Marx and Marxism that can help us make sense of the world today.

The fourth chapter, "The Red Thread," is collectively authored by the executive committee and is part organizational memoir, part practical guide, part critical self-assessment, and part speculative programme for the future. It reconstructs our history from within: charting the development of the annual conference, recounting how it evolved from an ad hoc gathering of radical scholars into a relatively large international conference and the particular contextual and

conjunctural factors that facilitated this development. But it is also a reflection on the challenges that we faced and continue to face, such as the gender imbalance and persistent whiteness of the conferences, balancing local community-building with internationalization, maintaining intellectual openness and ensuring the coherence of the conferences, as well as questions of how to navigate the inevitable tension between academic legitimacy and political engagement, particularly relevant to explicitly Marxist endeavours such as this. Drawing on a decade of practice, the chapter considers not only how SMS has developed, but also how we hope to see it develop in the future and what challenges remain ahead of us.

The fifth chapter "Changing the Rules of the Game" is an essay written by legal scholar and SMS executive committee member Marie Thøgersen. The essay offers a series of reflections on the personal, professional, and political stakes of pursuing critical research, confronting disciplinary orthodoxies, and challenging institutional complicity in genocide in the context of the neoliberal and increasingly repressive Danish universities, as well as the significance of constructing communities of solidarity, autonomy, and radical critique, such as SMS, from below.

The sixth contribution is a "Select Bibliography of Recent Marxist Research in Denmark," which has been compiled by the members of the executive committee. It offers a brief overview of recent work by SMS participants and collaborators, ranging from political economy to feminist theory, from Marxist historiography to ecological critique. The list is, unfortunately, far from exhaustive. It does not claim to represent the full range of Marxist research in Denmark and will inevitably omit important contributions. However, we hope that it offers a point of entry to anyone interested in exploring this highly dynamic and rapidly growing body of research.

The second part of the volume collects all the original calls for abstracts and the abstracts that we accepted for each conference, organized by year. It starts with the inaugural conference, which took place at the Institute for Culture and Society, Aarhus University 9–10 September 2016. It was simply titled "Marx Now" and aimed to establish an overview of contemporaneous Danish research that, in one way or another, took Marx and the many traditions that followed from him and his critical endeavours as its point of departure.

The second conference was also titled "Marx Now" and took place on 1-2 September 2017 at Roskilde University. The call for abstracts continued to emphasize our openness to contributions from all

perspectives engaging with Marx or inspired by his critical legacy, but also invited participants to reflect on the multiple anniversaries that coincided in 2017: it was 150 years since the publication of *Capital*, 100 years since the Russian Revolution, and the centennial of Denmark's sale of the West Indies to the United States. Nina Power delivered a keynote on Marxist conceptions of collective subjectivity, while Joshua Clover's announced keynote "What's New in Marxist Method?" was, unfortunately, cancelled due to illness.[3]

The third conference took place on 7-8 September 2018 at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense and was the first to introduce a (very broad) theme and subtitle "Arenas of Struggle." The Call for Abstracts invited contributors to look at sites of resistance beyond traditional loci such as the workplace or the state, including logistics, urban spaces, civil society, and the intersections of race, gender, and class. The conference – as always – remained open to contributions that did not address the theme. The keynote speaker was Tithi Bhattacharya, who delivered a powerful address on Social Reproduction Theory titled "What did Marx Have to say About Cooking Dinner? Marxism and Gender in the Twenty-First Century."

The fourth "Marx Now" conference was held at the Danish School of Education (DPU), Aarhus University's campus in Emdrup in Copenhagen 4-5 October 2019. The theme was "Power – Conflicts and Contradictions" and the call for abstracts encouraged papers that explored the entanglement of domination and exploitation across axes such as class, gender, race, sexuality, and nationality. The brilliant keynote lecture "Oppression and Exploitation: Two Sides of the Same Coin" was delivered by Sara R. Farris.

The fifth conference took place 9-10 October 2020 at Copenhagen Business School in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, which both reinforced and reframed the theme "Borders and Boundaries." Against a backdrop of resurgent nationalism, hardening border regimes, ecological collapse, and deepening inequalities, the conference sought to interrogate the spatial, social, and conceptual limits imposed by capital, and the struggles that emerge in and against these divisions. Keynotes from Maïa Pal and Brenna Bhandar grounded the theme historically and conceptually introducing "Jurisdictional Accumulation" and "Racial Regimes of Ownership" respectively.

In 2021 we dropped the "Marx Now" title in favour of "the sixth annual conference of the Danish Society for Marxist Studies." The

3 Nina Power's right-wing views were not publicly known at this point in time.

conference took place 1-2 October 2021, at Aalborg University and focused on the theme "Capital, Climate, Crisis." The call for abstracts invited historical and theoretical inquiries into the ecological contradictions of capital accumulation, the ideological work of green capitalism, the dynamics of fossil infrastructures, and the class and colonial dimensions of climate catastrophe. The keynote was delivered by Andreas Malm and was titled "Climate Breakdown as it Unfolds: The View from 2021" and members of the Zetkin Collective presented their new book *White Skin, Black Fuel*.[4]

The seventh conference took place 7-8 October 2022, at Aarhus University. The theme was "Time and History in the Age of Capital" and the call for abstracts invited critical reflections on how history is written, remembered, and contested within capitalist societies, challenging liberal narratives of linear progress and Francis Fukuyama's "end of history." The conference featured two keynote lectures. Heide Gerstenberger delivered a lecture titled "The Separation of Politics and Economy: A Historical and Theoretical Conundrum" and Peter Osborne gave the other keynote titled "'Excessively Social'? Histories, Temporalities, (Geo-)Politics."

The eighth conference was held on 6-7 October 2023, at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense and explored the theme "The National and the International." The Call for Abstracts invited critical reflection on how capitalism mediates and is itself mediated by the national form – and how Marxist theory and practice can respond to the shifting dynamics of sovereignty, internationalism, imperialism, and globalization. The conference featured two keynote speakers: Benno Teschke gave the lecture "What is Geopolitical Marxism? Radical Historicism and International Politics in Marxist International Relation" and Carolina Alves gave the other keynote lecture "What's Needed for a Radical Theory of Finance."

The ninth conference was held on 4–5 October 2024 at the University of Copenhagen and had the official theme "Class and its Dis/Contents." The call for abstracts invited scholars and activists to revisit the concept of class – its enduring centrality, its contested meanings, its multiple mediations, and lived contradiction – and how it unfolds across different historical, spatial, and political terrains. Charmaine Chua was scheduled to give the keynote "Battling the Behemoth: Amazon and the New American Working Class" but gave another lecture titled "What Does Anti-Imperialist Working Class

4 Andreas Malm and the Zetkin Collective, *White Skin, Black Fuel: On the Danger of Fossil Fascism* (London: Verso, 2021).

Internationalism Mean Today?" to address the ongoing genocide in Gaza. Patrick Eiden-Offe gave a keynote lecture titled "People, *Pöbel*, Populists: Proletarian Trajectories from the *Vormärz* to Tomorrow" and Bruno Leipold presented his then forthcoming *Citizen Marx* in conversation with Benjamin Ask Popp-Madsen.[5]

The tenth conference is scheduled for 10-11 October 2025 at Aarhus University. The theme is "Abolition" and the call for abstracts encouraged engagements with the intersection between Marx and Engels's understanding of communism as "the real movement which abolishes the present state of things" and contemporary abolitionism rooted in traditions of Black radicalism, feminism and queer theory, anti-colonial struggle, and ecological critique. The two keynotes are M.E. O'Brien who will give the keynote lecture "Insurgent Care and the Utopian Horizon" and Ashok Kumar will give the other keynote lecture titled "Abolish Capital: Disrupting the Laws of Motion."

* * *

SMS could not have organized these conferences without the help of numerous individuals and institutions, and we have incurred a multitude of debts of gratitude over the past decade. First of all, we wish to thank everyone involved in the organization of the conferences, past and present members of the executive committee, as well as the local facilitators, who helped carry some of the heaviest burdens of organizing the conferences: Laura Horn, Sune Vork Steffensen, Anne-Marie Eggert Olsen, Henrik Jøker Bjerre, and Mikkel Thorup. We would also like to thank a number of persons who have helped us in various other capacities behind the scenes: Jonas Larsen (who was also a founding member of SMS's executive committee, before leaving to pursue other endeavours), Niels Eli "Ålen" Kjær Thomsen, Aske Günther Andersen, Yancé-Myah Harrison, Bertel Nygaard, Mikael Carleheden, and Andreas Hjort Bundgaard, as well as all of the people who volunteered to chair panels, brew coffee, help with registration, etc. at the conferences.

Additionally, we want to thank the various organization and bodies that have at various points in time provided us with the funding that has made the conferences possible and ensured that we could keep attendance free: the Department of Social Science and Business at

5 Bruno Leipold, *Citizen Marx: Republicanism and the Formation of Karl Marx's Social and Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2024).

Roskilde University, the Research Programme for Philosophy and the History of Ideas at Aarhus University, the Department of Culture and Learning at Aalborg University, Græsrodsfonden, the Research Programme for History at Aarhus University, Department of Business Humanities and Law at Copenhagen Business School, Danish Institute for Advanced Study at University of Southern Denmark, Department of Language, Culture, History and Communication at University of Southern Denmark, Rød Fond, 15. September Fonden, and Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung.

We would also like to thank all of our keynotes who graciously agreed to come to Denmark and not only share their research with us but also participated in the conferences and engaged with the other papers and participants. Finally, we want to thank everyone who spent their time writing abstracts and presentations for the conference, as well as all the other participants whose engaged comments, questions, spirited engagements in the break, and innumerable other contributions, make the conferences what they are. You are the reason that we keep organizing this conference year after year and this book is dedicated to you.

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PART 1

REFLECTIONS

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1.

READING *CAPITAL* IN DANISH

THE LEFT AND MARX'S CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY OVER 150 YEARS IN DENMARK[1]

Bertel Nygaard

Between 1970 to 1972, Karl Marx's *Capital* finally appeared in a single complete, unabridged Danish translation. The eleven slim, mustard-coloured volumes from Bibliotek Rhodos provisionally concluded almost 100 years of efforts to publish Marx's magnum opus.[2] The past 150 years of engagements with this magisterial work in Denmark also illustrates key developments in the Danish left's struggles to both understand and change the world.

1. PIO, KNUDSEN, AND CAPITAL

The first volume of *Capital* was first published in German in 1867.[3] Marx left the following two volumes as vast stacks of unfinished manuscript when he died in 1883. They were subsequently assembled and published by his friend and collaborator Friedrich Engels in 1885 and 1894, respectively.[4] The work did not attain wide circulation in the first couple of decades. However, the initial volume attracted enough interest to warrant four German editions before the turn of

1 This text is an abridged version of Bertel Nygaard, "Kapitalen i Danmark gennem 150 år," in *Kapitalen på dansk: Marx-læsninger gennem 150 år*, ed. Magnus Møller Ziegler, Bertel Nygaard, Jakob Bek-Thomsen, and Anne Engelst Nørgaard (Aarhus: Forlaget Slagmark, 2022), 13–70, translated into English by Mikkel Flohr and revised by the author.

2 Karl Marx, *Kapitalen: Kritik af den politiske økonomi*, 11 vols. (København: Rhodos, 1970–72).

3 Karl Marx, *Das Kapital: Kritik der politischen Ökonomie Erster Band. Buch I: Der Produktionsprocess des Kapitals* (Hamburg: Otto Meisner, 1867).

4 Karl Marx, *Das Kapital: Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. Zweiter Band: Der Zirkulationsprozess des Kapitals*, ed. Friedrich Engels (Hamburg: Verlag von Otto Meissner, 1885); Karl Marx, *Das Kapital: Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. Dritter Band*, ed. Friedrich Engels (Hamburg: Verlag von Otto Meissner, 1894).

the century and was also translated into French, English, and Russian.[5] The book seems to have first arrived in Denmark in 1875, when Marx sent a copy of the French edition to the founder of the Danish Social Democratic Party, the former postal service official Louis Pio (1841-1894), recently released from prison for his political activities.[6] Pio translated a substantial excerpt from Chapter 23, on the British rural proletariat, for the party newspaper, alongside many other texts by socialists abroad. While his strategic conceptions of party and trade union organization loosely resembled Marx and Engels's position within the First International, and his analyses of the mid-1870s economic crises might suggest an element of theoretical inspiration from Marx as well, Pio did not adopt Marxism as a comprehensive theoretical outlook or worldview, nor does he seem to have studied *Capital* in much detail. The party's theoretical foundation remained eclectic and unsystematic throughout the 1870s.[7]

A more systematic engagement with Marx's ideas only began after the repression and crisis of the party in the late 1870s, when Pio emigrated to the U.S., and a group of politically adept skilled workers led by the glover and union organizer P. Knudsen (1848-1910) managed to relaunch the movement, which inaugurated its continuous long-term growth. Inspired by the German Social Democrats, the new leadership around Knudsen adopted Marx and Engels as the central theoretical and ideological figures – even though the party

5 Hannes Skambraks, *Das Kapital von Marx: Waffe im Klassenkampf* (Berlin: Dietz, 1977); Marcello Musto and Babak Amini, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Marx's 'Capital': A Global History of Translation, Dissemination and Reception* (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

6 Karl Marx, *Le capital* (Paris: Le Châtre, 1872); Kristian Hvidt, *Sylvia Pio: En adelig socialist* (København: Gyldendal, 2017), 20. On the early history of the Danish labour movement, see Gerd Callesen, "Denmark" in *The Formation of Labour Movements 1870-1914: An International Perspective*, ed. Marcel van der Linden and Jürgen Rojahn (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 131-60. A contextual analysis of the longer-term development of Danish society can be found in Niels Finn Christiansen, "Denmark: End of the Idyll," *New Left Review* 144 (1984), 5-32.

7 Karl Marx, "Det engelske Landproletariat," *Social-Demokraten*, 10 May–30 June 1876; Niels Finn Christiansen, *Arbejderbevægelsens forhistorie* (København: Selskab for Arbejderhistorie, 1986), 100; see also Per Salomonsson, *Socialismen og Socialdemokratiet: Indføring i dansk arbejderbevægelses teoridannelse 1871-84* (København: Selskab for Arbejderhistorie, 1974).

maintained a faith in the state that directly contradicted Marx and Engels's emphasis on its entanglement with capital.[8]

Marx and Engels's outlines of socialism as part of a comprehensive scientific understanding of society's structures and necessary development appealed to the leaders of the labour movement. With reference to this doctrine, they could assure themselves and their adherents that they were on the right side of history, understood as a more or less linear progression from poverty, suffering, and despair to prosperity, justice, and freedom. In a characteristic comparison, the party newspaper *Social-Demokraten* claimed in 1884 that Marx had discovered "the law of humanity's historical progression and uncovered the nature of modern capital and the conditions for the emergence and development of economic social forms," just as Darwin had explained the evolution of species and Newton, nearly 200 years earlier, had formulated the law of gravity.[9]

This was what the social democrats gathered from their readings of especially Marx and Engels's *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* and Engels's *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, both of which the party translated and published in Danish in 1884.[10] The same general understanding also underpinned the Social Democratic interest in *Capital*. P. Knudsen was part of a group who started work on a complete translation based on the third German edition, and after years of preparation, the first two volumes appeared in Danish in 1888 and 1889, translated by linguist and journalist Hans Vilhelm Lund

8 Gerd Callesen, "Det danske socialdemokrati – et marxistisk masseparti?" in *Den danske arbejderbevægelses programmatiske dokumenter og love (1871 til 1913)*, ed. Gerd Callesen and Hans-Norbert Lahme (Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1978), 130-48; P. Knudsen, *P. Knudsen: Bidrag til hans politiske biografi: Analyser og dokumenter*, ed. Hans Norbert Lahme (Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1983); Claus Bryld, *Den demokratiske socialismes gennembrudsår* (København: Selskab for Arbejderhistorie, 1992).

9 "Karl Marx' Dødsdag," *Social-Demokraten*, 14 March 1884 [author's own translation].

10 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Det kommunistiske Manifest," *Social-Demokraten* (13 January, 15 January, 16 January, 18 January, 19 January, 22 January, 23 January 1884); Friedrich Engels, "Socialismens Udvikling fra Utopi til Videnskab," *Social-Demokraten* (29 January, 1 February, 2 February, 6 February, 7 February, 9 February, 12 February, 13 February, 16 February, 20 February, 21 February, 22 February, 26 February 1884).

(1840–1893).[11] These were the first complete translations in the world published by the labour movement. They were published for workers, and their price was deliberately kept low at only 2 Crowns (about one or one-half day's wage for an average Danish worker at the time), barely covering the costs of production.[12]

The reception, however, was limited, and the publishers abandoned the project before Engels finished editing the third volume. Instead, through numerous lectures, pamphlets, and articles, the party leaders sought to link the Danish workers' experiences to parts of the analyses of exploitation in *Capital* and to the anticipated collapse of capitalism.[13] They focused on the first volume's analysis of surplus value and exploitation in particular, as well as the prediction of capitalism's inevitable decline. Although Marx had only sketched the latter briefly and in very general terms in *Capital*, P. Knudsen's 1892 presentation of Marx's social theory insisted that capitalism was not only immoral but also deeply irrational and rapidly approaching its inevitable demise:

> By depriving the capitalist class of control over the means of production and making these collective property, production is placed in the service of labour, rather than labor being commanded by the means of production or their owners.

11 Karl Marx, *Kapitalen. Første Del: Kapitalens Produktionsproces* (København: Det socialdemokratiske Arbejderparti i Danmark, 1886 [1888]); Karl Marx, *Kapitalen. Anden Del: Kapitalens Cirkulationsproces* (København: Det socialdemokratiske Arbejderparti i Danmark, 1887 [1889]); see also Ole Stender-Petersen, "De danske Marx- og Engels-oversættelser og den danske Marx-forståelse 1848-1895," in Gerd Callesen, Steen Bille Larsen, and Niels Ole Højstrup Jensen eds. *Marx i Danmark* (København: Selskab for Arbejderhistorie, 1983),115-146; Rasmus Juhl Pedersen, "Danske Marx-oversættelser," *Arbejderhistorie* 35 (1990): 51-58. The original title pages wrongly date the two first volumes of *Capital* as having been published in 1885 and 1887, respectively. Seemingly, this discrepancy resulted from the extended process of translating and preparing the books for publication. Gerd Callesen first noted this discrepancy and estimated the publication dates to be 1887 and 1888 based on circumstantial evidence. However, I have found that advertisements from the party bookstore regularly published in the party newspaper do not mention Volume I before May 4, 1888, and only began to mention Volume II in May 1889, which I therefore suggest are the actual publication dates. See Gerd Callesen, "Zur Verbreitung der ersten dänischen 'Kapital'-Ausgabe," *Beiträge zur Marx-Engels-Forschung* 28 (1989): 75–80.

12 Callesen, "Zur Verbreitung," 77-78.

13 See, especially, C.A. Schramm: "Nationaløkonomiens Grundtræk," *Social-Demokraten* (from 23 September-14 November 1884); P. Knudsen, *Socialismen* (København: Det danske Socialdemokrati, 1885); Domela Nieuwenhuis, *Kapital og Arbejde* (København: Det danske Socialdemokrati, 1888); P. Knudsen, "Karl Marx", Social-Demokraten (17-18 September 1892). While Nieuwenhuis's booklet saw several editions in Danish – despite the author's political affiliation with the left-wing oppositions within the Second International – Karl Kautsky's internationally influential account of Marx's *Capital* apparently had little impact in Denmark, even though it was translated into Swedish.

> Society can then organize production rationally according to its needs. Wasteful labour is avoided, and the time for necessary work can be reduced to a minimum. Only then will humanity fully benefit from machinery and other technical advances, as these will be used solely to produce the greatest quantity of life goods with the least possible labour.[14]

The following year, Knudsen added that work might be reduced so much under socialism that it would be transformed from a "burden into a form of recreation."[15] However, this utopian conception of the transformation of work was relatively rare in the discourse of Knudsen and the other prominent Danish Social Democrats.

II. A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ACADEMIC

From the turn of the century to World War I, Social Democratic Marxism received a significant boost from the work of the talented historian Gustav Bang (1871-1915). As the party's semi-official theorist during the early years of the twentieth century, Bang presented Marxism more systematically and competently than any previous Danish Social Democrats had done. His detailed exposition of *Capital* in *Social-Demokraten* between 1906 and 1907, was later revised into a 150-page book and was, by far, the clearest and most comprehensive Danish presentation of its central ideas. Earlier party leaders like Knudsen had focused on Marx's simple concepts of absolute surplus value and capital's need to increase the supply of labour.[16] Bang nuanced this view significantly. Drawing on Marx's concept of relative surplus value, he showed how increasing productivity and new inventions could raise the rate of exploitation even when working hours were reduced or workers succeeded in securing higher wages. According to Bang, these developments did not negate the structural issues arising from the falling rate of profit, which Marx described in volume three of *Capital*. However, alongside the integration of new areas into the capitalist world market, they represented counter-tendencies that could temporarily offset the falling rate of profit and delay the inevitable collapse of capitalism.[17]

Bang thus provided the basis for a much richer analysis of capitalism's potential for crisis and breakdown. He presented Marxist

14 P. Knudsen, "Karl Marx," *Social-Demokraten*, 17-18 September 1892 [author's own translation].
15 *Social-Demokraten*, 21 February 1893 [author's own translation].
16 See, e.g., Knudsen, *Socialismen*; Knudsen, "Karl Marx."
17 Gustav Bang, *Den kapitalistiske Samfundshusholdning* (København: Fremad, 1912).

arguments for why workers did not necessarily grow increasingly poor and why capitalism did not just collapse. The latter point in particular contributed significantly to aligning the Social Democrats' theoretical standpoints with their pragmatic political focus on reforms within capitalism. In other words, he shifted the interpretation of Marx so that it aligned much more closely with the Social Democrats' political horizon. Bang emphasized that the socialization and technical development of production under capitalism paved the way for a rational reorganization of production that did not rely on a complete collapse of capitalism as the starting point of socialist reorganization of society. This of course also meant that the socialist future appeared more distant than in Knudsen's formulations from the 1880s and 1890s. Bang was thereby able to provide a better Marxist foundation for the party's reformist policies than his predecessors. Yet he maintained the need for a fundamental revolutionary transformation until his death in 1915 at the age of 43.

III. BETWEEN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC SYMBOL AND REVOLUTIONARY THINKER

After World War I and the Russian Revolution, the Social Democrats' reformism became more pronounced, and no one took up the mantle as the party's Marxist theoretician after Bang. Nevertheless, the party continued to honour Marx symbolically. It made major efforts to mark the fiftieth anniversary of his death in 1933, and the party press *Fremad* reissued *Capital* in a heavily abridged version, now reduced to under 400 pages, edited by the German workers' educator Julian Borchardt (1868-1932).[18] At its publication, the party paper praised it as "a valuable memorial to Marx."[19] A memorial was precisely what *Capital* had become for Danish social democrats. They still praised Marx in broad terms, and some party members even formed study circles around Borchardt's abridged version of *Capital*, but the party no longer sought to connect Marx or his teachings to its practical political strategies. For the majority of Danish Social Democracy, Marx now primarily appeared as a founding figure of the past and a symbolic prophet of a future too distant to be relevant; a vision of the future that increasingly was relegated to the past.

18 Karl Marx, *Kapitalen: Kritik af Nationaløkonomien: Almenfattelig Udgave*, ed. Julian Borchardt (København: Fremad, 1933). Julian Borchart was a socialist politician, journalist, and activist who taught and served on the educational committee of the German Social Democratic Party and wrote a widely read digest of *Capital*.
19 *Social-Demokraten* (14 March 1933) [author's own translation].

When the party's new leader and prime minister Thorvald Stauning (1873-1942) on rare occasions referred directly to Marx, the polite phrases about the persistent long-term relevance of his doctrines were interspersed with unmistakable attempts to distance himself from the latter's analyses. In his decisive 1935 speech to the party congress, Stauning insisted: "Karl Marx could hardly have imagined a world like the one before us."[20] This was the same congress that ratified Stauning's programme *Denmark for the People* [*Danmark for Folket*], formalizing the party's transition from a class party to a people's party.[21]

The old Marxist orientation towards the future was instead carried forward in new, often more distinctly revolutionary ways by the new left-wing that emerged during the interwar period; it was dominated by the small Communist Party of Denmark [*Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti* (DKP)] but also included tiny independent leftist groups and currents, as well as circles of intellectuals who started to reinterpret Marx.[22] In the spring of 1930, a group of them gathered around the journal *Monde* and began an ambitious new translation of *Capital*, published as supplements to the journal.[23] In an accompanying statement, they emphasized that the translation would be complete and unabridged , arguing that both economists and workers would recognize the capitalist society Marx described as their own contemporary reality.[24] The complete translation of *Capital* was not merely a work of translation, but also aimed to contribute to the fusion of intellectual and manual labour in anticipation of the coming socialist revolution. But due to internal disagreements concerning the purchase of *Monde* by the Communist party in 1932, this project remained unfinished, and subscribers began receiving the

20 Thorvald Stauning, "Tale på Socialdemokratiets kongres 1935 og politisk manifest," in Claus Bryld, *Det danske socialdemokrati og revisionismen. Bind 2: fra 1914 til 1930'erne* (København: Selskab for Arbejderhistorie, 1976), 292 [author's own translation].
21 Socialdemokratiets Hovedbestyrelse, *Danmark for Folket: For Arbejde, Brød og Frihed* (København: Fremad, 1934).
22 The history of the DKP and other Nordic CP's is studied in Åsmund Egge and Svend Rybner eds. *Red Star of the North: Communism in the Nordic Countrie*s (Stamsund: Orkana Akademisk, 2015). For independent leftist intellectuals and groups see Morten Thing, *Kommunismens kultur: DKP og de intellektuelle 1918-1960* (København: Tiderne skifter, 1993); Olav Harsløf, *Mondegruppen: Kampen om kunsten og socialismen i Danmark 1928-1932* (København: Museum Tusculanum, 1997); Steen Bille Larsen, *Mod strømmen: Den kommunistiske "højre"- og "venstre"-opposition i 30'ernes Danmark* (København: Selskab for Arbejderhistorie, 1986).
23 Karl Marx, *Kapitalen. Kritik af den politiske økonomi* (København: Monde, 1930-31).
24 "Kapitalen," *Monde* no. 18, April 1930.

Norwegian translation instead.[25] This reflected a general Communist party disregard for *Capital* as a central text in its own right. Only very brief passages from this work were published as part of the anthologies of Marx's and Engels's canonized political writings, carefully selected by Soviet authorities and dutifully translated and published in large quantities by the Communist Party of Denmark like so many other Communist parties across the globe.[26]

IV. THE COLD WAR AND ALIENATION

The Cold War had severe consequences for the interpretation of Marx everywhere. After the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia in 1948 anything even remotely connected to Marxism was increasingly associated with the Soviet Union and its proxies, and the Danish Social Democrats effectively ceded the Marxist legacy to the Communist party. The Communist Party of Denmark's main contribution to the development of this legacy over the following years was limited to a slightly expanded second edition of *Selected Works* [*Udvalgte skrifter*] in 1952, with the most central texts also being reissued as pamphlets.[27] Rather than studying or publishing *Capital*, the Communist Party of Denmark reproduced dense Soviet treatises on political economy and Marxism-Leninism, alongside the loyal Danish Communist economist Isi Grünbaum's more popular accounts of a Soviet Marxist outlook.[28]

By the late 1950s, new readings of Marx began to emerge from the New Left that developed outside of the old workers' parties. The Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 led to a split in the Communist party and the formation of the Socialist People's Party [*Socialistisk Folkeparti* (SF)] two years later. They were soon supplemented by a number of new social movements protesting nuclear armaments and, from the mid-1960s on, also the increasingly radical protests against the Vietnam War. In 1967, the left wing of the SF formed a new party,

25 Harsløf, *Mondegruppen,* 291-297.

26 Karl Marx, *Udvalgte Skrifter*. 2 vols. (København: Monde, 1937-38). The most canonized texts by Marx and Engels were also published by the Communist party press in competition with corresponding Social Democratic editions, see, e.g., Friedrich Engels, *Socialismens udvikling fra utopi til videnskab* (København: Arbejderforlaget, 1933).

27 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Udvalgte Skrifter*, 2 vols. (København: Tiden, 1952); as well as pamphlets, e.g., Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Det kommunistiske Manifest* (København: Tiden, 1945), etc.

28 *Politisk økonomi: Lærebog* (København: Tiden, 1955); *Marxismen-leninismens grundlag: Lærebog* (København: Tiden, 1961); Isi Grünbaum, *Indførelse i den marxistiske Lære om Samfundsøkonomi* (København: Tiden, 1945) Isi Grünbaum, *Kapitalismens Økonomi* (København: Tiden, 1947).

the Left-Wing Socialists [*Venstresocialisterne* (VS)], which became central to radical left students, academics, and professionals in the late 1960s and throughout the following decade.[29]

During most of the 1960's these groups gravitated toward Marx's early writings on alienation and human emancipation. The philosopher Villy Sørensen's slim 1962 anthology of Marx's early writings had a major impact and provided the foundation of new humanist critiques of conformism in both late-capitalist welfare states and Soviet-style regimes.[30] While these reinterpretations of Marx at first by-passed *Capital*, they ended up paving the way for re-readings of Marx's critique of political economy too, by disentangling Marx from Soviet orthodoxy. At the same time, however, this process tended to dissociate the new readings of Marx socially and culturally from the traditional labour movement. New Left re-readings of Marx, from humanism to structuralism and beyond, were advanced intellectual endeavours, carried out by the growing masses of young people in higher education. When the New Left Marxists sought to reassert the key role of the working class as the main revolutionary subject, the class was reconceived as a desired *Other* and a protagonist of radical theories and strategies, rather than as an integral part of the movement itself.

V. RE-READING CAPITAL

The aforementioned Rhodos edition of *Capital* published in the early 1970s appeared as the working class also began to stir again with a series of strikes and protests and young left-wing intellectuals developed a renewed interest in the working class as a revolutionary subject. In order to understand and make sense of the world around them, these young leftist intellectuals began to reread Marx's critique of political economy. Looking back some ten years later, two Danish leftist intellectuals from the circle around the biweekly magazine *Politisk Revy*, Nils Bredsdorff (1946–2012) and Morten Thing, described the reading of *Capital* as "the greatest intellectual experience to date" and explained "[w]e realized that what we had previously

29 Ursula Schmiederer, *Die Sozialistische Volkspartei Dänemarks. Eine Partei der Neuen Linken* (Frankfurt: Verlag Neue Kritik, 1969); John Logue, *Socialism and Abundance: Radical Socialism in the Welfare State: A Study of the Danish Socialist People's Party* (København: Akademisk Forlag, 1982); Per Askholm Hansen and Jens Otto Madsen, *Fra sandkasse til kadreparti? VS's dannelse og udvikling 1967-73* (København: VS-forlaget, 1980); Søren Hein Rasmussen, *Sære alliancer: Politiske bevægelser i efterkrigstidens Danmark* (Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1997).

30 Karl Marx, Økonomi og filosofi: Ungdomsskrifter, ed. Villy Sørensen (København: Gyldendal, 1962); see also Jørgen K. Bukdahl, *Karl Marx* (København: Gad, 1967).

understood as Marxism was, at most, small corners of a gigantic intellectual project."[31]

Soon thereafter, however, some of these groups of young Marxist intellectuals began to point out insufficiencies in the Rhodos translation. Led by the Communist party intellectual Gelius Lund (1907-92) and the politically independent professor of philosophy Johannes Witt-Hansen (1908–1986), the Rhodos translation team had aimed for an accessible Danish style. Critics argued that this had obscured some of the key novelties and insights of Marx's critique of political economy, not least the conceptual understanding that he had developed through critical reflections on the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831). These disagreements led to intense and energetic polemics about translational principles and two parallel translations of Marx's *Grundrisse* in the mid-1970s. In retrospect, this may seem disproportionate, but for the participants the translation debates concerned not just terminology, but also fundamental principles of revolutionary politics, theory, and science.[32]

While both the traditional conceptions of historical materialism and the French philosopher Louis Althusser's structuralist reinterpretation of Marx's thought came to play key roles in 1970s debates on Marxism, the most prominent reading of *Capital* that emerged in 1970s Denmark was the so-called capital-logic school.[33] Inspired by recent German re-readings of Marx's critique of political economy in the wake of Roman Rosdolsky's ground-breaking study of Marx's *Grundrisse*, the capital-logic school emphasized the Hegelian logic of Marx's *Capital* as the point of departure for an analysis of capitalist society – or, more precisely, the aspects of society subsumed under capital. They criticized previous Marxists for perpetuating bourgeois conceptions of economics as a distinct science and for their strict

31 Nils Bredsdorff and Morten Thing, "Et spejl af Venstrefløjen," in *Politisk Revy i 20 år*, ed. Morten Thing (København: Tiderne Skifter, 1983), 106 [author's own translation].
32 See in particular, Jens Brinch, Niels Ole Finnemann, Finn Hansson, and Tyge Kjær, "I anledning af Grundridsudgivelsen," *Kurasje* 10 (1974), 104-120. Reprinted, along with other contributions to the debate in Magnus Møller Ziegler, Bertel Nygaard, Jakob Bek-Thomsen, and Anne Engelst Nørgaard, eds. *Kapitalen på dansk: Marx-læsninger gennem 150 år* (Århus: Forlaget Slagmark, 2022), 245-297.
33 For Danish examples of Althusserianism, see, e.g., Johannes Andersen, ed. *Althusserskolen: En introduktion* (Aalborg: Aalborg Universitetsforlag, 1980); Esbern Krause-Jensen, ed. *Omkring Althusser-skolens videnskabsteori*. (København: Rhodoes, 1977).

separation of theory from the empirical world.[34] They insisted that prior Marxists had missed Marx's critique of precisely such conceptions of science. The adherents of the capital-logic school insisted that *Capital* was not an application or specification of what Marx and Engels had first asserted in *The Communist Manifesto* and Engels later elaborated in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. On the contrary, Marx's critique of political economy marked a rupture in his thought that should be regarded as its very core. It was not about society in general, but specifically about the fundamental functions of capitalism. Marx's theories and his concepts of base, superstructure, etc. should be regarded as results of his studies of capitalism and not be presupposed as equally valid for the study of pre-capitalist societies.

Although capital-logic was a highly theoretical pursuit and its adherents kept the left's "practitioners" [*praktikere*] at arm's length, its explicit aim was always practical and revolutionary, i.e., to arrive at a genuinely emancipatory practice through the reconstruction of the critical and emancipatory potential of Marx's analysis of capitalism. The goal was not merely to secure better wages and working conditions for workers. It was to break with capitalism's fundamental mechanisms, including its systematic obfuscation of exploitation. In other words, the point was not just to read Marx's *Capital* in order to understand society, the point remained to change it. However, it was necessary to study this work at great length in order to even begin to grasp what it might mean to fundamentally transform society.

Capital-logic became predominant within the innumerable *Capital* reading groups that sprung up amongst the sizable contingents of radical students at Danish universities in the 1970s. Apart from the attempt to reconstruct Marx's conceptual framework, this school also developed numerous analyses of the capitalist state, economic conjunctures, and reformism.[35] There were also attempts to develop

34 See Hans-Jørgen Schanz, *Til rekonstruktionen af kritikken af den politiske økonomis omfangslogiske status* (Århus: Modtryk, 1974); Anders Lundkvist, *Kapitalens bevidstheds-former* (Aarhus: GMT, 1973). On the German 'new readings' of Marx, see Jan Hoff, *Marx Global: Zur Entwicklung des internationalen Marx-diskurses seit 1965* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009). On the remarkable Danish studies and translations of *Grundrisse* during this period, see Birger Linde, "Denmark" in *Karl Marx's Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy 150 years later*, ed. Marcello Musto (London: Routledge, 2008), 257-260.

35 *Statsteori, keynesianisme og arbejderbevægelse* (Aarhus: Den jyske Historiker, 1975); Ole Marquardt, *Konjunkturforløb og klassebevidsthed* (Aarhus: Den jyske Historiker, 1974); Jens Brinch, *Kapitalakkumulation i Danmark efter 1940: Et forsøg på en konkret konjunkturanalyse* (Copenhagen: Politisk Revy, 1974); *Krisen, majstrejkerne og arbejdsløsheden: En samling artikler om klassekampens udvikling i Danmark* (Copenhagen: Politisk Revy, 1974); *Kapitalismen i sumpen* (Copenhagen: Politisk revy, 1976); Christoph Deutschmann: *Venstrekeynesianismen* (Aarhus: Modtryk: 1975).

the implications of this approach for analyses of pre-capitalist societies as well as women's oppression.[36]

VI. "MONASTIC MARXISM" AND THE RECENT MARX REVIVAL

By the mid-1970s the intense energy of the left-intellectual engagement with Marx began to wane. This was not only because bourgeois and social democratic politicians at the time launched a sustained campaign against the so-called "monastic Marxists" [*Munkemarxister*][37] at the universities, but also due to growing criticism from within the young intellectual left of the capital-logic school's narrowing of the theory to the point where both concrete analysis and emancipatory practice seemed to be indefinitely postponed.[38] At the same time, the central hope of contributing to the revolutionary consciousness of the working class had become increasingly difficult to discern and even the hard core of the capital-logic school began to doubt the future prospects of their undertaking. And, little by little, their interest in Marx faded.

The fall of the Soviet Union and its satellite states around 1990 reinforced both parts of the rejection of Marx's legacy. The genuine diversity of Marxist traditions, their critical-emancipatory aims, and the familiarity with what Marx's texts actually said, increasingly fell into oblivion during these decades.

However, since the turn of the millennium interest in Marx has experienced a revival. The growing historical distance from the Cold War has made it easier for the younger generations to approach Marx anew. This latest wave of interest in Marx is intertwined with critiques of globalization and neoliberalism. Both on the intellectual left and in the wider public debate, the financial crisis of 2008 and its aftermath sparked renewed interest in Marx's *Capital* – not only as a historical document, but also as a means of analysing the

36 *Om studiet af førkapitalistiske samfundsforhold* (Aarhus: Den jyske Historiker, 1976); *Historie og kapitalisme: En periodiseringsdiskussion* (Aarhus: Den jyske Historiker 1979); Signe Arnfred and Karen Syberg eds. *Kvindesituation og kvindebevægelse under kapitalismen* (Århus: GMT 1974)

37 "Monastic Marxism" [*Munkemarxisme*] is a modern Danish expression coined by bourgeois politicians and commentators to denote and denounce a particularly dogmatic, narrow-minded form of Marxism that allegedly dominated the universities in the 1970s and which they subsequently repressed.

38 See, e.g., Curt Sørensen, *Marxismen og den sociale orden*, (Århus: GMT, 1976); Heine Andersen, et al. *Kritik af kapitallogikken. Om krise-, stats- og videnskabsteorien hos Altvater, Cogoy, Mattick, Reichelt, Schanz m. fl.* (København: Demos, 1975) (København: Demos, 1975).

contemporary crisis of capitalism. In Denmark, the most prominent example is Søren Mau's book *Mute Compulsion* from 2021 and the debates and interest it provoked.[39] As in most other countries, the new Marx-inspired perspectives have been closely linked, not only with critiques of capitalism, but also with critiques of racism, sexism, and the environmental crisis – issues that were on the agenda in the 1970s, but remained marginal to the most intense engagements with Marx's *Capital*.

There are a number of major questions that can and should be raised about contemporary discussions of *Capital*'s legacy and its varied uses over the past 150 years. What has four decades of neoliberalism – with its blend of deregulation, monetarism, financialization of capital, deindustrialization, individualist consumerism, rhetorical rejections of the state combined with expanded state support for big business – meant? What consequences does a critical analysis of capitalism have for climate politics, feminism, and anti-racist struggle – and vice versa? And how can these questions be related to an understanding of Danish capitalism and local struggles in Denmark? It is obvious that these questions are already being debated. Internationally, more comprehensive analyses based on Marx's critique of capitalism are emerging, and with the growing interest in such analyses among younger Danish intellectuals, they have also begun to gain a foothold here, as the present volume clearly shows.

39 Søren Mau, *Stum Tvang: En marxistisk undersøgelse af kapitalismens økonomiske magt* (Århus: Klim, 2021). See also the notes in Esben Bøgh Sørensen, "From a Ripple to a Wave" in this volume to get an idea of the content and some of the contributions to these debates.

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2.

WHAT IS ALIVE AND WHAT IS DEAD IN DANISH MARXISM?

THE MARXIST TURN, ITS ABSENT FATHERS, AND THE FUTURE TASKS OF A RUTHLESS CRITIQUE OF ALL THAT EXISTS[1]

Søren Mau

After a couple of decades of stagnation, there is once again a vibrant Marxist research environment in Denmark.[2] Over the last decade, students and early career scholars have initiated a Marxist turn in Danish academia, which can be traced in the number of PhD fellowships and postdocs awarded to different Marxist projects, the number of master's theses addressing the Marxist tradition or drawing on Marxist thinkers, the courses on Marxist theory and analysis at universities and Folk High Schools, the flourishing of study circles, and finally in a wide range of publications, from academic monographs, research articles, anthologies, and special issues of journals to more popular-oriented books and articles. In 2015, the "Danish Society for Marxist Studies" was established, which holds annual conferences at various universities that serve as a nodal point for the

1 This text is based on Søren Mau, "Hvad er levende og hvad er dødt i marxismen," in *Kapitalen på dansk: Marx-læsninger gennem 150 år*, ed. Magnus Møller Ziegler, Bertel Nygaard, Jakob Bek-Thomsen, and Anne Engelst Nørgaard (Århus: Slagmark, 2022), 309–35. The text was written in early 2021 for a non-specialist audience, and I was asked by the editors to keep references to an absolute minimum, which explains the absence of obvious references in many places. Instead of references in the text, a bibliography was provided at the end with a list of relevant works in the various traditions mentioned in the text (pp. 329-335). Some explanatory notes have been added to this version of the text by the translators Mikkel Flohr and Dominique Routhier to provide relevant context for an international audience. All notes – apart from references for direct quotes – have been added by the translators unless otherwise noted.

2 [Original note, updated by the author in 2025]: Thanks to Signe Leth Gammelgaard, Anna Cornelia Ploug, and Bertel Nygaard for help with the original version of this text. Thanks to Mikkel Flohr and Dominique Routhier for translating and editing the English version of the text.

Marxist research community in Denmark and as an intermediary link to international research environments.

The Marxist turn in Danish academia in the 2010s is remarkably disconnected from its immediate predecessor, namely the Marxism of Denmark in the 1970s, which raises a number of questions: why did the Marxism of the 1970s vanish and what is the relationship between it and the current Marxist turn? Where is Danish Marxist scholarship heading today, and can an analysis of the rise and fall of the Marxism of the 1970s help us avoid repeating the collapse of the 1980s? These are some of the questions I will address in this text.

The current surge of interest in Marxism is of course as much a result of the historical situation as the 1970s Marxist wave was. My own path into the Marxist tradition, like that of so many other millennials, was mediated by the economic crisis that we are in many ways still in. This crisis began, in a sense, in the 1970s, but its latest phase started with the financial collapse of 2007. It was by no means clear to me at the time, but in retrospect there was a relatively strong connection between the crisis and my own political radicalization process. Compared to most people, I was not particularly affected by the crisis, but it still had quite concrete effects on my life. My dad received a call early one morning telling him that he did not need to come to work anymore, because the Icelandic private equity fund that had bought the company he worked for a few years earlier had gone bankrupt overnight. I was about to move away from home and enter the housing market in Copenhagen, where the housing bubble in previous years meant that the student grants[3] no longer sufficed. Even though I come from a family and youth environment that was completely devoid of leftist views, it was almost impossible not to get a sense that something was wrong with the existing economic system.

I joined the left-wing political party, The Red-Green Alliance [*Enhedslisten*] – a relatively short-lived experience due to a combination of the party's continuous drift to the right and my own drift to the left – and began to familiarise myself with critiques of capitalism. In 2009, at the age of 20, I started studying social sciences at Roskilde University but was frustrated to learn that the famous critical consciousness supposedly embodied by this university had since been reduced to a single dull lecture on Marx in an introductory course in sociological theory, which was completely overshadowed by an

3 In Denmark students over the age of eighteen are provided an educational grant from the state to support their education.

entire course (!) on bourgeois micro-economics. After two semesters, I moved on to study philosophy at Aarhus University, where the critical spirit was in better shape; the philosophers associated with the collective *Center for Vild Analyse* ("Centre for Wild Analysis")[4] were located in precarious positions such as PhD students, part-time lecturers, and postdocs, and initiated inspiring discussions of communism and thinkers such as G.W.F. Hegel, Jacques Lacan, Slavoj Žižek, Alain Badiou, and Giorgio Agamben. Some of us wanted to follow Žižek's call for a return to Marx's critique of political economy, but apart from a few lectures in a political philosophy course, Marx was not really taught, and Marxism was conspicuously absent from the research environment at the department; there were no book launches, research seminars, conferences, etc. where students could get a sense of a Marxist research tradition. So we – like so many other students elsewhere in Denmark and the rest of the world in those years – taught ourselves and each other Marxist theory via study circles, lecture series, book projects, etc.[5]

There was virtually no legacy left behind by previous generations of Marxists in Aarhus or elsewhere. Most of the famous Marxists from the 1970s had retired, and those who remained – like Hans-Jørgen Schanz, Lars-Henrik Schmidt, Kjeld Schmidt, and Ole Fogh Kirkeby – had abandoned Marxism in favour of various, more-or-less, anti-Marxist and pseudo-critical perspectives. Our teachers mostly belonged to the generations that had entered the university during

4 The Centre for Wild Analysis was a collective founded in 2006 that started producing analyses of contemporary cultural and political phenomena drawing on psychoanalysis. See Henrik Jøker Bjerre and Brian Benjamin Hansen, "The Discourse of the Wild Analyst," in *Repeating Žižek*, ed. Agon Hamza (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 146-158; Henrik Jøker Bjerre, Brian Benjamin Hansen, Kirsten Hyldgaard, Jakob Rosendal, and Lilian Munk Rösing, eds., *Analyzing the Cultural Unconscious: Science of the Signifier* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2020).

5 Some of these study circles were subsequently institutionalized, starting with the summer school "Repoliticizing Capitalism: Contradictions, Critique, and Alternatives" organized by Laura Horn, Yancé-Myah Harrison, and Mikkel Flohr, which brought an international ensemble of Marxist researchers (including Lucia Pradella, Bob Jessop, Ngai-Ling Sum, Catia Gregoratti, and many more) together for two weeks every summer at Roskilde University from 2015 and onwards. Søren Mau and Camilla Schwartz also organized a course on "Critique" at the University of Southern Denmark, Magnus Møller Ziegler still teaches the course "Marx for the 21st Century" at University of Copenhagen, while Mathias Hein Jessen, Lara Monticelli, Birke Otto, and Charlotte Cator, developed an MSc minor in "Transforming Business and Organizations to Build Sustainable and Democratic Economies" at Copenhagen Business School. See Mikkel Flohr and Laura Horn, "Om at genpolitisere kapitalismen og genlæse Marx i dag: Erfaringer fra sommerskolen 'Repoliticizing Capitalism: Contradictions, Critiques and Alternatives,'" in *Kapitalen på dansk: Marx-læsninger gennem 150 år*, ed. Magnus Møller Ziegler, Bertel Nygaard, Jakob Bek-Thomsen, and Anne Engelst Nørgaard (Århus: Slagmark, 2022), 301–308.

or after the decline of Marxism in the 1980s. However, this lack of transmission was not only a disadvantage; it also meant that we encountered Marx's thinking more freely, without being disciplined by Marxological father figures. We avoided mediating our reading of the classics of Marxism through the interests and conflicts of the past. We went directly to Marx and read his texts in relation to our own context, without feeling obliged to work our way through the vast amount of literature that the 1970s discussion had left in the libraries. It was – and is – our own project, and there were no masters to interpret the texts for us.

1. 1970S MARXISM: AN AUTOPSY

The interest in Marxism in Denmark in the 1970s, much like today, was driven by political radicalization. And perhaps the most important reason for the decline of Marxism from the late 1970s onwards was the simple fact that the rebellion against the status quo was crushed by the neoliberal counter-offensive that began to spread across the world at this time. Whenever fewer people are engaged in the practical attempt to overthrow the existing state of affairs, there is less interest in critical theory and analysis. The counteroffensive also took the form of a direct and heavily ideological attack on Marxism in the universities; student numbers were cut, Marxist lecturers were fired, Roskilde University was threatened with closure in 1976 and put under the administration of an external rectorate, and in 1986, the minister of education Bertel Haarder closed the heavily Marxist-influenced sociology programme at the University of Copenhagen. In the same way that bourgeois politicians fight feminist and anti-racist research today, they fought Marxism back then.

But the collapse of Marxism back then also had internal causes. To understand the dynamics that led to the Marxist collapse of the 1980s, it is worth noting that the Danish Marxism of the 1970s can be roughly divided into two streams. Firstly, there were the critical university Marxists, who were usually inspired by "Western Marxists" such as Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Paul Mattick, Louis Althusser, Karl Korsch, Antonio Gramsci, and Geörgy Lukács. The university Marxists were critical of much of the Marxist tradition as well as parts of Marx's work, which they generally considered to be ambiguous and unfinished. On the other hand, there was the Marxism of the Stalinist, Trotskyist, and Maoist parties, formulated and disseminated by party intellectuals in their own schools, journals, and publishing houses. This "party Marxism" was generally far

more dogmatic and tended to treat Marx as an oracle, whose work constituted a complete and harmonious scientific system. These two Marxist currents were rooted in different parts of the general revolt against the status quo in the 1960s and 1970s. Party Marxism was rooted in the communist parties, the more traditional parts of the labour movement, as well as the peace movement, various anti-imperialist movements and the popular movement against the European Economic Community (EEC, the forerunner of the European Union), while university Marxism was mostly rooted in the student revolt and the New Left party [*Venstresocialisterne*].

The renaissance of Marxism in Denmark in the 1970s was a result of the rise of all these different organizations and struggles – traditional labour struggles, as well as what were called "new social movements." Despite their differences, party Marxism and university Marxism had a common origin and they also came to share a common destiny.

1968 in Denmark was a motley collection of liberation struggles with different goals, strategies, and protagonists.[6] To the extent that the crisis of Marxism can be attributed to internal factors, it is partly due to the unwillingness and inability to adapt to the arenas of struggle that were opened up and expanded by the 1970s. The self-proclaimed Marxist – Trotskyist, Stalinist, Maoist – parties did not necessarily respond positively to the new social movements fighting against sexism, racism, nuclear power, environmental destruction, heteronormativity, etc. They engaged in labour and anti-imperialist struggles, but often acted in a reactionary manner towards women's and environmental movements, etc. The Stalinists in The Danish Communist Party believed that lesbianism was bourgeois decadence, to mention just one example. Of course, the picture is not clear-cut, and the Trotskyists in the Revolutionary Socialist League [*Revolutionære Socialisters Forbund*] and the Leninists in the Communist League [*Kommunistisk Forbund*] were far less doctrinaire and more open to and interested in the new social movements. There were also smaller anti-imperialist groups such as the Communist Working Group (initially *Kommunistisk Arbejdskreds* and later *Kommunistisk Arbejdsgruppe*) that worked to financially support third world liberation movements and eventually went underground and started robbing banks to support the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (on

6 For an overview see Salar Mohandesi, Bjarke Skærlund Risager, and Laurence Cox, eds., *Voices of 1968: Documents from the Global North* (London: Pluto Press, 2018), 157–178 (especially pages 157-60).

the assumption that the Danish working class had been bought off with the proceeds of imperialism).[7] However, generally communist parties proved unwilling to engage in struggles that they could not control and that did not fit into their narrow understanding of class struggle. Similar patterns can be traced in many other countries, for example in France, where the French Communist Party acted in an incredibly reactionary manner throughout the events of 1968. It is in this sense that we must understand Michel Foucault's statement that '68 was "deeply anti-Marxist."[8] 1968 marks the collapse of the old communist parties, which was both necessary and appropriate. They had emerged as a progressive reaction to the social democrats' turn towards reformism and nationalism, and had been an important part of the anti-fascist struggle in the 1930s and 1940s, but in the following decades they had let themselves be reduced to ideological satellites of authoritarian regimes or sectarian Trotskyist parties stuck in the political universe of the 1920s, mechanically reproducing a fossilized Marxism-Leninism.

Things were not as bad for the more critical strands of Marxism that developed at the universities, which were rooted in the anti-authoritarian student revolt. The historical context was the changes in educational policy in the 1960s that produced an explosive increase in student numbers at the old universities in Copenhagen and Aarhus, which changed their social composition and dynamics, transforming them from elite to mass universities. This was complemented by the founding of new institutions of higher education in Odense (1966), Roskilde (1972), and Aalborg (1975). The students fought for and achieved democratic influence at these institutions. At a large number of departments and institutions, students and younger academics criticized the content and format of existing curricula (this was known as "disciplinary critique" [*fagkritik*]) and began to engage with Marx, Marxism, and critical theory anew outside of the suffocating dogmatism of the traditional left-wing parties. Yet it is striking just how traditional the political horizon of the university Marxism of this period nonetheless remained. Admittedly, it was (very) critical of Marxism-Leninism (or "Soviet Marxism" or "post-Marxism") and its classical strategies, conceptions of the party, political practice, and the state, and pursued a much more radical and anti-authoritarian conception of what socialism could and

7 For an English introduction see Gabriel Kuhn, ed., *Turning Money into Rebellion: The Unlikely Story of Denmark's Revolutionary Bank Robbers* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014).
8 Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits, tome 2: 1976-1988* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 756.

should be. However, it was still primarily oriented towards traditional working-class struggles as the primary and most important driver of progressive social change. Many of the issues that preoccupied the new social movements – for example, gender, sexuality, the environment, and racism – were more or less ignored, even by the critical, anti-Stalinist Marxists within universities. In fact, things were even worse in Denmark than abroad. In Germany, the US, Canada and the UK, promising alliances emerged between the Marxist critique of capitalism and the feminist critique of patriarchy, but as Susanne Possing, Signe Arnfred and Bertel Nygaard note in their contributions to *Kapitalen på dansk*,[9] the Marxist feminism of the 1970s never really caught on in Denmark (although, as they all mention, there are important exceptions). Overall, one finds remarkably few discussions of sexism, racism, or the environment in 1970s Danish Marxist publications. 1970s Danish Marxism was, as Possing describes it, extremely male-dominated. The discussions about the role of women's oppression, racism, and colonialism in the history of capitalism that flourished elsewhere in the world were apparently absent from Danish discussions.[10]

In both its critical and its more fossilized versions, Danish Marxism in the 1970s remained tied to a relatively traditional understanding of what progressive social change consisted of and who constituted the revolutionary subject. As a result, it was hit hard by the global crisis that confronted the classical labour movement in the 1970s, when the post-war economic boom was replaced by a deep crisis, the aftermath of which we are still living in. This crisis was also a crisis for the kind of industrial capitalism that the classical labour movement and its struggle strategies and analyses were built around.[11] Deindustrialization, the logistics revolution, outsourcing of production, financialization, industrialization of agriculture, a growing service sector, political attacks on trade unions, and general precarization of the

9 I.e. the anthology *Kapitalen på dansk*, in which this essay first appeared. See the first note in this chapter.

10 Susanne Possing, "Kapitalismekritik – med eller uden kvinder," in *Kapitalen på dansk: Marx-læsninger gennem 150 år*, ed. Magnus Møller Ziegler, Bertel Nygaard, Jakob Bek-Thomsen, and Anne Engelst Nørgaard (Århus: Slagmark, 2022), 139-76; Signe Arnfred, "Marxistiske spørgsmål, feministiske svar?" in *Kapitalen på dansk: Marx-læsninger gennem 150 år*, ed. Magnus Møller Ziegler, Bertel Nygaard, Jakob Bek-Thomsen, and Anne Engelst Nørgaard (Århus: Slagmark, 2022), 195–212; Bertel Nygaard, "Kapitalen i Danmark gennem 150 år," in *Kapitalen på dansk: Marx-læsninger gennem 150 år*, ed. Magnus Møller Ziegler, Bertel Nygaard, Jakob Bek-Thomsen, and Anne Engelst Nørgaard (Århus: Slagmark, 2022), 13–70.

11 See in particular Endnotes, "A History of Separation: The Rise and Fall of the Workers' Movement, 1883-1982," *Endnotes 4* (2015), 70-193

labour market changed the economic and political landscape fundamentally, transforming the anti-capitalist arena of struggle and weakening the workers' identity that was a central component of the classical labour movement. As the Endnotes collective describes it:

> At the same time, the decline of the workers' identity revealed a multiplicity of other identities, organizing themselves in relation to struggles that had, until then, been more or less repressed. The resulting "new social movements" made it clear, in retrospect, to what extent the homogeneous working class was actually diverse in character. They have also established that revolution must involve more than the reorganization of the economy: it requires the abolition of gender, racial and national distinctions, and so on.[12]

The crisis of Marxism in the late 1970s had several causes. Firstly, the forms of struggle, strategies, institutions, and political horizons that formed the basis of Marxism prior to this were undermined by a series of profound structural changes in global capitalism that were coupled with an intense neoliberal counteroffensive. Secondly, Marxism suffered from a certain inertia in engaging with the new social movements and analysing and incorporating the experiences and social conflicts that underpinned these movements. The labour movement was in decline, and struggles around gender, racism, nature and sexuality were ascending. Marxism as an intellectual movement had been closely tied to the labour movement and proved itself largely unable or unwilling to make itself sufficiently relevant to the new social movements. As a result, it did not survive the political attacks it faced and died a quiet death during the first half of the 1980s.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that the widespread post-Marxist and anti-Marxist caricatures of Marxism as an inherently Eurocentric, racism- and sexism-blind, class-reductionist economism are precisely that, caricatures. The Marxist tradition has always included a wide range of feminist, anti-racist and decolonial thinkers, such as Clara Zetkin, August Bebel, Alexandra Kollontai, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov "Lenin," W.E.B Du Bois, C.L.R. James, Frantz Fanon, Selma James, Grace Lee Boggs, Claudia Jones, and Angela Davis to name but a few. It is simply wrong to portray Marxism as an intellectual tradition that has always been blind to all the oppression

12 Endnotes, "LA Theses," 2016, https://endnotes.org.uk/other_texts/en/endnotes-la-theses (accessed 23 March 2025).

and destruction that could not be described by a narrow class model – even though it is of course also true that there are many Marxist traditions that fit this description. Marxism was extremely influential in the decolonial struggles of the 1960s, and Marxist feminism was vibrant in the 1970s. Unfortunately, these currents were not strong enough to prevent Marxism as a whole from being perceived as less relevant by many of those engaged in the emancipatory struggles of the time in Denmark.

Danish Marxism in the 1970s tended to turn inwards and close in on itself, not only in terms of research topics, but also in the sense that it was very concerned with making a clear distinction between Marxist and non-Marxist, i.e. bourgeois, scholarship. Perhaps this closed-mindedness is also one of the reasons why the decline of Marxism was so dramatic in Denmark. From the late 1980s to the late 2000s, virtually no Marxist research was published in Denmark. There are a few important exceptions: the 1970s Marxists who remained Marxists, such as Curt Sørensen, Morten Thing, Birger Linde, Karen Helveg Petersen, or Niels Albertsen, and the few researchers from the "lost generation" who went against the post- and anti-Marxist *Zeitgeist*, such as Mikkel Bolt, Bertel Nygaard and Andreas Beck Holm. But the exceptions are few and far between. This, in many ways, mirrors what happened outside of Denmark, yet it is as if the decline of Marxism during this period was both deeper and more drastic in Denmark compared to most other places. There is practically no continuity between the Marxism of the 1970s and today. Today, when you read current Marxist literature in English, French and German, the texts frequently refer back to older texts that lead you on the trail of earlier analyses and discussions; there is a way into this longer tradition from the present, a trace of history and continuity. This is not the case with Danish Marxism. Most younger Marxists in Denmark are far more at home in the debates of German or French Marxism in the 1970s, than they are in the Danish Marxism of that same period. The Danish Marxism of the 1970s is a foreign land because its defeat was so massive and virtually no traces were left for the subsequent generations.

In a sense, there was something paradoxical about the renaissance of Marxism in the 1970s: just when the political movements, social structures, institutions, organizations, and strategies that formed the material basis of Marxism as a living intellectual tradition were crumbling, Marxism experienced a global renaissance. In a widespread rebellion against the state of affairs, revolutionaries of the

time reached out to the intellectual tradition that, more than any other, had given legitimacy to the uprisings and revolutions of the 20th century. In a way, the Marxists of the 1970s thus confirmed the historical pattern Marx described in "18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte":

> The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle-cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language.[13]

My point, of course, is not that Marxism belongs in the past. On the contrary, as I'll come back to in a moment, I believe that Marxism is more important and relevant than ever before. Rather, my point is that the Marxism of the 1970s contained a tension between tradition and innovation, and that 1968 served as both a death blow to and a revival of Marxism – a death blow to the dogmatic Marxism-Leninism and a revival of the critical impulse found in Marx's writings. The innovative and critical tendencies came a long way and fought brave battles against the backward-looking forms of Marxism, but in the end they were still – partly because they themselves were not good enough to keep up with developments – swept away.

II. THE MARXIST TURN

As mentioned, there is virtually no continuity between the Danish Marxism of the 1970s and the Marxist turn in recent decades. When broader interest in Marx and Marxism began to re-emerge in the late 2000s, it was not Ole Marquardt, Gustav Bunzel, Signe Arnfred, Hans-Jørgen Schanz, or Anders Lundkvist who were read, but – in addition to Marx himself and classics such as Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin, Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Antonio Gramsci, and Louis Althusser – it was David Harvey's or Michael Heinrich's introductions to *Capital*, Silvia Federici's Marxist feminism, Ellen Meiksins Wood's political Marxism, the Endnotes collective's

13 Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in *Marx-Engels Collected Works. Vol. 11* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1979), 103-4.

theory of communization, Slavoj Zizek's ideology critique (and a lot of non-Marxist critical thinkers such as Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, and The Invisible Committee).

I have already hinted at one of the differences between the Marxist turn and 1970s Marxism, namely that discussions today are more international than they were back then. Of course, the Marxists of the time were at least as interested in foreign discussions as we are today, and just like today they went on study and research trips abroad: Curt Sørensen was in Berlin, California, and London, Schanz was in Berlin and Frankfurt, and Helveg Petersen in New York, to name a few examples. In general, the knowledge of French and German was better than it is today, as the many untranslated French and German quotes in the old publications testify. But the Marxists of the 1970s primarily wrote in Danish, and thus only addressed those who could read Danish. They adopted and developed foreign theoretical currents such as German capital-logic and French Althusserianism, but they rarely contributed to discussions outside the Scandinavian language area. Today, however, most researchers write in English. Of course, this reflects the general internationalization and Anglicization of the university, and many criticisms can be levelled at this trend, which older – culturally conservative – researchers often excel at. But while it is true that the Anglicization of the academy in some respects represents an intellectual decline, it is, all things being equal, a positive development that Danish Marxist research today is so much more intertwined with and engaged in international debates.

Another difference concerns the relationship to Marx, who is treated less as an oracle than before. This is not to say that the Marxists of the 1970s were uncritical of Marx. The realization that Marx's writings contained unresolved problems and ambivalences was a prerequisite for capital-logic's "reconstructions" and Schanz's *Til rekonstruktionen af kritikken af den politiske økonomis omfangslogiske status* ("Contribution to the Reconstruction of the Logical Status and Scope of the Critique of Political Economy"), which was, amongst other things, a critique of the idea of Marx's theory as a universal theory capable of explaining everything, this was the reason that the "logical scope and status" of the critique of political economy had to be clearly delimited.[14] The Danish version of the German state derivation debates in the Copenhagen journal *Kurasje* also assumed that Marx never developed

14 Hans-Jørgen Schanz, *Til rekonstruktionen af kritikken af den politiske økonomis omfangslogiske status* (Århus: Modtryk, 1974).

a theory of the capitalist state.[15] The Althusserians were critical of Marx's allegedly 'ideological' youth writings and the remnants of his youthful idealism and humanism, which – in their opinion – also reappeared here and there in Marx's later writings. Despite this critical attitude towards Marx, there was still a tendency to confuse Marx's analysis with reality and let *Grundrisse* quotes take the place of arguments. It was not the leading intellectuals of the new and critical currents who were the main force behind this exaltation of Marx. Party Marxism found it crucial to insist that the works of Marx and Engels – there was rarely any meaningful distinction made between the two – presented a coherent and self-sufficient worldview, with the sole limit being that the two father figures, due to their commitment to the class struggle, had not managed to supplement their economic theory with a political theory, which therefore became Lenin's lot.

The contemporary Marxist turn has a more balanced and nuanced view of Marx. This is partly due to a number of important publications in the still incomplete *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* (*MEGA²*), the historical-critical edition of Marx and Engels's writings.[16] It was not until 1993 that it became possible to read the original and unfinished manuscript of the third book of *Capital*, without Engels's many revisions, omissions and additions. The even more fragmentary manuscripts of the second book of *Capital* only became available in 2008 and 2012, and we had to wait until 2017 before the manuscripts that the Soviet scholar David Ryazanov had published as a single book under the title *The German Ideology* in the early 1930s and which became the official formulation of "historical materialism" in Marxism-Leninism, were published in their original and somewhat more motley form. In parallel, a number of previously unpublished notebooks have been published in the 2000s and 2010s, which have been picked up and used to develop anti-Eurocentric, anti-deterministic and ecological readings of Marx in particular.

All of these texts and publications, which were unavailable in the 1970s, have – along with a lot of good Marxist scholarship – emphasized two things: first, that Marx's critique of political economy was an enormous research project that he never came close to completing and which contains a number of internal, unresolved tensions

15 Editors' note: All the volumes of the journal *Kurasje* from 1970 to 1986 are available online via, https://rauli.cbs.dk/index.php/kurasje/issue/archive (accessed 23 March 2025).
16 Editors' note: For an overview of this project see Kevin Anderson, "Appendix. The Vicissitudes of the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* from the 1920s to Today," in *Marx at the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Non-Western Societies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 247-52.

and ambivalences. Second, that Marx was a constantly evolving thinker: in contrast to the insistence of classical Marxism and dogmatic Marxism-Leninism on the continuity and harmonious unity of Marx's thought, as well as the Althusserian thesis of one decisive break in 1845, the notebooks and the unfinished manuscripts show that Marx was constantly learning new things and remained willing to question his own positions throughout his life. Marx's writing is one long series of ruptures, united by a resolute and consistent critique of capitalism. It is no longer possible to treat Marx as an oracle, because it has become so clear that "Marx" is no longer one thing; instead, Marx's writings are treated more as a reservoir of groundbreaking and promising insights, theses, concepts and theories that are not always compatible, and which must be carefully differentiated from the mistakes, false leads, and dead-ends that are also found in Marx's writings. Such an approach may sound eclectic, but that isn't necessarily the case; it is, for example, entirely compatible with the capital-logic school of systematic "reconstruction."

This change in the relationship with Marx is also due to the fact that the communist parties that served as organizational nodes for traditional Marxism and more outright Marx worshipping in the 1970s have disappeared. And while the death of the old communist parties marks a step forward for the anti-capitalist struggle, it also bears witness to the sad fact that today Marxism as a living intellectual tradition exists almost exclusively in university environments. When dealing with the Marxist tradition and simplified textbook versions of Marxist theory, it is always important to remember that Marxism, unlike most other intellectual currents, has often had an ambition of becoming accessible to everyone. You cannot expect people who are not professional researchers, and who may not even have spent more than a few years in school, to relate to Marxist theory in the same way as those who spend years immersing themselves in debates over the dialectics of the value form. Marxist theory was never merely a scholarly current, it has also always been a set of ideas used to inspire movements and struggles. Such a project inevitably involves simplifications, and that is okay, because it is not necessarily critical to be able to distinguish sharply between value and exchange value or surplus value and profit in order to convey the theory of exploitation or relative surplus populations in a way that resonates with the life experiences of those who suffer under the domination of capital. This was recognized by Gramsci, for example, who did not let his critique of classical Marxism's deterministic philosophy of history

overshadow the fact that it can also come to function as "a tremendous force of moral resistance, of cohesion and of patient and obstinate perseverance" when "you don't have the initiative in the struggle."[17] We should not be afraid to simplify. Insofar as Marxist ideas can play a role in emancipatory struggles, it will be necessary to simplify. The insistence on the unity of theory and practice is at the core of Marxism and in many ways its strongest card, but in the purely academic battle of ideas between different intellectual currents, it also becomes an Achilles heel, because opponents have always been able to use the simplified versions of Marxism to dismiss it. The solution to this problem is not to condemn the crude simplifications, but rather to realize that the task of Marxist intellectuals is not to win some academic competition with bourgeois researchers, but to produce research and knowledge that brings us closer to the communist abolition of capitalism.

A third and related difference between 1970s Marxism and the contemporary Marxist turn is that the latter is less concerned with distinguishing itself from non-Marxist thinkers and currents, and more interested in drawing connections and forming alliances. Today, Marxism is just one among many critical intellectual currents; it no longer has a monopoly on being subversive. For subversives with a penchant for theory, there were not many alternatives to Marxism in the 1970s. The exception was the feminist tradition, which offered a number of critical but non-Marxist (which is, crucially, not the same as anti-Marxist) theoretical currents. Today, the picture is completely different, and Marxism has no privileged status in the field of critical theories, which also includes Foucault's analytical approach, Sara Ahmed's affect theory, Donna Haraway and Karan Barad's new materialism, Edward Said's and Gayatri Spivak's post-colonial theory, Frank B. Wilderson's Afropessimism, Judith Butler's queer theory, Slavoj Zizek's Lacanian critique of ideology, Giorgio Agamben's critique of sovereignty, Patricia Hill Collins's intersectional theory and Alain Badiou's philosophy of the event and many more. Many of these theories are based on a caricatured rejection of Marxism, and there are also Marxists who would dismiss all these movements as bourgeois ideology. However, despite the many significant and well-founded disputes, there is a greater willingness among Marxists today, to enter into discussions with and incorporate insights from other critical theoretical movements; a willingness that, in my

17 Antonio Gramsci, *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916–35*, ed. David Forgacs (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2000), 377.

opinion constitutes a necessary and productive openness to other perspectives and an undogmatic recognition that the Marxist tradition also has its blind spots, rather than a capitulation to bourgeois idealism.

And speaking of blind spots, a fourth important difference between the Marxism of the 1970s and the contemporary Marxist turn concerns the topics that are read about, discussed, and researched, and the people who carry out this research. As already outlined, the Marxist wave of the 1970s tended to devolve into a Marxological men's club that immersed itself in the dialectics of the value form without worrying about the struggles around gender, racialization, sexuality, and ecology that the new social movements confronted. This is no longer the case. The law of the tendency of Marxism to degenerate into a Marxological men's club unfortunately still holds true, and I am not trying to paint too rosy a picture of contemporary Marxism. There is still a lot of work to be done, but all things being equal, significant progress has been made. The research community is not as male-dominated as it used to be, and much more research is being done on capitalism's relationship with nature, racism, colonialism, and (hetero-/)sexism. In short, the current Marxist turn is more broadly oriented and is trying to move past the limitations that made 1970s Marxism irrelevant to many of those who engaged in the emancipatory political struggles of the time – even if this development is not always as consistent or as fast as one might wish.

A final difference that should be highlighted here is the international political context. The Cold War is over, and Russia and Eastern Europe are no longer subject to regimes that invoke Marxism. The contemporary Marxist turn has been driven by generations that grew up after the end of the Cold War. Bourgeois boomers may still love to pull the Stalin card as triumphant proof of the authoritarian nature of Marxism, but this ideological blackmail has lost its effect. Today we know that official Marxism-Leninism was a state-legitimizing ideology that had little to do with Marx's critical theory. Of course, many of the critical Marxists of the 1970s – whether they were Althusserians, adherent of the capital-logic school, empirically oriented historians and sociologists, or doctrinaire but anti-Stalinist Trotskyists – knew this all too, and it is in many ways their struggle to counteract the destructive effects of the linking of Marxism and Stalinism that we benefit from today. The authoritarian states of the Eastern Bloc and the international network of subservient vassal parties in the rest of the world are no longer a barrier to the spread

and development of emancipatory forms of Marxism; the new generations getting to know Marx today no longer associate him with Stalin. In this way, Marxism is finally emerging from the shadow of Stalinism.

III. THE TASKS OF MARXISM

Let me conclude with a few comments on the fields of Marxist research that, in my opinion, constitute the most promising and innovative trends in the current Marxist turn. Firstly, I would like to highlight the current that, under the name value-form theory, continues and develops what in 1970s Denmark was known as capital-logic, which was initiated by students of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in the 1960s, who were dissatisfied with their teachers' inadequate treatment of Marx's critique of political economy. Perhaps the most crucial contribution of value-form theories is the interpretation of Marx's critique of political economy as just that – a *critique* of political economy and a qualitative theory of the social forms of capitalism – not an alternative economic theory designed to produce quantifiable concepts that are immediately applicable to empirical analysis.

Until the original re-reading of *Capital* and *Grundrisse* by value-form theorists, Marx's economic critique had been read almost exclusively as an economic theory that, while critical of capitalism, was not fundamentally different from the type of theory found in classical political economists like Adam Smith and David Ricardo. The value-form theory readings pay particular attention to the first chapters of *Capital* (and the corresponding parts of *Grundrisse*, *Theories of Surplus Value*, *Contributions to the Critique of Political Economy*, and the so-called *Urtext*) and have demonstrated with philosophical care that Marx's theory of commodities, (exchange) value, abstract labour, and money contained a devastating critique of capitalism's abstract forms of domination. The value-form theories have formulated a wide range of important insights regarding Marx's method, the relationship to Hegel, the relationship between the many different unfinished manuscripts of economic criticism, the difference between Marx and Engels, Marx's epistemological framework, and most importantly, a deep insight into the mechanisms of power that ensure the subordination of society to the logic of capital.

In Denmark, the reception of this tradition has been filtered through the rise and fall of Schanz's capital-logic until recently. Schanz imported the early German value-form theories of Hans-Jürgen Krahl,

Hans-Georg Backhaus, and Helmut Reichelt, and exaggerated the esoteric and Germanified elements even more to make it all seem a little more learned and elevated: "criticism is referred to as a secularized philosophy, which, in regard to *schlechte Abstraktheit*, has only done very little to move beyond classical-bourgeois philosophy, even if the abstractions are now called something else: the economic moments are here no longer logically integrated in the research as anything but a rhetorical *flatus vocis*," as a representative sentence from *Til rekonstruktionen* reads.[18] In collaboration with colleagues and journalists, Schanz carefully constructed a narrative about himself as the former Marxist philosopher-king of the 1970s, who was not only the most advanced Marxist, but also became the best critic of Marxism for that very reason. This narrative usually also involves condescending ridicule of the economic-critical currents of the 1970s, typically quoting the excessive title of his book *Til rekonstruktionen af kritikken af den politiske økonomis omfangslogiske status* to suggest that the critique of political economy is a thing of the past and that Schanz's excessively obscure style is somehow representative of 1970s Marxism. According to the self-abdicated philosopher-king, "[capital-logic] died out as a coherent intellectual conjuncture in the 1980s" due to its inherent weaknesses.[19] This has a kernel of truth to it, *Til rekonstruktionen* itself certainly has had virtually no influence on subsequent Marxist debates, unlike its German antecedents, which are still being read and discussed. In the German- and English-speaking world, however, the value-form theory movement has continued to develop since then and represents one of the most promising and exciting trends in contemporary Marxism.

The second tradition I want to highlight is eco-Marxism. In the intellectual superstructure of the environmental movements of the 1970s and 1980s, it was common to criticize Marx and Marxism for uncritically perpetuating the typically Western and modern idea of nature as a resource to be tamed, disciplined and used for human purposes. In the case of Marx*ism*, the criticism was largely justified, but the same cannot be said of Marx. During the 1980s and 1990s, a string of ecosocialist thinkers demonstrated that Marxists have plenty of interesting things to say about nature, and around the turn of the millennium, Paul Burkett's *Marx and Nature* and John Bellamy Foster's *Marx's Ecology* established an eco-Marxist tradition by

18 Schanz, *Til rekonstruktionen*, 8 [translated from Danish].
19 Hans-Jørgen Schanz, "Kapitallogik," *Leksikon.org*, 2007, https://www.leksikon.org/art.php?n=3260 (accessed 23 March 2025) [translated from Danish].

showing that Marx was not only acutely aware of capitalism's contradictory relationship to its own natural basis, but also that the critique of political economy provides an unrivalled theoretical basis for analysing capitalism's historical and contemporary relationship to nature. Climate change and the gradual escalation of the global climate struggle have of course made eco-Marxism more relevant than ever before, and the field is currently packed with exciting and innovative Marxist scholars who provide compelling alternatives to reactionary neo-Malthusianism, superficial consumerism, Heideggerian romanticism of nature, depoliticizing new materialisms, and utopian market solutions. The last ten years of eco-Marxist research have shown that climate change is not only historically a result of capitalist relations of production, and that capital's destruction of nature is closely interwoven with the history of colonialism and patriarchy, but also that it will only be possible to secure a stable natural basis for humanity's existence on earth when capitalism's profit-driven production has finally been consigned to the dustbin of history once and for all.

The third tradition I want to highlight is the further development of Marxist feminism known as social reproduction theory. Against radical feminism's ahistorical concept of patriarchy, Marxist feminism of the 1970s developed a powerful analysis that showed that the oppression of women in capitalism cannot be understood as a pre-capitalist residue, but rather as a historically specific form of oppression that is materially rooted in capitalist conditions of production. In these discussions, the concept of the reproduction of labour power played a crucial role. Capitalist production presupposes that labour power is constantly reproduced, i.e., that it is ensured that workers are able to show up for work and produce surplus value day after day, and that new generations of exploitable proletarians are constantly being added. The reproduction of labour power includes care, pregnancy, childcare, parenting, cooking, cleaning, laundry, etc. The crucial insight of Marxist feminism is that capitalism is based on a historically unique separation between, on the one hand, this reproductive labour, which is performed as unpaid work in the privatized space of the home, and on the other hand, a formalized economic sphere consisting of commodity-producing wage labour. Throughout the history of capitalism, this split between production and reproduction has overlapped with gendered hierarchies, and it is the entrenchment of women in the reproductive sphere – which also implies inequalities in the labour market and all kinds of naturalizing,

sexist ideology – that, according to Marxist feminism, provides the material basis for the oppression of women in capitalism.

Marxist feminism of the 1970s was groundbreaking, but it also had its limitations. Black Marxist feminists such as Angela Davis and Gloria Joseph pointed out that it tended to present the situation and experiences of white women as universal, and a number of queer Marxists have since pointed out that the Marxist feminism of the time – like most other feminist movements before the rise of queer theory in the 1990s – generally failed to adequately reflect on the concept of gender, resulting in a tendency towards biological essentialism. More recent theories of social reproduction have taken these criticisms on board and expanded and thus reinforced Marxist feminism. Theories of social reproduction, like Marxist feminism of the 1970s, are interested in the reproduction of labour power, but instead of beginning with an assumption about where reproductive labour takes place (the home) and who does it (women), they are more broadly interested in all the life-creating processes that capitalism is deeply dependent on but cannot or will not integrate into its circuits. With this expansion of the ideas of Marxist feminism, the new theories of social reproduction have shown themselves capable not only of explaining and analysing the oppression of women in capitalism, but also of making important contributions to discussions of socialist strategy and understanding how racism, heterosexism, ableism, transphobia, and other forms of oppression are woven into capital's dominance.

* * *

Marxism is a diverse tradition with bitter internal disputes, but if there is one thing that unites and distinguishes Marxism from all other intellectual currents, it is its ability to understand capitalism. And this is precisely why Marxism is more important than ever. Never before has the logic of capital permeated so much of the world and so much of life as it does today. At the same time, capitalism is clearly in deep crisis, both because of its own contradictions and because of the growing opposition to it. In the last fifteen years, Marxism has shown itself capable of regenerating and renewing itself and making itself relevant for a new cycle of emancipatory struggles. There is much to suggest that the Marxist turn has only just begun. But there are also indications that we are in a situation today that is disturbingly similar to that of previous generations of Marxists in the early

1980s. The current Marxist turn has lasted about as long as the 1970s Marxist wave did at this point – just over a decade – and are there not signs that the struggle against the status quo is weakening and waning just like in the 1980s? The 2010s were clearly a decade of protest; the many movements against austerity, the wave of strikes in China and India, Black Lives Matter, the revolt against the Troika in Greece, the climate movement, the global squatting movement, the Arab Spring, the yellow vests, recurring riots, the movements of the squares, Occupy, #metoo, the movements surrounding and supporting Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders in the UK and US, etc. Many of these movements have suffered major setbacks and lost momentum, and on top of that, the coronavirus pandemic led to a serious decline in the number and scale of protests. What if we have entered the final phase of the 2010s cycle of struggle, just as the early 1980s marked the final phase of the liberation struggles of the 1970s? Marxism is a set of ideas, an intellectual current, a way of thinking, a "ruthless criticism of all that exists,"[20] to quote Marx – and as materialists we know that it is not Marxist intellectuals who will change the course of the world. "Ideas can never lead beyond an old world order but only beyond the ideas of the old world order," as Marx once put it.[21] It cannot be up to Marxist thought to avert a decline in the intensity of struggle; rather, it is inherently relegated to interpreting the course of events and producing concepts, theories and analyses that can be relevant and useful for the practical movement that seeks to abolish the world of capital. How do we avoid the fate of 1970s Marxism, if we are indeed entering a period of declining mobilization?[22]

The good news – which in a way is also bad news – is that there are also significant differences between the early 1980s and today. I want to highlight two things in particular. Firstly, the root causes of the global economic crisis of the 1970s were never addressed. The crisis was merely postponed and displaced through debt-driven financialization and the undermining of labour movements and protections. The 2008 collapse was the delayed fallout of this neoliberal "fix." But it's hard to imagine that it is possible to repeat the same trick today; on a global level, capitalism *is* already on a debt respirator, wages *have*

20 Karl Marx, "Letters from the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*", in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 3 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), 142 (italics removed).
21 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism: Against Bruno Bauer and Company*, in *Marx-Engels Collected Works. Vol. 4* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), 119.
22 [Footnote added by the author in 2025]: This was written in 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, and might be somewhat dated now. And perhaps also too pessimistic.

already been driven down, labour markets *are* already precarious, state assets *have* been privatized, production *has* already moved to low-wage countries, and the entire planet *has* already been integrated into the global circuit of capital. In short, it's difficult to see how the neoliberal pseudo-rescue of the 1980s could be repeated, since there are no remaining fat reserves for capital to feed on. The second major difference is *the climate*. Regardless of whether the climate movement succeeds or is crushed, the consequences of capital's relentless push toward ecological collapse will only become more and more pronounced from now on, even if, against all odds, another neoliberal crash landing is somehow pulled off. These two circumstances mean that we are likely entering an even more intense period of collapse, chaos, and conflict, where an increasingly small elite of ultra-rich men will fight frantically to salvage the remnants of a wounded capitalism that continues to blindly sacrifice the natural foundation of humanity for money.

No matter which direction things take, it's worth reflecting on how contemporary Marxism can avoid becoming a passing fad – turning inward and eventually fading into oblivion as it did in the 1980s. In conclusion, let me sketch a few points that may be worth considering. First, Marxist thought must remain relevant to contemporary revolutionary movements. This doesn't mean uncritically chasing every activist trend, but it does mean developing concepts, theories, and analyses that speak to the lived experiences and strategic needs of today's political struggles. Second, we must be prepared for the inevitable backlash and potential repression; whether the current Marxist resurgence deepens or dissipates, we can expect political attacks – similar to those currently targeting gender and sexuality studies in Denmark, and reminiscent of the campaigns against Roskilde University and the sociology programme at Copenhagen University in the 1970s and 1980s. Marxism cannot rely on universities and research grants for its survival. This doesn't mean we should abandon the university altogether, but it does mean we must build communities and institutions that sustain Marxist thought with at least a degree of autonomy from academic structures. Only then can we ensure that Marxism endures – even when jobs and funding for Marxist research disappear. Thirdly, it is important that we combine the aforementioned international orientation with the building and strengthening of local movements and communities that can, among other things, serve as an interface to new generations of Marxists and help ensure the existence of the research environments across

institutional affiliations. Fourthly, it is also important to mention something that researchers tend to underestimate the importance of, namely translations into Danish and Danish introductory literature. For researchers used to working in English, it is easy to forget that language is a barrier to many and that many primarily orient themselves in literature in their native language. As an examiner and supervisor of students, I have often wondered why some students rely on Villy Sørensen's or Johannes Witt-Hansen's outdated introductions to Marx, rather than the far better introductions available in English. But for many – not all – it is most obvious to start with texts in Danish. And rather than shaking our heads at the seeming lack of language skills, we should recognize that it is important to have literature available in Danish. We need a new translation of *Capital*, a reissue of a revised version of Hans-Jørgen Schanz and Mihail Larsen's translation of *Grundrisse*, and a number of other important, classic texts. And we need more introductory material in various formats – even though academia today is full of strong incentives to only write specialized research articles exclusively in English for journals that can only be accessed with a university affiliation. Marxism is too important to be sealed off behind paywalls and language barriers.

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3.

