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david mabb

the cost of life

oppression, exploitation and struggle
in the time of monsters

historical materialism

twentieth annual conference

the cost of life: oppression, exploitation and struggle in the time of monsters

Whether the discussion is about reforming pension systems, overhauling health care or the sources of inflation, we are constantly reminded that life has a cost, a price to pay, a burden to bear. At the same time, we are also periodically reminded that not all lives are valued or priced in the same manner; some lives are cheaper and more expendable than others: from over-work and deteriorating living conditions for billions of 'essential workers' to police violence and incarceration; from sexual abuse and the denial of bodily autonomy to the socially determined vulnerability and 'susceptibility' during the pandemic; from the persistence of racialised exploitation and oppression to the many faces of neocolonialism; from militarised borders turned into kill zones to the ongoing climate disaster.

But there is also the struggle of life (and the struggle for a decent life). As the impressive UK strike wave, the French insurrection against Macron's aggressive neoliberalism, mass protests in Greece, farmers' strikes in India, the new wave of struggles in the Americas, and the continuous youth rebellion against a future of extinction show us, there is a multitude of resistances to exploitation, racism, systemic violence and ecological degradation; resistances that are facing the increasingly authoritarian mutation of contemporary capitalist states trying to cope with the hegemonic crisis of 'actually existing neoliberalism'.

These recent struggles pose important practical and theoretical questions. How can we articulate a reading of the conjuncture that can bring forward the common thread running through all these attacks on life, the common thread of capitalist social-property relations in their articulation with patriarchy, racialisation and imperialism? How can we bring together the collective aspirations, demands and desires in a manner that leads to a coherent strategy for emancipation? What can we learn from these struggles and how can we treat them as experimental terrains for new political practices? And how can critical Marxist theory, in all its necessary and welcome polyphony, contribute to such an endeavour, bridging the gap between radical theory and collective praxis? These are some of the questions we want to be discussed at the twentieth annual Historical Materialism Conference.

Historical Materialism aims to create an inclusive, equal, diverse space for everyone. We are aware that the structural inequalities of race, gender, class, ethnicity and disability are entrenched in the way we produce, communicate and institutionalise knowledge in academia and we are committed to supporting our delegates who might experience them. In case you encounter a form of harassment, sexual harassment, intimidation or similar, please email info@historicalmaterialism.org to get in touch and/or directly approach your conference organisers at the registration desk. We have a procedure in place to support you in every way we can.

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

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

Historical Materialism would like to extend its gratitude to the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung in London and elsewhere for help in financing the travel of scholars from the Global South.

room: g3
workers' inquiry:
operaismo

Ed Emery (SOAS): *Workers' Inquiry in the 1970s: Ford, FIAT, and the Social Factory*

This paper will draw on extensive materials housed in my May Day Rooms archive in London, to map the origins and diffusion of practices of workers' inquiry in Italy and Britain in the 1970s, notably at the FIAT and Ford motor companies.

The presentation is based on work that I did in and around the Ford Motor Company in the 1970s (the Ford UK Workers' Combine); also on translation of political and theoretical organizational practices from Italy in the 1970s, notably related FIAT; and the subsequent archiving of this body of work with a view to making it a tool for future organizing efforts. The paper will be prefaced with a succinct history of *inchiesta operaia*, its genesis and subsequent development within Italian *operaismo*.

The strengths and weaknesses of that practice will be explored, and key areas of problem will be identified, notably with regard to violence, class decomposition and the social factory.

Francesca Ioannilli (Graduate Student at the University of Bologna): *On the Edge of Formation: Subjectivities Between Impoverishment and Enrichment*

In this brief intervention, I will try to line up some observations and insights, in relation to the characteristics of youth subjectivities from my own position, with particular attentions towards university students. A few years ago, together with others, following Romano Alquati's hypothesis on the centrality of formation in contemporary capitalism, we decided to place ourselves on the borders of the university, in the city of Bologna. The linear translation would be "education", nevertheless, in Alquati's specific vocabulary, formation is intended to mean the reproduction of *human-active capacity* as a commodity. I use this term to highlight the process of construction of something, the fact that there is a subject with certain characteristics and capacities that can then be turned into something different. Formation takes place inside different spheres and industries of reproduction. Schools, universities and education systems more generally are privileged places, thus the necessity to occupy them and investigate them.

We started a project with the support of an independent editor and an online magazine, and in the space of an independent library I organize book presentations and educational courses on different themes, in the lens of critical thinking, with all the ambivalence this category brings.

From this point of view we are trying to answer different and open questions. How does the class composition of students change? What observations can we make on the relationship between political composition and technical composition, with particular attention to the precariousness of work and life? What is the relationship between work-identity and professionalisation? How can we break the dominating logic of performance and the anxieties that come with it? What contradictions take place between formation and future working life conditions?

room:
dlt cultural remembrance in class struggles:
economies and dialectics of memory

The panel proposes approaches to discuss Memory from a materialist perspective, thereby challenging mainstream currents in Memory Studies. Memory Studies emerged in the late 80s and experience a "boom" in the first decades of the 21st century at the time when materialist theories were in decline, and the working-class movements shifted from utopian imagination to nostalgia. But not only has there been a lost encounter between Marxism and Memory Studies. The differences between their objects of research and methodologies have resulted in a historical process of disconnection.

Notwithstanding Marx addressed political remembrance as early as in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), we are less interested in quoting Marx than in pointing out how Historical Materialism and the Critique

of Political Economy can become fruitful means of addressing remembrance as part of the dialectics of history and class struggle. We propose this panel to think of alternative genealogies for the study of memory and methodological updates when addressing remembrance. We open the discussion to the debate of memory's role today, to the understanding of how the ideological interpretation of the past can contribute to the reproduction of the system of oppression and exploitation, to the absence of working-class memory in the academic research, and to the crimes of the capitalist class that are hidden behind theories of totalitarianism invalidating any radical confrontation with capital.

Materialism has remained apart from the study of memory, while memory has become a key concept in the construction of identity politics and the demands for "dignity" as part of the "politics of resentment" typical of liberal thought. We aim to work out a materialist understanding of Memory within the Marxist debate of social struggles and working-class legacy.

Heather Watkins, Nottingham Trent University and Maria Urbina-Montana, Wolverhampton University – 'The Forgotten Memory: Working Class Struggle versus Neoliberal Memories of Transformation'

Fifty years ago, the military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet (1973) reorganised Chilean society within the neoliberal framework, reframed its institutions and systematically dismantled any evidence of collective solidarity and agency among the working class. The UK followed Chile six years later when Margaret Thatcher brought neoliberalism to British shores after the democratic elections (1979). Since then, Chile and the UK have been paradigmatic cases of neoliberal transformations by coercion (Chile) and by consent (the UK). This paper aims to reflect on the ways in which two traumatic moments of working-class struggle have more recently been narrativized by the media, looking at how the death of its key actors (Pinochet in 2006 and Thatcher in 2013) allowed shifting the process of memory to stress the neoliberal narrative of transformations as a pivotal moment of modernization and national renewal, as the living history is fading away. This paper continues previous work done by the authors, where it was argued the need for a bottom-up approach to memory to counteract institutionalised approaches, stressing how the narratives of 'capital realism' (Fisher) have prevailed as the way forward for both countries without the inclusion of working-class struggles, whose narratives have been turned into largely forgotten memories. Recent events such as Brexit in the UK and the rise of the hard-right in Chile despite Gabriel Boric's presidency, have romanticised the Pinochet regime and Thatcher administration as historical conjunctions that led to a positive transformation and turning point that allowed both countries to become economic exceptions in their own rights. Therefore, this paper will argue that context and media narratives have actively participated in the construction of memories, stressing the absence of class discourses.

Gal Kirn, Univerza v Ljubljani – 'For Marxist Theory of Memory: Between Left-wing Melancholia and Emancipation'

The lecture will first present some theses on Marx's concept of the so-called primitive accumulation of capital and extend its use to the field of memory, sharpening the relation between capital and memory often missing in the Memory Studies. What is the status of debt in the symbolic economy of memory? Furthermore, this part will replace the totalitarian concept of violence with a more contextual and Marxian notion of class violence that entails a different notion of revisionism and iconoclasm. In the second part of the lecture dialectical approach on memory and resistance will be discussed and will answer the following questions: in what way is memory always already resistance (both in a psychoanalytic and political sense)? How, and can the Left move beyond the cultivating melancholy of defeat (Traverso)? Conversely, does and how does resistance – in the line with Walter Benjamin's "tradition of the oppressed" – also carry its own counter-archival practices, and by this carry further the shrapnels of emancipation that destabilise the dominant spatiality and temporality of male heroism, nation, empire, and capital? I will conclude with presenting some notes on future Marxist theory of memory.

Daniel Palacios González, UNED / Birkbeck, University of London – 'Towards an Economy of Cultural Memory: Defining Material Conditions for Remembrance'

This paper proposes three approaches to reframe the concept of kulturelles Gedächtnis or cultural memory from a materialist perspective. The concept has been popularised in the last twenty years by scholars linked to the Memory Studies field of studies as a consequence of a contemporary reading of the theories of Maurice Halbwachs, Aby Warburg and Pierre Nora, especially in the German-speaking context. It is a field that emerged simultaneously with the decline of materialist theories and political economy in historical and cultural studies. Consequently, formalist

and idealist interpretations of the phenomena of memory merged with constant anti-totalitarian rhetoric in defence of the duty to remember as part of liberal democratic values. Despite attempts to generate alternative genealogies and methodological updates, including gender, race, and climate issues as part of the Memory Studies, materialism and political economy remained apart from the study of cultural memory. Therefore, several possibilities are suggested to define lines for future work on cultural memory from a materialist perspective. Firstly, working on cultural memory as part of a mode of production, understanding how the dynamics of cultural remembrance could ultimately refer to economic structures, as for producing memory as culture, someone needs to own certain means of remembrance. Secondly, understanding cultural memory as a field that organises internal hierarchies; on the one hand, not everybody holds the economic, symbolic, social, and cultural capital for producing cultural memories, and on the other hand, their own narratives tend to hierarchise and exclude certain subjects from remembrance due to class interest. Therefore, in a third point, it seems urgent defining memory as an ideology that ensures the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production based on liberal rhetoric of human rights, victimhood and the defence of democracy against totalitarianism.

room: r201
marxism and work i

Neil Warner (London School of Economics and Political Science): Asymmetric mobilisation and the defeat of wage-earner funds in Sweden

The proposal for 'wage-earner funds' by the Swedish labour movement in the 1970s has received a significant degree of renewed attention in recent years. In their original form, as outlined in 1975, 20% of the profits of large Swedish companies would have been transferred each year to funds owned by trade unions through the issuance of new shares. Central elements of this proposal were progressively watered down in agreements between the LO and Social Democratic Party in subsequent years. A highly watered-down alternative form of wage-earner funds was introduced in 1984, but abolished by a new centre-right government after 1991. In general, explanations for the failure of the wage-earner funds proposal have focussed either on the unprecedented mobilisation against it by owners of capital, structural constraints, electoral consideration & opposition by the Social Democratic leadership. This paper argues that while these factors played a significant role in moments of the struggle over the wage-earner funds, they did so in combination with another more neglected factor: the failure to mobilise support from the majority of trade union members, both in the LO and the white-collar TCO, and left voters. In contrast to successful social-democratic reforms in Sweden, such as the expansion of the welfare state and industrial democracy legislation, wage-earner funds had an asymmetric mobilising power that favoured capital. This weakness of support for the funds proposal was connected to a common perception of its 'abstract' and 'technical' nature, which can in turn be connected with its distance from the everyday experiences of most workers.

Maja Breznik (Mirovni inštitut, Slovenia) – CONTROVERSY BETWEEN RIGHTS AND STATUSES AT THE WORKPLACE

The theory of "legal form" intervened in the field of labour law with the intriguing question of whether labour law merely reproduces the capitalist social relations. In doing so, it sparked profound self-reflection of both labour law studies and labour movements. Yet, whereas the theory of legal form refers to labour law as "capitalist law," French legal scholar Alain Supiot takes the opposite stance and calls it "collective," "class," or "social" law. Both sides defend their position by claiming that it enables a transformative social change which occurs through the interplay between individual and collective worker rights. I use these assumptions to examine employment practices and collective organising in four Slovenian firms. The aim is to establish how the dynamics between individual and collective workers' rights can create the conditions for social change. I ask whether we need less or more labour law, and what kind of labour law. In conclusion, this analysis leads me to the question of universal workers' rights. Matthew Cole: Automation and the Present of Work: Interrogating the Discourse

Much has been written on automation that falls into determinism. Techno-futurist approaches tend to engage at a high level of abstraction and are premised on the assumption that new technologies are neutral and autonomous rather than socially shaped. A critique of this "automation discourse" by Aaron Benanav maintains that low-paid work is coming to form a greater part of the labour market essentially because of manufacturing overcapacity and underinvestment, which ruined capitalism's growth engine. Another critique by Jason Smith argues that "smart machines" have failed to deliver on their promise and the growth of low-waged service work indicates terminal stagnation. This article interrogates the Brennerite foundations of these theses through deconstructing their

assumptions and consequences. It argues that these approach misdiagnose the problem, replacing technological determinism with economic determinism, downplaying institutional and infrastructural change and neglecting class struggle. Through this critique, I then examine what the global rise of services, the institutional decoupling of productivity and wage gains, and technologies mean for the present of work. Does competition mean capitalist growth must stagnate? Are services inherently doomed to low wages? By addressing these questions with a more nuanced approach to class antagonisms, this article finds that the role of labour and its automation may have more important consequences than the critique of the discourse affords.

room: rg01
studies in critical economic theory and history

Carolina Alves, Associate Professor in Economics UCL-IIPP & Fellow in Economics, University of Cambridge, Girton College: Joan Robinson in 1942, an encounter between Marxian economics and Macroeconomics

Joan Robinson's *An Essay on Marxian Economics* (1942) (henceforth *Essay*) is one of her three great works, the other two being *The Economics of Imperfect Competition* (1933) and *The Accumulation of Capital* (1956). It is also the least well-known, despite being the most important in laying the foundations of her enduring challenge to orthodox economics. At the core of the *Essay*, there is a critique of the rate of profit, and Robinson also expanded on the analysis of unemployment and imperfect competition, which she argued were modern developments that had "destroyed the complacency with which economists were wont to view the working of laissez-faire capitalism" (Robinson, 1966 [1942], p. xxii). Robinson found Marx's ideas much more powerful for explaining reality than the dominant Marshallian economics of her time. His vivid influence on her subsequent output gave her economic approach a distinctive feature. With economics facing unprecedented challenges, the eightieth anniversary of the *Essay* in 2022 is an excellent occasion to revisit which insights from Marxian Economics Robinson sought to incorporate into her later works, which can perhaps cast some light on today's profound macroeconomic challenges.

William Jefferies (SOAS): *The US Enterprise Rate of Profit 1994-2019*

Marxist estimates of the rate of profit widely, and mistakenly, equate neo-classical Hulten and Wyckoff valuations of the fixed capital stock (FCS) with fixed capital advanced (FCA). Dave Zachariah (2010), Duncan Foley and Adalmir Marquetti (2023), Michael Roberts (2022) and Deepankar Basu, Julio Huato, Jesus Lara Jauregui and Evan Wasner (2021) use Hulten and Wyckoff aggregates of discounted future service flows to calculate rates of profit. As these calculations include profits in their numerator and denominator of the equation, they are not rates of profit in any meaningful sense. Furthermore, Hulten and Wyckoff methods grossly overestimate the value of the FCS. Through applying data from the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS), estimates of this overvaluation are established, in aggregate and at the sectoral level, as are sectoral rates of turnover and enterprise rates of profit from 1994-2019, for the first time.

Janaína de Faria (UFVJM): *Mode of Production and Mode of Appropriation: continuities and discontinuities in primitive and in capitalist accumulation*

"Although Marx's category of mode of production is fairly discussed in Marxist literature, the way it is related to the category of mode of appropriation is broadly neglected. This paper theoretically explores the specificities of the capitalist mode of appropriation, which corresponds to the capitalist mode of production, vis a vis primitive/original accumulation. It is argued that identifying the intertwined character between mode of production and mode of appropriation, on the one hand, and the differences between the capitalist mode of appropriation from primitive accumulation, on the other, is crucial for grasping the full meaning of Marx's critique of the trinity formula presented towards the end of the **Manuscripts of 1864-5** (and hence capital fetishism).