FROM A RIPPLE TO A WAVE

HOW AND WHY WE NEED MARX AND MARXISM TO UNDERSTAND OUR WORLD TODAY[1]

Esben Bøgh Sørensen

A wave of Marxism haunts Danish universities in these years. It apparently sends shivers down the spines of Peter Kurrild-Klitgaard,[2] Per Stig Møller,[3] and Mads Lundby Hansen.[4] But let me reassure them right away: even though there has been a renewed interest in

1 This is a revised translation of an op-ed in the right-wing newspaper *Berlingske* written by Esben Bøgh Sørensen in response to a series of articles warning about the rise of Marxism at Danish universities with reference to the Danish Society for Marxist Studies' annual conference in Aalborg in 2021 and the recent publication of Søren Mau's *Stum Tvang* (the Danish version of *Mute Compulsion*) in that newspaper. This and the other explanatory notes have been added by the translators Magnus Møller Ziegler and Mikkel Flohr. Esben Bøgh Sørensen, "Fra skvulp til bølge: Vi har behov for Marx og marxismen til at forstå vores nutidige verden," *Berlingske*, 7 October 2021, https://www.berlingske.dk/kommentarer/fra-skvulp-til-boelge-vi-har-behov-for-marx-og-marxismen-til-at (accessed 22 March 2025); see also Søren Mau, *Stum Tvang: En marxistisk undersøgelse af kapitalismens økonomiske magt* (Århus: Klim, 2021).

2 Peter Kurrild-Klitgaard is a professor of political science at University of Copenhagen and former vice president of the Mont Pelerin Society (2009-10), who had been cited extensively in an article in *Berlingske* a few days prior, where he was highly critical of the contemporary resurgence of Marxism, insisting that it was both analytically outdated and politically dangerous. Troels Heeger, "Marxismen spøger igen på danske universiteter: Ny generation af intellektuelle vil afskaffe kapitalismen," *Berlingske*, 2 October 2021, https://www.berlingske.dk/opinion/marxismen-spoeger-igen-paa-danske-universiteter-ny-generation-af (accessed 23 March 2025).

3 Per Stig Møller is a conservative politician, author, and former minister. He decried the recent revival of interest in Marxism and Søren Mau's book in an interview in *Berlingske* some days earlier. Esben Vest Billingsøe, "Debatinterview: Per Stig Møller kritiserer marxistisk bølge: 'Det tyder på, at han ikke har fattet en kæft af, hvad kommunismen førte til,'" *Berlingske*, 3 October 2021, https://www.berlingske.dk/debatinterview/det-tyder-paa-at-han-ikke-har-fattet-en-kaeft-af-hvad-kommunismen (accessed 23 March 2025).

4 Mads Lundby Hansen was the chief economist of the free-market think tank CEPOS (Centre for Political Studies). He had recently published an essay insisting that Marxism would inevitably lead to "oppression, poverty, and genocide" in *Berlingske*. Mads Lundby Hansen, "Marxismen er ubrugelig – det ene eksperiment efter det andet har medført folkemord, undertrykkelse og hungersnød," *Berlingske*, 4 October 2021, https://www.berlingske.dk/kronikker/chefoekonom-marxismen-er-ubrugelig-det-ene-eksperiment-efter-det-andet (accessed 23 March 2025).

Marx and Marxism, both internationally and in Denmark, there is no Marxist wave, at least not in the way that *Berlingske* would have us believe.

The tenured researchers in the humanities and social science faculties in Denmark were taught and shaped by the generations who left or never even found Marx and Marxism as a serious scholarly source of inspiration. Although Marx appears as part of various course syllabi and reading lists, actual Marxist-inspired scholarship remains extremely marginalized in Danish universities. However, some of us are working to change that.

Just like the myth that Marx completely dominated the Danish universities in the 1970s and the exaggerated claims about the influence of so-called "identity politics" today, the myth of a current Marxist wave functions mostly as a political bogeyman.

Nonetheless, it is true that Marx and Marxism are taken up today by a number of younger scholars. This should not be surprising to anyone, given that capitalism has become increasingly pervasive, global, and dominant today.

1. BOURGEOIS ANXIETY

That this renewed interest in Marx has reawakened a number of old Cold Warriors is hardly surprising, given the witch-hunt against critical scholarship in recent years. It reveals a deep-seated fear among elites and within Danish bourgeois circles of even the faintest trace of socially critical research in the universities.

The Marx and Marxism which inspires us younger researchers is, however, completely different from the one which scares Kurrild-Klitgaard, Møller, and Lundby Hansen. Unfortunately, their understanding of Marx and Marxism does not go beyond the caricatures sometimes found in textbooks.

For instance, when Kurrild-Klitgaard claims that Marx based his economic analysis on the so-called "labour theory of value," which "all serious economists have since rejected," he shows that he has not understood that Marx offered a thorough critique of precisely the labour theory of value and was, incidentally, not at all interested in constructing an alternative economic theory, but a critique of political economy itself.[5]

5 See, Heeger, "Marxismen spøger igen."

And when Lundby Hansen says that Marx overlooked how "the price of a commodity is determined by supply and demand," he clearly shows that he has not read even the first few pages of *Capital*.[6]

That the renewed interest in Marx and Marxism once again summons the usual clichés about the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc speaks not only to a complete lack of original intellectual thought among bourgeois commentators, but also to a fundamental misunderstanding of the Marxist tradition itself.

For those of us who are re-engaging with Marx today, the old Cold War debates feel both anachronistic and irrelevant. Marxism, for us, is precisely a tool for understanding and criticizing the social model that existed in the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc. From theories of "state capitalism" (Raya Dunayevskaya), "non-mode of production" (Hillel Ticktin), and "bureaucratic collectivism" (Robert Brenner) to "modernization dictatorship" (Curt Sørensen), generations of Marxist thinkers have produced some of the most sophisticated and rigorous analyses of these societies.

Marx and Marxism constitute an extremely heterogeneous tradition that has nothing to do with the bogeyman conjured up by *Berlingske*. It is a tradition that has experienced an enormous international development in recent years, and which has investigated novel issues like climate change, ecology, digitalisation, and reproductive work thoroughly.

II. DISTINCTIVE FORMS OF POWER

At Danish universities there is also a need for research that is inspired by Marx, the Marxist tradition, and the new developments within this tradition. For the first time in world history, one mode of production dominates on a global scale: capitalism. We simply cannot understand the world we live in without the thinker who has provided us with the most fundamental analysis of the core structure of capitalism.

Marx does not offer an alternative economic theory, but instead poses entirely different questions: Why do the products of labour typically take the form of commodities? What kinds of social dynamics does this generate? Marx provides us the most elegant historical and social theory of what makes capitalism unique as a social formation.

6 See, Hansen, "Marxismen er ubrugelig."

With his theoretical tools, we can grasp the distinctive forms of power inherent in capitalism – particularly the way in which an impersonal compulsion to maximise profit permeates all aspects of social life, with far-reaching and destructive social and ecological consequences.

Marx and Marxism – understood as a broad and diversified research field – provides critical insights into when, how, and why modern capitalist societies emerged and what consequences this has had for humans and nature. With the enormous social, political, and climate challenges we face today, Marx and the tradition that bears his name are more relevant than ever.

At the conferences that the Danish Society of Marxist Studies have organized in recent years, we have witnessed a renewed interest in Marx and Marxism among younger scholars from a whole host of different disciplines. We have also witnessed growing interest from other parts of Europe, especially the Nordic countries. We can only hope that this initial ripple will eventually turn into a wave.

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4.

THE RED THREAD

LESSONS FROM ORGANIZING THE ANNUAL CONFERENCES OF THE DANISH SOCIETY FOR MARXIST STUDIES OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS[1]

Danish Society for Marxist Studies

In this text, we sketch out experiences and lessons from a decade of organising SMS's annual conferences and offer some reflections on what it says about the status and potential of critical theory and radical scholarship in Denmark. The executive committee has authored this paper as a collective, which means that there might be slightly contradictory points here and there, as we have strived to gather and communicate our experiences and deduce the most relevant lessons that we have learned as a group, rather than produce a set of internally coherent propositions.

The chapter commences with a brief history of the annual conferences that we have organized over the past decade. This historical narrative frames our discussion of the lessons that we have learned in the process. The second section discusses our efforts to address gender imbalance and broader questions of diversity, detailing both the methods that we have employed to address these issues and the challenges that we have encountered. We then turn to the internationalisation of the conference and the strategic tensions that it has produced, particularly the question of how to balance global networking and local community-building. The fourth section discusses our efforts to make the conferences open and welcoming, especially to early career scholars. In the fifth section we reflect on our current challenges, including the persistent whiteness of the executive committee and the conferences, the precarious employment of most of the members of the executive committee, and the limitations imposed by the absence of any stable institutional foundation. The

1 A previous version of this collectively written text was presented under the title "Organising for Radical Scholarship in Denmark" as part of the "Workshop in Critical Theory and Theorisation," 13-15 February 2025 organized by Stockholm University and the Nordic Summer University.

chapter concludes with a broader discussion of the intellectual trajectory of the conferences, their relationship to Danish Marxism and the national form more generally, and its aspiration to contribute to the development of an international tradition of critical and emancipatory scholarship.

1. HISTORY OF THE CONFERENCES

What is now the annual conference of the Danish Society for Marxist Studies began as a single conference in 2016 simply titled "Marx Now" [*Marx nu*]. The title served both as an invitation to reflect on the contemporary relevance of Marx and as a statement asserting the necessity of engaging with his ideas at that particular historical juncture.[2] The organising group consisted of five graduate students with a shared interest in Marx, Marxism and critical theory, which was frequently frowned upon if not met with outright hostility in many parts of Danish academia. They were primarily from Aarhus and Copenhagen.

The first conference that they organized was held in Aarhus in September 2016. In the call for abstracts, the executive committee – calling itself, rather grandiosely, *Selskab for Marxistiske Studier* ((Danish) Society for Marxist Studies) – announced that the major "Marxist turn" that had taken place in international academia since the financial crisis that started in 2007 had now reached Denmark. This was more wishful thinking than actual fact, or perhaps the most appropriate term here is that it was a performative statement – an illocutionary act, that sought to bring its object into existence rather than describe some preexisting reality. At the first conference, there were seventeen presentations and some ninety participants. The presenters were mostly colleagues and acquaintances of the organisers or senior academics who still remembered their Marxist roots. The conference was considered a massive success by the organizers, who decided to repeat it the following year at Roskilde University.

Over the years, the conferences continued to grow – both in terms of the number of presenters and participants. The two largest conferences thus far took place in 2021 and 2024. In 2021, the official conference theme was "Capital, Climate, Crisis" and Andreas Malm was announced as the keynote speaker. It proved to be a hugely popular event, especially considering that the conference took place in

2 Although themes were incorporated as part of the title from 2017 and onwards, "Marx Now" was only replaced with the subtitle "Annual Conference of the Danish Society for Marxist Studies" after the 2020 conference.

Aalborg, which is relatively far from both the capital Copenhagen and the second-largest city Aarhus. We surpassed 150 registered participants for the first time and received ample media coverage (mainly from outraged right-wing newspapers). In 2024, the conference theme was "Class and its Dis/Contents." The conference took place at the University of Copenhagen and the keynote speakers were Charmaine Chua and Patrick Eiden-Offe. The conference also had a record amount of papers and participants, which seems to have been occasioned by the success of our previous conferences and the support of the international network that had developed on this basis, in addition to our recent social media renaissance (primarily facilitated by Jeannette Søgaard Lie who joined the executive committee in 2023), which allowed us to reach a much wider audience. We were particularly successful on Twitter/X during this period, prior to the major exodus of users to Bluesky occasioned by Elon Musk's close collaboration with Donald Trump. Some of this audience has been rebuilt on Bluesky – not least on the back of "Danish Marxism" memes – but we still do not have anywhere near the same reach as we did on Twitter/X, which illustrates the extraordinary fragility of relying on privately-owned social media to create and maintain networks and community.

Although we believe that the conferences have been and continue to be successful, the main lesson from our work organising this series of conferences over the past decade that we wish to convey is not that we got it right every time. Far from it. However, we have continued to attempt to identify and engage with relevant issues and challenges. We have been adamant that there must be room to discuss problems in a friendly but serious manner and develop strategies to address them. We have been relatively successful with regard to shifting the gender composition of the executive committee and the conferences, but we have been less successful in addressing their persistent whiteness. In the following, we want to highlight and develop three positive lessons from our experience organizing these conferences over the past ten years: Our work to attain a better gender balance, our efforts to ensure internationalisation, and, finally, our efforts to create a positive and welcoming atmosphere for everyone, especially students and early career scholars.

II. GENDER TROUBLE

The initial conferences were characterized by gender imbalance and a general lack of diversity among the presenters, which also reflected

the composition of the initial executive committee, which was entirely male. It was a central objective to address these shortcomings from very early on, as our report from the first conference clearly shows:

> If we could change one thing in terms of the presentations and the conference overall it would be the gender balance. […] In the organizing committee we have been aware of this problem from the outset and have made an effort to invite women researchers to present at the conference, but unfortunately without much luck. We hope to be able to change this at next year's conference.[3]

Our motivation for addressing gender imbalance was never reducible to mere numbers or representation for its own sake. Gender imbalances both reflect and reproduce sexist structures, exclusions, and ignorance. Marxist scholarship itself has historically been hampered by sexism, producing negative social dynamics and intellectual dead-ends. For us, working towards gender balance was about cultivating a better and more inclusive intellectual environment – one capable of drawing together a wider range of people, experiences, and perspectives. In other words, it was about making a better conference for everyone.

To achieve this, we sought to change both the composition of the executive committee through proactive recruitment as well as continuous and concerted efforts to identify and address the inadvertent reproduction of sexist structures, patterns, and dynamics in the work of the executive committee and at the conferences. Since 2020 we have approximated gender parity in the executive committee and among the speakers at the conferences. We believe that these two facts are closely interconnected, and that both are the results of an organized and concerted effort.

One of the most central tools that we have used to effect the gender composition of the conference was what we refer to as a *prikkeliste* (loosely, an "invitation list"): a list of interesting and potentially relevant scholars in Denmark and beyond that we wanted to encourage to come and present at the conference. Every member of the executive committee was initially tasked with identifying a number of relevant researchers and then reaching out to at least ten researchers

3 Selskab for Marxistiske Studier, "Beretning fra Marx Nu! 2016," *Danish Society for Marxist Studies*, 22 September 2016, https://marxistiskestudier.com/2016/09/22/beretning-fra-marx-nu/#more-37 (accessed 23 March 2025).

from the list. Women and scholars working on particularly relevant but marginalized issues were explicitly prioritized.

This method can easily come to reproduce existing blind-spots and networks. However, our awareness of this danger motivated us to extend our research and outreach, which in turn led to new connections with inspiring researchers – including many who had not previously been to our conferences. Some had simply been unaware of their existence, while others were unsure who we were and what we represented. Early on, before anyone knew us, we might as well have been representatives of 1970s-style doctrinaire university or party Marxisms. In other cases, they may have questioned whether their work was relevant to the conference, as it might not have been explicitly Marxist and/or fallen outside of the disciplinary fields of philosophy, intellectual history, and political theory that were dominant in the beginning. We engaged in meaningful dialogues about their research and its relevance to the conference, emphasizing common points of interest and our non-dogmatic understanding of Marxism, which encompasses a wide array of critical and emancipatory thought.[4] This has proven useful in moving beyond the dominance of "Marx bros" and straight-cis-male-white-Marxology.

Because of our ongoing conversations and commitment to diversifying the composition and content of the conference, we have included many forms of critical and radical scholarship from a wide range of disciplines and traditions. This implicitly raises the vexed issue of what defines Marxism and critical research. From the outset, we have taken an open approach that deliberately avoids any restrictive definitions and actively tries to expand what is thought of as Marxism and critical thought. However, of course, our explicit orientation towards Marxism tends to skew the kinds of contributions that we receive towards those traditions that see themselves as continuing, in one way or another, Marx's critical and emancipatory project, ensuring a basic level of coherence and consistency at the conferences without too much effort on our part.

The call for abstracts (CFA) is another tool that we have used. Each year, the entire executive committee discusses potential themes and keynotes. After coming to some sort of agreement about the theme and beginning to contact potential keynotes, a smaller working group drafts the CFA, which we then discuss in plenum before further revisions are made. More than simply integrating topics of gender, race,

4 See the various Calls for Abstracts included later in this volume.

class, ability, and postcolonial approaches – in addition to their intersections with traditional Marxist and political economic topics – we also always try to critically evaluate potential themes themselves: how do they interact with various approaches and disciplines? Do they align a little too easily with established and mainstream approaches? Do they inadvertently lend themselves to self-selection mechanisms that might reproduce existing hierarchies and/or result in conformity among the participants at the conference? We take a similar approach when identifying potential keynote speakers, deliberately aiming to diversify the conference by prioritizing women and non-white scholars, as well as those engaging with otherwise marginalized topics and perspectives (with varying degrees of success and consistency).[5] These considerations also inform our review and selection of abstracts for the conference, where diversity is an explicit topic of discussion and a formal criterion in the selection process.

The lesson that we have gathered from our efforts to change the gender composition and diversify the conference more generally is that a deliberate and proactive approach, to a large extent, works. As we already outlined, we achieved approximate gender parity in both the executive committee and among the presenters at the conference in 2020 and have had a much better composition since then. This is not the result of general societal or academic trends, but of hard work and a sustained and systematic effort. Naturally, this does not mean that everything has been resolved; it is an ongoing effort to attain gender-balance and diversity at the conferences, and we are not always successful. Moreover, there remain lots of other gendered dynamics to identify, analyse, and tackle in the work of the executive committee, at the conferences, and, obviously, beyond. We do our best to engage in these discussions, even when they are challenging and polarizing, and to confront such issues, because we know they can be overcome through concerted efforts.

III. COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND INTERNATIONALISATION

The conference began as an effort to gather researchers and students in Denmark with an interest in Marx and radical scholarship from

5 We did not have a keynote speaker at our first conference in 2016. From 2017 and until 2021 we only invited women as keynotes (apart from Joshua Clover whom we discovered would be in Copenhagen for a literary festival at the same time as our conference in 2017, unfortunately he fell ill on the day and could not partake), and from 2022 and onwards we have had two keynote speakers of different genders at each conference. The latter development has, however, primarily been a matter of coincidence rather than deliberate policy.

across disciplines and universities in the context of an academic landscape marked by a general hostility towards Marxism. This community-building aspect has by and large succeeded: there is a core group of people who return year after year, and one person who has presented at every single one of our nine conferences so far. This builds strong social bonds and makes the exchanges at the conferences more intellectually rewarding.

A central ambition has also always been to make the conferences more internationally oriented and to attract international scholars. We have consistently promoted the conferences internationally and, in addition to the aforementioned use of the *prikkeliste*, we have also drawn extensively on our existing international networks to attract prolific scholars and recruit high-profile international scholars as keynotes. More recently, we have also begun using social media more consistently to reach a wider audience beyond Denmark.

The internationalization of the conference is obviously a benefit that makes it possible for Danish academics to not only establish connections with each other but also to connect with international peers, thus bringing Danish Marxist and critical scholarship into fruitful dialogue with contemporary international developments. When we ask returning international participants about their experience, many say that they enjoy the atmosphere of the conference and its smaller size compared to, for instance, the Historical Materialism conferences in London. We have made a decision to keep the conferences fairly small – both because we want to maintain a sustainable workload, and because we find the current size much more conducive to community-building and networking.

However, it also means that presentations, even by Danish academics, are now mostly in English (even if we still insist on the possibility of presenting papers in Danish). Whereas at the first conference in 2016, only two out of seventeen papers were delivered in English, today this relationship is largely reversed. This poses another question, namely, how to balance Danish and international contributions. The decision to keep the conference small (two days and approximately 50 papers), in combination with increased international attention, has meant that in 2024 we, for the first time, had to reject a substantial amount of submissions (approximately half), including many from colleagues and comrades. This is not an ideal situation as we would like to continue to be an open and welcoming event that advances community-building, rather than just another exclusive, elitist academic event.

We are committed to balance inclusion, workload, capacity, and internationalisation in various ways, but there are no easy solutions. So far we have acknowledged the problem and are discussing it when reviewing abstracts (similar to what we have done to address gender and diversity concerns). We have begun a conversation around establishing a procedure for how to promote continuity and community-building in a fair and transparent way that does not devolve into nepotism and favouritism.

IV. EARLY CAREER SCHOLARS AND "HYGGE-MARXISM"

As we just outlined in regard to international participants, one continuous aspect of their feedback has been that they appreciate the open and welcoming atmosphere of the conference. While it might be easy to resort to essentialist imaginaries of Danish "hygge," the truth is that this atmosphere is largely the result of deliberate organizational choices rather than any alleged national traits.[6] Since community-building was always an objective and a priority, we were adamant from the beginning that the conference should be free and accessible to non-academics, students and early career scholars. Moreover, submitting abstracts to and presenting at the conference should feel as safe and welcoming to a first-year student as it does to a tenured professor. To help this along, we have consciously made three simple commitments:

1. No titles or academic hierarchies. We do not introduce speakers by their title or academic affiliation, only by their name. If they think it's important to mention they have to announce it themselves (unsurprisingly, few ever do).

2. Attendance at the conference is always free, and social events (primarily the conference dinner) should be open to all, i.e., also to participants who are not presenting, and be kept affordable (no more than DKK 250).

6 For a thorough Danish Marxist critique of the concept of "hygge," see, Bue Rübner Hansen, "Hygge Yourself!" *Medium*, 19 February 2019, https://buerubner.medium.com/hygge-yourself-e1da7c01c419 (accessed 23 March 2025).

3. Breaks at the conference are long and frequent. They must be at least 30 minutes long and the lunch break should be at least an hour long.

These three commitments form part of a wider concerted effort to make the conference as welcoming as possible to all participants – whether newcomers, students, internationals, early career scholars, or others – and facilitate community-building. We try to be as observant and inclusive as possible and talk to those that are new – whether to the conference, Marxism, or academia – although we do not always succeed.

One concrete example: A few years ago, we received feedback from some international participants that while they had greatly enjoyed the conference, they also felt that we, as organisers, had been a bit reclusive, talking primarily among ourselves and some of our closest friends. While we did not notice it ourselves during the conference, in hindsight they were absolutely right. This is, perhaps, an outcome of the fact that 1) the members of the executive committee genuinely like each other and a major part of our motivation for continuing to organise the conference every year is also that we get to hang out for four days, and 2) our focus on community-building means that over the past decade of organizing the conference something like an "in-crowd" has developed. Since then, we have taken steps to address this issue: We try to be more conscious not to "huddle up" during breaks, but spread out and talk to people we don't know, and we have instituted a rule that we do not sit together at the conference dinner, but spread out and talk to people (we do, however, have dinner together after the final day of the conference in order to decompress and debrief, before potentially meeting up with other conference participants).

Our main conclusion is that it is possible to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for students, early career scholars, etc. by making a conscious and concerted organisational effort. This does not happen automatically or as an effect of formal declarations, but requires hard work, i.e., deliberate and ongoing efforts to organize according to these principles. This has also involved critical reflection on our own habituated practices, including the ways in which informal dynamics (including friendships etc.) might unintentionally reproduce existing hierarchies and patterns of exclusion. It involves (re-)considering central as well as seemingly minute aspects of the conference – from the call for abstracts to the length of the breaks

in between sessions – accordingly. If we have succeeded in creating something that occasionally feels different – something less intimidating, more communal, and more supportive – this is not because we have found some secret formula or because we possess some unique cultural trait; it is because we have approached the conference as a unique space that must be cultivated with care. The lesson is not only that it is possible to create an inclusive and welcoming environment, but also that it was up to us as organisers to make sure that it could be created and recreated, year after year.

V. CURRENT CONCERNS AND EFFORTS

Having outlined our positive experiences and lessons, we also wish to offer some thoughts on current concerns and efforts. First, while we are proud of our work to achieve gender parity and inclusiveness, the persistent whiteness of both the executive committee and the conference remains problematic. When it comes to the executive committee, there are, partly at least, some structural issues at work: researchers from global majority backgrounds remain a relatively small minority in Danish academia, which complicates recruitment. However, rather than hiding behind the structural issues, we want to acknowledge that we can and should do more – and we would appreciate both criticisms and suggestions for improvement in this regard going forward.

Secondly, and closely related to this, the conference remains largely limited to an audience from the Global North in spite of its increasing internationalization. We have very few participants from outside Northern Europe; there are often more participants from the USA than there are from Southern Europe. This is closely related to existing global economic inequalities and might be, at least partially, alleviated by material support such as travel grants. Over the years, we have had submissions from scholars from the Global South who required travel assistance that we were unable to provide. This is a consequence of the fact that we do not have any independent funds and have to fundraise for each individual conference from scratch every year (in parallel to the preparation and organization of the conference), and that the very limited amount of money that we do manage to raise is usually spent on the conference itself. In the future, we would like to raise money for travel grants to be able to include more scholars from the Global South. However, this would necessitate the establishment of a more formal organizational structure and, more importantly, the identification of a steady source of

funding for the organization (rather than just the individual conferences) that could be used for this purpose, so that we could advertise travel grants ahead of time (ideally at the same time that we publish the Call for Abstracts).

Third and finally, precarity in the executive committee is a persistent problem. Over the past ten years, only one member of the executive committee has managed to secure a permanent position at a university (incidentally, not in Denmark). While, on the one hand, it is in some ways a strength that we ourselves are early career scholars, it is also a severe limitation insofar as we are unable to secure a stable connection with host institutions and a stable stream of funding. In recent years, we have relied on the assistance of colleagues with tenured positions to secure the use of facilities and apply for funding. We have also streamlined our fundraising efforts, but we still need to work on more permanent solutions in this regard. The continued precarity of the members of the executive committee also limits the collective time and energy available to organize the conference, as the members try to juggle the demands of a competitive and shrinking academic job market and reproduce their existence in other ways as their funding and contracts run out. This also means that the organizational continuity of the conference and the experiences accumulated and used by the executive committee is continuously in jeopardy.

Moving beyond our experiences and lessons from organising the annual conferences over the past decade, we also want to provide an overview of how we might begin to understand Danish Marxism in this context. Firstly, we want to address the topics that have proven most popular at the conferences, and, secondly, we want to problematise the notion of a distinctly national form of Marxism as such.

VI. CENTRAL THEMES AT THE CONFERENCES

Our conference skews towards younger researchers and students, which we consider a strength. While we also welcome senior academics and older comrades with open arms, we want to avoid repeating, rehearsing, and rephrasing long worn-out debates in Marxist theory. We have no desire to remain fixated on the fall of "actually existing socialism" or the barbarism of Stalinism. Most of the participants in our conference were born after the fall of the Berlin Wall, which is also evident in the topics they appear to care most about based on their contributions. There are, of course, many topics that are frequently debated at the conference: aesthetics, right-wing populism,

digital technologies, various problems of deep Marxology, etc.; the topics are as diverse as the participants and change alongside them and with the theme from year to year. However, the most consistent and persistently returning topics across years and between themes remain *climate and gender*.

To us, this seems to reflect two things: firstly, that we have been relatively successful in widening the scope of the conference beyond the traditional confines of Marxism to engage with a broader array of issues and types of critical scholarship, including radical climate scholarship and feminist and queer scholarship. Secondly, this reflects the continued relevance of Marxist theory to the overarching concerns of contemporary society. To most radical scholars of the twenty-first century, the climate catastrophe and the on-going biospheric meltdown is a much more pressing and relevant problem than, e.g., the precise composition of the industrial working class or American cultural hegemony. As such Marxism – at least in the context of our conference – can be seen to have opened itself up in a way that was not the case during the last boom of Marxist theory in Denmark in the 1960s and 1970s. Søren Mau has highlighted that one of the major problems of that era was that "[t]he self-proclaimed Marxist – Trotskyist, Stalinist, Maoist – parties did not necessarily respond positively to the new social movements fighting against sexism, racism, nuclear power, environmental destruction, heteronormativity, etc."[7] Contemporary Marxist theory such as eco-Marxism and social reproduction theory explicitly address such issues and has made it possible for these themes to be integrated and continue to play a central and welcome role at the conferences.

VII. BEYOND DANISH MARXISM?

The second general point is to contest the notion of a national form of Marxism, or at least to suggest that the national form it takes is, in a sense, in the process of dissolving itself. Are there, then, special conditions for the reception and development of critical theory and radical scholarship in Denmark or the Nordics? Yes and no. There are traits that pertain to the peculiarities of the Danish context, not in the sense of nationality but particular historical and material conditions and preconditions – as well as conjunctural circumstances that might diverge from other countries – which have shaped the work of the executive committee and thereby also the conference.

7 See page 21 in this book.

First and foremost, the presence of a (rapidly deteriorating) welfare state and the accompanying social security system has obviously played a significant role in sustaining the engagement of the members of the executive committee. It has done so by providing a basic level of support and security for all of us to remain engaged in the voluntary work of organizing the conferences and thereby ensuring a certain continuity in the organization despite precarious working conditions. In this way, it has enabled organizational learning and development, which are otherwise often lost in precarious academic environments marked by high turnover and burnout. Although most members of the executive committee have been subject to insecure employment, short-term contracts, and underemployment in the university sector, the material pressures of everyday survival have been, at least, partially mitigated by the remnants of the welfare state. That said, the situation may change quickly. The continued rollback of social provisions, precarization of labour, and the absence of positions in academia alongside an increasingly hostile political climate all raise the question of how long this arrangement can be sustained – and what kinds of adaptations, compromises, or confrontations might be necessary in the near future.

Another noticeable trait is that while the executive committee has supported students and staff in various struggles, strikes, and protests against (continuous) cutbacks and taken positions on central political questions, the conferences themselves have remained an almost exclusively academic affair. While the conferences have often facilitated and supported other, more directly political endeavours and movements (and showcased research that developed out of these milieus), they have continued to orient themselves towards the academy, trying to legitimize and support radical scholarship that draws on Marx, Marxism, and critical research traditions without directly challenging this framework through political action. While such a position can be legitimately criticised, there are also good reasons for maintaining such a division of labour between research and political work.[8] One reason has been the limited capacity and competencies of the executive committee, leaving the important work of political organizing to others or partaking in it in different roles. Another has been to ensure an open and inclusive atmosphere for all participants, who might not identify wholly with an implied Marxist

8 For an example of such a criticism from Norwegian comrades, see Jørgen Schnell and Peder Ressem Østring, "Den marxistiske bølgen," *Gnist*, 12 December 2021, https://marxisme.no/den-marxistiske-bolgen/ (accessed 15 April 2025).

political project, in order to continue to promote an open and inclusive debate about what form and shape such a project might take. But perhaps the most central reason is that SMS was founded in an attempt to carve out a space for Marxism and critical thought within academic institutions which rely on bourgeois (double) standards of scientific practice that emphasizes the distinction between facts and values, science and politics. While this distinction fundamentally contradicts the critical insights and thrust of Marxism, engaging with it was necessary in order to contribute to the legitimisation of Marxist scholarship. However, this division of labour has obvious drawbacks and may potentially threaten the critical impetus and political relevance of the Marxist and critical research the society was founded to promote.

What is truly remarkable is perhaps that it was even possible to erect and maintain such a separation in the first place. This may be due to the relative absence of political mobilization within and against Danish universities in the recent decades (unlike in the 1970s).[9] It is not guaranteed that it will remain possible – or desirable – to maintain this kind of separation between academic and more overt political organizing in the future as conditions change. We have already seen efforts by politicians and university administrators to suppress student solidarity with Palestine, which we have consistently opposed, but further reactionary pressure and repression – like what we have recently seen in the US – could force the executive committee to confront the contradictions of its current position within the academy.

This set of material and institutional conditions – the precarious stability afforded by the welfare state and the seemingly depoliticized university – are relatively peculiar to the Danish context. However,

9 That being said, it is interesting to note that the Marxist turn in the Danish universities was in some ways presaged by significant student mobilizations and blockades protesting a neoliberal university reform in 2013. The mobilizations explicitly sought to democratize the university. On this movement see amongst others Søren Mau and Esben Bøgh Sørensen, "Erfaringer fra kampen for et andet universitet," *Det ny Clarté* 28 (2016): 48–55, https://marxistiskanalyse.dk/det-ny-clarte-2006-2016/6/ (accessed 7 April 2025). Other members of the organizing committee had formative experiences in the autonomous movement (particularly around the youth house-movement and various anti-racist struggles), the anti-war movement, and mobilizations against the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP15). On the former, see in particular René Karpantschof and Martin Lindblom, eds., *Kampen om Ungdomshuset: Studier i et oprør* (København: Frydenlund og Monsun, 2009); René Karpantschof and Anders Lund Hansen, "Last Stand or Renewed Urban Activism? The Copenhagen Youth House Uprising, 2007," in *Urban Uprisings: Challenging Neoliberal Urbanism in Europe*, ed. Margit Mayer et al. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 175–201; Bolette Larsen, et al, eds., *Kirkeasyl: En kamp for ophold* (Frederiksberg: Frydenlund, 2011).

while these conditions have shaped the organizational form and practical possibilities of SMS, they have not fully determined the content or intellectual trajectory of the conferences themselves. On the contrary, the gradual erosion of the social democratic welfare state, the entrenchment of neoliberal governance, and the intensification of global interdependence have all contributed to a noticeable shift away from nationally specific concerns. The shift is not merely thematic, but also methodological and linguistic. It reflects a deeper transformation in how Marxism and critical theory circulate and take root. Increasingly, the conference – and the intellectual work it fosters – has been shaped by global crises, transnational solidarities, and a sense that the pressing issues of our time, such as ecological collapse and gendered violence, defy national division. It is here that the question of language has been central – not only as a practical barrier, but as a historical and epistemological condition for the reception and dissemination of Marxist and critical thought in Denmark.

The language barrier has, historically, been a persistent limitation for the dissemination, reception, and development of Marxism and critical theory in Denmark. Here, we return again to the question of internationalisation. In the 1960s and 1970s, the trend in Denmark was for local academics to travel to France, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and, especially, Germany, where they would pick up the most recent developments in critical theory, which they would then return to disseminate in Danish as their own. Contemporary Danish Marxism is different. The almost complete disappearance of an academic Marxist tradition in Denmark after the 1970s pushed us to create our own based on various international sources, which had become available through advances in communication technology, such as the internet, peer-to-peer file sharing services, etc. and was decidedly international for that same reason.

Moreover, the contemporary problems that Marxism and critical theory are especially mobilized to address at the conferences are global: climate and gender. While there are many variations in how their complications and crises present themselves, they have no necessary national form nor can they be dealt with in isolation. To the extent that such a thing as "Danish" Marxism exists, it must immediately abolish itself – it must become non-insular and engage with, and contribute to, a global literature. As our conference has become increasingly international, it will hopefully contribute to this development. So the answer to the question "what is Danish Marxism?" is

that it is an amalgam and intersection of global trends and concerns that seeks to overcome its national characteristics. The task of Danish Marxism is to abolish itself.

VIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Looking back on the past ten years of organizing the annual conference of SMS, we are proud of the progress we have made, which has been the result of deliberate, sustained, and often labour-intensive but also inspiring organisational work. We have created a platform and network for critical scholarship that is open, interdisciplinary, and hospitable. This has been achieved through conscious efforts to break down academic hierarchies, maintain free and accessible participation, and cultivate a collaborative, non-competitive atmosphere where curiosity and critique are valued over prestige and institutional stature. A central aim has also been to encourage, support, and legitimize Marxist research in a national academic context that has often been indifferent or even hostile to such work. Moreover, our commitment to gender parity, internationalisation, and building an inclusive and welcoming environment for students and early career scholars has been relatively effective – not through abstract ideals alone, but through long and hard debates in the executive committee, collective reflections, and a persistent commitment to concrete practices meant to improve the conferences. The conference is now a space where diverse strands of Danish Marxist and critical scholarship can meet, connect with, and develop as part of an international and highly qualified dialogue about contemporary issues, while developing a strong sense of community.

At the same time, we remain acutely aware of all the work that still remains to be done. Some of the most central challenges may require strategic compromises or institutional solutions that go beyond what motivation and hard work can resolve. One central challenge is how to balance our aim of abolishing the national form of Danish Marxism through continuous internationalization with our aim of building and sustaining a community of students, activists, and scholars in a Danish context. As the conference grows and international attention increases, we are forced to choose between numerous brilliant submissions that come both from Denmark and abroad, from new contributors, offering novel perspectives, and former participants, who contribute to a continuous and developing dialogue. These decisions are becoming increasingly difficult, and we have yet to develop a clear strategy for how to navigate them in a meaningful

way. But neither internationalism nor local community-building can be forfeited without undermining the ethos of the conference. Furthermore, we should also address our current tendency to attract participants predominantly from the Global North. This tendency mirrors wider structural inequalities in academia (and beyond), including disparities in funding, mobility, and institutional access. While these systemic issues may be beyond our capacities to resolve, travel grants might be a way that we could limit their effects on the conference. However, securing consistent funding for these initiatives remains a challenge.

Another difficulty is the problem of reproducing the organization and the conferences in the context of precarious employment. The organization and the conferences have been sustained for more than a decade by shifting constellations of early career scholars in and out of employment. That they have survived – let alone flourished – under these circumstances is in many ways remarkable. But we cannot rely indefinitely on voluntary labour, personal networks, and improvised solutions supported by the remnants of the Danish welfare state. Without stable institutional support, the continuation of the conference and the many lessons that we have learned are constantly at risk. This is part of why we have written this text, to pass on what we have learned, to make sure that our experiences and reflections are available to others to use and adapt as they see fit, even if SMS should prove unable to reproduce itself in the current conjuncture.

Other issues, such as the whiteness of the conference and executive committee, however, are more clearly within our power to change. We welcome critique, discussion, and suggestions for how we might better address these shortcomings – not only as a matter of representation, but as part of a broader commitment to challenging the structural exclusions that shape academia and continue to deform critical research. We do not claim to have found definitive solutions. Yet we believe that facing these issues directly – through collective reflection and concerted collaborative actions to achieve concrete changes – is essential to creating more inclusive spaces for Marxism and critical research that can ensure that they remains relevant to the emancipatory movements that they orient themselves towards.

If there is one lasting lesson from this past decade, it is that the future of Marxist and critical research depends not only on isolated scientific work and individual brilliance, but on practices of collective care, community, and dialogue. If there is such a thing as Danish Marxism, this must be its core, alongside a commitment to abolish

itself: not by forgetting its origins and development, but by opening itself up, making its practices accessible and adaptable, and contributing to the construction of an international critical tradition that refuses both borders and orthodoxy.

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5.

CHANGING THE RULES OF THE GAME

Marie Thøgersen

Like many other female early career scholars, I often receive advice from people – always well-meaning but usually also entirely unsolicited. It happened again a few months ago, as I was talking to a colleague – one of those mid-40s white male scholars comfortably tenured in a mainstream discipline within the social sciences: "Marie," he said, "if you really want a future in Danish academia, here's what you need to do. Look around you – is anyone else here doing the kind of research that you are doing?"

I hesitantly admitted that I felt quite isolated as a Marxist international law scholar in Danish academia. With a few exceptions, the research environments at the law faculties are dominated by a doctrinal methodology, which presumes that rules can and should be studied largely in abstraction from the political and economic realities that shapes them. Even amongst those doing non-doctrinal research that might draw on, for instance, various sociological, philosophical, or economic perspectives, Marxist perspectives are rare, and are generally overshadowed by the anti-Marxist spirit of a generation of scholars that grew up and prospered in the neoliberal era. These scholars are now on top of the game, occupying most of the permanent positions in both the law departments and across academia more generally.

To that, he replied: "Then you need to do something else. The key in this game is to find yourself a research area that aligns with what your peers are working on. You simply cannot survive in this world alone." The underlying assumption was clear: the substance of research is secondary to the act of *doing research* in the first place. What matters is, ultimately, being part of the club.

Had I received the same advice two years ago, I might well have taken it. But now, frankly, I only felt a quiet pity for him – for the narrowness of his intellectual curiosity, for the apparent absence of any

feeling of substantial purpose, and for how bound he felt by the rules of the game.

One of the most significant encounters that has changed my perspective fundamentally, was my introduction to SMS, a welcoming, intellectually vibrant community of scholars from across a variety of disciplines, all refusing to be bound by the constraints of the status quo. In what follows, I want to offer a few reflections on what the existence of such a community means for radical scholarship in Denmark today. But in order to frame and facilitate these reflections, let me begin with a brief account of my own intellectual journey leading up to this encounter.

I was trained as a doctrinal legal scholar. Throughout my five years in law school at Aarhus University from 2015 to 2020, I was taught that law was an autonomous system of rules that could be readily applied to a given reality. It was not until I embarked on a PhD in international law that I began to observe a disjuncture between the presuppositions underlying legal doctrine (such as the presupposition that states are formally equal entities that have consensually committed to certain norms) and the empirical reality surrounding me (for example, that the views of some states are overtly given more weight than the views of other states, while yet other political entities do not even enjoy recognition as states). I thus began noticing deep inconsistencies, paradoxes, and circularities in the formalistic reasoning that had until then shaped my perspective on the world.[1] It was quite a devastating moment, but it was also an intellectual eye-opener and a moment when I felt more inspired than ever to read, think, and write. Structural critiques by scholars like Martti Koskenniemi exposed the limitations and contradictions of the discipline, and I felt a rising anger toward my discipline after reading the works of Antony Anghie, B.S. Chimni, Ntina Tzouvala, and China Miéville. As I eventually began working my way through *Capital*, the

1 The results of my initial confusion can be found in Marie Thøgersen, "Ruling the Cloud: A Critique of International Cyber Law" (PhD dissertation, University of Copenhagen, 2025).

object of my anger expanded from the discipline of international law to the broader economic system that structures it: capitalism.[2]

As I began voicing my concerns about our discipline to my colleagues at the law faculty where I was based, a sense of solitude began to quietly creep in. It was not that anyone explicitly told me to stop what I was doing. Rather, the responses I received – even if they were well-meaning – felt increasingly limited and sometimes outright unhelpful.

1. THE ILLUSION OF NEUTRALITY

But my feeling of solitude soon evolved into something much more profound. In the aftermath of 7 October 2023, when Israel launched its systematic destruction of Gaza – an escalation of decades of genocidal violence against the Palestinian people – I was struck by the absence of solidarity within my faculty. When I sent out a petition in solidarity with the students' Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions campaign (BDS), the majority of my colleagues remained silent, unwilling to heed the call and condemn the University of Copenhagen's collaboration with Israeli research institutions – and thus, essentially, siding with the oppressor.[3]

My colleagues, of course, did not see it that way. They informally stressed their sympathy with the Palestinian people, yet they had all sorts of reservations that meant they could not sign the petition. I think that their reasons, and the consequences of their (in)actions, are quite illustrative of how the academic perspectives we take – doctrinal, Marxist, or others – have real political implications. From my informal conversations with colleagues, I identified three primary reasons for choosing not to sign the petition. The first is perhaps quite specific to legal scholars, but the two others might have broader relevance.

2 Martti Koskenniemi, *From Apology to Utopia: The Structure of International Legal Argument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); B.S. Chimni, *International Law and World Order: A Critique of Contemporary Approaches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Ntina Tzouvala, *Capitalism As Civilisation: A History of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); China Miéville, *Between Equal Rights: A Marxist Theory of International Law* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2006); Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy. Volume One* (London: Penguin, 1990).

3 Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) is a global, non-violent, Palestinian-led campaign that advocates boycotts, divestment, and sanctions to put pressure on Israel to comply with international law and end the occupation, remove the separation barrier, ensure full equality for Arab Palestinian citizens of Israel, and recognize the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

First, lawyers tend to value a careful reading of any contract to avoid accidentally committing to unfavourable conditions, and my colleagues would point to details in the wording of the petition, arguing that this or that phrase did not align with their stance, e.g., "I don't believe that we can currently document a genocidal intention, so I'd prefer if we left out that word altogether."

Second, others expressed concerns for their position in academia and the potential professional repercussions. Perhaps surprisingly, this perspective was not reserved for precarious employees – senior professors would, with a straight face, explain to me how their signature would risk putting lower-ranking pro-Israeli employees in an awkward position – so it was better that they "remain neutral."

Third, others would argue that universities were not the appropriate arena for this struggle. They insisted that although they condemned Israel's actions, these actions were not attributable to the University of Copenhagen, nor to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv University, or any other university. In their view, keeping universities as a neutral arena supposedly free from politics was crucial.

In effect, the lawyers thus went about their business as usual. Most of them said nothing, did nothing – in their own views, they simply remained neutral. The international lawyers acted as experts in public, explaining, carefully, how we were still below the threshold of genocide, until we were not anymore, and then they explained how a genocidal intention could not (yet) be documented. And the politicians referred to the experts' assessments whenever they came in handy to justify their inaction.[4]

The presupposition of their work is that (international) law can be understood as an autonomous body of rules distinct from politics. Their role as experts is thus to elucidate the correct meaning of this or that rule and explain its implications. But what if this presupposition is mistaken? What if rules cannot be understood in abstraction from the social relations that shape them – and what if the discussions

4 Since South Africa brought charges of genocide against Israel before the International Court of Justice on 29. December 2023, the public debate has been heavily focused on this particular charge and concomitant the question of intent, since the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, defines the crime as "acts committed with *intent* to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group." See United Nations General Assembly, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, December 9, 1948, United Nations Treaty Series 78: 277, art. 2 [emphasis added]; for a brief overview of how major powers shaped the convention so as to exclude colonial, racial, and political violence, see Douglas Irvin-Erickson, "The History of Raphaël Lemkin and the UN Genocide Convention," in *Handbook of Genocide Studies*, ed. David Simon and Leora Kahn (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2023), 20-22.

of the definitions of genocide are shaped by the same histories of imperial and colonial violence that shape the current world order? What if the legal concept has been designed to address a very specific genocide while comfortably excluding thousands of genocidal destructions of indigenous communities in the colonial encounters? What if the current discussion of the "threshold of genocide" was nothing more than a political battle unfolding in legalese? From a Marxist perspective, exposing and engaging in these political struggles is crucial, but as I tried to make this point to colleagues, I realized that my initial feeling of academic solitude was in fact fundamentally political.

II. BUILDING COMMUNITY FROM BELOW

It was around this time that I first came into contact with SMS – an inspiring collective of radical, precariously employed, early career scholars much like myself. When I showed up for the ninth conference, I did not really know what to expect – after all, how much traction can a Marxist academic conference have in a small country like Denmark? But my reluctance soon disappeared, as I stepped into one of the friendliest and most intellectually and politically inspiring conference atmospheres I've ever experienced. Not too long after that, I found myself involved in organizing the next conference. As the most recent addition to the board of SMS, I've thus had the enormous privilege of stepping into an already established, dedicated community of radical scholars. I cannot take any credit for the incredible work that has laid the foundation for what has now become an institution in its own right. But precisely because of that, I feel that I am well positioned to offer a few words of praise.

The strength of SMS lies not just in the brilliance of the idea – establishing an independent academic society for Marxism and related strands of critical scholarship – but above all in the work that has held it together for more than 10 years. I remain truly impressed by the persistent organizing, the discipline, the self-reflection, and the collective commitment that have shaped the first ten years of SMS's life. With scholars from all over the world now traveling to Denmark each year for the annual conference, the relevance and reach of the project are unmistakably clear.

But beyond conference organizing, I believe the kind of academic community-building that SMS represents does something more: It inspires us to organize our way out of academic solitude. It reminds us that almost everything we typically need from institutions, we can

provide for one another. We can read, critique, and improve each other's draft papers, book proposals, and funding applications. We can bounce ideas around, host reading groups, and run seminars. And we can share our frustrations, doubts, and small victories over post-work drinks. By becoming for one another what academic colleagues are supposed to be, we can build up a form of intellectual freedom from a conservative academic institutional landscape that remains largely indifferent – if not openly hostile – to Marxist critique.

Of course, this autonomy has its limits. We cannot pay each other's bills. We still need institutional affiliations and wages to survive. And in Denmark, as elsewhere, the institutional landscape for early career scholars is highly precarious: the first decade of an academic life is often stitched together from a patchwork of temporary contracts and short-term grants; a year of funding here, another there. This precarity makes the need for a consistent, reliable and supportive community even more urgent. With communities such as SMS, we can be certain that regardless of where we are on the academic rollercoaster, we are never alone.

Let me return to the mid-40s, white, mainstream male scholar who offered me unsolicited career advice. His well-intentioned suggestion reflected the path he – and many of his peers – have taken: treating academia as a market, and their research as a product. Their intellectual choices have been guided by a sense of what might sell better, fit in more easily, secure the next grant, ensure tenure and rapid career advancement. To me, he represents a generation that has learned to play the game – and accepted its rules.

I'm not saying that they are bad people. They have in all likelihood done what they felt was necessary to survive within a university system increasingly shaped by the logics of New Public Management. But I also want to insist that doing research cannot be separated from the structures of violence, exploitation, and oppression that shape our world. And when we're fortunate enough to occupy a space within these institutions – even temporarily – we carry a responsibility to consider where we stand. I sincerely hope that the intellectual history of our time will place my generation of legal scholars in a different chapter than the generation that preceded it and is now running the institutions. I hope that within the next few years, we will be developing a collective consciousness that our work as academics is never neutral or apolitical. I hope that my legal colleagues' "expert assessments" of Israel's destruction of Palestine will no longer be seen as detached from the political responses that they legitimize. I hope

that academic collaborations with Israeli institutions complicit in genocide will soon be recognized as being just as political as boycotting them. I hope – and think – that such a "repoliticization" of legal scholarship will cause a majority of academics to speak up against universities' collaborations with Israeli institutions. And that much of the current reluctance is thus not in fact a reflection of profoundly different political views on the orchestrated catastrophe unfolding in Gaza, but rather a reflection of the different perspectives on the extent to which our work as legal academics is political in the first place. But in any case, bringing this sort of political awareness into legal academia will enable us to call out right-wing talking points disguised as expertise.

III. CHANGING THE RULES OF THE GAME

I hope that we're standing on the edge of a transition to an academic landscape in which the simple replication of what people around and above us are doing will no longer be the key to the game. That our research institutions will become spaces for radical critique and transformation. But in the meantime, while we're navigating a conservative institutional landscape as precariously employed political outsiders, I believe that the kind of community-building SMS represents holds the key to preserving our intellectual independence and sanity. In this sense, I see SMS as part of a broader effort to mobilize and sustain ourselves as radical academics – an effort that, over time, might contribute to a transformation of academia, eventually changing the rules of the game. By building spaces for radical critique and transformation independently of formal academic institutions, we can take away some of the power of these institutions. While we still need them to pay our bills, we can make them redundant in other areas: We do not need them to encourage us and inspire us in our work. We do not need them to provide us with "academic citizenship," as it is sometimes called, the sense of belonging to a community. And we do not need them to organize or to speak up against genocidal violence.

In a way, the mid-40s, white, mainstream male scholar was not wrong: it *is* impossible to succeed in this world alone. As almost every acknowledgement section in almost any monograph reminds us, "research is a collective endeavour." But what he failed to see is that collectivity does not have to come from hierarchical and neoliberal institutions. We can build it up from below.

To illustrate this point, let me end with another conversation I had a few weeks ago with a comrade who had recently applied for two PhD positions: one was at a research institution with a rare and genuinely critical environment – somewhere they could really see themselves thriving, whereas the other was at a much more mainstream research centre where they felt somewhat out of place even before setting foot in the building. They were offered the latter position, but their relief to finally have a ticket to the game was partly overshadowed by a hesitation towards the idea of spending three years in such an environment. So now, it was my turn to offer some unsolicited advice: "Take the position – honestly, it's not that important where you're employed. The institution is just footing the bill. You'll find, and build, your real community elsewhere. Come find us at the annual conference, it'll be a blast!"

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6.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RECENT MARXIST RESEARCH FROM DENMARK

Danish Society for Marxist Studies

The following bibliography is a curated overview of recent Marxist and critical research that either originates in Denmark or is otherwise affiliated with the milieu surrounding SMS and the annual conferences. The bibliography is far from exhaustive and is merely intended as a starting point for readers who want to orient themselves within the growing literature of contemporary Danish Marxism. The aim is not to establish a canon as such, but, rather, to begin to map out ongoing inquiries, debates, and developments.

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PART II

CONFERENCES

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2016

MARX NU / MARX NOW

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS[1]

Conference 9-10 September 2016
Aarhus University, Institute for Culture and Society

In the past decade, we have seen a growing interest in and research on Karl Marx and the Marxist tradition. The global economic crisis and numerous social protest movements have led many scholars and students to turn their attention to the Marxist tradition in an effort to understand capitalism and the social contradictions it creates. This trend is also evident in Denmark, where there is an increasing amount of critical research that, in various ways, is inspired by the Marxist tradition.

With the conference "Marx Now!" our ambition is to create a space where we can collectively gain an overview of the current state of research in this field within Danish universities. We therefore invite everyone working within or inspired by Marx and the Marxist tradition, broadly understood, to contribute to the first conference of the Society for Marxist Studies.

The term "Marxist" should be understood in the broadest sense, to include all forms of research that, in one way or another, engage with the Marxist tradition or are inspired by its liberating and critical impulses. The ambition is to attract researchers and students from as many different disciplines as possible. Contributions can cover topics ranging from contemporary social movements, art studies, the history of the left, neoliberalism, racism, Marxology, the history of capitalism, refugee flows, ideology critique, imperialism, class analysis, global inequality, crises, climate change, current and historical theoretical trends, and much more. In short, we aim to create an academic meeting point for researchers and students working within

1 Translated from Danish

Marxism, understood as a broad research field and critical research programme.

Please submit your abstract (200-300 words) to marxistiskestudier@gmail.com by 1 July. Presentations will be 30 minutes, followed by 30 minutes of discussion. The conference will be conducted in Danish, but presentations in English are allowed.

The Society for Marxist Studies is a scientific organization dedicated to promoting research on and inspired by Marx and the entire tradition of thought that originates from Marx's theories. Marxism should be understood in the broadest possible sense, and the Society does not adhere to any specific theoretical approach or political position.

The Society organizes an annual conference and strives to transcend the narrow disciplinary boundaries that characterize academia – boundaries that Marxism never fit within.

ABSTRACTS

Niels Albertsen

VÆRDIFORM OG ARBEJDSVÆRDI I KAPITALENS BEGYNDELSE

I "nedstigningen" fra sondringen mellem brugsværdi og byttеværdi til det abstrakte arbejde som værdiens substans fremfører Marx et argument, der kan resumeres således. En given vare A kan byttes med mange andre varer i de forskelligste proportioner. Da alle de andre varer hermed kan byttes med den samme vare A, må de også kunne byttes med hinanden. De må være "durch einander ersetzbare oder einander gleich große Tauschwerte" (Das Kapital, Erster Band, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1972, 51). Holder vi os nu til dette overfladernes flade univers, så siger Marx her, at varerne er ækvivalente byttеværdier for hinanden, fordi de er bytterelaterede via den samme tredje fællesnævner, vare A. Denne vare gør de andre varer lige med hinanden med hensyn til udvekslelighed i forskellige proportioner. Kalder vi denne almene udvekslelighed for værdi, så er det oplagt at undersøge de samfundsmæssige betingelser for, at en vare positioneres så den fungerer som det almene ækvivalent, der gør de andre varer værdi-ækvivalente med hinanden. Varebegrebet, værdibegrebet og pengene som det kommensurabiliserende tredje vil i en sådan

problematik være direkte relaterede hinanden, og en værdiformsorienteret forståelse og udvikling af kritikken af den politiske økonomi sat på skinner. Marx opererer anderledes. Han søger under ækvivalensernes overflader og finder via et andet kommensurabilitetsargument værdiens ækvivalenskonstituerende substans i det abstrakte arbejde, i fysiologisk forstand. Værdiformen kan ifølge Marx kun ligesætte konkret forskellige arbejder som værdi, hvis disse arbejder har noget virkeligt til fælles, nemlig at de er forbrug af menneskelig arbejdskraft i fysiologisk forstand. Dette kommensurabilitetsargument om menneskeligt arbejde som sådan konstituerer den Marx'ske arbejdsværditeori, som lægger grunden til Kapitalen som politisk økonomi om udviklingslove begrundet i arbejdsværditeorien. For Marx hænger begge dele sammen, og min tese er tilsvarende, at både den marxistiske politiske økonomi med vægt på arbejdsværditeorien og økonomikritikken med vægt på værdiformen har gedigen grund hos Marx. Det har de marxismeinterne stridigheder herom også. Om og hvordan dette så hænger gyldighedsmæssigt sammen er en anden og spændende sag.

Kristoffer Bayer

DET KAN ALDRIG BETALE SIG AT ARBEJDE: PROLETARIATET SOM KAPITALISMENS KONSTITUTIVE UMULIGHED

Dette oplæg anvender Slavoj Žižeks læsning af Marx' arbejdsværditeori til at bestemme 1) lønarbejdet som et symptom i kapitalismen og 2) proletariatet som kapitalismens konstitutive negativitet. I en læsning af begreberne singularitet i fysik og symptomet i psykoanalysen bestemmes lønarbejdet som det punkt, hvor kapitalismen både producerer og beviser sin inhærente umulighed. Lønarbejdets specifikke karakter som vare udgør en konstitutiv negativitet i kapitalismen og derfor skriver Marx, at "arbejdet er kun produktivt, idet det producerer sin egen modsætning." Lønarbejdet producerer altså kapitalen, fordi arbejdskraften som vare producerer mere værdi, end det i sig selv er værd. Derfor viser Marx' teori om merværdien, at det for enhver lønarbejder i det kapitalistiske system aldrig kan betale sig arbejde. På den måde er lønarbejdet som symptom i kapitalismen et eksempel på Hegels negationens negation: at lønarbejdet ikke kan betale sig, er ikke en negation af lønarbejdet, men negationens negation; forudsætningen for lønarbejdet i kapitalismen er, at det aldrig kan betale sig at arbejde. Venstres kampagne "Det skal kunne betale sig at arbejde" analyseres dernæst som et eksempel på, at

lønarbejdet som kapitalismens konstitutive umulighed bruges til at legitimere politiske tiltag: Lønarbejdet etableres som værende i en krisetilstand ("det kan ikke betale sig at arbejde"), der tjener til at legitimere politiske beslutninger såsom det nyligt vedtagne "kontanthjælpsloft." Proletariatet bestemmes slutteligt som navnet for den konstitutive negativitet, som både er kapitalismens mulighedsbetingelse og systemets inhærente umulighed. Proletariatet er ikke summen af alle lønarbejdere, men det symptomatiske punkt, hvor kapitalismens umulighed viser sig. Marx' kritik af den politiske økonomi er derfor muligheden for at konfrontere de inhærente umuligheder i moderne politik som "det muliges kunst." Vi skal derfor omskrive Otto von Bismarck: politik er at strukturere det umulige som muligt.

Nicolai von Eggers
OM REPRODUKTION

> "Die beständige Erhaltung und Reproduktion der Arbeiterklasse bleibt die beständige Bedingung für die Reproduktion des Kapitals"
>
> *Das Kapital, Band I (MEW),* p. 597f

> "Hat die Produktion kapitalistische Form, so die Reproduktion. […] Der römische Sklave war durch Ketten, der Lohnarbeiter ist durch unsichtbare Fäden an seinen Eigentümer gebunden"
>
> *Das Kapital, Band I (MEW),* p. 589, 599

For at kapitalen fortsat kan eksistere kræver det en konstant reproduktion af de kapitalistiske produktionsforhold – forholdet mellem lønarbejder og kapitalist. Reproduktionen af produktionsforholdet går imidlertid langt udover den umiddelbare produktionsproces. Dette antydes også af Marx selv – eksempelvis når han taler om "at reproducere muskler, nerver, knogler og hjerne hos allerede eksisterende arbejdere og […] at avle og opfostre nye arbejdere" – men generelt er der ikke meget at finde i *Kapitalen*, som går hinsides diskussion af den såkaldt "simple reproduktion." En bredere forståelse af reproduktionen af kapitalistiske produktionsforhold har imidlertid været genstand for senere marxistisk-inspirerede tænkere. Denne præsentation vil fokusere på forskellige begreber om reproduktion hos henholdsvis Louis Althusser, Henri Lefebvre og Silvia Federici. Som vil blive diskuteret i oplægget, har denne bredere forståelse

af reproduktion også praktiske konsekvenser i forhold til, hvad der tæller som antikapitalistisk kamp. Snarere end at forstå kampen mod kapitalismen som findende primært sted i produktionssfæren – i den direkte kamp mellem kapitalist og lønarbejder – peger disse begreber om reproduktion i retning af antikapitalistisk kamp forstået som blokeringen af reproduktionen af produktionsforholdene, hvor denne reproduktion finder sted.

Mikkel Flohr

THE YOUNG MARX ON CONSTITUENT POWER AND "TRUE DEMOCRACY"

Marx and Marxism is commonly charged with having neglected politics and the development of a theory of politics. However, this presumption ignores Marx's unfinished and unpublished 1843 Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of State, where he engaged political theory at length – an engagement, which propelled him towards his subsequent critique of political economy. It is the aim of the proposed paper to reconstruct and reinterpret his argument focusing in particular on his conceptualization of constituent power and "true democracy." In the 1843 Critique Marx argues that democracy is the foundation and content of all other constitutions and/as political forms (monarchy, aristocracy, etc.). Democracy in this sense does not connote a specific political form, but the content that constitutes them – a form of constituent power. The point is that all political forms of rule presuppose and rely on the tacit consent and continuous participation of the governed. However, oftentimes these political forms appear to maintain sovereignty over and against them. This is made possible through the division of society against itself in classes – allowing the sovereign state to appear to stand above and beyond the conflicts of civil society. Marx therefore concludes that all these political forms are democracies in contradiction with themselves. Marx proceeds to suggest that it is possible to overcome these contradictions and develop an adequate political form of democracy, which he describes as "true democracy," which presupposes the abolition of private property and with it, class society and the division between the political and the economic, which maintains the abstraction of (sovereign) political forms from their content.

Gorm Harste

HVORDAN BEGYNDTE DET AT GÅ GALT MED KAPITALISMEN? FØR, UNDER OG EFTER REFORMATIONEN

Oplægget bygger på et forskningsprojekt om, hvad der er gået galt med kapitalismen ud fra, hvordan kapitalismen fordrejede de mulighedsbetingelser, som økonomisk kommunikation kan skabe. Projektet viser, hvordan kapitalismens økonomiske system bygger på at inkludere sig selv gennem en række eksklusionsmekanismer som vedrører natur, andre (mennesker), andre levemåder og andre fordelingsmekanismer end lige de, der forstærker den kapitalistiske økonomis selvreference. Med Max Weber kan man sige, at calvinismen – specielt som den udviklede sig i Holland og England – byggede på teologisk selvinklusion som alternativ til den kommunitære katolicisme. Dermed skabtes en eksklusion ud fra en dualisme, som med dens liberalistiske fortællinger ikke var i stand til at indkoble mekanismer til at håndtere eksklusioner som en del af den selv – i modsætning til teologien (symbol/diabol), juraen (ret/uret), det politiske (regerende/regerede), krigen (ven/fjende), videnskaben (sand/falsk) og kunsten (smukt/hæsligt), økologien (kultur/natur). Med sine 1700-tals teorier om ligevægtssystemer ignorerer neo-klassisk økonomi disse eksklusioner og reducerer dem til midlertidige uligevægte. Hos Marx ser vi – lige som hos Clausewitz – muligheden af, at det moderne funktionelt differentierede samfund systematisk producerer risici for ubalanceret magtdeling. Det fatter den neo-klassiske økonomi ikke. Den har ikke opdaget, at det moderne samfund, netop siden midten af 1700-tallet bygger på uligevægtige magt- og arbejdsdeling (Montesquieu 1748; Durkheim 1893). I senmiddelalderlig økonomi blev datidens kreditsystemer udviklet indenfor konceptionen om en balanceret verden, hvis usynlige hånd var sikret af Gud og den credos (=kredit) den tillid kunne garantere for låntagere/långivere, betalere/betalte. Troen på credos vandrede derfra over i retssystemet, som var instituionaliseredet refleksivt og selvkritisk siden det 12. århundrede. Magtubalancen og magtdifferentieringen i at magt skulle magte at magte magt blev dermed konstituerende for moderne kapitalistisk økonomi, idet denne grundlæggende ubalance imidlertid blev fortrængt. Kapitalismen kravlede op på et loft af selvbestaltet overbygning, men smed stigen væk.

Sune Haugbølle

ARABISK MARXISME FRA OSMANNERRIGET TIL DE ARABISKE OPSTANDE

Dette paper introducerer et dansk publikum til arabisk marxistisk tradition. Det giver et historisk overblik fra de første marxister i det osmanniske rige til debatter efter de arabiske opstande. Marxistiske ideer har både haft en indflydelse på kultur- og idélivet i de arabiske lande, samt på den politiske udvikling fra anti-imperialistisk frihedskamp til konstitutionelle bevægelser, parlamentarisk liv, og siden 1960'erne hovedsageligt dissidens og opposition. Mange dele af denne historie er stadig underbelyst af forskningen. Men historiografien undergår i disse år en revolution med en mængde nye studier af arabiske kommunistpartier, revolutionære bevægelser og intellektuelle strømninger. Samtidig er arabisk marxistisk præget tænkning i vækst og indgår i transnationale debatter om, hvordan man fornyer den marxistiske tradition. Disse debatter sker på baggrund af to udviklinger siden 1980'erne: for det første en selvkritik (*naqd dhati*), der både læser arabisk venstreorienteret historie kritisk og søger at gå ud over dogmatik (post-marxisme); og for det andet en fornyelse af revolutionær strategi og ideologi efter 2011. Paperet tager udgangspunkt i et større forskningsprojekt ved Roskilde Universitet og trækker på læsninger af bøger, tidsskrifter, online materiale samt interviews og etnografi blandt arabiske revolutionære socialister i Libanon.

Andreas Beck Holm

HVAD ER MARXISME?

Hvad skal vi i det hele taget forstå ved begrebet "marxisme"? Det er klart, at der er tale om en teori, men hvilken form for teori – er den eksempelvis filosofi, videnskab, videnskabsteori, eller noget helt fjerde? Og det er klart, at der er tale om en politik, men hvilken – og hvilket forhold er der mellem teori og politik? Et af de mest stringente forsøg på at besvare disse spørgsmål findes i Althussers lille artikel "Sur la dialectique matérialiste," udgivet i *Pour Marx* fra 1965. Her opstiller han en række distinktioner mellem videnskab, ideologi, politisk praksis og filosofi, der kommer til at udgøre koordinaterne for hans egen rekonstruktion af Marx' tænkning. Det er velkendt, at disse distinktioner – og dermed Althussers 1965-projekt – ikke holder. Althusser selv er den første til at medgive dette i sin selvkritik fra 1973-74. Til gengæld er det en grundlæggende tese i dette paper, at projektets sammenbrud ikke simpelthen diskvalificerer Althussers

projekt. Dels er det påstanden, at der er tale om et sammenbrud ikke blot for dette projekt, men for en dominerende strømning inden for den klassiske marxisme i det hele taget, dels peger sammenbruddet i Althussers teori netop derfor ud over traditionen mod en ny og mere dynamisk måde at tænke marxismens egenart på, der lægger vægten på den politiske praksis og dermed på teoriens nødvendige åbenhed. Endelig er det også påstanden, at der faktisk er kontinuitet mellem Althussers oprindelige projekt og denne nye marxisme – og mellem sidstnævnte og andre aktuelle postalthusserianske teoridannelser, først og fremmest Slavoj Žižek.

Niklas Zenius Jespersen

KOMMUNISTISK MODSTANDSKAMP: EN SAMMENLIGNING AF MÅL OG METODER MELLEM DKP OG TROTSKISTERNE 1939-1945

Under 2. Verdenskrig eksisterede der to kommunistiske organisationer i Danmark. Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti (DKP), tilknyttet Sovjetunionen og Komintern, og Revolutionære Socialister (RS) af trotskistisk observans. Begge tilskrev sig Lenin og traditionerne fra den russiske revolution og mente at baserer deres modstandskamp på denne. I dette lys sammenlignes derfor deres metoder og perspektiver for modstandskampen under krigen og disse sættes op over for principperne fra Lenin og Trotskij om disse kampformer. Herved fremkommer det at begge organisationer fejlede i, at leve op til principperne fra Lenin og Trotskij i deres forhold til sabotagen og den væbnede kamp. DKP fejlede ved at skille sabotagearbejdet ud fra partiet og overlade det til en folkefront mens RS fejlede ved helt at fornægte sabotagearbejdet. Yderligere vises det at DKP fejlede i at leve op til de bolsjevikiske traditioner de hævede at håndhæve omkring internationalisme og klasseuafhængighed og endda hengav sig til reformistiske perspektiver for efterkrigstiden og chauvinistiske tendenser over for tyskere. RS fastholdt på den anden side en linje om klasseuafhængighed og internationalisme, inklusiv alliance med den tyske arbejderklasse imod fascismen såvel som et revolutionært perspektiv for modstandskampen. Ved at sammenligne metoder og perspektiver for de to organisationer og endvidere sammenligne det med de principper fra den russiske revolution som organisationerne tilskrev sig, åbnes der op for nye vinkler i diskussionerne og analyserne af den kommunistiske modstandskamp i Danmark ligesom at der åbnes op for en diskussion af i hvor høj grad den kommunistiske modstandskamp reelt funderede sig på de principper den tilskrev

sig eller om den i højere grad baserede sig på anderledes eller endog nye principper for kampen. Ikke mindst åbnes der for en anden forståelse af modstandskampen end den der er fremkommet ved hidtidige sammenligninger mellem DKP og borgerlige dele af modstandskampen.

Mathias Hein Jessen

THE CORPORATE STATE

Today it has become commonplace to claim the demise of the sovereign, democratic nation-state due to globalization, neoliberal policies and the increasing power of transnational entities (UN, EU, IMF, WTO, The World Bank) and multinational corporations. This was recently exemplified by the overturning of the Greek OXI-referendum by the Troika, which was seen as the proof of the loss of national sovereignty in face of economic interests. Such a view, however, prevalent in both public discourse and political debates on the left, rests on a misguided conception of the nature of the state and the sharp demarcation between state/corporation and the political/the economic. To Marx(ism), the state is an ideological construct which serves to manage the common affairs of the ruling class and a central part of this ideological construct is the state as a political entity separate from the economic sphere. These demarcations are fundamental to the functioning of state power, capitalism, neoliberalism and the upholding of existing political and economic power relations, but are continually reinforced and perpetuated by the constant claims of the encroachment of economic and corporate interests on the political-democratic-sovereign state. This paper claims that the state is itself a corporate entity which through history has achieved a privileged position in our political understanding as the repository of sovereignty and the sole legitimate claimant to political allegiance. In doing so, it has excluded all other corporate bodies and collective entities as legitimate claimants on political authority. This paper argues that we must understand the corporate nature of the state in order to repoliticize intermediate corporate bodies and collective entities both to understand how the political and economic system functions today, but also because they represent political alternatives beneath, beside and beyond the (liberal, capitalist) state.

Steen Nepper Larsen

EN SAMTIDSDIAGNOSTISK TYDNING AF BEGREBET "KAPITALENS CIVILISERENDE INDFLYDELSE"

I *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (1857-1858, da. *Grundrids til kritik af den politiske økonomi*, 1974-1977) og *Das Kapital* (1867, da. *Kapitalen*, 1970) undersøger og begrebsliggør Karl Marx "the civilizing influence of capital," der udpeger de af kapitalen producerede, latente mulighedsbetingelser for frigørelse, frihed og kommunisme. Udviklingen af produktivkræfterne muliggør principielt, at den frie tid til at være menneske i bliver det nye rigdomsmål og ikke den fortsatte udbytning, merværdi- og bytteværdiproduktion. Denne udvikling foregår bag om ryggen på de agerende under kapitalismen; men det vil være kapitalens logik at forsøge at transformere den potentielt frie tid til merarbejdstid, hvorfor den kapitalistiske moderniseringsproces ikke nødvendigvis fører til et brud med kapitalismen og en realisering af kommunismen (Se SNL 2011b). I en kritisk dialog med værker af Gorz, Hardt & Negri og Boutang undersøges det, om Marx' stedsegrønne begreb om kapitalens civiliserende indflydelse kan danne grund for en kritik af samtidens kapitalisme.

Peter Nielsen

VÆKST, KONSENSUS OG NYHEDER: FORMTYRANNI EFTER MEDIEEKSPLOSIONEN

Det er et essentielt paradoks i samtiden at medieudviklingen er eksploderet, mens mediekritikken helt modsat nærmest er imploderet. Der er behov for at genopdage og opdatere mediekritikken. I dette paper vil jeg – ud fra min bog *Mediekomplekset* (Frydenlund 2016), hvor mine vigtigste inspirationskilder er Jean Baudrillard, Michael Hardt og Antonio Negri – formulere en aktuel mediekritik, der vender den traditionelle mediekritik på hovedet. Det er særligt to afgørende teoretiske træk ved den traditionelle mediekritik, der er i stigende grad er problematiske: Medierne analyseres helt overvejende i lyset af indholdet og ses som sekundære i forhold til kritik af politiske og økonomiske forhold. Jeg vil argumentere for, at medier først og fremmest er kendetegnet ved, at former skygger for indholdet og derfor er det netop former, der er afgørende. Medier er samtidig primære i forhold til økonomi og politik, der i dag hovedsageligt kan betragtes som netop medier. Jeg lægger ud med at indkredse hvad medier er. Herefter analyseres kapitalismen som det første moderne massemedie og varen som dette medies budskab. Karl Marx' teori om varefetichisme fortolkes som mediekritik og vores aktuelle situation karakteriseres

som almen varefetichisme. Herefter analyseres det repræsentative demokrati som det andet afgørende massemedium. Hvor det i økonomien er vareformen, der er dominerende, er det i politik konsensusformen. På denne baggrund ser jeg på det, der normalt ses som medier, nemlig digitale medier som radio, tv og internettet. Nyhedsformen og masserne står i centrum. Særligt den seneste udvikling med sociale medier og smartphones analyseres som en radikal overgang, med konsekvenser for medierne som helhed.Der tegner sig en ny situation i det 21. århundrede, med store konsekvenser for teori og praksis.

Karen Helveg Petersen

KAN MAN OPSTILLE ET MARXISTISK BEGREB FOR NATIONALREGNSKABET OG DETS VÆKST?

Bruttonationalproduktet bygger på en syntese af neoklassisk tænkning og et sæt af keynesianske identiteter om nationalindkomsten/nationalproduktet i konsum- og investeringsgoder som producerede og (gen)anvendte i videre produktion eller konsum. Simon Kuznets var hovedkraften bag opstillingen af nationalregnskabet (national accounts) i 1930'erne i USA. Det støtter sig på input-outputtabeller. Målet er at finde et kvantitativt udtryk for den nyskabte værdi inden for en vis tidsperiode og så se på, om den ændrer sig over tid. I mangel af bedre eller pga. teoretisk uformåen er BNP og dets vækst blevet et kvasifysisk mål for produktionen, og dermed måler BNP i praksis ting og tjenesteydelser omskrevet til tingslige begreber. Papiret kritiserer den 'fysikaliske' skævvridning af BNP og dets andre svagheder: for stort brug af identiteter, der presser virkeligheden ned i kasser, ufleksible pris- og værdirelationer, et tautologisk begreb om inflation, der svarer til monetaristisk teori, osv. Det er også knyttet til en national økonomi, og de tilpasninger, der gøres for udenlandsk aktivitet og indkomst, er mangelfulde. I sin helt rå definition svarer begrebet godt til Marx' teori om værdi skabt gennem levende arbejde nedlagt i salgbare varer. Den nyskabte værdi deles mellem arbejdskraften, der i sig selv har en værdi svarende til sine reproduktionsomkostninger, og merværdi. Hos Marx fordeles merværdien ud på uproduktive arbejdere inkl. regeringsapparatet, profit, alle former for grundrente og betalinger af låne- og finansomkostninger. I modsætning til Marx ser BNP-folk dele af merværdien som input. Hvor alle er enige om, at halvfabrikata og råvarer skal nettes ud, er der hos Marx tale om en overførsel af værdi til det færdige produkt. Stammer den fra en tidligere periode, skal den trækkes fra, stammer den

fra samme tidsperiode, vil den optræde som nyværdi et andet sted. Så alt der sælges kan skilles i nytilført værdi og overført værdi. Kapitalapparatets afskrivning har en særlig rolle. Forfattere som Anwar Shaikh og Ahmet Tonak har forsøgt at udlæse et marxistisk nationalprodukt af de nationalregnskaber, der faktisk opstilles. Væsentlige resultater citeres. Andre forsøg er værd at citere, f.eks. Value, Competition and Exploitation. Marx, the Classics and the United Nations' System of National Accounts af Peter Flaschel et alia. De prøver at integrere produktivitetsudviklinger. En populær tilgang til problematikken findes i Lorenzo Fioramontis Gross Domestic Problem.

Dominique Routhier

"ACCELERATIONISMEN" POST MORTEM: EN MARXOLOGISK OBDUKTION

Accelerationisme er betegnelsen for et postmarxistisk program, hvis erklærede hensigt det er at reaktivere forestillingen om 'fremtiden' hos en formodet desillusioneret venstrefløj. Ifølge den accelerationistiske doktrin er en bevidst og kollektiv acceleration af kapitalismens iboende udviklingsdynamik – i retning af teknologisk optimering, automatisering og kybernetisk kontrol – eneste farbare vej hinsides kapitalismen. Nærværende oplæg situerer det accelerationistiske program i en bredere historisk kontekst, med særlig fokus på spørgsmålet om teknikken i den marxistiske tradition. Der argumenteres for, at accelerationismen trods tydelige vitalistiske inklinationer hviler på en opfattelse af teknikken, der fundamentalt set er ligeså rigid og mekanisk som en trold i en æske. Således betragtet fremstår accelerationismen mere død end levende, hvormed dissektionen af det accelerationistiske idékorpus kommer til at finde sted post mortem – som en marxologisk obduktion.

Curt Sørensen

KAPITALISME. DELTAGERKRISE, MASSEPOLITIK.

Den store befolkningsmassers indslusning i og mere permanente og ofte aktive deltagelse i det politiske liv er et relativt nyt historisk fænomen. Vel har man i tidligere tid kendt til revolter og opstande, men det var dog som eruptioner i en orden af stivnet social ro, en orden hvor den store befolkningsmasse, slaverne, feudalbønderne, almuen nok var den sociale pyramides grundlag, men selv var uden for indflydelse, ofte nærmest også usynlig. Masseindslusningen var ny og medførte overalt i Europa kriseagtige tilstande. Fra et tidspunkt omkring midten af det 19. århundrede – med den franske

og den industrielle revolution som forløbere – førte kapitalismens og statens udvikling til en omfattende europæisk deltagelseskrise. Den industrielle kapitalismes indbrud og efterfølgende udvikling i den bestående sociale orden frembragte overalt i Europa krisefyldte forløb. Nye dimensioner af konflikter udviklede sig og overlagrede de gamle i selvforstærkende og turbulente forløb. Den industrielle kapitalisme frembragte nye klasser og lag, der efterhånden mobiliseredes også politisk, samtidig med at gamle klasser og lag ligeledes blev aktiveret. Overalt vaktes den gamle agrare overklasse til forsvar for sine etablerede interesser, samtidig med at det nye industrielle bourgeoisi stærkere og stærkere fremførte sine synspunkter og krav. Samtidig frembragte også den moderne statsbygning nye mobiliseringer og nye interessemodsætninger og konflikter. Den generelle politiske udvikling, mobiliseringen og masseorganiseringen var nemlig også produkter af og led i stats- og nationsbygningens stadige fremadskriden. Nye befolkningsgruppers inddragelse i det politiske liv, deres mobilisering og organisering, successive valgretsudvidelser osv. var ikke blot et produkt af den industrielle kapitalismes udvikling samt sociale forskydninger, men tillige også frembragt af og led i denne anden af de to store historiske parallelprocesser. Massemobiliseringen og inddragelsen i det politiske liv var også et led i selve statsbygningens proces. Samtidig ændrede nationalismen karakter; den blev til en massenationalisme, idet den radikaliseredes. I bunden af de europæiske samfund begyndte den nye arbejderklasse at organisere sig fagligt og politisk og rejse krav om valgret og andre rettigheder samtidig med at den kæmpede for elementære økonomiske og sociale krav. Men massemobiliseringen og organiseringen omfattede også andre klasser, småborgerskabet i byerne og bønderne på landet. Dertil kom den nationale mobilisering i form af nationalismens udvikling. Det politiske liv ændrede herunder totalt karakter. Man bevægede sig overalt i Europa, omend i forskellige tempi og grader, ind i massepolitikkens tidsalder. Massepolitikkens gennembrud og udvikling førte til nævnte 'deltagelseskrise'. Der var brydninger mellem nye og gamle interessemodsætninger, der var problemer omkring selve massernes indslusning i politik, problemer og konflikter omkring masseorganiseringens omfang og form, konflikter mellem de nye massebevægelser og massepartier indbyrdes og mellem disse og traditionelle eliter og statsapparatet, og der var stadige pres nedefra for repræsentation og udvidelser af valgret. Der var også megen modstand og frygt eller i hvert fald tøven blandt traditionelle eliter og dominerende klasser, ikke mindst den agrare

overklasse, men også langt ind i den kontinentale liberalisme. I og med nationalismens udvikling og radikalisering udviklede der sig også her en ny og stærk konflikt dimension. På det historisk-konkrete plan kan man altså i perioden fra den franske og den industrielle revolution frem til 1.verdenskrig og videre ind i mellemkrigsårene og 2. verdenskrig konstatere højst turbulente forløb af deltagelse og krise. Parallelt hermed, ja, gennem disse konfliktfyldte processer, udviklede kapitalismen sig mere og mere som overordnet determinerende samfundsstruktur.

Esben Bøgh Sørensen

IDEEN OM ARBEJDE, DENS HISTORIE OG AKTUELLE KRITIK

I løbet af de seneste år har den arbejdskritiske tendens på den internationale venstrefløj fået ny vind i sejlene. Der er tale om f.eks. den tyske Krisis gruppe, den canadiske historiker Moishe Postone eller dele af den såkaldte kommuniseringsteori. Tendensen er ikke ny og kan trække tråde tilbage til Karl Marx' svigersøn, Paul Lafargue, og hans "Retten til Dovenskab." Andre vigtige teoretiske udtryk findes hos f.eks. Hannah Arendt og André Gorz, for hvem moderne samfund er særlige "arbejdssamfund." Ifølge denne anti-arbejde tendens er moderne kapitalistiske samfund særligt kendetegnet ved en streng arbejdsetik og først her bliver "arbejde" et abstrakt begreb, der underordner forskellige menneskelige aktiviteter under sig. Et arbejdssamfund par excellence. Hos dele af denne tendens bliver den klassiske arbejderbevægelse derfor også reduceret til en bevægelse *for* arbejde, dvs. som en integreret faktor i kapitalismen snarere end dens udfordrer. Den politiske konklusion bliver derfor at "arbejde" som sådan enten helt skal afskaffes eller mindskes og erstattes med fritid, kreativitet etc. I dette paper vil jeg problematisere en række af arbejdskritikkens grundantagelser. Ved at trække på forskning inden for arbejdets idéhistorie vil jeg vise, at den standardfortælling som arbejdskritikken baserer sig på, simpelthen er forkert. Jeg vil derefter skitsere både, hvilken social rolle arbejde får i kapitalismen og hvilke forskellige betydninger af arbejde og ideologiske udtryk vi kan identificere. Til sidst vil jeg forsøge at pege på, hvordan det i stedet er muligt at forholde sig til arbejde på en måde, der udfordrer kapitalismen uden dog at falde i samme fælde som arbejdskritikken.

Gert Sørensen

MARX I ITALIEN: FRA GRAMSCI TIL "THE ITALIAN THOUGHT"

I de seneste år er der i og uden for Italien dukket et særligt teoretisk brand op under betegnelsen Italian Thought, der angiveligt skulle skille sig ud fra, hvad man i den sammenhæng eksempelvis har kaldt German Philosophy eller French Theory, selv om der kan spores visse overlapninger. Det er den italienske filosof Roberto Esposito fra Scuola Normale Superiore i Pisa, der har gjort sig til international eksponent for denne lancering f. eks. i bogen Il pensiero vivente.Origine e attualità della filosofia italiana (2010) og i antologien Differenze italiane. Politica e filosofia (2015). Hvad der i særlig grad menes at have mobiliseret Den Italienske Tanke, er netop det politiske og den politiske praxis og hele det konfliktuelle rum, den konstituerer og udfolder sig i. I den udstrækning der er tale om andet og mere end smart marketing på et betrængt marked for den slags, tegner der sig her en ganske interessant teoriudvikling, som viser, at italiensk filosofi i dag ikke blot begrænser sig til Giorgio Agambens efterhånden velkendteHomo Sacer projekt. Oplægget vil afsøge disse tendenser inden for Italian Thought og i den forbindelse se nærmere på den særlige italienske Marx-reception fra Antonio Labriolas værker fra 1890erne over Antonio Gramscis Fængselsoptegnelser fra 1930erne og frem til 1960ernes såkaldte operaismo (med navne som Tronti og Negri). I dette regi vil oplægget komme med et første bud på denne lange traditions indflydelse på hele denne nyorientering, som dette i første række teoretiske initiativ afspejler over for den neoliberalistiske globalisering og nødvendigheden af det politiskes genkomst.