In the **Grundrisse**, Marx argues that the capitalist mode of production only arises after capital "itself creates the presuppositions for its maintenance and growth"; before then, certain prerequisites that "could not arise from its action **as capital**" had to be met so that capital could be accumulated outside the "sphere of the mode of production for which capital serves as the presupposition" (M&E Collected Works 28: 388). At the heart of these presuppositions is the way private property is repositied as a result, as spelled out in volume 1 of **Capital**: "The capitalist mode of appropriation, which springs from the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property" (C1: 929). It is in this sense that the creation of the presuppositions for capital before the consolidation

of the capitalist mode of production required action other than those from capital itself. This is what primitive accumulation accomplished, through a state-supported process of violent distribution of resources. But “while plunder, fraud and theft can stock up wealth that can be used as capital, they cannot actually make that wealth function as capital. Capital works as capital by other means” (Roberts, 2017:5).

So one must differentiate the particular mechanisms of capitalist appropriation: “*capital* [...] itself already presupposes a *distribution* [...]. But this *distribution* is completely different from what is understood by relations of distribution when a historical character is claimed for these, in contrast to the relations of production. [...] They give the actual conditions of production, and their representatives, a specific social quality. They determine the whole character and movement of production” (Manuscripts of 1864-5: 941). As Marx moves the analysis from the more abstract “pool of surplus-value” to the concrete revenues accrued by different forms of capital – i.e. from industrial to commercial profit, then from profit to profit of enterprise and interest – not only is the source of value lost in the sphere of circulation, but he progressively moves towards forms of surplus-value appropriation more and more determined by private property pure and simple. It eventually culminates with perhaps the most arbitrary of all forms of private property, land, whose owner accrues ground rent due to the state-legitimated ownership of parts of the Earth. The inversion that the sphere of circulation promotes – to each according to the type of private property owned is revealed when *Capital* reaches the critique of the trinity formula, an aspect anticipated here and there in C1 (as well as in preparatory manuscripts): “*the laws of appropriation or of private property*, laws based on the production and circulation of commodities, become changed into their direct opposite through their own internal and inexorable dialectic” (C1: 729, *emphasis added*).

Daniel Gonzalez (University of Illinois at Chicago): The Financial Serial Killer: Adam Smith’s ‘Invisible Hand,’ Necro-economics and the Role of Empathy in Capitalism

What is the role of empathy in Capitalism? In *Mute Compulsion*, Soren Mau argues against interpreting Marx from the standpoint of his early humanism. Following Althusser, Marx’s great step forward is his break with humanism in 1845. Mau also argues against Adam Smith by establishing the origins of capitalism in the violence of primitive accumulation, rather than in Smith’s “invisible hand” of the market, which valorized the pursuit of self interest as the establishment of the universal good. Yet as Warren Montag points out in *Necro-economics*, we still live in Adam Smith’s market, a market that requires some people to suffer death by this invisible hand. In *Necropolitics*, Achille Mbembe cites Marx as a collaborator in this violence through his politicization of the household via social reproduction theory. Taking all of this together, it’s surprising that the capitalist market of today is saturated with “empathy products” and our workplaces are suffused with empathetic managers serving as the standard bearers for equity and self care. In order to explore and problematize this contradiction, this essay will consider the role of empathy in Capitalism through the recent emergence of the “financial serial killer” (Bernie Madoff, Sam Bankman Fried, etc.) who have a surprising relationship to empathetic Capitalism, and whose offense is the pursuit of the illusion at the core of the commodity form -- the illusion that money self valorizes.

room: rb01
marxism, struggle and the housing crisis

Nick Bano: Getting the Housing Crisis Right

Discussions about the housing crisis are hampered by the neoclassical framework through which housing is invariably understood. There is a false fixation on supply, and confected disputes about YIMBYism versus NIMBYism. Even on the left there is a distinct absence of serious Marxist thought, with commentators misunderstanding basic Marxist principles (such as the ‘use value’ of housing) and blaming the crisis on nefarious international financial actors and monetary policy.

This paper will explore how Marxist concepts can lead to a much more compelling - and more demotic - understanding of the housing catastrophe. The yields and profit rates of ordinary dwellings, when housing is treated as fictitious capital, are far more important drivers of housing wealth than global finance and central banks. And, as owner-occupation remains the largest form of tenure in the UK, it is ‘ordinary’ people who are profiting from house-price speculation while other ‘ordinary’ people suffer poverty and terrible housing conditions as a result. This leads to difficult questions about the nature of class in Britain: a country where one in every 26 people is a petty landlord, earning (on average) just £26,000 in non-rental income. What would it take, and what would it mean, to abolish this bizarre petty landlord class?

Alva Gotby: Housing as Social Reproduction

This paper will explore how housing shapes the social reproduction of labour power in various ways. It is the site of much domestic labour, and the design of housing can also reinforce the privatisation of domestic labour within families and small households. Housing conditions shape people's health, both physical and mental, as poor standards and frequent evictions often negatively impact residents' wellbeing. Our status as tenants or homeowners can also shape our individual subjectivity, and how we relate to our position within society. Inheritance of housing is a key factor in the transmission of wealth and class status. Housing thus contributes not only to the reproduction of our labour power on a day to day basis, but contributes to the stratification of people into various groups and the reproduction of capitalist social relations.

Whereas access to housing is often perceived as an individual and isolating issue, struggle over housing can form collective subjectivity. This struggle, I argue, should also seek to challenge the privatised nature of housing and social reproduction. In this way, housing campaigns can be tied to a Marxist queer and feminist project of challenging heterosexual, nuclear families as the basis of social reproduction under capitalism. Instead, more collective forms of housing can form a new material foundation for relations of care.

Carla Rivera Blanco (London School of Economics): Recovering the Marxist meaning of the Right to the City: The case of Barcelona housing struggles

With this contribution, I seek to present my 2-years research about the housing movement in Barcelona and contribute to the advancement of critical Marxist (urban) theory. As is well known, Barcelona is one of the cities with the largest mobilization in defense of housing. The Platform for the People Affected by Mortgages (PAH) was founded in 2008, a worldwide reference nowadays. However, since 2015-2017, the organizational logics and use of language of Barcelona housing struggles have changed. New 'housing unions' have emerged throughout different neighborhoods of the city, and their claims are no longer explicitly used for the 'right to housing' but for the right to 'stay' in place. This is by no means trivial, as it raises a central question of Henri Lefebvre's approach to the *Right to the City* (1968): the effects of displacement for social mobilization. Against the liberal drift that the 'right to the city' has acquired (which legitimizes displacement by means of relocation), my aim is therefore to recover its Marxist meaning. Thus, from the lens of critical Marxist theory, I intend to draw lessons from this new political praxis and address the extent to which the struggle for a 'sense of place' can become a coherent strategy of emancipation today.

room: b102
denise ferreira da silva's unpayable debt

Panel Participants: Lama El Khatib (Freie Universität Berlin), Henrike Kohpeiß (Freie Universität Berlin), Matthew James Milbourne (Vanderbilt), Sam Nimmrichter (Freie Universität Berlin)

Denise Ferreira da Silva's book *Unpayable Debt* contains diverse interventions into contemporary and historical theorizing. In a particularly momentous move, da Silva recalibrates Marx's theory of value in order to align it with the historical reality of racial slavery. Following Hortense Spillers, Sylvia Wynter and others, da Silva thinks about the slave as a "wounded captive body in the scene of subjugation" while also being an object of trade and forced labour. According to da Silva, the special position of the slave in capitalism can only be understood by considering its negative force of erasing or undermining the order of value constituted by labour as a commodity. Opposing this paradigm of Marxist thought, da Silva (and who else?) argues that slave labour is precisely not a commodity but a naturalized resource extracted from objectified human beings.

This panel is meant to introduce da Silva's work to the context of Historical Materialism as a rich methodological resource to further examine racial capitalism. The four presentations will highlight different aspects of *Unpayable Debt* aiming to assess the gravity and depth of da Silva's argument and begin a dialogue about possible applications.

Lama El Khatib: Thinking against the "Arrow of Time": On Intellectual Inheritance / Indebtedness

Da Silva's *Unpayable Debt* not only raises the question of how violence manifests in material distribution but also touches upon issues of intellectual production. Namely, on how to relate to intellectual traditions (Marxist and post-Marxist) that have failed to adequately account for racial subjection but are nevertheless crucial for histories and

practices of struggles for emancipation. How is it possible to mediate intellectual histories with one another and not erase the contradictions that hold them apart? What is the tension and the space between a commitment to lineages of thought/praxis (inheritance) and the foreclosure of possibilities of moving beyond (indebtedness)?

In her book, da Silva returns to Octavia Butler's *Kindred* and the story of Dana who must rescue her great-grandmother's master-owner Rufus in order to survive. Dana's repetitive breaches of the "arrow of time" are at a deadlock: she strives to kill the man who enslaves her but needs him alive as her possibility of existence depends on his. Dana is an owner of a debt that is not hers to pay - a relation that da Silva registers both ethically and economically. This figure of unpayable debt is central to the ways in which da Silva complicates the triad of colonial/racial/capital. But it is also a figure that haunts the ways-in-which-we-come-to-know, forming a demand on the epistemic and intellectual legacies that continue to shape the pasts and presents.

This paper attempts to engage the concept of unpayable debt to think through a dialectic of intellectual inheritance / indebtedness and to trace how it plays out in da Silva's book. Within the panel it casts light on the philosophical legacies (Kantian, Hegelian, Marxist) that are part of Unpayable Debt and reflects on the ways in which da Silva alters and re-employs them.

Henrike Kohpeiß: The Logic of Negativation: Racial Submission and Negative Value

Da Silva describes negativation as a mechanism with the help of which the captive, enslaved body unfolds a force to "fracture the distinction between the symbolic, the juridical, the economic, and the ethical moments." (44) This capacity is effective in different ways. It is a resource for da Silva herself to recognize and analyze the mechanism at the very core of racial subjection but it also suggests an order of value, which reliably reproduces the global racial dialectic. The focus on negativation will help to understand in how far Da Silva conceptualizes racial capitalism as cohering through an undertow of past enslavement. In this paper, I will illuminate the concept of Negativation in two ways: First, negativation is to be seen as a force, which naturalizes the labor of slaves at the very basis of capitalist development and thereby positions it outside the realm of exchange. This entails a dynamic of erasure, which, according to da Silva, historical materialist approaches fail to account for. Second, negativation helps da Silva to also make sense of the ways in which the transhistorical and onto-epistemological effects of this racial undertow of capitalism determine not only the capitalist material present but also the intellectual tools we apply to analyze these effects. In order to disrupt the reproduction of the racial dialectic, da Silva proposes to activate the "wounded captive body in the scene of subjugation", which embodies and holds negativation through a concrete state of violent submission, as an epistemological tool. Within the panel, this paper engages with negativation in order to clarify the methodological shift da Silva suggests for the analysis of race and capital by tracing it throughout the book and contextualizing it with other approaches of negativity as critique.

Matthew James Milbourne: Blackness, Dialectics, Excess

One of the central concerns for da Silva in *Unpayable Debt* is how the figure of the wounded captive body in the scene of subjugation might enable a disruptive rethinking of both the (post-Enlightenment) logics of racialisation and how racialised blackness is understood to stand in relation to the (realm of the) political. For many on the radical Left, recourse to dialectics in general, and the Hegelian Master/Slave dialectic in particular, has been a primary tool in thinking through these two phenomena, as well as the concomitant struggles of African-descended peoples for something like freedom. Moreover, it has become a theoretical commonplace to assume that we cannot properly think the structure of race and racialisation without dialectics. Some have even ventured so far as to claim that the reverse is equally true, namely that we cannot properly think the Hegelian Master/Slave dialectic without an understanding of race and racialisation (Buck-Morris, 2005). However, on these points da Silva is quite explicit: "because their positions do not postulate equality, the Slave and her Owner figure a duality (Human and Thing) that does not set up a Hegelian dialectics" (40). This claim raises a number of key concerns for a whole range of radical positions. If the Hegelian dialectic of Master/Slave (or more accurately Lord/Bondsman) does not allow us to think the Slave/Owner relation, how might we re-consider this difference (if difference is at all a commensurate description)? Without dialectics as our theoretical beginning and end, what excesses open up for thought, for blackness, for freedom? In this presentation, I will first outline how da Silva distinguishes the Slave/Owner relation from that of the Hegelian Master/Slave relation via her reading of Hortense Spillers, and then use this as a springboard to consider what black studies has to offer in excess of dialectics.

Sam Nimmrichter: Ciphers of capital: Race, value, and the laboring body

The argument of Unpayable Debt suggests that Marx's labor theory of value is overdetermined by symbolic tools of raciality to the effect that racialized labor relations in the colonies, under slavery, or in subsequent social formations are not registered as productive of the unique form that capitalist wealth takes, value. In seeking to unravel the universal status of "abstract labor" as sole determinant of value, da Silva carries increasingly virulent critiques of the Human/Humanity as a gendered and racially exclusionary abstraction into the heart of historical materialism. Under this reading, the value-form appears as an integral element in the performance of a racial dialectic that returns violence to racialized bodies by figuring them as vectors of risk, uncertainty, and unruliness, while nullifying their material contribution as unproductive. Da Silva returns to the body of the laborer and the materiality of production to reconstruct how the purely formal constitution of value ("not an atom of matter enters into it") is preconditioned by racial difference and emerges against broader material entanglements that are not exhausted by a metabolic rift between nature and society but demarcate the racially circumscribed space of the free and self-determined Subject. This paper engages in a symptomatic reading of key Marxists texts on value to underline the urgency of Da Silva's critique: from the unsublatable difference between labor and the means of production in Marx writing that is paradoxically most pronounced when labor is most objectified, to Chris Arthur's distinction between a will that needs to be bent and a will that needs to be broken, all the way to the narrow delimitation of capitalist society in the new Marx readings of Michael Heinrich and Dieter Wolff.

room: b103
marxism and financialisation

Tom Haines-Doran (University of Leeds): The financialisation of car consumption

In contrast to other sectors of the economy, there has been little success in decarbonising transportation, which is now in many countries the highest sector for carbon emissions. A key problem is societal dependencies on motor vehicles. At the same time, there have been a multitude of studies relating to the 'financialisation of everyday life', seeking to account for both a rise in consumer credit and proliferation of private finance in the provision of goods and services. Car finance is big business, and one of the key sectors of consumer borrowing. Yet, given its importance to finance, and decarbonisation efforts, the financialisation of car consumption is almost completely ignored by academic study and activist politics. This paper explores the culture of the financialisation of car consumption using Ben Fine and Kate Bayliss's 'Systems of Provision' approach. It finds that financialisation is encouraging a faster rate of consumption of new vehicles, and leverages increased lending against consumers' own car dependency. This has helped car manufacturers overcome longstanding contradictions within their business model. At the same time it has increased financial risk for themselves, and consumers, and potentially militates against efforts to decarbonise the transport system.

James Meadway: An Unnatural Rate Of Interest: The Emerging Ecological Dominance Of Finance Capital

The Northern Hemisphere summer of 2023, like that of the summer before it, has been dominated by the shocking, unavoidable evidence of the real impact of climate change. Deadly wildfires, droughts, floods and attendant crop and infrastructure failures have dominated the news. Concurrently, interest rates across the globe have typically been rising at rates not seen for many decades, led by the central banks of the systems' historic core.

For the economic mainstream, this has been an inevitable response to soaring post-pandemic inflation: the increasingly privileged role of central banks in the developed world leaves them with the capacity and flexibility to act in response to crises, and to shape outcomes favourable (they believe) for ongoing accumulation. Post-pandemic supply shocks and resulting inflation have required central bankers to act immediately to rinse out the inflationary surges via tighter monetary policy, with a variety of justifications offered. For the Bank of International Settlements (2022), situating the surge in a longer-term perspective, this sudden movement in rates is merely the longer-term shift in the "natural" rate of interest, primarily occasioned by demographic changes.

Mainstream and other critics of the Federal Reserve and other major central banks have alleged such dramatic revisions to interest rates will be economically damaging, provoking recession and unemployment (Mankiw 2022; Kelton 2022). More fundamentally, critics of the mainstream, from post-Keynesians to Marxists, have strongly rejected the notion of a "natural" rate of interest, preferring instead to consider interest rates as largely socially constructed

– arising from policy decisions (as in the typical post-Keynesian case, Fullwiler 2023) or derivative of a rate of profit formed elsewhere (as in the Marxist, Lapavistas 2014).