Magnus Møller Ziegler

DUZBRÜDER: EDGAR BAUER OG HANS FORHOLD TIL MARX

På højdepunktet af revolutionen i 1848 var anarkisten og venstrehegelianeren Edgar Bauer som formand for *Demokratischen Club* en af Berlins mest kendte skikkelser. Da han døde godt 40 år senere, i 1886, forbitret og reaktionær, var han fuldstændig ukendt – undtagen i Danmark, hvor hans død blev relativt bredt omtalt. Undervejs havde han haft et liv, der var en knaldroman værdigt, og bl.a. tilbragt godt 10 år i London sammen med andre eksilrevolutionære, især Marx. Det er dette forhold, vi i oplægget vil fokusere på, og selvom en del af det bliver i den lettere ende, kommer vi også ind på den unge Edgar Bauers radikale, anarkistiske frigørelsesprojekt; hans forsvar for den

individuelle terror; forholdet til den mere kendte storebror, Bruno, og hans "kritiske kritik"; samt Marx og Engels og deres kritik af brdr. Bauer, især i *Die heilige Familie* (1844) – og ikke mindst, hvordan den radikale anarkist og nærmest hadefuldt kritiske filosof endte som politispion for den danske stat.

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2017

MARX NU / MARX NOW

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Roskilde University, Denmark
1-2 September 2017

Last year, the Danish Society for Marxist Studies [*Selskab for Marxistiske Studier*] held its first annual conference "Marx Now! 2016" at Aarhus University. It was clear that the so-called 'Marxist turn' has also taken hold at the Danish universities. The interest in Marx, the Marxist tradition, and other critical research traditions is growing amongst researchers and students as evidenced by the many presentations and participants

Society for Marxist Studies is a part of this development and will continue to contribute in 2017!

We therefore invite all critical researchers and students to participate in and contribute to the conference Marx Now! 2017 at Roskilde University, Denmark, on 1-2 September 2017.

The aim of the annual conference is to create an academic fixture for critical research at Danish universities. The term "Marxist" should therefore be understood in the broadest and most inclusive manner, so as to include, for instance, those traditions and thinkers that on the periphery of the Marxist tradition, address it, or have something interesting to say about it. The decisive factor is whether they display an emancipatory impulse and critical tendency – and not whether they pledge allegiance to a specific thinker or established canon.

2017 is a year of anniversaries: it has been 150 years since Karl Marx published the first volume of Das Kapital, it is 100 years since revolutionaries seized power in Russia, and it is 100 years since Denmark sold the Danish West Indies to the USA. We are highly interested in presentations addressing these topics.

However, we are also very interested in other topics, and topics for presentations might include social movements, right-wing populism, neoliberalism, workers' movements, anti-colonial struggles, globalization, climate change, racism, media, class analyses, sexism, ideology critique, art, literature, and revolution.

Send your abstract of 200-300 words to info@marxistiskestudier.com before 1 July. Presentations can be in Danish or English.

Society for Marxist Studies (SMS) is a scientific organisation dedicated to promoting research in and inspired by Marx and the entire tradition of thought, which springs from his theories. "Marxist" should thus be understood in the broadest possible sense. SMS does not adhere to any particular theoretical or political position. The society holds an annual conference and aims to transcend the narrow disciplinary boundaries of academia, which never could contain Marxism.

ABSTRACTS

Nina Power
MARX'S SUBJECTS: COLLECTIVE THOUGHT AND ACTION TODAY (KEYNOTE)

[unavailable]

Joshua Clover
WHAT'S NEW IN MARXIST METHOD? (KEYNOTE – CANCELLED DUE TO ILLNESS)

[unavailable]

Niels Albertsen
MARX' GLEMSOMHED: KOMMENSURABILITETSLOGIKKERNES STRID I KAPITALENS BEGYNDELSE OG INDVIRKNINGEN PÅ 150 ÅRS FORTOLKNINGER AF KAPITALEN

I sine "Ergänzungen und Veränderungen" til første bind af *Kapitalen* fra december 1871-januar 1872, offentliggjort første gang i 1987, skriver Marx noget meget bemærkelsesværdigt om udledningen af værdibegrebet i *Kapitalens* begyndelse. Her blev, siger han, varerne (de berømte: frakken og lærredet) hver for sig reduceret til genstandsgørelser af

menneskeligt arbejde slet og ret. Dette "hver for sig" har Marx ganske ret i. Så følger det bemærkelsesværdige. Marx skriver (forkortet, fremhævelser NA): "I denne reduktion blev det glemt, at intet er værdigenstandsmæssighed for sig selv. Varerne er kun dette, for så vidt genstandsmæssigheden er fælles for dem. Uden for deres forhold til hinanden besidder hverken frakken eller lærredet værdigenstandsmæssighed. Denne samfundsmæssige genstandsmæssighed besidder de kun som samfundsmæssigt forhold" (MEGA II/6: 30). Marx dementerer her den opfattelse af værdi som embodied labour (i varerne hver for sig) som utallige marxister og ikke-marxister har tilskrevet ham over de sidste 150 år. Tilskrevet ham med god grund, for det er den opfattelse, der gemmer sig i værdiudledningens kommensurabilitetslogik. Uden reduktionen af varerne hver for sig til værdigenstandsmæssighed ville værdiudledningen ikke fungere. Modsat kan tilhængere af en værdiformsorienteret forståelse af Marx' værdibegreb så med god grund hænge deres frakker på det her citerede argument, hvilket man implicit eller eksplicit har gjort siden Isaak Illich Rubins arbejder fra slutningen af 1920erne. Spørgsmålet er så, hvad man stiller op med Marx' glemsomhed. Kan man bruge et argument, som hviler på en forglemmelse, som begrundelse for varernes værdiværen (ibid.) og efterfølgende ophæve forglemmelsen, uden at det rejser tvivl om begrundelsens gyldighed? Marx ser tydeligvis intet problem, men 150 års vedholdende strid om forståelsen af disse sager indikerer, at der er modstridende logikker på spil i Marx' henholdsvise glemsomhed og hukommelse. Det undersøges nærmere.

Troels Thorborg Andersen

ERNST BLOCHS REVOLUTIONSETIK

På baggrund af mit speciale i Tysk fra KU vil jeg lave et oplæg om Ernst Blochs Geist der Utopie og den "revolutionsetik," som jeg mener man kan læse ud af Blochs filosofi. Oplægget vil bestå af følgende tre dele: Præsentation af Ernst Bloch: Ernst Bloch (1885-1977) var del af den tyske neomarxisme. Han blev kendt for sin filosofi om "utopien" og "håbet." Det første hovedværk Geist der Utopie blev skrevet i erfaringen af 1. Verdenskrig, Den Russiske Revolution 1917 og Den Tyske Revolution 1918/19. Her udvikledes "kernetanker," der skulle blive gennemgående i Blochs filosofiske værk. Vha. disse kernetanker har Bloch forsøgt at reformere marxistisk filosofi i retning æstetik, etik og metafysik. Blochs "revolutions"-begreb: Blochs ontologi kaldes "endnu ikke," hvilket vil sige, at intet endnu har fundet sin sande identitet. Dette betyder at "endnu-ikke-væren" altid er i

fremadskridende bevægelse for at blive sig selv. Nuet kalder Bloch "Det levede øjebliks dunkelhed." Øjeblikket er dunkelt, fordi vi kun kan erkende retrospektivt, eller i form af vores utopiske forestilling om fremtiden. Således giver erfaringen den revolutionære inspiration, og fremtiden den revolutionære mulighed. Den menneskelige væren kan således betegnes som en "revolutionær" væren. Blochs etik: Bloch forsøger at skabe forbindelse mellem teori og praksis. Det "etiske," ifølge Bloch, er erkendelsen og efterlevelsen af ens egen endnu-ikke-væren, hvilket vil sige forsøget på at omdanne erfaringen til utopisk handlekraft. For Bloch selv afspejler dette forsøg sig i hans litterære æstetik. Konkret betyder det, at Bloch skriver vha. fragmenter, montager og metaforer, der lader teksten forblive åben for fortolkning for læseren. Således handler Blochs projekt ikke om at give læresætninger, men derimod om at danne læseren til selv at tænke utopisk, dvs. at tænke revolutionært.

Kristoffer Bayer

PROLETARIATET, FORNUFTENS EGEN UFORNUFT

Dette oplæg undersøger – med udgangspunkt hos filosofferne Žižek, Zupančič, Tomsič, Honneth, Hardt, Negri, Balibar og (naturligvis) Marx – forskellige definitioner af proletariatet, dets praktiske og teoretiske relevans samt muligheden for at reformulere konceptet som en politisk kategori. Med andre ord, proletariatets hvad, hvordan og hvor. Udgangspunktet er, at proletariatet er det centrale begreb hos Marx – og det til trods for, at proletariatet er fraværende i *Kapitalen*. Hvad er proletariatet? Traditionelt set er proletariatet defineret som lønarbejdere. Dette er årsagen til, at proletariatet associeres med den industrielle arbejderklasse, der indtog hvad Marx definerede som den kvalitativt hegemoniske position i det 19. århundredes kapitalistiske samfund. I en analyse af Marx' arbejdsværditeori vil jeg argumentere for, at Marx' begreb om proletariatet deduceres ud fra det, Lacan definerer som Marx' grundlæggende opdagelse: merværdien. Bytningen mellem kapital og lønarbejde er kendetegnet ved en bytning af ækvivalenter, der frembringer et ikke-ækvivalent resultat, dets egen modsætning: udbytning. Merværdien paradoksale karakteristika er sammenfaldende med proletariatets subjektive position. Hvordan er proletariatet? Denne subjektive position som konstitutiv negativitet fremtræder mest tydelig hos Marx i Kritik af den hegelske retsfilosofi, hvor han giver udtryk for, at proletariatet er andet og mere end industriarbejderklassen. Proletariatet er, med Marx ord, den allerede eksisterende ophævelse af det bestående; en klasse i det eksisterende

samfund, der ikke er en klasse i det eksisterende samfund. Proletariatet er inkluderet i det bestående, netop ved at være ekskluderet. Hvor er proletariatet? Afslutningsvist diskuteres et modsvar til *Socialismens idé* af Axel Honneth, i hvilken han blandt andet argumenterer for, at socialismen må tage "afsked med ideen om proletariatet som revolutionært subjekt." Den centrale kritik af Honneths position kan opsummeres i en sætning: proletariatet er ikke (kun) defineret ved hvad det vil, men snarere hvad det er – det "irrationelle" element i den "rationelle" orden, med Marx ord, "fornuftens egen ufornuft."

Henrik Jøker Bjerre

COMMUNIST LIBERALISM

In recent years, we have witnessed many cases of left wing parties and movements defending individual civic rights against allegedly "liberal" politicians, (think about immigration policies and anti-terror legislation for example). I think this tendency is no coincidence, and that it may even inspire a position that I will define as "communist liberalism," turning what Slavoj Zizek has called "liberal communism" on its head. While liberal communism shares the "values" of global justice and equality, but sees free market economy as the necessary means to achieving this, often in some form of combination with philanthropy, communist liberalism does the precise opposite: In communist liberalism, the abolition of systematic exploitation of the work force (surplus value production) is the necessary prerequisite for defending civic rights in the sense of the liberal tradition itself.

Reinout Bosch

EN MODERNE HISTORISK MATERIALISME

Sproget har traditionelt spillet en tilbagetrukket rolle i den materialistiske historieforståelse. Nok fordi ord og begreber har liden materiel substans. Alligevel skrev Marx en af de få gange hvor han beskæftigede sig med emnet, at: "Sproget er [… den …] første eksisterende virkelige bevidsthed." Det er måden hvorpå vi forstår os selv og verdenen. Derfor har den historiske materialisme været hårdt ramt af semiotikken og diskursanalysens angreb på de sproglige strukturer de sidste årtier. I sin tætte relation og afhængighed af strukturalismen, blev subjektet afskaffet og i den efterfølgende objektivistiske auktion var den althusseriske marxisme bundet til at blive overbudt, som Perry Anderson har formuleret det. I stedet for at opnå subjektets afskaffelse, vendte subjektivismen gennem denne øvelse tilbage

med fornyet kraft som Adorno havde forudsagt. Det sidste kvarte århundrede er den historiske materialisme trådt i baggrunden som historisk forklaringsmodel. Konstruktionerne har overtaget og de brede linjer i historien spiller en mindre rolle i undervisningen. Det handler i stigende grad om at opbygge narrativer, for derefter at afsløre dem igen. Hvordan kan den historiske materialisme forstås og bruges i det 21. århundrede? Gennem læsning af Meiksins Wood, Olin Wright, Jairus Banaji og Alex Callinicos mfl. forsøges en kritisk afklaring af den marxistiske teori og metodes muligheder for at genetablere sit teoretiske hegemoni. Dette gøres centreret om praksis begrebet og dialektikken der er indbegrebet i den sjette feuerbach tese, der gøres centralt for den historiske forståelse.

Louise Skovholm Bøgh

KOMMUNISTINTERNERINGERNE UNDER BESÆTTELSEN

Som følge af 2. verdenskrigs ekspansion mod Øst i juni 1941, krævede den tyske besættelsesmagt, at danske myndigheder skulle internere samtlige ledende danske kommunister. Det førte til en regulær klapjagt på danske kommunister, der blandt andet indebar en overordentlig villighed til at skride til anholdelse fra politimyndighedernes side, flerfoldige grundlovsbrud samt et forbud mod både kommunistisk agitation og adfærd, der kunne mistænkes for at være kommunistisk. Hidtil har den danske historieforskning i grove træk antaget, at de tyske interneringskrav sprang som en bombe for de danske myndigheder natten til den 22. juni 1941. Det er min påstand, at dette er forkert og at den danske politiske spids i forvejen var informeret herom. Det er endvidere min påstand, at den udbredte danske antikommunisme var en faktor, der fik afgørende betydning for forløbet omkring interneringerne af de danske kommunister. Men hvad betyder det? Og hvor langt er demokratiet egentlig villigt til at gå, når det er under pres?

Ole Wugge Christiansen

PIERRE MACHEREYS MATERIALISTISKE LITTERATURFORSTÅELSE

Den franske marxist og filosof Pierre Macherey udgav i 1966 en i Danmark upåagtet bog *Pour une theorie de la produktion literaire*. Han indgik på det tidspunkt i et samarbejde omkring filosoffen Louis Althusser og dennes forsøg på nytænkning af marxismen. Macherey bidrog bl.a. til antologien *Lire le Capital*. På linje med de samtidige strukturalister forsøgte Macherey at løsrive sig fra den stærke hegelianske

forståelse af marxisme og dialektik, og han hentede i stedet inspiration fra bl.a. Nietzsche og Spinoza – den sidste forblev et forskningstema for Macherey i mange år. Machereys ansatser til en litteraturteori tog udgangspunkt i Louis Althussers forståelse af tænkning som arbejde, dvs. underlagt bestemte historiske og ideologiske produktionsbetingelser. Ambitionen var en videnskabelig og materialistisk forståelse af litteratur. Bogen tegnede i fragmentarisk form et omrids til den forståelse. Og den adskiller sig markant fra datiden strukturalistiske og nykritiske litteraturforståelser – først og fremmest ved ikke at opfatte teksters betydning som et immanent forhold i teksterne eller forfatterens tænkning. Deres betydning opstår først som bearbejdninger, der nok afdækker strukturer og sammenhænge i tekster, men som analytiske tilføjelser, nye betydninger, ikke som afdækning af præeksisterende essenser. Machereys teoridannelse fik et vist gennemslag i dele af den engelske litteraturkritik (bl.a. hos Terry Eagleton og Tony Bennet). I Danmark forblev den stort set forblev ukendt. Når Macherey i starten af 1970'erne blev omtalt var det oftest for analyser af litteratur, ikke for sin originale litteraturteori. Min oplæg vil fokusere på Machereys teoridannelse, der opfatter litterære tekster som nok objektivt eksisterende, men kun forståelige gennem menneskelig praksis, dvs. analytisk bearbejdning. Macherey argumenterer for tre konstituerende træk, der er afgørende for en forståelse af litterære tekster: For det første at de er produkter, dvs. skabt under bestemte produktionsforhold, der determinerer teksterne ideologisk, historisk og fortælleteknisk. For det andet at de er fiktion, dvs. bearbejdning og brug af illusioner, der forvandler litteratur til noget kvalitativt andet end andre tekster. Fiktion refererer ikke til noget objektivt givent, men bliver selvreferentielle – de fikserer bedrag på en ny, forskudt måde. For det tredje mener Macherey, at litterære tekster består at en overflod af modsætningsfyldte udsagn og betydninger. Tekster er på den ene side liniære og afsluttede, men samtidigt komplekse, mangetydige og disparate. En analytisk bearbejdning af tekster består derfor i skabelsen af en teoretisk forståelse af den overflod af betydninger, ikke i reduktion af betydning til simple dualismer (kultur/natur, menneske/dyr, mand/kvinde etc.) eller en essens. Den analytiske opgave bliver i stedet at forstå tekster i deres kompleksitet, egenart og selvgyldige betydningsdannelser. Jeg vil i mit oplæg vise, hvordan Macherey på den ene side foregriber den senere ideologikritik ved især at undersøge ideologiske strukturer i teksterne, og på den anden postmodernismen ved at forstå tekster som en overflod af betydninger. Jeg vil desuden påpege, hvordan

Machereys forståelse nok tangerer et monolistisk sandhedsbegreb, men samtidig lægger op til en overskridelse gennem analytisk praksis.

Nicolai von Eggers

ANTIPOLITICS, OR THE SPONTANEOUS IDEOLOGY OF THE OLIGARCHS: A MATERIALIST READING OF ARISTOTLE'S POLITICS

Aristotle's treatise on Politics can be read as the first attempt at defining a science of politics. But it can also be read as a specific intervention in a specific conjuncture. When Aristotle wrote his treatise, Athens was dominated by a direct, yet limited direct democracy: Citizens had direct control over the legislative assembly and the law court, military generals were elected and the public economy was based on a form of progressive taxation. Confronted with this form of politics, Aristotle adopts a cautious yet extensive critique and ultimately concludes that Athens should be governed by "the middle class" in a system he simply calls politeia (constitution). This politeia is not a brazen oligarchy under the direct control of the filthy rich, but also not a democracy in which the poorest sections of society could, at least formally, have a say and potentially even dominate politics. Aristotle tries to portray this as the most moderate form of democracy, but in reality, there is nothing distinguishing it from oligarchy even according to Aristotle's own definitions. Aristotle's attack on democracy rests on Aristotle's discussion of a number of elements concerning history, revolution, sovereignty, civil war and knowledge. In this paper, I will focus specifically on Aristotle's conception of political knowledge: What constitutes political knowledge and how is it obtained? Questions that points towards who are legitimate in making sovereign decisions and how such decisions are to be made. In this way, the question of epistemology leads straight to the question of sovereignty. By way of his critiques, Aristotle also gives us a definition of what (true) democracy looks like, what the essence of democracy is, which I will also touch upon. But my main argument Aristotle's position ultimately leads to a number of depoliticizing strategies and, hence, it should be seen as an antipolitics that is perhaps not too different from strategies and discussions today. This position, which is especially represented by liberals in politics but also supporters of "mixed constitutionalism" in academia, is what I propose to call "the spontaneous ideology of the oligarchs."

Jan Thorhauge Frederiksen

FLERE SLAGS KAPITAL, FLERE SLAGS KLASSE: ET MARXISTISK PERSPEKTIV PÅ DEN EMPIRISKE KONSTRUKTION AF KLASSER I BOURDIEU-INSPIRERET SOCIOLOGI

Den franske sociolog Pierre Bourdieu har i mange af sine studier gjort kapital til et centralt begreb. Den Bourdieuske udspecificering af det Marx'ske kapitalbegreb i kulturel social, økonomisk og andre kapitalformer tillader en mange-dimensionel analyse af sociale uligheder. Det er derfor oplagt at forsøge også at bruge Bourdieus kapitalformer i en klasseanalyse, men dette viser sig både kompliceret, og problematisk. Det Marx'ske klassebegrebs teoretiske indhold viser sig vanskeligt at fastholde metodologisk i en Bourdieusk ramme, af flere årsager. For det første er Bourdieus egen interesse i klasse-begrebet fokuseret på hvad nogen Marx-læsninger har kaldt klassen for sig, altså klasser som bevidste sociale agenter. Der er ikke som sådan en entydig Bourdieusk forestilling om klasser som heterogene og diskrete sociale grupperinger (klassen i sig). For det andet viser det sig vanskeligt at omsætte Bourdieus kapitalformer fra teoretiske begreber til empirisk tilgængelige fænomener. Undervejs sker der hyppigt det, at forholdet mellem klasse og kapital undervejs let reduceres til en identitet; i stedet for at klasse er forklarende for ulige kapitaldistribution, bliver ulige kapitaldistribution kategoriseret som klasse. Faren er således at klasse reduceres fra en aktivt ulighedskonstituerende social forskel til en klassifikation af sådanne uligheder. I min præsentation vil jeg diskutere hvordan en række nyere danske, norske og engelske studier empirisk konstruerer klasser med brug af Bourdieus kapitalformer. Jeg vil diskutere hvilke analytiske konsekvenser disse forskellige konstruktioner har, hvordan de håndterer forholdet mellem klasse og klassifikation, og i hvilket omfang de adskiller sig fra det Marx'ske klassebegreb.

Marie Frederiksen

KVINDER OG DEN RUSSISKE REVOLUTION

Den russiske revolution startede på kvindernes internationale kampdag 1917. Det var ikke et tilfælde. Krigen, fødevaremanglen og de elendige forhold lagde et kæmpe pres på hele den russiske arbejderklasse, ikke mindst kvinderne. I februar (marts ny tidsregning) blev det nok. Kvindelige arbejdere i Petrograd gik i strejke og opfordrede de mandlige arbejdere til at gå med. Det blev startskuddet til den russiske revolution. Fem dage senere var Zaren gået af. Før

revolutionen var kvinderne ifølge loven mere eller mindre at betragte som mandens ejendom, og han havde bl.a. lov at slå sin kone. Ifølge en opgørelse fra 1897 kunne kun 13,1% af de russiske kvinder læse. Det revolutionære parti i Rusland, Bolsjevikkerne, havde altid sat kampen for kvindens frigørelse højt. De så kvindekampen som en uadskillelig del af arbejderklassens kamp for befrielse. Og da de fik flertal i sovjetterne i Oktober 1917 gjorde de ord til handling. Det nye sovjetmagt sidestillede øjeblikkeligt kvinder og mænd juridisk. Kollontai blev verdens første kvindelige minister (folkekommissær). Abort blev lovliggjort (mere end 50 år før det skete i Danmark). Ægteskab og skilsmisse blev fjernet fra kirkens kontrol og gjort til et spørgsmål om simpel registrering. Et særligt organ, Zenothdel, blev oprettet for at uddanne og involvere flere i kvinder i at styre partiet og staten. Homoseksualitet blev afkriminaliseret. Men det blev også tydeligt, at ligestilling for loven ikke af sig selv sikrede reel ligestilling, for slet ikke at tale om kvindens befrielse. Sovjetøkonomien var langt fra udviklet nok til at bygge de nødvendige vuggestuer, skoler osv. Den stalinistiske degenerering, der fulgte revolutionen, førte tilbageskridt for kvinderne: Abort blev forbudt, skilsmisse blev gjort dyrt, homoseksuelle blev forfulgt.

Christian Gorm Hansen

MARXISMEN SOM REVOLUTIONENS VÅBEN?

I et bemærkelsesværdigt interview fra 1968 betegner den franske marxist og filosof Louis Althusser den marxistiske teoris historiske bedrift som en dobbelt revolution af den hidtidige filosofi: Fra og med den marxistiske teori bliver den mekanistiske materialisme, som var »idealistisk i sin historieopfattelse«, til dialektisk materialisme. Og dermed er magtforholdet efterfølgende vendt om: fra da af kan materialismen beherske idealismen inden for filosofien, og, ifald de politiske betingelser realiseres, vinde klassernes magtkamp, kampen mellem de forskellige tilværelsesopfattelser. Althussers artikulering af marxismens dobbelt-revolutionære egenskab udgør her næsten 50 år efter samtidigt en præcisering af, hvordan den marxistiske teoris revolutionære udsigelsesposition i dag alene indtager en en-dimensional funktion: Når marxister i dag fremfører marxistisk teori, begrænser dens "revolutionære" bidrag sig til at være fortolkningsmæssige nuanceringer, der kritisk skal antaste de for tiden gældende videnskabelige diskurser eller politisk-ideologiske hegemonier. Men, som Althusser formulerer det i forlængelse af Marx, det er først, når marxismen forenes med den politiske kamp, at den

ophører med blot at fortolke verden og kan blive et våben i kampen for dens forandring. Med forholdet mellem yderpolerne i Althussers karakteristik som udgangspunkt vil dette oplæg tage fat på den opgave at pege på, hvordan den marxistiske teori kan udgøre det fundament, hvorfra en ny tilværelsesopfattelse kan stilles op imod myten om kapitalismens uendelighed og dermed blive til en del af klassekampen som revolutionens våben. Dette stiller nødvendigvis en række spørgsmål, hvoraf blot nogle få vil blive berørt her: Kan man overhovedet tale om marxisme uden at tale om klassekamp? Hvor skal marxismen bruges? Af hvem? Hvordan bør den "organiseres" og på hvilket grundlag?, etc.

Andreas Beck Holm

SPINOZA I MODERNE MARXISME

Det er blevet sagt, at hver gang marxismen er i krise, vender dens mest innovative teoretikere tilbage til Spinoza i deres forsøg på at finde nye veje. Og sandt er det i hvert fald, at den hollandske 1600-tals filosof som en af meget få før-marxistiske teoretikere har fascineret marxistiske tænkere siden Marx og Engels selv. Denne udvikling er kun blevet forstærket gennem de seneste halvtreds år, ikke mindst i Frankrig, og ikke mindst i relation til Louis Althusser, der i 1974 selv erklærer at være spinozist. Spørgsmålet er imidlertid dels, hvordan indflydelsen fra Spinoza historisk er kommet til udtryk i marxismen, dels om Spinoza stadig kan bidrage til dens teoriudvikling, og i givet fald hvordan. Det er spørgsmål, som jeg i mit oplæg med udgangspunkt i en kort opsummering af nogle af hovedpointerne i Spinozas tænkning vil søge at løfte lidt af sløret for. Problemstillingens og stofmængdens enorme omfang dikterer dog en stram prioritering af stoffet, og derfor vil fokus i forhold til det første spørgsmål være på anvendelsen af Spinoza i den Althusser-marxistiske tradition, med særligt henblik på Etienne Balibar og Warren Montag, samt naturligvis Althusser selv. I forhold til det andet spørgsmål vil jeg kort præsentere nogle aktuelle marxistiske aktualiseringer af Spinozas værk.

Niklas Zenius Jespersen

DEN "UPERFEKTE" TEORI: DANMARK OG TEORIEN OM DEN FEUDALE PRODUKTIONSMÅDE

Da Marx i 1800-tallet udviklede hans teorier om feudalisme og den feudale produktionsmåde var der en generel enighed i intellektuelle kredse om at tage udgangspunkt i nogle få idealiserede

feudale samfund, særligt Normandiet og det normanniske England. Et snævert fokus, der også fik betydning for Marx' teoriudvikling og som levede videre længe efter Marx død, perfektioneret i Marc Blochs afvisning af alternative feudalsamfund som Skandinavien som tilfælde af "uperfekt" feudalisme. Men historien bevæger sig sjældent i denne slags "ideal"-stadier og forskningen har vist at langt de fleste feudale samfund på en række vigtige punkter fungerede vidt forskelligt både fra denne idealiserede feudalisme forestilling generelt og specifikt fra en række punkter i Marx' teori. Med udgangspunkt i overgangen fra vikingetid til tidlig middelalder i Danmark vil vi kigge nærmere på relationen mellem Marx teori og hvad vi i dag ved om de faktiske samfund i perioden. Ligeledes vil vi perspektivere til lignende problemer mellem Marx' teori og andre "uperfekte" feudalsamfund. Herunder vil vi se på forskellen mellem Kapitalens afsnit om feudal jordrente og jordrentens udvikling i Danmark, forskelle mellem teori og empiri i forhold til udviklingen af betalingsformer (arbejde, naturalier og penge), samt betydningen af den overvældende eksistens af frie selvstændige bønder, den manglende juridiske binding til jorden og ekstra mellemlag af forpagtere mellem den umiddelbare producent og aristokratiet, for om produktionsmåden i f.eks. Danmark kan beskrives som feudal. På det grundlag vil vi diskutere om det er teorien om feudal produktion der må udvikles eller droppes eller om det er visse af disse samfund, herunder Danmark, der må afvises som at havde været feudale. En diskussion med implikationer for en generel ny forståelse af hele teorien om historisk materialisme.

Mathias Hein Jessen

THE SEPARATION BETWEEN STATE, MARKET AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN CAPITALISM: A MARXIST APPROACH TO CIVIL SOCIETY IN (NEOLIBERAL) CAPITALISM

Siden 1980erne og i stigende grad op gennem 1990erne til i dag er forestillingen om "civilsamfundet" blevet en afgørende bestanddel i de vestlige liberal-demokratiske samfund. På den ene side spiller civilsamfundet en central rolle i den liberal-demokratiske forestilling som en normativt privilegeret sfære med iboende (gode) værdier såsom sammenhold, sammenhængskraft, frivillighed og demokrati(ske processer), der må beskyttes mod statens og markedets koloniserende logikker. På den anden side er civilsamfundet i stigende grad blevet centralt i nedskæringsdiskursen i de vestlige stater som en særlig værdi og ressource, der kan mobiliseres og instrumentaliseres

til at afhjælpe den kriseramte velfærdsstat og yde nogle af de velfærdsydelser som velfærdsstaterne ikke længere vil eller kan yde. Dette paper argumenterer for, at civilsamfundet og adskillelsen af stat, marked og civilsamfund spiller en afgørende rolle og er en konstituerende faktor i den moderne stat, den liberal-demokratiske forestilling og i kapitalismen. Civilsamfundet er ikke en given sfære, der eksisterer med særlige værdier, men er noget der konstant og kontinuerligt produceres, og dermed produceres om en særlig form for civilsamfund. Netop ved at producere civilsamfundet som noget "ekstrapolitisk" udenfor staten og markedet, depolitiseres civilsamfundet og gøres til en ressource, der kan mobiliseres i nedskæringspolitikkens tjeneste. Dette paper forsøger således at udvikle en marxistisk tilgang til civilsamfundets rolle i den neoliberale kapitalisme. *Bemærk at oplægget vil være på engelsk.*

Kalle Kühlmann

DEN RUSSISKE REVOLUTIONS KONSEKVENSER I DEN DANSKE ARBEJDERBEVÆGELSE

Den Russiske Revolution i 1917 havde vidtrækkende konsekvenser for dansk kapitalisme og den danske arbejderbevægelse. For den danske arbejderbevægelse betød den Russiske Revolution, at processen med Socialdemokratiets udvikling væk fra at være dansk kapitalismes største trussel endegyldigt blev afsluttet og partiet nu var kapitalismens støttepille. Det kulminerede med den socialdemokratiske ledelses fredning af Kongehuset og det borgerlige demokrati efter Christian d. 10. kupforsøg i 1920 (også kendt som Påskekrisen). Den danske stat og herskende klasse havde i flere omgange forsøgt at knuse eller svække den danske arbejderbevægelse og Socialdemokratiet, men den socialdemokratiske ledelse totale omfavnelse af reformismen og det borgerlige demokrati siden 1877 havde reelt ført til, at Socialdemokratiet var en naturlig allierede for den danske herskende klasse mod social omvæltning. Den russiske og tyske revolutions meget konkrete trussel om at sprede sig til Danmark førte til, at de to parter fandt hinanden i en alliance, der har holdt sig helt til i dag. Ligesom i andre lande blev Danmark ramt af store bevægelser i kølvandet på Den Russiske Revolution. Den Russiske Revolution betød splittelser i mange lande i den traditionelle arbejderbevægelse og førte til, at Danmark fik sit første Kommunistparti, DKP. Der var store muligheder for partiet, men det kom dårligt fra start, grundet dårlig forberedelse, økonomi og politiske uenigheder. Partiet blev dog konsolideret på baggrund af hjælp og

støtte fra Tredje Internationale, men med Stalins magtovertagelse i Sovjetunionen i 1924 begyndte en proces, der førte til at DKP gik fra at være samlingspunktet for den revolutionære danske venstrefløj til at blive et udenrigspolitisk redskab for Moskva.

Adrian Ortega Camara Lind
FREMMEDGØRELSE I DANMARK: ET HISTORISK GENSYN
Oplægget tager udgangspunkt i et historisk-filosofisk specialearbejde der har været undervejs i det forhenværende semester og som stadig er under udvikling, hvilket afspejles i denne oplægsskitses karakter. Der lægges ud med en kort præsentation af Karl Marx' fremmedgørelsesbegreb og dets filosofiske implikationer, som læst i hans berømte 1844 Parisermanuskripter. Begrebets udvikling og brug hos andre filosoffer som, Lukacs og Marcuse, vil også kort blive skitseret. Dernæst præsenteres den historiske ramme for analysen af begrebets rolle i venstrefløjens fortolkning og forestilling af samfundet. Det væsentlige i oplægget bliver her præsenteret igennem et udvalg af forskellige kilder som er tiltænkt de tilhørendes interesse, og som kan hjælpe os til at nærme os den daværende virkelighedsforståelse og det medførende forestillingsunivers. De væsentlige træk i kilderne vil derefter blive forsøgt syntetiseret til en begyndende forståelse af disse fremmedgørelseserfaringer. Tilhørende ville blive inviteret med til diskussionen af denne historisk-filosofisk-syntetiserende fortolkning. Det præsenterede kildematerialet vil blandt andet bestå af; Udklip fra DSU's ungdomsblad (SOC), filmklip fra Peter Watkins "70'ernes folk," uddrag fra hippie-litteraturen (Barbara Berger), uddrag fra socialisationsforskningen, uddrag fra filosofien (Ole Thyssen), sangtekster af Jesper Jensen og digte af Marianne Larsen.

Saman Atter Motlagh
ET TEORETISK ANTI-HUMANISTISK BEGREB OM FREMMEDGØRELSE?
Det er en aristotelisk indsigt at et begreb om "det gode samfund" (politik) er betinget af et begreb om "det gode liv" (etik), eftersom at et godt samfund tilsigter at producere gode liv. Fremmedgørelsesbegrebet som det kendes fra den tidlige Marx' Økonomisk-filosofiske manuskripter handler dybest set om menneskelig frigørelse. Det er derfor et vigtigt stykke marxistisk filosofi fordi vi hermed har udgangspunktet for et marxistisk begreb om mennesket, og hvordan mennesket kan frigøres til realisering af et godt liv – dvs. en

marxistisk etik. Set med post-strukturalistiske briller virker det dog som om at fremmedgørelsesbegrebet bygger på en suspekt essentialistisk, humanistisk menneskeforståelse (jf. også Althussers afskrivning af den tidlige Marx). Dog er det filosofisk vigtigt at holde fast i eller udarbejde en etik for den marxistiske teori. I dette oplæg vil jeg derfor forsøge at "redde" fremmedgørelsesbegrebet og den marxistiske etik vha. den lacanianske psykoanalyse, der netop selv tilhører den post-strukturalistiske tradition, hvorfra ellers kritikken af fremmedgørelsesbegrebet og den tidlige Marx kan rejses. Dette greb kræver en udfoldelse af hvor en marxistisk og en lacaniansk menneskeforståelse kan mødes, og hvorfra en etik og et nyt begreb om fremmedgørelse kan rejses. Kort sagt kan man med den sene Marx, Althusser og Lacan begribe mennesket som et socialt og historisk produceret subjekt, og ikke som et naturgivent væsen. Altså et subjekt som er konstitueret i kraft af en socialitet, en fremmed magt, en Anden. Subjektet er i kraft af denne konstitutive andethed altid-allerede fremmed for sig selv. Politisk og etisk emancipation og selvrealisering handler derfor ikke om at komme ud af fremmedgørelsen, men om dialektisk at overskride fremmedgørelsens, ved at drage fremmedhedens/andethedens logik ende. Dette er hvad der i den lacanianske psykoanalyses etik kaldes "at traversere fantasien."

Peter Nielsen

NYLIBERALE UNIVERSITETER?

I efterkrigstidens industrisamfund var fabrikker og Folketinget centrale udtryk for samfundslivet i bred forstand og samlingspunkter for sociale spændinger. Fabrikker er i dag enten tomme eller automatiserede. De står tomme tilbage, når produktionen flytter til udlandet, og når de forbliver her i landet, medfører den accelererende automatisering, at de ikke længere er centrale i det sociale liv. Folketinget er tilsvarende enten tomt eller automatiseret i overført betydning. Det politiske liv på Christiansborg er tomt i den forstand, at de vigtigste beslutninger og strømninger i samfundet finder sted udenfor. Og i det omfang der gennemføres love, laves reformer og opereres efter politiske planer, er der et essentielt element af automatik over udviklingen. Det er som om nyliberalismen er et fast program i den politiske maskine. Sideløbende med industrisamfundets forvitring er universiteterne imidlertid blevet en slags biopolitiske koncerner; de institutioner der er for velstandssamfundet, hvad fabrikker og Folketinget var for industrisamfundet. Universiteterne var helt frem til 1990'erne et markant modbillede til nyliberalismen og

et bevis på, at radikalt demokrati og autonomi ikke kun var slagord på gaden, men realiserbare måder at organisere liv og arbejde på. I dag er det indiskutable mål for universiteterne, at de skal bidrage til øget økonomisk vækst gennem nyttig viden og større udbud af relevant arbejdskraft. Men selvom de nyliberale reformer har bredt sig som en steppebrand i den formelle organisering og officielle retorik, så er hverdagen fortsat præget af stor mangfoldighed og alternativer til nyliberalismen. Kan universiteterne bane vejen for et andet samfund eller handler det snarere om at tage flugten, med de progressive værdier i bagagen?

Matina Noutsou

THE 'GREFERENDUM' AND THE EUROZONE CRISIS IN THE DANISH DAILY PRESS

This presents a critical analysis of the Danish press coverage of the referendum called by the Left-led coalition government of Greece in July 2015, concerning the future of austerity policies. It focuses on the conservative daily press of Denmark, one of the "core" EU countries, writing on developments in the periphery. Three main themes emerge in the study's discourse analysis of Berlingske Tidende's and Jyllands Posten's coverage: "post-democratic realism," "the upper-class gaze," and "Orientalism and cultural racism." The authors not only reveal the one-sided, elitist coverage by the rightwing papers at Europe's centre but also point out how the principles of neoliberalism itself and the acceptance of austerity are being constantly reinforced by the media in a country like Denmark, which had previously been marked out for its more progressive welfare capitalism. Denmark's turn to the Right (and to racism) alongside its biased coverage of the "Greferendum" are examined here in the context of the way in which neoliberalism and its politico-social effects are now presented as both common sense and the only way forward.

Henning Salling Olesen

A POLITICAL ECONOMY OF LABOR? A LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

This paper outlines a link between the critique of the political economy of capital – in line with Marx – and a conception of economic democracy based in the everyday experiences of working people. Theorizing learning in and for work life in a way which discovers what the political economy of capital disguises is seen as the material basis of developing new forms of social relations and democracy. A "political

Economy of Labor" must conceptualize the needs and interests of the working people and the qualitative and material aspects of work life – as opposed to the exchange values and the "dead labor" which form the basic elements of the political economy of capital.Until now the relation between economy and political processes is mostly thought of as a relation between quasi natural economy and modifications enabled by the state. The Social Democrat Welfare systems are based in the redistribution of revenues and the provision of services that tend to be neglected or under-prioritized in a capitalist market. This model is under siege, both in terms of power and in terms of legitimacy. This paper will point to the potential for democratic social change based in the everyday experiences of work, depending on how the processes are understood and organized. The scientific task is to develop methods and theoretical tools to help excavate and understand these experiences and to help to form a vision/theory of the possibility of organizing the entire complex modern societal work and the exchange process as a (political) economy of the living workers. The response to these great issues may be found in empirical investigations at the micro level – among others in the study of work and learning. The present state of capitalism – where industrial as well as the colonial tools for profitability are being exhausted – has in a way already set this scene – manifested in the interest in human resources, lifelong learning and emotional labor. The notion of a political economy of labor is a theoretical framework in which the material (evolutionary and historical) development of the capacity to work is analyzed as a process of learning and self-regulation.

Anna Cornelia Ploug

ÅNDSAUTOMATEN, ELLER IDEERNES MATERIALITET: IDEOLOGITEORETISKE RESSOURCER HOS SPINOZA

"[M]atrixen for enhver mulig teori om ideologi" kan findes i appendixet til første bog af Etikken (1677), skal man tro Althusser. Her forklarer Spinoza hvordan mennesket 'vender naturen på hovedet' og bilder sig ind at være en fantastisk undtagelse fra den lovprægede natur. Imidlertid kan man finde materiale til at tænke ideologi andre steder i Spinozas værk. Med afsæt i Etikken (og til dels TIE), der skelner mellem 'tænkning' og 'udstrækning' som forskellige måder at forstå virkeligheden på, vil jeg pege på to interessante elementer til en ideologiteori, der begge beror på at vi sætter parentes om spørgsmålet om sandhed, og i stedet interesserer os for relationer internt til idesfæren. Dels et analyseredskab, der angår ideens årsag eller

grund; dels en pragmatisk orienteret strategi, der angår dens virkning. I sin adskillelse af attributterne blokerer den spinozistiske metafysik for at tænke ideologi som en afledt 'refleks' af de materielle betingelser, og opfordrer i stedet til at undersøge kausale strukturer blandt ideerne selv. Ved hjælp af begrebet om den adækvate ide vil jeg identificere tre 'ideologiske figurer', der eksemplificerer det element af forvrængning, der er på spil i ideologiske konstruktioner, uden at søge tilflugt i kategorierne sand/falsk og dermed forblive i et spørgsmål om korrespondens mellem ideer og ting. Dernæst vil jeg – i forlængelse af Hasana Sharps begreb om renaturalisering (2011) – pege på hvordan en materialistisk kritik bør udvides til at omfatte tænkningen selv således at ideer og ideologiske komplekser vurderes ud fra deres affektive virkninger. Ved en sådan spinozistisk indstilling flyttes fokus væk fra ideer som afbildninger og hen imod deres produktive kraft i en affektiv økonomi.

Anders Ramsay

LOGISKT ELLER HISTORISKT? STRIDEN OM TOLKNINGEN AV VARUANALYSEN

För 150 år sedan utkom i Hamburg den första utgåvan av första bandet av Das Kapital. Det var frukten av ett arbete på en kritik av den klassiska nationalekonomin som Marx hade påbörjat över tjugo år tidigare i Paris och som han då trodde skulle vara snabbt överstökat så att han kunde övergå till andra uppgifter. Projektet skulle visa sig vara mer komplicerat än han tänkt sig och kom att sysselsätta honom resten av hans liv, utan att han kom till en egentlig avslutning på det. Boken nådde ingen omedelbar framgång och egentliga diskussioner om den kom inte i gång varken i arbetarrörelsen eller i den akademiska världen förrän efter hans död. Vad många av Marx senare anhängare länge inte varit klara över är att den första utgåvan 1867 på väsentliga punkter skiljer sig från den bok som senare blivit läst. Den har en annan kapitelindelning och framför allt skiljer sig de inledande kapitlen om varan och värdet till både uppdelning och i viss mån innehåll. Dessutom innehåller den ett appendix som är en förenklad pedagogisk framställning av varukapitlet. Det var inte Marx första försök till framställning av varuanalysen och inte heller det sista. De olika versioner Marx lämnade eftersom har gett upphov till olika tolkningstraditioner. Mot den historiska tolkning som Friedrich Engels gjorde i det tredje bandet av Das Kapital, av varuanalysen som en skildring av den enkla varuproduktionen, vilken länge var den rådande i både den ortodoxa marxismen och i

marxism-leninismen, står den logiska tolkningen som stärkts med den nya marxläsningen sedan sextiotalet. Varuanalysen framstår som oumbärlig för förståelsen av analysen av kapitalet, men samtidigt inte som oproblematisk. Frågan gäller dels om Marx verkligen lyckades göra en rent logisk framställning, dels om han menade att den också hade en historisk giltighet, och slutligen vilken tolkning som är den mest hållbara. Jag kommer i anslutning till författare som Backhaus, Reichelt, Heinrich, Rubin och Postone att argumentera för den logiska tolkningen och för att varuanalysen endast har giltighet i och förutsätter det utvecklade kapitalistiska produktionssättet.

Klaus Schulte

EN INDKOMST TIL AT LEVE AF – OG TID TIL AT LEVE I

Oplægget vil præsentere og kritisk diskutere den tyske sociolog og social-psykolog Frigga Haugs marxistisk-feministiske teoriansats, som siden 2008 med fremkomsten af hendes bog *Die Vier-in-Einem – Perspektive. Politik von Frauen für eine neue Linke* er stødt på en tiltagende interesse, både i Tyskland og internationalt. Bogens hovedtanker kan der nu også stiftes bekendtskab med på dansk i Haugs artikel *Hvorfor kæmpe om Tid?* På grundlag af sin historiematerialistisk-socialantropologisk funderede nytænkning af forholdene mellem kønnene som produktionsforhold og et 80'er-marxismens fiksering på lønarbejdet samt med udgangspunkt i de "indespærrede" udviklingspotentialer, som produktivkraftudviklingen under nutidens transnationale high-tech-kapitalisme rummer for både arbejdende og "arbejdsløse," argumenterer Haug for muligheden og nødvendigheden af en radikal nedsættelse af erhvervsarbejdstiden for alle til fire timer dagligt. Suppleret med forslaget om fire timers dagligt reproduktions- og omsorgsarbejde for både kvinder og mænd samt kravet om fire timer til hhv. selvudviklingsaktiviteter for hvert menneske og fire timers rådighed for aktiv deltagelse i politik og civilsamfundets anliggender bliver det til en konkret utopi for en grundlæggende forandring af vores levemåde med differenceføl-somt-universalistisk ligestilling mellem kønnene. Ikke tænkt som en dogmatisk opskrift på, hvordan hver enkelt skal opdele sine 16 vågne timer i døgnet, skal den snarere tjene som kompas ved udviklingen af en revolutionær-realpolitik i Luxemburgs og Gramscis forstand, der tager det socialistiske og kommunistiske perspektiv ind i de daglige kampe om samfundsforandringen i de 'arbejdendes' interesser. Her skal Fire-i-Én – Perspektivet kunne fungere som ledetråd og vurderingsgrundlag ved den kritiske diskussion om og udformningen af

nærmere liggende målsætninger (jf. f.eks. debatter om borgerløn, uddannelsesorlov, både individuel og samfundsmæssig bæredygtig fleksibilisering af arbejdsmarkedet og pensionsreformer) og programmer for faglige organisationer, demokratiske folkelige bevægelser og politiske partier.

Curt Sørensen

DEN RUSSISKE OG DE CENTRALEUROPÆISKE REVOLUTIONER I KOMPARATIVT PERSPEKTIV

I mit paper/oplæg vil sammenligne den russiske revolution i 1917-21, i Tyskland 1918-1923, og i Østrig- Ungarn 1918-20. Jeg vil, med fokus på klasser og klasseforhold samt staten, fremdrage og diskutere de fælles træk i forløbene, men også forskellighederne. Jeg vil herunder tilbagevendende diskutere spørgsmålet om forholdet mellem historiske og strukturelle forhold og centralt placerede aktørers situationsopfattelse og handlinger, spørgsmålet om forholdet mellem teori, ideologi og praksis og massedynamikken i bunden af de respektive samfund. Til slut vil jeg rejse spørgsmålet om de videre konsekvenser af forløbene.

Gert Sørensen

POLITIK, MEDIER, HEGEMONI: FRA BERLUSCONI TIL TRUMP

I den udstrækning den tidligere italienske ministerpræsident Silvio Berlusconi er blevet nævnt som en slags inspiration for Donald Trump, kan der være grund til at se nærmere på dette fortilfælde, der har vist sig at være andet og mere end et italiensk case. Der kan næppe være tvivl om, at Berlusconi fra 1980erne og frem bidrog til at ændre den lange efterkrigstids politiske kultur ved hurtigere end andre at tænke medierne og 'hverdagsfornuften' ind i den politiske konsensusdannelse. Oplægget vil, for det første, undersøge de økonomiske, symbolske og politiske kilder til Berlusconis hastige opstigning i det italienske samfund og indkredse grundtrækkene i det kulturelle hegemoni, der skulle sikre hans bredt funderede magtbasis i flere årtier og for altid ændre det politiske landskab. Dernæst vil det analysere de præmisser, der her er blevet lagt dels for en ny cyklus af konflikter mellem den neoliberalistiske globalisering og nationalpopulismen og dels overhovedet for en egentlig postdemokratisk udvikling.

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2018

MARX NU / MARX NOW ARENAS OF STRUGGLE

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

University of Southern Denmark
7-8 September 2018

They say that when you repeat something three time in a row it becomes a tradition. It is thus with great pride that the Danish Society for Marxist Studies (SMS) invite you to the establishment of a new tradition in Danish academia: the society's annual conference, **Marx Now!**

SMS invites researchers, students, and other interested parties to present research directly related to or otherwise inspired by Marx, Marxism and/or the critical impulse that has issued from this tradition over the past 200 years at **Marx Now!** 2018.

The overall theme of this year's conference is **Arenas of struggle** understood in the broadest possible sense of the term. Traditionally, Marxism's theoretical arenas of struggle have been political economy and critical philosophy while the practical arenas of struggle of the workers' movement have been the economic and political class struggle. But in the 21st century, the situation appears more complex; these central arenas of struggle (may) have lost their centrality, and other arenas appear to have supplanted them. We invite explorations of this phenomenon. Examples might include:

- **Logistics.** As capital has engulfed the entire planet, the global south has been subjected to its rule, and insofar as the post-fordist organisational model has internationalized production and distribution, logistics has become an increasingly central phenomenon: from the most basic forms of commodity transport such as freight ships, highways, and freight trains to the satellites and subterranean cables that

constitute the physical foundation of the internet. What is the significance of logistics for capitalism today? How does resistance to capital manifest itself on the logistical front?

- **Urban spaces.** Capitalism has always been inextricably tied to urbanization and the concentration of labour in cities, but more recently, cities have increasingly become centres of social movements and countercultures that attempt to subvert the spatial preconditions of capital and transform them into spaces of contestation. The struggle over urban spaces has become a struggle against capital. How do these struggles unfold practically? And is it possible to think urban spaces beyond or outside of the power of capital and the market? If the era of the bourgeois nation states is over, can the city become the site of a new form of resistance?

- **Intersections.** Questions of gender, sexuality, and other social categories have long had an important role in left-wing and Marxist social movements and struggles, but in recent years these question have been revisited in relation to discussions of 'identity politics.' The questions of the intersections between these categories and their reproduction have become increasingly central and have challenged previous conceptions of class, production, and reproduction. But what are the relations between oppression based on sexuality, skin-colour, gender, class, religion, functional variations of bodies, etc.? And what perspectives can Marxism and critical thought contribute to these questions?

- **Imperialism, globalization and the national question**. With capital's internationalization, the last 15 years of constant war and conflict in the Middle East and the on-going so-called 'migration crisis', the question of imperialism and related questions of globalization and the nation state are back on the agenda. How are we to understand these phenomena? Is the nation state a passing political formation? Is its dissolution an answer to capital's internationalisation or a part of it? And what can the Marxist canon contribute with regard to the issue of imperialism and the national question?

This is not an exhaustive list, but a few examples of what might be topics in our discussion of contemporary arenas of struggle. We hope that this theme can serve as a heuristic device or a way to develop new perspectives on on-going research. Like in previous years, there is also room for for presentations that do not directly relate to the theme. We invite presentations on any and all topics related to Marx, Marxism, critical research and related topics.

Send your abstract of 200-300 words to marxistiskestudier@gmail.com before 1 July 2018. Abstracts and presentations can be in Danish or English.

The Danish Society for Marxist Studies (SMS) is a scientific organisation dedicated to promoting research in and inspired by Marx and the entire tradition of thought, which springs from his theories. "Marxist" should thus be understood in the broadest possible sense. SMS does not adhere to any particular theoretical or political position. The society holds an annual conference and aims to transcend the narrow disciplinary boundaries of academia, which never could contain Marxism.

ABSTRACTS

Tithi Bhattacharya

WHAT DID MARX HAVE TO SAY ABOUT COOKING DINNER? MARXISM AND GENDER IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (KEYNOTE)

Marxism is often understood primarily as a theory of class struggle. But should class struggle be conceived in gender-neutral terms? My work explores the gendered silences within Marxist theory and considers how we might develop Marxism to better account for the mutually implication of class and gender.

Kristoffer Bayer

KARL MARX IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY – BEYOND METAPHYSICS AND POLITICS

This presentation explores the legacy of Marx in contemporary philosophy, focusing on the works of Jacques Derrida, Slavoj Zizek and Giorgio Agamben. I argue that the most fundamental political concepts of these philosophers – hauntology, the symptom, and the remnant, respectively – are all developed in continuation of Marx' fundamental concepts: class struggle, communism, the proletariat.

I thereby wish to highlight the importance of Marx in the development of contemporary philosophy. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida will write that Marx does not like ghosts but thinks of nothing else. That is a critique of the metaphysical Marx which simultaneously (and thereby) points towards the legacy of Marx: "a specter is haunting Europe," of course – communism. I will begin and end my presentation with Derrida's deconstruction of Marx and the politico-philosophical lessons to be drawn from this – in the words of Derrida himself: a hauntology. I subsequently show how both Zizek and Agamben develop some of their most central concepts by reference to Marx' concept of the proletariat – as formulated in the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* – and both formulate the proletariat as a double negation (negation of negation) which does not bring about any determinate entity. The proletariat as a negation of negation is by both philosophers embedded in a critique of Hegel's concept of society as a totality as well as any dialectic involving the gradual reconciliation of opposites. In closing I will examine how the ontologization of Marx' political concepts – and the politicization of Marx' ontological concepts – deployed by the three philosophers indicate new coordinates for contemporary political philosophy. New ways of conjuring up the specter of communism. As Derrida also puts it, there will be "no future without Marx."

Mikkel Bolt

POSTFASCISM, OR, THE CULTURAL LOGIC OF LATE CAPITALISM

Postfascism is very much a cultural phenomenon. And the conflicts of today occur less as class struggle than as cultural battles. Why is that? I propose to use Fred Jameson's classic text on postmodernism (as the cultural logic of late capitalism) as a framework for considering the new postfascist tendencies that have emerged during the last few years in USA and Europe (Trump, Brexit, Alternative for Germany, Pegida, Le Pen, Wilders' Party for Freedom, the Danish People's Party etc.). Jameson's analysis of postmodernism supplies us with a 'take' with which we can start mapping these reactionary or postfascist phenomena and embed them in an analysis of changes in late capitalism.

Nicolai Mariegaard von Eggers

POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Recently, leftist philosophers such as Peter Hallward and Panagiotis Sotiris have picked up the notion of sovereignty, or popular sovereignty, in order to try and conceptualise what a communist administration of power might look like. In this way, they can be said to address if not a lack then at least an underdeveloped element of Marxist theory, which tends to focus either on the theory of history or various forms of critique rather than discussing the form and content of popular rule. However, in the wake of new Leftist movements, from Barcelona and Rojava to new parliamentarian platforms such as Podemos, Syriza, Corbyn, Sanders and Mélenchon, it is only natural that the theoretical question about what popular rule is, how it works and what it might look like begin to come the fore of Leftist theorising. While the initial enthusiasm has ceded and we, with the rise of the right, humanitarian liberalism paralysed and the ascendency of authoritarian liberalism, are in a different situation from only few years ago, it is still even if not even more important to discuss the positive visions of the Left. In this paper, I wish to discuss the possible merits and potential pitfalls of the notion of sovereignty as part of that, also theoretical, work. I will do so by discussing various conceptions of sovereignty and distinguishing a thoroughly democratic variant from liberal, conservative and fascist ones.

Eskil Elling

WALTER BENJAMIN'S CONCEPTION OF THE PROLETARIAN STRIKE: BETWEEN SOVEREIGNTY AND COLONIALITY

In "Zur Kritik der Gewalt," Walter Benjamin formulated a conception of the general strike which concisely outlines the radical potential of this form of political action. As opposed to the political strike, he writes, the proletarian strike does not aim to achieve an immediate advantage, such as increased pay, but rather has as its sole objective the dissolution of the capitalist state. In this presentation, I argue that while this view grasps the importance of the strike as an arena of struggle, it also shows its limits. In a first step, I follow Werner Hamacher in arguing that Benjamin's proletarian strike works by exploiting the dependence of the order of the state on being performed by its subjects. The proletarian strike is 'afformative': in it, the subjects simply do nothing, and hence they suspend this performance, effectively realizing by this event the (albeit temporary) dissolution

of the state at which they aim. In a second step, I argue that this conception depends on the subjects in question being sovereign members of nation-state; only on the condition that they are recognized co-legislators of the state, and hence co- constitutive of its order, can their denial to perform this order achieve the desired effect. In a final step, drawing on decolonial theory, I argue that this form of resistance is confronted with its limits in former colonial states. Even today, the subjects here do not have the status of sovereign members of the world order which oppresses them. Rather, they are constituted as the other of this order, which thus depends on their exclusion. This shows that today's struggles for emancipation have to move beyond the arena of the nation-state, and also that on this level, the traditional strike has only limited effectiveness: Refraining from the performance of citizenship, which for the sovereign citizen amounted to a suspension of the state, is exactly what is expected of the colonial subject. Nevertheless, I stress in conclusion that Benjamin was, towards the end of his life, moving towards a more adequate conception of political resistance rooted in the "tradition of the oppressed."

Mathias Hein Jessen

CIVIL SOCIETY AND (NEOLIBERAL) CAPITALISM

Since the 1980's, and increasingly throughout the 1990's and continuing today, civil society has re-emerged as a central notion in Western (neo)liberal-democratic societies and as a central notion in the governance of these societies. On the one hand, civil society plays a central role in the liberal-democratic imaginary as a normatively privileged site or sphere of communication, voluntarism, social cohesion, democratisation processes, critique and resistance which must be protected from the encroaching logics of state and market. On the other hand, and at the same time, civil society is increasingly seen as a resource of public governance which can supply the social- and welfare services that the state can or will no longer provide. The language and notion of civil society is increasingly deployed as a means to open up public provision of welfare to austerity, cut-backs, privatization and competition. This paper analyses the function civil society plays in the current (neo)liberal, capitalist hegemonic order in both 1990's Third Way Social Democracy and the post-financial conjuncture, particularly in Denmark and the UK. Civil society at the same time legitimises the progressiveness of liberal democracy by positing the necessity as well as factual existence of a delineated sphere of free debate and social critique, while at the same time

this sphere with inherent (good) values can be appropriated to argue for the progressiveness and dynamism of civil society as opposed to the state, cold, ineffective, bureaucratic public sector, thereby legitimising cutbacks and introducing competition and private business solutions to the provision of welfare services. By arguing that civil society is a means to subsume societal struggle to a statist corporate-legal form that supports a given state-project, the paper seeks to develop a Marxist approach to civil society in (neoliberal) capitalism.

Andreas Beck Holm

POLITIK OG DEMOKRATI I RANCIÈRES POSTMARXISME

Den franske filosof Jacques Rancière er i dag en af Frankrigs bedst kendte intellektuelle. Han er elev af Althusser og medforfatter på *At læse Kapitalen*, men han har gennem de seneste årtier udviklet sig bort fra ikke blot Althusser-skolen, men også marxismen i det hele taget – uden at hans politik- og samfundsforståelse i øvrigt med tiden er blevet mindre radikal af den grund. Hermed er han et godt eksempel på de forfatterskaber, der ofte betegnes som postmarxistiske, idet de ganske vist placerer sig i traditionen fra Marx, præsenterer sig selv som politisk progressive, og ofte også trækker på marxistisk tankegods, men alligevel ikke kan karakteriseres som marxistiske i ordets egentlige betydning. I dette oplæg vil jeg give en kort introduktion til to nøglebegreber i Rancières forfatterskab, nemlig politik og demokrati. I gennemgangen af dem skulle det gerne blive klart, både hvordan man i hans forfatterskab ser kontinuiteten fra marxismen, og hvori bruddet med denne består. Samtidig vil jeg argumentere for, at selv om Rancières tilgang til disse emner rummer nogle styrker og ikke mindst et kritisk potentiale, løber den i al sin radikalitet ind i nogle blindgyder, der diskvalificerer den både teoretisk og politisk i sammenligning med en egentlig marxistisk tilgang.

Mette Toft Nielsen

DECOLONIZING KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN DANISH CLASSROOMS

Despite the fact that the year of 2017 was dedicated to shed light on Denmark's past as a colonial nation, marking that 100 years ago Denmark sold the West Indies to the USA, little has changed when it comes to the way we engage in discourses and narratives. Thus the cognitive imperialism continues to colonize the way we assign meaning to the world around us. In this presentation I want to take a critical look at how we engage future generations in Danish primary

schools in knowledge production. This means zooming in on how colonial power structures are still prevalent when, e.g. presenting pupils with narratives of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, how the theoretical foundation is rooted in white supremacy, embracing an ethnocentric understanding of culture, and how the xenophobic dichotomy of superior-inferior determines what falls within the frame and that which does not. I will discuss why this reality is a problem and use my own practice to suggest examples of how we can decolonize the knowledge processes we engage new generations in, both in terms of content and methods. I will finish my presentation by arguing why this way of thinking of teaching processes is essential for all children and young people in our primary schools as well as for our society as a whole if we want to secure social cohesion in the future.

Christian Skov Nørgaard

HULLER I DANMARKSKORTET

Hvordan blev 1960'ernes idealistiske almennyttige velfærdskvarterer til 2010'ernes kriminalitetsplagede ghettoer? Eller… Fandt den udvikling overhovedet sted? Oplægget handler om de politiske, urbane og økonomiske drømme og vilkår, der medførte at man på kort tid byggede en voldsom mængde almennyttige boliger, og hvordan disse drømme og vilkår førte til en politisk og journalistisk stigmatisering af boligområderne og deres indbyggere. Centralt i fortællingen står det socialdemokratiske kompromis mellem et ønske om social retfærdighed og en accept af kapitalismens vilkår, et kompromis, som fører til en skævvridning af boligmarkedet – man giver skatterabatter på boliglån, så de store og gode nybyggede lejligheder er mindre attraktive for middelklassen, der foretrækker at eje egen bolig. Pludselig mangler der nogle samfundslag i de nye kvarterer, der skulle huse stort set alle velfærds-Danmarks indkomstgrupper. De mangler i de planlagte "byer i byen," som skulle udgøre små mikrosamfund. Kvartererne var tænkt til denne socioøkonomiske diversitet – man byggede lejligheder i forskellige størrelser for at kunne rumme forskellige familiestørrelser og indkomstgrundlag. Da kvartererne stadig var nye, var projektet allerede på vej til at slå fejl. Det er disse kvarterer, som mærker kriserne hårdest. Det er her, der er flest arbejdsløse, og det er her, man viser nyligt løsladte og fraskilte mænd hen, når de ikke kan finde en bolig. Det er her, flygtninge og indvandrerne flytter ind, når de kommer til Danmark. Det er de kvarterer, de møder. Årsagerne til og udviklingen af problemerne i disse kvarterer har eksisteret længe inden Danmark modtog de første gæstearbejdere, men

hurtigt bliver arbejdsløsheden, kriminaliteten og utrygheden til et spørgsmål om dårlig integration. Pludselig har indvandrerne skabt disse *huller i Danmarkskortet*. Indvandrerne, og ikke den økonomiske politik. Islam, og ikke skattefradrag og boligstøtte. *De fremmede* er blevet syndebukke for velfærdsidealernes forsvinden i senkapitalismens kriser.

Anne-Marie Eggert Olsen

A MARXIST READING OF PLATO'S REPUBLIC

The title of my doctoral thesis on Plato's *Republic*, *To Change the World* ("At forandre verden"), announces rather explicitly an inspiration from Marx. What does that actually mean, and how does it change the interpretation of Plato? My paper will present issues that relate Plato to Marx and the later Freudo-Marxist Critical Theory. First of all individual and society (for which the Greeks had no word), but also dialectics and non-identity. Plato regards humans as products of society to an extent, we only meet again in Hegel and Marx, but contrary to Hegel's Aristotelian-naturalistic view of society, Plato sees society as our own product – and not a good one at that! The main scope of the Republic is thus at once at critique of society and of ideology: The social mechanisms of domination are real and effective as well as internalized and reproductive. Especially the critique of the pseudo-individualism in his contemporary democratic society and its reproductive logic (viz. Freud) that blacklisted Plato's political philosophy in the post-war period, gains actuality through a historical materialist reading. Finally it is discussed whether such a hermeneutic strategy tends to take Plato hostage in an alien universe. It must come to the test, anyway, and it is no objection that Plato is not a materialist. Idealism ultimately takes its name from Platonic ideas, but how 'idealist' is the theory of ideas? Plato clearly objects to the 'old materialism' (elements, atoms) and elaborates 'the subjective side' through his concepts of soul and spirit, but the theory of ideas is at the same time a dynamic and dialectical metaphysics underlining the non-identity of thing and concept (*chōrismos*) with a healthy skeptical assessment of the power of spirit.

Dominique Routhier

THE CYBERNETIC HYPOTHESIS REVISITED: THE NOTION OF "AUTOMATION" IN EARLY POSTWAR FRANCE, 1957-1962

This paper relates the history of cybernetics in France to heretical Marxist debates about the political economy of automation in the late

1950's. More specifically, this paper surveys discussions from three non-aligned journals; *Arguments*, *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, and *Internationale situationniste*, respectively. What was at stake in these discussions was the question about to what extent the application of cybernetics to the production process might open up new avenues towards emancipation, or, if this process – referred to as 'automation' – would instead merely reinforce capitalist relations of production and entail new forms of alienation in as well as outside the workplace? By using this somewhat overlooked chapter of French intellectual history as an analytical prism for the broader social, economic and cultural implications of automation in postwar Europe, this paper argues, we can begin to more clearly see the material contours of the 'cybernetic hypothesis' and the misguided social imaginary of 'full automation' that came with it.

Rune Møller Stahl

CONTOURS OF A MARXIST THEORY OF ECONOMIC IDEAS (CANCELLED)

The paper will outline the contours of a historical materialist approach to the study of the political influence of economic ideas and economic science, with a special focus on an understanding of the specific role of liberal economics in capitalist societies. The paper will draw on insight from a broad range of theoretical sources internal and external to the Marxist tradition. Most important here will be Gramsci and the Neo-Gramscian tradition, but other major resources include Robert Heilbroner's work on the history of economic thought, Althusserian theories of ideology and the intellectual historical methodology from Ellen Meiksins Woods conception of "Social History of Political Thought." By integrating the study of the political influence of economic ideas into a materialist framework, the article hopes to allow for a study of economic ideas that does not, wittingly or unwittingly, consign a primary causal influence to ideational factors. Furthermore, the approach will allow for a novel understanding of the specific roles economic ideas and intellectuals play within national and international elites, as well as a more nuanced understanding of the different aspects of the legitimating and ideological function of economic theory in modern societies.

Mathias Klitgård Sørensen

MOBILISING BERLIN'S QUEER CLUB SCENE: QUEER MARXISM AT THE INTERSECTION

On May 27 of this year, the proto-fascist party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) rallied in front of the Bundestag under the banner "For the Future of Germany." Only 2,000 AfD supporters turned out, a sharp contrast to the 10,000 that the party anticipated. This diminished turnout was set into sharp relief by the presence of more than 25,000 counter-protestors. The counter-protest was not only remarkable in size, but so was the fact that it was primarily organized by activists drawn from Berlin's vibrant nightclub culture. The counter-protestors brought the distinctive politics and praxis of the Berlin techno scene – which is frequently explicitly anti-fascist, queer, anti-racist and femme-centred – to the scene. They also brought music, drowning out the slogans and speeches of the AfD. The proto-fascists found themselves out-numbered and eclipsed by an explosion of diversified desire and bodily/gendered expression, by sweating, dancing bodies massified in solidarity. If Marxists have historically been committed to mass movements, it is because securing broad change to both legal frameworks and the relations of production necessitates broad coalitions. Nonetheless, as queer Marxists have underscored, dominant Marxist accounts of mass struggle have not been sufficiently sensitive to how disciplinary norms hierarchise and exclude certain bodies. In this paper, I intervene in this conversation by offering a case study of the queer counter-protest to the AfD. I consider the various ways in which it makes explicit the relevance of queer critique for anti-capitalist and Marxist organizing. I examine the complex relations between a highly politicised club scene grounded in queer body politics and the possibility of a Marxist mass movement politics. I number the lessons learned and contextualise them as interventions into contemporary debates in queer Marxism more generally. While not explicitly anti-capitalist or Marxist, the anti-AfD protests arguably overcame the individualisation of struggle and represents a promising and instructive first step toward broader alliances.

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2019

MARX NU / MARX NOW POWER – CONFLICTS AND CONTRADICTIONS

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Danmarks Institut of Pædagogik og Uddannelse (DPU)
Aarhus Universitet, Campus Emdrup
4-5 October 2019

Forms of power pervades all spheres of life, including the university. Yet where there is power, there is also the possibility of subversion. To explore different concepts of power and subversion, the Danish Society for Marxist Studies would like to invite you to our annual conference, Marx Now! at the Danish School of Education (DPU) in Copenhagen, 4-5 October 2019. The purpose of the conference is in part to strengthen the critical research traditions at universities, to identify gaps and blind spots and to bring together researchers from disparate fields. We invite those inside and outside of the academy to join us in this endeavor and urge potential contributors to translate the broadly formulated theme into their own areas of research.

The overarching theme of the 2019 conference will be Power: Conflicts and Contradictions. Power is contradictory. It suppresses, directs, conducts, registers and standardise. The power of capital relies on and reproduces a wide array of social contradictions and antagonisms relating to class, gender, race, sexuality, body forms, culture, nationality, etc. That domination and exploitation historically have gone hand in hand seems beyond questioning, so instead we will ask how and through which mechanisms the two have been linked. How can we best understand the ways in which capital has produced or reshaped and utilized identity markers as class, race and gender?

The aim of this year's conference is to interrogate Marxist perspectives on power. If capital is 'the command over unpaid labour' (Marx, Capital), what does that mean for our understanding of the relation between economic and political power? Is there a distinctive Marxist perspective on power, and if so, how should we define it? Is 'capital' something that can exercise power, and what is the relation between Marxist and non-Marxist (mainstream and critical) conceptions of power? Is power something that can or should be 'taken,' and if so, what would that mean in the current conjuncture?

We welcome papers which reflect on these questions in the context of contemporary capitalism as well as in the different historical constellations of capitalist societies and from historico-political as well as abstract-theoretical perspective. Papers may address problems such as:

- What is the logic of contradictions under capital?
- Which conceptual oppositions characterize the logic of capital? Examples could be freedom and coercion, abundance and scarcity, accumulation and destruction.
- How do power and powerlessness relate to each other as a conceptual pair?
- Does subversion arise from within power relations or is it better understood as exterior to it?
- How should we understand the relations between capitalism, colonialism and racialisation, the economic coercion of workers and the brute force and violence exerted under conditions of chattel slavery?
- Are gendered relations of dominance linked to an assumed opposition between productive and reproductive work, and if so how?
- What is economic power and what power do contemporary economists possess?
- How is power concentrated and reproduced among elites?
- Is the periodization of history an exercise of power? For instance, how does the distinction between feudalism and capitalism express an underlying power relation when we consider capital as a global phenomena?

As was the case at all three previous Marx Now! conferences, we will also try and take papers into consideration which do not directly

touch upon the theme. We welcome papers on any subject central to your specific field of work, provided it in some way or another is rooted in a critical research tradition.

Please submit your abstract of 200-300 words to info@marxistiskestudier.com no later than 1 August 2019. Abstracts and presentations may be in Danish or English.

The Danish Society for Marxist Studies is an academic organization dedicated to promoting research in and inspired by Marx and the entire critical tradition of thought, which springs from his theories. "Marxist" should thus be understood in the broadest possible sense and as a society we do not adhere to a specific theoretical or political position. The society hosts an annual conference and aims to transcend the narrow disciplinary boundaries of academia, holding that any Marxism worth its salt would do so.

ABSTRACTS

Sara R. Farris
OPPRESSION AND EXPLOITATION: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN (KEYNOTE)

[unavailable]

Marius S. Ostrowski
"REFORM OR 'REVOLUTION" REDUX: EDUARD BERNSTEIN ON THE 1918-19 GERMAN REVOLUTION

The 1918-19 German Revolution forced an abrupt moment of decision among German socialists in the question of 'social reform or revolution'. This paper traces the arguments of Eduard Bernstein, the founder of 'reformism', on the lessons Social Democracy should draw from the events of the Revolution and the transition from Kaiserreich to the Weimar Republic. It argues that Bernstein makes significant advances on his early reformism in his post-Revolution writings, and explores his refinement of the concept of 'revolution' as well as his critique of Bolshevism and the USSR as a new ideological rival within the socialist movement.

Rune Møller Stahl

CONTOURS OF MARXIST THEORY OF ECONOMIC IDEAS (CANCELLED)

The paper will outline the contours of a historical materialist approach to the study of the political influence of economic ideas and economic science, with a special focus on an understanding of the specific role of liberal economics in capitalist societies. The paper will draw on insight from a broad range of theoretical sources internal and external to the Marxist tradition. Most important here will be Gramsci, and the neogramscian tradition, but other major resources include Robert Heilbroner's work on the history of economic thought, Althusserian theories of ideology and the intellectual historical methodology from Ellen Meiksins Woods conception of "Social History of Political Thought." By integrating the study of the political influence of economic ideas into a materialist framework, the paper hopes to allow for a study of economic ideas that does not, wittingly or unwittingly, consign a primary causal influence to ideational factors. Furthermore, the approach will allow for a novel understanding of the specific roles economic ideas and intellectuals play within national and international elites, as well as a more nuanced understanding of the different aspects of the legitimating and ideological function of economic theory in modern societies.

Anne-Marie Eggert Olsen

DE VÆRENDES TINGS MAGT: NATUR ELLER SAMFUND? EN PÆDAGOGISK REFLEKSION I FORLÆNGELSE AF MARX' ARISTOTELES-RECEPTION

5 senge = 1 hus. Aristoteles kommer iflg. Marx langt i sin forståelse af varelogikken, men kører fast i selve ækvivalentformen; han får ikke fat i værdisubstansen, altså det kvalitative aspekt, der forener seng og hus, nemlig menneskeligt arbejde. Marx forklarer det med Aristoteles' socio-historisk begrænsede horisont, hvor menneskeligt arbejde ikke kan sættes på fælles nævner og dermed fungere som ækvivalent for substantielt forskellige produkter som senge og huse. Dertil må vi, siger Marx, have et samfund, hvor vareformen er den almene form for arbejdsprodukt, og mennesker samfundsmæssigt forholder sig til hinanden som varebesiddere, altså ikke et slavesamfund som det antikke. Aristoteles er undskyldt for sin konklusion, at senge og huse ikke kan have nogen fælles form, og at målestokken må ligge et andet sted end i tingene selv. Men hvor ligger den så iflg. Aristoteles, og er det alene hans forståelse af arbejdet, der blokerer

for en løsning? En forklaring kan være, at Aristoteles' fysik blokerer, fordi tingenes natur både teoretisk og praktisk går forud for og determinerer erkendelse og produktion. Marx' vareanalyse er i mangt og meget modelleret over Aristoteles' analyse af den naturlige substans. Den formulerer en vareontologi, hvor værdisubstansen på samme måde som hos Aristoteles fikserer processer til former og ting som en slags '2.-naturs-ontologi'. Mit ærinde i den forbindelse er pædagogisk og dannelsesteoretisk: Rousseau fremhæver 'tingene' som en af de grundlæggende opdragelsesfaktorer ved siden af naturen (barnets egen vækst og udvikling) og menneskene (handlinger, civilisation). Men hvad gør vi, når alle ting, der omgiver os, er produkt af og udtryk for netop den menneskelige aktivitet og vilje, det ifølge Rousseau gælder om at blokere for i bestræbelsen på at fremme frihed og godhed?

Mathias Klitgård

"MERELY NATURAL": GUY HOCQUENGHEM AS A QUEER MATERIALIST

"There is no morality that does not claim to spring from the respect of nature, yet the foundations and the desire for morality are economic," Guy Hocquenghem writes in his queer communist polemic *Screwball Asses* (1972) as a way to open a discussion of the political construction of 'nature' and 'the natural'. As both historical materialists and queer theorists would agree, making economic domination and unequal power relations a question of morals grounded in an ahistorical category of nature only stabilises status quo. The critical project thus becomes a 'denaturalisation' of these social relations. For many Foucauldian and deconstructionist branches of queer theory, the problem of whether the critical performative is able to secure states of non-domination becomes visible in the relation to nature: if queer critique makes the unnatural merely naturally unnatural, i.e. acceptable, the radical potential is obliterated. Hocquenghem chooses a slightly different entry point: stratified relations of non-desire (blockage) and non-relations of desire (absence). The question is not how nature becomes visible as constructed, but how particular views of nature circulate to both foreclose bodily becoming and disconnect sexuality from capital. As much feminist new materialist thought has recently started to emphasise, the enabling exclusions that construct 'nature' as powerless and passive, ready for human impregnation (sexist metaphor intended), coincide with misogynist heteronormativity. Nature as strategy under capital is both enabling

and disabling. This paper reads Hocquenghem as a queer Marxist interested in human exceptionalisms and human-natural relations as crucial to exposing the contradictions of capital as they unfold in relations of desire. Qualified by a queer turn to the turn to 'matter', I attempt to emphasise the materialist politics of Hocquenghem's queerity and, more generally, to show how a queer materialist mode of analysis necessitates a discussion of how, to misquote Butler (1996), both heteronormativity and its Others under capitalism become 'merely natural'.

Niklas Zenius Jespersen

MODERNE OG MARXISTISK KLASSETEORI

Klasser er basalt set en måde at opdele mennesker på. Hvad end det er opdelingen mellem klassetrin i folkeskolen, mellem passagerer på et fly eller mellem grupper i samfundet, så er der tale om en opdeling i kategorier. I politisk og økonomisk forstand er klassebegrebet ofte associeret til den marxistiske inddeling af modstridende samfundsgrupper baseret på deres relation til produktionsapparatet, men dette er langt fra den eneste klassemodel vi kender til. I nyere tid har andre klasseinddelinger overtaget og lagt vægten anderledes, f.eks. på bredere socioøkonomiske forhold eller på politisk magt. Diskussionen om klasser lever fortsat i bedste velgående. Samfundets klasser diskuteres ivrigt i medierne, det politiske liv og i forskningen; hvem der tilhører arbejderklassen, hvem overklassen og eliten er og hvor klassedelingen går i det moderne Danmark. Er det kultureliten der styrer det hele? Er det arbejderne der kæmper imod akademikerne, er prekariatet det nye proletariat eller er uddannelse det nye klasseskel? Diskussionen handler ikke kun om forskelle i empiriske analyser, men om selve definitionen af klasserne og om hvilket udgangspunkt skillelinjerne trækkes. Er det produktionsforhold, uddannelse, kulturel kapital, netværk eller noget andet der definerer. Jeg vil forsøge at skitsere de grundlæggende elementer og forskelle i de forskellige klasseteorier, fra Marx og Engels, over Bourdieu og Mills og op til de nyeste danske analyser hos bl.a. Lars Olsen, Grau og Ellersgaard og eliteforskningen. Jeg vil prøve at vise hvor forskellene ligger og hvordan teorierne virker overfor hinanden og herfra åbne for en analyse og diskussion af de forskellige teoriers anvendelsesmuligheder og hvad de betyder for vores forståelse af samfundet og magtkampene i det. Hermed vil vi også se på betydningen af klasseforståelse og -analyse for vores forståelse af magten og modmagten i

samfundet og om hvad der grundlæggende definerer den magtsfære de støder sammen indenfor.

Catia Gregoratti & Laura Horn

HUMAN POST-CAPITALISM AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

While contemporary debates in Marxist Feminism are focused on relentless and timely critique of the present, as evinced in the literature on care, (re-)privatisation of social reproduction, and depletion there is as of yet little or no engagement with questions surrounding automation and the future (but see Vrasti 2016). Recent developments in cybernetics invite a theoretical re-engagement with tech-utopian Marxism feminism (Firestone 1970), post-work (Weeks 2011) and post-humanist theory (Haraway 1984; Braidotti 2013). The paper engages with this body of Marxist feminist thought, highlighting the need for a more radical feminist perspective that is committed to using "utopia as method" (Levitas 2013). We argue that such method can be harnessed through an engagement with feminist science fiction – a crucial site of imagining alternative post-capitalist and/or post-scarcity scenarios in which mechanisation and automation have led to radical changes in relations of production and social reproduction. We develop this paper in two steps. In a first part, we offer a discussion of what feminist science fiction can offer to Marxist Feminism. In the second step, we draw on Woman at the Edge of Time (Piercey), The Female Man (Russ) and the Heart goes Last (Atwood) to investigate concrete manifestations of technological change that are pertinent to social reproduction and automation: care robots, sexbots and extrauterine fetal incubation (aka the artificial womb). We probe the interlinkages between the commodification of social reproduction inherent in these technologies, and the liberation from patriarchal structures that they promise.

Alva Gotby

THEY SAY IT IS LOVE, WE SAY IT IS WORK: EMOTIONAL REPRODUCTION AND FEMINIST POLITICS

This paper outlines the concept of emotional reproduction, which names all the processes which sustains the emotional wellbeing of people, and prepares them to sell their labour power. Drawing on Marxist-feminist writings on social reproduction, I expand this perspective through a particular focus on emotional aspects of reproduction. This implies a focus on gendered labour, as women have typically been tasked with the responsibility for the emotional wellbeing of

others. I also explore how such labours can be subverted and changed through a feminist politics that pays attention to reproductive labour and subjectivity. Drawing on the writings and practice of Wages for Housework, as well as more recent developments in feminist and queer Marxism, I ask how our emotional investments can both prevent and facilitate a radical politics. The labour of emotional reproduction now takes place across waged and unwaged spheres, calling for a politics of coalition able to draw together seemingly disparate groups. This requires the rethinking of many of our emotional ties and an exploration of the emotional practices of our organising. This paper, then, tracks both how emotional reproduction is involved in exploitative labour processes and how it can be reconfigured towards a more liberatory horizon. Drawing on my doctoral research, I will reflect on the need for a more comprehensive focus on emotion within left politics.

Lotte Schack

"TO BE IN A COLLECTIVE IS TO BE NOT ALONE, IN THE END": THE IMPORTANCE OF CARE AND REPRODUCTIVE LABOUR IN ANTI-PRECARITY ACTIVISM

The rise of precarious employment caused by neoliberal policies and the challenge of organising precarious workers has been subject to much debate on the left (Standing 2011, Neilson & Rossiter 2008, Seymour 2012). Based on four months of ethnographic fieldwork in Berlin with two different anti-precarity activist groups, this paper explores possibilities of building viable political movements that are able to challenge rising precarity and austerity brought about by neoliberal policies. In the last two decades, the German labour market has undergone severe structural changes through the so-called Agenda 2010-reforms. Among other things, the reforms impeded access to unemployment benefits and liberalised the labour market, leading to a dramatic increase in the number of the precariously employed and the working poor. In spite of the difficulties usually associated with organising precarious subjects, Germany has nevertheless seen the formation of multiple activist groups concerned with precarity. Focusing on the outward strategies of social movements such as the dramatic spectacle of demonstrations and strikes, discussions about social movements have neglected and thus devalued the reproductive labour that goes into the daily life of the movements. In this paper, I argue that equal importance must be paid to the mundane everyday practices of activist groups. Drawing on participant

observation and interviews with members of Berlin-based activist groups and insights from Marxist-feminists (Federici 2012; Bhattacharya 2017; Vogel 1983), I argue that care and reproductive labour must be central concerns for anti-precarity activist groups. It is through the groups' care practices that they manage to create lasting solidarity through offering an alternative to the capitalist logic's demands for constant productivity, instead showing a different way of relating to one another. The groups function as spaces exempted from the insecurity which otherwise condition the lives of precarious subjects, keeping activists from 'burning out', thereby contributing to the continued struggle against precarity.

Bernd Bonfert

ALLIED AGAINST AUSTERITY: HOW DIFFERENT TYPES OF EUROPEAN ACTIVIST COALITIONS OPPOSE NEOLIBERALISM

There is little doubt among Marxist scholars that struggles against neoliberal capitalism have an inherently transnational dimension. The recent wave of European anti-austerity movements in 2011 is a prime example of this, as activists across the continent simultaneously mobilised against the neoliberal slashing of public budgets and the deregulation of labour conditions in response to the supposed 'sovereign debt crisis'. However, while parallels between the goals and strategies of different national mobilisations are certainly an important component of transnational struggle, they do not yet indicate actual transnational collaboration or the emergence of a collective strategy. To understand how and to what extent struggles against austerity were able to break down geographical and political divisions among leftist forces in Europe, we also need to look at practical cooperation of activists within transnational coalitions. This contribution demonstrates that recent European activist coalitions against austerity have developed around three distinct strategies: Systemic Reform, which entails activists seeking legal changes in the EU; Disruptive Intervention, which activists engage in to influence public consciousness; and Collective Empowerment, through which activists organise mutual exchange and solidarity among marginalised class factions. This strategic diversification of transnational activism represents its specialisation towards institutional, ideological, and socio-structural dimensions of counterhegemony respectively. Consequently, individual anti-austerity coalitions are uniquely qualified but also inherently limited in their ability to challenge neoliberal

capitalism. Based on a Social Network Analysis this contribution demonstrates the trends of transnational activist cooperation empirically, while a qualitative investigation of specific coalitions explains the underlying strategies and challenges. This culminates in a discussion of whether the strategic diversification of anti-austerity coalitions offers any benefits for anticapitalist struggles, or if there is a need for convergence around a more unified approach.