Yet when, as all sides acknowledge, the “natural” world is asserting itself against human society in the most fundamental way, social constructivist accounts of the formation of interest rates and the financial system in general fall short. A world of fundamental ecological instability is not one in which either the fetishised “naturalism” of the mainstream, or the socially constructed interest of the heterodox can function well as explanatory models.

Drawing on the recent work of Saito (2022), Mau (2023) and others in addressing the fundamental role of nature in Marx, this paper proposes the concept of ecological dominance over finance, and the formation of what we can call an “unnatural rate of interest” as the basic form of financial organisation in capitalism subject ecological instability. It applies this insight to recent movements in global interest rates, and draws some conclusions regarding future crises and the political interventions they are likely to spark.

Elif Karacimen, Ahmet Hasim Kose: *The Financialisation of Agro-Food Companies and Transfer Mechanisms: The Case of Turkey*

One of the most important effects of the 2008 global crisis has been the increase and diversification in the financial activities of non-financial companies (NFCs) at the global level. In fact, one of the most prominent aspects of this phenomenon, which has been going on for a long time and is described as financialization, was the increase and change in the financial activities of global agribusiness companies. The financialization trend in these companies, which control agricultural commodity chains, including production and distribution (trade) networks in the agriculture and food sectors at the global level, has led to the definition of the current food regime (so called third food regime) as financialized food regime. This trend, which took off in central economies, has been transferred to emerging capitalist economy (ECEs) through different channels and created multidimensional effects on the agricultural structures (especially the liquidation of small agricultural enterprises and land deprivation) and food sectors of these countries. One of the most important shortcomings of the academic literature in this field is the lack of adequate examination of ECEs experiences and transmission mechanisms of the process. Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) have been playing an increasing role in the financialization processes of the agribusiness companies of ECEs. Although the importance of these institutions is emphasized in the relevant literature, there has been almost no academic study based on specific country experiences. In this context, this study first analyzes the agribusiness activities of the EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development), which is one of the most important DFIs specializing in agriculture. Then it focuses on agri-food companies that the EBRD provides financing for and discusses how this financing affects financial and nonfinancial activities of companies their market shares and controls. The ultimate aim of the study is to reveal how Turkey’s agriculture and food regime have been restructured in line with all these trends.

room: b104

hmspen:

international queer movements and marxism

Aida Parnia (University of Toronto): *Queer politics in Iran’s Woman, Life, Freedom movement: Beyond politics of recognition*

The presence and visibility of queer and trans people in the Woman, Life, Freedom movement signalled a change in Iranian politics. This change was reflected in many of the manifestos and demands of Iranian resistance groups, as they included specific mentions of the lives of queer and trans Iranians and represented a variety of queer and trans politics.

In this paper, I analyze the content of the manifestoes, statements, and demands from several Iranian groups after September 2022 to describe the variety of queer and trans politics these groups put forward. Using Marxist critiques of politics of recognition and theories of social reproduction, I ask the following questions: How and in connection to what concepts specific demands for the liberation of queer and trans people are made? How do the politics reflected in the documents align with theories of social reproduction and queer and trans oppression? Lastly, how far do their demands go in imagining a world that disrupts capitalist forms of social reproduction and liberation of queer and trans people?

The preliminary results suggest that legalization and recognition of equal rights for queer and trans people are present in most of these. The mentions of queer and trans people are made when equal rights between men and women and patriarchy are discussed, reflecting rights-based politics even within left-wing organizations. In some references, the peculiarity of queer and trans oppression is sidelined under a broader discussion of demands for “women and gender minorities.” However, these narratives illustrate an understanding of heteropatriarchy and its connection to capitalism. All these documents keep their imagined world to one that provides equal opportunity for all with a strong welfare state, and their critiques fall short of calling for transformative change in nuclear families as the primary unit of social reproduction.

Philip Raad (American University of Beirut): Sex, Authority and Politics in an Egyptian Serial Killer Novel: Ghaleb Halasa's *The Question* (1979)

In 1979, the Jordanian-born Marxist writer Ghaleb Halasa published the novel *The Question*. The novel, written in Arabic, takes shape around two interlocking storylines set in Cairo in 1961. The first is the rise of a self-proclaimed pious serial killer who has taken as his target sexually promiscuous women, and whose method reflects the attempt to impose a fittingly perverse punishment. In each case, and to increasing degrees of brutality, he targets the victim's genitals. The second storyline is that of Mustafa, a leftist intellectual recently released from prison, and seemingly incapable of articulating a return to political life. Mustafa's main preoccupation throughout the story is instead his private life: at the beginning of the novel, the reader finds Mustafa in a relationship with Souad; by the end of the novel however, Mustafa moves away from Souad towards a relationship with her aunt, Tafida.

As we grapple with the ongoing rise of authoritarianism and leftist malaise in our late capitalist contemporary, how does an intimate look at literature from the Arab world help us to think in a profoundly historical way about our situation? Through an examination of the discussion in Arabic intellectual debates instigated by this as yet poorly studied novel, to include an interview between the literary critic, and then member of the Lebanese Communist Party, Youmna el-Eid, and through its own formalist reading of the novel, this article meditates on the question of the sexual-political in the Arabic novel, on profound historicity in cultural study, on differential relations in late capitalism, and the cross-lighting on our own contemporary offered by a novel that models the structure underpinning the struggle of the Egyptian leftist intellectual to act politically amidst the rise of a pious, patriarchal, authoritarian police state.

room: bglt
marxist history and trotsky

Pierre Millet (EHESS, Université de Genève): Trotsky's writings on fascism

To the regret of his biographer Isaac Deutscher, Trotsky sacrificed a large part of his literary projects in the 1930s to his tireless political activity for the Fourth International. He therefore did not write the history of the Russian Civil War he had planned, nor a major theoretical book on fascism. But he never stopped writing to sound the alarm against what he perceived very early on as a mortal danger.

Countering the rise of fascism in Germany and Europe meant confronting the policies of the party leaderships that sought to represent and lead the workers' movement: the Social Democrats and their anti-social policies and the Stalinist Communist International and its disastrous theoretical formulations such as social fascism. Trotsky endeavoured to define fascism and its National Socialist variant as clearly as possible in order to provide his readers and supporters with the conceptual tools they needed to fight an enemy whose nature was difficult to grasp and even contradictory and who managed to appear as a radical, anti-capitalist revolutionary movement, while at the same time benefiting from the underhand support of the big Industry.

What is probably the most comprehensive edition of Trotsky's writings on fascism was published in 2015 by the Editions Syllepse in France. It is a thick volume of over 900 pages, with texts written over two decades, from 1922 to 1940. They come from pamphlets or articles, often polemical in tone and always written in direct response to the most immediate current events. Far from the caricatures that have been made of Marxist approaches to fascism, according to which it is merely a tool in the hands of big business, Trotsky's writings are highly nuanced and particularly enlightening in understanding the hybrid nature of this political movement and its ability to play on the very weaknesses of those who aspire to defeat it. We suggest to present the main guidelines and theoretical articulations of these writings.

Stefan Guzvica (Higher School of Economics, Saint Petersburg): When the Comintern was Trotskyist: Permanent Revolution in the Third Period

This paper calls for a re-evaluation of the policy of the Comintern during its “Third Period” from 1928 until 1935. Historiography has so far identified Stalinism with the idea of stagism, opposed to the theory of permanent revolution espoused by Trotsky. However, as I will show, the Third Period, especially between 1929 and 1932, was a time when the Stalinist faction in the International embraced permanent revolution as its policy. This left turn mirrored a similar process in the Soviet Union’s internal politics, where the Stalinist leadership seemingly took up the platform of the Left Opposition. The motivation was similar: to outmaneuver the “rightist danger” of Bukharin and prevent the formation of an anti-Stalinist bloc composed of the Left Opposition and the Bukharinists. For this purpose, the Comintern embraced the idea of permanent revolution, although it was euphemistically called a “single-stage” revolution, one in which an immediate socialist revolution in the periphery fulfills the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution as well. This was set in opposition to the “two-stage” idea, which presumed a period of bourgeois-democratic transformation growing into a proletarian revolution. The latter, of course, was first presented by Stalin and Bukharin during the debates on the Chinese Revolution in the mid-1920s. However, by 1929, the Stalin faction, now in open conflict with Bukharin, had abandoned this view. This period allowed for relatively open debates, which I will summarize using a case study of Balkan communist parties. However, it served primarily to lure into the open potential supporters of both left and right “deviations” from the Stalinist line. By 1932, most of the participants in the debates had been sidelined on charges of factionalism. At this point, the International reverted to endorsing a “two-stage” revolution, giving the communists the flexibility towards bourgeois political organizations which set the stage for the class collaboration of the Popular Front era. The paper will conclude with brief remarks regarding the contemporary implications of the debate on the theory and practice of Marxist organizations.

Salvatore Tinè (Università di Catania): Crisis and fascisation of the state in the Komintern analysis of the 1920s

In the course of the second half of the 1920s, a so-called ‘left’ political turn matures in the international communist movement, destined to mark its political action and relations with the social-democratic parties and the sectors of the organised labour movement influenced by them, for a long period, until the victory of Nazism in Germany. The identification of the main enemy in social democracy, certainly one of the main moments of communist tactics in this phase, is, at least in part, a consequence of the objective radicalisation not only of the class struggle in general in many capitalist countries of western and central Europe, but also of the sharpening, even in forms of open ‘militarisation’, of the political struggle within the workers’ movement. This could not but lead to difficulties in applying the tactic of the single front. But the turn to the left is certainly linked but also to the sharpening of the opposition between the USSR and the imperialist camp, which, at least in the immediate term, makes the very prospects of ‘world revolution’ more uncertain and difficult. In this context, the problem of fascism could not but regain a strong relevance both in the analysis of the phase and in the very definition of the strategy and tactics of the communist parties. It was therefore no coincidence that the theme of fascism, its class and political nature, as well as its international character was at the heart of the discussion on the strategy and tactics of the world communist movement that took place at the 6th Komintern Congress, which opened in July 1928. In the general approach of the Communist International, fascism emerged as one of the specific forms of the more general process of transformation and involution in an increasingly regressive and reactionary direction of capitalist power and the apparatus of the bourgeois state that marked the end of the period of so-called ‘relative stabilisation’ and the entrance into a new and more acute phase of the ‘general crisis’ of capitalism. In this sense, it was precisely at the 6th Congress that some of the analytical bases of the anti-fascist strategy of the popular fronts of 1935 were already defined.

room: mal g13
building anti-oligarchic futures:
alternative forms of organisation & guerrilla democracy

Peter Bloom (University of Essex); Rodrigo Nunes (University of Essex); Camila Vergara (University of Cambridge)

We live in oligarchic democracies, constitutional orders in which elected representatives are the lackeys of capital, the “open and disguised agents of the ruling classes,” as Rosa Luxemburg put it in *Die Nationalversammlung*. The current state of systemic corruption demands new ways of thinking about the relation between politics, oligarchy, and the economy. It is necessary not only to denounce and oppose dominant oppressive ideologies, but also to

revisit and reinterpret old concepts to offer creative paths out of the capitalist ecocidal nightmare. Critical theory, with its anti-materialist bent, has been so far unable to properly offer strategies for emancipation. This panel seeks to go back to materialism and praxis to explore the different vertical and horizontal forms that can be combined, mobilised, and spread for politically challenging oligarchy and fostering new radical civic and economic relations.

Camila Vergara: *The Anti-Oligarchic Swerve: Dynamic Materialism and Regenerative Politics*

Capitalism in the 21st century, based on global extractivism and profit, is fostered by the rule of law, both domestically, with constitutional rights to property and limitless accumulation of wealth, and internationally, with trade agreements enabling transnational corporations to claim compensations for regulatory changes affecting their projected profits. To properly study this type of structural domination and envision realist routes to more egalitarian societies, without alienation and exploitation, it is necessary to embrace a materialist method to study constitutions: the juridical mainframes that structure life in common. In this paper I revisit Marx's conception of materialism by engaging with his most important source, Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*, and focusing on the swerve, its relation to freedom, and the material constitution. From this perspective, constitutional orders are sources of regularity created from a form of social consciousness at a given point, and, like every other established regularity, vulnerable to becoming formal straitjackets. Following the dynamic materialism he finds in Lucretius, Marx argues it is possible to create a constitutional order that could adapt to swerves, "advancing in step with real human beings—which is only possible when 'man' has become the principle of the constitution." I argue that this merging of the "political" and "material" constitutions, which Marx calls a "true democracy," is only possible if the people themselves are at the centre of decisionmaking, speaking and acting in local councils and other counter-hegemonic spaces. Moreover, following John Bellamy Foster's Lucretian interpretation of Marx's materialism, I argue these spaces need to be conceived within radical ecological interconnectedness. Finally, I offer an interpretation of this dynamic ecological materialism from the viewpoint of plebeian republicanism and regenerative agriculture, and argue that if a swerve is going to be emancipatory and establish a material constitution, it must be decisively anti-oligarchic and anti-extractivist.

Peter Bloom: *Viral Revolutions, Guerrilla Democracy, and the Contagious Commons*

This paper challenges prevailing accounts of systemic change that either dismiss the possibility of revolution or glorify insurrectionary action. Instead, it draws on recent theories of "mobile power" proposed by Bloom, Smolovic-Jones, and Woodcock (2021), which establish a link between hegemony and a combination of ideological commitment, organizational flexibility, and cultural adaptability. In this framework, the proliferation of dominant and dominating systems is inexorably connected to the dominant mode of production's capacity to experiment, innovate, and contextually adapt politically, culturally, and institutionally. Notably, capitalist wage labour demonstrates an insatiable ability to incorporate novel ideas and grassroots movements, perpetually expanding and updating itself. I explore how anti-oligarchic politics and commons economic ownership can harness the potential of mobile power, highlighting the capacity to experiment with commons resource-sharing and anti-elitist decision-making through a diverse range of organizational forms, including hierarchies, values, such as competition, and a deeper understanding of local conditions and desires. By doing so, these transformative initiatives and movements create "glocal" networks, where ideas and tactics for local revolutionary transitions are contagiously shared. Leveraging new technology, these networks are bolstered by guerrilla cultures of viral knowledge sharing from the grassroots and foster a permanent socio-material revolution. By adopting an approach that recognizes the dynamic nature of power and its relationship to hegemony, this paper challenges both the scepticism toward revolution and the romanticization of insurrectionary action. Instead, it highlights the potential for systemic change through the mobilization of mobile power, which enables the dissemination and adaptation of anti-oligarchic politics and commons-based economic models. Through the contagious spread of ideas and tactics, these networks can create transformative social, economic, and political movements that challenge and subvert dominant systems. Ultimately, I offer insights into how revolutionary transitions can be facilitated and sustained in the pursuit of a more egalitarian and participatory society.

Rodrigo Nunes: *Transition in Our Lifetime: How Can Past Debates on Transition Illuminate Our Present Condition?*

In the Marxian tradition, "transition" designates not one but two historical moments and, arguably, very different historical experiences. On the one hand, it refers to a period following a rupture in which some kind of revolutionary government reconciled the discontinuity imposed by the revolution with a continuous process of transformation that

transformed the remnants of the capitalist organisation of society into something else. On the other, it designates the passing of feudalism into capitalism through a continuous process (though not without some significant breaks) taking place over centuries, not directed by any specific agency, polycentric and unfolding in multiple timelines and parallel rhythms. As the word returns to everyone's lips today because of the climate crisis, it appears as though the kind of transition that our situation requires combines elements of both those things. It must occur at the speed normally associated with revolutionary processes, and can hardly take place in the necessary time without a degree of coordination and planning equal to or even greater than that expected from the socialist economy. Yet there is no collective agency or apparatus of power capable of promoting it at the appropriate (global) scale, and the challenge therefore seems to consist in working out how such change could be induced through the intervention of national governments and action from below. Starting from this observation, this paper will ask what we can learn from past debates on the concept of transition that can shed light on our current predicament.

room: mal g23
on irish politics
hosted by jacobin

The political ramifications of the Great Recession and the decade of crisis that followed are still making themselves felt in Ireland on both sides of the border. In the South, Sinn Féin has been consistently polling ahead of its conservative rivals and is hoping to form a government after the next general election, due to be held by early 2025 at the latest. In the North, the Brexit crisis has splintered the unionist bloc and created greater uncertainty about the region's constitutional future than at any time since the Good Friday Agreement was negotiated.