Sune Haugbølle

ENTANGLEMENT AND POWER: PALESTINIAN-DANISH RELATIONS IN THE 1970S LEFT

In the 1970s, Palestine was one of a handful of emblematic revolutions that became causes to learn from, support, and emulate for Marxian activists in the global New Left. Europeans and others travelled to the Middle East and met with, sometimes even trained with, Palestinian guerillas. For their part, Palestinian thinkers and political activists travelled to Europe, read 'Euro-Marxist' theory, and took inspiration from Western student protests. Some of these activists linked up with parallel networks coordinating anti-imperial solidarity in the global south, such as the Tricontinental movement based in Cuba. Historians have recently begun to reconstruct these linkages from a global perspective. Based on interviews and texts gathered as part of a new research project, this paper analyses the networks that tied political struggles in Denmark and Palestine together between 1967 and 1979. It seeks to understand to what extent an ideological community developed from the encounter between different New Left groups that was not just in formal agreement about adherence to Marxism-Leninism, but also agreed on the fundamental problem-space of the post-colonial era. Danes and Palestinians initially bonded over a Marxist-Leninist vocabulary and an anti-imperialist view of the global struggle. However, what did New Left militants understand by terms like resistance and revolution, and how did their understanding change through the meeting with people from other struggles? In networks of solidarity and common struggle, who had the power, and how was power conceived?

Gustav Johannes Hoder

RECLAIMING CULTURAL MARXISM

What the marxist tradition since the beginning of the so-called neoliberal age tells us, is that Marx is first and foremost a scientific and an economic thinker – how else can we save his writings from the

legacy of dictatorships built in his name? However, in the wake of more recent right-wing categories such as "cultural marxism" and the popular succes of lacanian-marxism, perhaps it is time to revisit the archive in search for the cultural Marx. One of the most (in)famous "cultural marxists" of the 20th century was the frenchman Guy Debord. His magnum opus, The Society of the Spectacle, was written immersed in the intellectual politics of postwar Paris. Published 52 years ago, it presents us with a Marx vested in praxis, critique and hegelianism: a 'french' Marx, centred on alienation, commodity fetishism and false consciousness. Strongly influenced by György Lukács, Debord presents not only a dangerously un-academic and scarcely workerist reading of Marx, but claims to take his foundational ideas further, by developing an original theory of "spectacular" power. In lieu of the contemporary reception of Giorgio Agamben's works, Debord's theory of power has recently enjoyed broader scholarly attention. The specific question of my talk will be whether his project succeeds, and subsequently, how this project relates to political struggles within contemporary culture. At the foundation of this cultural Marx that Debord revives, are three central points of departure: the concept of 'spectacle' or false consciousness as the central function of power, the subversion of its language through the situationist tactic of 'détournement', and certain interventions in past and present debates concerning the periodisation of capitalism. I will also present a critique of the tradition that has confined Debord's theory to a product of the european artistic avantgardes. The talk forms part of an overarching research into the phenomenon of politicisation and the roots of the political in contemporary culture.

Gert Sørensen

ARVEN EFTER MACHIAVELLI. MAGTKRITIK: MELLEM POLITIK OG ETIK

Det konfliktuelle forhold mellem på den ene side de, der sidder på magten, dvs. har kontrollen med ressourcerne og deres anvendelse, og vil konsolidere den, og på den anden side de, der ikke har magten og vil i besiddelse af den, tegner en dyb forkastningslinje ned igennem de moderne samfunds politiske og kulturelle historie. Det inviterer også til en dobbelt optik, afhængig af om man anskuer processen med 'fyrsterne's blik eller med 'de udelukkede's blik. Med afsæt i Niccolò Machiavelli vil indlægget slå ned på nogle af de centrale tematikker, der er blevet bragt i spil for at håndtere disse grundkonflikter. Det gælder det politiske spørgsmål om beslutning, lovgivning

og prioritering, dernæst spørgsmålet om almene etiske normer og endelig spørgsmålet om styreform (demokrati eller diktatur). Indlæggets anden halvdel vil diskutere Antonio Gramscis genoptagelse af disse tematikker hos Machiavelli, der med fascismen og stalinismen fik fornyet aktualitet i mellemkrigsperioden, for i lyset heraf at afslutte med nogle betragtninger over nationalpopulismen i dagens Italien.

Mikkel Thorup

ANTIFEMINISME I LIGHEDENS TIDSALDER

I disse år ser vi to samtidige og forbundne udviklinger: en udvidelse og radikalisering af feminismen og en mobilisering og politisering af en antifeminisme. dette oplæg vil på baggrund af en bog, jeg sidder og skriver på, præsentere en række bud på hvorfor og hvordan den aktuelle antifeminisme er opstået og hvad dens hovedargumenter er. det vil ske på baggrund af en refleksion over, hvordan det er muligt at argumentere for ulighed, endda en start-ulighed og ikke 'bare' en resultat-ulighed, i det man med en vis ret kan kalde for lighedens tidsalder. oplægget vil eksplorativt invitere til tænke med over, hvordan man kan forklare den aktuelle opblussen af antifeminisme, hvad dens relationer til tidligere tiders misogyni og antifeminisme er ifht motivation og argumentation samt endelig og mest vigtigt, hvad dens nye bevæggrunde og argumentationsformer er.

Michael Rahlwes

THE CRISIS OF MARXISM AND MARX'S CRITIQUE OF POLITICS

Althusser's provocative talk on the Crisis of Marxism in late 1970s included the claim of a missing critique of politics in Marx. To overcome this deficiency Althusser and his scholars referred to Marx's later writings in order to develop a Marxist critique of politics. However, in current debates on emancipation and radical democracy a different reference to Marx' thought can be observed. On the one hand, we can consider an emphatic readings of Marx's early writings. Authors like Miguel Abensour and Ernesto Laclau argued that Marx's writings between 1842-1844 should be read as a critique of false bourgeois universalism and as a plea for radical democracy. On the other hand, this reading neglects Marx's later writings (even the political writings after 1848) as reductionist or based on a false socio-economic approach. The proposed talk will question those readings from the viewpoint of the Althusserian project to develop

an undogmatic approach on critique of politics in Marx later writings. Hence, we can find in Marx political writings (after 1848) as well a "machiavellian moment" (Abensour) that takes political struggles, the social conditions of these struggles and the conjunctural dynamics into account. According to Etienne Balibar, Marx later critique of politics is based, on the one hand, on a power relation approach with "class struggle" as the key concept of political analysis. On the other hand, Marx' broader socio-scientific approach to understand modern societies as a complex structure enables us to understand the variety of class domination institutional politics and political class struggles in their heteronomy. Hence, what we can learn from Althusser's intervention in Marxist discourse is the need for developing a more complex conflict approach to politics than is possible in Marx' early writings. However, what remains from the emancipatory readings of the early Marx (and what marks the weak point in Althusser's approach) is nonetheless the question of how to overcome bourgeois political forms.

Erica Borg and Amedeo Policante

CAPITAL, BIOPOWER AND THE ANTHROPOCENE: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE EARTH BANK OF CODES

In this paper, we intend to explore the ways in which the Anthropocene – conceived as a crisis of reproduction of life *and*capital – is ushering in a new global politics of reproduction. In particular, we will consider the case of the Earth Bank of Codes as a paradigmatic form of biologised capital: a new form of 'command over unpaid labour', whose introduction is legitimized by the necessity to 'manage the ecological crisis' and 'protect life'. Officially presented at the last World Economic Forum, the project promises to 'revise and reinvigorate our understanding of biology', 'enabling conservation' and 'maximizing returns' in two simple steps: sequencing the genome of all eukaryotic life, encoding it in a blockchain and enabling its circulation as a commodity. In other words, the Earth Bank of Codes has been presented at once as a scientific steward (supporting genomic research), an economic enterprise (generating and distributing profits), a political mediator (preventing conflicts) and a biopolitical strategy, i.e. a direct response to the problem that the 'earth's biological assets […] are under serious threat' (WE Forum 2018: 5). In this paper, on the other hand, we consider this ambitious project as the paradigm of the new mechanisms of power and exploitation, currently emerging under the ostensible neutrality of 'environmental

management'. Analysing closely its preparatory documents, we argue that the EBC respond to capital's need to turn the 'ecological crisis' into an opportunity to further its own expanded reproduction by: a) presenting the ecological crisis as both an 'economic conundrum' and a financial opportunity; b) promising to 'unlock' the value of nature's biological assets, thereby pushing market actors away from the destructive extraction of resource commodities and towards the supposedly 'immaterial' extraction of knowledge; c) constituting a bioeconomic strategy, aimed at securing both life and capital through the preservation of biodiversity.

Victor Sacha Cova

DOES MARXISM NEED A THEORY OF POWER?

The 2008 financial crisis led to a "return to Marx" tasked with explaining the continued existence of capitalism in spite of its recurrent crises, and counter-posed with the post-structuralist marginalization of economic questions. Marx, it was wagered, could better explain the persistence of forms of gendered and racial domination than Foucault or Bourdieu because he could address the economic dimensions of power and not merely its political ones. In order to make such a case for the continued relevance of Marx, it would therefore appear necessary to theorize economic power from a specifically Marxist perspective in order to distinguish it from Foucaldian concepts such as "biopolitics" or "biopower" or the arrays of capitals (symbolic, cultural, social, economic, etc) articulated by Bourdieu. Yet is this not already conceding too much to Foucault and Bourdieu? In this paper, I recover Gillian Rose's critique of Foucault's hypostasis of power, which makes of the regulation of power itself a form of power and thereby leaves us powerless. In this reading, Foucault's work negates the inventions of bourgeois society and bourgeois thought (particularly in Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Smith and Constant) which form the basis of Marx's critique of political economy. With Benjamin and Adorno, we can understand how Foucaldian hypostases of power become plausible in a world that has fallen below the threshold of bourgeois society after the failure of the world revolution in the 1920s, at the same time as such theories of power consecrate this regression as the only political horizon. Striving to provide a better, more inclusive theory of power fails to register this regression and can only further legitimize it.

Mathias Hein Jessen

THE CORPORATION AS A POLITICAL SUBJECT

We live in an era abound with corporate scandal: From the roles of banks and financial institutions in the Financial Crisis of 2007-8 to the tax evasion and tax fraud schemes revealed in the LuxLeaks, Panama Papers and CumExFiles. This is not to mention the numerous human rights abuses and environmental disasters caused by corporations. Corporations play a significant and dominant position in today's political and economic situations, accounting for 69 of the world's top 100 economies and about 100 corporations being responsible for 70% of global carbon emissions. In our contemporary political and social order, the corporation occupies a paradoxical role. It is on the one hand created, recognized or given existence by the state (by law), but comes to appear as something standing outside the state, threatening and challengingits power, as being outside and beyond its control and regulation. However, the state has always created, used, accepted and been dependent upon a number of corporate entities in order to govern social life and has in this endeavour granted them extensive rights, privileges, immunities and exemptions from law in order to secure central governmental objectives. This paper argues that we need to understand corporations as political subjects constituted to achieve governmental aims deemed central to a given political order. The chief governmental aim today is to secure economic growth and therefore the private, for-profit corporation has become the central political subject, to the detriment of the worker and other collective subjects such as cooperatives and unions. The corporation is in many ways the ideal neoliberal subject; perfectly economically rational and free to move to wherever profit is available and as the central wealth-creating subject of the neoliberal age, it is granted a number of privileges and exemptions from law in order to achieve this.

Laura Deal

CAPITALISM, COLONIALITY, AND CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE COFFEE: HOW VOLUNTARY SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS SIDELINE INDIGENOUS INNOVATION

Voluntary sustainability standards (VSS) such as Fairtrade, Organic, and UTZ, cover an ever-larger proportion of the coffee market, standardizing production methods across coffee-growing landscapes and cultures of the Global South. Yet these standards are not delivering on their promise of greening the industry, which is slated to lose

up to 88% of coffee-growing lands by 2050. Meanwhile, evidence accumulates that the traditional knowledge (TK) and land stewardship practices of indigenous peoples (IP) are invaluable for developing sustainable innovations in the agricultural sector and protecting biodiversity. In Latin America in particular, many IP depend on coffee production for part or all of their livelihoods. Yet despite their mutual interest in saving the coffee sector from collapse, no coalition between VSS stakeholders and indigenous coffee farmers has formed to date. This paper draws on critical legal theory, postcolonial and feminist scholarship, and the sociology of knowledge to interrogate possible reasons for this separation. It argues that the norms of individualism, privatization, and productivity maximization conspired with the scientific ideologies of the Darwinian revolution to lay the ideological foundations for the monoculturalization of agriculture. This sidelined the possibility of indigenous innovation (II) in the coffee sector, and these norms remain embedded in VSS schemes today. The paper closes with recommendations for how we can begin to decolonize VSS to facilitate indigenous innovation (II) and environmental justice in the coffee sector.

Tim Christiaens

SHAREHOLDER VALUE AND MANUFACTURED IRRESPONSIBILITY IN CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The contemporary global economy is marked by a peculiar contrast between the complexity of governance structures and the elementary brutality of these techniques on affected populations. One of the fields that shows this dynamic most clearly is corporate governance. Never have corporations possessed the tools to micro-manage their workers' conduct like today, and yet these techniques are frequently employed to the detriment of workers' wellbeing and mental health. Yet the corporate governance system makes it hard to point fingers. Who is to blame for troublesome corporate restructurings in the age of shareholder value? Managers can easily attribute the necessity layoffs or budget cuts to imperatives emanating from financial markets. Following the dominant theory in corporate governance, agency theory, managers are merely agents of the shareholders, their principals. This entails that managers must listen to whatever stock markets signal through price fluctuations, even if that means putting enormous costs on workers. Agency theory thereby manufactures a system of irresponsibility where managers can enact unpopular initiatives without having to take responsibility for them. One

can always blame these actions on the ephemeral entity named 'the financial markets'. I wish to explain the rise of this manufactured irresponsibility by investigating the genealogy of the principal/agent-relation. This has been first elaborated in Christian theology to explain the relation between God and the priests administering his will on Earth. Priests acted as 'agents of God' in his absence performing the actions necessary to establish the salvation of God's followers. According to medieval theology, this implied that priests were only instruments of God and did not have to assume responsibility for what they did in his name. I argue that this irresponsibilization technique first generated in the theological principal/agent-relation is still operative in today's corporate agency theory.

Zhou Yang

MARX'S INITIAL EXPLORATION OF THE PROBLEM OF ALIENATION: BETWEEN KANT AND HEGEL

In the later period of his excerpting The Notebook on Epicurean Philosophy, through the re-study of Hegel's logic and *The Philosophy of Nature*, Marx got a new perspective on the relation between substance and accident and conceived that he could reconstruct Epicurean Atomism by a critical application of German idealistic substance-accident theory. Marx's Doctoral Dissertation is the realization of this idea mentioned above: through applying German idealistic substance – accident theory in transform Epicurean time proposition "time is the accidents of the accidents," Marx construct a new time -substance theory. Time is the accidents of the accidents of one substance, while the accidents of the accidents is another substance, thus the contradictions between the substance and the accident, becomes the contradiction between two substances. Contrary to Kant's understanding, the contradiction is in the level of substance itself not the level of substance-accident. Contrary to Hegel's understanding, it is the contradiction between two substances but not the contradiction of one substance itself. This new form of contradiction was determined as "alienation" by Marx.

Amina Samale & Mette Toft Nielsen

ANSVARET FOR AT GØRE OP MED MAGTHIERARKIER FORANKRET I HVID OVERLEGENHED

Hvem bekræftes i det danske klasselokale og hvem negligeres eller ligefrem undermineres? Hvordan kommer sådanne magtstrukturer i spil på et strukturelt plan i dagligdags undervisningen i

klasseværelser på danske folkeskoler? Magt(u)balancen i klasseværelset formes blandt andet af alder, køn, samt muligheden for at leve op til identiteten som succesfuld elev. Dette forstærkes yderligere og i særlig grad når etnicitet tilføjes. Børn er ikke farveblinde – de socialiseres til at reproducere magthierarkier og er dermed bevidste om racemæssige forskelle i en meget tidlig alder. Desuden erfarer de diskrimination på egen krop: Hvem ekskluderes? Hvem får mest skæld ud? Hvem kan slippe af sted med ting og hvem kan ikke? I dette oplæg vil vi give eksempler fra egen praksis på, hvordan magt produceres, legitimeres og reproduceres på et strukturelt plan i danske klasselokaler. For at skabe et mere socialt retfærdigt og tryggere klasseværelse argumenterer vi for, at vi som lærere må forpligte os på at påtage ansvaret for at gøre op med magthierarkier forankret i hvid overlegenhed. Dette må gøres ved at italesætte og gå i dialog med vores elever omkring (ulige) magtpositioner, strukturel ulighed og reproducering af normative magtstrukturer. Vi vil komme med konkrete forslag til, hvordan dette kan gøres samt åbne op for dialog heromkring.

Marcus Christian Hansen

WILLIAM THOMPSON, COUNTER-POWER, AND PRE-MARXIST SOCIALISM

In this paper, I will reconstruct the pre-Marxist socialist critique of the Irish utilitarian thinker William Thompson (1775-1833). Thompson was a foremost member of the Owenite intelligentsia and presented an advanced criticism of not just mainstream political economy (especially Torrens, Malthus and James Mill), but also of the psychological effects which the very system of market competition brought about. Thompson is an interesting transitional figure in the history of left-wing thought, in that he both expressed a non-socialist Radicalism via his diffuse idea of a 'ruling' and 'industrious' class and a generally moralistic critique of 19th century Parliament, as well as a non-moralistic understanding of the market as an impersonal force that brings about social corrosion and the misery of the lowliest part of the British and Irish populace. He was furthermore innovative in that he was the first to employ the category of 'surplus value', as well as in his articulation of an early understanding of 'value' as a category specific to modern market societies. The paper will show how Thompson's thought was organised around a fundamental understanding of market society in terms of power rooted in property-relations and sexual inequality. Against this 'system of individual

competition', as well as the 'system of force and fraud', Thompson proposes a Owenite communist system that is radically democratic, with equal control over property and sexual equality. To conclude, the paper will highlight some of the main breaks and continuities between Marx's mature thought and his British predecessors.

Karen Helveg Petersen

PRODUCTIVE AND UNPRODUCTIVE LABOUR IN REPRODUCTIVE WORK: CHANGING MODES OF EXPLOITATION

Modern Marxist theory either ignores the distinction between productive and unproductive labour or subsumes service work under the category of productive labour. Marx clearly stated, though, that labour whose services are consumed directly without market intervention is remunerated outside of the capital circuit of surplus value production. The value of labour power is determined like any other commodity, by the abstract labour measured in the time spent on producing it. However, Marx vacillated between determining the value by the necessities of the individual labourer, including a "historical and moral element" (economic reproduction), and the wider reproduction costs necessary for the regeneration of the societal labour force over time (social reproduction). Deliberately, he did not unfold these wider requirements for reproduction of society. Feminist Marxist economics is correct in wanting this omission rectified. It should be done by examining the capitalistically produced goods and concrete work going into the reproduction of those who are involved in or a precondition of productive work and thus setting the bar for the exploitation of labour power and class struggle. Ever more spheres of life are subsumed under productive surplus-value generating work by the capitalist drive. Since early industrialization four logical-historical phases can be distilled in the transformation of reproduction in the tension between productive and unproductive labour. The first phase until around 1850 is characterized by maximal exploitation of labour power, including women and children. The second phase concentrates on productivity development (relative surplus value) and cheap overseas consumer goods. During the third phase from World War II to the 1980's work force expansion also includes the massive hiring of workers into care services while pressure on reproduction costs is exerted in the fourth phase till now. The arenas are increased productivity and class struggle, legal and political fight for gender equality and equity, mechanization of house

work, industrialized food production, the state taking over care for children and the elderly and explosive expansion of education and health services. The subordinate role of the Global South is integral to the guiding political-economy question if exploitation is increasing or decreasing.

Sigurd M. N. Oppegaard

REAL SUBSUMPTION UNDER PLATFORM CAPITALISM AND THE POWER OF TECHNOLOGY: THE CASE OF UBER BLACK IN OSLO

While platform capitalism still constitutes a marginal phenomenon in the Nordic countries, digital platform companies have succeeded in establishing their operations in already precarized sectors of the economy. Platforms operate in the fringes of the "Nordic model," exploiting a population made superfluous by a "knowledge intensive" and ethnically segmented labor market. In this presentation, I will explore the platform technology through Marx' concept of real subsumption of labor and description of the role of technology in capitalist production. Based on a case study of Uber Black drivers in Oslo, Norway, I argue that the platform is neither a mere marketplace nor a neutral technology – as the "sharing economy" ideologists hold –, but is best conceived as a form of power regulating the drivers' formal flexibility. While Uber allows the drivers to work as much or as little as they want, this freedom is countered with an "algorithmic management" comprising of the rating system, dynamic prices and rates, and an instrument for automatically assigning tasks. The platform technology functions as a Bravermanian deskilling process, whereby the drivers are rendered as interchangeable elements in the production process, functioning independently of the workers' knowledge and skills. Parallel to Deleuze's description of the "control society," the platform enables Uber to let the drivers loose, while retaining total control. Taking account of the social, legal and economic relations inscribed in Uber's work arrangement (technological infrastructure and formal flexibility), I argue that the real subsumption of the platform entails a double movement severing the distinction between the private and the working self, as the platform technology enables and makes consequential the judgement of the Uber driver as a person, and simultaneously the reduction of the worker to "pure labor." In conclusion, I discuss the current and potential political responses to platform capitalism.

James Day

ON FORMS OF SUBSUMPTION AND SUBSUMPTIVE FORMS OF INTERVENTION

In connection with my work on English translations of Hans-Jørgen Schanz's *Til rekonstruktionen af kritikken af den politiske økonomis omfangslogiske status* (1973) and *Antikritik* (1977), this paper will offer a preliminary assessment of the vibrant, short-lived *kapitallogik* tendency within Scandinavian Marxism (circa 1973-80), considered in the context of the *Neue Marx-Lektüre* in Germany as well as the circle around Jacques Camatte's journal *Invariance*. Although some of the "new" readings of Marx, triggered in large part by the rediscovery and translation of key texts, have been highly influential on the contemporary critique of value (for example in the journals *Endnotes*, or *Exit!*), they remain by and large distinct historical tendencies. Theories of the logic of capital within Scandinavia are a largely forgotten counterpart to these better-known French and German traditions. A comparative account of their contributions to the recent renewal of interest in key Marxist categories, for example those around the formal and real subsumption of labour, is thus not only of historical interest, but may also be useful in tracing the development of the "logic of capital" today, for example in terms of the relationship between phases of subsumption and the (re)production of labour power. A brief commentary on the distinction between forms of subsumption and subsumptive forms of intervention in Schanz's *For a Reconstruction*, which can be considered the cornerstone of *kapitallogik*, will consider expansions and contractions of the logical limits to capital, as well as the ways in which it subordinates areas of sociality external to it.

Mikkel Bolt, Lotte List, Eskil Halberg and Anna-Cornelia Ploug

PÅ RÅBEAFSTAND AF MARXISMEN (ROUNDTABLE)

På råbeafstand af marxismen analyserer et teorihistorisk forløb fra sidst i 1960'erne og frem til i dag inden for vestlig filosofi, politisk tænkning og kulturstudier. Et forløb kendetegnet ved en afsked med marxismen og med det revolutionære projekt, marxismen kan siges at være udtryk for. En opgivelse af en kritik af kapitalismen. Et forløb, hvor en vigtig selvkritik – den nødvendige analyse af klassekampens genkomst, forvandling og omslag i den anden halvdel af 1960'erne og begyndelsen af 1970'erne – hurtigt afløses af en opgivelse af det revolutionære projekt. Bevægelsen fra revolutionær selvkritik til opgivelse af marxismen og afsked med en analyse af kapitalismen er

anliggendet for bogens tekster. Det er et forløb, der går fra revolutionært opbrud og den nødvendige udvidelse af marxismens historiske analyse til afsked med en sammenhængende systemkritik til fordel for en overdreven tiltro til økonomiens selvstyre. Bogen er tænkt som et bidrag til en genaktivering af marxismen og dens kritiske analyse (og afvikling) af det kapitalistiske samfund. At være 'på råbeafstand af marxismen' er at forsøge at ryste den fortrolighed, som kapitalismen antog i perioden, efter at den vestlige marxisme selvkritisk så nærmere på den historiske materialismes klassekategorier og historiefilosofi.

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2020

MARX NU / MARX NOW BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Copenhagen Business School
9-10 October 2020

Capital knows no bounds, yet thrives in a world of borders and boundaries; between classes, between individuals, between nation states, between politics, economy and household, between production and reproduction. These divisions define the terrain of capital, as well as the struggles against it.

The nation state, which has been the main frame of reference and struggle for left-wing politics since the First World War, remains exposed to the economic and political pressures of global capital as well as the threat of nationalist recuperation. Right-wing parties have proven uniquely capable of leveraging this national(-ist) framework to reframe the widespread anger with the economic and political system following the 2008 financial crisis, in order to capture power. Meanwhile, novel and increasingly deadly border regimes have been developed in the US, EU and beyond, and new ones are currently proliferating across the globe in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Capital not only traverses and transcends national borders and boundaries but is also driven to transgress the natural limits of life on the planet, while nation state competition hinders any meaningful response to the impending ecological collapse. We are currently entering a new epoch, where capital erodes not only its own foundations but also the preconditions of human survival as such.

The Danish Society for Marxists Studies wants to interrogate and address the significance of these borders and boundaries to contemporary capitalism and anticapitalist struggles. We therefore invite contributions on this and related topics for the fifth annual Marx Now conference. Topics might include (but are not limited to):

- The relationship between capitalism and the international state system, including war and the construction of border regimes in historical or contemporary perspective.

- The relationship of nationalism(s) and fascism(s) to capitalism and the nation state system, as well as the recent rise of right-wing nationalism and populism.

- The origins and significance of the structural division of social life under capitalism into separate spheres, i.e., domestic, economic and political spheres, as well as productive and reproductive labour, their particular dynamics, struggles and interrelations. The limits to capital accumulation and the subsumption of different spheres of social and natural life.

- The causes of and responses to the unfolding climate crises within global capitalism and the international system.

- The relationship between limited value production and unlimited asset valorization in the financial sector.

OPEN CALL

The ambition with the annual Marx Now conferences is also to create a common platform for critical and emancipatory research in Denmark. For this reason, as in previous years we are also happy to welcome papers that do not directly touch upon this year's theme but contribute to these research traditions

Please submit your abstract of 200-300 words to info@marxistiskestudier.com no later than 15 June 2020. Abstracts and presentations may be in Danish or English.

ABSTRACTS

Maïa Pal

JURISDICTIONAL ACCUMULATION: THE ROLE OF EARLY MODERN CONSULS AND THE CHALLENGES OF MARXIST HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY (KEYNOTE)

In her keynote, Maïa Pal will present the concept of 'jurisdictional accumulation' as developed in her recent book and discuss the methodological issues at work with respect to marxist historical sociology: The majority of European early modern empires – the Spanish, French, Dutch and English/British – are best characterised as developing practices of 'jurisdictional accumulation.' These practices are distinguished by the three categories of extensions, transports, and transplants of authority, and the book is mostly concerned with various diplomatic and colonial agents which enabled the transports and transplants of their sovereign's authority. Through historical analyses of ambassadors and consuls in the Mediterranean based on primary and secondary material, and on the empires' Atlantic imperial expansions and conquests, the book makes two major analytical contributions. It firstly develops jurisdictional accumulation as a conceptual innovation, based, secondly, on an interdisciplinary mix of methodological angles. These intertwined contributions enable us to go beyond common binaries in both conventional and critical histories of international relations and international law through the use of a Political Marxist framework and its concept of social property relations.

Brenna Bhandar

RACIAL REGIMES OF OWNERSHIP: PROPERTY, POSSESSION AND COLONIALISM (KEYNOTE VIA VIDEOLINK)

In this presentation, I will explore the historically embedded relationship between race and property, what I have termed 'racial regimes of ownership.' As a prime motor force of colonisation, the entanglement of race and property, haunted by the figure of the possessive individual, continues to shape contemporary modes of dispossession and racial subordination. The production of racial subjectivity and the constitution of private property relations are articulated conjointly, in ways that are neither inevitable nor transhistorical. Rather, the racial regime of ownership requires continual renewal and reinstantiation to prevail over other ways of being and living. I draw on Stuart Hall's theorization of articulation, and

Cedric Robinson's conceptualization of racial regimes in order to emphasize three different aspects of the constitutive relationship between modern property laws and the racial subject: the non-inevitable yet non-arbitrary nature of this juridical formation; the (consequential) necessity for this formation to be continually renewed in the colonial drive to appropriate and control indigenous land; and the recombinant nature of the constituent parts of the racial regime of ownership. By emphasising the contingent and unstable nature of the racial regime of ownership, I will by way of conclusion consider tactics of *de-propertisation* and *estrangement* from predominant modes of ownership.

Timm Graßmann

THE ESSENCE AND THE LIMITS OF MONETARY POLICY ACCORDING TO MARX

The world market crisis of 1857-8 was the first one in which the European governments and state banks refrained from a policy of credit rationing and, in order to break the panic, resorted to a multitude of partly novel instruments and measures such as international coordination, debt moratoria, conversion of private debt into state debt and liquidity provision. In his notebooks on the crisis, the so-called *Books of Crisis* of 1857-8, published for the first time in 2017 in the *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA), Marx certainly took note of this "birth of monetary policy." Marx had previously assumed a very close connection between economic crash and political crises, mediated through a fiscal crisis, but in 1857-8 it became clear that the state's ability to manage crises was not as limited as he had previously assumed. Through monetary policy, the state was able to "borrow time" and avoid the political turbulence Marx had expected. Marx theorized this experience in his manuscript for the Third Book of *Capital*, where he defined the possibilities and limits of monetary policy in more detail. He pointed out that while no state action could avert the recurrence of crisis, wrong monetary policy would necessarily aggravate every monetary crisis, implying that the right one would mitigate it. The presentation will discuss what, according to Marx, the essence of a "right" monetary policy is, what its limits are and what political consequences Marx drew from this.

Solange Manche

FICTITIOUS CAPITAL: WHAT BOUNDARIES BETWEEN THE REAL ECONOMY AND FINANCE AFTER COVID-19?

Critics of fictitious capital often exaggerate the claim that the notion conceives of a strict separation between the real economy and finance. These critiques are often closer to a dialogue of the deaf about the meaning of fiction itself, rather than that they touch upon a fundamental disagreement about the structure of financial products as claims over the future. Besides mapping this dispute, this paper attempts to periodise different stages of financialisation in terms of the proximity between finance and productive activities, primarily by building on the regulation school tradition (Durand, Lordon, Orléan). Instead of taking the habitual approach of comparing profitability rates, I will instead look at how the process of capitalisation has gradually financialised all aspects of everyday life. As the deregulation of the economy that started in the 70s put relentless pressure on wages, the only way to sustain consumption was by extending credit, leading to the type of assets that were at the heart of the 2007-2008 crisis. Since deregulation, the response to economic crises have been blurring the lines between finance and the real economy—or in fact life—as the pandemic has demonstrated. This is not to discredit the idea that fictitious capital obfuscates the valorisation process by validating it preemptively. Instead, I will argue that we need to question what valorisation process it is that it validates, which increasingly appears to be the promise of a future return by capitalising assets.

Karen Helveg Petersen

DOES MARX'S THEORY OF MONEY AND CREDIT HOLD TODAY?

The paper aims to present a coherent modern Marxist theory of the monetary system by tracing the conceptual and historical developments of the money, credit, banking and capital nexus. For obvious reasons Karl Marx did not develop an up-to-date theory of money and banking. Nonetheless, Part V of *Capital* Volume 3 gives valuable, albeit raw and incomplete, material on which to build a coherent theory of the interrelations of money and credit markets supported by the modern central bank. The Bank Act of 1844 granted the Bank of England quasi-monopoly of banknote issue in line with its gold and other reserves. In normal times commercial banks handled their settlements through a complicated web of money market dealers, but when crises hit, the Bank was lender of last resort. The paper explores

the compatibility of 'the money view' of Perry Mehrling (*The New Lombard Street*), with Marx's thinking. The money view stresses the key role of liquidity, whose modalities vary from high-powered central bank money to short-term private credit, and a corresponding hierarchy within the monetary system. State debt fuels the markets. In view of the dollar replacing the pound sterling as world money, Mehrling redefines the role of the world's central bank, the Fed, as not only 'lender' but 'dealer of last resort' or as market facilitator of the international monetary and financial system. This in many ways unlocks Marx's writings. Quantitative easing following the 2008 financial crash has led to unprecedented growth in central bank and large bank balances through increased liquidity. The corona crisis has once more put the spotlight on the tools and role of central banks, but also raised the question: Can the integrated international financial and, at a deeper level, capitalist system continue to paper over its inner fault lines or will they crack open?

Jenny Strandberg

THE LIMINALITY OF EXPLOITATION: REFLECTING ON THE DUAL ROLE OF BORDERS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PLATO AND MARX

The function of borders as both objects of transgression and means of control for the sake of maximizing profit characterize our current economic and political moment. To better understand the dual role played by borders in a global economy, I turn first to Plato's description of the first city in the *Republic*. In Book II, Socrates says, "I think a city comes to be because none of us is self-sufficient, but we all need many things." The first city is healthy and happy but bears few resemblances with their own city of Athens. Thus, they also consider the origin of the luxurious city focused on satisfying wants rather than needs. To fulfill the insatiable cravings of people in the 'feverish' city, the rulers seek to occupy the land of their neighbors. The neighbors, who themselves "have surrendered to the endless acquisition of money," respond with a violent counter-attack. Hence, we learn from Plato that border transgression and war are the necessary consequences of an acquisitive spirit. This paper understands capitalism as a manifestation of this spirit and argues that state aggression will follow from it necessarily. It further argues that, in a global economy, state aggression has become multilateral and carried out in the form of free trade agreements and punitive immigration policies. Today, borders must be porous enough for capital and goods to flow freely,

while, at the same time, vigilantly maintained to control the movement of people in search of better livelihoods. This paper reflects on this situation by discussing the extreme forms of alienation experienced by the migrant worker in a world committed to free trade and the criminalization of the economic refugee.

Tamara Caraus

MARX'S CRITIQUE OF 'BOURGEOIS COSMOPOLITANISM' AND THE PROSPECTS OF A RADICAL COSMOPOLITICS

"The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country" says the *Communist Manifesto,* the same text which states that "The working men have no country" and ends with the famous call "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!" The 'bourgeois cosmopolitanism' was the object of critique in most of the texts authored by Marx (and Engels). Marx underlined that "political economy displays a cosmopolitan, universal energy which overthrows every restriction and bond, but comes out in its complete cynicism" (*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*) and that "free competition and world trade gave birth to hypocritical cosmopolitanism and the notion of man"(*German Ideology*). However, Marx's critique of bourgeois cosmopolitanism was not formulated from a local or national perspective, but from a more radical cosmopolitan perspective: despite its brutality, global capitalism fulfils a progressive historical role, eliminating all sorts of barriers erected between human beings in previous epochs and laying the groundwork for a higher level of universalism and emancipation, so that the struggle could become a universal human struggle. The global character of the capital and concomitantly of the proletariat struggle constitutes the core of methodological cosmopolitanism that shapes Marx's entire project, as the first part of this paper will argue. Unlike methodological nationalism, which subsumes society under the nation-state and presupposes that all actions take place in the nation-state container, methodological cosmopolitanism considers the social, political and cultural phenomena as happening in the world as a whole. Marx conceptually and methodologically internalized the world economy and global processes of capital, even when he analysed a national economy (as is the case of England in *Capital*). However, the double global dimension of Marx's approach generated misunderstandings in the whole history of Marxism which reduced cosmopolitanism to the

world market and bourgeois worldview, while the proletariat struggle was framed as internationalism, without questioning the role of the nation-state in the reproduction of capital. The second part of the paper will argue that the re-affirmation of Marx's methodological cosmopolitanism allows mapping a radical cosmopolitics in Marx's thinking: workers as actors in the world as a whole, or proletariat as a cosmopolitical agency, practicing a global critical politics from below, contesting the existing world order based on the nation-state which stands, along with the capitalism, at the roots of the global injustice and exploitation. The concomitant abolition of capitalism and of the nation-state is the radical core of this cosmopolitics: "Communism is only possible as the act of all dominant peoples all at once" (*German Ideology*). Marx's methodological cosmopolitan presupposes that struggle against capitalism has to be concomitantly envisaged as cosmopolitical, otherwise the struggle will fail to grasp all sources of inequality. The nation-state, through appeals to the emotions of national unity, tames the excesses of the world market (e.g. through redistribution and other regulations) and is the last resort for capitalism's survival, while continuing to reproduce inequalities between countries. In the envisaged struggle, cosmopolitan and communist horizons tend to become one, and the concluding part of the presentation will examine the degree in which these horizons overlap, making the radical cosmopolitics the real stake of the struggle against global injustice both in Marx's time and now.

Emanuela Conversano

"THE TRUTH AS TO THE CONDITIONS OF CAPITALIST PRODUCTION": THE MEANING OF COLONIZATION IN MARX'S CRITICAL THEORY

In a note to *Capital*, Volume One, Marx extends the category of "colony" not only to "real colonies," where systematic colonialism rules, but also to those societies which are a colony of Western Europe only "economically speaking." As we live in a supposedly post-colonial world, Marx's statement in the same chapter, according to which the colonies unveil "the truth as to the conditions of capitalist production," gains a special meaning and makes Marx's *critique* still relevant to understand the contradictions of the contemporary world. In my presentation, I would like to start from Marx's idea that colonialism is a method of the so-called "primitive accumulation," as it emerges in both the first book of *Capital* and in later notes, such as the *Ethnological Notebooks* and the drafts of the letters to Vera Zasulich, where

Russia is depicted as a colony in a broader sense. In all these texts, the critique of the actual domination of capital is intimately intertwined with the critique of the dominant thought. Today, capitalism has taken on global contours even clearly and the boundaries between "opposing economic systems" in the *practical* struggles appear more blurred. Therefore, rethinking how Marx himself deconstructs the *theoretical limits* of the Eurocentric human sciences of his time (economics, history, anthropology, etc.) through a global perspective on the *real antagonisms* between 'centre' and 'peripheries' is perhaps even more useful and challenging: it is a fundamental task for any *critical* and *revolutionary* theory to look at the conflicts in the light of the new colonial methods and the momenta of capitalist accumulation still occurring across the world.

Rebecca Lund & Helene Aarseth

THINKING WITH FEMINIST HISTORICAL MATERIALISM FOR EXPLORING WOMEN IN SCIENCE: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, A METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

This article suggests a rereading of feminist materialism that takes seriously the concerns of essentialism and universalism, arguing that a feminist materialism is highly relevant for exploring and explaining gendered inequalities within the contemporary academy. Marx and Freud – and more specifically the ways in which these were brought together in Feminist Historical Materialism (e.g. Nancy Chodorow, Evelyn Fox Keller and Nancy Hartsock) – has been out of fashion for quite some time – critiqued, mainly by proponents of feminist postmodernism, for being universalising, essentialising, and for giving privilege to sameness (e.g. among women) above differences (e.g. those caused by race and class relations). We suggest that the contemporary situation, related to growing gender polarization and remasculinization of the academy, calls for a reengagement with what a feminist historical materialism has to offer. We also suggest that the critiques of feminist historical materialism, while to some extent valid, often rest on unfortunate misconceptions, largely caused by the (admittedly) problematic psychoanalytically informed notion of gendered personality structures. We seek to retrieve and further develop what we conceive of as a potentially productive conception of the material, that emphasises a pre-linguistic (not pre-social) exchange between subjective and objective structures, in the 'intercourse' between the subject and its environment. We suggest that this reworked feminist materialist conception offers an orientation

towards how differences and relations of power are produced and reproduced in everyday practices, that necessarily will be temporally and contextually particular.

Karen Ravn

SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN THE PERIPHERY: (RE-)PRODUCING LIFE IN LEBANON

While having taken various forms in different historical eras, women migrant domestic workers have been employed into private Lebanese households for at least a century to carry out daily care and housework for little (or no) pay. In this project, I seek to explore that situation through a critical analysis of the organization of domestic labor in Lebanon. By applying the Marxist-Feminist analytical concept of social reproduction, I analyze the organization of domestic labor in households as constituted by larger market structures, and as positioned within social relations of (re-)production on a local, regional and global scale. The analysis, therefore, also involves the broader organization of "social reproduction" in Lebanon, meaning all processes and forms of labor needed for the daily (re-)production of life and labor power. In the social/colonial formation of modern Lebanon (located in the Periphery), the centering of financial and trade interests in the political economy has simultaneously pushed the processes of social reproduction to a peripheral position with crucial consequences for the majority popular classes and social relations of (re-)production. Such processes are visible through the long-lasting privatization of social welfare, in legislations on labor & family relations, (non-)citizenship laws, housing conditions, and unequal access to reproductive autonomy, particularly for women and those deemed non-citizens. It is shown that Lebanon as a financialized capitalist society, like elsewhere, results in an organization of social reproduction as both feminized, racialized, and either privatized or commodified. Reproductive processes, thus, become a contested field of survival, dependent on people's structural position with regards to both class, gender, citizenship, race, and sexuality, while enabling the political establishment to utilize social reproduction as a means to subordinate and gain political support. As such, I argue that social reproduction in Lebanon appears to represent a rather permanent microcosm of current structures of social-reproductive conditions/crises on a global scale. In exposing the connections between global, regional, and local structures of domestic labor, I show that such an organization renders as co-constitutive of a

large global labor force of temporarily employed (migrant) workers whose reproductive autonomy become significantly reduced to cut the costs of labor and (re-)production in order to increase capital accumulation. In other words, I expose that the organization of domestic labor and social reproduction in Lebanon ought to be perceived as directly structured by the capitalist mode of (re-)production on all its various scales, as intensely experienced in the current crisis-phase of Lebanon and globally.

Martin Lemberg-Pedersen

A POSTCOLONIAL INQUIRY INTO THE MIGRATION-BORDER-INDUSTRY ENSEMBLE

This paper critically examines European migration and border control from a postcolonial and political economic perspective. In recent years, Western military-industrial political networks have gained a prolific role in EU processes of border control policy-making. Moreover, the expansion of large-scale systems extracting, storing and processing data about displacement has expanded dramatically, giving rise to new economies of displacement data among an ensemble of humanitarian, developmental and financial organizations and institutions. The ways in which these dynamics unfold is analyzed by identifying and characterizing processes of "active forgetting" in European migration politics. How complex displacement crises are understood and framed have to do with epistemological, material and discursive patterns, many of which privileges the continuation or expansion of dynamics like arms exports, humanitarian intervention, forced migration and financialization. This paper therefore critically rethinks key events and developments within the contexts of first the Atlantic slave trade capitalism, geopolitics and industrialism, and later the EU mobility regime. This leads to a shift from a linear to cumulative time horizon which makes it possible to understand the continuation of colonial and racial power matrices in current EU practices, including the externalization of border control to Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey, as well as the ongoing influence of the European IT- security- and arms industry on the formulation of EU politics of mobility.

Gert Sørensen

DEMOKRATI OG EPIDEMI. NATIONALPOPULISME OG FASCISTISK ARV: DEN ITALIENSKE CASE

I 2018 fik Italien den første populistiske regering i et af de europæiske kernelande. Den bestod af *Movimento 5 Stelle* (Femstjernebevægelsen) og *Lega*. Det blev hurtigt *Lega*'s leder Matteo Salvini, der bragte sig i centrum som indenrigsminister og aktualiserede den tilbagevendende debat om Italiens fascistiske fortid. Da den historiske fascisme opstod i årene efter første verdenskrig blev der her lagt nogle præmisser for at føre politik med krigens midler, der fik afgørende betydning for Europas udvikling, efterhånden som den tyske nazisme tog over. Der kan derfor være god grund til at tage denne arv op og undersøge nærmere, i hvilken udstrækning det, som Umberto Eco har kaldt 'den evige fascisme', har bidraget til at farve nutidens populistiske bevægelser og sat et i forvejen skrøbeligt demokrati som det italienske under et stærkt pres. Med Corona-krisen og de træk af undtagelsestilstand, som bl. a. Giorgio Agamben mener har været kendetegnende for krisehåndteringen, står vi overfor en suspendering af 'normaliteten', som vi formentlig ikke har set siden anden verdenskrig og dens konsekvenser. Meget var anderledes i 1945, da krigsafslutningen banede vejen for nye demokratiske forfatninger i Tyskland og Italien og overhovedet for den vesteuropæiske socialstat. Med diverse populismer, en fortsat uafklaret Covid-19 epidemi og et aggressivt kinesisk diktatur rejser der sig atter et grundlæggende spørgsmål om, hvilken styreform der er bedst egnet til at tackle krisen og programmere fremtiden. Det definerer i dag den kritiske teoris store koordinater.

Derek S. Denman

BARRICADE POLITICS: OCCUPYING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE SPATIAL STRATEGIES OF RADICAL DEMOCRACY

Although "throwing up the barricades" today often refers to the border closures and repressive policies of nationalist regimes, this paper follows a different genealogy of the barricade, from its deployment as an instrument of popular insurrection in nineteenth-century France to contemporary acts of occupying and blockading critical infrastructure. This counter-history of fortification is one in which popular and indigenous movements deploy barricades not to obstruct the free movement of people but to interrupt the circulations securing capital and state power. Infrastructure, logistical networks,

and supply chains have become integral to understanding security politics and global political economy. As such, theorizing circulation struggle has become an essential part of envisioning radical democratic resistance to ongoing processes of settler colonization and extractive capitalism. The paper examines the history of the barricade as a fortification deployed in popular revolt. In doing so, it considers the legacy of the barricade for the spatial practices of circulation struggles along pipelines, at ports, and in cities. The paper concludes by suggesting the Blockadia Map, which tracks actions against fossil fuel extraction, attempts to "scale up" circulation struggles and construct a vision of spatial order running counter to logistical capitalism.

Astrid Elkjær Sørensen

CORONA-KRISENS BETYDNING FOR DET LØNNEDE OMSORGSARBEJDE

I de kvindedominerede omsorgsfag i Danmark har der i årtier hersket en bred utilfredshed med lønniveauet. En utilfredshed, der i 2007 og 2008 resulterede i nogle af Danmarkshistoriens længste og største strejker, og et vedvarende krav fra fagenes fagforbund om, at politikerne skal gå ind med en ekstra pose penge specielt øremærket til at hæve lønnen i de traditionelle kvindefag i den offentlige sektor. Omsorgsfagenes lønkamp står dog som følge af coronakrisen pludselig i en ny situation. Netop nu oplever pædagogerne, sosu'erne, sygeplejerskerne og alle de andre medarbejdere i omsorgsfagene nemlig en sjælden stor ros fra både politikere og befolkningen – og globalt tales der om en komplet revurdering af det før så oversete reproduktive arbejde. I de danske omsorgsfag giver den nye anerkendelse håb om, at man ved den offentlige sektors overenskomstforhandlinger i 2021 endelig får det markante lønløft, som de kvindedominerede fagforbund har kæmpet for i årtier. Overenskomstforhandlinger 2021 vil dog uden tvivl også blive stærkt præget af en dansk økonomi i krise, hvilket vil vanskeliggøre større lønløft. I mit oplæg belyser jeg de historiske årsager til de kvindedominerede fags relative lave lønniveau, herunder hvordan den danske arbejdsmarkedsmodel har virket konserverende for lønhierarkiet mellem fagene i den offentlige sektor. I forlængelse heraf diskuterer jeg, hvilke scenarier vi kan forvente omkring overenskomstforhandlinger i 2021, og om hvorvidt corona-krisen kan ende med at føre til en opgør med omsorgsfagenes lønefterslæb.

Lasse Thomassen & Óscar García Agustín

POST-MARXISM IN ARGENTINA: RADICAL POLITICS FROM PERÓN TO KIRCHNER

In this paper, we examine Ernesto Laclau's writings on Argentinian politics. Those writings consist of occasional pieces in newspapers, media interviews, and short pieces in lesser-known academic outlets, almost all of them only published in Spanish. We use Laclau's writings on Argentinian politics to show that, while Laclau's academic writing is often very abstract, the theory is informed by very concrete political contexts. His theories of hegemony and populism should be seen as attempts to think through the political challenges facing the Latin American Left, particularly in Argentina, from the 1950s onwards with its debates between, among others, those who followed the different internationals and those who argued for a national-popular strategy. In doing so, we contribute an understanding of the development of Laclau's post-Marxism and the development of the so-called Essex School. We then take on a tendency of Laclau to treat populism as diametrically opposed to institutionalism in his theory of populism. We show that, in his political writings, he thinks of Left strategy as a careful balancing of populism and institutionalism, where the exact balance between the two depends on the particular historical circumstances. This is particularly evident in his interventions on Kirchnerism, and it is important for thinking about the implications of Laclau's theory of hegemony and populism for radical politics in Latin America and Europe today. In arguing this, we contribute to the literature on populism, showing that Laclau's contribution to that literature is more complex than both his theoretical writings and his critics suggest.

Allan Dreyer Hansen

LACLAU'S THEORY OF POPULISM AND THE PROBLEM OF ANTAGONISTIC BORDERS

In this paper I address the question of antagonism and populism in Laclau's theory. On the one hand antagonism has held a very prominent place in Laclau (and Mouffe)'s theory, as it is the foundation of the claim of the ontological primacy of the political – as he claims in a famous paper: "only antagonistic borders are authentic borders." On the other side the development of the theory has introduced other (post)foundational concepts such as dislocation and heterogeneity. Laclau never gave a definite answer to the status of antagonism vs dislocation, but antagonism's privilege (is a part of the) equivalent

claim of the ontological primacy of (the logic of) populism. Through an exposition of Laclau's reconceptualisation of antagonism and a critique of its elevation to ontological primacy, I discuss Laclau's notion of populism. I argue that (the logic of) populism is not an ontological category. This not only poses theoretical problems but also strategic and political ones. Both sets of problems centre around the presence of the signifier *people* in populist movements. If populist logics are ontological, the organising (empty) signifier may be anyone. If it is not ontological, 'the people' or some equivalent thereof, must be present. I then move on to two political/strategic problems in Laclau's claim that populism (the construction of a people) is the main task for the left. The first is antagonism and democracy. A democratic order cannot be antagonistically divided internally, so how can an antagonistic divide between people and elite be democratic articulated? The second is the potentially nationalistic logic of the people. Can the organizing signifier be 'the nation' without turning nationalistic? And can populism transcend the limitations of the nation-state?

Javier Moreno Zacares

THE BEAST AWAKENS: SPAIN'S NEW OLD RIGHT

After the death of Franco, the Spanish far right spent decades subordinated to mainstream conservative politics, unable to produce an autonomous force capable of making significant inroads into the country's parliamentary system. This feature became much remarked upon in the wake of the global financial crisis, when international commentators noted the 'Spanish exception' to a broader pattern of resurgent nativism. This 'exception', however, came to an abrupt end in 2019, when the far-right party Vox saw an unexpected breakthrough that quickly turned it into the third largest parliamentary force, forcing centrist parties into a rightward drift. The trend is underpinned by a radicalisation of the conservative middle classes, as recently exemplified by the mass anti-lockdown protests radiating out of Spain's wealthy neighbourhoods. With the benefit of hindsight, the paper reconsiders the 'Spanish exception' and its sudden unravelling, tracing the roots of Vox to the ultraconservative wing of the Spanish right. The paper then enquires into how to best conceptualise Vox in light of the ongoing discussions about theories of fascism and authoritarian neoliberalism. The paper then concludes by examining the future prospects for the Spanish constitutional

regime, including its potential breakdown under the pressure of the far right.

Andreas Beck Holm
ÉGALIBERTÉ: OM ETIENNE BALIBARS VISION FOR EN POSTMARXISTISK POLITIK
Den franske filosof Etienne Balibar blev i første omgang internationalt kendt som medforfatter på Louis Althussers hovedværk *At læse Kapitalen* fra 1965. Efter sit brud med det franske kommunistparti i 1981 har hans tænkning imidlertid bevæget sig uden for de traditionelle rammer for marxistisk filosofi, idet han dog – til forskel fra andre såkaldte postmarxister som Mouffe eller Rancière – hverken har gjort op med eller kritiseret marxismen. Et af hovedtemaerne i hans senere forfatterskab har været diskussionerne af racismens genopblussen i det europæiske politiske liv og denne genopblussens sammenhæng med nationalismen og nationalstaten. Samtidig har han med afsæt i disse analyser formuleret et politisk projekt, der ikke blot trækker på den klassiske marxisme, men også på eksempelvis menneskerettighedserklæringerne, og hvis formål både er at drage konsekvensen af nationalstaternes tiltagende magtesløshed i en globaliseret verden og at skitsere rammerne for en nytænkning af demokratiet på disse betingelser. Snarere end at give en bred introduktion til Balibars mangefacetterede forfatterskab vil dette oplæg præsentere netop dette element i hans tænkning der kulminerer med diskussionen af begrebet égaliberté. Det er en term, der står centralt i udviklingen af det, han selv kalder en menneskerettighedspolitik. Oplægget vil med andre ord præsentere et anderledes bud på en postmarxisme, der ikke er båret af kritikken af Marx, men derimod af en metapolitisk realisering af det uerkendt progressive potentiale i indoptagelsen af diskurser, som højrefløjen traditionelt har haft monopol på.

Silas Marker
POPULISME ER FOLKETS IDENTITETSPOLITIK
Trump, Brexit, Le Pen, Orban, Bolsonaro, Salvini, Åkesson. Dansk Folkeparti, Nye Borgerlige og Stram Kurs. Højrepopulismen spiller en stadig større rolle i dansk og international politik. Verden over mobiliserer populismen et "folk" imod en "elite" og iscenesætter samfundet som et konfliktfelt og en antagonistisk kamp mellem "dem på toppen" og et undertrykt "os." Ganske interessant ligner dette på overfladen jo arbejderbevægelsen og venstrefløjens historiske rolle.

Og vi har da også set en venstrepopulisme i form af SYRIZA i Grækenland, PODEMOS i Spanien og La France Insoumise i Frankrig. Og alt efter definition: Corbyn i Storbritannien og Sanders i USA. I Danmark har stemmer særligt omkring Enhedslisten luftet idéer om en ny venstrepopulisme som en vej frem for venstrefløjen. Dette oplæg vil tage udgangspunkt i den argentinske filosof Ernesto Laclaus populismeteori og bruge den, om end ikke uden kritik af den, til at forstå populismen som en politisk diskurs eller artikulationslogik på tværs af årtier og landegrænser. Populisme er ikke bare tom demagogi, appel til folkestemningen eller "uansvarlig" økonomisk politik, som man tit hører i den offentlige debat. Måske peger denne artikulationslogik tværtimod på noget grundlæggende i det politiske, nemlig at identiteter og konflikter er afgørende i politik. Det rejser spørgsmålene Hvordan skal vi forholde os til populismen? Hvad kan vi lære af populismen, og hvad skal vi forkaste? Og er en venstrepopulisme virkelig vejen frem?

Hans Erichsen

STATEN OG KAPITALENS GRÆNSER: DELEUZE OG GUATTARIS BIDRAG TIL DEN HENSYNSLØSE KRITIKS MANØVREDYGTIGHED

I dette paper vil jeg forsøge at vise, hvordan Gilles Deleuze og Félix Guattaris politiske filosofi i skikkelse af en nuanceret statsteori kan yde et bidrag til fortsættelsen af Marx' igangsatte videnskabelige revolution forstået som kritikkens brud med den politiske økonomis diskursive felt. For så vidt Marx' kritik kan siges at være et brud med den politiske økonomis blinde vinkler, dette diskursive felts internt forbundne og uudtalte konstitutionsmomenter (antropologisme, individualisme, ahistoricisme og empirisme), så er det muligt at læse Deleuze og Guattaris politiske filosofi som en lacaniansk-althusseriansk marxisme, der forsøger at videreføre og konsolidere dette brud. Indledende vil jeg overveje de analytiske slagsider og potentialer, der måtte opstå ved at begive sig ud på 'de tusinde marxismers øhav' med Deleuze og Guattari – især med fokus på nyere værdiformslæsninger af Marx' kritiske forskningsprogram. Dernæst vil jeg vil opstille og forfølge hypotesen: Kapitalkritik uden statskritik er tom; statskritik uden kapitalkritik er blind. Det negative argument er, at tages de to kritikker hver for sig, kommer de begrebsligt til at udgøre hinandens grænse, sådan som det eksempelvis ses i nogle traditionelle marxistiske diskussioner omkring basis-overbygning eller økonomi og politik, hvor deres respektive gyldighedsområder tænkes at påvirke

hinanden i eksterne kausalrelationer. Det positive argument vil omvendt være, at Deleuze og Guattaris formanalytiske og transversale statsteori også er kapitalkritik i den udstrækning, at den konkretiserer og differentierer værdiformteoriens begreb om realabstraktion og sociale relationers kapitalistiske formbestemmelse. Dette kan hjælpe os til at få et bedre greb om formbestemmelsernes voldsomme årsager. Konkretiseringen og differentieringen af realabstraktionens manøvredygtighed udfoldes med henblik på det, jeg kalder staten og kapitalens grænser, nemlig proletarer og jorden – de genstridige mulighedsbetingelser som ethvert kapitalistisk samfund bøvler med.

Frida Sandström

CIRCULATION AS PRODUCTION: DEMATERIALISATION OF LABOUR SINCE 1968

In a short essay, cultural critic Ian White compares pornography to silent film: both sharing "a formal drive that turns action into a demonstration of itself for the sake of entertainment." More than just "people fucking," we also see "a formal presentation of it," White argues, bringing attention to how the formal construct of mediation alienates a disintegrated and displaced productive action from its simultaneous materialising and consuming reception. This paper seeks to reinterpret the 1968 art-theoretical concept of "dematerialisation," introduced as the Western concept of art merged with everyday life during the downfall of the avant-garde, predicting an ascendant paradigm of (il-)liberal, "dematerialised" labour. Different from neighbouring post-Marxian concepts such as "immaterial," dematerialisation allows us to analyse closer the moment at which labour is turned "into a demonstration of itself." Virtual or not, this differently distributed mode of production circulates its living labour as (dematerialised, disintegrated) products – formal reception being essential to its materialisation and valorisation (as art objects, as commodities). In a recent poem, Mara Lee traces this circuit in gazes staring at a formal, transactive interface – distorting the worker (herself) behind it into an abstract instant of a mere image of action, in exchange. If abstraction, as Sohn-Rethel argued, doesn't "originate in men's minds but in their actions" – commodity exchange being a particular mode of "social interrelationship," then dematerialisation is abstract mediation: circulation as production.

Sondre Thorbjørnsen & Sigurd Oppegaard

THE FUTURE OF WORK: A REVIEW OF A RESURGING DEBATE

In this presentation, we will present and review a selection of contributions to the scholarly and political debate on the "future of work," a "post-work" society and "post-capitalism." The idea that technological progress and innovation can liberate humans and societies from the strains of work has ignited many and varied utopian visions for centuries (from Bogdanov's Martian communism in *Red Star*, to Keynes' vision of his grandchildren's fifteen hour workweek, and, recently, Bastani's "Fully automated luxury communism"). In *Capital Vol. 1,* Marx cites John Stuart Mill, who, seemingly surprised, finds that "It is questionable if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of any human being." As a response, Mars argues that capital employs machinery "as a means for producing surplus value," not easing the labor process. Currently, automation, robotization, machine learning and artificial intelligence have given rise to both utopian and dystopian visions of a jobless future, as well as policy initiatives such as UBI and job-guarantee. We map the diagnoses, narratives, visions and theoretical foundations of recent contributions to this debate. We critically discuss the realities in the predictions made, the social relations at the basis of and immanent in technological developments, and, in particular, the ways in which capitalism's dependency on human labor is framed: Does the "end of work" entail the end of capitalism? Can capitalism surpass the biological as a barrier for accumulation? Or, might the substitution of human labor power for machines rather pave the way for a new phase of capitalism?

Anna Krogh Kjeldgaard

COGNITIVE CAPITALISM, SOCIAL ACCELERATION, AND MENTAL DISTRESS

How do the cluster of phenomena signified by the terms 'cognitive capitalism' and 'social acceleration' impact mental health today? Contrary to the current tendency to individualise mental distress in public health discourse, I will, in this presentation, try to integrate insights from both critical theory and Foucault's discourse analysis to see how mental distress is linked to social trends and modern structures of society. Especially in the workplace there has been an increased focus on individual optimization and performance rate. I will argue that this is a sign of a growing exploitation of human

subjectivity as such, as employees are expected to both invest and regulate their subjectivity to increase productivity. Thereby work and identity come to be intertwined, and this affects the very construction of identity and how we view ourselves both as individuals and as workers. To be more precise, I will look at how the subjective investment at the workplace is intensified in such a way that employees might experience emotional exhaustion, lessened job satisfaction, and fewer opportunities to mentally detach from work. In my presentation, I will explain how this way of doing work within cognitive capitalism is linked to social acceleration, and how these phenomena can lead to symptoms that are often considered to be a part of stress, depression or anxiety diagnostic criteria. I will show how an internalization of these issues can lead to further damage. This is why I propose to use the term *pathological deceleration*, as an umbrella term that can capture the different kinds of mental distress that may stem from social tendencies. With this term, I try to point out that the physical and psychological symptoms of mental distress are best understood as manifestations of social and cultural conditions within the individual. This term can help replace a predominantly individualized psychological view of mental distress, and help draw attention to the systems of knowledge, values and norms that validate and reproduce the social order that makes us fall ill in the first place.

Maj Grasten

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SELF-PRESERVATION IN INTERNATIONAL LEGAL THOUGHT

The international law of foreign investment is currently undergoing a legitimacy crisis. Criticized for privileging private individual profit over community welfare, international investment law espouses a neoliberal rationality, reflected in the exponential growth in investor claims against capital-importing host states in the developing world. Sovereign rights are curbed by the safeguard of private property. Scholars have argued that the international investment regime's underpinning ideology is the result of how bilateral investment treaties (BITs) are negotiated or the preponderance of investor friendly, conservatist arbitrators in investor-state arbitration tribunals. In contrast, this paper argues that this neoliberal rationality is an inherent structural feature of international law in general, which has deep intellectual roots in the political economy of international legal thought historically. Drawing on critical legal-historical scholarship and Marxist studies in International Law (IL), I develop this argument

through tracing the key notion of 'self-preservation' in the doctrinal work of international law's 'founding fathers', from Francisco de Vitoria in the 16th century, through modern natural law thinkers, and the positivists at the end of the 19th century. Self-preservation was understood as the essence of human nature which could only be protected by the possession of rights such as the seizure of national resources, including land. The paper shows how this notion was instrumental and found legal form in the context of settler colonialism from the early 17th century onwards and legal doctrines justifying the civilizing mission in the second half of the 19th century in which no distinction between public and private power was made. The paper suggests that the history of the political economy of self-preservation in international legal thought reveals the entangled history of sovereignty/property in which the safeguard of private property ownership against sovereign rights became codified through the development of modern international law and gained traction as ideology and apology for European colonial expansion and occupation. It is against this historical background that the current 'crisis' in the international law of foreign investment can be understood and assessed.

Christiane Mossin

MASKS, FICTIONS OR IDENTITIES? LEGAL BOUNDARIES AND COLLECTIVE POSSIBILITIES

The paper examines inherited legal conceptualizations of collective personhood with a view to the hindrances they entail for the development of new forms of collectivity today. Especially, attention is drawn towards crucial collective concepts of European legal history decisive for the development of modern intra- and cross-state organizational forms such as associations, foundations and corporations, and for general assumptions as to the meaning of collective legal subjectivity. In the 19th/ early 20th c Roman Law concepts such as 'societas', 'universitas', 'corporationes' and 'persona ficta' were subjected to intense jurisprudential discussions regarding their modern definitions and implications within the context of modern private law and an emerging capitalist society. At stake was whether a collective of people – and not just an individual – could be ascribed legal subjectivity, and, if granted, how issues related to guilt, debt, honor, autonomy, public and private responsibility, temporality and change were to be determined and differentiated on a collective level. These legal debates were not only significant for the development of

modern private law, but contained a range of fundamental general reflections: Should collectivity be understood as something *constructed (fictional) or natural, formal or informal, dynamical or fixed, immediately present or always mediated/dependent on symbolic representation or imagination, unitary or fragmented, instrumental or emotional*? Such questions are no less philosophical than legal, just as they can be linked to broader cultural debates and imaginations of the period — and of today. The paper discusses the legal-philosophical thematizations in the light of bio-political considerations. The original Roman law concept 'persona' meant 'mask' — and highlighted a distinction between the personality ascribed to an individual through law and the natural human being. The question is whether this way of distinguishing has been lost in modern societies: is life increasingly reduced to the categories applied to it, not only legal, but also political, administrative and cultural categories — to the extent that such categories are being naturalized? Or do we witness an entirely fragmented situation in which naturalization and instrumentalization reigns side by side? In terms of collective personhood, the paper suggests that exactly the schism between naturalization and instrumentalization functions as a fundamental obstacle to the development of forms of collectivity capable of altering capitalist logics and roles.

Mathias Hein Jessen

THE SEPARATION OF THE STATE AND THE CORPORATION IN CAPITALISM

In her essay 'The Separation of the Political and the Economic in Capitalism', Ellen Meiksins Wood chastised Marxists for having "perpetuated the rigid conceptual separation of the 'economic' and the 'political' which has served *bourgeois*ideology so well." This paper examines a particular subset of this separation, namely that between the state and the corporation. Despite Marx's characterization of joint-stock corporations as 'powerful engines' of capitalism, the corporation has rarely been thoroughly analysed by neither Marx nor Marxists. This lack has only increased with the multinational corporation rising to become the main engine of contemporary capitalism. In the vein of Meiksins Wood, this paper holds that Marxists and leftists have perpetuated the rigid conceptual separation of the 'state' and the 'corporation'. On the right, in neo-classical and (neo-)liberal thought, corporations are treated as a nexus of individual (voluntary) market-transactions and equated with individuals or small enterprises. On the left, corporations are treated as economic creatures

separate from the state, encroaching upon and threatening the sovereignty and autonomy of the democratic state. The paper traces the roots of this separation in early liberal thought, where it holds that our way of understanding corporations and their relation to the state was founded, and which still haunts us today. Here, because of their similarity to the state, corporations were constructed as individuals subject to the power of the state, and thereby *subordinate to*, *dependent upon*, and *separate from* the state. At the same time, corporations were a central way through which to govern social life and achieve ends of government – mainly the accumulation of profit – by granting corporations a wide range of legal exemptions, immunities and privileges. This tendency continues today, where corporations are granted wide-ranging authorities to protect private property, minimize individual liability, and transgress international borders in search for profit.

FEM-MA

WORKSHOP (IN DANISH)

FEM-MA er en feministisk-marxistisk læsegruppe, der blev dannet i efteråret 2019. Her mødtes vi over otte uger for at læse om og diskutere emner som arbejde, sygdom, kærlighed og familien for at forestille os, hvordan vi kan indrette en feministisk og kommunistisk verden. Vi forsøgte at gøre læsegruppen så kollektiv som muligt ved at læse og lave mad sammen til møderne og lade diskussionerne tage udgangspunkt i vores egne erfaringer. I denne workshop vil vi dele erfaringer med eksperimentelle måder at lave læsegrupper på og diskutere, hvordan vi kan udvikle revolutionære måder at læse og lære på kollektivt. Med udgangspunkt i det zine, vi afsluttede læsegruppen med at lave, skal vi i workshoppen også selv arbejde med tekstbidder fra feministiske marxister. Vi håber, vi i workshoppen kan undersøge læsegruppens potentialer og kan inspirere hinanden til nye kollektive måder at læse kritisk teori på.

Killian Favier

FROM LATOUR TO MARX: TERRESTRIAL PHILOSOPHY AND CAPITALISM

In the context of the Anthropocene, a period of human-induced natural changes that jeopardize the conditions of life on earth, Bruno Latour has insisted on the need to go back "down to earth," to "land," to understand that we are "terrestrial" or "earthbound." In other words, we have to understand the materiality of our human condition.

Latour contends that Moderns have always falsely seen themselves as "materialists," the proof being that they have destroyed the stability of their homely earth, and are still doing so today, despite all the warnings coming from scientists. Can Marx, the materialist philosopher *par excellence*, fall into that category? There are debates about his supposed "ecology," as if the matter was to decide whether Marx was an "ecologist" ahead of his time. I argue that his importance lies elsewhere. First of all, in his philosophical premises, set with Friedrich Engels in the *German Ideology*, which locates the first condition of human history in the concrete, natural lives of human beings on earth. Secondly, in his analysis of Capital as a never-ending process of *immaterial* accumulation. The notion of *value* depicts the metaphysical reality of the capitalist economy, — it follows a logic which is literally out of this world. If Marx did not expect capitalism to damage the conditions of life on earth, he did provide a terrestrial starting point for philosophy, as well as a critical theory of an economy that structurally ignores materiality, or treats it only as a means for an unearthly end.

Eskil Halberg

SUBSUMPTION AF NATUREN ELLER KOMMUNISTISK REPARATION

Kapitalen underkaster ikke kun naturen sin magt ved at brede sig ud over større og større dele af landskabet. Kapitalen er i færd med at skabe sin egen natur. En på den ene side humpende og deform natur, og på den anden side en 'effektiviseret' natur. I forlængelse af human-økologen Andreas Malm og litteraten Jasper Bernes, samt Moishe Postones begreb 'abstrakt tid' gøres et forsøg på en analyse af kapitalens reelle subsumption af landskabet under kapitalen. Kapitalen forsøger at omskabe naturens rummelighed og dens tidslighed for at øge eller forlænge akkumulationsprocessen. En bevægelse fra årshjul til stopur, og fra landdistrikt til automatiseret lagerhal. Tilsyneladende uden grænse. Men kapitalen har en grænse. Nemlig det biofysiske stofskifte mellem samfundslivet og dets materielle forudsætninger. Dette stofskiftet er blevet afbrudt af en forstoppelse af affald (ikke mindst drivhusgasser), der før eller siden vil sætte en stopper for kapitalens akkumulation. Om ikke andet ved en biosfærisk nedsmeltning og fortløbende katastrofe. Processen er fremskreden. Subsumptionsanalysen fører til en række strategiske spørgsmål om klassekampens forhold til natur, fordi en ødelagt natur gør både reproduktion og kamp svært. Hvad skal den kommunistiske

bevægelse gøre med den ødelagte natur i kampen mod kapitalismen? Den ødelagte natur – ørkendannelsen – er en del af klassekampen, fordi madproduktion og dermed reproduktion af livet bliver stadig mere afhængig af kapital. Subsumption af naturen under kapitalen er således også subsumption af arbejdsprocessen under kapitalen. Det er svært at lave mad i et ødelagt landskab og derfor svært at slippe fri af akkumulationsprocessen. Ørkendannelse skaber kapitalafhængighed. Madproduktion i vores samtid gør kamp umuligt, men kamp er omvendt også umuligt uden mad. Jeg vil argumentere for at, den kommunistiske bevægelse således må blokere kapitalens bevægelse og reparere landskabet i en og samme bevægelse. Revolution og reproduktion på samme tid.

Ida Lunde Jørgensen & Juan Ignacio Starrico

THE MUSEUM AS A TRENCH: INTERWEAVING HEGEMONY AND SUBVERSION AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF DENMARK

This paper examines the contested process of national identity formation that is currently taking place against a background of intense political debate surrounding immigration and belonging. Grounded in a visual analysis of two artworks exhibited at a national museum in Denmark, the paper illustrates how the subversive interweaving of art creates counter-narratives, which subtly but profoundly change the meaning of the hegemonic ones. In doing so, it becomes apparent how strong national myths of a fair nation are transformed to allude to dark sides such as the exclusion of ethnic and cultural difference. We contribute to the field of Marxist studies by complementing a historically inclined neo-institutional approach with Gramscian theory of hegemony and visual methods of analysis, inspired by Ferguson, Barthes, and Panofsky, to attend to the contestation of myth and national identity through the strategic exhibition of art.

Mikkel Nørregaard Jensen

LOOK AWAY AND LET DIE: GRÆNSEVOLD VED EUROPAS KYSTER

"The boat drifted SSW for seven to eight days before it encountered a military ship between 3 and 5 April (point E). Despite approaching them in circles and witnessing the distress of the passengers, the ship left without assisting them." In this description of a boat carrying refugees from Libya to Lampedusa in Italy from the art installation The Left-to-Die-Boat a survivor tells of a meeting with a

military boat deliberately ignoring the law of the sea by not rescuing the passengers from the boat. Two later died. The artwork is made by the research community Forensic Architecture as a part of the trial against the responsible border authorities who let the boat run aground. Taking the The Left-to-Die-Boat as my starting point I seek to investigate different forms of border power in relation to EU's border efforts in the Mediterranean. In the analysis of The Left-to-Die-Boat, I will especially emphasize how border control functions not only as a "top-down" power relation, but as form of control taking form as a social, processual mechanism; as Bordering (Van Houtum & Naerssen 2002; Brambilla 2015, 2017; Mbembe 2018, 2003 (2019)) and as a spatio-temporal entity, as a so-called Borderscape (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013; Brambilla 2015, 2017; Brambilla & Jones 2019). Based on the artwork analysis and the exposé of the two theoretical concept, I want to argue that the installation raises questions to contemporary forms of border control that constitute the European border complex: A complex that operates through inclusion and exclusion at the same time – as a mechanism shaped by law, militarization and identity-processes working by complicating migration routes and look away when casualties show up at border crossings. In conclusion, I seek to discuss how the artwork both shows how the complexity of EU's border control shields from criticism, and also shows holes of possible resistance against the border control with the aim of changing it.

Nicolai von Eggers

THE REPUBLICAN ROOTS OF COMMUNISM: ALBERT LAPONNERAYE AND THE LEGACY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

With the advent of the French Revolution, republican ideas of self-government and citizens' active participation in government were adapted to mass politics. As a consequence, models for ensuring mass participation (welfare policies, local assemblies) were increasingly discussed by radical theorists such as Robespierre and Babeuf. With the reactionary turn of the French Revolution and European politics such doctrines were quickly suppressed – and thus unknown to the public – and figures like Robespierre vilified. In 1834, however, the first ever edition of Robespierre's *Works* were published in two volumes. The editor was Albert Laponneraye, who also wrote a lengthy introduction. Laponneraye was a writer and teacher who in 1831 had given a course on the French Revolution for working-class

people of Paris. It was later shut down by authorities later that year and Laponneraye was imprisoned, but he nonetheless published a lengthy history of the French Revolution in 1838, the first such history to paint radicals such as Robespierre and Babeuf in a positive light. By the late-1830's, he was one of the most prominent of the so-called 'neo-babouvists' who, like Étienne Cabet, argued in favour of communism but who, unlike Cabet, believed the means for achieving that end was class struggle through which proletarians would liberate themselves. In this paper, I will present and discuss the political ideas of Laponneraye, focusing on how the republican legacy (particularly that of Robespierre) with its emphasis on self-rule and active political participation influenced Laponneraye's ideas about communism and class struggle.

Hannah Voegele

FIGHTING VIOLENCE BEYOND POSSESSIVE INDIVIDUALISM

My paper interrogates the social, intimate and property relations that underpin sexualized and gendered violence. I argue that struggles against violence must strike at "cultures of property," that is, the historically materialized and systemic logics of propriety and possession. This investigation is motivated by recent attention to femicides that fails to address the historically sedimented structures that produce gender violence. Common narratives stress individual responsibility and investment in the penal system, borders and the private sphere. In contrast feminist grassroots movements emphasize the continuity between different forms of violence including coloniality, capitalist expropriation and militarization. My unique contribution is to explore how the proprietorial violence of "western modernity" contributes to contemporary gendered violence. By way of the claim of this somewhat constitutive relationship, I aim to contribute to two discussions. On the one hand I want to show how in critiques of society we fail to see the pervasiveness of property and its impact. On the other hand, I want to intervene in our debates about violence. I aim to adopt a two-pronged approach to make these interventions and build my arguments. One, I am making an argument about the genesis of our modern proprietary system. This historical view lays open the violences inscribed into it that are embodied in our relationships today; this is a history of the modern property system generally, with a specific highlight on how this played out in Germany's colonial pasts. Two, I am dissecting the logics of the liberal proprietary order in which we live and form our social existence to

see whether it could in essence offer alternative ways of relating. This is confronting the recourse that contestations of liberalism are often met with; has it just been corrupted by its history and can be freed from it? Here, I focus specifically on the common emancipatory declaration of self-ownership and its ambiguities.

Louise Rognlien

THE SCANDINAVIAN MUSLIMWOMAN AS THRESHOLD FIGURATION

My argument is three-fold: firstly, that the figure of "the Muslimwoman" is an important figuration in contemporary Scandinavia, and secondly, that the contemporary expression of this figure is bound to a specifically situated history of alterity. Thirdly, that this figuration functions through and as a demarcation. I develop the neologism "Muslimwoman" first applied by Miriam Cooke, through an emphasis on the Muslimwoman as a figuration, inspired (amongst other) by Judith Butler and further with Sara Ahmed's concept of "sticky objects." Further to this I argue, when working on figurations like this one, that the analytical concept of 'thresholds' might be more useful than "boundaries." While the latter signals something more static and fundamental, the threshold accentuates mobility, a transformative potential and highlights an "in-between space." I also argue for the necessity of situating a figuration like this, geographically, historically and culturally. By situating the figure of "the Muslimwoman" in a Scandinavian historical and contemporary context, a specific history of alterity comes into view. The latent historical imagery of alterity and homogeneity, highlights the connection to aspects of a Nordic colonialism and orientalism, as well as Nordic exceptionalism through the narrative of "a Nordic model" of welfare and equality. I problematize this through a discussion of the concept of "Nordic whiteness" and the so-believed "achieved gender equality," in light of the concept of "femonationalism" framed by Marxist scholar Sara R. Farris. The contribution is a gendered, postcolonial theoretical approach and a conceptual framework for working with figurations in general, and "the Muslimwoman" specifically, and an advocacy of a necessary situated historical approach.

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2021

CAPITAL, CLIMATE, CRISIS

SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE DANISH SOCIETY FOR MARXIST STUDIES

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Aalborg University, Denmark
1-2 October 2021

Keynote: Andreas Malm

As the world comes to terms with the new normal of the COVID pandemic, contemporary capitalism reveals itself as a cluster of intersecting crises of systemic proportions: health crisis, economic crisis, and the relentlessly unfolding crisis of the relationship between humans and nature. Viral disease as well as climate change are rooted in and produced by a type of social relation that, for the first time in human history, rules on a global scale: capital.

While the transitions to capitalism have always entailed transformed relations between humans and their environment, the unfolding ecological crisis appears intimately related to the ongoing crises of capital. Capital seems unable to produce any kind of stable development today, a situation that has deep roots in the upheavals and economic stagnation that has persisted since the 1970s. Thinking through the relation between capital and ecological crises is crucial for understanding our contemporary political conjuncture.

The history of capitalism is also the history of struggles against its forms of exploitation. These struggles have always had an environmental and ecological dimension. When workers fight polluting work and living environments, it is also a fight against capital. Nevertheless, the link between anti-capitalist and ecological struggles is not always a straightforward matter, and tactics and strategies are more diverse than ever.

The Danish Society for Marxists Studies wishes to interrogate and address the unfolding double crises of capital and the ecological relationship between humans and nature, their history, and the types of conflicts and struggles they produce. We therefore invite contributions on this and related topics for the society's sixth annual conference. Topics might include (but are not limited to):

- Natural limits to economic growth
- Class struggle and ecological crisis
- Social reproduction in times of crisis
- The power of fossil capital
- Critical analyses of national and international climate policies
- Unequal distribution of the effects of health and climate crisis
- The interdependency of ecological and economic development
- Human bodies and their environment
- Marxist concepts of nature and bodies
- Metabolism of humans and nature through production
- Struggles around displacement and the inhabitability of cities
- Visions of nature and crisis in art
- Class struggles during the pandemic
- The interrelation between different types of crisis and their sources

OPEN CALL

It is the ambition of the Danish Society of Marxist Studies to create a common platform for critical and emancipatory research in Denmark. For this reason, we also welcome papers that do not directly touch upon this year's theme but contribute to these research traditions.

Please submit an abstract of 200-300 words to info@marxistiskestudier.com no later than 15 June 2021. Abstracts and presentations may be in Danish or English.

ABSTRACTS

Andreas Malm

CLIMATE BREAKDOWN AS IT UNFOLDS: THE VIEW FROM 2021 (KEYNOTE)

In the summer of 2021, the climate crisis took another turn for the worse, with an unbroken string of extreme weather events hitting countries from Madagascar to Russia, Germany to the US. And yet, after the brief slowdown of 2020, business-as-usual was again resurgent, with fresh investments in oil and gas and coal across the board. This talk will offer some preliminary reflections on the current conjuncture of climate breakdown and politics. It will consider inter alia the inert power of fossil capital; the apparent swing from far-right denialism to capitalist climate governance in the US; the ubiquity of mechanisms of denial; the absence of the climate movement in the global North since the outbreak of Covid-19 and prospects for its return; what tactics the next cycle of climate unrest could and should deploy, and, last but not least, the looming spectre of solar geoengineering.

Members of the Zetkin Collective

WHITE SKIN, BLACK FUEL: UPDATES ON THE FAR RIGHT IN THE CLIMATE CRISIS (BOOK LAUNCH)

[unavailable]

Magnus Andersen & Marlene Spanger

THE (IN)VISIBLE MIGRANT WORKER: THE MIGRATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS IN DENMARK

All over the world, platformisation allows companies to 'employ' a flexible, yet precarious workforce for instance within the service industry such as food and groceries delivering, cleaning and waiter services. In Denmark *Wolt*, *Vigo*,*Nemlig.com, DAO, Hungry*, *Happy Helper* and *Hilfr* are examples of companies that organise and transform labour on platforms in one way or another (Andersen & Spanger 2021). Drawing attention to the figure of the labour migrant, we examine how digital platforms intermediary work or more precisely 'employ' migrant workers, and challenge the predominating categorisations in the so-called 'Danish model'. Taking point of departure in the case of the food delivery company *Wolt*, we analyse how the occurrence of

the digital platforms changes the conditions for a 'differential inclusion' (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013) of migrant workers on the Danish labour market. Drawing on the concept of the 'migration infrastructure' (Xiang & Lindquist 2014) we examine how different actors such as the migrants themselves, the trade union, the platform companies as well as the state challenge the highly institutionalised Danish labour market with their different histories, motives and logics (Spanger & Hvalkof 2020). Doing so, we argue that the figure of the migrant working on these digital platforms become (in)visible. On the one hand, they are visible performing the work in the everyday urban space. On the other hand, migrants performing labour on digital platforms become invisible in the institutionalised national space as they transgress the categorisations of 'the Danish model'. As a result, this (in)visibility shows how the mobility of a heterogonous group of migrant workers in Denmark is regulated and exploited in complex ways.

Marie Huntley Andersen

MAPPING THE COMPLEXITIES AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF PIG MEAT PRODUCTION

This master's thesis explores the politically economic relations of pig meat production in Denmark. The objective is to gather a nuanced understanding of the dynamics present in the pig meat commodity chain as it relates to the increasingly global nature of the industry. With the guiding research question, 'How can recent changes of the pig meat industry be explained?', I explore the contradictory circumstances that characterize the current phases of the industry. These are related to the role that the meat industry used to play in Denmark as historically rooted in the cooperative movement and to the current realities of TNCs dominating the industry. The slaughtering company Danish Crown is used as an anchor of the analysis for its role as a lead firm in the pig meat industry. The analytical pillars are built around the framework of the Global Commodity Chain (GCC) that is a lens trough which central actors and relations are mapped out: in particular, the relationship between Danish Crown and labor (slaughterhouse workers) and the relationship between global demand actors and Danish Crown's production. The labor aspect is most salient in the analysis and the perspective of slaughterhouse workers is assessed through a historical referencing of conflict and unrest. In particular, how labor has responded by different means to the changing challenges. I argue that the dynamics of the pig meat

GCC is rooted in capitalist modes of accumulation that draws, and thrives, upon unsettled problematics of workers 'organization.

Mads Barbesgaard

CAPITAL, OCEAN SPACE AND THE BLUE ECONOMY PARADIGM

Since the turn towards green and blue growth was widely endorsed at the Rio+20 gathering on sustainable development in 2012, heads of state, international institutions, transnational corporations, investors and NGOs increasingly look to the oceans and their resources to solve a stream of global challenges. The OECD, for example, has argued that the ocean has an indispensable role in addressing a range of challenges from world food security and provisioning of energy and natural resources, to climate change. For the oceans to play this role, however, the OECD and others have argued for dramatic transformations in the political economy of global ocean space in order to facilitate the expansion of new types of ocean industries: from the more speculative (e.g. deep-sea mining for raw materials for 'green' technologies) to already existing (e.g. offshore wind). Where existing academic and political work tends to emphasize the immediate dispossessory dynamics associated with blue growth (e.g. "ocean grabbing"), new conflicts concerning use and control of ocean space within and between these new ocean industries are also emerging. Building on critical political economy of ocean space literatures, this intervention seeks to elucidate contemporary competitive accumulation in the global ocean through an examination of the conflicting interests *between* these new and emerging ocean industries as they seek to position themselves strategically in the so-called blue economy. The intervention thereby seeks to contribute an analysis of the role of capital in appropriating and re-organising the oceans according to its own needs through a scrutinization of *who* exactly is appropriating the oceans and *how* they are seeking to do so under the emerging blue economy paradigm.