This panel will explore the different aspects of this political conjuncture and the possibilities arising from it. Topics addressed will include the much-vaunted economic model in the South and the ways in which it might be changed; the nature of British policy in Ireland, the divisions within unionism, and the feasibility of Irish unification; and the political strategies adopted by Sinn Féin as it seeks to capitalize on this moment.

Brian O'Boyle: The Celtic Comeback: myth and reality

The political class in Dublin treasured the reputation of its state as the polar opposite of Greece in the maelstrom of the Eurozone crisis, and expected that praise from EU officials would eventually translate into popular adulation on the home front. Yet a large segment of the Irish population has shown itself to be deeply unimpressed with the narrative of economic recovery and prosperity after the dark days of the Great Recession, much to the annoyance of many Irish politicians and opinion-formers. This paper will look at the substantial picture of what has been happening to Irish capitalism since the crash, the long-term impact of austerity on popular living standards, the gap between headline figures for GDP and real economic performance, and the likely trajectory of the Irish economic model over the coming years.

Geoffrey Bell: From the Edge of the Union to the End of the Union? Unionism, the British State, and Irish Unity After Brexit

Little more than a decade ago, the idea of Irish unity seemed more remote and improbable than at any time since the peace process began in the 1990s. The Brexit crisis of the UK state and the manner of its resolution have transformed the calculus, with consequences that have already had a major impact on the political culture in Belfast, whether or not the eventual result is a united Ireland. This paper will look at three overlapping questions:

- 1) What is the nature of British policy towards its residual Irish territories after Brexit? Is there a "selfish strategic or other interest" in blocking Irish unification, and how might developments in other parts of the UK, notably Scotland, influence such considerations?
- 2) What long-term factors underpin the recent decline of party-political unionism towards minoritarian status? If unionism is unable to remain hegemonic within the Northern Irish framework, will that compromise its ability to block constitutional change?
- 3) In spite of recent developments, most opinion surveys still indicate that a referendum on Irish unity would reaffirm the status quo by a comfortable margin. What obstacles do the forces arguing for unity—above all Sinn Féin—have

to overcome in pursuit of that goal, and what are their chances of doing so?

Daniel Finn: Sinn Féin and the Transformation of Irish Politics

The Irish party system was once renowned for its stability and for the weakness of its electoral left. The last decade has tested both stereotypes to destruction. The last election, held just before the pandemic reached Ireland, gave Sinn Féin the largest vote share and forced its conservative rivals to form a grand coalition; Sinn Féin has been consistently leading the opinion polls for the past two years. Yet even if it manages to convert its average polling scores into a new electoral high point, it will confront a formidable set of barriers. Sinn Féin has lowered its sights and is not proposing any radical reforms to the structures of Irish capitalism, and its policy agenda is well within the traditional mainstream of social democracy. However, that agenda is still more ambitious than anything that has been successfully attempted in the Eurozone since the Great Recession, going well beyond the precedents of the Costa and Sanchez governments in Iberia. In particular, Sinn Féin's pledge to address the Irish housing crisis, on which its recent electoral rise depends, will involve tackling core interests of the Irish bourgeoisie if it is to succeed.

Alexandre Guelerman (Sociology Graduate Program - University of São Paulo): A Cycle of Strike Action in Political Perspective: a mixed-methods approach to the emergence and limits of new forms of workplace resistance by poor workers in Brazil

The 2010s witnessed the rise of a remarkable cycle of strikes in Brazil; however, this cycle of strikes did not lead to significant political or labor-related transformations, in contrast to the strike cycle during the democratization period. In this research, I aim to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms that can explain both the emergence of this extraordinary cycle of strikes and the fact that it did not give rise to new collective political actors. To do so, I combine the analysis of statistics on strikes and other forms of labor disputes in Brazil with conducting in-depth interviews with workers who participated in strikes that can be considered representative of the most recent strike cycle (considering the sector of occurrence, dimensions, and demands). I argue that the emergence, characteristics, and outcomes of these strikes are related to the features of the neoliberal arrangement of social inclusion experienced by poor Brazilian workers during the Nova República, especially during the Workers' Party governments. These strikes (of small scale and short duration, led by precarious service workers, oriented towards the realization of historically unfulfilled rights, and weakly linked to unions) were part of a multifaceted pattern of labor conflict that also involved individual forms of resistance against rights violations (lawsuits, indirect terminations, labor complaints, refusal to obey abusive orders). This "dust of small conflicts" can be explained by how experiences of inclusion through consumption, education, and digitization have impacted the self-esteem and normative expectations of poor workers, leading them to seek greater knowledge about their rights and reducing their tolerance for infringements. However, this same set of experiences of social inclusion, to the extent that it was made possible within a neoliberal and competitive political-economic arrangement, does not automatically generate interest in formal or durable methods of collective organization and political action.

François-Xavier Hutteau: On the struggle against pension reform in France and beyond

The movement against the pension reform at the beginning of 2023 in France marked a renewal of trade union struggles, even though it did not succeed in imposing its political agenda or preventing the government from implementing its reform. In this paper, I will attempt to sketch out some of the key features of the phase in France. I will also suggest some elements about the technical, political, and social composition of this movement. Moreover, my aim will also be to understand the type of inquiry and struggle to be conducted in this context, in which powerful social struggles coexist with a hardening of authoritarianism and a crisis of the Fifth Republic.

Roser Espelt Alba (ELA Sindikatua and Universitat Oberta de Catalunya): Class power and the validity of the strike. The Basque and Catalan cases

In times of inflation, the discussion about wage growth and its necessary relationship with productivity returns. However, the disassociation between them is evident and manifest in the light of historical evidence. De-industrialisation and tertiaryisation of economies such as the Catalan seem to be behind the decline in the medium wage, while the disappearance of large industries and the low union density questions the potential of traditional forms of the working class' struggle. However, despite this general trend in Southern Europe, economies such as Basque have presented a lower deindustrialisation and higher wages. The productive structure and wage level maintains a direct relationship with the degree of syndication of the working class in the territory, and the number of strikes and their duration. In this sense, the union and collective self-defense tools such as the resistance box are decisive.

Thomas Lambert (University of Louisville): Is Neo-Fascism Inevitable?

There has been a growing discourse over the last few years about the rise of neo-fascist political movements and governments throughout the globe. Some believe that neo-fascism is an offshoot of neoliberalism or the

latest phase of monopoly capitalism. At the same time, there are scholarly writings on how austerity by central governments can lead to neo-fascist movements and regimes. This paper examines a general theory of fascism and neo-fascism and analyzes the economic history of the US (and to some degree, world economy) using the concept of long waves and then looks at trends among different nations regarding their economic surplus, investment levels, debt levels, and attempts at economic austerity. The analysis supports notions that the economic slowdown of various nations along with a slowdown in substantive investment levels, rising government debt levels, and austerity measures or proposed austerity measures could be associated with increasing neo-fascist political activity. Given capitalism's reluctance to engage in sufficient levels of productive investment or surplus absorption and its reliance on central governments to remedy the problems of poverty, unemployment, etc. through increasingly higher levels of debt and/or greater austerity by higher taxes on workers or by cuts to government welfare programs, neo-fascism probably has arisen in response to current capitalistic shortcomings and contradictions and as a means to protect capitalism. As these problems continue, the inevitability of movements in favor of neo-fascism needs to be explored.

Alberto Destasio (Università di Catania): The will to unification. A comparison between Italian fascism and neo-fascism

Since taking office, the neo-fascist Italian government headed by Giorgia Meloni has designed and implemented a series of measures against the working class. The 'decree-labour', provocatively approved on Workers' Day, is the general labour policy programme of the current government. Firstly, the Meloni government intends to replace the previous citizenship income with an 'inclusion cheque', the aim of which is to force less well-off individuals to accept any job offer, on pain of interrupting the welfare measure. Secondly, private entrepreneurs who decide to hire the beneficiaries of the cheque will be exempt from the cost of social security contributions. Finally, the cut in the tax wedge, while on the one hand adding a small amount to wages, on the other hand subtracts useful funds to finance the welfare state. The aim of these measures is to force the labour force into exploited and underpaid work. In our paper we intend to propose a critical analysis not only of economic policy, but also of the political discourse of the current Italian government. Indeed, Giorgia Meloni's continuous recourse to the rhetoric of 'social pacification' (cf. her letter to *Corriere della Sera* of 25 April) and of 'concord' between labour and capital, stands in clear continuity with the management of class conflict advanced by Mussolini's government and theorised by fascist philosophers such as Giovanni Gentile and Ugo Spirito. Through a comparative analysis, we will show how the current government, despite its mystifying distance from the twenty-year fascist period, is the perfect ideological and political heir of the tradition of Italian fascism.