Aaron Benanav

INVESTMENT, GROWTH, AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Capitalist society promises to resolve workers' experiences of job precarity and income insecurity through economic growth. However, on the one hand, capitalist economies have generally been growing more slowly over time, and on the other hand, we face strong ecological limits to the global growth logic. Increasing numbers of people

are trying to imagine a "post-work," "post-growth," or "post-scarcity" future, many of them inspired by a Marxist framework. But it is difficult to describe, exactly, the links between security, work, sustainability, and change that such a vision requires. In this paper, I suggest that the solution is to be found in more clearly examining the investment function in a capitalist society, which allocates producer goods in line with the requirements (and opportunities) of profit-making. What does investment look like beyond the value form of wealth? How would this investment be organized?

Bernd Bonfert

NETWORKS OF COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE: BUILDING A GRASSROOTS ALTERNATIVE TO OUR CAPITALIST FOOD SYSTEM?

Covid-19 has exposed the vulnerabilities of our global supply chains. In the food sector, it has disrupted international trade, resulting in retail shortages and growing food insecurity in many countries. In response, demand for more local, sustainable and solidarity-based forms of food provision has increased, as more people began relying on food aid and engaging in alternative food initiatives. The practice of 'community supported agriculture' (CSA) represents a particularly intriguing type of food initiative, as it subverts capitalist market dynamics in favour of community planning. In CSA, local farmers and households enter into a mutual partnership to share the financial burden and products of agriculture, which allows them to plan their food production and consumption collectively and in relative independence of capitalist market circulation. As such, CSA has been praised for its contribution to building more self-reliant, decommodified and sustainable local food systems. However, expanding the practice into a widely accessible economic alternative across larger scales remains a considerable challenge, which numerous national and transnational CSA networks are trying to confront. These networks have received surprisingly little scholarly attention thus far, which this paper seeks to amend. Drawing on theoretical notions of a non-capitalist 'solidarity economy', as well as on the literature on social movement networks, the paper presents a qualitative case study of the British 'Community Supported Agriculture' network, based on document analyses and semi-structured interviews. It contextualises the network within the UK's dominant agricultural system, characterises its goals and organisational processes, and assesses how its activities contribute to expanding and consolidating CSA. In

doing so, the paper also discusses how the network manages trade-offs between its transformative ambitions, diverse member interests and material capacities, as well as what impact the pandemic has had on its overall scope and strategy.

Dan Boscov-Ellen

"FOSSIL FASCISM" AND THE LIMITS OF LIBERAL CLIMATE POLITICS

In their recent book exploring the dangers of "fossil fascism," Andreas Malm and the Clara Zetkin Collective suggest that "she who does not wish to speak of fossil capital and the liberal ideology that has sustained it should also be silent about fossil fascism and its prefigurations." They contend that, rather than being diametrically opposed, "the one bleeds into the other." In this paper, I argue that the emerging climate strategy of the Biden administration – one that heavily stresses national security, national economic competitiveness, and green jobs for American workers in making the case for (insufficient) climate action, while retaining certain core commitments to the fossil economy and remaining deeply hostile to immigration – presents a clarifying case study of this dynamic. The Biden administration's early actions and rhetoric provide an important window into the evolving relationship between liberal ideology, climate crisis, and the racist and xenophobic preoccupations of the far right. Although there are obviously stark and important differences between the rhetoric of right-wing ethno-nationalists and Biden's more pluralist climate nationalism, I argue that we must pay attention to their similarities, and to the ways in which the latter may inadvertently validate the former as climate change unfolds. I go on to suggest that attention to this potential ideological pipeline – and to the structural limits that preclude adequate responses within a liberal political framework – help to sharpen the contours of an appropriate ecosocialist politics, in contrast with various reform-oriented social-democratic visions of climate action.

Erika Brandl

ON OPERATIONALIZED SOLIDARITIES: INSIGHTS OF ECOSOPHY AND OTHER *RECONNAISSANCE* TACTICS FOR THE CLIMATE AGE

A movement and a strategy of radical aspirations in face of the ecological crisis, deep ecology used to be a dominant theme in environmental philosophy, but its standing today is severely diminished. In

their hope to overcome the noxious dualistic separation of human and nonhuman systems, deep ecologist advocates like Norwegian Arne Næss (regarded as among the developers of environmental ethics) ended up attaching too great an importance to people's individual experience of reality as a source of bettered environmental attitudes – with the result of the movement's contemporary downfall. Yet I claim that Næssian insights on unity, "joyful sharing" and togetherness can inform and improve on cannon practices of solidarity. While it has been well argued that relationship between the theoretical-rhetorical uses of the term "solidarity" and its potential as conceptual tool is a tricky one, I think that these are notions which hint at solutions to modify our current activities towards more sustainable – and fair – economic and environmental praxis. These short, selected insights, which follow from Næss' own "ecosophy," here constitute a toolkit of sorts – a flawed, curious toolkit that reflects back on the ways we (hope to) develop and operationalize solidarity. In the piece, I comment on the ecosophical method that Arne Næss proposed with the intention to curb and end men's exploitation and destruction of the natural world. I discuss the effects of a reconceptualization of Næss' "indistinguishability" of interests by that of mutuality, and make the case that his strategy for self-identification and self-realization is one which, through exercises in recognition (reproduction) and collective living, can increase an individual's preparedness to share resources with others. I defend the position that these so-called exercises need not be of ontological essence, but that they can be reworked as simply political. To conclude, I attempt at qualifying the "type" of solidarity here at play, and briefly contrast it to important traditions of solidarity (social theory tradition, socialist tradition, Catholic tradition), in order to assess its subversive potential.

Eva la Cour

'NATURRIKDOM OG KULDRIFT PÅ 78': GEO-AESTHETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON (A) CHANGING SVALBARD

Herta Grøndal, an Austrian photographer who throughout the latter half of the 20th century shot an extensive number of still photographs on the High Arctic Archipelago of Svalbard selected to feature Svalbard on postcards, stamps and in museum displays, is an important source for visual research related to Svalbard. Less known are Grøndal's films from the 1960s and 1970s, commissioned by Store Norske Spitsbergen Kul Kompagni (SNSK). I propose to

consider Grøndal's films as historical assemblages of Svalbard, which scenographically offer themselves as material in the present, and to discuss the kind of narratives that they are enrolled in telling in a contemporary context of (a) changing Svalbard: speculating upon contemporary productions of Arctic imaginaries, Grøndal's film provide a historical contrast to the planned decommissioning of coal extraction, with a time when Svalbard's settlements were still functioning and imagined foremost as coal company towns. That is, Grøndal's filmpractice mobilizes materialy anchored questions of access to the past as much as to its recollection, when considered in the context of an ongoing development of Svalbard's ascending role as a Norwegian flagship pristine wilderness, attractive adventurescape and aspiring Arctic sustainable exemplar. This draws from the basic assumption that, in order to understand climate change (being the dominant framework of environmental and Arctic imaginaries) as a human-caused threat of 'loss' it is useful to understand that the Arctic was never authentic. Rather, I claim, the 'loss' consists in the increasingly impossible conditions for processes of historical becoming, whereby Svalbard's historically but also continuously depends on coal – historically as an energy source and currently as an imaginary foundation for Norwegian presence.

Victor Cova

WHAT WAS THE MARXIST CRITIQUE OF PROGRESS?

The rejection of progress, which was once a prerogative of the right, is now predominant on the left. It appears that progress never really did take place but was only a narrative meant to justify countless horrors, or worked for the benefit of the few at the expense of the many. In any case, even if it had once happened, we hear, it must now stop – or else a climate catastrophe will ensue. Although this may well be the case, it raises the question of the specificity of the Marxist critique of progress, which never amounted to a rejection of progress as such. In this paper I outline this critique, from Marx through Kautsky and Lenin to Benjamin, Adorno and Kolakowski, as a clarification of the crisis of bourgeois society under the industrial mode of the production, of the self-contradictory becoming of the core metaphysical categories that organise its thought – necessity, possibility, freedom, history, nature – and of their disintegration in progressivism and stalinism in the aftermath of the failure of the world revolution in the 1920s. As a result of that critique, it becomes possible to see that those contemporary social movements on the Left that are

apparently most critical of progress in fact embody some of the most pernicious aspects of progressivism, from the conflation of morality and history to the relinquishing of freedom in the name of necessity.

James Day

PRELIMINARY NOTES ON THE ABOLITION OF SPECIES-BEING

Fracture, non-identity and radical difference were preconditions for recoiling from, for tracing the contours of, the dialectic between human potential and capital according to the "Gloss on Humanism" written by Gianni Carchia for circulation at the "Conference against Repression" held in Bologna in 1977. If the cycle of protests across the globe over this period spelled the end for notions of class struggle based on the affirmation of working class identity, Western Marxism nevertheless predominantly preserved an ideal of human nature and community turned inside out by alienation. In the current cycle of struggles, however, it might be argued that the critique of conceptions of human nature and human community present throughout Marx's work appears to be an urgent necessity. This paper will seek to reconstruct Marx's views on species-being and human community across his writing, with special attention to the shifting terminology around labour power in the critique of the political economy. Is it possible to posit a fundamental change in species-being with the establishment of the capitalist mode of production? Is Marx's notion of abstract labour untenable once his notions of humanity, and human labour, are critiqued? "End of the month: end of the world." This slogan, which appeared in the fusion of the yellow vest movement with climate marches, concisely posits the coherence of wage labour and the myriad climate crises. This paper will conclude by asking whether the possible sublation of human community and species-being in forms interspecies co-existence is part of the development of the workers movement and its forms of struggle (from the general strike, to the human strike, to the climate strike), or requires the undoing and renunciation of the vocabulary of the theory of revolution.

Derek S. Denman

HOSTILE ARCHITECTURE, MILITARIZED POLICING, AND THE ENCLOSURE OF THE URBAN COMMONS

The literature on public space refers to the "fortress city" to denote a proliferation of defensive architecture: spiked ledges, divided

benches, and other restrictive measures intended to regulate mobility, access, and urban use. These material forms are made more hostile by practices of sustained harassment by police and through laws targeting the unhoused. This combination of discomfort by design, regressive legislation, and racist policing produces what Mike Davis calls the "architectural policing of social boundaries." While the enclosure and policing of public space has been well documented, my aim in this paper is to demonstrate the generative role of warfare in this process. I argue that the fortress city is not merely a metaphor for highly securitized space, but arises from a set of imperial circuits moving practices of control from occupied cities to the conduct of urban governance. Focused on these pathways of militarization, the paper follows the doctrine of crime prevention through "defensible space," formulated by the architect and urban planner Oscar Newman. I seek to reveal how "defensible space" echoes notions of defense in depth spelled out in notions of military fortification. By following this pathway of militarization, I show how the design of the built environment serves as a relay between war front and home front. In doing so, the paper aims to contribute to the study of enclosure and primitive accumulation, building upon recent scholarship that reveals how violence at the origins of capitalism persists within its subsequent social formations.

Mikkel Krause Frantzen

THE HYPERABJECT, ECOMARXISM AND SCIENCE FICTION

Let me start with a paraphrase that encapsulates the hypothesis of this paper and of the article ("Ecology, Capitalism and Waste: From Hyperobject to Hyperabject," 2020) and book (*Klodens fald,* 2021) on which it is partly based: The wealth of the contemporary world, in which the capitalist mode of production still prevails, paradoxically presents itself as an immense accumulation of waste. To account properly for this situation, I argue in this paper, we need a concept of the hyperabject. In the first of this paper, then, I will outline the main conceptual characteristics of the hyperabject, while pointing to some of the key – theoretical, analytical and political – differences between that concept and that of the hyper*o*bject as formulated by Timothy Morton. Having substantiated my definition of the hyperabject as a planetary infrastructure of waste and demonstrated how it offers a crucial materialist and feminist perspective that Morton's theory does not, in the second part of the part I will show how this concept is of relevance to contemporary ecomarxism, including theories of the

Capitalocene, of the metabolic rift and of toxic colonialism. In the third and final part, I will consider how the field of literature, art and culture –more specifically the genre of science fiction and Kim Stanley Robinson's two most recent novels – can assist Marxist studies of Capital, Climate, Crisis.

Signe Leth Gammelgaard

INDEBTED BODIES: LITERARY DECADENCE AND LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY FINANCIALIZATION

In this paper I argue that the literary movement of decadence in the late nineteenth century can be understood through the perspective of the contemporaneous financial expansion. I argue specifically that the formalist characteristics of the decadent style mirrors traits from Marx's understanding of finance capital and loan capital more generally. In order to do so I show parallels between the new economic thinking of the period, Ferdinand de Saussure's concurrent innovation of linguistics, the decadent style, and the logic of finance capital. By examining three novels from the period of the nineteenth century, namely Balzac's La Peau de Chagrin, Huysmans's À Rebours and Wilde's The picture of Dorian Gray, I show that this development in the credit economy and in finance registers on the bodies of novelistic characters and affects the way that debt is portrayed. Finally I speculate on the use of studying literature to understand the history and dynamics of capitalism.

Anders Lund Hansen, Mads Marbesgaard, Louise Fabian and Vasna Ramasar

UNEVEN URBAN OPERATIONAL LANDSCAPES AND SAND EXTRACTION

This paper aims to advance our conceptual and empirical understanding of uneven urban operational landscapes and sand extraction. The city's material skeleton is founded on extraction of sand. The United Nations Environment Programme considers sand as the "unrecognised foundational material of our economies." We unpack the socio-ecological metabolism of operational urban landscapes by 'following the sand'. This paper follows up on the calls within both rural and urban studies regarding the need to supersede the urban/rural divide in order to better elucidate contemporary processes of socio-spatial transformations and their implications. This means that analysing urbanisation processes and their implications today, theoretically and empirically takes us far beyond the "city." The research contributes to this theoretical challenge through the

intersection of theories on planetary urbanization, political ecology and social reproduction. Connections between urbanisation processes and relations to nature are frequently assumed rather than examined and overgeneralization is common. In this paper, we lay out the theoretical ideas and present some initial empirical analysis of the urban operational landscape and the on-going processes of the urbanisation of sand in the Greater Copenhagen/The Oresund region. The paper makes a theoretical contribution by operationalizing the three mutually constitutive moments of urbanization laid out by Brenner and Schmid (2015): concentrated, extended and differential and connects to the metabolism of nature.

Markus Christian Hansen

HOW DO WE STUDY CAUSALITY IN CAPITALIST AND NON-CAPITALIST SOCIETIES?

This presentation will suggest that we cannot provide a transhistorical theory of economic determination. One of the great issues of philosophy, sociology and history is the question of determination – economic, technological, institutional, or otherwise. This is especially the case in Marxism, which has at times indulged in the (in)famous "base-superstructure" metaphor presented by Marx in the introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* in 1859, and later voiced by Engels in his letter to J. Bloch from 1890. Despite the diminutive size played by such comments in the overall body of work of Marx, they have shaped not only Marxist theoretical discussion, but also the general reception of "Marxism" as a theoretical field, to an outsize extent. On the other hand, there has also been a striking theoretical poverty when investigating issues of historical development. Various factors are highlighted on an *ad hoc* basis with little concern for providing some theoretical establishment of the order of determination or causality between for example ideas and economic practices. The result has been a mixing-up of causal factors in a way which cannot spontaneously be justified.By utilizing a Political Marxist approach, I will suggest that the issue of how social causation functions can only be answered with reference to historical specificity. I will argue that capitalism *is* in fact more economically deterministic than previous historical socio-economic forms, whereas for example feudal society allows for a much greater degree of free action. The practical upshot of this is that we must allow for greater causality of "superstructural" elements when studying non-capitalist societies.

Morten Haugaard

URBAN AGRICULTURE AS POTENTIAL ANTITHESIS TO FOOD-RELATED ALIENATION

Globalisation and increasing industrialisation has led to a rather substantial food liberalisation, paving the way for the possibility to consume food from anywhere and nowhere. This has led to people being alienated from the food they consume, due to distance from production and the normlessness found in modern consumption – so called gastro-anomie. A potential opposition to this, can be seen in the increasing popularity of urban gardening and foraging – but to what extend can this be seen as a direct response? By investigating the potential de-alienating properties of urban gardening and foraging, the study presented is looking at the practice of these in relation to local foodscapes and human-nature interrelation. The study was methodologically conducted through literature-reviews and interviews with practitioners of urban-gardening and urban foraging in and around the city of Aalborg, while theoretically understood through the lens of early Marxian work on human-nature relationship, gastro-anomie and foodscapes. Throughout the study it was found that most informants took great pride in their practice, since it in their eyes, directly opposed modern food production methods. Although their practise was not spawned from a direct hatred towards modern alienated production, it became their direct opposition. The practitioners did not see themselves as part of a geographically constructed local foodscape, but rather a symbolic one. Urban agricultural and foraging practises can be seen as showing a lot of promise in regards to de alienating it's participants. The practise is seen by it's practitioners as an antithesis to modern food related mass-production, but the practice needs further integration into the local foodscape to garner real change in regards to food related alienation and gastro-anomie.

Philip Højme

RETHINKING COMMUNISM AS BIOCOMMUNISM: LIFE AND SPECIES-BEING

This presentation seeks to reconceive the little known concept of biocommunism (Dyer Witheford 2008; Wróbel 2020a, 2020b) in light of the growing realization that Nature is increasingly knocking down the bulwarks constructed by late capitalism. To reconceive Communism as biocommunism, at present, means to awaken the branch of Marxist thoughtconcerned, not so much with society

as with life itself. This concern is similar to both Agamben's *bare life* (1998[1995]) and Butler's *precarious life* (2004, 2012). Biocommunism constitutes, in my interpretation, a conception of communism much in line with Bookchin's idea of *social ecology* (2006) – which in turn distinguishes biocommunism from both Stalinism and Leninism – instead, biocommunism is anarchic, rather than statist, and plural, as opposed to universal. By starting from Dyer-Witheford's suggestion of returning to the young Marx's idea of 'species-being' or *Gattungswesen,* this presentation aims, on the one hand, to sketch biocommunism as less techno-optimistic than Dyer-Witheford's original proposal, and on the other, as less utopian than Wróbel's conception of biocommunism as an 'overcoming of biopolitics'. Instead, I will suggest that biocommunism ought to be concerned with the present lives in their actual present situations as these *present* their *bare* or *precarious* suffering to the world.In conclusion, I am offering an interpretation of biocommunism as a possible reconception of Communism in an age where uncontrollable Nature has once again become visible. At the same time, I am also offering a novel qualification of the earlier conceptions of biocommunism. The latter makes biocommunism a fruitful concept for further research under the present conditions – climate change, COVID19, etc. – because the qualification suggests a need to reorient Communism towards life itself rather than society. Lastly, biocomminism can provide us with this reorientation without any recourse to positing neither a technological nor a post-biopolitical future.

Mathias Hein Jessen

CORPORATE SUBJECTS: AN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF THE CORPORATION

The corporation is arguably the central subject of contemporary capitalism. Contrary to popular belief and economic textbooks, economic activity in contemporary capitalism is not dominated by individuals, but by firms, companies and corporations. Central for this functioning is the corporate form, which gives a collective the right to own property, to be an object and subject of law, to be a legal or fictitious person or subject. In short: to act *as* an individual. This paper argues that in order for the corporation to function in capitalism, it has been equated to and configurated as a person, as an individual, and as a subject. This personification, individualization and subjectivation goes beyond its rights and privileges as a juridical person, but has throughout the history of capitalism endowed

the corporation with a number of duties, privileges and rights. As such, there is a contradiction in conventional economic thinking, which equates firm action with individual action (theory of the firm), which cannot explain the existence, dominance and political influence of corporations. Corporations today account for a dominant percentage of the world's top 100 economies, responsible for the majority of global carbon emissions, increasingly politically influential, taking over more and more aspects of governance, and continue to be the driving force of value extraction and spreading of capitalism around the world. Consequently, critical scholarship on the corporation and the corporate form has sprouted in recent years within a number of different disciplines such as history, geography, legal studies, sociology, political science, and even Marxist studies. However, this paper argues, we need to understand how the corporation has been, and is continually being, constituted as constructed as a subject with particular rights (property, legal personality), privileges (limited liability, entity shielding, immortality) and duties (responsibility, fiduciary obligations, accountability, publicity).

Sidsel Jelved Kennild

OCCULTISM AND ITS POLITICS: NATURE, CAPITALISM, AND PSEUDO-RATIONALITY IN THE "ANTHROPOCENE"

With global financial crisis, accelerating ecological downfall, and growing climate activism, the Anthropocenic analysis of the present paves the way for cultural and academic reinterpretations of the relationship between humans and nature. These reinterpretations reflect both the Icarian character of human dominion over nature and the inversion that i.e. the inevitable significance of human entrenchment in nature. I argue that the historically specific contradiction between dominion and entrenchment entails a contemporary turn to occultism in which the crisis of the dialectical relationship between subject (society) and object (nature) comes to be intelligible through phenomena such as postmodern "witchcraft," botanical practices, homeopathy, tarot cards, and astrology. The emergence of occultism as a response to the societal conditions of capitalism is, however, not specific to the Anthropocenic moment. Rather, occultism has reoccurred during the course of the 20th and 21st centuries. As Theodor W. Adorno emphasised (Minima Moralia, 1953), in bourgeois society the fear of the product of human technology reaches far beyond the fear of nature itself. This panic appears as consciousness falling back upon "a need for ontology," often expressed as an idea of nature as

enchanted or as a meaningful system that embeds and conditions the subject. Methodologically inspired by Adornian critical theory, my paper offers a historical reading of occultism in the present, not only as a particular brand of Anthropocenic response to the crisis of the relationships between science, society, humans, and nature, but also as a reoccurring advent in bourgeois thought. More specifically, I historicise how and why rationalities such as astrology, homeopathy, nature spiritualism and pseudo-science emerge in Anglo-American and Danish public discourses in order to discuss how occultism as an alternative to bourgeois rationality apprehends nature and society in late/post-political capitalism.

Mathias Klitgård, Liu Xin & Laura Horn

"SEXUALITIES AND CRITIQUES OF CAPITAL": AN INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITORS

Emphasis on the political significance of sexuality presents one of the most important feminist contributions to critiques of global capitalism. While the relation between the economic and the cultural/non-economic, and between redistribution and recognition continues to be subject of debate (see for example Fraser 1995; Butler 1998; Oksala 2017), there is a general consensus that sexualities and sexual politics are both foundational to and shaped by the capitalist mode of production and accumulation (see for example Drucker 2015; Reynolds 2018), as well as the changing relations of labor and formations of statehood (see for example Liu 2015; Chitty 2020). For example, it has been argued that the contingent inclusion of particular sexual minority identities in nationalist narratives and imaginaries feeds into the neoliberal logic of "privatization and personal responsibility" (Duggan 2003, 12) on the one hand, and the figure of the exceptional and civilized nation-state on the other hand (see for example Puar 2007). Moreover, the restructured relation between capital and labor through the logic of financialization, has been said to form what Lisa Adkins and Maryanne Dever call the "post-Fordist sexual contract," which instead of separating production and reproduction "places the ideals of intensive mothering, domesticity, entrepreneurialism and an investor spirit towards work and working on the same continuous plane" (Adkins 2016, 3). The purpose of this talk is to present background, structure, preliminary insights and ideas in progress behind the upcoming special issue of *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning* on sexualities and critiques of capital. This special issue provides a platform for critical analysis and debates that shed light on

the complex and often contradictory ways through which sexualities and capital are related to, shaped by, and constitutive of each other. It invites discussions that concern how the changing mechanisms of capital accumulation and the restructuring of labour in post-Fordist capitalism shape sexualities and sexual politics, as well as how sexual oppression under capitalism foments critiques of domination and communities of resistance.

Anna Krogh

RADIKALISERING AF PSYKOTERAPIEN? ET SKRIDT PÅ VEJEN MOD EN MERE KULTURKRITISK OG KOLLEKTIVT ORIENTERET PSYKOTERAPI

Skal målet med psykoterapi altid være at udrede og ændre klienten? Eller kan det som Prilleltensky et al (2009) fremsætter også være en forandring i individet med henblik på, at individet skal forstå, stille sig kritisk overfor og måske endda forandre ydre omstændigheder? Den kritiske og krisepræget situation menneskeheden befinder sig i post-COVID19, har tydeliggjort en presserende opgave for psykoterapien: hvordan behandler vi mennesker der oplever psykisk mistrivsel, således at ansvaret ikke placeres hos dem? Hvordan kan vi i terapien inddrage de ydre betingelser, der kan belaste mennesker og rette opmærksomhed ud mod dem og den måde de foldes ind i individer på? I denne præsentation, vil jeg introducere kritiske måder at forstå psykisk mistrivsel, der peger udad mod strukturer og tendenser ude i verden, i stedet for indad mod individet. Arbejdet er især inspireret af Hartmut Rosas kapitalismekritik, og den allestedsnærværende sociale acceleration berøres også i oplægget. Indledende vil jeg skitsere hvorledes vi kan udbrede psykoterapiens genstandsfelt. Her gør jeg brug af særligt Carsten René Jørgensens tilgang til psykoterapi, da han advokerer for at arbejde med en bredere og mere integrerende forståelse af årsagerne til psykisk mistrivsel. Herefter fremsætter jeg tre forslag til måder hvorpå man kan trække kultur- og samfundskritik ind i det terapeutiske rum: først, hvordan man vha. Foucauldiansk teori og analyse kan søge at afdække skjulte magtforhold og -positioner i klientens liv. Herefter, ved at kortlægge fælles forståelseshorisonter i samfundet og søge efter måder at bryde med disse. Og slutteligt at undersøge og forstå coping-fænomenet som noget kollektivt. Afslutningsvis vil jeg adressere det ansvar jeg mener, der ligger hos mennesker der arbejder med psykoterapi, for at gøre brug af kritiske perspektiver. Og hertil overveje hvorledes en terapeut kan og bør reflektere over egen indlejring i samfundet.

Herunder, hvordan vi der arbejder med terapi, kollektivt kan udfordre hvilken viden, og dermed også behandling, der betragtes som legitim når man beskæftiger sig med psykoterapi.

Line Skovlund Larsen

CLIMATE BLAME BELOW THE GLACIERS: CHALLENGES TO CLIMATE JUSTICE IN PERUVIAN MOUNTAINS AND GERMAN COURTS

In this talk I will discuss the notions of climate responsibility and climate blame in relation to climate justice between the Global South and the Global North. I will do so by focusing on climatic changes and risks in a Northern Peruvian city in the Andes and a related climate lawsuit against a coalmine in Germany. In this discussion I will introduce the term *diffuse responsibility* – a term I have coined to explain the common (mis)understanding that "everyone" is responsible for the climate crisis. I argue that the discourse of attributing blame for climate change to local livelihood management strategies creates guilt in individuals and conceals major emitters' climate responsibility. The talk will take as its starting point the research for my master thesis in which I investigate climate blame amongst a local population in the Northern Andes, Peru, and relate it to arguments on climate liability in German courtrooms. I do so on the backdrop of a climate lawsuit filed by a Peruvian farmer (Saúl) against a German coal- and electricity company (RWE). Within the local Andean population I find a range of perceptions of climate change causes, and I show that residence, livelihood strategies and worldviews have influence on perceptions of climate change. Through theories of climate justice, individual guilt, and collective responsibility I find that the majority of the local population blame themselves or their own community for climate change. This curiously resembles arguments put forward by the coal mining company for exempting their climate liability. In the paper I also offer a critique of the project of the lawsuit concerning community involvement, and a discussion of the potentials of climate litigation as a tool for climate justice.

Adrian Ortega Camara Lind

MARXISM AT THE UNIVERSITY: THE DISCIPLINARY CRITIQUE [*FAGKRITIK*] AND THE CRITIQUE OF THE (BOURGEOIS) CULTURAL RADICAL PEDAGOGY

In the bourgeois public sphere, the popularity of Marxism in the 1970s university world is used as a mythologised spectre. But what

did the Marxists of the day really want? Did they really simply want to "overthrow and destroy society" as some say? This paper will explore the critique and programme of the Student Revolt, also known as the Disciplinary Critique(fagkritik). The Disciplinary Critique was closely linked to the dawning of Marxism at the university. It developed during the Student Revolt and became the tool that students used in their struggle against professor-rule (professorvælde) and against the established scientific authorities. The main emphasis of the presentation is on the programme and theory of Disciplinary Critique, but I will also discuss its preconditions, emergence and development. In particular, the presentation will examine the Marxist critiques of bourgeois pedagogies of the time (especially the critique of the cultural radical pedagogy). The paper will also present the critique of the bourgeois university as well as the critique of the dominant bourgeois scientific paradigms. The presentation will also address the student rebels' idea of the critical university and the fate of this idea. I will critique the existing recent literature on the subject, in addition I will discuss in detail a few important works by Danish Marxist thinkers of the period and highlight their strengths. Finally, we will discuss together the relevance of Disciplinary Critique, as well as the status of Marxism and the critical sciences in the university today.

Johannes Lundberg

THE INVESTMENT DISPOSITIVE AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS

This presentation will investigate the role of financial capitalism in mitigating/aggravating the climate crisis. More particularly, it will analyse the way finance theories have affected Danish pension funds' divestment decisions (i.e., decisions to end investments in fossil fuel companies). By now, various studies have documented that the specific economic interests of fossil fuel companies have led them to a highly successful lobbyism to delay climate regulations. As the power of capitalism is sliding from owners of means of production towards owners of means of finance, investors now have a critical role in influencing the fossil industry. On this backdrop, the investigation takes up a double task: First, it will identify a logic of an 'investment dispositive' (i.e., a tendency transversing different types of techniques, theories, practices, and documents). The investment dispositive will be traced in financial theories concerning 'agency theory,' 'modern portfolio theory,' and 'fiduciary duty,' proposing a tendency to: define investors' responsibility to maximise profit, highlighting

risk management, delimited active ownership, and neglection of environmental consequences of investments. Second, it will trace how the investment dispositive has translated into textbooks, laws, and investment models and practices, focusing on how this has shaped the divestment decisions of Danish pension funds. The analysis of Danish pension funds will focus on to which degree and how: a) Co-ownership in pension funds gives a stronger voice and concrete political influence to climate concerned members compared to commercial and state-owned pension funds; b) Transparency strengthens public discussion about investment policies and policies of active engagement; c) The investment dispositive hinders Danish pension funds in implementing investment policies aligned with the goals of the Paris agreement.

Vasiliki Makrygianni & Kostas Petrakos

SPACES OF EXTRACTION AND STRUGGLE: PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION AND URBAN STRUGGLES IN THE CASE OF "SKOURIES" GOLD MINING IN NORTHERN CHALKIDIKI, GREECE

Despite the widespread attention to the spatial expansion of extractive frontiers around the globe, the power imbalances between multinational mining companies, host countries and local populations remain underexplored. In this presentation, we examine the case of a gold mining project in Greece, a country that has been in the epicenter of a financial and social crisis. During the last decade, the Canadian company Eldorado has undertaken a gold mining investment in the environmentally sensitive area of Skouries. A fruitful social struggle has emerged against this project, both in the rural site and in the urban Greek metropolis. Following autonomous Marxist literature (De Angelis 2007, Federici 2011, Hardt and Negri 2009), the circulation of capital could be interrupted by social, class, gender or ecological struggles. To unsettle this view, we build on recent critical scholarship on new enclosures, land-grabbing and the permanence of primitive accumulation and we explore the inter-articulation of gold mining projects and neoliberal policies in crisis-scapes. Moreover, drawing on insights from literature on critical geography (Massey 1994, Allen 2003, Bridge 2014), and on current debates over extractivism and neo-extractivism (Svampa 2013, Acosta, 2016, Gudynas 2018), we explore the corporate strategies and techniques of power used in spaces of extraction, and problematises the dialectic relationship captured in the repeating pattern of emergence and

bankruptcy of mining companies shifting between job prosperity and expanded unemployment at the local level. In addition, we unsettle the differentiated state strategies that foster continued extraction and discuss how the state promotes the forcible appropriation of land for mining operations. We pay attention to the social mobilization at the extractive frontier, and we highlight how extraction, apart from a spatially localized form of development, is a privileged site of gender segregation in mining sites. Through this case study we investigate not only how the financial crisis but also the recent COVID state of exception provide an opportunity for multinational mining corporations to expand their zones of exploitation and how social resistance can reclaim common resources and question processes of capital accumulation.

Søren Mau

MARXISM AND THE BODY (CANCELLED)

Since the 1980's, critical scholars in the humanities and social sciences have confronted the tendency in Western intellectual culture to devalue or ignore the corporeal dimensions of human existence. This 'corporeal turn' has been dominated by non- or anti-Marxist theoretical traditions such as phenomenology, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis and new materialism, while Marxist perspectives have been perspicuously absent. In this talk, I will discuss what a Marxist contribution to the corporeal turn might look like, and pose the question of what insights a specifically Marxist approach to the body can produce, and how it differs from and relates to other approaches.

Lara Monticelli

ON THE NECESSITY OF PREFIGURATIVE POLITICS

The purpose of this article is to elaborate on the concept of prefiguration by outlining the necessity of its contribution to a progressive public philosophy for the 2020s. In the introduction, I explain how the object of critique for many social theorists has shifted over the course of the last decade from neoliberal globalization to capitalism understood as an encompassing form of life. In light of this, I enumerate the features that should define a progressive public philosophy: radical, emancipatory, and decolonized. The introduction is followed by an overview of the academic debates emerging after the North Atlantic financial crisis of 2007-2008. Among these, accelerationism fundamentally rejects the incorporation of prefigurative politics in any emancipatory political agenda. To better understand

this position, I examine the origin and meaning of prefiguration and prefigurative practices in more detail in section three. In it, I argue that prefigurative politics entails a holistic approach to social change that digs its roots in feminist and ecological thought and focuses on social reproduction and the preservation of life rather than solely economic production. Subsequently, I deploy the case of Occupy Wall Street to show that a growing number of contemporary social movements are implementing a dualistic strategy that simultaneously combines repertoires of action typical of protest movements with prefigurative practices focused on the embodiment of alternatives. This dualism along with the limited success of Occupy Wall Street in concretizing its claims and goals has led prefigurative politics to being labelled as incompatible with, if not even hindering, any emancipatory strategy. My argument instead is that prefigurative politics constitutes a fundamental and necessary component of any political strategy aimed at transcending contemporary capitalism since it conceives progressive social change in an ontologically and epistemologically different way with respect to political parties and protest movements. Taking this into consideration, I conclude that conventional politics and prefigurative politics can be seen as having the potential to mutually reinforce each other and that prefigurative politics should be acknowledged as a pivotal concept in establishing a progressive public philosophy for the 2020s. Only by doing so, will this philosophy be truly radical, emancipatory and decolonial.

Bertel Nygaard

MARX' *KAPITALEN* PÅ DANSK GENNEM 150 ÅR: MELLEM BOGHISTORIE OG SAMFUNDSHISTORIE

Karl Marx' kritik af den politiske økonomi har været omstridt, siden den blev formuleret. Den er blevet læst, oversat, forstået, brugt – og ofte påfaldende ignoreret – på vidt forskellige måder siden 1800-tallet. Så gennem de danske modtagelser af *Kapitalen* og dens beslægtede skrifter kan man ikke blot foretage bogfilologiske kortlægninger. Man kan også tegne konturerne af skiftende sociale, politiske og kulturelle kontekster. Derigennem kan man samtidig åbne for forskellige måder at tilgå værket på – og desuden forsøge at værne nutidige nylæsninger mod at gentage gamle, glemte fejl. Formålet med dette oplæg er følgelig at undersøge det historiske arvegods, som ligger i de skiftende danske modtagelser af *Kapitalen*. Hovedvægten lægges på tre højdepunkter i interessen for Marx og *Kapitalen*, hver med cirka 40 år mellem sig: 1890, 1930 og 1970. Derudover perspektiveres til

de tidligste Marx-receptioner i slutningen af 1840'erne og den nye interesse for Marx' økonomikritik inden for de seneste 10-15 år. Ved hvert af disse punkter spørges til, hvilke politiske, sociale og kulturelle aktører, der udbredte Marx' tanker, hvem der modtog dem, hvilke former disse tanker fremstod i, og hvilke betydningsgivende samfundsmæssige sammenhænge de indgik i. Oplægget skal samtidig præsentere en ny bogudgivelse fra forlaget Slagmark om danske *Kapitalen*-læsninger med særligt fokus på 1970'erne og nutiden.

Anne-Marie Eggert Olsen

SOCIALONTOLOGI ELLER SAMFUNDSTEORI?

'Socialontologi' har siden 70erne gradvis etableret sig som svar på det omdiskuterede spørgsmål om, hvad Marx egentlig lavede, og hvad en filosofisk videreførelse af Marx' tænkning ret beset går ud på. Der kan imidlertid findes gode grunde til at have reservationer overfor, hvad betegnelsen stipulerer både om filosofi og om samfund. Oplægget vil – polemisk – præsentere og diskutere nogle indvendinger med udgangspunkt i Kritisk Teori, nærmere bestemt Theodor W. Adornos bestemmelse af samfundsteori: "Die Theorie der Gesellschaft ist aus der Philosophie entsprungen, wärend sie zugleich deren Fragestellungen umfunktionieren trachtet, indem sie die Gesellschaft als jenes Substrat bestimmt, das der traditionellen Philosophie ewige Wesenheiten hiess oder Geist." ('Soziologie und empirische Forschung', GS 8, 196).

Yan Pan

NEIJUAN (INVOLUTION), EDUCATION AND LABOUR IN CHINA

My presentation will be a reflection on economy and education, responding to the recent public frustration signified by the social phenomenon of neijuan (involution) in China since 2020. Neijuan refers a social process of endless competition and depletion in which many Chinese people find themselves. It is a brutal rat-race where everyone exhausts themselves in the competition for limited opportunities. The tendency towards neijuan has been intensified in the context of China's deep integration into the global market economy and its partial transition from agricultural, industrial economy, to post-industrial, knowledge economy. It also is accelerated along with the transition of educational ideology, from socialist ideals to neoliberal developmentalism, where education and students, as future workers, are commodified as human capital for economic development.

Education in contemporary China in many ways is a contentious site that reproduces economic and social inequality where schools, students and disciplines are stratified, mirroring the hierarchical order in the labour market and social classes. My presentation will first greet the audience with living examples of neijuan and its different manifestations to help the audience familiarize with the social phenomenon. Then I will shift the focus on analyzing the relationship between labour commodification, education and neijuan. I will try to answer these questions: What is the class composition in contemporary China? How has labour commodification, both in industrial and postindustrial areas in China, rendered intensified, new, complex, unequal status of employment? What are the goals and market mechanisms that mobilize people to enter competition, and what role does education play in this process? In the end, I will touch upon the emerging forms of resistance among Chinese youths.

Martin Karlsson Pedersen

KLASSEKAMPENS MILITANTE MILJØHISTORIE: ERFARINGER FRA 70'ERNES AUSTRALIEN OG USA

I *How to Blow Up a Pipeline* rejser Andreas Malm en kritik af klimabevægelsens principielle taktiske standpunkt: brugen af ikke-voldelig civil ulydighed. Malm fremhæver i kontrast hertil, hvad han kalder en "radikal flanke," som har benyttet sabotage (ødelæggelse af ejendom) som et taktisk våben til at ramme kapitalisten der, hvor det gør mest ondt: profitten. Malms historiske oprids af en radikal flanke er vigtig at få forbundet med den militante del af den vestlige klassekamps miljøhistorie. Den kan på samme måde fungere som et korrektiv til klimabevægelsens tendentiøse historiefortælling, med dens klassefravær, samt give Malms analyse en klassedimension: her tog arbejdere også mere radikale taktikker i brug i kampen for miljøforhold og mod kapital, markedslogik og produktion for profit. Klassekampens militante miljøhistorie giver både empirisk og historisk kød på den principielle teoretiske diskussion blandt øko-marxister om arbejderklassens "pro-økologiske pontentiale." Samtidig sætter den fokus på de positive historiske alliancer mellem arbejderbevægelsen og miljøbevægelsen, og den fælles kamp for både sociale og økologiske behov. Herved får vi givet vigtige historiske argumenter for klassekampens (stadige) relevans for miljø- og klimakampen.Jeg vil fokusere på to historiske eksempler fra begyndelsen af 1970'erne: Green Bans bevægelsen i Australien ført an af Jack Mundey og NSW-BLF samt OCAW i USA ført an af Tony Mazzocchi og kampen mod

Shell i 1974. Jeg vil ud fra disse to historiske eksempler uddrage og diskutere nedenstående fælles erfaringer i den bevidste kamp mod kapitalens naturødelæggelse: 1) Hvordan miljøkampen udgik fra "the point of production" samt en radikalisering af taktikker: industriel sabotage og strejkevåbnet. 2) Den rolle som en øget anti-kapitalistisk og socialistisk bevidsthed – den militante minoritet – spillede i begge fagforeningsgrene. 3) En fremhævelse af "fælles interesser" mellem arbejderklassen og miljøbevægelsen samt hvordan de modgik kapitalens splittelsesredskaber (eks. "job blackmail").

Daniel López Pérez

LIFE CHANCES AND CLASS: AN ALTERNATIVE TO CAPITALISM

How are Marxists, not only scrutinising, understanding, and criticising, but overthrowing capitalism? What theoretical tools have Marxists, and what tools are missing for this endeavour? Is it necessary a, even further, politization of Marxism, so it turns its scholarship into praxis? The problem of the crisis of capitalism is a subject extensively investigated in Marxism. Undoubtedly, we have accomplished a great deal to critique and identify capitalism's contradictions. We argue that one of those contradictions is that the system that we so vigorously criticise is also the system that enables and concedes millions of exploited labours living conditions. While we must continue doing a critique of the society, how are we addressing the ontological demands of labours, that is, the necessity to survive and have a "good life"? This paper proposes recasting the concept of life chances, which could twofold attack capitalism. First, it could enable unveiling exploitation as the other main constitutive factor of class. Second, it could enable us to understand and foster the organisation of the working classes around alternative forms of production of life—ultimately addressing the contradictions related to the environment. We propose recasting life chances and creating them in a class-conscious way. Such an endeavour could be attained by paying more attention to class-based forms of social entrepreneurship. These forms of production and social organisation have been already developed. However, their study and theorisation have restricted mostly to liberal literature on economy and business management. Their models on shared value and corporate social responsibility manage to conceal the contradictions of capitalism and depoliticise the social initiatives and collective actions for life chances. Marxism ought to take the concept back from liberal sociology, associated mainly with

Weber, and place it alongside exploitation in the core of the class analysis.

Vasna Ramasar

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE CLIMATE JUSTICE: IS RACE THE ELEPHANT IN THE CLIMATE MOVEMENT?

This paper offers a critical examination of how the climate movements in Europe and the tensions that exist in engaging environmental racism. Activists have been fighting for social and environmental justice in different local conflicts for decades. Over time this has spawned global economic justice movements like the debt cancellation movement. Today, climate justice brings together a global concern with a justice movement. This paper explores the political role of a global climate movement for fostering the diversity of life and movements around the world. The paper uses a qualitative approach drawing on discourse analysis and empirical examples to build the argument. In the first part, a critical perspective to global environmental movements is offered by articulating the challenges of an inclusive climate movement in terms of race, gender and ethnicity. A potential concern for planetary justice as a mobilizing concept is the risk of a singular narrative of justice where restrictions of the dominant system are reproduced. Using climate mobilization as an example, the exclusion of people of colour and the appropriation of indigenous struggles are discussed in terms of the power and politics at play in global movements. The second part of the paper draws on the work of the Global Tapestry of Alternatives to suggest a more pluriversal approach where an intersectional climate justice is encompassing of different ways of being, knowing and living in a world where many worlds fit. The paper is concluded with some lessons from global movement building that is based in local action.

Karen Ravn

PRECARIOUS MIGRANTS, PRECARIOUS SPACES: ORGANIZING LABOR OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN THE NEOLIBERAL ERA

When the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the world at the beginning of 2020, it rapidly exposed (crisis-ridden) relations of dependency for human life, and especially how certain "life-making" labor activities—such as childcare, nursing, food preparation, and cleaning—are an indispensable part of the daily (re-)production of society. At the same time, the "essential workers" carrying out such labor

of social reproduction paradoxically appear to often work and live under rather precarious conditions, as exemplified by low wages or temporary resident and work permits, resulting in a lesser organized group of workers. Put differently, the social-reproductive conditions of essential workers often seem to be rather restricted, despite their cruciality for humans, labor, and society. This project seeks to explore the current organization of labor of social reproduction, which especially should be understood in the context of the last decades' rise in the commodification of reproductive labor during the neoliberal era's global reorganization of social reproduction, as intensively exposed during the current global COVID-19 crisis. The increasing forms of waged and marketized reproductive labor pose relevant strategic, political, and philosophical challenges for feminist, social, and labor movements, and for the livelihoods of migrant workers who make up large parts of the social-reproductive labor force on a global scale. Particularly, this project seeks to carry out an analysis of the options for organizing labor of social reproduction as they occur in increasingly marketized, informalized, and commodified forms of labor in the global context of neoliberalism. This paper will present a few preliminary and comparative case-studies of trade unions and other social or labor movements working on campaigns for, and/or with workers of, social reproduction in its widest sense.

Kristian Rehfeld

MONSANTO, 'TERMINATOR' SEEDS, AND THE REAL SUBSUMPTION OF CONTEMPORARY AGRICULTURE

In 2018 a merger was approved between the U.S. based Monsanto, previously known for its production of the dioxin-based herbicide 'Agent Orange' during the Vietnam War, and the German multinational Bayer AG, once infamous for its use of slave labour and human experimentation in Nazi concentration camps. If their collective histories failed to make such an acquisition adequately horrifying, then their staggering control over global seed markets should. Following the deal, the locus of power over global food supplies centralised further; by 2019 more than 60% of global proprietary seed sales were controlled by just four firms: Bayer, Corteva, Syngenta and BASF. In the same year an estimated 690 million people were hungry and over 2 billion lacked access to safe and nutritious food. Two years on following the Covid-19 crisis these figures have only grown more dire. A decade prior to the acquisition Monsanto gained access to 'terminator' seeds, genetically modified to sterilise after a single harvest to

prevent a second generation from maturing, ensuring rural farmers are further indebted to global agrobusiness. The ethical implications of a handful of multinational corporations controlling such large swathes of the global food production and supply process, and their capacity to develop such technologies, are not difficult to discern. Perhaps before all else this technology fundamentally endangers the livelihoods of much of the world's population who rely on traditional seed saving and localised plant breeding to sustain themselves and their communities by forcibly subsuming them to the logics of capitalism. To understand how agriculture reached this point requires an exploration of the industrialisation of agriculture, the centralisation of capital, and the manipulation of contemporary patent and regulatory frameworks. This paper explores these phenomena primarily through Marx's writings on the centralising tendency of capitalist accumulation and the formal and real subsumption of labour. In doing so it aims to illuminate the irrational logics which lead companies like Bayer-Monsanto to resort to such things as 'terminator' technology, and how the monopolisation of global agriculture allowed them to do so.

Bjarke Skærlund Risager

FINANCIALIZED GENTRIFICATION AND CLASS COMPOSITION IN THE POST-INDUSTRIAL CITY: A RENT STRIKE AGAINST A REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST IN HAMILTON, ONTARIO

Through a case study of a rent strike against a real estate investment trust in a working-class neighbourhood in Hamilton, Ontario, this paper asks how we might understand class and class struggle against financialized gentrification in a post-industrial context. While class has been central to gentrification literature, working-class experience and struggle have often been ignored or conceptualized in a way that precludes agency. New research on financialization of housing often focuses on struggles but has so far paid limited attention to class. In this paper I draw on Italian *operaismo* (workerism) and its concept of class composition to contribute to the current debate by suggesting that financialized gentrification and struggles against it might contribute to a recomposition of the urban working class. Through a qualitative account of the 2018 East Hamilton rent strike, I analyse this struggle as two moments of class composition in the sphere of social reproduction. First, the extraction, exploitation and displacement pressure tenants experienced is analysed through the

lens of technical class composition. Second, the rent strike itself is analysed as an expression of political class composition involving a confrontation of urban capital, a politicization of housing precarity, and the building of collective, autonomous power.

Caroline Anna Salling

A GIFT OF HEATING: TO ODENSE, FROM FACEBOOK

Within several places in Denmark, district heating infrastructures and Big Tech's data centres and are getting converged to utilise heat from servers in warming up local homes, factories, shops, and institutions. In 2020, a particular form of taxation was removed as part of the recent climate initiatives of the Danish parliament to motivate use of heat from industrial processes for district heating. The Facebook corporation took a leading role in the lobby work to remove the tax to gift the heat "for free" to the local heating infrastructure in the city of Odense. A few people involved with overseeing and calculating the socio-economic framework for such a change in tax policy have argued that this might afford 'fake productions of excess heat' as the tax no longer constructs a limit for over-producing excess heat and thereby might under-prioritise work on making industries more efficient in their electricity use. On the other hand, using the excess heat might help with phasing out the use of fossil fuels such as coal while it simultaneously contributes to the increasingly growing infrastructure of tech capitalism. What comes with this gift of heating enabled by changed tax policy, and how is Facebook written into the local infrastructure through the gift-giving? In this paper I turn to Anna Tsing's (2009; 2013; 2015) analysis of the roles of gifts and commodities in capitalist accumulation. This also includes ways that formally function non-capitalist such as gifting but always comes with certain obligations, politics and needs for reciprocation that contribute to accumulation and concentration of capital. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in Odense and with people involved in the changed tax policy, I will discuss an emerging relation in a moment of capitalist entanglements between data and environmental change.

Morteza Samanpour

THE HISTORICAL ONTOLOGY OF CAPITALISM IN MARX'S CAPITAL: A CRITIQUE OF VALUE-FORM ANALYSIS

Value-form analysis in the broad sense of the term (*Neue Marx-Lektüre* as well as those influenced by it: Bonefeld, Heinrich, Postone,

Systematic Dialectics, etc.) is one of the most influential philosophical interpretations of *Capital* that treats Marx's critique of political economy as critical theory of capitalist societies, an enquiry into the most basic fundamental relations constitutive of the capitalist mode of production. The object of Marx's critique in *Capital*, according to value-form theory, is not the history of capitalism but only the 'inner structure' of capitalist societies in its "pure state" or its *ideal average*. In distinction to value-form analysis that interprets Marx's theory of value as the "ontological ground" of capitalism presented in a dialectical-logical form, I will argue that Marx's social ontology has a *processual* character whereby the "inner structure" of capitalism is articulated in its motion and dynamics, that is, in relation to its "history." The historical chapters such as "So-Called Primitive Accumulation" and "The Working Day" are not merely historical illustrations of an already developed logical-theoretical argument, having simply a secondary and subordinate role in Marx's supposedly logical dialectics. Rather, the historical genesis of capitalism and the historical tendencies of capital constitute crucial moments within Marx's critique of capitalism that attempts to grasp the most fundamental social relations of capitalism in their dynamic. This is not an arbitrary methodology but, rather, stems from the practical-critical or "dialectical" nature of Marx's discourse that treats its object from the standpoint of "its negation" by virtue of identifying the possibilities of social transformation within history. Towards the end of the paper, I draw out the theoretical implications of interpreting Marx's *Capital* as "historical ontology" (the social-ontology that is constituted by history) for both social reproduction theory and the postcolonial-informed theories of capitalism wherein the relationship between the social-ontological structure of capitalist societies (the production and circulation of value) and the "non- or extra-economic" condition of capital's reproduction (patriarchy and colonialism) becomes central.

Lotte Schack

BRIDGING CRISES AND STRUGGLES: ON THE (DE-) POLITICIZATION OF THE SWEDISH CLIMATE MOVEMENT

In recent years, the climate movement has seen a rise in popularity which can be seen in the wide mobilisation e.g., of Extinction Rebellion and Fridays for Future. Sweden, the homeland of the latter, is no exception. Large segments of the movement have insisted on the necessity to remain apolitical and present the climate issue as

purely scientific in order to secure support from a broad range of politicians and civil society actors. However, in recent months, the movement has started to engage in more explicitly political topics. To analyse the co-presence of politicising and depoliticising tendencies in the movement, I draw on Nancy Fraser's (2021) concept of crisis. According to Fraser, the climate crisis cannot be understood as an isolated crisis but must be conceptualised as one crisis among many that together constitue a general crisis of capitalism. Any attempts at conceptualising the crisis as a single issue thus risk leading to its-depoliticization. Instead, to effectively combat the climate crisis, the climate movement must be what Fraser calls 'trans-environmental': it must not confine itself to addressing the climate crisis as an issue separate from other political struggles. However, what could such a movement look like? What struggles should it align itself with? And what drivesits emergence in Sweden at this point in time? I analyse how different currents of the Swedish climate movement take up this challenge for example, through connecting industrial forestry to indigenous struggles or reject it, insisting on the importance of a strict focus on the climate question. In exploring the different strategies and tensions within the movement, I seek to examine how different parts of the movement relate to activism, politics and social justice, and how their different approaches construct and (de)politicize the problem of climate change and its agents.

Jean-Claude Simon

BIFURCATION AND TRANSITION: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

This paper is about applying theoretical foundations, derived from Marx, Polanyi and Kovel to develop an eco-socialist *praxis* in the context of the current economic, health and social crisis of ordo(neo) liberal capitalism. It provides the framework for a society project. The eco-socialist transition is not a technical solution but an in-depth societal change toward a political economy of work necessary to put an end to all forms of exploitation and domination. My starting point is thus the « deadly infinity » of capitalism: exponential growth, competitiveness and profit maximisation that, taken together, turn people and nature into things. The society project is anchored into two necessary processes: First a change of course (bifurcation), a rupture with capitalism; that is to say a significant change in political conditions to be led by a popular social movement in the current context of the multiple crises of the mode of production. Second a long-term

transition that will combine significant and progressive changes in the political, economic and social fields in order to build new institutions in the context of popular power. To lead such a change, the social movement must become hegemonic, able to think and lead the process toward eco-socialism. It is thus a class-based revolutionary initiative. The bifurcation will be the starting event for three « de-commodifications »; work, nature and money will be placed outside of market relations, will become commons, and be « instituted » as such. Democratic planning will determine the placement of available resources according to a needs-based economy that will also be multi-level: local, regional, national and international. The transition itself will be based on the switch to 100% renewable sources of energy and a radical conversion of industry and agriculture.

Tobias Skiveren

MISINTERPRETING NEW MATERIALISM; OR, WHY MALM GOT IT ALL WRONG

In The Progress of this Storm. Nature and Society in a Warming World (2018), Andreas Malm launches a fierce critique of the recent turn to matter in the humanities and social sciences also known as "new materialism." Targeting a wide range of contemporary thinkers, Malm claims that new materialism fails to deliver adequate tools for counterworking the climate crisis, because it obscures the human origins of this crisis by distributing agency across human/non-humandivides. In this paper, I want to argue that Malm bases his polemic on a methodological dogmatism that takes critique to be the only legitimate modes of analysis, thereby misconstruing the analytical aims of many new materialist thinkers, Jane Bennett in particular. These thinkers, I claim, distribute agency, not to critique the acts of rocks, but to change anthropocentric modes of perception and, in so doing, foster "ethical energetics" that can condition societal change. Drawing on recent discussions about postcritique, I'll make my case, first, by studying how the valorization of critique undergird Malm's claims, especially his emphasis on human responsibility. I'll then demonstrate how this very same valorization fails to acknowledge the political-ethical value of new materialism's emphasis on response-ability. Ultimately, the paper pushes back against the hegemony of critical methods by underscoring the advantages of methodological pluralism.

Albin Söderlund

THE OATLY CONTROVERSY AND THE LIMITS OF CORPORATE CLIMATE ACTIVISM

Oatly, a Swedish company specializing in plant-based foods, has consistently been vocal about their devotion to combat climate change. Despite their commitments, in July 2020, Oatly took on private equity firm Blackstone as an investor. When the deal was announced, people were disappointed and puzzled, and boycotts occurred. In response, Oatly explained that if they could show big investors that companies such as Oatly are profitable, it would be the most important thing they could do for the environment. The paper analyzes this controversy through the theory of metabolic rift. I begin by outlining what I take to be the most plausible understanding of the theory of metabolic rift. I proceed by arguing that Oatly's strategy to safeguard the planet is a non-starter, since as long as value inserts itself as a mediator in the transhistorical metabolic relation between human and nature, metabolic rifts are bound to happen. In this way, it is the economic form determinations, not the lack of green investment that lies at the heart of the ecological crisis. I suggest that the inherent structures of capitalism motivated the Blackstone deal, which, in turn, highlights that it does not matter whether companies are genuine or not in their commitment to combating climate change – no single actor can bend the inherent rules of capitalism. Finally, I argue that the controversy presented itself as a political opportunity for an eco-socialist movement. The already existing broad dissatisfaction with climate corporate practices together with the discrepancy between Oatly's commitments and actions formed an advantageous situation in which a critique of capitalism, not individual capitalists, had potential to reach a wider audience.

Jeannette Søgaard

IS A MARXIST IDENTITY POLITICS POSSIBLE?

Identity politics has undoubtedly brought along important discussions and both juridical and political rights for many minority groups. In academia, identity politics are often discussed within the concept of intersectionality and here, some scholars claim that this theory is incoherent. Amongst the critics are Marxists, who see intersectionality as a replacement of a material analysis of social relations with intersubjective forms of oppression and therefore see identity politics as incompatible with Marxist theory even though both Marxism and intersectionality are dominant on the political

left. Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) is a recent theory that claims to be able to combine Marx' materialism with an intersectional theory of oppression by placing oppression within the material condition of production by focusing on reproduction of the workforce. In this talk, the possibility of a combination between intersectionality and Marxism will be discussed in two steps. Firstly, I will use the historical Marxist-feminist debates of female oppression under capitalism and the related intersectional, queer and Marxist critiques of Marxist-feminism. Secondly, I will try to evaluate whether SRT is able to account for those critiques. and try to sum up some of the theoretical challenges SRT faces today from newer Marxist critiques as a point of departure for further discussion of the possibility of a Marxist identity politics.

Esben Bøgh Sørensen

THE ECOLOGY OF AGRARIAN CAPITALISM IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

The advance of ecological Marxism in the last twenty years has, to a large extent, revolved around the reconstruction of the ecological impulse inherent to Marx's thought. In this context, Marx's critique of 19th century capitalist agriculture (the period of British "high farming") and his preoccupation with contemporary natural scientific, especially chemical, thought has been essential for identifying capital's compulsion to create disturbances in the metabolic relation between humans and nature and rifts in natural cycles and processes such as the nutrient cycle essential for sustaining soil fertility. The metabolic rift analysis has been employed mainly to explain contemporary ecological crises, including those produced by industrialized and globalized agriculture. However, capitalist agriculture arose much earlier in the pre-industrial era in the context of the 16th and 17th-century English countryside as immediate producers (peasants and farmers) became separated from their means of subsistence. While this separation has been noted as the initial metabolic rift, we lack further studies into the ecological roots of capitalism in this period. In this paper, drawing on the metabolic rift theory and the Political Marxist notion of social property relations, I provide an overview of the ecological implications of the rise of capitalist agriculture in early modern England. Using secondary literature and primary sources from contemporary agricultural writers, I point to the destruction of previous local ecologies by capitalist farming, the innate drive to subsume labour and nature to the requirements

of competitive farms, and the profound ideological changes in natural knowledge implied by this process. Finally, I discuss how such an approach differs from the World-ecological approach and try to draw some consequences for the further development of ecological Marxism.

Gert Sørensen
DEMOKRATIETS TUNGE BYRDE: DET ITALIENSKE *CASE*
Hvor er det demokrati på vej hen, som vi i vor del af verden har kendt til siden Anden Verdenskrig? Det er det store spørgsmål, som der endnu ikke findes klare svar på. Konsekvenserne for de politiske systemer har ellers været mærkbare, efter at neoliberalismen tog over som den kapitalistiske produktionsmådes dominerende praksis og diskurs. Det har banet vejen ikke bare for kapitalens *financialization* men også givet nogle afgørende fordele til *High Tech*. De politiske systemer er sideløbende med denne udvikling nærmest blevet eksproprieret og har tilladt, at stadig mere af deres myndighed er overført til ukontrollable globale aktører, der dermed har fået vidtgående beføjelser til at diktere 'nødvendighedens politik'. Her melder Italien sig som 'det svage led', hvis størrelse og institutionelle porøsitet flere gange har bragt EU på kanten af en eksistenskrise. Igennem de sidste 25-30 år har landet været igennem en lang række politiske eksperimenter med snart teknokratiske regeringer og snart populistiske bevægelser ved roret (fra Berlusconis Forza Italia til Salvinis Lega og den såkaldte Femstjernebevægelse). Flere af disse bevægelser er allerede imploderet, men de har efterladt en dyb tvivl om den demokratiske styreforms evne til at træffe langtidsholdbare beslutninger med bred folkelig opbakning og give et bud på de løbende økonomiske, miljømæssige og sundhedsmæssige kriser. Indlægget vil se nærmere på den entropi, der tilsyneladende har dikteret de seneste årtiers udvikling i Italien og andre steder, og som kalder på modstrategier. Det bliver derfor også et forsøg på at indkredse den kritiske teoris store koordinater.

Rune Møller Stahl & Christoph Houman Ellersgaard
ELITES AND POPULISM IN THE DANISH POWER BLOC
In this paper, we analyse the ideological position of key actors in the Danish power bloc. Based on 38 in-depth interviews with individuals holding core positions in elite networks, we explore the core ideological project that unites interlocked corporate directors, union leaders, business association executives, senior civil servants, professors and

politicians in a coordinated market economy. The interviewees were sampled so all hold central positions in the elite network, but at the same time occupy the most divergent positions of those integrated in power elite networks. We show a hegemonic project tied to 'the extreme center' and a growth model of export led growth unite both the representatives of capital as well as the most centrally placed unions. Populism and radical political parties are frowned upon, while even corporate leaders support moderate income distribution and a continuation of relative egalitarianism. We show how populism in the case of corporatist cross-class elites is constructed as a pathological element in democratic politics. Elites forcefully renounce other elites who cave in to the asserted allure of populism. We show how elites access the credibility and seriousness of others based on whether or not they refrain for using 'populist' rhetoric, in particular anti-EU, xenophobic, anti-globalization, anti-capitalist discourse. We finish the paper looking at how elites construct key contemporary societal challenges, highlighting how these are understood in ways in which the current power block may have to adapt, but not change fundamentally. We discuss the paradox of elites not linking these challenges to the rise of populism, but instead view populism as an externality to current societal developments.

Mustafa K. Topal

KURDISKE KVINDERS IMPLEMENTERING AF DERES NYE FEMINISME I ROJAVA/NORDSYRIEN

I min afhandling "Kvindekrigere i den kurdiske nationalbevægelse PKK: Et kønsreflekteret perspektiv" (RUC, 2020) undersøger jeg bevæggrunden for kurdiske kvindekrigeres deltagelse i Kurdistans Arbejderparti (PKK) og i partiets politisk militante kampe. Det empiriske grundlag i afhandlingen udgøres af etnografiske feltstudier, herunder deltagerobservationer blandt kurdiske kvindekrigere i Kurdistan (Irak og Syrien). Udover kurdiske kvinder, der deltager i PKK's kampe mod den tyrkiske stat for at få den til anerkende kurdernes rettigheder, har jeg også i Syrien/ Rojava interviewet kurdiske og ikke- kurdiske kvinder, der sammen forsøger at implementere et nyt demokratisk samfund, mens de også aktivt er med til at føre en kamp mod Assad-regime, Islamisk Stat og Sunnimuslimske Jihadister, der støttes af Tyrkiet. Dette empiriske grundlag analyseres ud fra et postkolonialt, poststrukturalistisk, og ny-materialistisk kønsblik, for dermed at kunne begribe de kurdiske kvindekrigeres personlige og kollektive, identitetsmæssige forandringsprocesser.

Afhandlingen konkluderer kort at kurdiske kvinder tilslutter sig PKK for at udvide deres egne handlemuligheder. Det nye styresystem som især kvinder finder sig ansvarligt for at implementere i Rojava kaldes *demokratisk konføderalisme*. Det er et system, som PKK's leder Abdullah Öcalan har udviklet under sin fængsling (siden 1999) med inspiration fra den amerikanske anarkist og socialfilosof Murray Bookchin (1982). PKK's første manifest fra 1978 havde som mål at skabe en uafhængig kurdisk stat som middel til at standse den vold og undertrykkelse, som kurderne igennem tiden har oplevet. Med en verden i forandring, især efter Sovjetunionens fald har Öcalan modereret PKK's ideologi og er begyndt at være kritisk over for nødvendigheden af en nationalstat. Hen imod slutningen af 1990´erne begyndte Öcalans at udvikle demokratiske konføderalisme som et alternativ til nationalstaten og statssocialismen. I min præsentation, baseret på min afhandling, kortlægger jeg hvordan kurdiske kvinder definerer deres forståelse af feminisme som betragtes at være et vigtigt element af demokratiske konføderalisme. I min samtaler med kurdiske kvinder har jeg oplevet at de er skeptiske over for marxismen. Trods marxismen har tidligere fungeret som ideologisk inspirationskilde for PKK's tænkning, kritiseres den nu for at ikke opstille et reelt alternativ til den kapitalistiske livsstil eller den vestlige feminisme, som de betragter som et hvidt, kapitalistisk middelklasseprodukt.

Daniel Vernegg, Alf Jørgen Schnell & Yngve Heiret

GREEN NEW DEAL: GREEN KEYNESIANISM OR SOCIALIST STRATEGY?

The proposal for a Green New Deal (GND) is spreading like wildfire at the global left. The concept of GND accommodates a wide range of climate strategies that advocate the necessity of a strong state to promote transformations through ownership and strategic investments in green industries and infrastructure. The GND hinges on the experiences from the inter-war New Deal politics in the US, inspired by the economist John Maynard Keynes who advocated for an expansive state to stabilize the capitalist economy. In the same way that the original New Deal challenged the contemporary dominance of laissez faire ideology, the GND seeks to break free from the neoliberal hegemony by reasserting the importance of the state in climate politics. However, while all GND strategists share Keynes' belief in a state led economic transformation, there is disagreement on the left about the purpose of a climate politics in which the state takes control over the economy. While the Keynesian left seeks to break with

neoliberalism, there is a strong current of Marxist thought arguing that the GND should be part of a gradualist socialist strategy to break not only with neoliberalism, but with capitalism as such. This paper elucidates these different perspectives on GND as a strategy by taking the Norwegian left as a starting point. Mobilizing in a context in which welfare institutions and the other victories from the golden era of social democracy remain more intact than in most other European countries, the Norwegian left is arguably in a favorable position to launch a radical and visionary proposal for sustainable economic transformation. Indeed, there is a wide-held belief on the left that the more left-leaning the political environment is, the more it offers the possibility of launching radical solutions. Nevertheless, assessing the proposals for a GND on the Norwegian left, we argue that the Nordic variety of GND is fundamentally Keynesian, in that it recognizes the ecological and social contradictions of capitalism, but nevertheless invokes a "strong" state to push capital in a green direction with the explicit aim to establish a more sustainable capitalism. In this presentation we provide a critique of Norwegian Keynesianism and propose an alternative perspective on the GND as a gradualist socialist strategy.

Magnus Møller Ziegler

FOWL PLAY: OWLS, EAGLES, AND THE FUTURE IN MARX AND THE YOUNG HEGELIANS

At the end of Marx's published "Introduction" (1844) to his unpublished critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, he writes that, "the day of German resurrection will be heralded by the crowing of the Gallic cock." In this paper, I argue that Marx's avian metaphor relates to another feathery piece of imagery, viz. Hegel's famous dictum that, "The Owl of Minerva takes flight only at dusk" (*Philosophy of Right*, preface). In his metaphor, Marx is invoking two things. First, what Wolfgang Bunzel and Lars Lambrecht has called the 'symbolic topography' of Young Hegelianism, i.e. the tendency to ascribe symbolic and theoretical meaning to topographic signifiers, in casu France and Germany. Second, as – in the Young Hegelian imagery – France and Germany represents practice and theory respectively, what Marx is implicitly invoking is the Young Hegelian notion of *praxis* understood precisely as a kind of post-theoretical practice. Hence, I argue, he is contributing to the Young Hegelian rehabilitation of *the future* as a relevant category for political philosophy, since to these Young Hegelians it is only in a future post-eschatological moment that such a human *praxis*

can be realised – illustrated by the future tense of Marx's sentence: the day *will* be heralded… However, in the essay Marx also begins a radical reconceptualization of the Young Hegelian concept of *praxis*. To Marx, *praxis* does not just denote the fully realised state of human flourishing of the post-eschatological moment but also the kind of human activity needed to bring about this moment. In other words, *praxis*, to Marx, is the act of drawing the future into the present.

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2022

TIME AND HISTORY IN THE AGE OF CAPITAL

SEVENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE DANISH SOCIETY FOR MARXIST STUDIES

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Aarhus University
7-8 October 2022

"We know only a single science, the science of history."
– Marx & Engels

For a brief moment in time, history was thought by some to be dead. The world market was hailed as the great harbinger of liberal democracy, leaving room for nothing outside it. But since the turn of the century, economic crashes, the pending climate catastrophe, and recurring imperialist wars have repeatedly demonstrated the falsity of this narrative. History is very much alive and kicking. Today, it seems clear that the colonial fantasy of universal neoliberalism is unable to grasp the critical state of affairs in which we find ourselves.

For the seventh annual conference of the Danish Society for Marxist Studies, we therefore invite papers that reflect on history and time. History, understood both as a science and as the object of that science, is never neutral but rather a continual battlefield for class struggle. In propagating the narrative of progress, liberalism seeks to project the past onto the future and secure the status quo of the present. In order to challenge this ideology, we need critical concepts of time, history, and the methods of their narration. By centering this year's conference on time and history in the age of capital we wish to engage and develop critical thinking on these key concepts.

We welcome participants from all disciplines and invite contributions on a range of topics: From the role of history and collective memory in workers' struggles, through longue-durée histories of commodities and markets, to theoretical discussions on the recent shift away from postmodern network theories to a renewed focus on structural analyses or grand narratives. As Marxism and post-colonial as well as critical theory continually remind us, history is most often written by the victors. Where does that leave the histories of anti-capitalist struggles today?

As different concepts of history imply different notions of time, we also encourage examinations of temporality: Can critical history writing make use of standard liberal time concepts, or must it produce its own? How is our understanding of temporality challenged by, for instance, the dizzying time perspective of the climate crisis? Are we living in a time of permanent crisis, and if so, how does that influence the possibility of shaping our future?

Examples of topics might include (but are not limited to):

- Historical materialism(s) as methodology
- The return of the longue durée
- Intersectional history writing in a Marxist framework
- The relation between economic and cultural history
- History of perception and aesthetics
- Marxist uses of history – what have they been, and what should they be?
- Histories of meaning and the meaning of history
- Histories of world-commodites, e.g. the importance of sugar for the bourgeois revolutions of the 18th century
- Narratological studies of history
- Crisis temporality and rupture
- The quantification of time under capitalism
- What is the relation between labor time and free time?
- The creation of collectives in history writing
- Is the capitalocene a historical, a natural, or some other kind of era?
- The exploitation of future labor
- Utopian and dystopian visions past and present
- Periodization of the history of capitalism

- The possibility of writing a contemporary intellectual history of 21st century fascism
- Marxist historiographies
- Time and temporality in Marx's writings

OPEN CALL

The Danish Society of Marxist Studies is committed to providing a common platform for critical and emancipatory research in Denmark. For this reason, we also welcome papers that do not directly touch upon this year's theme but contribute to these research traditions.

Please submit your abstract of 200-300 words to info@marxistiskestudier.com no later than 1 June 2022. Abstracts and presentations may be in Danish or English.

PLEASE NOTE: The conference is in-person only, and it will not be possible to present virtually.

ABSTRACTS

Heide Gerstenberger

THE SEPARATION OF POLITICS AND ECONOMY: A HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL CONUNDRUM (KEYNOTE)

The analytical concept of a separation between politics and economy, or rather, between state and market, is thought to grasp the very specific historical characteristics of capitalist societies. That this concept has helped to overcome Marxist orthodoxy is indisputable. I nevertheless suggest that we revisit its historical and hence theoretical assumptions. In the context of those historical processes which we have come to term bourgeois revolutions there occurred, indeed, a process of separation between the sphere of private appropriation and the sphere of political power. Its result, however, was not a separation of state and market but of state and society. Even if the formal separation of the state from society, i.e. from its capitalist class structures, was never actually achieved, the fact that this possibility is suggested by its institutionalized forms was central to the political legitimation of capitalism in bourgeois capitalist societies. But how about the relation between state and society in present day capitalist societies? And how about the relation of politics and economy?

Peter Osborne

'EXCESSIVELY SOCIAL'? HISTORIES, TEMPORALITIES, (GEO-) POLITICS (KEYNOTE)

A combination of recent changes in the global political-economic situation of capitalist societies and the dynamics of geo-political rivalries has exposed the wishful character of the liberal-progressivist interpretation of post-1989 capitalist globalization, along with that of its pseudo-Marxist 'accelerationist' avatars. At the same time, the apparent convergence of a disparate series of new theoretical discourses suggests their possible coalescence into something like an alternative, cosmopolitical progressivist paradigm. Post-Actor-Network-Theory 'materialisms', 'earth' and climate-change sciences (the Anthropocene), the study of pandemics and an emphasis on ecological sustainability point towards the development of a new metaphysical naturalism as the basis for an aspiringly 'planetary' politics. This talk will offer some critical remarks on the main features (and some of the ironies) of this emergent neo-naturalist metaphysical-political paradigm – in Latour and Chakrabarty in particular – in the context of the increasingly powerful yet antinomical structure of Marxist discourse since the 1980s. Without a conception of the social as an ontologically emergent domain, it will be argued, the multiple temporalities of 'history' are once again doomed to be subsumed to those of 'nature' ('the terrestrial' or 'the earth') and the possibilities for rethinking the concept of politics foreclosed.

Yasmin Afshar

DOES SOCIAL CONFLICT LEAD TO PROGRESS? ON ADORNO'S CRITIQUE OF CONFLICT THEORIES

Does conflict lead to progress? In the bourgeois tradition of the philosophy of history, but also in the revolutionary tradition, this question was often answered affirmatively. In early modernity, Hobbes, and later Kant and Hegel, attributed to social antagonism the paradoxical engine of social cohesion in a divided society. Since it was no longer provided by a transcendent entity, social unity came to be understood as a human construct, to be asserted and legitimated each time. The secular discourses on progress derive, says Koselleck, from this necessity. In the 19th century, Marx and Engels carried on this modern heritage, making class struggle the truly rational social conflict – as opposed to capitalist competition, in which individuals act blindly, according to the laws of the market, as mere carriers of commodities. A century later, class struggle was no longer an evidence

in Germany and revolution no longer seemed to be around the corner, as in the time of Marx and Engels. In 1968, Theodor W. Adorno and the sociologist Ursula Jaerisch published Anmerkungen zum sozialen Konflikt heute ("Remarks on social conflict today"), in which the fixation of social conflict as a social invariant by functionalist sociologists (Lewis Coser, Ralf Dahrendorf), as well as by dogmatic Marxism is called into question. Adorno and Jaerisch reveal that under the integrated society, conflicts generated by the fear of declassification and the brutalization of relations are indices of a disintegrating tendency. The link between conflict and progress is therefore called into question: social conflict not only causes suffering, but also leads to disintegration and potentially to barbarism (regression). In my paper, I would like to discuss Adorno's provocative watchword "abolish conflict" in the context of the current conflict theories – in its liberal version, as well as in its radical democratic one.

Bernd Bonfert

'NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE MADE SENSE TO DO ALONE.' COLLABORATION IN LOCAL COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE NETWORKS

Multiple systemic crises have shaken our global supply chains and demonstrated the instability of our capitalist food system. Calls for more resilient and sustainable alternatives have rapidly intensified, fuelling people's engagement in grassroots practices such as community-supported agriculture (CSA). In CSA, small ecological farmers and local households share the costs and products of farming, allowing them to organise their food provision around short and sustainable supply chains independently of capitalist markets. Many scholars and activists praise the practice for offering a prefigurative vision for a future post-capitalist food system, whereas others criticise it for being limited in scale and social accessibility. However, both sides of this argument rely on research that focuses overwhelmingly on the performance of individual CSA initiatives. We therefore know very little about whether multiple CSAs can tackle their shortcomings through collaboration, such as by expanding and institutionalising their alternative practices at scale. This paper aims to alleviate this blind spot. It investigates local CSA networks in Wales and central Germany through a dual theoretical lens of the 'foundational economy' and 'food movement networks', discussing their capacity for expanding and consolidating non-capitalist food system alternatives and identifying the challenges they encounter.

Methodologically, the paper draws on semi-structured interviews with CSA actors and observation at network gatherings. Ultimately, the paper shows that local collaboration enables CSAs to integrate and diversify their material supply chains ('scaling out'), contribute to the politicisation of their communities ('scaling deep'), and participate in municipal food councils to advocate for policy change and attract institutional support ('scaling up'). It also reveals competitive tensions between neighbouring CSAs arising from their increasing local concentration, which constitutes a hitherto unknown challenge to CSA's autonomy from capitalist market imperatives and points to the need for new collaborative strategies.

Reinout Bosch

THE CONCEPT OF MODE OF PRODUCTION IN NORDIC SOCIALISM

Pelle Dragsted's *Nordisk socialisme* (Gyldendal 2021) was sold out on the date of publication and must be considered as one of the best-selling books on the concept of socialism in the last decade. In the book, Dragsted presents a concept of modes of production that is not based on the combination of productive forces and relations of production, but instead bases its concept on the way in which economic areas are managed. This methodological approach is the basis for Dragsted's theory of the ongoing struggle between what he calls the democratic and oligarchic sectors. Through analysis it becomes clear that it is through the use of the concept of democracy as a prism for the understanding of society that an independent concept of modes of production is developed by Dragsted. The question therefore remains what significance the change in Dragsted's concept of mode of production has for the development of his theory, including concepts such as capitalism, socialism and democracy. It will be shown that theorizing the democratic and oligarchic sector can only succeed on the basis of a narrowing of the concept of capitalism, in contrast to the understanding of the concept that is otherwise known from Marxist research. This in turn is done through the use of a discursive rather than structuralist method, which in itself leads to a discussion of the relationship between these two diverse theoretical approaches. The presentation will be based on an overall critique of *Nordisk socialisme* that the contributor together with Christian Gorm Hansen will publish with the publishing house Solidaritet in the autumn of 2022.

Chiara De Cosmo

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE FUTURE: ERNST BLOCH AND THE IDEA OF PROGRESS

In the framework of Marxist projects, which aim to develop a non-Western-oriented historiography [see, for example, Tomba (2011; 2013), Bensaid (19961), Morfino (2013)], Ernst Bloch's theory of time is widely explored. The category of "non-contemporaneity," both in its socio-political and epistemological meaning, opens up plenty of considerations about the complex interweaving of different temporal dimensions in present time and powerful clues to escape from the traditional one-directional view of modern progress. By reading this side of Bloch's philosophy, critics had also emphasized that the so-called Bloch's "narrative thought" is far to be a mere account on the fragmentary nature of modern experience. Quite the opposite, Bloch sees the discontinuity as dialectically bound to the structural logic of present time, that is the logic of the capitalistic mode of production. In the framework of a society dominated by the capital, the idea of progress can only be understood as ideological – namely, it is the appearance of uninterrupted renewal that hides the actual repetition of always the same contradictions. The very notion of freedom and universal emancipation, which is at the real core of Enlightenment, has lost the concreteness of its finality by oppressing other cultures in an univocal horizon of progression. The aim of my intervention is to describe Bloch's critique of progress, in order to show how he seeks to keep together the idea of universal freedom and the manifold ways to conceive it. According to my opinion, Bloch's critical account on progress unfolds the theoretical lines of a renovated historiography strictly interrelated with a critique of capitalistic society. Moreover, by exploring his philosophical view, particularly as outlined in Differenzierungen im Begriff Fortschrifft (1955), it is possible to gain a view of history open to the concrete dimension of future.

Victor Cova

HISTORY AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE FRENCH NEW LEFT

This paper argues for the centrality of Lukacs' History and Class Consciousness for the French New Left's rediscovery of Marx after 1960 and through the 1970s as a key component of the so-called "humanism" debate. Some, like the Socialisme ou Barbarie circle, rejected Lukacs out of anti-Stalinism. Others, like Althusser, rejected Lukacs in order to defend Stalinism. Those who most

defended Lukacs (Lucien Goldmann, Kostas Axelos) did so with great ambivalence and from the perspective of the later Lukacs who had dismissed his earlier work. No one, it seemed, could accept Lukacs's critique of history which he had intended as a synthesis of the debates between the revolutionary Marxists and their adversaries. Asking about the French New Left's (non)reception of Lukacs is therefore also a way of asking about the New Left's relation to the Old Left. What did he take to be an Orthodox Marxist critique of the concept of history that was so unacceptable to the French New Left? What were the political stakes of that reception at the time? What is the legacy of this (non)reception for today's Left in general and the French Left in particular?

James Day

THESES ON THE ACTUALITY AND INEXISTENCE OF THE THEORY OF REVOLUTION IN WESTERN MARXISM

Via a series of theses, this paper will seek to outline the current limits of the theory of revolution in Western Marxism and ask a series of questions about the relationship between acuteness and potentiality, agency and automatism, repression and exploitation. The theses will be glossed by readings of a series texts both within and beyond Marxism and theories of communization (of, for example, the relationship between actuality and potentiality in Marx's work itself, of Françoise Proust's investigation of the "tone" of history in connection with contemporary uprisings, of Hans-Jørgen Thomsen's magnum opus on the contingency of communism in the context of the exclusionary basis of Marx's theory of history) to suggest the fractured, spectral grounds on which the theory of revolution is based. What, for example, is the relationship between the modalities of freedom and necessity in an historical materialism reconstructed after the critique of the political economy? Between the incessant and constitutive violence essential to the concept of capital and its dialectic with wage labour? If communism is the real movement that abolishes the present state of things, what is the status of non-movements? What does it mean to ask questions like these now, in Aarhus?

Derek S. Denman

ENCHANTMENTS OF POLICING: CONTINUITY AND CONTRADICTION IN CINEMATIC COPAGANDA

This paper asks what happens if we interpret representations of policing in film as a shared cinematic universe. What continuities

emerge between stories of the formal institution of the police and vigilantism, settler and imperial force, private security, and domestic violence? What contradictions become evident within logics and practices of policing, and how are these contradictions resolved, often cementing the role of police in political order? The cinematic universe is a term most commonly used to refer to big budget, multi-movie franchises. A cinematic universe suggests a different aesthetic relation between films than the idea of a genre (or subgenre). Where genre conveys shared conventions and style, cinematic universes make world building primary. The aim is not to establish a common narrative structure, but to detail a condition of order that holds together despite its many tangents and tensions. The production of a cinematic universe constantly seeks to address emerging inconsistencies between films. Debates arise around inconsistencies, and the focus on these contradictions serves as either a moment of defensive rationalization or the basis of critique. I suggest that police films hold together in much the same way, attempting to reconcile the production of racial capitalism with liberal imaginaries. Specifically, the paper considers how the seemingly unrelated films Training Day (2001), The Purge (2013), Bright (2017), and Vampires (1998), fit together to reproduce enduring attachments to police. By framing police films as a cinematic universe, I want to suggest that attachments to policing work not only through ideology but also through enchantment. Appeals to police as guarantors of safety and social welfare—despite mounting evidence to the contrary (Vitale 2017)—rely on immersion in a world in which force and pacification are subsumed by police stories of dramatic tension, humor, and moral triumph. The ideology that sustains policing today works less through reference to technocratic politics and more through a process of world building, whereby sprawling elements of police in cinema reveal new details and intrigues of making and enforcing imperial and capitalist order (Bargu 2019; Neocleous 2000).

Manuel Disegni

JEWS, MONEY, AND CAPITAL. MODERN ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF MARX'S CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

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 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 appearence 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.

Christoph Ellersgaard, Jacob Lunding & Anton Grau Larsen

FROM BOURGEOISIE TO MANAGERIAL CLASS: THE INNER CIRCLE OF THE DANISH CORPORATE ELITES 1910-2020

Since Michael Useems (1984) seminal work on the inner circle, scholars have argued that a socially cohesive group integrating a segment of large corporations play a key role as the voice of the business community as a whole (Comet 2019; Heerwig and Murray 2019; Larsen and Ellersgaard 2018). This has led scholars to argue that both the composition of different fractions of business in the corporate core and the fragmentation of these elites has large repercussions in the efficacy of business power (Allen 1978; Barnes 2017; Benton 2019; Benton and

Cobb 2019; Chu and Davis 2016; Mizruchi 1982, 2013; Murray 2012, 2017). However, the relationship between the overall development of capitalism within a nation state and the composition of the key group representing the capitalist class vis-á-vis the state remain unexplored. To study this, we explore the changing social composition of the inner circle of the Danish corporate elite during the last 110 years. Using the Danish Equivalent of Who's Who, Kraks Blå bog, we identify the corporate inner circle on a year-to-year level based on career and membership overlaps in corporations and business associations of the approximately 30,000 elite individuals biographies. We construct a network based on career and membership overlap and use a novel method to identify central individuals and affiliations in elite networks, k-circles, to demarcate the inner circle. We then use biographical data on e.g. gender, social background, matrimony, education, career trajectory and residence to describe the evolution of the inner circle as a social group and show how changes in this group is aligned with different concepts of control of the capitalist class. We show how the class relations of the inner circle changes substantially. From being an almost exclusively capital based patrician elite – underpinning their career and membership ties with ties made in the local community and through intermarriage – having closed social networks tied to the Copenhagen mercantile community, the inner circle increasingly becomes also becomes based in the provinces, draw on technical expertise communities and with focus on production. As Danish society sees moves towards neoliberalism and a rise in large enterprises, the inner circle increasingly become based in economic expertise and return to the Copenhagen.

Lucile Franchet

FLEXIBILISATION POLICIES AND LABOUR MARKET STRUCTURES IN FRANCE

This work is part of my doctoral research on labour market flexibilisation policies in France. This project breaks from the mainstream literature and the claim that flexibilisation policies foster economic growth and lowers unemployment. As such, this research proposes a class relational perspective on flexibilisation policies. I define labour market flexibilisation as part of the transformation in social relations of production that have allowed the rate of exploitation to increase in many countries. Labour market flexibilisation is an important development in labour market policies, driven by the neoliberal imperative and in response to the 1970s profitability crisis.

This thesis therefore analyses flexibilisation of the labour market as a concrete capitalist class struggle to (re)produce an exploitable labour force. This work also proposes a conceptualisation of power and class as its aims at analysing power redistribution between capital and labour. The French case is analysed to highlight peculiar forms that these policies took in France, in particular the expansion of collective bargaining coupled to a decrease in union density. Firstly, this work proposes a socio-historical analysis of the French labour market, crucial in understanding the peculiarity of the French flexibilisation agenda. Secondly, the quantitative data will be analysed to understand the greater macro-economic picture of French labour markets. Finally, this work will contain a qualitative analysis, resulting from an interview process. The respondents are different types of employee representatives that have participated in collective bargaining in France during the neoliberal era. The interviews seek to investigate the dynamics of class struggle at work and the evolution of collective bargaining since the 1970s and link it back with the greater macro-level story the data and the historical analyses tell us. This aims at highlighting the ways in which French capitalism reacted to the 1970s profitability crisis through covert labour market flexibilisation policies.

Cooper Francis

MARX'S ROMAN PROBLEM

Like Hegel before him, in whose writings we find an unexpected indistinction between Roman law and political economy, Marx is haunted by the question of ancient Rome. From his earliest manuscripts for Capital to his late ethnographic writings, we find Marx continually return to the relation-difference between ancient Rome's dissolution of the "ancient community" and modern England's dissolution of feudal relations. In both historical instances we are presented with "one fine morning" in which "free men stripped of everything but their labour power" are confronted by "those who held all the acquired wealth" in the form of "capital" — yet only one resulted in the capitalist mode of production. Drawing on Marx's now well-known letters to the Russian populists, we will argue that for Marx, beyond any resonances of German Romanticism or its well-studied return as farce during the French Revolution, the problem of ancient Rome poses itself foremost within the philosophy of history. We will engage in a close reading of a few key moments in the development of Marx's analysis of this transition in order to argue that it provides

a hermeneutic tool towards understanding his multi-linear understanding of history, between the longue durée historical genesis of capital and the temporality of a global structure that naturalises and reproduces its own presuppositions. We will argue that it is through a deeper engagement with capital's contingently Western European trajectory that our understanding of Marx's philosophy of history can open onto a global horizon away from the platitudes of even a "combined and uneasy development" — or worse a "general historico-philosophical theory [of the marche general]" — towards an understanding that "the archaic or primary formation of our globe itself contains a series of layers from various ages."

Merethe Riggelsen Gjørding

CHANGING MINDS, CHANGING INSTITUTIONS

The practice of carcerality and the development of Marxist theories can be said to have a partially intertwined history. Antonio Gramsci, Marxist philosopher and leader of the Italian communist party PIC, got imprisoned in 1926 as he and the party were seen as a threat by the fascist regime. From poor conditions in prison, he scribbled down reflections over possible strategies for change. Angela Davis was already a great thinker within black Marxism when she got jailed in 1971. A global protest movement to free her and other political prisoners lucky had success, and Davis became and still is one of the leading figures within the collective prison abolition movement. Realizing that we must liberate minds to liberate society, the (past?) curbing of the prison abolition movement within Scandinavia is striking. I will rearticulate some thoughts from the imaginative resources within the overlap of Marxism and prison abolition frameworks in a presentation that is not based on rigor theoretical research, but eclectically will carve out other ways of considering justice in touch with my own practice within restorative and transformative justice. Seeing that prisons in fact are obsolete, as Davis posed in 2003, what else can be done in? And how can Marxist thoughts assist us in envisioning these steps?

Yacob Ellies Haddad

MARXISM'S (IN-)ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND RACISM

Based on my master's thesis Thinking Otherwise: Antiracism in a Danish Context, I would like to develop a few ideas of the (in)ability of Marxism to understand of racism. Whereas Marxism has been accused of reducing everything to a question of the relations

of production, the struggle against racism has been accused of making race the always-already meaningful explanation of exploitation. Gramsci's notion of hegemony – as developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) and Stuart Hall (1986) – enables us to understand how race functions discursively as a power-inscribed way of establishing differences. From slavery and colonialism to Fort Europe's treatment of refugees and immigrants, race creates a constant devaluation of certain social groups' labor power. It is a color-coded commonsense that enables the "laws of motion of capitalist society" to function (Marx, 1992, p. 598). Racism functions through ideology, which is ideas that "have a center of formation, of irradiation, of dissemination, of persuasion" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 192). In Denmark, the discourse of racism primarily functions through the discourse of the "non-western immigrant," which enables the racist practices of the Danish government, such as the gentrification plans and the relocation of asylum seekers to outside of Europe. The discourse is connotated – for example in speeches of the Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen – with neoliberal notions of "cultural differences" and "individual responsibilities," which makes it difficult to challenge. As Georg Lukács (1980) argues, the ontology of social being can only be accurately understood together with an epistemology that connects thought and reality. I want to argue, that Marxist analysis can be "stretched" – to borrow from Frantz Fanon (1963, p. 14) – to appropriately understand racism, and possibly create a counterhegemonic project against it.

Till Hahn

TIME'S CARCASS: ABSTRACT TIME AS MEDIUM OF DOMINATION AND THE LONG DEATH OF HISTORY

As early as in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx remarks that under capitalism, the worker becomes "time's carcass." It is remarkable, though, that it is not the worker's body itself which is turned into dead matter, but rather time itself. This paper will thus explore the meaning of time as reified through capitalist order, as well as medium of reification and as agent of abstract domination through this capitalist order. I will argue that this material condition of time leads to the idea of an end (or death) of history as the final stage of liberal ideology, since temporality itself ceases to exist in forms different from the homogenous, linear, reified time of the workday. My Paper will start with an analysis of the idea of time as pure intuition as presented by Kant in his first Critique. I will show that within this highest point

of abstraction within bourgeois philosophy there is already a form of reification at play which aims at the suspension of time's inner movement. I will further argue that, far from being the condition of pure sensation a priori, this form of time is materially produced by the order of the workday, thereby not just ensuring the production of surplus value but also installing an empty and homogenous time as means of abstract domination in which all history is reduced to the meaningless passing of contingent events and rendering all hope for true change futile.

Louis Hartnoll

HISTORICALLY PECULIAR, FALSELY INVARIANT: ADORNO AND THE THEORY OF CLASS

> 'The withering of the class struggle is mirrored in [Adorno's] critical theory as the degeneration of the materialist conception of history.'
>
> – Hans-Jürgen Krahl

For my contribution to this year's SMS annual conference, I propose to reassess the claim that Frankfurt School Critical Theory either abandoned or failed to articulate a theory of class and class stratification as an integral element of historical social analysis. First expressed as a tension among the members of the Institut für Sozialforschung and later codified in the work of Helmut Dubiel,1 the indefatigable claim has been that the empirical thoroughgoing 'integration' of the proletariat into the capitalist system, arising from and confirmed by the experience of twentieth-century fascism, caused Adorno and Horkheimer to fundamentally forego questions of class and class consciousness in their critical theory of society. To contest this now widely-accepted and frequently-rehearsed reading, I will argue the unlikely thesis that for Adorno class not only remained important for his historical assessment of capital, but, moreover and in reverse, he attempted to articulate a theory that would centralise shifting historical dynamics into notions of class antagonism, class conflict, and class struggle. To advance this, I will return to and reconstruct several of the key theses of Adorno's little-known confrontation with the sociology of conflict in 'Remarks on Social Conflict Today', co-written with Ursula Jaerisch in 1968.2 I will situate this text in the context of earlier essays – such as Adorno's 'Reflections on Class Theory' (1942), Horkheimer's 'The Sociology of Class Relations' (1943), and their

joint work Towards a New Manifesto (1953) – and correspondence – such as that between Horkheimer and Henryk Grossman, and Adorno and Alfred Sohn-Rethel – in order to sketch what a theory of class in Adorno may look like. By foregrounding and rereading this late essay, I hope to contribute to the conference's general theme by exploring Adorno's theory of the historically peculiarity of the expression of class contradiction as well as his critique of the false historical invariance of structural antagonism.

Rolf Hecker

MARX'S CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM DURING THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS OF 1857

In the second half of 1857, and in the first three months of 1858, Marx's method was heavily condensed. He did not enter the library of the British Museum, but transformed his modest home office into an analysis center: "I am working enormously, as a rule until 4 o'clock in the morning. I am engaged on a twofold task: 1. Elaborating the outlines of political economy ["so that I at least get the outlines clear before the déluge" (MECW 40, 217)] 2. The present crisis. Apart from the articles for the Tribune, all I do is keep records of it, which, however, takes up a considerable amount of time." (MECW 40, 224.) Marx is working on his economic manuscript ("Grundrisse"). He also has laid three large record books, in which he collects material on the crisis in France, England, and Northern Europe. He evaluates the most important British daily newspapers. And he composes the weekly articles for the "New York Tribune," some of them using the collected material. On the one hand, Marx combined with a crisis situation the possibility of social changes; he expected a revival of the revolutionary forces. On the other hand, Marx acknowledged that the economic cycle did not extend over a period of five to seven years, but would take place "at more or less 10-yearly intervals" (Grundrisse, transl. by Martin Nicolaus, Penguin: 1974, p. 720) due to the development of the fixed capital. Marx thus looked for the causes of the crisis not in the money market, but in the production conditions which lead to an overproduction crisis. Thus Marx broke away from the idea of a direct coupling of crisis and revolution. Thus Marx's analysis gained in sharpness and clarity, and made him draw up a great six-book-plan of his work, from which he ultimately parted, saying that the most important thing was the analysis of the production and reproduction of capital in its details and in its totality. He consistently pursued this goal in his subsequent manuscripts and the publication of

the first volume of the "Capital" in 1867. He could not finish his work, but when today talks about the crisis of capitalism (as now since 2008), everyone thinks of Marx, because he was the first to provide such a comprehensive and profound crises analysis – which is why the "Capital" belongs to the UNESCO world documentary heritage.

Yngve Solli Heiret

THE UNEVEN AND COMBINED DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORWEGIAN STATE

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 as an exceptionally democratic variety of capitalism characterized by cooperation, equity and social sustainability on its head. This presentation argues that the exceptionalism that pervades Norwegian (and Nordic) historiography is sustained by 'state-centric' assumptions that assume Nordic history to have developed within self-enclosed and discretely bounded territorial containers. Employing a historical-geographical materialist framework that takes seriously the historical production of state-territory, this presentation demonstrates that through the Government Pension Fund Global and the internationalization of large state-owned companies, the Norwegian state has become a multinational capitalist that obtains a significant share of its revenues from international ventures. From the vantage point of the Latin-American occupants, Norway looks more like an imperialist state than what Norwegian scholars refer to as a distinctive 'democratic capitalism'.

Emile Ike

THE DIALECTIC OF LABOUR TIME AND FREE TIME: REVITALISING OBJECTIVE POSSIBILITY AS A CATEGORY FOR IMMANENT CRITIQUE

Capitalist society is characterised by the continuing drudgery of work in a world where the liberation from work is technically possible. This gap between the actual and the potential is growing deeper in the context of today's capitalism, in which the application of science and technology to the production process is becoming increasingly common. Starting from this observation, this paper proceeds to revitalise a notion of objective possibility as a category for an immanent critique of capitalism, which ought to be distinguished from external and internal approaches to social critique. Drawing on Marx's critique of political economy, Adorno's sociological writings, and Postone's reinterpretation of Marx's critical theory, I argue that the task of immanent critique is to detect the structural contradictions immanent in capitalist societies and to reveal the historically determinate possibilities for social transformation that these contradictions give rise to. More specifically, I want to suggest that labour-saving technologies provide immanent standards for a materialist critique of contemporary capitalism. Due to the constraints of market competition, capital is structurally in need of increases in productivity, thereby compelling investments in advanced technology and machinery. This objective and immanent tendency renders the production of material wealth potentially independent from the expenditure of direct human labour, and thus enables a transition from socially necessary labour time as the capitalist value-form of wealth to a communist form of wealth that is measured in socially available free time instead. However, this objective possibility can never be realised under capitalist conditions, since the appropriation of surplus labour time remains constitutive of the capitalist production of value. The dialectic of labour time and free time hence refers to the fact that capitalism constantly generates the objective possibility of another organisation of time and activity, yet at the same time systematically hinders that possibility from being realised.

Simon Nørgaard Iversen

ANARCHIST AND UTOPIAN THOUGHT IN ANCIENT STOICISM

Recent scholarship argues that according to ancient Stoicism, humans have a natural inclination for property ownership and for

interacting as property owners. For some researchers, the ancient Stoics, therefore, display striking affinities with classical liberal thought, such as John Locke's, on property relations. However, according to Peter Kropotkin, Zeno of Citium, Stoicism's founder, was the most eminent exponent of anarchist thought in Antiquity. This supposed anarchist train of thought is most visible in Zeno's now lost political treatise, the Republic. This paper will argue that a careful reconstruction of the content of this treatise lends support to Kropotkin's remark and suggests that Zeno argued for the dissolution of a majority of the institutional structures of the ancient Greek City-State including property ownership. I will argue that the treatise, with a firm ground in Stoic metaphysics and ethics, presented a utopian vision of a future society, but also that intellectual diffidence among later Stoics would add uncertainty to the practicability of the treatise's utopian claims. This might suggest a rift between early and later Stoicism concerning their political thought but to counter such a rendering of the intellectual development of ancient Stoicism, I will conclude my paper by intimating that Zeno's anarchist and utopian ideas would remain an undercurrent in later Stoic thought and that there is little evidence for considering the ancient Stoics advocates for proto-Lockean liberalism.

Niklas Zenius Jespersen

PRODUKTIONSMÅDER UDEN FOR DEN SLAGNE VEJ

Urkommunisme, antik produtionsmåde, feudalisme, kapitalisme, socialisme, kommunisme. Sådan beskrives traditionelt den slagne vej for menneskehedens udvikling ifølge den marxistiske tradition. Hvad end vi taler om de dominerende traditioner blandt erklærede marxister eller om marxismens borgerlige kritikere, så beskrives marxismen som at tilskrive menneskehedens udvikling en slagen vej langs evigt fremadskridende trappetrin af stedse højere produktionsniveauer. Men hvordan blev denne forståelse af marxismen egentlig dominerende? Hos Marx og Engels finder vi den ikke, tværtimod nævner de både asiatiske og germanske produktionsmåder og åbner i deres skrifter op for en langt mere dynamisk og nuanceret forståelse af samfundsudviklingen. Et nærmere studie af den historiske empiri gør det da også hurtigt umuligt at opretholde ideen om at alle lande har gennemgået disse udviklingstrin eller blot at opretholde ideen om at udviklingen altid skulle havde bevæget sig gennem kontinuerligt højere niveauer. Skal vi forstå den historiske materialismes teori, befri den fra fortidens dogmer og genetablere den som

fundamentet for nye videnskabelige forståelser af, og opdagelser om, menneskehedens udvikling, så må vi først turde konfrontere den politiske manipulation som teorien har været udsat for og genfinde den historiske materialismes oprindelige frigørende videnskabelige metode. I dette oplæg vil vi udforske den historiske materialismes udvikling fra Marx og Engels oprindelige skrifter til dens senere udvikling. Ved at undersøge teoriens udvikling i lyset af magtkampene i først Sovjetunionen, og siden Kina og andre planøkonomier, vil vi spørge hvorfor og hvordan den videnskabelige teori blev reduceret til politisk dogmatik. Og ved at undersøge de stalinistiske diktaturers hegemonistiske kontrol over den socialistiske verdenslitteratur vil vi diskutere hvordan den kunne påvirke teoridannelsen hos selv antistalinistiske strømninger. Afsluttende vil vi åbne for diskussionen om eksistensen af andre produktionsmåder ved kort at drøfte teorierne om asiatisk, germansk, bonde- og tributære produktionsmåder.

Mathias Hein Jessen

WHO OWNS THE CORPORATION? AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

In recent years, there has been an upsurge in 'active ownership' of shareholders in order to force corporations to be more sustainable. However, the idea that shareholders 'own' the corporation not only does not make sense in any meaningful way of ownership, it is also inextricably linked with the 'shareholder primacy' and the 'shareholder value maximization' paradigm prevalent in dominant corporate governance theory and practice. This paper argues that it is not the shareholders that 'own' the assets and capital of the corporation, but instead it is the corporation itself. This distinction is crucial as it dismantles the (neo-)liberal myth that shareholders own the corporation which links the performance of management (agents) solely to the interests of the shareholders (principals) in what is called 'agency theory'. Proponents of sustainable 'active ownership' thus perpetuate the myth that shareholders own the corporation and thereby neglect the way in which the corporate form is inextricably linked to capitalism, exploitation and colonialism, and the way that shareownership ties individual lives ever closer together with capitalism and share price on financial markets. It also upholds the primacy of the shareholder to exclude workers, society and climate as those primarily exposed to the risks of corporate actions. The paper examines the intellectual movement to promote individual ownership of

corporations, which also reveals the idiosyncrasies of liberal conceptions of ownership and corporate governance.

Mikkel N. Jørgensen

YOUR BORDER IS A FICTION: AESTHETIC COUNTER HISTORICAL TEMPORALITIES IN WENDY TREVINO'S CRUEL FICTION

Contemporary critical aesthetics are beginning to take shape in response to the violence of borders and the discursive reproduction of border violence around the world (Brambilla & Jones 2019). Some forms of aesthetic production seek to unsettle historical narratives and imaginaries around the construction and necessity of borders. In this presentation, I analyze the collection of poems *Cruel Fiction* (2019) by the American poet Wendy Trevino with a special attention to how the poems offer ways of critically engaging with the imaginaries and narratives around American bordering. In the analysis, I highlight how especially Trevino's invocation of communal forms such as plural "We's," and her inclusion of personal memories of living in the US- Mexico borderland and historic revolutionary moments in Mexican-American history offers alternative radical historical border temporalities. Drawing on the border aesthetics tradition (Schimanski & Wolfe 2019, Schimanski Nyman 2021) and on critical utopian theory focused on history and memory as utopian acts (Abensour 2006/2008, Benjamin 1950/2007, Löwy 2006/2016, Rigney 2018), I argue that *Cruel Fiction* is uniquely connected to the political struggles against borders and immigration policies in the USA, and she forms this connection between poetry and political struggle in the figure of the commune as a form of inclusive communal imaginary. The paper concludes that the communal imaginary is built on memories of past migration struggles, and imaginaries of the future to function as a place of open reproduction of identity, freed from the capitalist reproduction of oppressive border identities.

Emma Kast

"ADAM BIT THE APPLE": ADAM SMITH'S THEORY OF ECONOMIC ORIGINAL SIN

Left-leaning demands for justice today often highlight the disconnect between hard work and adequate reward, or between reward and adequate work. These demands are exemplified by the Fair Trade movement, and the rallying cry "equal pay for equal work," which seek to remedy this discrepancy. Indeed, the idea that reward does

or should correspond to labor is so ubiquitous that it seems natural. But in all of these demands is an implicit notion of deservingness, which shares a troubling parallel with the classical liberal insistence that economic reward either is or should correspond to an individual's value-producing labor and parsimoniousness. In this paper, I discuss how Karl Marx's socially holistic method makes possible a critique of deservingness itself, beginning with his critique of what he calls Adam Smith's myth of "economic original sin." This is the origin story upon which classical political economists rely to justify wealth and poverty. Marx's critique enables us to think about the tensions that arise when an individual's labor serves as the marker of their basic economic entitlement. Simultaneously, essential questions about the relation between the individual and the social in capitalist society come into sharper focus.

Marie Louise Krogh

SPIVAK'S PERSISTENT CRITIQUE

Whenever Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's interventions into the terrain of epistemic decolonisation are discussed, it is almost always in relation to her now (in)famous question-cum-assertion: 'can the subaltern speak?'. In this paper, I offer a counter-reading of her work from the standpoint of another sentence, one that has been repeated across her oeuvre: 'the persistent critique of what one cannot not want'. What I will try to demonstrate is that we might use this sentence to give form to her self-description as a 'practical deconstructivist feminist Marxist'. Following this reading through and considering her engagements with Marx and the philosophical canon of the European Enlightenment, I argue that we find in her work the contours of an immanent critique of theory's material embeddedness in global capitalism.

Hedvig Lärka

EMERGING SOVEREIGNS: ON CORPORATE INCOME TAXATION AS SOCIAL FORM

With the introduction of a global top up minimum tax, corporate income taxation (CIT) – long considered a sovereign matter – stand to enter the field of international law. This transition is propelled by a will on the part of OECD and G20 countries to collect on a world of hidden profit, sparked little over a decade ago through the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) project. Perpetuating both OECD deliverables and scholarly debate is the idea that international

cooperation re-establishes tax sovereignty made nominal by aggressive tax competition. This article, however, will argue that tax sovereignty relies not on autonomous authority over territory, but on the co-formulation of those globalized legal forms which uphold the taxed subject and the tax sovereign alike. Read through Marxian social form theory – minding the constitutive role of the capital relation to CIT regimes – tax sovereignty is existentially driven toward the enlargement of those legal forms by which it is engendered. This article shows that historically, it was the global conflict between OECD and non-OECD countries, waged around the formulation of globally harmonized legal forms, that produced the infrastructure necessary for aggressive tax planning and is intensified today as international tax law warily takes shape. Finally, the article accounts for the global top-up minimum tax presently descending – armed with the design of a first of its kind, common consolidated global tax base to decide on the legitimacy of sovereign CIT measures – ready to tax a world of hidden profits from the top down. This article accounts for the global minimum top up tax not as savior but as imperial technique, wresting (further) control over the making of international tax law. As such, the top up minimum tax marks the apex of a historical, imperial conflict, spanning the last century.

Lotte List

CRITIQUE OF CRISIS: KOSELLECK'S SCHMITTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

In a 1948 essay, Carl Schmitt wrote that German intellectual history of the 18th and 19th history 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 in leftist academia to diagnose our time as a 'permanent crisis'.

Jacob Aagaard Lunding & Anders Sevelsted

ECONOMISTS, THE MORAL ELITE, AND THE SOCIAL QUESTION IN DENMARK (1852-1923)

From the establishment of the 'state science' education in 1848, economists have formed a central part of the Danish moral elite, understood as the part of the elite that has, among other things, educational and organizational resources to influence the normative foundation of society. The paper conducts a career network analysis of data from the Danish Who's Who in the period 1910-1923 to outline a prosopography (collective biography) of the economists as a group. It is shown that the economists in the Danish Who's Who largely reproduced their class background and that they were engaged in society's dominant organizations across sectors. In addition, five distinct career clusters are identified. The intellectual history conducted in the second part of the paper focuses on cluster four, comprising a new generation of scientifically revolutionary state economists. Particular focus is placed on Professor Harald Westergaard, showing how the new statistical methods he helped develop set the framework for the political debate on universalism in social policy, while his own social commitment crossed sectorial boundaries, as he was engaged in religious civil society organizations as a solution to societal problems.

Søren Mau

MARXISM AND THE BODY (CANCELLED)

Since the 1980's, critical scholars in the humanities and social sciences have confronted the tendency in Western intellectual culture to devalue or ignore the corporeal dimensions of human existence. This 'corporeal turn' has been dominated by non- or anti-Marxist theoretical traditions such as phenomenology, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis and new materialism, while Marxist perspectives have been perspicuously absent. In this talk, I will discuss what a Marxist contribution to the corporeal turn might look like, and pose the

question of what insights a specifically Marxist approach to the body can produce, and how it differs from and relates to other approaches.

Ticiane Lorena Natale

CRISIS OF VALUE, OVEREXPLOITATION OF LABOUR AND THE WEAKENING OF THE LEGAL FORM

This research seeks to understand the transformations in Labour Law under a broader context that I call the weakening of the legal form. My hypothesis is that there is a crisis of value in the current stage of capitalism (exaggerated financialization and overexploitation of labour) which, consequently, is reflected in its predominant social form of social regulation, the legal form. In fact, the prices practiced on the market do not correspond to the value; the overexploitation of labour further deepens this problem by selling the commodity workforce below its value. However, the expanded reproduction of capital is still taking place through the extraction of surplus value, depending on abstract human labour dimensioned by socially necessary labour time and, consequently, on the legal form (which establishes that all human beings are equal so that their labours are equalized). In this clash, the financialization of the economy presses for the dissolution of Labour Law (the right to the commodity of labour) with a view to Civil Law (private property law), but, in practice, it finds the opposite of the legal form: the denial of the subject of law and the overflow of the human condition from the productive sphere object of law not only to the sphere of circulation, but in all contexts of the existence of the working class. This is expressed by the Law's difficulty in regulating social relations in a predominant way, with politics and religion coming into play (non-equivalent forms); and democratic rights that attacked worldwide. With the diagnosis of the current phenomenon, it is intended to open space for a reflection on new forms of struggle for the emancipation of the working class. The method used in this research is historical dialectical materialism; the theoretical framework adopted is the Marxist Dependency Theory.

Thomas Noutsopoulos & Nikos Folinas

MARX'S GROUNDING OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND HISTORY IN THE LABOR PROCESS

As it is well known, in the exposition of the labor process in Capital vol.1 Marx abstracts from every social-historical form and presents the general material conditions of every form of society, what he summarizes with the term "relation of natural metabolism."

However, it would be wrong to assume that history is absent from the labor process as this process is not ahistorical but trans-historical. In our paper we attempt to show the necessity of the concept of labor for the abstract, general grounding of historical time as well as the relevance of its abstract ends i.e., individual and productive consumption for the study of history. As far as the first task is concerned, we are going to analyze the way Marx conceives labor's involvement for the emergence of consciousness of historical time, meaning the way labor associates in general past, present and future. As for the second task, we are going to discuss Marx's prioritization of productive consumption against individual consumption as the basis of a materialist science of history. Based on the above, we purport that what is missing in Marx's concept of the labor process is historicity, not history, a distinction which we are going to highlight by focusing on the notion of violence present in this process. Our reading helps one to develop a novel understanding of the general features of capital as a historical relation of production.

Bertel Nygaard

HISTORY AND THE FORMATION OF MARXISM

In the middle of the German November Revolution of 1918, Rosa Luxemburg recalled her studies of the French Revolution of 1789. Even in the dry account of the liberal 19th-century historian Mignet, the latter event emerged "like a Beethoven symphony intensified into gigantic proportions, a raging storm on the organ of the times" – unlike the timidities of the current German revolution. The intensity of her engagement with the revolution and her sense of a plurality of times reveal a crucial, yet mostly under-acknowledged element of classical Marxism: the study of history. Marx, Engels and the early Marxists of the Second International persistently reflected on history, not just in the grand, sweeping narrative of The Manifesto of the Communist Party or in such approximations to conventional historiography as Engels's Peasant War in Germany, but throughout their political writings and Marx's critique of political economy. And the first generation of Marxist followed suit. Thus, from its very formation, Marxism was conceived not just as a social theory, nor merely as a call to change the world. History – the study of concrete social relations in the past and the present – was a key aspect of Marxism, mediating between its concerns with theory and practice, adding empirical content and contradiction to them, allowing the past to serve as a reflective testing ground of current political

strategies. In other words, conventional ideals of Marxism as a unity of theory and practice might be reconceived in terms of a triangular relationship between history, theory and transformative social practice. Such is the main argument of my book *History and the Formation of Marxism* (forthcoming in the Palgrave Macmillan series "Marxism, Engels, and Marxism"). In this paper I want to elaborate on that line of thought, providing examples of early Marxist concerns with the French Revolution.

Sigurd M. N. Oppegaard

A RECENT HISTORY OF THE NORWEGIAN TAXI INDUSTRY: PLATFORMIZATION AND EXPLOITATION IN THE SO-CALLED NORWEGIAN LABOR MARKET MODEL

In this presentation, I map the recent history of the Norwegian taxi industry. With a few detours to the Middle Ages and 1800s, the presentation takes Uber's effort to establish its business model in Norway in 2014 as a point of departure. This event provoked a taxi market deregulation that a few years later made it possible for multiple taxi platforms to find a foothold in the industry and develop into essential actors in the current market. Drawing on concepts such as "surplus populations" and subsumption, and exploring the labor-capital relation in the Norwegian taxi industry, the analysis aims to understand the conditions under which platform work could emerge in the Norwegian taxi industry and within the so-called Norwegian or Nordic labor market model, that generally is presented as protecting workers from the same kinds of conditions as those the platforms offer. The analysis shows that while the platforms have initiated a transformation of the taxi industry, their operations are based on the forms of exploitation that have been dominant in the taxi industry for a long time. Second, the so-called Norwegian labor market model was never a significant obstacle for the taxi platforms. It was rather the product and service market regulations that caused Uber when the platform first tried to begin operations in Norway. Finally, the analysis suggests that the emergence of taxi platforms as well as platform work more broadly in Norway depends on a segment of the labor force made superfluous by capital and excluded from generally well-regulated working conditions and welfare provisions that tend to characterize the Norwegian labor market.

Peder Østring

DISMANTLING FOSSIL CAPITAL

In a rapidly warming world, the question of what to do with fixed fossil capital will have to be confronted sooner rather than later. Globally, there are over 7000 offshore platforms, which together with surrounding infrastructure make up a substantial oceanic built environment. If we are to have a fair chance of keeping global warming well below 2°C, a significant amount of these installations would have to be decommissioned, through the shutting down, dismantling and recycling of these structures. Several aspects relating to capitalist value affect the emerging decommissioning industry, such as how the privileged position of exchange over use value inhibits increased circularity and shorter value chains, how value of past labour can be contained in old metal components, and how further labour engaged in recycling adds new value. Finally, the climate crisis comes with an imperative of unprecedented levels of devaluation of these structures. Decommissioning is also affected by the uneven development inherent to capitalism, where trails from the offshore fossil industry lead all the way to South-East Asia and the exploitative practices of shipbreaking and beaching of drilling rigs and offshore vessels. Making use of the mass and quantity of metals contained in fossil infrastructure has to be part of any programme that would set out to heal the metabolic rift between humans and nature in a carbon constrained world. Through salvaging the remains of fossil capital, new landscapes can be built from the ashes of the old. This double movement of destruction and creation also holds the prospect of creating new jobs with clear overlaps of skills of oil workers. Moreover, a planned phase out of oil and gas would strengthen the prospects of upscaling employment in the decommissioning industry.

Morten Ougaard

MARX'S ECONOMIC THEORY AND THE PROSPECTS FOR CAPITALISM: A LONG-TERM AND GLOBAL VIEW

The paper focuses on Marx' theory of the long-term tendency of the falling rate of profit (LTFRP), expounded in Capital Vol. III. The paper first situates the LTFRP in the larger context of Marx's work and considers briefly the critique of the theory. It then stresses that the theory is about the tendency and importantly also about the counter-tendencies triggered by the LTFRP. The paper summarizes the countertendencies specified by Marx and considers their relevance of contemporary capitalism. Some of these are mobilized through

the operation of capitalist markets but others are mobilized politically. Among them are the incessant drive to intensify the labour process and to raise the rate of exploitation, to develop the productive forces, to expand the pool of employable labour, inter alia through expansion to less industrialized areas, and to economize on the use of material resources. The paper discusses the prospects for these tendencies and relate them to the societal need to move dramatically towards sustainability. The conclusion is twofold. First, that over time some of these counter-tendencies will be exhausted, in particular when considering the planetary limits and the fact that capitalist growth is exponential. Second, that ongoing efforts to mobilize the other tendencies will lead to sharpening conflicts and competition between enterprises, classes and nations.

Irene Pace

HISTORICIZING THE EMERGENCE OF DANISH ELITE GASTRONOMY

In this paper I first describe how Danish elites fostered the import of French culinary labour in the 1980s, creating a generation of mentors while also attracting the attention of the Michelin accolade. I then merge a population ecology perspective to a prosopographical study of Copenhagen's Michelin starred scene between 1980 and 2020 from a point of view of organisational strategy and survival. The high-end culinary niche of Copenhagen rose in international visibility in the first decade of the 2000s, when the French regime was substituted by the New Nordic imagery building on the tension between localised and globalised food production processes. Once a fertile ground for family-led simpler businesses, the city's prestigious food scene is now shaped by locally constructed corporations whose efforts rely on foreign tourism, 'fluid' labour turnover, and financial alliances spanning beyond the boundaries of gastronomy – where not of the Nordic region itself. The boundaries of localism seem blurred and commodified. The paper stems from my doctoral research – mainly – in the field of economic sociology, where I use 30 interviews with key actors (past and present) and data on corporate ownership of high-end restaurants to reconstruct a longitudinal understanding of core shifts in the scene at different levels of observation/analysis – professional, organisational, and lastly at the level of linkage between patronage and craftsmanship.

Nicos Tzanakis Papadakis

THE INTRUSION OF HISTORICAL TIME IN THE LOGICAL MODE OF PRESENTATION OR, WHY THE THEORY OF POLITICS TAKES THE FORM OF HISTORICAL EXCURSUS?

It should be indisputable that Marx's critique of political economy does not claim to discover the laws of motion of world history but only those of capitalist societies. As representatives of the New Capital Reading have elaborated, the conceptual genesis gains primacy over the question of historical genesis in Capital. Nevertheless, there are long historical sections, especially in the first volume of Capital, in which Marx is not primarily concerned with the conceptual genesis, but instead addresses real-historical processes. That raises the question of how the logical development of categories and historical excursuses interrelate in Marx's presentation. Are the historical excursuses merely secondary illustrations of what has been already conceptually developed – as many interpreters claim – or do they fulfil a function of an essentially different kind? The question becomes even more interesting if one considers the so-called 'historical' excursuses occupying the bulk of the chapters devoted to the capitalist production process. In the proposed presentation, I will examine how the logical-dialectical presentation method and the historical one relate to each other, based on the eighth chapter of the first volume of Capital, dealing with the production of absolute surplus-value. I will firstly highlight the conceptual site of the issue this chapter raises. Secondly, I will elaborate on the theoretical effort of this chapter. I will argue that Marx develops in that chapter the theoretical scheme of the function of the state law in bourgeois society. Finally, I will sketchily answer the question of why this conceptual content necessarily takes the form of a historical presentation. In other words: Why is the historical excursus the most appropriate presentation method for a theory of the function of law in capitalist society?

Ludvig Goldschmidt Pedersen

THE POVERTY OF INTELLECTUAL HISTORY: A CRITIQUE OF MARXIST HISTORIES OF NEOLIBERALISM

It is common in Marxist histories of neoliberalism to assume that ideas matter. The spread of neoliberal reforms is associated with the works of Milton Friedman, Friedrich Hayek, and James Buchanan as the ideational superstructure that underpins the intensified concentration of capital. In this paper, I will argue that this is a misunderstanding of the logics that has driven the direction of policy in recent

decades. Rather, we should look at the long durée logics that become institutionalized in the state apparatus through bureaucratic ideals and knowledge production techniques. By going closer to the political decision-making process, we discover that the malice of neoliberal reforms in fact are everything but fuelled by grand ideas. Rather they are the product of an epistemological structure in which limited statistical tools to make stuff visible, and bureaucratic self-images as defenders of the common good, together produce an efficiency straitjacket for policies. This creates a challenge for how to write Marxist histories which will be explored in the paper's second section: that Marxist histories need to take the state seriously. Bringing the state back into Marxist analyses means exploring how class, institutions, and knowledge permeates the political decision-making processes. This in turn would open new avenues to explore the temporalities of contemporary capitalism as a set of interlocking modes of analyses and futures.

Benjamin Ask Popp-Madsen & Mikkel Flohr

THREE CONCEPTS OF FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY: LIBERAL, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC, REVOLUTIONARY

Contemporary political struggles are deeply connected to the right to freedom of assembly. Whether one thinks of pro-choice demonstrations outside the home of an American supreme court judge, anti-war demonstrations in St. Petersburg, attempts to unionize workers at Amazon and Starbucks, the Trumpist attack on the US Capitol, demonstrations against pandemic lockdowns, or the police crackdown on climate activists like Extinction Rebellion and racial justice activists like Black Lives Matter, these events all implicitly pose the questions of who can assemble in public, for what purposes freedom of assembly can be used, how authorities justify limitations to the freedom of assembly, and why it is conceived as a potential threat to the current political order. To explore the implicit politics of the freedom of assembly, this paper seeks to distinguish between three different conceptions of freedom of assembly: a) liberal, b) social democratic, and c) revolutionary. Firstly, in the liberal understanding, freedom of assembly is one right in the catalogue of individual rights such as freedom of speech, thought, religion and association, which must be regulated and delimited by state authorities. Secondly, in the social democratic understanding, freedom of assembly is the precondition for the establishment of unions, and hence of processes of negation and compromise within a capitalist economy. Freedom of assembly

in the social democratic understanding, hence, is the precondition as well as the form of action, which creates protective institutions within capitalism. Thirdly, in the revolutionary understanding, freedom of assembly names a potentially revolutionary form of action able to destabilize existing regimes and institute new political constitutions. In this radical, revolutionary understanding, freedom of assembly is neither a constituted power (as in the liberal understanding, where freedom of assembly is codified in the constitution) nor a protective power (as in the social democratic understanding, where freedom of assembly is a protection against the worst ravages of market society), but a constituent power, which is able to create new political forms.

Bjarke Skærlund Risager

TERRITORIAL STIGMATIZATION AND HOUSING COMMODIFICATION UNDER RACIAL NEOLIBERALISM: THE CASE OF DENMARK'S "GHETTOS"

Exploring the relation between racialization and housing commodification, this paper retraces the recent history of Denmark's infamous 'ghetto' policies targeting marginalized non-profit housing areas. I argue that this history has unfolded in the context of actually existing racial neoliberalism, understood as an evolving co-constitutive relation and process of racialization and neoliberalization. The past two decades have seen increasing political efforts to commodify non-profit housing areas, while marginalized areas have been subjected to increasing racialized territorial stigmatization. Due to the failure of these commodification efforts, however, existing research has mostly concerned itself with the discursive 'ghetto' stigmatization and not with the relation between these two processes. With the 2018 'Ghetto Law', however, this relation is cemented. The law requires non-profit housing associations in socioeconomically marginalized areas with a majority of 'non-western' residents to significantly reduce their proportion of non-profit housing, primarily by selling off housing and land and by private new-build, in order to bring about social and racial mixing. In order to comprehend the emergence of this exceptional law, I argue, we must retrace the history of how processes of commodification and racialization have intensified and been intwined. I do this through a close reading of grey literature, primarily policy proposals, policy evaluations, and various bureaucratic documents.

Dominique Routhier

A MARXIST APPROACH TO THE CONCEPT OF "THE DIGITAL"

According to some scholars, 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 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 modern computation and propose instead a Marxist understanding of "the digital" as a historically specific form of capitalist time-management.

Morteza Samanpour

HISTORICAL TIMES AND TEMPORALISATION: MARX'S THEORY OF (DIFFERENTIATED) REPRODUCTION AFTER THE GRUNDRISSE

Marx's critique of political economy goes through fundamental transformations after the Grundrisse (1857). All the categories that distinctively express the unity of the reproduction process, that is, 'circulation' in the wider sense of the term, 'total social capital', 'competition', and the 'world-market' are all fully developed in the formative years of 1861-63, which are incorporated into Volumes II and III of Capital. No longer viewed as the social relationship of production in capitalist societies, capital is now understood as the processual-circulatory social form that 'posits its own presuppositions' world-historically, i.e., at the level of the world-market. In this paper, I will first and briefly demonstrate how the above categorial transformations led Marx to abandon the unilinear and teleological conception of historical time – more specifically, the evolutionist, progressive model of 'genesis, development, crisis, and breakdown' inherited from the Enlightenment era. Marx's relationship to colonialism changes not simply because of 'political-ideological' reasons, as Kevin Anderson has claimed, but because of social-ontological reasons. Marx's conception of historical time becomes 'multi-linear' because the reproduction of total social capital is conceived as the mutual interrelation of the circuits of accumulation based on the multiplicity of methods of surplus extraction that are simultaneous/contemporaneous with one another on the world-market. Slavery, for instance,

was not an anachronistic residue from the past but synchronous with wage-labour. Drawing on the temporal and feminist readings of Capital, the central claim here is that the reproduction of global capital is intrinsically constituted by 'social differentiation', understood as the process of actively creating differentials of temporalities of forms of value across the social spaces of the world-market. The temporalisation of the world-market through the social mechanism of competition is the key to grasping how capitalism reproduces itself globally, including the histories of colonialism and new forms of imperial relations that no longer operates based on the exclusive dominion of the 'West' over the rest. Viewed from the standpoint of reproduction, the value-form appears as the 'totalizing' social form that subordinates all social relations to its own life-process, not by creating homogeneous (as the Hegelian readings of Marx argue) but rather heterogenous historical times. Towards the end of my paper, I will try to address the political implications of the multiplicity of historical times for Marx's dialectical-practical critique of capitalism, especially with respect to the extremely stratified structure of today's global capitalism as driven by the processes of financialization.

Frida Sandström

A SENSUOUS REVERSAL OF CONSCIOUSNESS: RIVOLTA FEMMINILIE'S DECULTURATION OF HISTORY

In their 1970 essay "Sputiamo su Hegel" [Spit on Hegel], the Italian feminist collective and publishing house Rivolta Femminilie (hereafter referred to as RF) refers an 'Unexpected Subject,' emerging self-consciously as a capacity that transforms life 'completely.' This is the process of 'deculturation': a reversed process of self-realization, against the social relations and cultural formations that dominates modern civilization. In their critique of colonial culture, as much as of strivings toward a revolution without the emancipation of sexualized and racialized subjects, and children, RF describes deculturation to be taking place during 'social' maternity. As a self-criticism that turns consciousness 'backwards,' the child, who still isn't 'culturalized,' is central to this process. The point is not to be 'represented,' what RF claims to be 'compulsive,' but rather to give way to 'imagination.' Hence, RF refuses representation in the present forms of culture, and rather seeks to "judge that transcendence itself." This paper seeks to engage with the notion of deculturation and its implicit critique of the transcendental subject in Hegel, Marx, and in

modern aesthetics. Alike Adorno's 'de-artification' [*entkunstung*] of art, the negative and 'unexpected' transcendence during deculturation gathers what RF calls "situations and episodes of historical feminist experience." This fragmented polyphony, they argue, interrupts, modern civilization, so that acting becomes "simple and elementary." In both cases, historical experiences are uttered against existing forms of representation, which questions the notion of praxis as it is known from early Marx: as opposed to a sensuous revolutionary detournement, 'deculturation' suggests a sensuous reversal. What does this make of the concept of history?

Serap Saritas

GREEN VERSUS OLD: NEW DEALS AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

Between 1933 and 1939, Roosevelt in the USA implemented a series of policies which are called as The New Deal. These, indeed, started a new era in terms of the shift of responsibility of social reproduction from private to public sphere. Social reproduction consists of reproduction of labour power, biological and generational reproduction in relation to mode of production, family and state institutions. In this sense, public benefits for children, elderly or unemployed as well as social security regulations of New Deal programme were of extreme significance. On the other hand, the New Deal was also a way to shape the social reproduction sphere in a way which contributed to gender, race and sexual orientation related inequalities. When we come to the current era, we hear a lot of discussion on Green Deal which aims to stop climate change with a collaboration of public and private sectors. While European Union Green Deal is substantially a growth strategy, critical voices demand for a Green New deal with common themes including but not limited to decarbonising and democratising the economy while ensuring a socially just transition. Nevertheless, except from Feminist Green New Deal demands, most of the discussion on the issue focuses on production related impacts of existing and future green policies. This paper aims to analyse social reproduction related outcomes of proposed Green New Deal policies with a historical dialogue on the New Deal. In this context, periodisation of social reproduction and crisis of social reproduction in the neoliberal financialised era are discussed.

Lotte Schack

POLITICAL SUBJECTIVITY IN THE SWEDISH CLIMATE MOVEMENT

Many have argued that one of the major problems with the struggle against catastrophic climate change is the absence of a revolutionary climate 'subject', akin to the proletariat or feminist subject. Considering this discussion, in this paper I examine how Swedish climate activists see themselves as political subjects, drawing on Marxist-feminist work on subjectivity. 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 victim 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. Drawing on Edelman's critique of reproductive futurism, I problematize 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 problematize this notion of childhood by drawing on the 1970s Children's Power movement, arguing that the child can be both a politized and antagonistic subject position, necessary for challenging the current catastrophic system and imagining an alternative future.

Klaus Schulte

NECESSARY WORK – LIBERATED TIME: ON FRIGGA HAUG'S PROGRAM FOR A MUTUAL REESTABLISHMENT OF MARXISM AND FEMINISM

The lecture will focus on the historical materialist and practice-philosophical basis for the German Marxist-Feminist Frigga Haug's claim, according to which the relations between the sexes and between different genders can, and must be, understood as an intrinsic part of Marx's concept of relations of production. The theoretical challenge of the kind of innovative, mutual reestablishment of Marxism and Feminism, which Frigga Haug is working on, consists

in understanding thoroughly and in fully appreciating, that the relations of production and property- and class-relations arising from here exist a priori as practically lived social relations between sexually embodied humans. As such, they are mediated through all kinds of ideological practices and forms of social conscience, respectively. At the same time, humans of all genders are, by means of their socially interrelated practices which are founded on, mainly, work and individual as well as collective psycho-physical reproduction, at all times involved the necessary metabolism with nature, which they are part of, due to their capacity as being the socio-biologically highest organized form of life on earth. Thus, relations between them are conditions of all kinds of production – and there are no relations of production independent of practically lived relations between sexually embodied and socially gendered human beings. According to Haug, the reason for the historically persistent structural discrimination of women in various forms during the entire historical process since the two first divisions of labor is a separation between the production of the means of life and the equally necessary (re)production of life itself through all kinds of care. This applies from conception, birth(giving) and child rearing to accompanying assistance to the dying. The truly crucial separation occurs early in the development of human society, due to the fact, that surplus-production only can take place in the realm of the production of means of life: From here, questions of appropriation, right of disposal and societal distribution of the surplus product arise. Enter patriarchy! Consequently, we can, in the development of human social and individual relations ever since, observe an ever increasing subordination of the (re)production of life itself, 'naturally' inherent with, but also socially delegated to womankind, under the production of the means of life, increasingly, but by no means exclusively, carried out by men. In this way, patriarchy becomes the long lasting, both bone-hard but at the same time toughly flexible and adaptable structure of domination that hitherto has helped to cement the existing class relations at all times. Capitalism in this respect came to constitute the most advanced bastion of patriarchy. With her real-utopic-gramscian Four-in-one-Perspective, however, Haug shows that and how, even under the current capitalist conditions, some counter-hegemonic breaches can be shot into the many branched walls of this fortress. Especially in its most advanced, high-tech-productive form, capitalism offers increasing opportunities to overcome patriarchy: This objective comes into reaching distance, when fighting wage-laborers

successfully press for a radical reduction of average working hours and proceed to change the division of labor, especially as far as the almost automatic delegation of most forms of care work to women is concerned. In this way, some opportunities open up for more and more people of all genders to have the time, mental surplus and social elbow-space to engage in solidarity in the counter-hegemonic struggle for a fundamental societal change aimed at establishing both a non-profit, sustainable socio-economic order and the abolition of patriarchy.

Esben Bøgh Sørensen & Markus Christian Hansen

MARKET DEPENDENCY OR CAPITALISM? THE CASE OF DANISH AGRICULTURE

"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.

Asger Sørensen

ALIENATION AND HUMAN NATURE: RECUPERATING THE CLASSICAL DISCUSSION

Following Marcuse's interpretation of Marx's Manuscripts, firstly I argue to distinguish between alienation, renunciation, reification and estrangement. Secondly, despite the complication due to the translation of a German language discussion into English, we should continue considering alienation the key issue to discuss rather than estrangement. For the 20thcentury realized socialism of the Soviet-bloc, the problem with alienation was that if alienation is not intrinsically and exclusively linked to capitalist relations of production, why should we want to have socialism instead? Today, however, the desirability and legitimacy of private property are rarely contested, and I therefore propose to take seriously the Soviet-side worries. However, instead of thinking of the critique of alienation and of political economy as mutually exclusive, with the inspiration from the Manuscripts, I take them to be two aspects of the same critique. As I argue, human being is understood as becoming alienated under capitalism mainly by being deprived of the product of work due to state enforcement of private property rights. Alienation is thus implied by capitalist exploitation and should be handled through politics, economy and law, i.e. as an objective social condition in need of change. Hence, for Marx criticizing alienation implies criticizing the political economy of capitalism. When it comes to wage, this is the result of struggle between worker and capitalist, where the former is destined to lose. Basically, value is produced by the utility added through work. The worker produces the value, but in a capitalist society, the value is alienated to the capitalist where it is accumulated. The fundamental contradiction of Smith's national economics is that it purports to contribute to the happiness of society, but in reality, it leads to the misery of the majority of society, the working class.

Rune Møller Stahl

CONTOURS OF A MARXIST UNDERSTANDING OF ECONOMIC IDEAS

The paper will outline the contours of a historical materialist approach to the study of the political influence of economic ideas and economic science, with a special focus on an understanding of the specific role of liberal economics in capitalist societies. The paper will draw on insight from a broad range of theoretical sources internal and external to the Marxist tradition. Most important here will be Gramsci, and the neogramscian tradition, but other major resources include Robert Heilbroner's work on the history of economic thought, Althusserian theories of ideology and the intellectual historical methodology from Ellen Meiksins Woods conception of "Social History of Political Thought." By integrating the study of the political influence of economic ideas into a materialist framework, the article hopes to allow for a study of economic ideas that does not, wittingly or unwittingly, consign a primary causal influence to ideational factors. Furthermore, the approach will allow for a novel understanding of the specific roles economic ideas and intellectuals play within national and international elites, as well as a more nuanced understanding of the different aspects of the legitimating and ideological function of economic theory in modern societies.

Ilona Steiler

LINKING TIME, LABOUR, AND SUSTAINABILITY IN ANALYSES OF GLOBAL DIGITAL CAPITALISM

The multiple and overlapping global economic, social and ecologic crises of recent years have dramatically highlighted the urgent need for wide-scale transformations. However, mainstream approaches to achieving sustainability, such as the SDGs or green transitions, mainly aim to tackle existing challenges for or within capitalism, rather than considering structural transformations (Selwyn 2021). Against this background, and following Lefebvre's (2004) dictum that there is 'a bitter and dark struggle around time and the use of time,' in this paper I identify time as both a central battleground and key ingredient in addressing environmental destruction, social inequality and labour exploitation. Engaging with previous analyses of time and labour under capitalism (Thompson 1967; Postone 1993) as well as with Marxist eco-feminist theorizing (Brennan 2003; Harcourt and Bauhardt 2018), I aim to develop a better understanding of the current acceleration and appropriation of time in the global digital economy.

The empirical focus is on the manifestations of these processes—the demands for flexibility, multi-tasking, self-responsibilization and the joggling of work and caring responsibilities—for female knowledge workers, which are contextualized within wider dynamics of extraction and commodification of time under 'all-the-time capitalism' (Nealon 2012), i.e., the subjugation of all spheres of life to market participation. Drawing on secondary research literature and auto-ethnographic experiences, I trace everyday strategies of saving, buying and spending time as time is turned from a free resource into valuable asset, highly priced and globally traded commodity but also class signifier. In conclusion, I suggest that the digital economy exacerbates and globalizes the inextricable links between time-use and labour and environmental exploitation, and that exploring alternative, socially and ecologically viable ways of working and living must be based on a critical analysis of global capitalist structures.

Victor Strazzeri

CAN DEFEAT BE CONCEPTUALIZED? ON WRITING THE ENTRY "DEFEAT" [*NIEDERLAGE*] FOR THE *HISTORICAL-CRITICAL DICTIONARY OF MARXISM*

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.

Joen Vedel & Eva la Cour

LIVE EDITING AS ARTISTIC PRACTICE: TOWARDS A REORIENTATION OF HISTORICAL TIME

History writing has always been a place of struggle and filmmaking has long been part of it; both in terms of forming these struggles and being formed by them. Drawing from the different subjects of our individual artistic research projects – where we use video live-editing to express 'geo-aesthetical discontent' (la Cour) and 'research the (im)possibilities in capturing historical events while they unfold' (Vedel) – we depart in this presentation from a shared materialist investigation into the temporalization of History using moving images. As such, we will discuss our attempts to reorientate linear temporality towards new constellations between thinking and image, the archive and social processes, historical time and now-time, authenticity, authorship, and authority. What are the needs for temporal and relational forms of the image and image-practices at this time of crisis? Which aesthetics may a turn to temporal communalities enable? How can our different methodological strategies be used to challenge a historiographic concept of futurity? In raising such questions we wish to contribute to new, much needed, conceptualizations of artistic practice not as an act of intention but as an act of relation; filmmaking not as an act of narrating a place or a community, but as an act of engaging situated conditions upon shifting grounds. The purpose of bringing about ideas of temporal communality, then, is to critically circumvent the historical and colonial legacy of more site-bounded desires of achieving communality – in artistic and filmmaking practices but also in a wider sense.

Troy Vettese

ELINOR OSTROM: A THEORIST OF THE NEOLIBERAL COMMONS

Elinor Ostrom (née Elinor Claire Awan, 1933 in Los Angeles, d. 12 June 2012 in Bloomington), was an American political economist best known for her scholarship on 'common-pool resources'. In 2009, she and Oliver Williamson won the Nobel prize in economics largely because of her magnum opus, Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action (1990), which forcefully refuted the commonsense notion of 'tragedy of the commons'.

That term, coined in 1833 by the economist William Forster Lloyd to explain poverty during the early industrial revolution, was popularized over a century later by the biologist Garett Hardin (1968) in an influential article of the same name in Science. Ostrom's humbling of Hardin contributed to the shift in the 1990s where the environmental movement shifted from its Malthusian roots to a market-friendly neoliberalism. Ostrom was an unusual thinker in that her work has garnered admirers from across the political spectrum, but this is partially because the left overlooks the conservative foundations of her 'commons' framework. So far, however, only neoliberal scholars have studied Ostrom's work and biography in any depth. This paper seeks to rebalance the historiography through a critical engagement with Ostrom's oeuvre. Instead of focussing on the 1990s when Ostrom wrote her most influential works, this intellectual history traces the construction of her framework back to the 1960s. It was in the quarter century prior to the publication of Governing the Commons that Ostrom began her collaboration with Vincent Ostrom (a prominent public choice theorist and constitutional scholar), defended suburban 'white flight' with arguments similar to those posed in her later work on the commons, and, finally, mastered game theory mid-career. These three elements would become the defining features of Ostromian environmental economics, which still exerts a powerful influence in the discipline almost a decade after her death.

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2023

THE NATIONAL AND THE INTERNATIONAL

EIGHTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE DANISH SOCIETY FOR MARXIST STUDIES

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark
6-7 October 2023

Since the birth of the modern state, political struggle has been waged on the double battlefield of the national and the international. In the nineteenth century, at a crucial point in the consolidation of the European system of nation states, Marx argued that capitalism trended towards global expansion and subsumption. The tensions between the national and the international increasingly took centre stage, continuing well into our own time and, while the past decades have seen further international economic integration, nationalism still penetrates all aspects of political and cultural life. On a theoretical level, however, the pairing of national and international is currently challenged by alternative spatial notions such as "localities," "extra-territoriality," "environment," "sphere of influence," "alliance," and "empire."

For the eighth annual conference of the Danish Society for Marxist Studies, we therefore invite researchers and activists from the broader critical tradition to engage with the notions of the national and the international anew, as both theoretical suppositions and material realities.

We welcome participants from all disciplines and invite contributions on a range of topics. Examples might include (but are not limited to):

- Conceptualisations of "the national" and "the international" across space and time
- Social reproduction and the internationalisation of care work
- Feminist internationalism throughout history
- The local as a site of political practice
- Migration and global inequalities
- The development of international finance
- War, peace, and (inter)national politics
- New state capitalism and the relation between the nation-state and transnational institutions
- The workers' movement beyond territorial boundaries
- The development of legal regimes in international corporate law
- Elite conceptions of cosmopolitanism
- Post-colonial approaches to state formation and nationalism
- Critical logistics studies
- Aesthetic approaches to state, border, and transnational problems

By adding new perspectives on the complex interaction of national, international, and transnational forces and movements, we hope to further critical discussions on the transgressions of capital, as well as on the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this register of Marxist analysis.

OPEN CALL

The Danish Society of Marxist Studies is committed to providing a common platform for critical research in Denmark. For this reason, we also welcome papers that do not directly touch upon this year's theme but contribute to these research traditions and thereby contribute to and enrich the Marxist research tradition by expanding its range of interlocutors.

Please submit your abstract (max. 250 words) through this form by 1 June 2023 at 10pm CET. Abstracts and presentations may be in Danish or English.

PLEASE NOTE

The conference is in-person only, and it will not be possible to present virtually. We are unfortunately not able to provide any financial assistance this year.

Attendance is **free** but requires registration. Participation in the conference dinner is only possible with pre-payment at registration. Please register here.

ABSTRACTS

Benno Teschke

WHAT IS GEOPOLITICAL MARXISM? RADICAL HISTORICISM AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS IN MARXIST INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (KEYNOTE)

Political Marxism (PM) is best known for a series of innovative studies on the subject of country-specific transitions to capitalism. This literature works, as a rule, within the confines of single-country studies (methodological nationalism) or comparative history. Inversely, Marxist paradigms in the field of International Relations (Classical Theories of Imperialism/Neo-Leninism, WST, Neo-Gramscian IR, UCD) remain afflicted by a recurrent theoretical and empirical problem: the absence of a dedicated approach to the historical sociology of international politics. As a rule, the study of foreign policy making and the encounter between multiple foreign policies in the sphere of international politics is subsumed under wider sociological patterns or structural imperatives prevailing within and between political communities. If PM and Marxist IR are over-sociologised and under-geopoliticised, how can Geopolitical Marxism rectify and overcome this problem? This question involves a methodological reflection on how to capture and validate the sphere of grand-strategy making, high politics and international diplomacy in its significance for the international management of transitions and non-transitions to capitalism. Radical Historicism in this sense requires not only a focus on spatio-temporal specificity, it also requires 'the rescue of foreign policy elites, grand strategy makers and diplomats from the enormous condescension of Marxist posterity'. Empirically, the paper demonstrates how this shift towards the making of geopolitics changes our historical narrative of the 1815 Treaty of Vienna and its world-ordering consequences.

Carolina Alves

WHAT'S NEEDED FOR A RADICAL THEORY OF FINANCE (KEYNOTE)

Fictitious capital in Marx is what is known today as financial securities. Its emergence is because in capitalist societies any stream of income can be capitalised. I argue that these titles do not represent any real capital but are termed *capital*because they guarantee a claim upon the value that is produced in society. They are also termed *fictitious* because their capital value can be different from whatever are the value-generating processes in society, which in turn gives rise to and supports speculation. Although these titles extend the limits of the credit system, they do not necessarily guarantee a future production of surplus value, which, together with speculation, makes the credit system prone to speculative booms and instability. Although the dynamics of the accumulation of fictitious capital and real capital may potentially diverge from each other, finance – particularly fictitious capital – is not only parasitical or an intrusion, but an integral element of the capitalist economy. It emerges endogenously from the real accumulation and is a necessary outgrowth of accumulation. Yet, the opportunities for financial investments and accumulation through the expansion of financial markets tend to leave industry under-invested and under-performing, thus reinforcing the tendency towards what has been defined as financialisation. Note that the development of finance does not take us to the transformation of the fundamental value. The detachment from the production of values and the real source of value-generating returns due to the capitalisation process and creation of fictitious capital is much more about capital trying to separate from and undermining its own material basis, i.e., the production of new use-values through labour exploitation (see Paulani, 2014; and Rotta and Teixeira, 2016), than a complete independence from capital valorisation. That is why the expansion and development of financial securities since the 1970s have been accompanied by profound changes in the relationship between labour and capital seen in the production process and sector organisation (see Lazonick & O'Sullivan, 2000). I also argue that as titles of fictitious capital, the functionality of government bonds extrapolates the needs of state financing to either cover deficits or stimulate AD. Its functions are not mainly associated with bond-financed deficit expenditure and the fiscal stimulus, but rather more directly related to financial market liquidity, portfolio diversification, returns on real and financial investment, and price-setting of real and

fictitious securities in general. Government bonds are at the heart of Marx's theory of money and the credit system.

Anders Sevelsted and Troels Krarup

THE DEPLORABLE AND THE RESPECTABLE: ECONOMIC IDEAS IN DANISH SOCIAL POLICY 1891-1933

Scientific paradigms such as Malthusianism, eugenics, and social economics indicate different ways of thinking economically about social policy. Each paradigm is embedded in a comprehensive set of ideas about the role and purpose of social policy in society. In this paper, the authors analyze the relationship between religious, cultural, and economic ideas in Danish social policy from 1891 till 1933. Building on the concepts of moral elites and theological economy, the analysis is conducted by analyzing writings by two prominent figures in the early and the later part of the period: Statistics Professor and Christian socialist Harald Westergaard (1853-1936) and Social Democratic Minister of Social Affairs K. K. Steincke (1880-1963). At first glance, the two could not be more different: One a protagonist of Christian voluntary social work, the other the architect of the emerging welfare state and a harsh critic of philanthropy. However, a closer look reveals striking similarities as well: Westergaard spearheaded economic thinking in social policy and co-founded the Anthropological committee which would be key in the eugenic program in social policy that Steincke adhered to – a program that aimed to eliminate the non-productive individuals by limiting reproductive rights. Moreover, the two had overlapping Christian worldviews that influenced their position on the role of the family and the role of philanthropy in social policy. Most importantly, the two exhibit similarities in respect to the envisioned aim of social policy: Not merely survival, but spiritual growth. The paper ends with a discussion of the relationship between economic ideas and cultural ideals in the present.

Anette Svane

ART AND CONTEMPORARY SCANDINAVIAN CAPITALISM

We live in a post-theoretical, post-critical time, claims Horea Poenar (2018), where art has lost "its ability of resistance" and become banal or mere effect. Under the pervasive power of what Mark Fisher (2009) famously deemed capitalist realism, cultural products can perform anti-capitalism for us in ways that only serve to reinforce capitalist structures. Stefanie Baumann (2021) points to how

standardization of cultural expressions shape and perpetually endorse perceptual habits under modern capitalism. Given these perspectives, the question becomes whether, and how, we can talk about art and resistance under contemporary conditions. With this paper I will explore certain aspects of what this means for art under contemporary Scandinavian capitalism. Engaging with some recent examples of Scandinavian television shows and film, I will point to how they play with and against contemporary capitalism, specifically at the level of form. I will pay particular attention to the way that these moving images relate to the specificity of Scandinavian 'culture' and politics, arguing that there are (formal) cracks to be found despite the increasing dominance of market ideology. My contention is that these cracks may guide us on the way to a system beyond capitalism, but this is dependent on rethinking what it means for art to resist.

Benjamin Ask Popp-Madsen

THE THEORY OF THE FIRM AND THE SPECTRE OF MARX

The 'theory of the firm' designates a number of economic and managerial theories that emerged in the beginning of the 20th century and was later fully developed by the Chicago School of economy in the post-war decades. For its practitioners, the theory of the firm explain the nature, structure, and behaviour of modern corporations in technical, economic, and non-political terms. The intellectual groundwork for the theory of the firm is developed by the economists Frank Knight and Ronald Coase in the 1920s and 1930s. Although both ardent free market liberals and early members of the Mont Pelerin Society, Knight and Coase recognize that the laissez-faire account of capitalism inherited from 19th century liberals fails to understand the relations of hierarchy, authority, command, and obedience which do exist within the modern business corporation. In fact, for Knight and Coase, the business corporation is only an effective organizational form of coordination vis-à-vis the markets' price mechanism due to its internal relations of hierarchy and authority. Drawing on Marx' insights on the difference between 'free' market exchange and exploitative production as well as on Elizabeth Anderson's notion of corporations as 'private governments', the paper reconstructs these early 20th century theories of firm, and explores how the discipline of economics seek to depoliticize and legitimize workplace domination and authoritarian relations of power within the economy.

Bjarke Skærlund Risager & Søren Christensen

RECLAIMING THE URBAN HOUSING COMMON: "COMMON RESISTANCE" AGAINST DENMARK'S "GHETTO LAW"

Located between state and market, and governed by resident democracy, Danish non-profit 'common housing' (almene boliger) has traditionally lived up to its 'common' name as a self-organized and decommodified good. Recent decades have, however, seen increasing efforts to enclose this common through neoliberal marketization and political control culminating with the 2018 'Ghetto Law'. The latter compelled housing associations to significantly reduce non-profit housing in areas stigmatized as 'hard ghettos', primarily via development and marketization of housing and land. To make the implementation of this legislation more efficient, the legislation stripped democratic power from the local resident boards. Conceived within the theoretical-political framework of the urban common, Denmark's 'Ghetto Law' demonstrates that the latter is an ongoing conflictual practice subject to both state regulation and capital accumulation. Further, as this practice concerns the common both as resource, institution, and community, the legislation also demonstrates that enclosure not only involves 'common housing' stock but also its democratic self-governance and resident community. Against this backdrop of enclosure, the main focus of this paper is how the 'Ghetto Law' has also spurred residents at risk of displacement and enclosure to reclaim their housing common. Focusing on the activities of the grassroots resident network Almen Modstand (Common Resistance), this paper will map the network's practices of resistance and reclamation. We understand this reclamation of the housing common, like its enclosure, to concern not just a material resource: reclaiming common housing might also involve revitalizing common resident democracy and community.

Carl Wilén

WHY PASHUKANIS WAS RIGHT: ABSTRACTION AND FORM IN THE GENERAL THEORY OF LAW AND MARXISM

The area of Marxism and law has long been considered marginalised. However, hand in hand with the renaissance of Marxist theory in recent decades, neglect has finally been put to rest. As Marxists increasingly explore the connections between rights, law, democracy and capitalism, one text in particular has taken centre stage: *The General Theory of Law and Marxism*, published by E. B. Pashukanis in 1924. This paper seeks to make three contributions to the field of Marxism

and law. First, by proposing that Pashukanis's polemic is best understood as a critique of a spectrum between formalism and instrumentalism, containing both differences and similarities, it rectifies the way in which these concepts most often either have been discussed at a too general level or been defined too narrowly. Second, by addressing the status of the concepts of abstraction and form in Pashukanis, it reconstructs the concept of the legal form according to the spirit of his thought to supersede the limits of the formalism-instrumentalism spectrum, despite the unevenness found in the letter of his text. Third, with respect to the reconstruction of the concept of the legal form, it demonstrates how objections against Pashukanis's focus on the sphere of circulation at the cost of production, his exclusion of inequalities of race and gender, his failure to recognise the emancipatory potential of law, and his structuralist, consequentialist or instrumentalist biases, which reduces the space for agency, processes and the relative autonomy of politics, ideology and law, can be neutralised

Christoph Houman Ellersgaard

A TYPOLOGY OF ELITES AND CLASSES

Recent years have seen a proliferation in the studies of elites. From being 'forgotten by the social sciences' (Savage and Williams 2008) a decade and a half ago, elites have become a key topic in contemporary social sciences. However, the concept is used without much empirical clarification. Indeed some claim that 'the word elite is probably one of the most misused words in the sociological lexicon' (Scott 2003, 155). In particular the relationship between studies of elites and classes remain undertheorized. This pertains both to the relationship between elites and dominated classes and the relationship between various elite groups and concepts such as 'the ruling class' or 'hegemonic blocs'. In this paper, I propose some conceptual clarifications to distinguish between elites and classes in ways which allow us to discuss how the concept of elite may help us understand class agency or lack thereof. Based on the frameworks of Mills and Bourdieu, I suggest avenues to understand how the social organisation of elites can help us understand how class relations unfold in contemporary societies. Lastly, I provide illustrations of particular elite constellations which enables or disrupts class action both within the capitalist class and the working class. These serve to illustrate that the social organisation of elites must be understood when understanding the relationship between the national and international

and the extent to which the political power of capital is able to cross borders.

Daniel Badenhorst

"... A VERY GOOD WAY OF SEPARATING THE SHEEP FROM THE GOATS": THE NATIONAL QUESTION BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE COMINTERN

Frantz Fanon wrote that, 'It is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows'. This deliciously dialectical dictum is emblematic of Fanon's thoughts about the primacy of the national liberation struggles in colonial countries and his decidedly 'unorthodox' approach to the Marxist analysis race, nation, and class. For many, Fanon's journalism, speeches, and books have become veritable treasure troves of 'correctives' to the Marxist account of the colonial situation. Yet, more often than not, those that turn to Fanon's work to stretch, supplement or scold Marxism neither situate Fanon in his historical context nor do they bother to assess the legacy of Marxist thinking about the national or colonial questions in the African context. By focusing on the case of South African Marxism, this paper will document the way that Marxists in the mid-20th century dealt with the national and colonial questions. More specifically, it will use the case of South Africa to explore the complex and mutually determinative theoretical–practical relationship between international and national communist groups. It will be seen that not only was Fanon's thinking about the colonial question reflective of African and international trends but that his positions were almost entirely accepted in some way or other by prominent communist organisations. In fact, the Comintern chastised the Parti communiste français for the line it took on Algeria, which demonstrates that while French communists may have needed schooling on the national and colonial questions, this was far from true in the international context.

Erik Hansson

THE BEGGING QUESTION: SWEDEN'S SOCIAL RESPONSES TO THE ROMA DESTITUTE

Begging, thought to be an inherently un-Swedish phenomenon, became a national fixture in the 2010s as homeless Romanian and Bulgarian Roma EU citizens arrived in Sweden seeking economic opportunity. People without shelter were forced to use public spaces as their private space, disturbing aesthetic and normative orders, creating

anxiety among Swedish subjects and resulting in hate crimes and everyday racism. Parallel with Europe's refugee crisis in the 2010s, the "begging question" peaked. The presence of the media's so-called EU migrants caused a crisis in Swedish society along political, juridical, moral, and social lines due to the contradiction embodied in the Swedish authorities' denial of social support to them while simultaneously seeking to maintain the nation's image as promoting welfare, equality, and antiracism. In The Begging Question Erik Hansson argues that the material configurations of capitalism and class society are not only racialized but also unconsciously invested with collective anxieties and desires. By focusing on Swedish society's response to the begging question, Hansson provides insight into the dialectics of racism. He shrewdly deploys Marxian economics and Lacanian psychoanalysis to explain how it became possible to do what once was thought impossible: criminalize begging and make fascism politically mainstream, in Sweden. What Hansson reveals is not just an insight into one of the most captivating countries on earth but also a timely glimpse into what it means to be human.

Eskil Halberg

AF MED HOVEDAFTALEN: DEINDUSTRIALISERING OG ATOMISERING AF DET DANSKE ARBEJDSMARKED

Den såkaldte "danske model" blev til i en voldsom hungerkrig iværksat af primært københavnske arbejdsgiverne. Den danske model er historisk i bedste fald et kompromis mellem arbejderbevægelsen og kapitalen. I oplægget vil jeg argumentere for, at den danske model har udspillet sin historiske rolle som middel til sociale fremskridt for lønmodtagerne. Det skyldes først og fremmest deindustrialiseringen af det danske arbejdsmarked, der har ført til atomisering, fleksibilisering og individualisering af arbejdsmarkedet som følge af afviklingen af de store industriarbejdspladser fra første halvdel af det 20. århundrede. Opsugningen af arbejdskraft sker først og fremmest i servicesektoren og den offentlige sektor, hvor den danske model ikke giver lønmodtagere nær den samme forhandlingsmagt. Dette af teknologiske og økonomiske årsager. Dette har ført til demobilisering (faldende medlemstal i FH). Sideløbende har fagbevægelsen omorganiseret sig til i stigende grad at lave interessevaretagelse i form af lobbyisme i stedet for at udvikle nye kampstrategier på arbejdspladser og i sociale bevægelser. En strategi der viste sig at fejle ved afviklingen af Store Bededag i 2023. Fagbevægelsens krise er derfor ikke i første omgang en politisk-idémæssig krise, som handler om

manglende evne til at bygge identitetsmæssig tilknytning til arbejderbevægelsen. Det er et langt mere omfattende strukturelt problem, der udgår fra den politisk-økonomiske udvikling i den vestlige verden. Kort sagt er den danske fagbevægelse fucked på et dybere plan end blot deres manglende evne til at "forklare lønmodtagerne," hvorfor det er vigtigt at være fagligt organiseret.

Georganna Ulary

ECOLOGICAL MARXISM AS A NEW FORM OF INTERNATIONALISM

Revolutionary theory and praxis aimed at social transformation has always been hampered by the conflict between local and national struggles (with their particular concrete demands & tensions), and international struggles. To critically address these tensions, a new foundation of internationalism is needed, a foundation with the potential to unite and motivate not just "workers around the world," but all world citizens. Traditionally, proletarian internationalism coalesced around the project of worker solidarity forged within the hidden abode of production – on the factory floor, in the trade union movements, in the fields of farmworkers, etc. This conventional foundation for international class struggle, while still valuable, remains ineffectual today for several reasons. As theoretically appealing as it is, materially, it comes up short as a transformative agent. This paper examines a new foundation of internationalism (of international solidarity and praxis) which has the potential to overcome the barriers of the traditional form. Generally, I suggest that ecological Marxism offers a promising new theoretical foundation for internationalism; more specifically, I critically evaluate the "environmental proletariat" (a term coined by John Bellamy Foster) as the most promising contemporary agent for revolutionary praxis. First, I diagnose some of the most salient limitations of the conventional form of internationalism. Next, I give reasons for why ecological Marxism (with its emphasis on the metabolic relation between humans and nature) serves as a promising new ground for internationalism. Finally, I critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the environmental proletariat to act as the new agent for international struggles.

Gianmaria Brunazzi

WOMEN AND MIGRANTS IN THE ITALIAN LABOR MARKET: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EXPLOITATIVE DYNAMICS IN THE REPRODUCTIVE SPHERE

This paper examines the relationship between class, gender, and racial oppression within the Italian labor market, using it as a case study to explore some theoretical implications in Marxist theory. Specifically, it investigates the correlation between Italian women's emancipation, starting by the early 1980s, and the massive absorption of poor migrant women, into the Italian care system. During the rise of neoliberalism, which prompted the definitive inclusion of women in the productive system, the Italian welfare system – despite feminist struggles, and because of deeply rooted cultural factors – was deeply inadequate to meet families' needs. Women from poor countries, in this context, due to their vulnerability stemming from economic, gender and racial factors, were drawn as the ideal substitutes for Italian women in the realm of care work. The capitalist expansion of the eighties, in Italy, were made possible by innovative forms of mixed exploitation and a peculiar resurgence of domestic work – which was no longer solely associated with high social status, but extended to broader segments of the population, particularly in large cities. While many Marxists argue that "in the abstract, capitalism does not require racialized and gendered forms of exploitation" (Wood, 2015, p.276) due to the hierarchical primacy that they attribute to capital-centric rules of value-extraction, concrete historical experiences reveal that dominant classes constantly (not exceptionally) recur to pre-capitalist forms of extraction to relaunch capitalist accumulation. Our case study, from this perspective, enables us to develop broad-spectrum reflections on a never solved fracture in Marxism between history and theory: between the primacy of class struggle and that of capitalist economic laws of motion.

Jacob Blumenfeld

WHAT WAS SOCIALIZATION?

In this talk, I will attempt to lay out the background of this "socialization debate" after the German Revolution, with the goal of disentangling the variety of proposals for economic transformation, reform, and revolution contained within this single, overdetermined concept. The demand for socialization—of property, the economy, the workplace, the family, the state—surged from below and came from above, with very different connotations. In my talk, I will thus

focus on one of the first texts to systematize the various ideas of socialization called Sozialisierung: Versuch einer begrifflichen Grundlegung nebst einer Kritik der Sozialisierungspläne (1921), by Felix Weil, who founded the Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt two years later. Alongside this text, I will discuss works on socialization by Karl Korsch, Eduard Bernstein, Karl Kautsky, Otto Neurath, Walther Rathenau, Rudolf Hilferding, and Otto Bauer. One argument I will make is that socialization was a strategically ambiguous term, which allowed even its opponents to claim it and redefine it in their interests.

James Rushing Daniel

PETER THIEL'S FROM ZERO TO ONE AND THE END OF NEOLIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM

In 2014, PayPal founder Peter Thiel (with venture capitalist Blake Masters) published *From Zero to One: Notes on Startups, or How to Build the Future*, a bestseller that is considered by some to be one of the most noteworthy texts on contemporary entrepreneurship (Thompson). Beyond offering a lengthy explanation of a metaphor for successful innovation, *From Zero to One* marks a pivotal moment in the rhetoric of the technology industry, and in the narrative contemporary capitalism more broadly, in which "progressive neoliberalism" (Fraser) began to shift toward what Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval call "the new neoliberalism," an explicitly reactionary model of capitalism dominant today. This paper will analyze how *From Zero to One*, posing as guide to innovation in the technology sector, formulated a comprehensive rejection of the cosmopolitan capitalism of the early 2000s that presaged not only the rise of Trumpism but the conservative shift (Burmila) of the American Democratic Left as well. Looking to the Thiel's dismissal of "neoliberal internationalism" (Amin), his disparagement of globalization as "horizontal progress," and his embrace of monopoly capital (Baran and Sweezy), this paper will illustrate how the text articulates a model of capitalist innovation in open conflict with the heretofore globalist (Slobodian) sensibilities of neoliberalism. The paper will additionally historicize the text in the broader narrative of global capitalism's cultural shift led by what Wolfgang Streeck calls "the new protectionists," typified today by such figures as Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy.

Jeannette Søgaard

SEXUALITY, SOLIDARITY, AND STRATEGY: HOW CAPITALISM HAS SHAPED INTIMATE RELATIONS GLOBALLY AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF PROGRESSIVE FORMS OF RELATING

Many will argue that we have gained the most gender and sexual minority rights and sexual liberation under the capitalist mode of production and that our current system provides the best conditions for expressing free authentic sexualities and intimate ways of relating. I will show with Kimberly Tallbear how capitalism and sexuality historically have been interconnected e.g., how oppressive colonialist sexual legislation on monogamy and marriage has been a tool in primary accumulation strategies accelerating the global expansion of capitalism. In line with the Marxist feminist's social reproduction framework, I also argue that sexual coercion is not only the kind of oppression that occur from sexual and gender-based violence and legislation against minorities, but also coercion that comes from capitalism's need for stabile forms to reproduce labour power. Lastly, I will touch upon the possibilities of progressive forms of intimate relating. Is there any progressive political potential at all in experimenting with alternative forms of intimate relating?

Johannes Lundberg

HOW MEMBER-BASED DEMOCRACY HELPED INTEGRATE CLIMATE CONCERNS IN INVESTMENT POLICIES: THE CASE OF AKADEMIKERPENSION'S WIDE-RANGING DIVESTMENT DECISION

Within the last decade, researchers have increasingly discussed the growing role of investors in the climate crisis and the effects of divestment, yet we know little about the exact dynamics and governance structures that shape divestment decisions of institutional investors. Thus, in this presentation, I examine the process of institutional change in AkademikerPension, a democratically governed Danish pension fund. I focus specifically on their process from flatly dismissing proposals to divest (i.e., excluding investments in coal, oil, and gas) in 2014 to becom one of the most climate-progressive global institutional investors by 2022. Through an original analysis of qualitative data, including general assembly minutes, annual and sustainability reports, media coverage, and interviews with board members, administrators, and pension members, I identify the factors that drove AkademikerPension's significant investment strategy

shift. Particularly, I highlight the role of the following four factors: the formalized democratic channels for members' various considerations to be taken into account; the administration's internal financial analyses; board and administration replacements; and the insistent pressure from NGOs, media, and member networks. This investigation contributes to ongoing debates in political economy, particularly with respect to the possibilities of establishing democratic member-based alternatives within financial institutions. By focusing on the institutional transformation process of the divestment decision, this study sheds light on how changes in climate-related investment policies can occur. Furthermore, the case indicates the possibility of supplementing quantitative goals with qualitative criteria and considerations in financial decision-making processes.

Karen Helveg Petersen

IMPERIALISM AND THE MILITARIZATION OF AFRICA

Africa is, increasingly, host to multiple interventions by major powers. The US, EU (France), China, Russia, UK, India and Arab states compete for influence through investment and aid, market access and the offer of lenient borrowing terms. In addition, military cooperation, augmented by covert operations, is on the rise. The present militarization of Africa is articulated through both old-fashioned and new-fangled imperialism but also takes the shape of an expansion of domestic African military forces that have played a strong political role throughout the post-colonial era. The elements of analysis are, 1. Protection of 'imperial' interests in mining and major investment projects, 2. Outside interference in internal conflicts, 3. Military assistance and bases, 4. Private armies hired by corporate interests or local governments, 5. Sale of military equipment/preferred suppliers, 6. African countries as allied partners, 7. Support to African peace-making efforts, 8. African rearmament by own means. The paper tallies military resource deployment by the different parties. Does enhanced domestic military spending impair countries' social and development efforts? The face-off between Western and other external powers reflects the renewed recognition of Africa's economic and strategic importance. Although African countries are taking on their own cause, they are hampered in reclaiming full autonomy by the perpetuation of their heavy debt burden as a result of dependency on major powers and institutions such as the World Bank for technology/capital equipment and major infrastructure investments. This calls for a new determination of 'imperialism' as a

conflictual and contradictory struggle about power and self-determination.

Ksenia Arapko
THE INTERNATIONALISM OF THE COMMUNIST WOMEN'S MOVEMENT
The Communist Women's Movement (CWM) was founded as a section of the Communist International in 1921. Functioning with a high degree of autonomy, the CWM sought to advance the struggle of communism among women on an international scale. Few discussions have been had about the historical role of the movement. What little has been examined about the CWM has, somewhat expectedly, focused specifically on the question of women and women's liberation. The communist women leaders spearheading the efforts of CWM, however, contributed significantly to the theoretical developments and practical struggles of socialist internationalism. The movement directed efforts at home and aboard through its interventions in parties, journals, conferences, and resolutions in the Comintern world congresses. In looking at the formation and early days of the movement, this paper will begin to unearth the contributions of communist women to the struggle for internationalism which to this day have been severely neglected.

Lotte Schack
ROOTS OR BRANCHES OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS
The climate movement is frequently charged with being depoliticized, both by academics and activists from other movements. This often concerns movement groups' reluctancy to placing themselves on the political spectrum and defining clear adversaries and allies. In this paper I however criticize this conception of depoliticization. Here, I argue, politicization is understood in an essentially liberal manner and presented in oversimplified terms, missing important points of contention. To illustrate this, I trace a conflict in a local Swedish branch of Fridays for Future (FFF), drawing on ethnographic fieldwork. Some activists wanted to keep strictly to the climate issue, arguing against cooperating with groups not concerned with the climate. Others wanted to work 'intersectionally', highlighting connections with other unjust systems such as capitalism and colonialism through cooperation with other groups. While this could be interpreted as a conflict between politicizing and depoliticizing tendencies, such a reading neglects important aspects. Through

an alternative reading, I compare the conflict to the debate within Marxist feminism about the connection between gender oppression and capitalism. The described conflict could be understood in analogous terms, namely as concerning the relationships between the climate crisis and other injustices. While all the activists agreed that such relationships existed, the point of contention was rather how they were related: in the words of one activist, what are the roots and what are the branches? I argue that these kinds of conflicts, rather than risking depoliticizing the movement, should instead be seen as a hotbed for further movement analysis and strategizing.

Luis Cortés

AUTONOMY THROUGH NATIONAL INDUSTRIALIZATION AS THE FORM OF INTERNATIONAL SURPLUS TRANSFER TO INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF VW DO BRASIL

Industrialization is seen as the key to allow "Global South" countries to attain autonomy in an international system that keeps them in an underdeveloped and subordinate position. From these approaches, the national sphere in these countries would be restricted by their dependency towards core imperialist countries, and its expansion would imply less value transferred toward these economies. In contrast with the above, this presentation will argue that in principle capital accumulation is international, although it appears concretely in national forms. Thus, the national sphere never exists in isolation: its underlying content is always international. This means that developmentalist strategies are not forms of breaking with the international, but the political expression of it. This will be shown in the analysis of a subsidiary company that operates in apparent isolation from its HQ: VW do Brasil, a subsidiary of Volkswagen. In particular, the implementation of modularization from 1995 onwards is presented as a recuperation of profitability through investment and innovation as a consequence of the relative autonomy of the subsidiary. However, seen from an international perspective, the investment in Brazil is the liquidation of obsolete capital from broke companies liquidated during a global concentration process of the automobile industry. Brazil's subsidiary can operate under the average productivity through subsidies sustained by the extraordinary ground rent from natural resources. Thus, industrialization in rentist countries uncovers a transfer of surplus value from a country whose specificity is the production of commodities that bear ground-rent towards a major industrialized European economy.

Magnus Møller Ziegler

CANNIBALS AND ANIMALS OF CAPITAL: ON DEHUMANISATION AND THE CAPITALIST GROTESQUE

In the final pages of *Capital* volume one, Marx likens exploitation to cannibalism. There is, he says, nothing that prevents one person from offloading their necessary work on another, just as there is nothing preventing one person from eating another. Following David McNally, I argue that this simile is not simply literary hyperbole but rather what McNally calls a 'literal metaphor' potent with theoretical meaning and implications. In this paper, I argue that Marx's Gothic metaphor of the cannibal – along with the vampire, the ghost, and the werewolf – should be read in light of his commitment to seeking out the grotesqueness of capitalism, i.e., capital's normalisation of monstrosity in the form of a colonisation of our corporeal being and experience of everyday life. Further, I argue that this emphasis on the grotesque can be traced back to Marx's intellectual partnership with Friedrich Engels and Moses Hess in the mid-1840's, and that his continued commitment to this theoretically laden metaphorical language also suggests a continued commitment to a theory of the ontological dehumanisation of workers under capitalism: It is not just that workers are treated inhumanely; under the capitalist grotesque, they cease, in an ontologically meaningful sense, to be human altogether.

Martin Hauberg-Lund Laugesen

CAPITALOCENE DIDACTICS: ON THE REVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL OF SCHOOLS

Since the great education reforms in the 19th century, school systems have been used throughout the world for nation building purposes. Formalized schooling has been mobilized as a powerful means for nationalistic ends. However, since the rise of environmental education and, now, education for sustainable development, school systems have begun to reorient themselves to transnational problems such as the climate and biodiversity crises. Hence, 'the environment' now appears as the new international horizon for strategic interventions with a view to disrupting the radically unsustainable system that has produced the abyssal predicaments of the Capitalocene. In my presentation, I will share didactic reflections on how schools can serve as local sites of disruption. Disruption, that is, of the growth ideology of capitalist realism as it has been politically managed and propagated by the OECD countries. I will also present 1-2 empirical

cases from an ethnographic fieldwork illustrating how such disruption might look like in practice and how it can meaningfully contribute to children's learning and development. Unavoidably, schools are ideological battlegrounds. The question remains: Are we, as educators, aware of and explicit about the ideological assumptions we carry into our teaching? Or are we, by way of subtle means, implicitly persuading our students into accepting a certain view of the world – be it for or against the current system of ecological destruction? I will present capitalocene didactics as the name for an historically urgent reconfiguration of how the climate and biodiversity crises and sustainable development are taught in schools.

Mathias Hein Jessen

THE SEPARATION OF STATE AND CORPORATION IN CAPITALISM

This paper is concerned with a particular subset of the separation between the political and the economic central to the legitimation of capitalism, namely that between state and corporation. The separation of state and corporation is a central feature allowing the rise and spread of corporate power – both historically and actually – because it fundamentally misrecognizes the political constitution of the corporation, the centrality of corporations in governing social life, and shields both states and corporations from liability and accountability. The separation of state and corporation is central to the dominant corporate governance paradigm and practice of shareholder value maximization conceiving the corporation as a nexus of contracts among market individuals. However, the separation is also perpetuated by critics of corporate power who reify the state as the seat of politics and democracy and the corporation as an economic market actor, reproducing the ideological separations between the political and the economic, state and society, and public and private. The paper traces the separation of state and corporation in three historical periods: 1) the corporation as a body subject to the state in the early modern period; 2) as a rights-bearing person in 19th century Anglo-American corporate law; and 3) as a nexus of contracts or bundle of assets owned by shareholders, reducing the corporation to individual market transactions. In all three instances, the corporation is emptied of social and political content, origin and authority by conceiving it analogously to a body, person or individual.

Morten Ougaard

THE VIKING SOCIAL FORMATION IN A WORLD SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

The paper is a contribution to historical materialist theorizing of the Viking age, based on extant historical scholarship, i.e., no new evidence. Using Samir Amin's notion of a 'family of tributary formations' I suggest that the Viking formation belongs to the subtype of tributary trading formations. A defining feature of this subtype is that a significant part of wealth is derived from control over long-distance trade rather than surplus extracted from the local area. Moving up to the world-systems perspective inspired by Abu-Lughod, I argue that the rise of Viking society was enabled by its location at the intersection between the two major long-distance trade routes in Northern Europe. One route going North-South from Northern Norway via the Danish straits down to North-Western Europe and even further; the other route going East -West from The Caspian and Black Seas and beyond, through Russian rivers and overland to the Baltic and Danish waters, and from there to Northwestern Europe. Finally, I note the temporal correlation between the Viking expansion and the expansion of Islam in the Mediterranean. I suggest that Arab dominance if not control over this major southern trade route between Western Europe and the near and far orient made the alternative Northern route more attractive to Western Europe. In short, the Arab world created one of the preconditions for the Viking expansion.

Nanna Dahler

MOVING CHILDREN, MOVING COSTS: THE GEOGRAPHY OF FORCED ADOPTIONS IN THE DANISH WELFARE STATE

Forced adoptions – adoption of children without consent from their birth parents – have become a more common child welfare intervention in Danish municipalities. With reforms to adoption law in 2016 and 2021, the government has pushed for an increased use of pre-emptive adoptions as an alternative to long term foster care, arguing that adoptions provide more stability and continuity for vulnerable children. With the latest reform to the field – expected to be implemented in 2024 – it becomes possible for municipalities to complete an adoption before the birth of the child. The 98 municipalities in Denmark use forced adoptions to a wildly varying extent; in 2020 for example, half of all forced adoption cases came from two – rural and poor – municipalities. While foster care placements place children within the municipality, forced adoptions put children up

for adoption to a national list of adoptive parents, most often moving them to other regions. Building on an ongoing ethnographic study of forced adoption in Danish municipalities, this paper explores the uneven geographies of forced adoption. Forced adoptions move the responsibility for some children from the public realm into the privatized system of social reproduction that is the family institution. Furthermore, they also move children, and municipal costs to child welfare, from some regions to others – largely from poor to rich regions. This paper draws on geographical approaches to social reproduction and feminist family-abolition perspectives to explore the ways in which municipal economy and welfare state retrenchment inform forced adoption politics.

Niklas Zenius Jespersen

MARKEDSMEKANISMER ELLER PLANLÆGNING? INSTITUTIONELLE KONFLIKTER INDENFOR DEN DANSKE SUNDHEDSSEKTOR UNDER DEN NEOLIBERALE VENDING

Under indtryk af den neoliberale bølge, der prægede Vesteuropa fra 1970'erne og frem, kom offentlige institutioner under et voksende pres for at reducere udgifter og gennemføre reformer langs markedsøkonomiske principper. De følgende årtier så vi introduktionen af konkurrencemekanismer, privatisering, kommercialisering og konstruktionen af et marked for velfærdsydelser inden for den offentlige sektor. Denne neoliberale vending fik også fat i Danmark, men påvirkede ikke alle offentlige institutioner ligeligt. Indtil da havde den offentlige sundhedssektor i Danmark fået lov til at vokse hurtigt, uden at det havde medført kontroverser eller politiske indgreb. Men fra 1970'erne og frem søgte skiftende regeringer at begrænse de offentlige udgifter gennem indførslen af markedsmekanismer og konkurrence. Dette skete dog ikke uden modstand og udløste en konflikt inden for sektoren. Mens Sundhedsministeriet promoverede tiltagende neoliberale synspunkter i dets udgivelser, så promoverede den magtfulde og historisk set politisk uafhængige Sundhedsstyrelse en alternativ tilgang. Sundhedsstyrelsens udgivelser og politiske tiltag promoverede en tiltagende centraliseret og socialiseret offentlig planlægning, kombineret med en socioøkonomisk tænkning der advarede imod samfundskonsekvenserne af nedskæringer og samtidig forklarede, at der ikke fandtes neutrale valg, men at disse altid udsprang af interessekonflikter i samfundet. Ved at analysere udgivelser, rapporter og politiske anbefalinger fra disse to statsinstitutioner vil jeg vise de ideologiske konflikter, der brød ud mellem dem,

og stille spørgsmål til, hvad sådanne inter-institutionelle konflikter betyder for vores forståelse af staten og dens klasse- og ideologiske karakter.

Søren Bøgh Sørensen
PRODUCTIVE LABOR IN THE ERA OF DIGITAL CAPITALISM
In recent debates that cut across the fields of political theory, political economy, and critical media studies, Marxist theorists have argued over whether so-called immaterial labor such as that performed by users of digital media services like Facebook and Google's search engine can intelligibly be considered productive labor in the sense of being the source of surplus-value. Some commentators maintain that the immaterial labor performed by the users of digital social media cannot be considered productive labor as the affective networks that make social media valuable cannot be measured in terms of labor-time. Moreover, it is a contentious issue whether the profits realized by large digital media corporations are derived from the value-producing labor of the users or from the production-processes of the companies whose commodities are being advertised. This paper will explore this 'digital labor debate' to sketch out a suitable conceptualization of productive labor in the era of digital capitalism. Clarifying and possibly updating the concept of productive labor is important both because it can inform our understanding of the power of capital today and because an adequate theorization of this concept can bolster solidarity between all forms of exploited labor – material as well as immaterial – along the so-called 'international division of digital labor'.

Søren Mau
MARXISM AND THE BODY
Since the 1980's, critical scholars in the humanities and social sciences have confronted the tendency in Western intellectual culture to devalue or ignore the corporeal dimensions of human existence. This 'corporeal turn' has been dominated by non- or anti-Marxist theoretical traditions such as phenomenology, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis and new materialism, while Marxist perspectives have been perspicuously absent. In this talk, I will discuss what a Marxist contribution to the corporeal turn might look like, and pose the question of what insights a specifically Marxist approach to the body can produce, and how it differs from and relates to other approaches.

Tessa Barnow

THE EU TAXONOMY'S SUSTAINABLE CORPORATE SUBJECT: THE POLITICS IN FINANCIALISING SUSTAINABILITY IN ORDER TO FINANCE THE SUSTAINABLE TRANSITION

After adopting the EU Taxonomy in 2020, corporations were placed at the heart of the green transition and sustainable growth. It provides a universalised definition of sustainability, including technical criteria to corporations' economic activities, based on what it terms technically, economically, and scientifically feasible and necessary alternatives. In this paper, I analyse the taxonomy's categorisations of sustainable economic activities; examine how it rationalises corporations as subjects of a green transition; and ultimately illuminate how this apparently science-based, technical, and legislative sustainability tool is saturated with politics. I draw on Foucault's governmentality-approach to examine the EU Taxonomy framework as expressive and co-constitutive of a particular rationality of what, how and why to govern. Particularly, this paper focuses on how corporations are made subjects of sustainability; its assumptions, prioritisations and strategies for how to conduct the conduct of corporations. I argue that the taxonomy governs the green transition from the primary problematisation of an investment gap from which follows the need to mobilise private capital and necessitates returns on investments. This naturalises the need for 'green growth' and places corporations at the centre of enabling a green version of the business-as-usual capitalist, liberal, and efficient economic system. In this pursuit, particular knowledges, technologies and innovations are included at the expense of alternatives, as they fit the dual ambition of economic growth and reduced carbon footprints relative to the maintenance of production and consumption levels.

Tim Christiaens

PLATFORM COOPERATIVISM AND THE RENEWAL OF G.D.H. COLE'S GUILD SOCIALISM

In recent years, activists and academics have championed platform cooperativism as a political counterstrategy against the injustices common in the digital gig economy. Companies like Uber or Deliveroo treat their workers notoriously badly, and worker-owned cooperative platforms seem to provide a promising alternative. However, Marxists are often skeptical of this proposal. Based on the negative comments about cooperatives in the writings of Marx and Luxemburg, they argue that worker-owned cooperatives in capitalist

markets will be forced to imitate the exploitative practices of their capitalist rivals. Companies that refuse to adapt to the stringent demands of the profit motive will supposedly be outcompeted. In this paper, I will defend the politics of platform cooperativism by rekindling G.D.H. Cole's philosophy of guild socialism. Cole was a British economist and philosopher who switched between academia and the UK Labour Party throughout his life. In the early 20th century, Cole was suspicious of the centralized state-managed socialism of the Soviet-Union, and advised the Labour Party to fight for a sphere of production composed of workers' guilds. Platform cooperativism promises to construct similar guild-like institutions in the gig economy. In my paper, I argue that the Marxist doubts concerning worker-owned platforms underestimate the capacity of worker guilds to manage market competition.

Timor Landherr

THE TRANSIT FIX: BORDER EXTERNALISATION AND THE INTERPLAY OF CAPITAL AND RACE IN THE TRANSIT "MIGRATION" STATE

What happens after border externalization? States and regional organizations of the Global North increasingly engage in transnational migration management that seeks to prevent potential irregular migration beyond their own territory. Despite the impressive financial, political, and logistical resources the numerous involved actors mobilise to reach this goal, little is known about the effects of this strategy on their target states and populations. This paper conceptualizes border externalisation as a spatial intervention that absorbs contingent migrant flows into an intricate interplay of capital and race. Using historical-geographic materialist methodology, this paper argues that the immobilization and differential integration produced through externalization can serve as a spatial fix for acute labour shortages in so-called transit "migration" states. This differential integration disempowers the targeted migrant population and aggravates racial antagonisms. Hence, border externalisation is not just a (by-)product of racist ideology and policy, but also intensifies structural racial hierarchies in the space it intervenes into. Building on primary qualitative interview data, the paper studies this spatial intervention through the case of the "EU-Turkey Deal" and Turkey's differentially integrated Syrian refugee population. On a theoretical level, the paper thereby contributes to the recent trend that reinserts

the border into global processes of capital accumulation, imperialism, and racialized crisis management.

Troy Vettese

"EVERY COOK CAN PLAN": GOVERNING THE GLOBAL POLIS

The enduring problems of socialist theory – alienation, planning, the state, and democracy – must be addressed jointly to achieve their resolution. An enduring sense of alienation in a socialist society would lead to problems of motivation and information, which make efficient planning difficult, if not impossible. In turn, planning that requires an increase in state power risks a despotism of the party or its bureaucrats. The solution, however, are not merely small-scale Ostromian commons or market socialism as these schemes cannot tackle large-scale problems and likely will degenerate into capitalism. In this paper, I will sketch what a global, democratic, and planned economy could look like. I draw on the works of CLR James, Otto Neurath, Janos Kornai, and Ellen Meiksins Wood, as well as survey the history of planning in Kerala and China, as well as direct democracy in ancient Athens.

Ulrika Winter

EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTALISM: PURPOSE, PLEASURE AND POLITICS IN A CATASTROPHIC TIME

As climate catastrophes are increasingly entering the present even in the Global North, environmental movements are shifting from narratives of avoiding catastrophe to handling ongoing ones. One expression of this is what I call "emergency environmentalism," most clearly represented by Extinction Rebellion's (XR) declaration of "climate emergency." However, mobilizing for collective action in an emergency is not without contradictions. Drawing on 10 interviews with Swedish XR and A22 activists, I explore their motivations in order to outline the potentials and pitfalls of a necessary 'politics of catastrophe'. I show that fear experienced in relation to environmental disasters can dispose people to take collective action and that pleasurable emotions resulting from protest keep activists going despite bleak outlooks and low chance of success. However, the limited time slot for action implied in the emergency narrative raises in some activists the sensitive question of when it is time to give up. Through the case of emergency environmentalism, I argue that attention to emotions can provide a path for a viable politics of catastrophe, and

that a stronger emphasis on class struggle provides a purpose for continuing the fight regardless of whether it is "too late."

William Westgard-Cruice

THE TRANSNATIONALIZATION OF THE WIND ENERGY SECTOR AND THE INTERNATIONAL FRAGMENTATION OF THE WORKING CLASS

The structural power of the working class to effectively confront employers' associations and capitalist states at wider geographical scales has been strongly shaped by workers' capacities to establish control over the production and circulation of energy. This capacity is conditioned in large part by the geographies of energy production networks (Mitchell, 2011; Malm, 2016). The rapid growth of renewable energy industries thus poses new challenges for the organized working class. Although each renewable energy technology is materially and geographically distinct, there are some challenges that are common across the wind and solar sectors. The first is that the manufacturing process of renewable energy equipment is highly fragmented across international borders. The second is that the workers who design and manufacture the main components of wind and solar power plants are often spatially separated from those workers who install, operate, and maintain renewable energy systems (Franquesa, 2022). Our analysis of the offshore wind energy sector serves to illuminate these issues. For any given offshore wind farm, the wind turbine generators, blades, foundations, cables, substations, and other major components are produced in different sites by workers pitted against one another in a distinct form of "multi-scalar competitive fragmentation" (Hürtgen, 2021). In addition, the offshore wind energy sector is inheriting techniques of labor control from the offshore oil and gas and maritime transport industries, namely the use of Flag of Convenience (FOC) vessels and the segmentation of the global maritime workforce along lines of nationality, language, gender, and "race" (Campling & Colas, 2021).

Yannis Bougiatiotis

MEANS OF CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT: A MARXIST POLITICAL ECONOMY CRITIQUE OF THE TRADE REGIME DEBATE

The question of free trade versus protectionism has long been the apple of discord between different schools of economic thought. The development of the free trade doctrine from classical political

economy to neoclassical theory under neoliberalism progressed an array of arguments against protectionism and in favor of unrestricted international competition. On the other pole, originating predominately from underdeveloped economies, "early" and "late" antagonizers created a long legacy of protectionism that rejected the optimistic prescriptions of free trade and advocated instead for the necessity of protectionism for national development. Despite the differences between "free traders" and "protectionists" regarding the particular means, both sides have confined their positions to the narrow limits of capitalist development. Building upon that premise this paper provides a Marxist political economy critique of the debate by interrogating the class-biased implications of both free trade and protectionism. By extension, the critique of the existing debate invites further steps in reimagining development alternatives that are not necessarily confined to capitalism.

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2024

CLASS AND ITS DIS/CONTENTS

NINTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE DANISH SOCIETY FOR MARXIST STUDIES

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

University of Copenhagen, Denmark
4-5 October 2024

OPEN CALL

While we particularly encourage engagements with the theme of "Class and Its Dis/Contents" for this year's conference, we also welcome papers on any number of topics that contribute to critical research and thereby to enriching the Marxist tradition by expanding its range of interlocutors.

* * *

The last half of the twentieth century saw the traditional industrial working class in the West decompose and its institutions suffer a series of decisive defeats. This has left a growing number of "surplus populations" exposed to the naked imperatives of neoliberalism and increasingly militarised policing of intersecting hierarchies of class, race, gender, and colonialism.

These developments have shattered traditional ideas of the working class as the unified subject of history, but it has not necessarily changed its contents. Marx already identified the proletariat as a (non-)class defined solely by its lack of access to the means of reproducing its existence independently and whose emancipation could therefore only be realised through its self-abolition. Moreover, subsequent dissidents in the workers' movement have long emphasised the interlocking contradictions of racialization, sexism, and colonialism that underpin and structure classical conceptions of the

working class in an effort to overcome them. Such contradictions have increasingly come to the fore in recent struggles against capitalist forms of exploitation, oppression, appropriation, exclusion, incarceration, and extermination across the globe.

So where are we now? What happens to Marxist theories of class when we take such interlocking contradictions seriously? For this conference, we encourage contributions that critically engage with the intersections and interactions of class and other forms of classification. Our ambition is to bring about an undogmatic meditation on the concept of "class" and its limits, its theoretical underpinnings across historically and geographically shifting political and economic realities, and its practical — that is to say, political — consequences. Topics of interest might include, but are not limited to:

- How have global production chains and processes of de/-industrialization affected the technical and political composition of class across the globe?
- How does class intersect and interact with other social classifications such as race, gender, sex, and dis-/ability? When and where do they reinforce or challenge one another and how can this be exploited?
- How have different social groups historically constituted themselves as classes through aesthetic expression, and how do they continue to do so?
- How have class and its various contradictions been thought and mobilised politically throughout history?
- What conception of class might be relevant for contemporary anti-capitalist struggles and movements?
- How have attempts to construct and mobilise alternative political subjects ('the people', 'the multitude', etc.) fared as the basis of anti-capitalist politics?
- What is the relationship between domestic class structures and the global division of labour and what are the implications for local and internationalist struggles?
- How do class dynamics intersect with colonial dynamics in Israel-Palestine?
- What would it entail for historical materialism to decenter the working class?
- What can be garnered from contemporary debates about the social and political primacy of different forms of

exploitation and oppression in relation to strategies for liberation?
- What would the self-abolition of the proletariat look like if we took the interlocking contradictions that structure it seriously?

Please submit your abstract (max. 250 words) through this form by 1 May 2024. Abstracts and presentations may be in Danish or English.

PLEASE NOTE:

The conference is in-person only, and it will not be possible to present virtually. Attendance is free but requires registration beforehand. Participation in the conference dinner is only possible with pre-payment at registration.

The Danish Society for Marxist Studies *(Danish: Selskab for Marxistiske Studier, SMS) is an independent academic society in Denmark. The purpose of the society is to further interest and research in Marxism and other strands of critical thought at Danish universities and institutes of higher learning, especially among early career scholars. We understand 'Marxism' in the broadest possible sense of the term as the critical tradition emanating from Marx's thought in its entire historical and theoretical breadth and depth, and SMS is not committed to any one particular theoretical or political position.*

ABSTRACTS

Charmaine Chua

BATTLING THE BEHEMOTH: AMAZON AND THE NEW AMERICAN WORKING CLASS (KEYNOTE)

This talk examines the political economy of Amazon.com's corporate expansion, interrogating how Amazon remade global capitalism, and in process reworked the coordinates of American working class life. We develop a spatial analysis of Amazon's monopoly power, arguing that Amazon is both central to the recomposition of class structure and emblematic of a broader bifurcation between urban professional managerial class tech workers and an increasingly suburbanized, and majority Black, brown, and immigrant logistics working class today. By situating Amazon as a force driving class decomposition, we also seek to understand how capital is recomposing new working class formations in the United States. We trace

Amazon's unique capacity to control and coordinate a vast logistics network by combining logistics, retail and digital services into a single corporate entity, allowing it to extend market domination over massive global supply chains. Its influence, stretching from the geographies of factory production in China to suburban working class structure in the US, and to the very doorsteps of our homes, has not only been increasingly crucial to patterns of global consumption but also to local and national economies, and to the coordinates of working class life in the US. Yet, as we argue, an urban-concentrated and increasingly restive Amazon tech workforce is refusing the atomization of white and blue-collar working classes, building momentum and solidarity with warehouse workers by waging united demands around climate justice, healthcare access, and resistance to the military and prison industrial complex. Amazon, in other words, is the frontier for the working class struggles of the future. Learning from workers struggling in the hinterlands of Amazon's empire and their tech worker comrades, we chart a strategy for building a revolutionary class consciousness that confronts managerial domination with a multiracial class struggle that centers feminist and anti-racist intersectional justice.

Patrick Eiden-Offe

PEOPLE, PÖBEL, POPULISTS: PROLETARIAN TRAJECTORIES FROM THE VORMÄRZ TO TOMORROW (KEYNOTE)

"What's in a name?" Unlike Shakespeare's Julia, who assumes that names are merely arbitrary and thus meaningless – "That which we call a rose by any other name would smell just as sweet" – the talk will argue that the words we use to call social actors actually matter. This is particularly evident in a historically turbulent time such as the German Vormärz (1815–1848) – or today. In the Vormärz, a variety of names were brought into play to call that new social collective that would only a little later would make history as 'the proletariat'. 'Pöbel', 'Volk', 'ouvriers', 'Arbeiter' – the names of the class were as diverse as the ways of naming: Definitions were only one way of determining a name. Names could also be specified in lists or spread and made plausible through narratives. At the end of the Vormärz, Karl Marx will sublate the diverse names in one concept. But even in Marx, the concept of class continues to have (at least) two names – 'proletariat' and 'working class' – and both are haunted by their outcast doppelganger, the lumpenproletariat. The talk seeks to regard this indeterminacy not as an error, but as the enabling ground for a

constitutive productivity that has always been intrinsic to class theory since the Vormärz. So, what would be the names with which we could call the class today, call it into being and call to arms?

Andrea Taborri and Victor Hugo Jara Cardozo

BRAZILIAN SUBIMPERIALISM: DEPENDENCY AND SUPEREXPLOITATION IN THE PARAGUAYAN MAQUILA

Class antagonism lies at the core of capitalism, however, assuming that it plays out in the same way in every capitalist society seems overly naïve. The complex reality of contemporary capitalism, the development of global chains of production, and the intricated dynamics of imperialism call for a careful examination of how class struggle is deployed in the context of uneven capitalist development, especially in the Global South. Almost 50 years ago, a group of Latin American scholars elaborated what is today known as Marxist Dependency Theory (MDT). Their basic tenet is the existence of a sui generis capitalism in dependent countries that works according to Marx's general laws but with its own specificities. This research explores the Paraguayan maquiladora industry through the theoretical lens of MDT, bringing to the fore concepts such as sumbimperialism and superexploitation. In the first section, we analyse how the dynamics of dependent capitalist accumulation in South America led Brazil to adopt a subimperial role, and how this reflects on the Paraguayan maquiladora industry. In the second section, we delve into the dynamics of class confrontation within the maquiladora industry itself, underscoring superexploitation as its structural feature. Based on more than thirty interviews with workers, trade unionists, managers of maquila factories, and institutional representatives this research indicates that the maquiladora industry in Paraguay is rooted in the subimperial character of the Brazilian socioeconomic formation in a context of dependent capitalism, which results in poor working conditions, very constrained possibilities for local growth, and ultimately, superexploitation.

Anna Ullman

TRADITIONS OF THE OPPRESSED: THE PROLETARIAN AESTHETIC OF THE 1970S FOLK REVIVAL MOVEMENT IN DENMARK

The rise of counterculture during "the long 68"and the subsequent appropriations of its critical potentials in the service of the new spirit of Capitalism (Boltanski & Chiapello) have challenged the

question of possible approximations between music cultures and emancipatory politics. After the historical disappearance of the working class as a revolutionary subject, scholars informed by Cultural Studies have attempted to analyse marginalized identities, social groups, and aesthetic subcultures as potential sites of political resistance. Despite building on an explicitly Marxist framework, the traditionalist folk music revival movement which flourished in Denmark during the 1970s has remained out of scope. Introducing class politics into folkloristic research and ethnomusicology, the movement sought to establish communitarian spaces in which research, education, cultural politics, social gatherings, and embodied aesthetic practices by largely anonymous and undocumented contributors were to become enmeshed with everyday life. Drawing on Negt & Kluges (1972) concept of Lebenszusammenhäng as a countering force against the fragmentation of the proletarian horizon of experience, this paper will locate the movement within a context of proletarian publicity as a form of resistance against real subsumption under capital. The paper will discuss the movement's proposal of a specifically proletarian aesthetic, eschewing the capitalist twin logic of bourgeois aesthetics on one hand, and the reified forms of the culture industry on the other. Which insights might be derived from tentatively approaching this seemingly anachronistic proposal at face value? Could a new reading guide us towards imagining what a contemporary proletarian aesthetic might look or feel like?

Anne Mari Borchert

CANON AND REPRODUCTIVE LABOR: A FEMINIST STUDY OF WOMEN'S LITERATURE RECEPTION

Interest in art and literature depicting reproductive labor is booming, e.g. Tove Ditlevsen's international breakthrough or adaptations and translations of Marlen Haushofer's Die Wand (1963). In their time, authors like Haushofer and Ditlevsen were discredited for their simple style and the seemingly banal scene of the home. Literary success involved knowledge of certain forms, genres, and references, akin to experimental, modernist writers. A simple, realist style and inferior social position got confused with a simple, inferior author, though these texts humorously expose gendered social structures of the world in which they will be read. My thesis is that exclusion practices of academia and public discourse in formulating a canon have led to devaluation of women's literature (following Nicole Seifert, I call it women's literature) in which representations of reproductive

labor are devalued because of cultural regimes. The novelist Marlen Haushofer (1920-1970) is my main example, as her reception history illustrates shifting perceptions of women's literature. Haushofer portrays post-war Austria as a mix of "Dämonie u. Idylle" in laconic prose, fusing realism with parody of the bourgeois household. I will conduct a reception analysis encompassing Haushofer reception in three waves: reviews from her contemporaries, a 1980s renaissance, and ongoing interest, academic and popular. By unpacking textual strategies and reception dynamics, I aim to shed light on interplay between gender, tradition, and literary as well as societal value.

Anton Ösgård

TODAY THE INPUT-OUTPUT TABLE OR TOMORROW THE FIRING SQUAD: DATA AND POLITICS IN PLANNING THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

The 1920s calculation debate has been popularised in recent years with reference to the planning abilities of transnationals like Walmart, calls for fully automated luxury communism and left-accelerationism. This renewed interest causes us to refocus on this debate with a contribution on how planning is happening in the capitalist state today, and responding to the main liberal arguments against economic planning, (1) that it inevitably leads to authoritarianism and (2) is unfeasible because the economy is an intrinsically unknowable entity. With the massive rise in computational power, it is possible to ask if the second argument has been won by proxy. Other work has made the case that the global economy has been artificially made unknowable, with the explicit aim of putting it out of reach of political or democratic control. Less attention has been given to the alternatives, examples of how global data and political arrangements for planning were sought, and how they are being used by capitalist states today, specifically in CO2 emission accounting. The scholarship of Wassily Leontief, father of Input-Output (I/O) analysis, is reviewed to outline an almost-forgotten (but in a bastardised form, widely used) proposal for how the (planetary) economy can be made visible, comprehensible and controllable. His I/O models are now part of national accounting, which is why we aim to outline Leontief's explicitly reformist model which was built to be scaled from within the already existing capitalist economy in order to understand its potential for a planned economy today.

Benjamin Ask Popp-Madsen & Mathias Hein Jessen

A FEATURE OR A BUG? THE SUCCESSIVE ATTEMPTS OF EXEMPTING THE CORPORATION FROM SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY

Corporation stand at the very center of contemporary capitalism. They account for a dominant percentage of the world's biggest economies, wield enormous political and economic power, and are the leading drivers of the climate crisis. In light of this – and combined with the seemingly endless unearthing of corporate scandals in recent years – a number of debates and discussions about how to manage, govern, curb, abolish or perhaps transform corporations have sprouted in recent years, both in academic and activist circles. The discussions about reforming the corporation can very generally be put into two camps: one highlighting the need for a corporate purpose (either voluntary or state-chartered) to make corporations more accountable and societally responsible, and another highlighting the need for democratizing the corporation. However, these discussions, we hold, tend to neglect the fact that the corporation is a legal technology designed to evade responsibility and to shift accountability, liability, and profit between legal and natural persons. Furthermore, they tend to miss the successive political struggles over the corporate form and the (successful) successive attempts by economists, legal scholars, and philosophers of exempting the corporation from social responsibility. Transforming or abolishing the corporation, or making it more accountable and responsible, requires understanding the political struggles over the nature and purpose of the corporation.

Birke Jessing Friedländer

STORMING THE CAPITAL: THE COUP D'ÉTAT IN FAR-RIGHT POLITICAL IMAGINARIES

In left wing history the storm of the Winter Palace in Petrograd 1917 is famous as a symbol of Bolshevik victory in the Russian Revolution and has become a symbol of the working class taking over the halls of power from the Tzar. In recent years, storms on the centers of power have, however, been appropriated by far-right politics. On January 6, 2021, supporters of Donald Trump stormed the Capitol in Washington, DC. In Germany, a plan to overthrow the state and detain members of the Bundestag was unraveled by the police in 2022. On January 8, 2023, supporters of the former far-right president Jair Bolsonaro stormed the national congress, supreme court and presidential palace in the capital of Brazil. What were the far-right

looking for in the halls of power? How can we understand the relations between state power and class power expressed in these movements? How can we understand the far-rights perception of the state expressed in their attempted, but failed, coups? By departing from the Brazilian case, I want to explore these questions and argue that the events point to how the state, as a reified and fetishized object, have become central to far-right imaginary politics that seeks to concentrate power in the executive and, thereby, force the totality according to their desires.

Bruno Leipold and Benjamin Ask Popp-Madsen
CITIZEN MARX: REPUBLICANISM AND THE FORMATION OF KARL MARX'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT (BOOK PANEL)

[unavailable]

Charlotte Cator
BETWEEN COLLECTIVE SELF-GOVERNMENT AND GREEN GOVERNMENTALITY: CLASS IN THE SUSTAINABLE CITY

Cities have become a focal point for climate action, sustainable economic development and environmental policy. As inherent class-based phenomena and core nodes of capital accumulation and consumption, urban centres form an indispensable part of the capitalist political economy. The latter has come to rely largely on entrepreneurial urban growth, since neoliberal policies promoting place in the city have been accompanied by the search for 'creative' growth and processes of urban renewal and gentrification. This has given rise to the urban middle class, which has come to dominate urban policy considerations. Against this background, I analyse the climate politics in western-European cities. Based on Marxist conceptions of class and the urban, I argue that many of the developments around the 'sustainable city' can be interpreted as a neat succession of the 'creative city', promoting entrepreneurial urban growth and neoliberal governmentality. However, there is political potential in the middle-class city in cases where urban activists reclaim spaces to experiment with alternative forms of ownership, production and consumption. Hereby, they posit the city as a space for social reproduction rather than (financialised) economic production and give shape to a postcapitalist politics of the urban everyday that is attuned to the complexities of class in the middle-class city.

Christoph Ellersgaard, Rune Møller Stahl, Andreas Møller Mulvad
BEYOND THE BRAHMIN LEFT: FOR CLIMATE POPULISM
The climate movement stands at a crossroad. As more opportunities for Green Finance arise, power elites are increasingly becoming divided between reactionary fossil capital fractions and green capital fractions. While it can be tempting to align with green capital, we argue that this will lead to a technocratic, non-democratic and economically unjust green transition that will push the working class in the arms of the Fossil Capital. In order to build a movement that enables a just green transition, we therefore argue that three breaks are needed within the climate movement: 1) A sociological break. Drawing on Bourdieu and Piketty, we argue that the climate movement needs to resituate its struggles in broader symbolic class struggles and avoid the pitfalls of virtue-signalling of the "Brahmin Left." 2) A philosophical break in a republicanism understanding of ownership is needed to ground climate politics in popular politics 3) A political-economic break with the current growth coalition. We discuss how the climate movement must move from being an avant-garde to build solidarity around working class practices such as austerity, in order to build a movement centered on local climate practices of the popular classes. We argue that this is only possible by building a republican alternative to green capital that is willing to take populist positions. A climate movement capable of challenging the current power elite and only be successful if climate policy stops being an identity project and becomes a practice available for the vast majority."

Dana Kopel
GAY MAY DAY: THE 1975 STRIKE AT THE LOS ANGELES GAY COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER
This paper presents the history of a major strike at the Los Angeles Gay Community Services Center (GCSC) in 1975. Founded in 1971 by activists from LA's Gay Liberation Front, GCSC reflected a shift in the approach of the gay liberation movement in the US, from direct action to service provision, and a broader shift in US social movements, beginning in the early 1970s, toward nonprofitization and dependence on state and private funding. Though the nonprofit-industrial complex has since become hegemonic within US social movements, I argue that this form of elite capture faced organized resistance from the start—particularly from queer Marxists, as the GCSC strike reveals. I examine the political contestations that prompted and shaped

the strike: between the "old guard" of white gay men who founded GCSC and the younger lesbians and "effeminist" gays who staffed it, among them most of GCSC's staff of color; between separatist lesbians who saw the strike as a primarily an issue of gender and the lesbians and gay men who allied to reshape their workplace, among them organized gay communists like those in the Lavender and Red Union; and between gay liberationists who supported LA's queer communities through service provision and those who prioritized not just survival but anticapitalist transformation. In analyzing the strike, I uncover how strikers navigated labor struggle through intersections of class, gender, sexuality, and race in the early years of neoliberalism, and what their efforts and the strike's ultimate failure can teach Marxist organizers today.

Darío Doña Falcón

BEYOND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION THEORIES: MARXISM, GENDER AND THE INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

Social reproduction theories, among other frameworks derived from Marxism, have elaborated their conception of gender based on a social division of labour that separates productive labour from reproductive, domestic, unpaid labour. They consider both phenomena to be forms of "productive" labour for which remuneration has historically been separated on the basis of gender, as inheritance from pre-capitalist forms of work organisation. We contest this conception as one that is outdated and only superficially understands the complex nature of identity under capitalism, which ultimately makes it ineffective as a framework for class struggle. Instead, it leads to reformist activism such as the "Wages for Housework" movement. Building upon previous research, we argue waged labour has lost its centrality in contemporary capitalist economies; a global phenomena, in spite of spatiotemporal heterogeneities, affecting both so-called deindustrialised Western, high-income countries and emerging economies. This process is still undergoing, with relative surplus populations on a global scale being about 60% of the global population before the 2008 crisis. This has displaced a large part of the proletariat to illegal, informal or subsistence economic activities, including domestic work and caregiving. As a result, a growing proportion of the proletariat performs waged reproductive labour. Through this, we argue that the Marxist conception of gender cannot be based simply on the remuneration of an activity or its domestic

setting, but on more complex interrelations of structures and dynamics such as private property and the market economy.

Dashiell Anderson
THE PRODUCTION OF RURAL SPACE AND EVERYDAY RURAL LIFE IN SITUATIONIST THEORY
Amidst the success of right-wing ideology in rural constituencies across the globe, this paper uses Situationist theory to address unique problems of rural alienation in everyday life and the production of rural space in the formation of capitalist accumulation. Situationist theory, which has almost always concerned itself with the nature of urbanization, offers important insight into the unique revolutionary potential of rural working classes, which according to Marx and other Marxist theorists often possess socially antithetical forms of exploitation, alienation, loneliness, boredom, and unfulfillment in everyday life. The unique forms of everyday rural work and leisure, if traced back into Situationist theory, yields the seeds of a revolutionary rural working-class imaginary that does not suffer from the same forms of reification and mysticism as the overly-transactional, spectacle-centered city. Possibilities for successful forms of detournement and the creation of experimental ambiences that disrupt the rhythm of everyday life are uniquely accessible (though at times increasingly difficult to realize) in rural areas and among rural workers. This, I argue, is exhibited in the widespread success of right-wing political ideology in rural areas that attack the social aspect of alienation in exploitation in everyday rural working-class life in order to build right-wing populist sentiment. The paper argues that Situationist theories of everyday life and the production of space can and must be expanded to include equally alienated and exploited rural working-classes. If done so, the potential to harness a rural working-class that the left has for too long neglected is still possible.

Dominique Routhier
ABOLISH ART
"Dadaism sought to abolish art without realising it; surrealism sought to realise art without abolishing it. The critical position since developed by the Situationists demonstrates that the abolition and the realisation of art are inseparable aspects of a single transcendence of art." In this much-quoted paragraph from The Society of the Spectacle (1967), the situationist Guy Debord argues, paradoxically, that to realize art is to abolish it. But what does it mean? As prompt

for further discussion, this paper reconsiders the situationist proposal to "abolish art" in light of the "long downturn" and attendant developments in Marxist value-form theory, Feminism, and Black radical thought. Drawing on the racialized and gendered distinctions between "productive labor" and "unproductive labor," and revisiting Marx's concept of "services" as it applies to today's (art) economy, this paper ultimately proposes a categorical critique of "art" that at once explains and challenges its exceptionalism within the broader contours of the critique of political economy.

Eleonora Antonakaki Giannisi

TECHNOLOGICAL DIFFERENTIATION AND THE INDIFFERENCE OF FORM

In this paper, I will propose a Marxist and psychoanalytic theory of indifference. I will trace the relation of indifference to Marx's money form as well as digital technological developments. I will be taking as a starting point Georg Simmel's 1900 work on The Philosophy of Money, in which Simmel claims that money "does not only point to the indifference of economic technics but so to speak is indifference itself." I will argue that money and technology, both in their capacity as means, lead to an indifferent differentiation that in turn produces an indifferent subjectivity. Void and overstimulating differentiation devalues all unitary categories such as class and throws the individual into solitary remission. With this new reading of indifference, I propose to expand our understanding of alienation and the commodity fetish as well as the malaise they entail. I propose this expansion by materially and conceptually outlining the development of indifference, an important part of which lies today in the fusion of money, the market and the machine in the processes of digitalization. I will begin by presenting Simmel's notion of indifference, proceed to connect it to the psychoanalytic possibility of detachment of affect from meaning and interject some brief comments on digital formalization and the detachment from quality that it also presupposes. I will end with a critical analysis of Simmel's concept of relativism and connect it to the dissolving of categories that hold an individual as well as a collective subject together.

Ingrid Hanon

MARX, VALUE AND PRODUCTIVE LABOR: UNDERPINNING MISCONCEPTION

This paper reviews the concept of productive labor in Karl Marx's economic writings, unveiling widespread misconceptions about the notions of work and value formation. Drawing primarily on the Manuscripts of 1861–63 and 1864–65, as well as the Results of the Immediate Production Process, the paper explores Marx's notion of productive labor and contrasts it with interpretations offered by scholars in the autonomist and value critique traditions. Proponents of the autonomist tradition argue for an extended notion of productive labor that encompasses a broader range of activities beyond traditional waged work, suggesting that value production has spread beyond the confines of the factory. Conversely, scholars in the value critique tradition emphasize the increasing exhaustion of productive labor from the 1970s, which may lead to capitalist final collapse. Through a critical analysis of key concepts in Marx's economic writings—such as value, exploitation, abstract labor, socially necessary labor time, and wage labor—this paper examines these conflicting interpretations of the crisis of value and critically assesses the underlying misconceptions about the notion of productive labor within these theoretical trends.

Jacob Spenser Wilson

INTRA-CLASS WAR IN THE FAR-HINTERLAND: THE CONTRADICTIONS OF AGRICULTURE IN GLOBAL NORTH ECONOMIES

Marx pointed out in Capital that transformations in agricultural production were necessary to support the emerging industrial revolution, creating the infamous divide between town and country. This divide continues to be central to capitalist accumulation today, where the logistics revolution and deindustrialization have brought with it a global expansion of these spatial relations of production. While many analyses have focused on the global relations of production, few have engaged in an extended investigation of the relations between town and country within the nation-state (Davis; Mazoyer and Roudart; Neel). In the far-hinterland of developed economies such as Eastern Oregon, farmers are confronted with an ultra-competitive global market that constrains their ability to reproduce themselves (Bernes; Benanav; Coppess; Cox). Competition has driven farmers to take up unsustainable practices that destroy the soil, exploit migrant

laborers to squeeze surplus-value, and turn to fascist politics to defend their property rights from supposed government overreach (Malm; Mau; Saito; Toscano). This paper asks how and to what extent capitalism, after expanding outward via imperialism and inward via the subsumption of labor power (Federici; Kluge and Negt), is beginning to proletarianize unproductive landowners. Using Eastern Oregon as a case-study, I will outline how the division of labor between town and country is breeding an intra-capitalist class war, with ecological and political consequences. Through it, the far-hinterland can be shown to be a key site for Marxist inquiry into the ecological crisis and the role of the nation-state in driving class conflict.

James Rushing Daniel

MARX, IDENTITY POLITICS, AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF CLASS IN CONTEMPORARY ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Across numerous academic fields, a hegemonic stance on "identity politics" (Michaels) now dominates. Comprised of a diverse set of perspectives and methodologies—including intersectionality (Crenshaw), antiracism (Kendi), and afropessimism (Wilderson)—this centrist stance either diminishes or, more often, entirely occludes attention to class while privileging other forms of difference, race in particular. Rejecting Marxism and other class-based approaches, the contemporary academy insists upon a politics of witnessing in which, as Loïc Wacquant writes of afropessimism, "there is no politics of liberation." Following the scholarship of Kevin Anderson and Andrew Zimmerman, this paper regards Marx as a neglected thinker of racial conditions able to offer a valuable "demystification" (Reed) of the current morass of identity politics and class erasure. With Adolph Reed Jr., this paper discusses how Marx offers the academy a means of reincorporating class concerns by framing identitarian difference as part of "an ascriptive hierarchy" functioning to "legitimize capitalist social relations by naturalizing them" (Reed). Seeking to deepen Reed's claim, I look to the Grundrisse's formalization of totality to consider how race functions within the broad architecture of production and circulation. Race understood through such a lens may be seen less as site of essential difference, as it is in conventional contemporary academic discourse, and rather as crucial aspect of capitalism's "form of appearance." Questioning prevailing academic investments in race as an "ontology of difference" (Sonu), I posit race as a means of legitimizing "ongoing confiscatory process[es]" (Fraser) and occluding the conditions of "economic power" (Mau).

Joachim Peter Tilsted

TRANSFORMING A SYNTHETIC WORLD: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF PETROCHEMICAL TRANSITIONS

Operating enormous, integrated refineries and clusters, the petrochemical industry runs processes in which hydrocarbons are turned into the building blocks for the full array of synthetic materials. Continuing a historical trend of consistent output growth, petrochemicals are currently the largest driver of oil demand growth. At the same time, the industry is under increasing pressure to transform because of its contribution to the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity decline. To understand this predicament, I sketch the political economy of petrochemical transitions and the features that define the struggle over the future of fossil-based chemical growth. Reframing energy transitions not only as a matter of decarbonisation but of defossilisation, I map out the material, institutional, and discursive power of petrochemical incumbents and the linkages between fossil fuels, chemicals, and synthetic materials. Drawing on a range of methods and data sources including social network, document, and narrative analysis, I argue that the proclaimed forthcoming energy revolution faces intricate difficulties given the use of fossil fuels as feedstock, which confers material power upon the actors occupying the petroleum-chemical-synthetics nexus. This power enables incumbent actors to navigate growing transition pressures and pursue production growth. This insight underlines the substantial implications that arise from understanding fossil fuels not only as energy carriers but as feedstock, including an expanded understanding of the power of fossil capital, the need to consider phase-out that goes beyond fossil fuels as energy, and the importance of denouncing carbon centrism.

Juho Korhonen

CLASS AND GENDER IN THE WRITINGS OF HILJA PÄRSSINEN AND FINNISH SOCIALIST WOMEN

The Grand Duchy of Finland was the first state in Europe to enact full women's suffrage, inclusive of the right of women to stand for election. As such, it was arguably the first modern democracy in the world. This took place in the poor periphery of the Russian Empire. A major role in this achievement was played by working class women, who had actively mobilized and argued, from their own particular point of view, for full women's suffrage against incremental reforms, including class-based male suffrage. This happened at a time when

most socialist parties in Europe where still prioritizing class over gender and advocating for only for the extension of male suffrage, based on class-based arguments. Focusing especially in their historical and social scientific thinking and analysis of socialism, in this paper I shall outline how class and gender combined in the writings of Hilja Pärssinen as well as other Finnish female socialist suffragists. Through these arguments, they were able to override more conservative views, including by male members of the Social Democratic Party and drive through a hegemony of opinion on the matter, making gender an integral part of socialist efforts at democratization. What particular arguments did they use, why where they successful and what could we learn from their worldview and societal analysis today?

Karolina Enquist Källgren

CONSTELLATION CAPITALISM: ON SOCIAL FORM AND AESTHETIC OBJECTS IN CONTEMPORARY CAPITALISM

I argue that the development of capitalism since the between the wars period can best be described in terms of constellation capitalism. Constellation capitalism has developed in parallel with the Neo-liberal thought complex and it has been strengthened by the expansion since the 1950s of private equity and venture capital. Constellation capitalism describes a state of capitalism in which the commodity form dominates other social forms, but does not fully determine them. Further, constellation capitalism not only holds inner tensions between social forms, it is dependent on and survives through them. In constellation capitalism, relatively autonomous social forms are what makes the promise of an ever-expanding market possible. I argue that the concept can explain current political polarization in radicalized but short-lived counter-movements. It can further be used to pint-point strategic instances of tensions within the dominant order – instances that are represented in what I call aesthetic objects –, and it can be used to develop an idea of reification as a necessary aspect of political processes that actualize change. I develop the argument by engaging with several authors in a broad Marxist tradition and by reinterpreting some of their concepts. Such concepts are social form (Alfred Sohn-Rethel and Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez) and aesthetic objects (Ernst Bloch and Walter Benjamin).

Katrine Høghøj

ARE ALL WOMEN HOUSEWIVES? CLASS, GENDER AND RACE IN THE WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK CAMPAIGN

This paper discusses the Wages for Housework campaign's attempt to theorize the interconnection of class, gender, and race. Conceiving the demand for a wage for housework as a political perspective allowing for a redefinition of women's caste position as a class position, the wages for housework activists and theorists aimed for a conception of class that breaks with the identification of the working class as "white, male and over 21." However, some Black feminists and 'social reproduction theorists' have criticized the demand and the theoretical analysis underpinning it for relying on a conception of social reproduction that implicitly centers the experiences and interests of white women. The question hence becomes to what extent the redefinition of women's class position on the basis of their role as 'housewives' is capable of representing women that are not only oppressed in terms of class and gender but also in terms of race. My paper discusses this question through a comparison between Angela Davis' critique of the campaign in Women, Race and Class and attempts to think through the question of race within wfh, more specifically Selma James' "Sex, Race and Class" and "The Autonomy of Black Lesbian Women" by Wilmette Brown of Black Women for Wages for Housework. I suggest that though Black feminist critiques such as Davis' complicates the claim that all women are primarily oppressed on the basis of their role as housewives, they do not delegitimize the demand as a mechanism for the development of feminist subjectivity and as a family-abolitionist demand.

Laura Horn & Marie Huntley Andersen

DE SIDSTE SVIN: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GREEN TRANSITION IN THE DANISH PIG-MEAT INDUSTRY

The focus of this paper is a mapping of current developments in the Danish pig meat industry, with a focus on the role of organised labour. Against the background of broader changes in the global value chain of pig meat, the Danish sector has come under intensive pressure, not just economically but also politically. How do worker representatives and unions position themselves vis-à-vis employers and other actors? How can we understand the class politics inherent in processes of restructuring in an industry that stands in direct contradiction with the green transition that is necessary in the climate and ecological emergency?

Lea Kuhar

REDEFINING CLASS STRUGGLE: THE SLOVENIAN PATH TO POST-MARXISM

The paper will delve into the formation of civil society in Slovenia during the 1980s, which played a pivotal role in the transition from socialist Yugoslavia to capitalist Slovenia post-1991. Specifically, it will examine the emergence of new social movements, including student activism, punk and neo-avant-garde movements, feminist, environmentalist, pacifist, gay, and spiritual (new age) movements, that formed an alternative network and constructed a sphere of political struggle distinct from and independent of the existing socialist state. The paper will focus on the rise of new Marxist and philosophical currents in Slovenia during this period, particularly the attempts at "radical democracy" influenced by the readings of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, and the reinterpretations of Marx through Althusser and Hegel through Lacan, that laid the groundwork for what is now recognized as the Slovenian Lacanian School and was at the time represented in the works of Miran Božovič, Mladen Dolar, Rastko Močnik, Braco Rotar Rado Riha and Slavoj Žižek. The paper will examine this period by tracing the conceptual development of one of the key Marxist concepts: class struggle. It will analyze how, in the span of 30 years, the concept of class struggle transformed from a political-economic category describing the antagonism between two social classes to "the real of social structure," which has become a key concept in post-Marxism. By producing a genealogy of the concept of class struggle, the aper will question to what extent the initial endeavor to construct and mobilize alternative political subjects in Yugoslavia, though retrospectively perceived as a subversive leftist stance, was fundamentally rooted in liberal capitalist ideals.

Linn Brolin

CAPITAL-LABOUR RELATIONS AND THE DIALECTICS OF NATURE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

In a rapid acceleration of anthropogenic climate breakdown, planetary boundaries to sustain human survival on earth are put under more pressure. As a result of the increased prevalence of extreme weather events, capital accumulation and labour processes are being disrupted. Despite all its crises and contradictions, it seems like the capitalist mode of production not only has survived but actually strengthened in the era of climate crisis. Just as capital always has strived to overcome its own limitations through new technologies

and markets to expand its scale, its tendency to exploit natural forces seems to be reinforced while the climate crisis is getting increasingly urgent. Thus, while ecological emergencies disrupt processes in the capitalist mode of production, it does not lead to the collapse of capitalism. Instead, it seems like capital can continue to accumulate under any condition as long as there is no complete extinction of human life on earth. In my dissertation project, I am interested in exploring how the relationship between capital and labour is renegotiated in a changing climate. Drawing from dialectics I intend to develop a theoretical framework based on Ecological Marxism and the Power Resource Approach. By empirically looking at the Swedish labour market I will examine how workers and employers make sense of climate change and what practices and strategies they impose when responding to climate risks. In this sense, I want to understand how social relations of production are shaped and rearranged by the effects of climate change both discursively and materially.

Lotte List

POLITICAL ECONOMY AND THE POLITICS OF HISTORY IN THE *SATTELZEIT*

Reinhart Koselleck's concept of the 'Sattelzeit' has become a standard historiographic term to describe the period 1750-1850 as the transitional phase from early to late modernity. Yet the concept does not merely denote objective institutional and social transformations; rather, it includes a notion of modernization as self-historization. The Sattelzeit is the time in which European civilization comes to understand itself as historical and assumes its position at the center of world history. In Koselleck's recounting, this is quintessentially expressed in Enlightenment philosophy of history, which conceptualizes modern history in terms of progress, emancipation, and rationalization. This intellectual current corresponds to the bourgeois revolutionary wave in social history. However, as the historian Vanessa Ogle has recently pointed out, Koselleck's narrow focus on utopian political history excludes the great transformation of the economy and economic science of the same period from his definition of modernization and the historization of modern time. In this paper, I argue that early political economy grapple with questions of philosophy of history and that such metaphysical beliefs on one hand correspond to economic developments, and on the other shape the way modernity, through economics, comes to understand itself as 'modern'.

Lucile Franchet

FLEXIBILISATION POLICIES AND LABOUR MARKET STRUCTURES IN FRANCE

This doctoral research critically examines labour market flexibilisation policies in France, challenging the mainstream narrative that links flexibilisation with economic growth and reduced unemployment. Adopting a class relational perspective, it redefines labour market flexibilisation as a transformation in the social relations of production, facilitating the increasing rate of exploitation in many countries. This study analyses these policies as a manifestation of a concrete capitalist class struggle to (re)produce an exploitable labour force, influenced by neoliberalism and the 1970s profitability crisis. Focusing on France, this research uniquely combines a socio-historical analysis of the French labour market, quantitative macro-economic data, and a mixed-methods case study of France Télécom. This approach reveals the nuanced forms of flexibilisation in France, particularly in the context of diminishing union density and evolving collective bargaining. The thesis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the power dynamics between capital and labour, offering insights into the covert strategies of French capitalism in response to economic challenges since the 1970s.

Luis Cortés and Gabriel Rivas

THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL CONFLICT AS CLASS STRUGGLE: TOWARDS AN INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRIAL RESERVE ARMY

The genocide that started in Gaza in October 2023 is part of a larger historical process of expulsion and dispossession enforced by the construction of the State of Israel. Israel's settler-colonialism was technology-intensive, which allowed capitals to mobilize a working class from abroad that could develop highly qualified productive attributes instead of forming a local low-paid working class. As such, Palestinians were from the start excluded from the capital accumulation process altogether. Taking as a starting point the questions concerning the surplus working population and the overproduction of capital set out in Marx's Capital, this presentation seeks to explain the Palestinian situation by showing how its economic content determines the specific national political forms that mediate the conflict. Understanding this from a class perspective, the Palestinians do not appear to be a national working class constituted around the existence of a Palestinian State, but instead a differentiated part of

the working class employed by the Israeli capital, which is in part inserted in global value chains. As industrial reserve army, Palestinians are an intrinsic part of the global capital accumulation process. This is thought as a counterpoint to nationalist or decolonial positions which, by focusing on the naturalization of land ownership and the existence of national spaces as something that transcends the capitalist social relation, place self-determination of the Palestinian people as something external to class determinations, representing it as a cultural process.

Magnus Møller Ziegler

HEGELIANISM AND THE SOCIAL QUESTION

In his 1821 *Philosophy of Right*, G.W.F. Hegel deemed the so-called 'social question' unsolvable. The question of systemic poverty had become a pertinent intellectual debate in the period of German modernisation known as the Sattelzeit: as old communal social bonds were torn asunder, a new class of systematically disenfranchised paupers no longer bound by the rights and responsibilities of the old, corporatist order arose – a process described vividly by Marx in relation to the English enclosure movement a century before. Hegel famously conceptualised this class of people as 'rabble' (*Pöbel*) and suggested that a temporary alleviative measure might be to ship them off to the colonies. However, between 1820 and 1840, the conceptualisation of this class shifted dramatically within the Hegelian school. In this paper, I argue that this conceptual shift was one from passive mass to an active subject of history; that it began with Hegel's immediate successor, Eduard Gans, but is born out in the debates of the Young Hegelians; and that this development is a reflection of the developing nature of social and economic relations in the German Sattelzeit period.

Mariah Wakefield

RESILIENCE AND VICTIMIZATION: HOW NEOLIBERAL IDEOLOGY CURTAILS CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

This paper examines how neoliberal ideologies – narratives of resilience and victimization and their effect on the subject – counter class consciousness. It explores how these seemingly opposing identifications work in tandem to atomize the neoliberal working class. "Resilience" has long been used to obfuscate class dynamics and larger structural failings. By cultivating and valorizing resilience in its subjects, neoliberalism makes the response to socio-economic

precarity a personal directive. Neoliberal ideology (which includes the entrepreneurial impetus and myths of meritocracy) forms subjects who believe that their success is determined by resilience, an enduring ability to "bounce-back." Yet conversely, neoliberalism also engenders victimization – what scholars such as Wendy Brown have framed as growing political passivity. As the state continually divests itself of responsibility to the public, those seeking government aid (or even social recognition/sympathy) must "prove" their authentic victimization (through, of course, parameters set by neoliberalism itself). This further fragments the working class and fuels identity politics in the polity, shifting focus further away from collective/class action to individual experience/behavior. Resiliency requires some degree of optimism about the free-market system, which blocks the subject's awareness that they are part of a greater oppressed class. Victimization acknowledges oppression but primarily on an individual level. This paper contends that the working class's ability to identify themselves and their position is limited by neoliberalism's ideological drive towards both resiliency and victimization.

Marie Louise Krogh

ECONOMY AND EMPIRE AMONG THE GERMAN IDEALISTS

Recent studies of the political philosophies of the German Idealists have made the case: i) that their conceptions of freedom, right and recognition are intimately related to their theories of property (Blumenfeld 2023); and ii) that as legal philosophies, they should be understood not as ahistorical theoretical constructs but as reflections on the attempt to systematise different regimes of property law within the German territorial states (Yeomans 2023). In this paper, I will argue that while there is much to be gained from these studies and their attempt to historicise and politicise our understanding of the German Idealists –notably by demonstrating how they attended to the sociality that sustains private property relations – they are also impeded by a tendency to downplay the significance of imperial power-politics and global colonial trade in the period now commonly known as the Sattelzeit (c. 1770–1830). With Fichte's The Closed Commercial State (1800) as my primary example, I will suggest that the problem of empire – in particular, of imperial control over the emerging global market – played a greater role in the political philosophies of the German Idealists than previously recognised, and that a tendency to conceive of Europe as a self-enclosed and self-sustaining system has impeded this insight. In the context of dicussions of

property and law, this means that the central problem is not just of adjudicating between different spheres of jurisdiction internal to a given state, but of navigating the confrontations between different sovereign jurisdictions and of adjudicating how claims to territory could or could not be established in the context of colonial possessions.

Marijam Didžgalvytė
IN THE GAMES INDUSTRY, CONVERSATIONS OF CLASS HAVE BEEN A LOSER. TIME TO CHANGE THAT!
The global videogames industry surpasses both music and film in revenue, emerging as the most significant cultural outlet today. Yet, despite that, it is seldom seen as a space for class struggle. Due to leftist skepticism, the liberal milieu within the games industry that has more self-centred ways of selling their titles, and of course, a powerfull class in charge of the modes of production. If we believe the late academic Stuart Hall, it's a space to reclaim, Theodor Adorno would also correctly argue it's simply a circus that only more fully entrenches us into alienation. Walten Benjamin would center the discussion into how these structures are built, and who they benefit, which would be the driving force behind this lecture. Currently, the industry perpetuates systems of oppression more often than it offers tools for liberation. However, videogames have also acted as platforms for alternative political narratives and organizing – when and how? And when where progressive politics were co-opted for social capital accumulation, as defined by Pierre Bourdieu. That is not to mention the current brutal conditions in the Global South necessary for the medium to exist. The goal of this speech is not merely to critique, but to galvanize action, whether amongst academia, game developers themselves, trade unions or a variety of other stakeholders. By doing so, we can work towards a videogame industry that contributes to a broader emancipatory project, transforming it from a tool of capitalist reproduction into a medium of class struggle and liberation.

Matthew Cole
"TO EACH ACCORDING TO THEIR CONTRIBUTION": RETHINKING MARX AND "VULGAR SOCIALISM" IN THE AGE OF PLATFORMS
What claim can the working class make to the products of their labour in the age of platforms? The canonical debate over workers'

share of the product begins with Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program, in which he deconstructs the idea that under socialism workers will receive the "undiminished" or "full product" of their labour. He claims this notion is ensnared by the bourgeois logic of "equal rights," which is "an unequal right for unequal labour." This conception of right contrasts with a vision of lower and higher stages of communism. Marx's critique of Locke, Mill and others argues that the right to property is transformed under capitalism from a claim based on one's own labour into a claim over the ability to appropriate and hoard the products of another's labour. Yet he also claims labour-power is exchanged in a relationship of equivalence for wages. Must then workers simply accept the state-sanctioned appropriation of unpaid labour and surplus-value? Thankfully not, since Marx also argues notion of equivalent exchange is actually a ruse, since the capital exchanged for living labour capacity is already "alien labour, appropriated without equivalent" and must be replaced in that exchange "with a surplus by living labour capacity"; the relation between capital and labour only appears as "a mere semblance" of equivalents." Where does this leave his critique of bourgeois right and the claim by so-called "vulgar socialists" that each and every worker has a right to share in the products of their labour? And how might emergent forms of property such as intangible assets complicate the critique? This paper explores such questions.

Mohammad Javanmard

THE CONTEMPORARY SUBJECT OF HISTORY, DEATH, AND DESTRUCTIVE DESIRE

Under neoliberal globalisation, along with the relative shift of capital in the last decades towards mechanisms of primitive accumulation – i.e. accumulation through dispossession, exclusion from wage labour, devaluation of lives and bodies – we have been witnessing the rise of social and revolutionary uprisings that were sparked by the death of certain members from highly exploited and marginalised social groups. We can, for instance, think of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions, the Ni Una Menos movement in Argentina, and Black Lives Matter movement in the US. In this paper, I examine the transnational tendencies of these social eruptions, indicating signs of a subject of history, a new proletariat whose centre is less the traditional industrial working class and more those whose lives and bodies become a site for capital accumulation, those living in death-frontiers, that is where capital meets death and accumulation

is in a direct relation to the production of death and devaluation of lives. To discuss this, I draw on Veronica Gago's concept of 'feminized bodies' to denote such socio-economic classes as well as Sayak Valencia's Gore Capitalism. Thinking through Franz Fanon's account of the role of violence in gaining agency and resisting total de-humanisation, I also argue that in such a moment of despair, entrapment within the status quo, and lack of agency, it is the destructive desire of the most exploited socio-economic groups that enables gaining a newfound agency, which then spreads through the collective and gives rise to the possible emergence of a new subject of history.

Nikolay Sarkisyan

AESTHETIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE LUMPENPROLETARIAT AS A KEY TO IMPERIALIST WORLD ORDER: RUSSIAN POST-SOVIET "RED-BROWN" LITERATURE

The 19th and early 20th century Marxism was often suspicious of the lumpenproletariat, but this attitude shifted in the 20th century as the revolutionary potential of this group became more widely recognized. The lumpenproletariat played a significant role in the struggle for independence in third world countries like Algeria and Guinea, which was desribed respectively by Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral. In the first world, there have been instances where this class acted as a revolutionary force, such as the Black Panther movement in the United States. This raises the question: Does the lumpenproletariat possess revolutionary subjectivity? Can it serve as an independent force for social transformation? Without a distinct political leadership, the lumpenproletariat has shown the capacity for mutiny and revolt against the dominant order, often in hysterical, violent, and criminal forms, lacking any ideology, essentially turning the bourgeois world inside out. This image was reflected in Pasolini's Ragazzi di vita. Drawing on Fredric Jameson's thesis that the third world literatures are always national allegories, I want to explore the aesthetic (self)understanding of the lumpenproletariat. Specifically, I will focus on the phenomenon of Russian post-Soviet 'red-brown' literature, which addresses the themes of the lumpenproletariat or, more broadly, the declassé. My aim is to demonstrate how this understanding of the lumpenproletariat can help us make sense of the current actions of bourgeois Russia and what this reveals about the international imperialist order.

Pavlos Roufos

THE POVERTY OF OPPOSITION TO THE EU: NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY AND CLASS

Prominent scholarly accounts of European integration portray it as a process of a diplomatic/inter-governmental compromise between (primarily) Germany and France, an approach often supplemented by the view that Germany acquired a hegemonic role in the process. Parallel to such views, European integration is identified with a critical loss of national sovereignty, especially for those nation-states portrayed as peripheral to the hegemonic framework. Critical accounts of European integration, that became more prominent during the Eurozone crisis, popularised these approaches, conceptualising opposition to the EU/EMU and its austerity as a challenge to a German-led political economy of discipline, while also positing the reclaiming of national sovereignty as its alternative. This paper will focus on re-tracing the role of key architects of European integration as members of a cross-national epistemic community of shared (ordoliberal) beliefs about the state and the legal framework necessary for the market economy, and not as representatives of particular national interests. From such a perspective, the suggestions that see critical opposition to the EU/EMU through the promotion of national sovereignty demonstrate a failure to grasp the essential structure and purpose of European integration, thereby strengthening, circularly and inevitably, the very conditions that initiated it. Instead of a revival of national sovereignty, the potential for escaping the 'ordoliberal cage' of European integration is located on an equally trans-national class (and not national) mobilisation, capable of challenging both trans-national and domestic elites.

Rosie Collington

IN AND AGAINST THE GROWTH REGIME? NATIONAL BUREAUCRACIES AS SITES OF CONTESTATION IN GREEN TRANSITION POLICY

Following the adoption of the Paris Agreement, national governments around the world have developed and begun implementation of strategies to pursue systemic reductions in carbon emissions. Existing research describes how political parties, civil society actors, industry associations and transnational finance actors have influenced processes of agenda setting and policy formation in green transition strategies. However, national bureaucracies remain under-theorised as sites of contestation in these policy processes. This

paper argues that this is particularly pertinent for political economy research as governments move to stages of budgeting, implementation and evaluation of green transition initiatives. The paper begins by discussing tensions in the carbon neutrality objectives and green transition strategies that governments have adopted, and the growth regimes they are pursued within. It explores existing literature that demonstrates how the transformative potential of states is shaped by political processes (such as party negotiations and corporate lobbying) and relational processes (such as the creation of constituencies and structural economic factors). It advances a conceptualisation of bureaucratic processes of contestation that builds on notions of intra-bureaucratic contestation and bureaucratic activism. Then, drawing on insights and examples from a broader research project by this author, it proposes four levels at which this contestation occurs in the realisation of green transition strategies: environment and climate ministries; inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms; accountability and advisory bodies; and by individual public sector employees. It concludes with a discussion of the potential and limitations of these processes of contestation for the development and realisation of post-growth policies.

Rune Bennike

SURPLUS TO THE GREEN TRANSITION: CLAIMS AND CONDITIONS OF DEINDUSTRIALIZED LABOUR IN SOUTH-WESTERN SARDINIA, ITALY

This paper discusses the ways in which local workers in a former mining area in South-Western Sardinia have largely been rendered surplus to the needs of capital by deindustrialization and increasingly also in the green transition. Part of the way, this follows Marx' articulations of a relative surplus population and further developed by agrarian studies scholars such as Kalyan Sanyal and Tania Li. Yet there is something particular, I argue, about the industrial surplus population that sets the experience apart. Whereas the smallholders analysed by Li and Sanyal undergo a process of dispossession without proletarianization, the industrial laborers of Sulcis-Iglesiente have already passed through a process of proletarianization before being rendered surplus to capital. Hence, these people have already experienced a forceful and conflictual process of mobilization and organization building up work-related networks and union infrastructures. As described in other post-mining/post-industrial contexts, these networks persist, albeit in more-or-less fragmented

forms, well beyond the closures of the attendant industries. This raises some central questions about the post-industrial role of such networks. If the withdrawal of labor through strikes is no longer viable, then what sort of basis is there for claims-making and how is it mobilized? And what do the historically strong unions do when memberships are dwindling due, maybe not so much to a disinterest in union organization, but simply due to falling employment rates? What kinds of identities and sense of (in)justice are made the basis for claims to survival – maybe even a decent living – in place?

Saman Atter Motlagh

UNLIBERTY, INEQUALITY AND ENMITY: CONCEPTUALIZING THE SUBSTANCE OF HIERARCHIES

There are many potential ways of conceptualizing what a leftist critique of society is essentially about. By expanding, or perhaps perverting, Marx' concept of 'capital', Bourdieu offers a model for a social theoretical concept of inequality that cuts across many aspects of social life. In this talk, I will attempt to expand, or perhaps pervert, Bourdieu's concept of 'capital' with a psychoanalytic approach in order to offer a (meta)psychological concept of inequality that cuts across ALL aspects of social life. Furthermore, I will attempt to argue that such a concept of inequality is not separable from a concept of freedom, nor is it possible to truly understand the concept of enmity without it. In short, it is an attempt to conceptualize the substance of hierarchies and its toll on individuals, thus providing one potential, and hopefully fundamental, way of conceptualizing what a leftist critique of society is essentially about. To apply the theoretical gains of this discussion to a practical problem, the negative image of vocational education and training, my current research project, will be used as an example.

Sebastian Kokesch

MOURNING AGAINST OCCUPATION IN PALESTINE

In his 1973 publication Journal of an Ordinary Grief, Mahmoud Darwish dives into what it means to both mourn for historical Palestine and for its liberation-to-come. The Israeli repression of public displays of Palestinian collective memory – and hence also grief – means that mourning enters into contradiction with the occupying state. This however is not to say that mourning is not itself a site of contradiction, because not only do oppressive regimes appropriate the language of mourning, it plays an indispensable role in the

mythology of the new power. Authors like Negri, Negt, Kluge and Adorno have repeatedly pointed out how fascist states have come to resignify collective mourning as a public parade commemorating military defeat or TV transmissions of official funerals. Looking into Mahmoud Darwish's writing there emerges a clear counter-image of mourning as one of protest against the erasure of Palestinian memory from history. In a similar fashion, Amadeo Bordiga's essay "In Janitzio Death is not Scary" documents a mourning rite that is the exact inverse of the imposed stillness of state mourning. Here, mourning shows the personal death as reconciled with the fate of its historical community. The role of the fida'iyyin – martyrs – in the Palestinian struggle put every death into relation to the violence of the occupation. Under the threat of genocide, mourning cannot isolate personal death from the community. Instead, it necessarily takes on the shape of a demand for life. Focusing on how exactly mourning is expressed in the Palestinian struggle can clarify how mourning drives organized resistance and allow us to rethink the fight for mourning as a fight for a life free from fear, thus making it a political act of emancipation.

Shea Hennum

CLASS WAR BY OTHER MEANS

This presentation takes seriously Ruth Wilson Gilmore's claim that prisons represent the waging of class struggle by other means. It does so in two ways. First, by highlighting the relationship between class (in a conventional sense) and incarceration. Second, by teasing out how radical imprisoned intellectuals such as George Jackson, and formerly incarcerated novelists such as Edward Bunker, revolutionize our conception of class in their cultural figuration of prisons and prisoners. I do so in order to demonstrate how conceiving of class from the perspective of prisoners engaged in class struggle allows us to grasp prisoners as a class—internally divided across lines of race, gender, education, and antagonized by "free-world" people, most directly by prison guards, wardens, doctors, administrative staff, state bureaucrats, etc. From this perspective, we can come to recognize the struggle to abolish prisons as one waged by prisoners in order to abolish themselves as a class and thereby radically transform the political-economy of the planet. In this way, prison abolition represents and entails the waging of class war by other means, which precipitates and includes the critical reconsideration of "class," "war," "prison," "abolition." Undertaking this reconsideration, this presentation

aims to reframe these terms by demonstrating how their use emerges in and through the class struggle waged in and through prison.

Sherryl Vint

THE FUTURE AS ASPIRATION: RETHINKING CLASS AND IDENTITY

In the contemporary context of platform capitalism and accumulation by dispossession, anticapitalist struggle must forge solidarities beyond those of working vs. owner classes. This paper focuses the outsized role of Silicon Valley today, specifically its promotion of neoliberal fantasies that conflate technocapitalist products and the lifestyles they promote with the betterment of humanity as a whole. Drawing on Neda Atanasoski and Kalindi Vora's notion of technoliberalism, and critiquing the ideologies dubbed TESCREAL by Gebru Timnit and Emile P. Torres, I argue that it is urgent to rethink the category of anti-capitalist struggle, through the framework of racial capitalism, via an understanding of the importance of popular fantasy (as much as structural positionality) as a vector in the formation of an anticapitalist-class identity. The TESCREAL acronym names a range of transhumanist and ultra-rationalist ideologies embraced by Silicon Valley billionaires which also constitutes both a significant force in global economies (billions of dollars are directed toward future-value promised by technologies such as AI) and an aspirational class identity (propelled by propagandistic structures such as Peter Thiel's fellowship to promote entrepreneurship rather than education). While critique of TESCREAL has focused on its eugenic implications, less attention has been paid to its continuity with racial capitalist histories, specifically the ways it repeats the liberal production of 'freed' human potential through the dehumanization of colonised peoples and their labour. By focusing on the science-fictional underpinnings of Silicon Valley futurism, I suggest the need for increased attention to discourses of futurity in how we understand class.

Sophia Wathne

BUILDING THE WORLD WE WANT AND NEED

In this paper, I propose that the general understanding of prefiguration as a post-material, plaything of the middle-class is due to a lack of class and decolonial perspectives in the literature on prefiguration which tends to skew towards movements in the global north that are predominantly white and middle class. While some of the most famous prefigurative movements are in the global south, such

as the Zapatistas in Chiapas or the Rojava revolution, the literature rarely engages with prefigurative movements in the global south. This skewed sample has led to critiques of prefiguration, which is seen as a strategy reserved for the wealthy with time to experiment. The assumption is that if you are struggling to make ends meet you do not care about the climate or participatory democracy, and for many, the square movements of the 2000's and 2010's confirmed this. Moreover, the Marxist tradition's disregard of the peasant as a political figure, despite their historical significance, the class position of peasants, especially in today's neo-agro-colonial economy, is heavily under-theorized. This paper challenges this, rather simplistic, critique of prefiguration, by adding the political theory of a rural global south based movement to the literature on prefiguration. The KPL highlights a decolonial class aspect by showing how prefiguration can be aimed at exactly fulfilling basic needs while building a better world. In short, prefiguration for the KPL aims at creating livelihoods and organizing in ways that enable the survival of their members, moving the focus away from lifestyle and spectacle.

Søren Bøgh Sørensen

ACCUMULATION BY INVISIBILISATION: EXPLOITATION AND VALUE EXTRACTION IN THE GLOBAL DIGITAL VALUE NETWORKS OF MACHINE LEARNING SYSTEMS

Algorithmic systems in the form of machine learning or Artificial Intelligence (AI) are playing an increasingly important role in contemporary capitalism. From financial trading, credit, logistics, automation of production to marketing, advertising, and cultural production, these systems are entrenching unequal power relations while contributing heavily to our contemporary ecological crises. While AI no doubt represents one of the newest hypes of the tech-industry and its Silicon Valley ideology, we should nevertheless take seriously the negative impacts that such digital technologies have for the environment and human beings. This paper will delve into some of the negative consequences of AI systems by examining the social relations of power involved with the global value chains of such systems. It does so by focusing on the ways in which AI is implemented in algorithmic management systems but also how the production of these systems themselves depend on a largely invisibilized reserve army of data workers in the global south. In doing so, the paper attempts to build a comprehensive theorization of different forms of power lying at the intersection of capitalist social relations, neo-colonial extractivism,

and digital technologies, in order to shed light on different pathways for building and enacting resistance against the algorithmic logic of digital capitalism.

Tessa Barnow

A POLITICAL THEORY OF THE CORPORATION: REFOCUSING THE DEGROWTH DIAGNOSIS OF CORPORATE GROWTH IMPETUS AND SHAREHOLDER POWER

This paper challenges the degrowth movement's diagnosis of corporations as naturally growth-centric and undemocratic following the dominating voting power of majority shareholders. The author argues that this view stems from a neoliberal (mis)conceptualization of the corporation as a private entity and misrecognises shareholders as executive owners of corporations limited by shares. Drawing upon intellectual histories of the corporation, the author suggests that the problems attributed corporations by the degrowth movement are rooted not in shareholder ownership in itself, but from a general misconceptualisation of the corporation, leading to problematic regulation and governance. The author proposes a political re-conceptualization of the corporation, recognising it as a separate legal person constituted with its own interests, distinct from its shareholders. This perspective reveals that shareholders should not be understood as owners of corporations, lacking direct control over, responsibility for and the management of corporate assets or operations. The paper contends that the growth imperative and shareholder primacy of corporations arise not from stock-ownership in itself, but from misrecognising shareholders as rights-bearing owners of the corporation, which naturalises governance that equate corporate interests with shareholder interests. The author advocates for a revaluation of corporate governance, suggesting that more democratic and growth-agnostic corporate models might be possible if recognising the separate legal person that is the corporate form. The paper concludes by encouraging the degrowth literature to engage with this alternative conceptualisation of the corporate ontology to foster a political critique that could pave the way for transformative changes in corporate governance.

Thomas Waller

MISPLACING THE AVANT-GARDE: PETER BÜRGER AT THE MARGINS

This paper rethinks the distinction between the "historical avant-garde" and the "neo-avant-garde" from the standpoint of the periphery. As Peter Bürger influentially argued in Theory of the Avant-Garde, whereas the historical avant-gardes of the 1910s and '20s were united by the radical demand to reintegrate art into the praxis of life, the neo-avant-gardes of the 1950s and '60s lacked those earlier movements' revolutionary ambition. In subsequent years, critics took issue with Bürger's narrative of the betrayal of origins, accusing him of imprisoning postwar artistic experiments within a framework of repetition (Foster; Bucloh). More recently, Daniel Spaulding has reinvigorated the debate by positing the history of the avant-garde alongside the fate of the early-twentieth century workers' movement, which culminates in the political defeats and class re-compositions of the 1960s and '70s. Although cogent and compelling, these periodizations of the avant-garde do not easily translate into the peripheries of the world-system, where cycles of struggle are typically either belated or premature, divergent or prophetic. This paper accounts for this disconnect by proposing the category of the 'peripheral avant-garde' as a third term that aesthetically registers the asynchronous logic of combined and uneven development. As a test case, I take the Brazilian avant-garde movement known as Neo-Concretism, which follows the promise of a future class rapprochement between the national elite, the working class, and the landless peasantry in mid-century Brazil. As I will argue, the Neo-Concretists both supersede and return to the achievements of the historical-avant-garde a situation of underdevelopment.

Tilbe Akan

RIGHT TO BE UNHAPPY? A MARXIST-FEMINIST APPROACH TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF CAPITALIST HAPPINESS

The fetishization of happiness has obscured its complex social dimensions. This study delves into the capitalist discourse on happiness, revealing its detachment from social connections and its transformation into a commodity divorced from broader societal contexts. Under the guise of positivity and healing, happiness becomes a material concept and a tool of class power, legitimizing and furthering the structures of contemporary capitalism. This research examines how happiness functions as a political discourse, used to justify particular

societal arrangements. Through a Marxist-feminist lens, I assert the right to be unhappy as crucial for resisting dominant power structures. Ahmed astutely observes, "Happiness translates its wish into a politics, a wishful politics, a politics that demands that others live according to a wish" (Ahmed, 572). Thus, this paper analysis moves beyond critiquing capitalist happiness to advocating for the recognition and defense of the right to be unhappy. A central aspect of the capitalist happiness narrative is its self-legitimization to pacify and suppress the populace. The expectation for universal happiness becomes oppressive, penalizing marginalized groups who struggle to attain it. This illusion of social mobility coerces the unhappy into conformity, fostering compliance to maintain a non-threatening façade for the ruling class. This study aims to unravel the multifaceted nature of capitalist happiness. It highlights how happiness functions as a class weapon, perpetuating societal norms and reinforcing the legitimacy of those in power. Additionally, it explores the political potential of reclaiming the right to be unhappy within the capitalist framework of happiness.

Tim Christiaens

FASCIST PUBLIC SPHERES

With the rise of social media, fascist discourse and political tactics have moved into a new era. While there are clear resonances between the public rallies and speeches of, for example, Donald Trump and Benito Mussolini, late fascism today would never have been so successful without the online war machine of the alt-right. The online far-right is composed of white supremacists, a resentful manosphere of incels and gaming geeks, 'edgelord' New Atheists, and even trolls without ideological commitment who are there only "for the lulz." Maurizio Lazzarato has called this patchwork, loosely kept together through the viral dynamics of social media, 'cyberfascism'. Using the notion of "fascist public sphere," I argue that there is an elective affinity between fascism and social media that becomes visible in the tactics of the cyberfascism. While social media do not cause fascist upsurges, their design is also not neutral to political struggle. They constitute a unique terrain in which some political tactics operate better than others. Social media establish an attention market that thrives on engagement and cults of personality that fit extraordinarily well with the fascist understanding of the public sphere as the domain of acclamation for a political leader. Cyberfascism

constitutes the far-right's response to the structural transformation of the public sphere in the age of social media.

Veronika Ahrensbøll Schultz

BETWEEN WALLS AND WARDENS: A CRITICAL MAPPING OF THE CURRENT DANISH PRISON EXPANSION

The Danish prison system is undergoing significant expansion with new prisons being built, a pay raise for prison officers and a recruitment campaign. These are political responses to the perceived crisis in Danish prisons. At the same time, the image of Danish prisons as humane exceptions prevails. By this logic, prison officers are welfare workers like nurses and educators. Danish prisons are not, as opposed to e.g. US-American prisons, linked to capitalist exploitation. This paper critiques the exceptionalism that perpetuates the myth of humanism and overlooks the prison as an important point for a critical analysis of state reorganisation. I ask why we are seeing such a significant expansion of the prison system. My thesis is that the expansion is possible because it fulfils certain functions for the state. In line with the Marxist abolitionist Ruth Wilson Gilmore's concept of carceral geographies, I map the functions that emerge when analysing the prison as a place expanding in "walls and wardens." I argue that prison expansion becomes a tool for economic development in struggling communities and is simultaneously linked to notions of a welfare state based on care. This runs alongside a racialisation of crime, which increasingly involves fantasies of annihilation as prison becomes a tool for removing unwanted citizens. Both the care and the economic fix promised by the prison expansion must be understood as means of covering up the effects of the reorganisation of the welfare state as a crisis in the prison system and a question of crime.

Violeta Garrido

CLASS EPISTEMIC POSITION AND COLLECTIVE (UN-) CONSCIOUSNESS IN HISTORY AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

The year 2023 marked the 100th anniversary of the publication of *History and Class Consciousness*, a work that represented an enormously sophisticated intervention both at the level of Marxist theory and philosophy and at the level of revolutionary politics. I propose to explore the extent to which there is in the Hungarian thinker's work a theorisation of the unconscious, an unconscious not necessarily libidinal or pulsional, but as an epistemic and automating mechanism of agents' action, and how to deal with it. First, on the basis of

its common history with the psychoanalytic claim, I will explain the need for Marxism to think about the unconscious. Afterwards, I will show how Lukács understands the historicity of consciousness. Then I will explain how reification works in creating unconscious epistemic barriers but also how it shapes class consciousness. Then I will look at the ability of the dominated class to overcome these barriers. Finally, I will outline some of the strategies of consciousness-raising or transcendence of the unconscious that are also present in Lukács' later work. This last part is the most important because it helps us to discuss and imagine what strategies we have today to develop class consciousness. According to the Hungarian philosopher, it is necessary to find some kind of collective organisation -—the party, but not necessarily in Lukács' later work, which focuses more on the general need for democratisation— that acts as a carrier of the consciousness wrested from reification.

William Banks

THE DEATH (AND REBIRTH?) OF THE KOLLEKTIVROMAN

In a recent essay, Luke Savage notes a marked resurgence of one of the more hidebound conservative bugaboos, namely the charge that Leftists of all stripes share a commitment to "collectivism," and that this complete disregard of "the individual" constitutes a mortal threat to our very civilization. Of particular curiosity in this latest wave of hysteria is a survey of US elite colleges which "found that collectivism is the most broadly promoted theme" across the curricula of these storied institutions of higher learning. Oddly enough, one corner of the contemporary university that has clearly not gotten the message is departments of literary studies, which uniformly teach a version of literary history in which the individual narrative subject – be it centered or "de-centered" – is presented as the "natural" form of address in the novel. But this story elides a significant period, roughly between the world wars, in which authors the world over consistently challenged the convention of individual subjectivity, which was broadly viewed as a relic of the bourgeois past. These collective novelists, particularly preeminent in Denmark/Norden, attempted to reimagine the novel as a vehicle for the dramatization of collective subjectivity; in Marxist language, the subjective element in class formation. And yet today hardly anyone, even the so-called experts, is aware that any of this ever happened, for the genre rapidly went extinct after 1945. This paper examines the various reasons for this, and

further argues that a revival of the collective novel is sorely needed in our renewed struggle for socialism.

William Westgard-Cruice

MARITIME LABOUR REGIMES IN THE OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY INDUSTRY

Within the growing literature on the geographies of renewable energy, there has been a remarkable tendency to disregard the workers involved in the construction, operations, and maintenance of renewable energy power plants. Today, more and more workers in the global wind energy industry are organizing in trade unions and taking strike action, raising the necessity of scientific analysis of the organization of 'labour regimes' throughout this industry. Within advanced capitalist countries, an increasing share of wind power capacity is being developed offshore, and both the specific natural conditions and territoriality of offshore wind power production are shaping labour regimes in this sector in ways that have yet to be systematically analysed. In this presentation, such an analysis is undertaken from the perspective of the Marxian critique of political economy. Emphasis is placed on the continuous introduction of new means of production and associated transformations in the productive subjectivity of the 'collective worker'. It is argued that the development of labour regimes is shaped by the contradiction between the production of relative surplus value through the objective and subjective socialization of labour and the necessity of capital to maintain control over the workforce in the spheres of production and social reproduction. Many Marxists have theorized how and why capitalist production necessarily drives ecological degradation. New research is needed to uncover how the historical dynamic of capital accumulation is also producing new human needs, new human capacities, and new potentialities for the reconstitution of the working class as a historical subject.

Yan (Thea) Pan

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF NEUROTECHNOLOGY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REPRODUCTION OF LABOUR POWER

The paper explores the frontiers of digital capitalism: the political economy of neurotechnology (or brain-computer interface (BCI)) in the context of a global race in neuroscience development and commercialisation driven by states and venture capitalist since 2014.

Specifically, I will introduce the neuroscientific project in China – China Brain Project – and the research and application landscape of BCI startups. The hypothesis of the paper is that the concerted push by state and capital towards the advancement of neuroscience and neurotechnology, that is the advancement of the productive force in capitalist social relations, represents a new form of exploitation of labour power through capitalising on brain data as well as manipulating human intelligence, emotion and interaction with machines. To this end, the paper aims to demonstrate the technical capabilities of neurotechnology, give examples of BCI applications in health and workplace scenarios, problemtise the discourse of transhumanist human enhancement, and argue for 'intelligence capital' as a concept to understand a deeper entrenchment of real subsumption of labour process in digital capitalism.

Zoe Zofia Robakiewicz

FORMING FORSTANDERSKABERNE: COLONIAL REFORMS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY GREENLAND AS A MILESTONE IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF GREENLANDIC SOCIETY FROM SUBSISTENCE ECONOMY TO WAGE LABOR AND MARKET INTEGRATION

In my presentation, I aim to illustrate the process of transforming Greenlandic society from one centered around subsistence economy to one integrated into the external market, particularly drawing on Karl Polanyi's characterization of market patterns. My focus will be on the colonial reforms implemented in Greenland during the mid-nineteenth century and the establishment of forstanderskaberne, local councils of representatives, as a pivotal moment signifying a milestone in a finished process of primitive accumulation and the proletarization and transformation of Greenlandic society into a wage labor system. To depict the process of proletarization, I will emphasize the deliberate undermining of the foundations of the subsistence economy by the colonial power. This erosion aimed to weaken the independence of indigenous social relations from colonial governance. The research informing this presentation is grounded in the history of Danish colonial governance in Greenland spanning from 1721 to the second half of the nineteenth century. It draws upon legal documents such as the Instrux for Greenland from 1782, which served as the colony's constitution until the 1950s, as well as writings by colonial administrators like Henrich Johannes Rink.

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2025

ABOLITION

TENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE DANISH SOCIETY FOR MARXIST STUDIES

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Aarhus University, Denmark
10-11 October 2025

OPEN CALL

While we particularly encourage engagements with the theme of "Abolition" for this year's conference, we also welcome papers on any number of topics that contribute to critical research and thereby to enriching the Marxist tradition by expanding its range of interlocutors.

* * *

"We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence," Marx and Engels once famously wrote. The word 'communism' to them did not signify some utopian endpoint, but rather a concrete engagement with a concretely existing state of affairs standing in the way of social liberation. Today, as the extreme right is attacking liberal institutions from within, critical scholarship has the urgent task to provide an alternative perspective on what it means to abolish in order to reconfigure.

Contemporary abolitionist discourse has been crucially shaped through black radicalism during the twentieth century. Drawing on the collective memory of slavery, this intellectual and political movement criticised the unfulfilled promises of anti-racist governing and interracial democracy. Appropriating Marxist categories, they analysed the conditions for life in a society built on colonialism, while black activists struggled against the police and other state institutions of racial and carceral capitalism.

In recent years, we have seen a surge in abolitionist discourse and practice, which became especially visible during the Georg Floyd protests. Abolition puts into question not only private property, but also the wide range of social forms it depends on such as racism, borders, prisons, and militarism. Feminist and queer abolitionists, working towards liberated forms of living, have adopted and renewed the abolitionist epistemology to criticise capitalist and colonial structures imposed on gender and social reproduction. Abolition is the decisive rejection of power differences and a radical strategy towards liberation; it is both the context and content of social struggle.

The concept of abolition assembles under its banner a broad range of critical theoretical traditions and analytical strategies; it marks a common direction, yet a plurality of approaches. In a call for a world beyond sexism, racism, police, and prisons, the Danish Society for Marxist Studies invites researchers from all fields and strains of critical research and radical scholarship to engage with abolition as a broadly conceived project of liberation.

We welcome papers that engage with topics such as (but not limited to) the following:

- Abolition and political organisation
- Abolitionist strategies against, beyond, and within the state
- Empirical engagements with rejections of reformism
- Critiques of and alternatives to abolitionism
- Queer and feminist liberation
- Settler colonialism
- Prison abolition
- Family abolition
- Abolition of (private) property
- The relationship between abolition and freedom
- Successes and pitfalls of prior abolitionist efforts

Please submit your abstract (max. 250 words) through this form by 1 May 2025. Abstracts and presentations may be in Danish or English.

PLEASE NOTE

The conference is in-person only, and it will not be possible to present virtually. Attendance is free but requires registration beforehand.

Participation in the conference dinner is only possible with pre-payment at registration, which will open in the summer.

The Danish Society for Marxist Studies *(Danish: Selskab for Marxistiske Studier, SMS) is an independent academic society in Denmark. The purpose of the society is to promote interest and research in Marxism and other strands of critical thought and radical scholarship at Danish universities and institutes of higher learning, especially among early career scholars. We understand 'Marxism' in the broadest possible sense of the term as the critical tradition emanating from Marx's thought in its entire historical and theoretical breadth and depth, and SMS is not committed to any one particular theoretical or political position.*

ABSTRACTS

M.E. O'Brien

INSURGENT CARE AND THE UTOPIAN HORIZON (KEYNOTE)

Drawing from her book *Family Abolition* and her speculative fiction, M. E. O'Brien will speak on the political contradictions of utopian socialism. Considering the legacy of French utopian socialist Charles Fourier, deliberate communal living projects, and the critique of the utopian tradition by Marx and Engels, O'Brien identifies both the radical kernel in their utopianism and their colonialist tendencies. These utopian blueprints can be counterposed to the utopianism emerging from within collective protest movements, considering the George Floyd uprising and recent global Palestinian solidarity movement as examples. These utopian horizons are fostered by forms of insurgent social reproduction that emerge in the collective life of protest. This analysis points to a role for revolutionary theory and radical speculative fiction in drawing out, distilling and reflecting back the revolutionary horizons already taking shape in mass struggles.

Ashok Kumar

ABOLISH CAPITAL: DISRUPTING THE LAWS OF MOTION (KEYNOTE)

Capitalism's efficiency is a death trap. Industrial hellscapes, maritime empires, and fossil fuel wars have built a world that runs on just-in-time suffering—but the machine is seizing up. This presentation examines how these regimes of accumulation, rooting in globalized supply chains, the centralization of capital, and extractive

energy economies, generate immense power and deep vulnerabilities. This isn't theory. It's a battlefield. Every "optimized" supply chain is a noose we can tighten. From hyper-exploited garment and electronics workers whose labor sustains global production, to mass strikes in factories across the global south that interrupt the flow of industrial capital, resistance is emerging at capital's weakest links. The Houthis (Ansar Allah), whose blockade of the Red Sea has disrupted maritime trade against Israel's genocide in Gaza, have exposed critical chokepoints in global shipping. Meanwhile, climate activists sabotaging fossil fuel infrastructure confront extractive economies head-on. These struggles reveal that capitalism's efficiency is not invincible but contingent, dependent on uninterrupted logistical flows and vulnerable to disruption. Rather than succumb to defeatism in the face of capital's apparent omnipotence, this paper argues that the left must seize the strategic openings created by these contradictions. Strikes strangle production. Blockades starve ports. Pipeline sabotage bleed investment. Every fracture is a frontier. The task is not merely to critique capital but to abolish it by exploiting its fractures, turning efficiency into fragility, and transforming isolated acts of resistance into a coordinated offensive against accumulation itself.

Amelia Spooner

FREE TO LABOR: WORK AFTER THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY IN THE FRENCH EMPIRE

Recalling a central claim of W. E. B. Du Bois' Black Reconstruction in America, Ruth Wilson Gilmore has written that abolition is not "just absence." Rather it is "a fleshly and material presence of social life lived differently," both a "theory of change" and "a theory of social life." This talk examines the theories of change and social life encoded in legal projects for the (second) abolition of slavery in the French empire in 1848. It takes 1848 as a particularly important moment when the already existing ideological alliance between citizens' rights and the duty to work was inscribed into law. In other words, the end of slavery meant the beginning of a particular sort of social and legal freedom: the 'freedom' to work. That is, newly minted citizens demonstrated their fitness for the rights ostensibly accorded to them qua citizens through their laboring. The appeal to the citizen-as-worker at the highest level of abstraction – a category seemingly applicable to all French citizens – obscured its specific object in the colonies: proletarianized, racialized, workers. Law managing

workers after the abolition of slavery broke decisively with the legal frameworks that had preceded it and drew its core ideological and programmatic resources from the pre-emancipation context. The talk thus investigates the relative 'break' brought about by abolitionary projects. What remains of the old world in the "fleshly and material presence of social life" that has just been born?

Denise Utochkin

THE PIVOTAL MOMENT FOR AI ABOLITION

Despite the early critical theoretic work challenging assumptions about the necessarily progressive nature of science and modernity, a hegemonic narrative about the inherently emancipatory potential of technology remains widespread within mainstream culture as well as academic discourse. Opposing this fideistic belief and building on insights from critical theory, critical algorithm studies, and anthropology of bureaucracy, this paper views 'AI' as a sociotechnical assemblage and political project. We argue that doing so reveals AI to be a product of the necropolitical high-modernist ideology that gave rise to two key precursors of 'AI': speculative global capital and nation-states. Using 'AI' as a particularly rich context in which to trace the destructive force behind capitalist democracies, we analyse how the logics of reification and necropower are articulated in a wide range of 'AI' applications and demonstrate that the ultimate goal of these logics is extinction. Noting the rapidly growing contribution of 'AI' to the climate collapse, increasing number of lives deemed disposable by its development, deployment, and application, global epistemicide it enabled, and the promise of a hyperreal fully administered society whose delivery is being attempted through it, we conclude that abolition of 'AI' before it has been fully naturalised, as sociotechnical assemblages in the industrial revolutions before it, is not only a moral imperative, but also a hopeful act that re-opens a windows of opportunity of transformative change and realisation of actual liberation for all. This might be the last possibility before the end of the world as we know it.

Esben Bøgh Sørensen

COOPERATIVES AS DRIVERS OF CAPITALIST AGRICULTURE

On the Left, cooperatives are generally seen as essential to organizing a socialist economy, with historical farmer cooperatives often cited as a key inspiration for contemporary socialist movements. In particular, the historical Danish cooperative farmer movement is frequently

portrayed as a democratic and anti-capitalist sector of the economy, standing in contrast to a capitalist sector dominated by stakeholder-owned companies. In this paper, I argue that the notion of historical Danish farmer cooperatives as democratic and anti-capitalist is based on a romanticized perception of Danish agriculture before the Second World War. In reality, cooperatives were the very organizational mechanism that facilitated Danish farmers' integration into the capitalist world market. More than just enabling this integration, I argue that cooperatives actively accelerated the capitalist transformation of Danish agriculture. And since the 1960s, they have played a central role in driving an export-oriented and industrialized model of animal farming, leading to the concentration of agricultural land in the hands of a few large landowners. Today, this model faces profound challenges amid multiple ecological crises. A reconsideration of historical Danish farmer cooperatives also has implications for how we understand the role of cooperatives in socialist strategy. My reinterpretation suggests that cooperatives should be seen as one of many organizational forms within capitalist economies, rather than as inherently capable of pointing the way beyond capitalism. Placing cooperatives at the center of socialist strategy risks relegating the crucial question of abolishing market competition to the background.

Jacob Blumenfeld

THE ABOLITION OR SOCIALIZATION OF PROPERTY

"The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property," Marx and Engels wrote in the Communist Manifesto. But what does this mean for property relations beyond capitalist society? Are there still some rights to property in a post-capitalist world? What about the historical and current struggles for socializing property, production, land, housing, energy, finance and the family? Are these abolitionist demands or reformist ones? This talk will argue that the idea of socialization offers a more coherent, though contested, framework for thinking the transition to a post-capitalist society, but only if it incorporates abolitionist insights as well.

Jana Kujundzic

MARXIST-FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF THE FEMICIDE LAW: TOWARDS FEMINIST ABOLITION IN THE BALKANS

This paper provides a Marxist-feminist critique of femicide law recently adopted in Croatia and argued for in other former Yugoslav states such as Serbia and Montenegro by radical and liberal feminists. These calls for the expansion of the carceral state are disguised as demands for protection and as measures for the success of women's rights. This is what Duff (2018) refers to as "feminism-as-crime-control," advocating for longer sentences and the introduction of new criminal offences, such as femicide, in the name of protecting women. The definition of femicide suggests that the ultimate goal is to exterminate women. On the contrary, domestic violence is tasked with disciplining women into (re)production; murder is an excess to which the state should respond because, in addition to disrupting the sanctity of the family home, it harms capital by destroying women as a resource. The purpose of punishment and the role of the police is not primarily to safeguard women from violence; rather, it is to protect marriage and family, or relationships that have the potential to evolve into such structures, as legally recognised and monitored forms of kinship. Building on Roberts's (2017) assertion, the law is not simply a repressive tool for the ruling class; it is also an integral part of the social ontology of capitalism. But the law is never neutral or objective; it carries gendered and class-based characteristics, shaping norms around femininity and sexual propriety. This article will argue for feminist abolition firmly rooted in materialist analysis.

Kristoffer Willert

ECOVILLAGES AS ANTI-CAPITALIST LABORATORIES FOR ABOLISHING AND RECONFIGURING SOCIAL LIFE?

Can prefigurative movements like ecovillages support the abolishment of the existing social order? Some consider them anti-capitalist laboratories that embody, from the bottom up, ways to reorganize social life. My aim is to investigate the abolitionist and revolutionary potentials of the ecovillage movement. Ecovillages are communities practicing renewable energy production, permacultural food production, communitarianism, shared economies, and post-capitalist urges. Most ecovillages organize a commons-based social life mediated more by non-monetary transactions, collective property relations, and use values. Like other 'anarchist' niches, they prefigure alternative social life forms in the here and now as they fight

capitalist destruction by building ecological futures in the cracks of the present system. But can they support an ecosocialist revolution? It has been claimed that ecovillages are divorced from socio-political mobilization by being privileged (white, middle-class), escapist, and a-political (individualistic). Although these criticisms are likely true in some cases, I will argue that ecovillages do have willingness and potential to support the abolition of capitalism's imperial mode of living. But to fulfill that potential, they need revamp their political strategies by 1) engaging more with other social movements with the aim of 2) creating political pressure and counter-hegemonic discourses on a larger scale. As they now exist, instances of anti-capitalist organization are generally scattered and entrapped like irritants in the pores of capital. We need to free and connect them through what David Harvey has called a "co-revolutionary" process. Ecovillages can participate in that process.

Mikkel Flohr

CONTRIBUTION TO A MATERIALIST APPROACH TO THE HISTORY OF IDEAS

My paper is a reflection on and contribution to the development of a distinctly Marxist approach to the history of ideas (focusing in particular the history of political thought). It commences with an outline of the relevance of historical materialism to the study of the history of ideas and interrogates the reasons for its historical marginalization within the discipline. It then introduces and engages one of the most successful attempts at constructing a Marxist approach to the history of ideas, namely Ellen Meiksins Wood's "social history of political theory." However, the paper identifies a number of contradictions in her approach and show how they can be resolved via a return to and elaboration of Marx's historical materialism.

Magnus Møller Ziegler

WHAT IS A "MATERIALIST" CONTEXT?

As noted in recent path breaking work by Mikkel Flohr (2025), Marxism has always had a fraught relationship with ideas, and consequently Marxist approaches have been conspicuously absent from intellectual history and the history of ideas as a discipline. This is not least strange since context has been the watchword of contemporary intellectual history for the past 50 years, and the materialist conception of history practiced by Marx seems uniquely suitable for precisely the kind of historicising contextualisation favoured by many

intellectual historians. In this paper, I want to explore what 'context' means from a materialist perspective. By looking at examples of how Marx actually contextualised in his analyses, and following Flohr as well as William Clare Roberts's recent (2025) discussions of 'ideology', I claim that materialism in this regard does not mean a dismissal of ideas and discursive practices as irrelevant. On the contrary, Marx's attentiveness to the relationship between form and content requires us to examine how and why these relate to and affect each other. A materialist context is thus not just a material context. This also has wider implications for what we even mean by 'idealism' and 'materialism', a discussion also relevant with regards e.g. to so-called new materialism, and I claim that materialism as understood by Marx is not an ontological but a methodological standpoint.

Lotte List

MARX BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY AND CRITICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

In order to develop a Marxist intellectual history, we must first understand Marx's own conception of what "history" means, and the role of the concept in his thought. A classical critique of Marx has it that his theory of capitalism rested on a teleological view of history: according to this interpretation, Marx was a utopian who believed that the conflictual nature of capitalism would eventually bring about its end and pave the way for humanity's reconciliation in the new era of communism. This critique may have found its most prominent proponent in Karl Löwith, yet it has remained a recurrent objection to Marxist thought. Drawing on the work of Massimiliano Tomba on historical temporality and historiography in Marx, this paper argues that while a certain rhetoric of determinism did play a role in the writings of the young Marx, he gradually revised his youthful philosophy of history into a critical historiography in the later works. Marx's conception and use of the notion of history thus changed throughout his writings, resurfacing as a central theoretical problem at critical stages of theorizing. In *Capital*, he came to employ a critical rehistorization against the romantic "Robinsonades" of political economy, and in textual fragments from his final years, we find considerations on multiple temporalities. Insofar as this late Marx has a universal concept of "world history," this appears as a product of the capitalist world market, not as a teleological endpoint, and it is never total or uncontested by other possible histories.

Marie Thøgersen

CAPITAL, CLIMATE, AND THE LIMITS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

In a globalized world, capitalism and its ecological consequences transcend national borders, while international law remains rooted in the idea of fixed territories. This presentation discusses international law's limitations and potentials in countering the ecological devastation wrought by global capitalism. While international law is organized around territorially bounded states, Marxist legal scholars have long shown that it is also complicit in capitalism's relentless drive to tear down spatial barriers. However, thinkers disagree as to how international law's territorial logic correlates and coexists with the logic of capital. The presentation brings a fresh perspective by deploying a critical spatial lens, showing how international law simultaneously facilitates and restricts global movements of money, commodities, and people according to the logic of capital. With its inherent tendency to overproduction, global capitalism is the root cause of the climate crisis, which knows no territorial limits and threatens planetary living conditions altogether. As climate movements increasingly deploy international legal discourse to push for climate action – calling for the criminalization of ecocide and state adherence to the Paris Agreement – the stakes are sharpened: the territorially bounded system of international law is being mobilized to address a crisis fueled by the very boundlessness it has enabled. Through a critical interrogation of three aspects of the Paris Agreement – greenhouse gas reduction provisions, climate financialization mechanisms, and technological development mandates – the presentation shows how international law's spatial flexibility continues to serve the interests of capital, hampering its potential as a tool in the struggles for climate justice.

Micha Frazer-Carroll

ABOLITION AND MENTAL HEALTH

In mainstream abolitionist discourses, mental health services are often positioned as an alternative to incarceration. However, in capitalist economies, mental health services have historically served as key sites of state surveillance, coercion, incarceration and control. During the industrial revolution, "lunatic asylums" and "mental hospitals" rapidly expanded across Europe, its colonies and the US. Like prisons, they warehoused people who were unexploitable under the emerging economic system, or actively destructive to the process of

capital accumulation. "Anti-psychiatry" theorists and activists such as Erving Goffman and Franco Basaglia identified mental hospitals as "total institutions" that functioned as prisons with no sentences. This movement, which was quelled by the mass closure of institutions in the latter half of the 20th century, is a rare case study for abolition in action. Deinstitutionalisation is an often-overlooked historical event, which should be instructive in debates among present-day abolitionists. It had clear successes and failures, including the subsequent expansion of the prison population. There is also a societal amnesia surrounding the history of asylums, particularly in the UK context from which I write, which has led anti-capitalist and anti-austerity activists to make uncritical demands for psychiatric expansion. This risks setting the abolitionist movement back. Using research from my book Mad World: The Politics of Mental Health (Pluto Press, 2023), and engaging with the successes and failures of the anti-psychiatry movement, I will argue that, as abolitionists, it is crucial that we engage with the lessons of deinstitutionalisation, and contemporary demands for psychiatric abolition.

Mikkel Krause Frantzen

ABOLITION AND CARE IN THE CLIMATE ENDGAME

"We are on the brink of an irreversible climate disaster," the scientific paper "The 2024 state of the climate report: Perilous times on planet Earth" states, "This is a global emergency beyond any doubt. Much of the very fabric of life on Earth is imperiled. We are stepping into a critical and unpredictable new phase of the climate crisis." In my current project I call this critical and unpredictable new phase of the climate crisis the climate endgame. This endgame is not simply the end of the world, but the unraveling of existing life-systems, temporalities, and political imaginaries. In this context, abolition becomes both more urgent and more fraught. What does it mean to abolish a world that is already abolishing itself? Drawing on Black radical traditions of abolition, Marxist thought, and eco-feminist work on the concept of care, this paper explores the friction between abolition and care in the climate endgame. Rather than positioning care as a 'soft' supplement to the hard work of 'abolition', I ask whether care itself can be reimagined as an abolitionist practice, and whether some forms of care might need to be abolished altogether. "We are inheriting a broken world," Jacob Blumenfeld writes. "We no longer need to abolish it, since it's already abolishing itself. Our task…is rather to manage its decline." This paper takes that provocation seriously – not

to relinquish abolition, but to reimagine it as a Marxist horizon of struggle in the climate endgame where care and militancy converge and become one.

Nanna Dahler

ABOLISHING ADOPTIONS: FROM COERCED CHILD REMOVAL TO COMMUNAL CARE

A new approach to child welfare policy has seen the light over the last decade in Denmark: Adoption without consent from birth parents is becoming a cornerstone in municipal child protection practices. Before reforms to adoption- and child welfare law in 2015, Denmark saw 1-2 yearly cases of child protection adoptions. After the reform, numbers have risen yearly to over 50 adoptions in 2024. With the newest reforms, adoptions for child welfare purposes can be effectuated before the child is born, and the adoptions will be closed adoptions, which permanently terminate parental rights for the birth parents. In most cases, parents are rural poor with disabilities or psychiatric diagnoses. This paper takes starting point in a feminist ethnography on forced adoptions in Danish municipalities to explore what an abolitionist critique of the new adoption paradigm can be. First of all, it acknowledges the complicated way that care and coercion come together in child welfare politics. The paper argues that the state adoption paradigm de facto performs a transfer of children from one class to another and rests on a privatized model of social reproduction based on proprietarian child-parent relationships. The paper then asks what forms of communal child welfare we could wish for after abolishing adoptions.

Signe Leth Gammelgaard

THE GENERAL ASSOCIATIVE TENDENCY ON SPEED (ABOLISH INSTRUMENTALITY)

A recent study in Nature has shown that innovation and disruptiveness in science has declined over the past six decades across all disciplines and faculties. Measured in terms of citation patterns, the study shows that despite a growing volume of publications, progress and disruptive breakthroughs seem to be slowing down. One takeaway is that people are generally citing more inside their own field and citing the same sources. The study further suggests this to be correlated with the funding mechanisms in the current research environment, stating indeed that "Relying on narrower slices of knowledge benefits individual careers, but not scientific progress more generally."

(143) In this paper I will first briefly discuss the mechanisms of this funding structure in the Scandinavian countries and how it affects the possibilities for both creative and disruptive research, paying particular attention to the patterns that apply to early career scholars. Then, I will suggest possible strategies to counteract these trends and create spaces – albeit small – for actual thinking and for examining new ideas. I will foreground the usefulness of association and curiosity as opposed to the structural incentives for instrumentality, feasibility, and logical reasoning, and I will finally discuss how to address this problematic at a more collective level.

Tim Christiaens

ABOLISH PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OVER LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is quickly transforming the world of work. Especially for knowledge workers, the emergence of Large Language Models (LLMs) appears like an imminent threat to their livelihoods. However, debates over automation and cognitive deskilling are not new. The rapid industrialization of British manufacturing in the 19th century had already stirred social unrest and academic debate about these topics. In response, Karl Marx formulated a conflict-based theory of technological development that can inform our understanding of AI's impact on work today. According to Marx, technological innovation is the product of power-struggles between managers and workers over the coordination of the labor process. As Harry Braverman later specified, workplace technologies separate the moments of conception and execution, which render workers subservient to managerial commands mediated by machines. Technological development is a tactic for managers to cut labor costs by replacing workers with machines, increase labor productivity, and deskill the remaining workforce. However, technological development is also an arena of social struggle where workers can fight back and retake control over the moment of conception by seizing the means of production. I argue that the development of LLMs can similarly be understood as a managerial tactic to privatize the commons of social communicative cooperation and render knowledge workers dependent on technologies that coordinate their labor for them. However, by retaking control over the financing, design, and implementation of LLMs, workers could reconfigure these technologies to align with human social needs.

Abhiraj Goswami

"WE HAVE NEVER BEEN HINDU": CONTESTED IMAGINATIONS IN NON-WESTERN MARXIAN THOUGHT

This paper examines the clash between the Ambedkarite and Maoist movement in post-independence West Bengal, India as a vital, though underexplored, site of abolitionist politics in the Global South. Grounded in a critical reading of B.R. Ambedkar's Annihilation of Caste and Charu Majumdar's Historic Eight Documents, my research interrogates how caste and class are mobilized as competing axes of social domination, and how each movement conceptualizes the abolition of oppressive structures. Though both traditions engage in direct action and grassroots organizing, they diverge on what must be abolished and how: Ambedkarites prioritize caste annihilation through legal, institutional, and cultural struggle; Maoists advocate armed revolution to destroy the state and private property. This tension is also reflective of the clash between the pre-figurative, radical realist interpretations of Marxian thought and the interstitial, analytical Marxists. I diagnose this by interpreting abolition as a strategy of liberation, which focuses on dismantling foundational structures of domination rather than engage in mere reform. Situating Indian political thought within broader Marxian discourses, I use a comparative-interpretive approach that highlights the dialectical entanglement of caste and class. Ultimately, my research explores whether a shared emancipatory horizon can be forged across these movements, and the lessons that such a synthesis could offer to the contemporary literature on Marxian imaginations that tackle social stratification, racial capitalism, and structural violence.

Alejandra Juárez González

ABOLITION AND EMANCIPATION: A MARXIST REFLECTION ON POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

Abolition and emancipation are two central concepts in both postcolonial and Marxist theory. While abolition is often approached from a juridical-legal standpoint, emancipation is commonly related to wider processes of social and political transformation. This study focuses on reinterpreting abolition from a perspective of Marxist emancipation, which is examined across three interrelated dimensions: political (as the emancipation of the working class and the achievement of political independence from the capitalist state), economic (as the transcendence of private property and the liberation of labour as its true essence) and ethical (as the overcoming of

human self-estrangement inherent to capitalism). Drawing on key postcolonial works from Latin America and the Caribbean—such as Eric Williams, José Carlos Mariátegui, and Susan Buck-Morss—this study aims to explore the philosophical significance of abolition in relation to emancipation in the specific context of Latin America and the Caribbean. This study considers the region's colonial episode to be central to the constitution of capitalism as a global phenomenon and thereby will engage with certain postcolonial debates that consider the colonisation of the Americas as the inauguration of the universality of European modern rationality – namely, the philosophical basis of capitalist logic. Ultimately, it argues for the necessity of a postcolonial perspective within Marxist theory to understand how capital's abstract universality has colonised global spaces, and to consider the possibilities for emancipation beyond the confines of the Western world.

Anastasiya Kotova

NO SOUL TO DAMN, NO BODY TO KICK? THEN ABOLISH IT

That the corporation has no soul to damn and no body to be kicked is a lamentation of the limits of the criminal punishment for corporations, attributed to Lord Thurlow. Despite this lamentation, the idea of imposing criminal responsibility on corporations has continued attracting sustained attention of liberal lawyers. In this talk, I will demonstrate how the individualising discourse of corporate criminal responsibility for atrocity crimes normalises the corporate form as such and naturalises ubiquitous and systemic harm, produced by corporate operations. I argue that corporate activities necessarily result in the exhaustion of human and extra-human nature due to, on the one hand, the dynamics of the mute compulsion and, on the other, the capital-nature relation. Further, I suggest that the specific way, in which mute compulsion is articulated through legal relations and the legal form – in this case the corporate form – brings about the intensification of the dynamics of mute compulsion. Thus, I suggest that liberal legal attempts to pursue legal accountability should be sidelined in favour of dismantling the corporate form as such.

Anthony Obst

FROM BLACK RECONSTRUCTION TO "THE BRONX SLAVE MARKET": OUTLINES OF ABOLITION DEMOCRACY IN 1930S BLACK MARXISM

Over the course of the Depression decade, Black American activists and intellectuals engaging with the Marxist tradition articulated radical visions of collective self-determination to positively substantiate the abolition of racial slavery. Like W. E. B. Du Bois in his historical study Black Reconstruction (1935), they frequently highlighted what Saidiya Hartman (2006) would later call the "afterlife of slavery" to argue for comprehensive social, political, and economic transformation that would exceed the liberal imaginary of rights-based inclusion. Drawing on Du Bois's framework of abolition democracy, I explore the resonances of this framework in a range of political writings and organizing efforts of its time. One example I will focus on consists of the theory and practice that revolved around what the activist-intellectuals Ella Baker and Marvel Cooke called "The Bronx Slave Market" (1935) – an informal economy that sprang up in the Great Depression through which Black women's domestic work was systematically expropriated. My analysis proposes that writers such as Du Bois, Baker, and Cooke laid critical groundwork for abolitionist projects that would develop in the wake of the civil rights movement and in response to an expanding carceral state in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Thus, the writings of 1930s Black leftists offer instructive elucidations for what abolition democracy has been and what it will have been, providing crucial insights for contemporary movements seeking to dismantle carceral geographies and build more just futures.

Ashley Bohrer

CAPITALISM AND THE UNFINISHED ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

In the debate about how to figure the relation between slavery and capitalism, Marxist theorists tend to make a devastating assumption: that slavery was, in fact, abolished in the 19th century. This paper argues against this assumption, using the work of Saidiya Hartman, Rinaldo Wolcott, Fred Moten and others to argue that while slavery as a labor status was abolished, many social relations of slavery (in both the realms of production and reproduction) outlasted formal abolition, what Hartman calls the 'afterlives of slavery'. The paper engages with Marxist analyses of slavery (Post, Tomich, Williams, Du

Bois, Nesbitt, Mau, and others), exposing how integrating an analysis of slavery's afterlife and the unfinished character of abolition shifts not only how we understand the slave/waged worker relation historically, but also how we think about that capitalism means more broadly. In this sense, truly understanding what abolition means and integrating it into our analysis radically refigures how we define and understand capitalism.

Birke J. Friedländer

AT THE EDGE OF ABOLITION: IMPUNITY IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 2023 COUP-ATTEMPT IN BRAZIL

Following the proposal of Ruth Wilson Gilmore – not to assume that the police are the solution to the problem we face (2022) – I want to explore contemporary responses to far-right political violence in Brazil. I depart from the recent coup-attempt, where thousands of supporters of the former far-right president, Jair Bolsonaro, on January 8, 2023, stormed the national congress, supreme court, and presidential palace in Brasília. The criminal investigation into the coup-attempt has furthermore revealed an alleged plan to assassinate the then president-elect Lula da Silva, his vice-president candidate Geraldo Alckmin and the head of the Supreme Electoral Court Alexandre de Morães. These events have sparked traumatic memories in the country of the military dictatorship (1964-1985) during which thousands were tortured, murdered and disappeared. The response to the coup-attempt has largely been a turn to the legal apparatus and a call by the Brazilian left to imprison the "golpistas/terroristas" (coup-mongers/terrorists) under the slogan of "sem anistia" (No amnesty). The slogan refers to an amnesty law of 1979 that granted amnesty for all political crimes during the dictatorship, which facilitated the return of many exiled leftists, but also included the military's own crimes. For many Brazilians on the left the political reasoning has therefore been that this time, there shall be no amnesty, nor impunity. In this paper I will present the preliminary findings of my recent fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro and Brasília and discuss the possibilities for an abolitionist framework within a context of historical impunity.

Bruno Leipold

SORTITION AND SOCIAL DOMINATION

Can sortition (random selection for political office) contribute to the abolition of capitalism, patriarchy, racism, and other forms of social

domination? This paper attempts an answer to that question by first examining the limited radical literature on sortition from CLR James to feminist utopian fiction and practical proposals from BLM activists for police abolition. From this survey, I identify and critically assesses a putative argument in favour of sortition over elections: (1) that it produces a better descriptive representation of the socially dominated; (2) that it is more insulated from capture by the socially dominant; and (C) hence leads to political outcomes that erode social domination. I argue that the putative argument's two premises can hold true but depend on institutional design, which if done poorly may mean that sortition is no better or even worse than elections. More fundamentally, I argue that even where the two premises are fulfilled, sortition is not sufficient for political outcomes that erode social domination, which depend on the concurrent actions of organisations of collective power (i.e. social movements, political parties and trade unions). I conclude that sortition can, given certain accompanying institutional and organisational conditions, make a modest contribution to the abolition of social domination.

Carlos Cordero-Pedrosa

T. THOMAS FORTUNE: A REPUBLICAN ABOLITIONIST?

This paper looks at the political thought of journalist, intellectual and civil rights militant, Timothy Thomas Fortune (1856-1928). Although recognized as part of the Black Radical Tradition, most of the academic work on Fortune has emphasized biographical and experiential elements: his journalistic production, his formative role over the likes of W.E.B. Du Bois or Ida B. Wells, and his contentions with African American conservative leader Booker T. Washington. This scholarship has not addressed the central ideas of his thought, namely the critique of domination in the post-slavery and the budding industrial society, and the notion of freedom as the capacity to be socially and materially independent from possible arbitrary interferences. His thought blends the ideas of his black abolitionists coetaneous, with republican and socialist thought. For Fortune, the formal abolition of slavery was insufficient to make African-Americans free without targeting the economic and political system. As he wrote, slavery persisted under waged labor and abolitionism was "another name for communism." In his thought can be discerned a normative basis concurring with the principles stemming from the long genealogy of natural rights. He elaborates upon the right of man to exist as the basic condition of freedom along four main points: the fiduciary

conception of property and political life, a singular version of virtue manifested in the importance of education, unity of action through black and white solidarity, and a critique of industrial waged labor.

Mikkel Nørregaard Jørgensen

AGAINST THE INNER LIFE OF GREAT MEN: CRISIS AND AESTHETIC FORM IN ASTA OLIVIA NORDENHOF'S DJÆVLEBOGEN

Danish author Asta Olivia Nordenhof's narrator ends the preface in *Djævlebogen*, the second instalment in her novel-septology on the Scandinavian Star ferry tragedy, with the statement: "while struggling / to write / a real book / on the inner life / of great men / my motto / here it comes / it is simple and / good: / fuck men! (…) I can do / what I want / so this is / my book (…) an erotic thriller / about businessmen and / the devil / it is / some poems / about love / a speech / from the mad house." The project statement of Nordenhof's books was to examine capitalism through the insurance arson of the Scandinavian Star ferry in 1990. However, the notion of containing this project within the novel form seem to be crumbling. This crumbling is turned into a literary reflection on the possibility of great narratives of literature in times of crisis by Nordenhof. In this paper, I argue that *Djævlebogen*, and the septology's published volumes, can be viewed as a literary response to the global crises of today – a response shaped from a sense of impossibility of giving form to crisis. I situate my analysis in dialogue with theory ranging Adorno's thinking on the impossibility of poetry after Auschwitz, Peter Osborne's writing on crisis and form, Joshua Clover's writing on literary form and capitalism, and feminist work on care and anti-narrativity from for example Silvia Federici and Ursula K. Le Guin.

Emilie Farbæk Johansen

SEXARBEJDE: ARBEJDE, SOLIDARITET OG SENKAPITALISME: EN ANALYSE AF SEXARBEJDERORGANISERINGERNE VSS OG SWARM OG DERES STRATEGIER I, MED OG MOD STATEN

This research explores the political strategies of sex worker organising through an analysis of the Danish sex worker magazine 'Vi står sammen' (VSS) from the 1990s and the British collective 'Sex Worker Advocacy and Resistance Movement' (SWARM), active since 2009. Employing a feminist, Marxist, queer, and affect-theoretical framework, the presentation examines how VSS and SWARM work with, within, and against the state. VSS pursued

a reformist approach — a politics for the meantime — through strategic alliances with political parties and the creation of spaces for care, community, and re-presentation. In contrast, SWARM adopts an explicitly abolitionist agenda, fostering solidarity across justice movements and providing radical political education to sex workers. By claiming the identity of "worker," SWARM exposes the workings of capitalism and its mechanisms of racialised, gendered, and sexualised oppression—while aiming to dismantle them. By analysing sex workers' political strategies—particularly regarding recognition, state collaboration, and the framing of sex work as work—the presentation argues that sex worker resistance provides crucial insights into the double bind of contemporary radical politics; how to strategically navigate the tension between immediate survival and long-term emancipation. VSS and SWARM's endeavours reveal that resistance is not only persistent but also expanding, posing a challenge to the patriarchal-capitalist order. They underscore the critical importance of acknowledging marginalised communities and learning from their resilient strategies of resistance.

Frida Sandström

DECULTURALIZATION AS THE ABOLITION OF CULTURE AND THE FAMILY FROM FRANTZ FANON TO CARLA LONZI

Italian art critic and separatist feminist Carla Lonzi's essay "Let's Spit on Hegel" from 1970 became decisive for Italian feminism in which women's rights were called for as decolonization. (Lonzi 2023: 23; Dalla Costa & James 2012: 58; Rivolta Femminile 2023: 70) Lonzi describes feminist consciousness-raising as 'deculturalization' – a notion which prior to her had been used by Frantz Fanon to describe the 'cultural alienation' of colonized subjects (Fanon 1986: 159; Fanon 1967: 31, 41; Ruíz 2019: 238). Transposing deculturalization to separatist feminism, Lonzi made it the name of the practice of 'disidentification' from, and unlearning of 'patriarchal culture' (Ellena 2021: 115; Mascat 2023: 107). At the same time, she described it as the activity of rediscovering the oppressed experience of the subaltern (Lonzi 2023a: 48; Giardini 2021:201-202). The negative aspects of deculturalization in Fanon's writing was hence turned on its head by Lonzi as sexual liberation in which abolition was practiced in the withdrawal from heteronuclear law and culture. In this paper, I will reactualize Lonzi's practice of deculturalization in the context of a materialist critique of culture and the family today. Following her insistence that an autonomous sexual practice as the refusal to participate in

procreation was enough to obliterate the current system, I will underscore how collective desire is a common denominator across Fanon's and Lonzi's thinking of how experiences of the deculturalized subject are to be expressed – within and against confining cultural forms (Fanon 1986:134–135; Lonzi 2023b:88; Fiorino 2020: 200; Giardini 2019).

Geoffrey Rathgeb Aung

DE-/IMPERIAL WORLD-MAKING: INTER-ASIAN COMMUNISM AND THE LOGISTICAL BLOCKADE

Grounded in long-term, engaged fieldwork in Myanmar's southern borderlands, this paper considers the ongoing struggle against one of the world's largest logistical infrastructure projects: the Dawei special economic zone (SEZ), a deep-sea port and petrochemical estate geared towards moving oil and gas from the Persian Gulf and Bay of Bengal to Thailand and the transpacific. Taking up Kuan-Hsing Chen's call for de-imperialization across inter-Asia, I frame the Dawei SEZ as a site of contradictory world-making projects. On one hand, SEZ proponents aim to deepen imperial logics scaled at the level of a changing world market. On the other hand, Dawei-area farmers, fishers, monks, and students challenge this Thai-backed mega-project by forming cross-border spaces of struggle with comrades in Thailand, for instance, but also elsewhere. Rooted in mass demonstrations, refusal of relocation, and blockades of the access road—practices I locate within an uneven, yet emergent logistical blockade, extending from Oakland to Standing Rock, the Red Sea to Hong Kong, the Wet'suwet'en Nation to Santiago, Bangkok, and Delhi—I argue that de-imperial intimacies anchored in Dawei prefigure alternative worlds beyond those delimited by contemporary logistical empire. Accordingly, I locate de-imperial inter-Asia within the real movement unfolding against the logistical present. This communism—however inchoate, however incipient—raises fundamental questions about capitalist logistics, the imperial formations of today, and the need for a social antagonism capable of abolishing the current order. Can the logistical blockade, a site of both care and militancy, reconstruct and reclaim a more authentic form of human community?

Lotte Schack, et al.

SAMTIDA MARXISTISK TEORI: EN ANTOLOGI (BOOK PRESENTATION)

Der foregår en renæssance for marxistisk teori både på og udenfor universitetet. I antologien Samtida marxistisk teori (red. Evelina Johansson Wilén, Lotte Schack, Carl Wilén og Johan Örestig Kling), som udkommer på det svenske forlag Daidalos i løbet af 2025, undersøges denne renæssance i 39 kapitler af 44 forfattere. Hvert kapitel præsenterer en samtidig marxistisk teoretiker og dennes relevans for at forstå vigtige spørgsmål i vores samtid: fra økonomiske kriser og det europæiske grænseregime, klimakatastrofen og gentrificering, til den feministiske bevægelse og velfærdsnedskæringer. Formålet med antologien er at vise den mangfoldighed som findes i den samtidige marxistiske teori, og gøre denne bredt tilgængeligt—for studerende, såvel som aktivister og alment interesserede læsere. Et andet formål har været at samle det marxistiske miljø i Sverige, og de teoretikere som præsenteres og de temaer, som tages op, er et resultat af forslag, som er indkommet fra forfatterne selv. Bogen er derfor i høj grad et kollektivt projekt, som spænder over en bred vifte af marxistiske teoritraditioner. I dette panel præsenterer to af antologiens redaktører først tanken bag bogen og arbejdet med den. Efter det har vi budt to kommentatorer til at læse bogen og komme med kritiske kommentarer, som skal byde publikum ind til en åben diskussion både om antologien, men i forlængelse af dette også en diskussion om, hvordan vi kan formidle marxistisk teori, samt dens relevans—og begrænsninger—for politisk organisering. Forhåbningen med panelet er også at kunne inspirere til lignende projekter i den danske marxistiske kontekst.

Mathias Hein Jessen

FROM PERSON TO FICTION AND BACK AGAIN: LAW AND ECONOMICS, AGENCY THEORY AND THE SCHIZOPHRENIA OF CORPORATE PERSONHOOD

Legal scholars and political theorists have increasingly highlighted how the economic and organizational efficiency of the firm is conditioned upon its existence as a separate legal person or entity, and that this existence is conditioned upon legal and state intervention. In doing so, they criticize economic theories of the firm, agency theory and the nexus-of-contracts approaches for downplaying the role of law and the state in the constitution of legal entity status or personhood. This paper argues that this downplaying is not simply

an understatement, but part of a rhetorical and discursive strategy to encase the firm from political contestation, both from above (the state and law) and from below (from worker influence). Agency theory, nexus of contracts and its influence in the economic analysis of corporate law must be understood as part the Law and Economics-movement to encase the corporation from the encroachment of state, law, democracy, worker influence and social and environmental responsibilities. The paper analyzes how the discrepancy between the legal institutional facts of the corporation and the dominant theoretical strains have been produced through a rhetorical redecription of the corporation by disregarding separate legal personhood and reducing the corporation to the actions of utility-maximizing individuals. This rhetorical move has allowed for 'corporate schizophrenia', the ability to reap both the economic, organizational and liability benefits of separate legal personality and at the same time the economic benefits of 'piercing the corporate veil', by disregarding the separate legal entity status and safeguard the (property) rights of individual shareholders.

Matthew Cole

DESTROY AI: TECHNO-ABOLITIONISM AND COMMUNIST FUTURES

Hysteria over technological change has morphed from utopian prognoses of a post-work future into a realist dystopian present where generative artificial intelligence has started substituting human labour in tasks ranging from creating writing to genocidal airstrikes. Yet, fears of a robot apocalypse are overblown. Instead, the digital revolution consumes unprecedented amounts of energy and water to deliver a world of AI-slop, despotic surveillance, and crypto pyramid schemes. Cloud capital is fossil capital by another name and AI's endgame for humanity is climate apocalypse. Demand for compute power and data storage is displacing other socially useful activities from education to housing. In this context, a new politics against machines has been emerging across the world. This paper explores the practical implications of a techno-abolitionist communism. While the abolition of artificial intelligence is but one step in the long march to the abolition of private property, it is nonetheless necessary to sketch out how this might be done. Can we simply turn back the clock on the large-scale development and organisation of the forces and relations of production? A neo-primitivist return would mean more subordination to the scarcity and

instability of nature in an ever more crisis-prone climate. Yet, as EP Thompson reminds us, "a reminder of its alternative needs, expectations and codes may renew our sense of our nature's range of possibilities." The possibility of a communist future means we must abolish the present state of things, including (but not limited to) AI.

Mikkel Bolt
REPRÆSENTATION OG FASCISTISK POLITIK

I januar 1979, tre måneder før parlamentsvalget i Storbritannien, publicerede Stuart Hall artiklen "The Great Moving Right Show," hvor han forsøgte at analysere det højreskred i britisk politik, der blev bekræftet, da Margaret Thatcher i april vandt valget og blev britisk premierminister. Hall udfører i teksten en marxistisk situationsanalyse og forsøger både at beskrive det specifikke i situationen og forankre tilslutningen til Thatcher i et længere historisk perspektiv, der har at gøre med opbremsningen i britisk økonomi og det komplicerede for Labour i at skulle gennemføre et politisk spareprogram. Hall diskuterer om Thatcher skal forstå som en genkomst af mellemkrigstidens fascisme og peger på ligheder i det politiske program, hun fører kampagne med, og mellemkrigstidens fascistiske bevægelsers politik, ikke mindst konstruktionen af fjendebilleder, for Thatcher migranter, og betoningen af behovet for lov og orden. Men Hall er bange for, at venstrefløjen overser det nye ved Thatcher, hvis fascismetermen bringes i anvendelse. Hvis det er fascisme, ved vi hvad vi skal gøre, skriver han. Derfor coiner han betegnelsen autoritær populisme. Med genvalget af Donald Trump er det oplagt at vende tilbage til Halls analyse, der stort set ikke har været bragt op i forsøget på at analysere Trump, hverken i 2016 eller i 2024. Oplægget vil gøre dette ved at diskutere ligheder og forskelle mellem Marx' analyse af Louis Bonaparte, Antonio Gramscis analyse af Mussolini og Halls analyse af Thatcher med særligt henblik på spørgsmålet om repræsentation.

William Banks
DAVID HAMILTON JACKSON AND CLASS STRUGGLE AT THE TWILIGHT OF THE DANISH WEST INDIES

In May of 1915, the Crucian educator, journalist and labor leader David Hamilton Jackson arrived in Copenhagen to plead the cause of his long-suffering people, marking the beginning of the end of two centuries of Danish rule, if not, as sadly remains true to this day, actual independence. After securing vague promises of social reform as

well as, critically, a guarantee of press freedom, Jackson returned to St. Croix to found the daily newspaper The Herald, through which he and his allies would help establish the St. Croix Labor Union, which would stage a national strike the following year, the success of which would ultimately prompt the Danish government to agree to the sale of the colony to the United States in 1917. This paper examines the complex intersection of race and class as it plays out in the pages of The Herald during the waning days of Danish rule.

Emily Siena Stephenson

ABOLITION, ACCUMULATION AND THE SETTLER COLONIAL CARCERAL STATE IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

This paper explores how carcerality in Australia – particularly in the Northern Territory (NT) – functions not merely as punishment for crime, but as a settler colonial mechanism for the continual accumulation of wealth through Indigenous dispossession. Despite widespread evidence that prison fails to deliver justice or safety, Indigenous hyperincarceration persists, with Indigenous youths often comprising 100% of those in detention. Drawing on settler colonial theory and Marxist understandings of accumulation by dispossession, I examine how the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in NT prisons sustains settler capitalist expansion: criminalising Indigenous presence as a precondition for extracting value from Indigenous land and life. Prisons here do not just confine bodies – they form part of a carceral economy which works to clear space for economic, political, and ideological control. Within this context, I critically assess the emergence of alternative-to-custody initiatives under the NT Aboriginal Justice Agreement, including the Peacemakers, Community Courts, and the Healing Centre on the Groote Eylandt Archipelago off the east coast of the NT. These projects claim to reconfigure justice through Indigenous-led processes, raising urgent questions about the potential for abolitionist openings. Do they challenge the foundational settler logic of the carceral state, or do they reproduce its extractive and disciplinary functions under a new guise? This paper considers whether such initiatives offer material ruptures to settler domination – or whether they serve to camouflage carceral expansion as 'community-led' justice.

Isa Lappalainen

ENTREPRENEURIAL DREAMS, EXPLOITED LABOR: SMALL FIRMS AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF STARTUPS IN SWEDEN

Sweden has been hailed as a "startup mecca," with innovation-driven entrepreneurship promoted as a driver of economic growth and employment. Massive public and private investments have fueled this sector, yet behind the rhetoric of dynamism lies a deeper transformation of waged labor. This paper critically examines the political economy of Sweden's startup society, analyzing its ideological foundations, redistribution of risk, and the creation of a new capitalist subject: the "startuper." We argue that the "startuper" belongs to the broader petite bourgeoisie, traditionally defined by its intermediary position between labor and capital. Yet unlike conventional small firms, startups are embedded in an ecosystem shaped by state policy, venture capital, and a narrative that glorifies insecurity—recasting it as the necessary condition for the kind of buzzing, high-tech entrepreneurialism deemed appropriate to hyper-modern contemporaneity. Through projectification and short-term funding cycles, startups often fail to generate stable employment, instead normalizing precarity and self-exploitation among both founders and workers. Bringing Marxist critiques of the petty bourgeoisie into conversation with empirical analysis of the Swedish startup economy, we explore how startups diverge structurally and ideologically from traditional small capital. We ask: How do startups reconfigure the role of small capital in contemporary capitalism? What conditions have enabled their expansion? And to what extent do they represent a genuine economic transformation, rather than a creation of speculation and ideology sustained by state policy? By interrogating Sweden's startup boom, we assess its implications for labor relations, the emergence of new political subjectivities, and class struggle.

Tatiana Llaguno

SOCIALIZE ALL LABOUR: A HEGELIAN-FEMINIST DEFENSE OF FAMILY ABOLITION

This paper brings together Hegelian philosophy and Marxist-feminist discussions on labour. First, it critically examines Hegel's treatment of work, arguing that both the definition of labour he offers and the centrality he gives to it align with Marxist feminist tenets. However, it also contends that Hegel's confinement of care work to the family excludes it from universality –something that reveals a

contradiction in his theory of freedom, as care work remains unrecognized as a fully free form of labor in his system. Importantly, the paper highlights that current interpretations of Hegel's theorization of the family often fail to integrate both gender and class analyses, and that by doing so, they limit critical appropriations of his thought. Engaging historically and theoretically with feminist demands for the socialization of reproductive labour and the abolition of the family, the paper demonstrates how practical contradictions that point out to normative failures, consistently underlie recurrent feminist debates on these questions. Finally, it explores the limitations of the family form and mobilizes both Hegelian and feminist insights to advocate for the socialization of all labour and the reconfiguration of our social relations and institutions. Drawing on feminist theorizations of the anti-social family, the paper contends that Hegel's concerns about the lack of ethicality in civil society must be extended to the family and that family abolitionists are convincingly addressing the ethical contradictions of the family form while preserving its rational core. It concludes that the feminist demand of the socialization of labour is not merely a matter of justice but a condition for the actualization of freedom itself.

Aleksandra Arent

TERRITORIALISATION FOR EXTRACTIVE AND ENERGY INDUSTRIES THROUGH EU-FUNDED NATURE CONSERVATION IN KENYA

In my presentation, I will address the issue of the EU's territorialisation of Kenya's land, which is fostered by the current large-scale climate aid programmes under the general strategy of 'aid for trade'. First, I will briefly introduce the mechanisms that allow the EU's member states and their corporations to grab immense stretches of land in Kenya. These include the UN's Clean Development Mechanism, Kenya Vision 2030 and the EU's Green Deal, of which implementation often results in displacements of the rural communities from their communal land through favouring (foreign) capital, underpinned by colonial ideologies. After that, I will present two case studies based on my fieldwork in Kenya: the Northern Rangelands Trust, which is an EU-funded land management NGO governing over 12% of Kenya's land mass and Papariko, a French-backed carbon credit programme aiming to conserve mangroves on the entire coast of the country. I will argue that these programmes allow for 'accumulation by dispossession', often to the benefit of EU-based extractive

and energy corporations, including Total Energies and Vestas. Furthermore, I will also touch upon how these programmes encourage conflicts between local rural communities through restricting access to natural resources essential for the subsistence livelihoods. The resulting clashes motivate the EU-funded militarisation of the previously communal lands. Lastly, I will elaborate on how this limitation of subsistence livelihoods forces the rural communities into participation in the global economy, for example, through replacing the use of mangroves for house-building with Chinese-owned concrete, or instead of using the products of pastoralism, becoming customers of international food corporations.

Jonna Beebe

OUR BURNING BODY: PRIVATE PROPERTY, GATTUNGSWESEN, AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The central contribution of this paper is an exploration of how private property and the capitalist mode of production, together, result in estrangement from nature. By critically engaging with the Marxian concept of gattungswesen I will show how the abolition of private property is necessary for responding to climate disaster not just in an economic sense, but ontologically as well. The connection between private property and nature is outlined in Marx's 1844 manuscripts. He outlines how the existence of private property under capitalism coerces workers, who do not own private property, to sell their labor to survive. This results in four kinds of alienation most notably alienation from gattungswesen. When we are alienated from our gattungswesen we are estranged not only from our Human nature, we are also alienated from the world around us. Marx refers to our environment, what he calls "inorganic nature," as our inorganic bodies. I will interrogate exactly what "inorganic nature" is in this sense and its relationship with the worker, and what Marx means when he says it is our inorganic body. He claims that we affirm our essence as humans by freely engaging in creative labor in our environment. However, because capitalism coerces us to utilize our labor in the service of capital, we are estranged from both our nature as humans and a part of ourselves, inorganic nature. As long as the means of production are privately owned, this state of estrangement will inevitably persist and continue to facilitate the climate crisis.

Mariah Wakefield

ABOLITION AND THE SUBJECT: MICRORESISTANCE OR THE GREAT REFUSAL

This paper explores abolition through subjectivity, arguing that the development of radical subject forms require a complete refusal of the capitalist hegemon, and not mere negotiations with the system of power. This paper explores the theoretical divide between true abolition and forms of micro resistance, by juxtaposing a Foucaldian approach to subjectivity with Marcuse's concept of the Great Refusal. I center Marcuse here, since his work has inspired subsequent abolition movements, and informed prominent abolitionist and criminal justice reform strategies for theorists such as Angela Davis. Understanding the extent of capitalism's ability to mould subjectivity, to propagate false-consciousness, Marcuse championed a more extreme response– the Great Refusal. This refusal sets the demands for a new kind of society where life instincts transcend the aggressive instincts, or the competitive instincts of the capitalist market. In contrast, Foucault and scholars working in that tradition, cite how revolutionary action is formed by day-to-day micro-resistances, and in the subject's ability to "invent one's own life." After disavowing total revolution, Foucault promoted new technologies of the self that allowed the neoliberal subject to "not be governed so much." Foucault's theories are representative of a widely held approach to mediations between subjectivity and neoliberal capitalism, wherein the modern subject must find ways to negotiate with the dominant system of power. Additionally, the Foucauldian approach often negates how race and gender privileges curtail the subject's ability for resistance and "autonomy." As this paper will argue, this is fundamentally counter to abolitionist tactics and theory, and does little more than strengthen neoliberalism's ideological and material hold.

Merethe Riggelsen Gjørding

THE DYADIC COMMITMENT OF THE ABOLITIONIST ETHOS

In this presentation, I unfold what I have termed a research endeavor of the unfinished, drawing on Thomas Mathiesen's (2014/1986) notion of the unfinished as a methodological and ethical orientation. I reflect on the dyadic commitment within the abolitionist ethos: remaining attuned to the present material conditions of life, while also engaging the horizon of transformative, abolitionist futures. These reflections emerge from my doctoral research, Enabling Justice – Learning with Incarcerated Women How to Understand and Practice

Prevention Differently, which I am currently completing. With deliberate ambiguity, this study centers the Danish penal welfare system examining both how incarcerated women experience its current preventive practices across various institutions, and how they envision alternative forms of public intervention. While the presentation foregrounds methodological contributions, it also offers glimpses into the empirical textures of the research. Rather than limiting the analysis to how the criminal justice system responds to legally defined 'crime' – and thereby reaffirming the state's delimitation of what counts as harm – this work broadens both the analytic lens of prevention and the institutional field in which it unfolds. I introduce three key research strategies: (1) Decentering the individual, (2) Refusing carceral language as analytical categories, and (3) Speculative practices and counter-spells. In doing so, I foreground the importance of unresolved doubt and ambivalence as vital companions in research that aligns with abolitionist commitments to both/ands as also suggested by Davis, Dent, Meiners, and Richie (2022), and that embraces a necessary humbleness in moving toward unbuilt ground.

Veronika Schultz

DET ÆSTETISEREDE FÆNGSEL: AFVIKLING, UDVIDELSE OG ABOLITIONISTISKE BRUDFLADER I SAMTIDENS DANSKE FÆNGSELSLANDSKAB

Dette paper stiller skarpt på, hvordan æstetiske strategier i samtidens danske fængselslandskab dækker over, normaliserer og reproducerer fængslets voldelige karakter – netop i det øjeblik, hvor institutionen på overfladen synes i forandring. Jeg undersøger, hvordan nedlagte fængsler som Vridsløselille omdannes til boligområder og kulturinstitutioner med henvisning til fællesskab og idyl, mens nye fængselsbyggerier – som udvidelsen af Sdr. Omme Fængsel, der gør det til landets største fængsel – præsenteres gennem billeder af bæredygtighed, nordisk humanisme og arkitektonisk ro. Gennem analyser af arkitekttegninger, kommunal byplanlægning og borgerprotester mod nybyggerier, viser jeg, hvordan forestillingen om det humane fængsel æstetiseres og dermed afleder kritik. Med afsæt i abolitionistisk tænkning, Roland Barthes' teori om myten og Michelle Browns begreb "penal spectatorship," læser jeg denne æstetisering som et ideologisk slør, der naturaliserer fængslet som en nødvendig og legitim institution i velfærdsstatens infrastruktur. Samtidig peger lokale borgerprotester mod nybyggerier af fængsler på en affektiv fornemmelse af tab af adgang til fællesrum og natur

– en latent erkendelse af fængslets adskillende karakter og den vold, som fængslets mure trækker op i landskabet. Jeg argumenterer for, at der netop i spændingsfeltet mellem afvikling og udvidelse åbner sig et abolitionistisk mulighedsrum for at udfordre denne æstetisering og spørger, hvordan vi kan genindsætte erfaringen med frihedsberøvelse i det kulturelle og politiske billede – og insistere på fællesskaber uden fængsler.

Marina Velickovic
ABOLITION OF INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL LAW: A MARXIST CRITIQUE
Black feminists in the United States have made sophisticated arguments for the abolition of the prison industrial complex, of which criminal law is a crucial component. This literature offers a materialist critique of the carceral system, demonstrating the centrality of prisons for processes of both dispossession of Black communities, and accumulation of capital through the extraction of Black labor inside prisons. I take this as my starting point and explore the potential and limits of an abolitionist critique of international criminal law (ICL). I argue that ICL is fundamentally different as a mode of accumulation and that consequently, its potential abolition is unlikely to significantly disrupt accumulation or circulation of capital.

Anette Svane
CONFRONTING THE WORLD THROUGH ITS LIVING BECOMING: ART AS CAPITALISM'S OTHER
Has art lost its ability for resistance? One distinct characteristic of the system of capitalism is the ability to reinvent itself, adapt to, and co-opt criticisms of it. Fredric Jameson and Mark Fisher, among others, have pointed to how the notion of 'alternative' no longer designates anything outside of the mainstream but has become the dominant style within the mainstream. Gestural anti-capitalism is thus no threat to capitalism but becomes an integral part of it. This makes any form of cultural opposition inherently contradictory, as it stands in tension with capitalist structures and the fragile autonomous status of artworks. Stefanie Baumann, following Theodor Adorno, argues that standardization of cultural expressions shape and perpetually endorse perceptual habits under contemporary capitalism. Tensions of totality and freedom find their expression in the opposition of popular culture and counter culture, and the old Marxian aesthetic conflict between realism and modernism. One central

aspect of the conflict has to do with how the idea of art's autonomy is caught up in elitist notions of taste and superiority, and today we see how distorted ideas of 'mass appeal' and popularity can become weaponised by reactionary forces. With this presentation I will revisit and rethink some central aspects of this aesthetic conflict, especially Bertolt Brecht's notion of realism as an experimental attitude. Engaging with some recent examples of Scandinavian art, I will emphasise how 'realism' as an aesthetic attitude might break through the opposition of popularity and resistance.

Nicole Stybnarova

'DECEIVING WITH A SWEET BANANA': WOMEN IN TRUST TERRITORIES AS THEORISTS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

This contribution is inspired by theories of abolition and non-reformist reforms, which it combines with the normative approach of praxis- and grounded theory. Despite their ostensive evolution from social movements, abolitionist and non-reformist interventions often remain theoretical and, some would even say, utopian, as they refrain from committing the error of reforming within the existing system. My contribution makes practical, normative and anti-essentialist proposals for non-reformist reforms of law aimed at women's liberation. In my training as international lawyer, I examine petitions sent by women in trust territories (former colonies under UN's supervision) to the UN Trusteeship Council between 1945-1998. These women were laywomen – bakers, wives, entrepreneurs. Inspired by how they described their needs and articulated their demands towards the UN, the international community and law, I treat their petitions as an imaginary canon of international law and women's rights. The women discussed women's liberation through topics such as, market participation, access to means of production, control over scientific knowledge, etc. Through their pronouncements, they effectively redrew axioms which define social problems of women's liberation and corresponding hegemonic and critical theoretical and legal concepts. Additionally, the women argued with a distinct rhetorical style combining history, economy, politics, law and personal stories. I draw on these substantive and formal elements of the women's political speech to articulate three regulatory proposals radically rethinking how we conceive of women's rights. Through this exercise, I show how praxis- and grounded theory can attach a positive and firm (yet anti-essentialist) project to abolitionism.

Suzana Rahde Gerchmann

DISRUPTING CAPITALIST LEGAL SUBJECTIVITIES, ABOLISHING ACCUMULATION STRATEGIES

Law is perceived as being pivotal to women's emancipation. Women gaining legal recognition and a full set of rights is construed as equivalent to gender equality. When addressing issues around gender pricing, which involves charging consumers differently for the same product or service because of their gender (e.g. pink and blue razors), experts turn to regulation. Legal scholars suggest anti-discrimination as the solution to the problem, and economists argue women should shop better. However, law has a limited emancipatory potential. In this paper, I focus on alternative solutions to gender pricing that allow real emancipation and material transformation of realities. As gender pricing materialises women's subordination in small percentages of extra charges and labour across a lifetime, the question I aim to answer in this paper is: acknowledging law's limited emancipatory potential, what can we learn from Queer Marxists and abolitionists regarding the transformation of material realities? How can these experiences help us to address gender pricing practices? To address these questions, I first engage with the necessity of disrupting gendered subjectivities, contextualising the current moment of struggle. Through Floyd's theory on the reification of sexuality and Gabriel's conception of gender as an accumulation strategy, I explain how the regulation of these subjectivities goes beyond the law. Hence, more than ever, groundwork and abolition are necessary to transform reality. In the second part, I examine concrete examples of feminist and gender-nonconforming solidarity networks to look for alternatives that disrupt the gendered categories framed by the binary or tertiary. From these experiences, I contribute to the theory of how to disengage from gendered categories underpinned by cis-heteropatriarchy.

Charlotte Fraser

DEBTS THAT CAN'T BE PAID: DON'T PAY UK AND THE CONTRADICTIONS OF CAPITALIST LEGALITY

In the summer of 2022, striking yellow-and-black leaflets began appearing across the UK. Distributed by Don't Pay UK—a grassroots movement formed in response to soaring energy prices—the leaflets called on one million people to cancel their direct debits by October 1st if prices continued to rise. Framed as a last resort in the face of material precarity, the campaign combined the immediacy of

economic survival with the political logic of mass refusal. This paper explores the narrative strategies employed by Don't Pay UK to frame a moment in which capitalist legality could no longer guarantee the reproduction of life. The campaign portrayed the crisis both as a historical threshold, gesturing toward a horizon of abolition, and as a breakdown in the system that demanded urgent repair. Articulating the idea that 'debts that can't be paid, won't be', the campaign and its adherents highlighted a contradiction: a system that criminalizes nonpayment is itself in crisis when so many are simply unable to pay. Yet alongside this, the campaign articulated reformist aims, such as lowering bills and regulating energy providers. I argue that Don't Pay UK's rhetorical strategies enabled it to hold this tension productively. By occupying the space between survival and refusal, legality and illegality, reform and rupture, the campaign navigated the difficulty of sharpening a structural contradiction in which the primary victims were also the most vulnerable. In doing so, it catalysed a challenge to the prevailing common sense about debt, obligation, and the legitimacy of the capitalist order.

Andreas Beck Holm

THE CASE FOR ROUSSEAU AS A PREDECESSOR OF MARXISM

Even though Marx himself was less than impressed by his French colleague, Jean-Jacques Rousseau has often been hailed as a predecessor of Marx and Marxism. Particularly in France, but also in Italy, the transition from Rousseau to Marxism has at times been viewed as almost seamless and beyond debate. As traditional wisdom has it, the links between the two are the French Revolution and the Jacobin tradition, and it is a reasonable assumption that French Marxism has, at least to some extent, been shaped by this perceived heritage. Outside France and Italy, the connection between Rousseau and Marxism may have been noticed less frequently and systematically, but it is still a prominent theme in the literature on both Rousseau and Marxism. Drawing on such influential writers as Althusser, Della Volpe, Besse, and Colletti, this presentation will provide an overview of some of the main reasons why interpreters both past and present have seen Rousseau's political philosophy as paving the way for Marx's later criticism of capitalism and materialist understanding of history.

Benjamin Ask Popp-Madsen

SEEING LIKE AN INVESTOR STATE: CONCEPTUALISING STATE-CAPITAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

In James C. Scott's influential book Seeing Like a State, it is argued that a fundamental condition for the modern state's control of society is that society is made legible – standardized, simplified, quantifiable, and hereby controllable. The historical process of state formation, and state control over it subjects, is hence a process of continual legibility via the development of a certain statist gaze through which humans, nature, problems and challenges are viewed, molded, transformed and ultimately controlled. While Scott utilized this framework to analyse what he thought was the inherent failures of high modernist, grand-scale planning throughout the 20th century – both in the East and in West – which ignored, overwrote and eradicated local knowledges, practices and ecologies, this presentation will utilize Scott's framework to conceptualize emerging state-capital relations in the 21st century. Scholars agree that contemporary, so-called advanced capitalist states have to increasing degree begun to operate as investors, relying on escorting private capital to politically determined policy goals – be they sustainable transition or military rearmament. The presentation will develop the framework of Seeing Like Investor State in order to explore how comtemporary, advanced capitalist states envision the behaviors, incentive structures and priorities of the corporations and investors whose capital the state to an increasing degree relies on. Only by operating with a standardized, simplified and quantifiable conception of corporations and investors can private capital be made legible for the state and hereby controlled and utilized for its political objectives.

Louison Cahen-Fourot

ABOLISHING DIRTY CAPITALISM BY THE MONEY? THE ENVIRONMENTAL TURN IN MONETARY REGIMES AND CAPITAL ACCUMULATION REGIMES

Although remaining controversial and in its infancy, the "greening" of monetary policy and financial regulation is spreading. Far from aiming at overcoming capitalism, such a "green" turn appears as a key channel to reform capitalism, through redirecting finance towards so-called "green" capital. It may mean more than merely a set of technical adjustments to central banks operations and risk management by financial institutions. In post-World War II capitalism, significant changes in the forms taken by money, in the modalities

of its issuance, of its circulation and in the basis of its valuation heralded equally substantial mutations in the broader political economy. Changes in monetary regimes turned out to be early signs of structural changes in the patterns of capital accumulation. We take stock of this environmental turn in monetary regimes throughout the world, keeping in mind that such changes do not occur in an institutional vacuum and instead co-evolve with the other institutional forms governing the society. We assemble a comprehensive database of policies integrating environmental criteria into monetary policy and financial regulation to date. We characterize the main varieties of green monetary regimes. Further, we analyze whether the choice of specific green monetary arrangements can be explained by the institutional configuration surrounding a country's environmental state as well as other factors. We conclude, based on these results, by discussing the consequences of the greening of the monetary regime for social-ecological transformation in different institutional contexts as well as for the overall consistency and stability of capital accumulation regimes.

Nikolaj Kornbech

THE ECOLOGY OF SOCIOECOLOGICAL FIXES: A FOUNDATION FOR MARXIST CRITIQUE OF "GREEN" TECHNOLOGIES?

The theory of the socioecological fix has recently developed in Marxist literature as a way to analyse and explain capitalist responses to the current planetary crisis, particularly responses relying on technological innovation. However, the extent to which this theory also contains a critique of such fixes, and what the nature of that critique is, is ambiguous. This paper reviews the empirical and theoretical socioecological fix literature, focusing on the different ways that ecological critique is achieved. Following Ekers and Prudham's seminal theorisation of the socioecological fix and more recent theoretical amendments, I delineate the critiques in the empirical literature terms of (1) contingent factors affecting the success of socioecological fixes on their own terms, (2) contingent factors which I argue are based on qualities external to socioecological fixes, and (3) those are arise from necessary qualities of a socioecological fix. I discuss how the ambiguous nature of the latter derives from a more fundamental uncertainty in the underlying concept of nature. In particular, drawing on the work of Kate Soper, I suggest the socioecological fix literature straddles an inadequate and undertheorised middle ground

between a reductive physicalist notion of external nature and a constructivist view of nature which entails a total collapse of the society-nature distinction. Finally, I engage with Luis Andueza's discussion of nature in terms of value-form theory to propose a concept of nature which is adequate for ecological critique, and discuss its implications for analysis of empirically actual socioecological fixes.

Kristoffer Bayer

IMAGI-NATION: A MARXIST ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL IMAGINARY

In 1975, Cornelius Castoriadis launched a stark criticism of Marxist thought in his The Imaginary Institution of Society. Castoriadis claimed that not only was Marxism as a theory dead, but it had died for good reasons. To be truly revolutionary, wrote Castoriadis, one had to move beyond Marxism. Some eight years later, the Marxist scholar Benedict Anderson launched an equally stark criticism of Marxist thought in his seminal book Imagined Communities (1983). From different perspectives, both scholars criticized Marxist thought for neglecting the imaginary foundation of political communities and, vis-à-vis, the importance of the nation as an imagined community. Today, when right-wing nationalists are on the move, it seems appropriate to revisit these critiques and formulate a contemporary, Marxist analysis of what philosopher Chiara Bottici, amongst others, calls 'the political imaginary' — which is the aim of this paper. In this paper, I'll start with a genealogical analysis of the history of the idea of the imagination from Aristotle (phantasia) to Immanuel Kant (die Einbildungskraft), and trace how the imagination shifts from being perceived as an individual cognitive faculty to a social and political force. Afterwards, I'll present the theories of Castoriadis and Anderson, outlining their critiques of Marxism and analyzing how they perceive the imaginary as the foundation for political movements. Lastly, based on the works of Bottici and others, I'll sketch out a Marxist analysis of the political imaginary and formulate a contemporary notion of the nation as an imagi-nation.

Onni Ahvonen

SUBTERRANEAN UTOPIANISM IN THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF WALTER RODNEY

In the wake of formal decolonization, revolutionaries across the Global South turned to Marxism for social analysis and a grammar to imagine and realize liberatory futures amid piles of "imperial debris"

(Stoler 2013). In the anglophone Caribbean, this turn to Marxism and the language of socialism took place in the wake of the Black Power protests that engulfed the region in the late 1960s. During the "Long Seventies," both Caribbean governments and social movements increasingly articulated their political programs in reference to the goal of building socialism and communism. Thus, a peculiar form of "Tropical Marxism" (Awan 2023)—in relation to the broader current of Third World Marxism—emerged in the process and introduced novel ways of understanding relationships between collective struggle, political imagination, and social change. In this paper I explore the utopian imaginaries that emerged from this conjuncture by turning to the political thought of Guyanese Marxist historian Walter Rodney. Scholars working on Rodney have generally not considered him a utopian thinker. In fact, Rodney is mostly viewed as dismissive of utopian thinking. I want to argue the contrary—that in fact, one can find a latent, hidden, strand of utopian thinking in Rodney's work and political practice. I use the term subterranean utopianism to identify this unrecognized future-oriented method of social analysis and critique. Furthermore, I also want to highlight the elisions and exclusions that suffuse this latent utopianism by considering the contradictory nature of a post-colonial utopian imaginary in an atypical settler-colonial context like Guyana.

Victor Strazzeri

ISOLATING CONNECTIVITY: IN THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CAPITALIST LONELINESS

Marx begins his critical analysis of the capitalist mode of production with the commodity. In this paper, I take loneliness as my starting point, even if the object – capitalist society – and the goal – to overcome it – are unchanged. My premise is that there is an implicit theory of capitalist connectivity in Marx's critique of political economy. The bourgeoisie, Marx and Engels remark in the Manifesto, "must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere." Yet, it simultaneously "tears asunder" pre-existing bonds of sociality and subjection, leaving "no other nexus… than naked self-interest." If novel class and center/periphery asymmetries result from this process, the expansion of capitalist relations also brings forth a specific, isolating form of connectivity. The paper draws attention to this phenomenon, not only because of widespread social isolation and loneliness – which the WHO has made a "global public health priority" –, but also because liberal discourses seem unable to

address the issue. Instead, their emphasis on the self-reliance and self-improvement of the entrepreneurial monad, while highly functional for the neoliberal dismantling of the state, has opened a flank to far-right "remedies." The paper does not envision the "abolition of loneliness"; rather, it raises the question of how solidarity and collective action can break isolation in a manner that directly counteracts far-right forces while overcoming liberalism's privatization of individuality. The critique of the political economy of capitalist loneliness thus emerges as a lever towards novel bonds between individual and collectivity with an emancipated society as horizon.

Oscar Talbot

TOWARDS A THEORY OF SOCIAL WEALTH

The concept of 'social wealth' has received very little attention despite its centrality to one of the core concepts of Marx's Capital, that of accumulation. Where it does appear, even within Capital, it appears underdeveloped, sometimes nothing more than a euphemism, polemic motif, or an abbreviation for the wider system of capitalist production. I tease out Marx's use of the term, offering three conflicting readings – social wealth as social capital; as double internality; and as a deflationary account of social wealth as polemic. The term, however, has also been taken up by abolitionists as a way to indicate non-commercial wealth inherent in human society. Angela Davis, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, and Moten and Harney all invoke the concept, albeit in different manners, as a way to articulate the structural harms of the prison industrial complex. In this paper I provide an exegesis of the term as found in Capital: Volume I, followed by an exploration of the idea as used by these abolitionists, where I show the differences between their usage and the strict Marxian usage, for example as found in Saito. I argue that the idea of social wealth can gesture towards a non-capitalist form of value, and an abolitionist negation of exploitation.

James Rushing Daniel

ABOLISH THE ENTREPRENEUR

In late capitalism, particularly in the spheres of technology and finance, the figure of the entrepreneur looms large. A coinage of 18th century economist Richard Cantillon, the entrepreneur long remained a comparatively modest concern until several prominent 20th century economists and management theorists (Drucker, Kirzner, Knight, Schumpeter) centered the concept in their thinking

of global capitalism. While a variety of competing conceptions have shaped a multipolar understanding of the entrepreneur—as, variously, a manager, an undertaker of risk, and an arbitrageur—it is Schumpeter's vision of a Promethean figure, the rare genius whose interventions are responsible for civilizational advancement, that has become ascendant, particularly in the American context. In this paper, I call for the abolition of the entrepreneur, both conceptually and materially, and for a compensatory turn to communist and collective forms of innovation and social change. As I will detail in this paper, the promotion of the entrepreneur has been used to strategically maintain a hierarchical, individualistic, and meritocratic culture and to defend capitalist policies designed to maintain inequality and class difference. I will discuss several examples of this deployment, including the positioning of tech CEOs such as Elon Musk, Alex Karp, and Peter Thiel as contemporary philosopher-kings; the promotion of Israel as a start-up nation (Senor and Singer); and the marketing of entrepreneurial education as a path toward social mobility. As the paper will contend, it is only through a radical abolition of this figure that a leftist conception of advancement and innovation can flourish.

MARTIN HAUBERG-LUND LAUGESEN

RETURN OF THE REPRESSED: ON WHY THE ABOLITION OF THE FREUDO-MARXIST PROGRAMME WAS A MISTAKE AND WHY IT SHOULD BE TAKEN UP ANEW

In this paper I will present a timely, refurbished Freudo-Marxism of value for understanding and solving central predicaments of today (e.g. climate collapse, 6th mass extinction, rise of technofeudalism). This updated Freudo-Marxism will remain committed to moving beyond the vulgar Marcusianism of the late 1960s and 1970s, even if Marcuse remains a relevant interlocutor for contemporary endeavours. Other pet aversions from the Freudo-Marxist canon such as W. Reich and E. Fromm will also be shown to be of continued relevance for understanding and changing today's situation. Because the continuous mass production of ideologically conducive unconscious desires is very much still one of the main vehicles of Capital's social reproduction, the combined optics of Marx and Freud continues to be relevant as an analytical lens and a conceptual apparatus to consult when wanting to understand where hope might lie in these dire times of death and darkness. Of special interest in this presentation will be a return to the research

conducted in the 1960s and '70s in the field of socialisation research. In Denmark, researchers such as Birger Steen Nielsen were pioneers and today the emerging interdisciplinary field of developmental science can be seen as a further development. Ultimately, I claim, if Marxism loses sight of the psycho-sexual nature of the production of political subjects ready to and capable of abolishing what U. Brand and M. Wissen has dubbed the imperial mode of living, hope slips through the fingers of ivory tower thinking overly focused on societal structures and economic dynamics.

Emeer Hassanpour

THE AMAZONIAN ANGER

Marx's concept of the "sweating system" and "piece-wage" not only raises critical questions for contemporary critiques of political economy but also manifests as a tangible expression of workers' social anger—an anger that ultimately serves as a source of profit for the capitalist. Today, two centuries later, the emergence of "side jobs" and "gig work" has profoundly reshaped the algorithmic economy while simultaneously transforming workers' relationships with one another. For instance, during the recent Amazon workers' strike in Los Angeles, the division between station workers and delivery drivers became starkly evident: while the former participated in the strike for better wages, the latter remained committed to fulfilling deliveries. This phenomenon illustrates a broader transformation in labor relations under platform capitalism, wherein wage workers are increasingly isolated from one another, rendering collective organization and solidarity an illusion. This essay is an autoethnography situated during a six-month period in which the author worked, out of necessity, as an Amazon delivery driver. Following graduation and an unsuccessful job search, the author was compelled to shoulder this gig, gaining first-hand insight into the tensions between station workers and delivery drivers. The study highlights the mutual resentment and animosity between these groups, a dynamic that aligns with Marx's observation of the "exploitation of the worker by the worker" under wage labor. Ultimately, this essay argues that the fragmentation of the workplace fosters alienation, perpetuating a cycle in which workers normalize the exploitation of one another rather than directing their discontent toward the capitalist structure.

Theryn D. Arnold

TRẦN ĐỨC THẢO AND THE MARXIST CRITIQUE OF COLONIAL CONSCIOUSNESS: DIALECTICS, PHENOMENOLOGY, AND THE VIETNAMESE REVOLUTION

Trần Đức Thảo (1917–1993) remains an understudied yet significant figure in Marxist thought, particularly in the context of colonialism, ideology, and national liberation. A Vietnamese philosopher trained in France, Thảo engaged deeply with both phenomenology and dialectical materialism, producing a unique synthesis that sought to explain the colonial subject's consciousness and the revolutionary process. While much of his early work was influenced by Husserl and Hegel, his later writings moved toward an explicitly Marxist framework, critiquing French colonialism in Indochina and the role of intellectuals in revolutionary struggle. This paper examines Thảo's theoretical contributions to Marxist anti-colonialism, particularly his analysis of how colonial ideology structures subjectivity and his attempts to articulate a materialist theory of consciousness. By placing Thảo in dialogue with Frantz Fanon and other anti-colonial Marxists, I explore the implications of his work for contemporary debates on ideology, class struggle, and decolonization. Additionally, I assess the contradictions of Thảo's position within the Vietnamese Communist Party, considering how his intellectual trajectory reflects broader tensions within Marxist movements navigating postcolonial state formation. Ultimately, this paper argues that Thảo offers a crucial but neglected perspective on colonialism and revolution, one that challenges Eurocentric narratives within Marxism and highlights the dialectical interplay between consciousness and material conditions in anti-colonial struggles. In doing so, I seek to reclaim Thảo's work as a valuable resource for rethinking Marxist approaches to ideology, national liberation, and historical change.

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ABOUT SMS

The Danish Society for Marxist Studies (Danish: *Selskab for Marxistiske Studier*, SMS) is an independent academic society in Denmark. The purpose of the society is to further interest in and research at the intersection of Marxism and other strands of critical scholarship at Danish universities and institutes of higher learning, especially among early career scholars.

For this purpose, SMS organises an annual conference where scholars, students, and others can present their ongoing research, and where we are committed to traversing the narrow disciplinary borders that have always characterized academia, but which Marxism never really fit.

We understand 'Marxism' in the broadest possible definition of the term as the critical tradition emanating from Marx's thought in its entire historical and theoretical breadth and depth, and SMS is not committed to any one particular theoretical or political position. We welcome critical scholars and students of all stripes, colours, and traditions.

The executive committee is a voluntary body that also functions as the organising committee for the annual conference and currently consists of the following members:

Magnus Møller Ziegler
Marie Thøgersen
Esben Bøgh Sørensen
Søren Bøgh Sørensen
Dominique Routhier
Søren Mau
Lotte List
Jeannette Søgaard Lie
Marie Louise Krogh
Markus Christian Hansen
Signe Leth Gammelgaard
Mikkel Flohr
Charlotte Cator

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DANISH MARXISM: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE brings together reflections on the history, development, and contemporary tendencies of Marxist thought and critical scholarship in Denmark. It also offers accounts of the work of the Danish Society for Marxist Studies and the intellectual community around it. Finally, it documents the highly original research that has been presented at the society's annual conferences over the past ten years (2016-2025).

THE DANISH SOCIETY FOR MARXIST STUDIES [Selskab for Marxistiske Studier (SMS)] is an independent academic society that works to promote interest in and research on Marxism. We understand "Marxism" in the broadest possible sense of the term, as the critical traditions that originate in Marx's thought, in their full historical and theoretical breadth and depth. SMS is not committed to any single theoretical or political position.

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