Eduardo Altheman Camargo Santos (Post-doctoral fellow / University of São Paulo): Fascism now and then – Herbert Marcuse's legacies for the critique of far-right authoritarianism

In this presentation, I will first resort to Herbert Marcuse's analyses of Nazi Germany, especially those written in the 1940s during his appointment as a political analyst at the Office of War Information and Office for Strategic Services during his U.S. exile. My objective is to highlight some of the main elements of his critical theory of fascism, namely: fascism as the heir of liberal capitalism; the support for the Führer's regime within the social body; and the refutation of fascism as an expression of anomalous or atavist violence.

In the second part, I will turn to Marcuse's 1972 book *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, where he identifies a global restructuring of capitalism with neofascist leanings. Political assassinations, enduring wars, a more violent wave of repression of social movements, dictatorships in Latin America – all these components led Marcuse to argue that this was no longer a society in which "a comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom prevails," as he had formerly claimed in his 1964 *One-dimensional Man*. I will underline the elements Marcuse lists as those pertaining to a new form of fascist revival – not the exact configuration of the 1920s and 1930s' forms of "classical" fascism, but also adding novel features to its repertoire.

Finally, I will turn to the contemporary political scenario, analyzing empirical examples from the U.S.A. and Brazil, especially concerning Trumpism and Bolsonarism. The reawakening of paramilitary groups, assassinations and racialized incarceration as political weapons, colossal economic conglomerates, attempts to overthrow democratic institutions, and threats directed at the suffrage system – all of which supported by massive popular demonstrations – mark an extreme-right wave that hit the world in recent years, one that presents stark resemblance to classical forms of fascism, now hybridized with neoliberal characters. The goal is understanding how Marcuse could help make sense of our critical political times.

Mateo Crossa (Instituto Mora): Debates On Unequal Exchange: Placing Superexploitation At The Center Of The Analysis

Debates on unequal exchange and value transfer in the global economy have been vital to understand —from a Marxist perspective— some of the main trends in the relation between core and periphery. In the broad field of research focused on the study of unequal exchange, two important Marxist points of view stand out. On the one hand, there is the perspective sometimes referred to as “Broad Unequal Exchange,” which is based on the idea that the asymmetry in the global capitalist system is based on the different organic compositions of capital between developed and underdeveloped countries. On the other hand, there is the perspective known as “Narrow Unequal Exchange,” which argues that dependent economies can become as productive as the imperialist ones, making the source of surplus value transfer reside in wage differences, rather than in differentiated productive configuration.

This presentation will argue that, although these two approaches have been very important to understand the dialectic between core and periphery, both offer limited possibilities to understand the productive formations in dependent capitalism. Using the analysis framework presented by Ruy Mauro Marini’s contributions, I will argue that dependent capitalism —based on super-exploitation as the main source for supplying foreign markets— contributes to the formation of productive scenarios in which export led sectors formed by high compositions of capital coexist with extended productive pauperism destined to supply the domestic market (local, regional and national) where low rates of profit and little capacity for accumulation are set. In this sense, returning to Marini’s approaches, I will show that one of the basic characteristics of dependent economies is the productive polarization causing hypertrophy of export activities, and at the same time, a dystrophy of activities aimed at the production of consumer goods for the domestic market.

Janina Puder (Universität Duisburg-Essen): Superexploitation in Global Capitalism: the Case of Labor Migration

When the term “superexploitation” is discussed in public debates (which actually rarely ever happens) it is usually done to draw attention to particularly poor, inhumane working and wage conditions of certain groups of workers. Whether it is modern slavery, poverty, precarity, racism, or segmented labor markets – these descriptions are considered indicators to emphasize the issue of superexploitation. In this context, the term tends to take on a moral, ahistorical turn without reference to the analytical categories of Marx’s theory of exploitation and labor value. However, if the theoretical roots of the discussion on superexploitation are taken seriously, the concept must not only be historically and materially specified, but also examined from a class-specific perspective to understand why superexploitative working conditions persist in some capitalist societies while they appear hardly conceivable in others.

In his 2016 published book “Imperialism in the Twenty-First Century: Globalization, Super-Exploitation, and Capitalism’s Final Crisis”, John Smith has sought to revive the thesis of superexploitation of Brazilian economist and sociologist Ruy Mauro Marini. The work of both Marini and Smith can be considered an important theoretical contribution to the relationship between the extended reproduction of capital, unequal development and changing rates of exploitation in the context of the global division of labor. But both approaches share at least three blind spots: Firstly, they lack a historically embedded, empirical investigated account of how relations of superexploitation are translated into specific mechanisms of domination and exploitation in concrete sites of production. Secondly, they do not observe how relations of superexploitation are reflected in the (im)possibility for workers to reproduce their labor power solely through the performance of wage work. And thirdly, they fail to identify practices of resistance of workers against their systematic superexploitation. To fill these gaps based on superexploited migrant workers I propose an analytical framework investigating superexploitation drawing on Marx’ theory of exploitation and critical political economy, enriching it by consulting the analytical lens of Social Reproduction Theory. Thereby, I argue that relations of superexploitation not only involve discriminatory mechanisms as a leverage to enable the devaluation of the labor power of certain workgroups, but that superexploitation is also closely connected to (crisis) dynamics of the extended reproduction of capital.

Andy Higginbottom (Kingston University): Imperialist Oil Rents from Surplus-Profit to Super-Profit

Lobbying to get major oil companies to switch from fossil fuels to renewables has failed, because fossil fuels continue to generate a significantly higher rate of return. Their assets are not stranded. Resulting gas contamination

is increasing, at the very moment that global warming is manifestly dangerous. To save the planet it is evermore clear that the mega-corporations have to be destroyed, and the profit motive removed entirely from the way society extracts materials from nature.

To understand why carbon extractivism is so profitable, this paper connects Marx's theory of rent with Lenin's theory of imperialism. Building on the theory of prices of production, Marx conceptualised differential ground rent as a form of surplus-profit that arises for capital operating under more favourable conditions, and absolute rent as ownership monopoly. Lenin had a highly developed reading of Marx's theory of rent, and applied it to the concept of a democratic revolution in Russia that would abolish private landownership. Despite the textual leap, there is a hidden connection between Lenin's theory super-profits as the driver for modern imperialism and Marx's rent theory, the exhaustion of land as well as labour super-exploitation.

These theoretical issues are of particular relevance to the UK, given that London is the base for 2 out of the 5 biggest oil supermajors, and 3 of the 7 biggest global mining companies, that are between them responsible for more than five times the carbon emissions in the UK.

Bringing the state in, the categories of differential and absolute rent underpin corporate taxes (including windfall taxes) and royalties respectively in producer states. The imperative for territorial control of strategic resources is one connection between the economic and military dimensions of imperialism, for a long time centred on oil and the Arabian gulf, plus now on the most strategic transition minerals.

room: r201
marxism and philosophy

Sarah Merchant (UC Berkeley): Spiritual Ontology and Political Liberation: 'Unity of Being' as an Articulation of Anti-Capitalist and Anti-Colonial Critique

How might troubling the analytical separations between the human, the natural, and divine allow us to re-imagine the possibility for political liberation amidst contemporary capitalist catastrophe, ecological destruction, and secular crises of meaning? This paper explores this question through the writings of twentieth century intellectuals Ubaidullah Sindhi and Ali Shariati. Writing in early twentieth century India, Sindhi explored the political implications of **wahdat ul-wajud**, a perspective within Islamic metaphysics that sees all differentiated worldly objects as manifestations of a single, unified consciousness. Sindhi argued that **wahdat ul-wajud** not only challenged the self-other dichotomy undergirding Hindu-Muslim communal violence, but also acted as a theological basis for uniting Hindus and Muslims against British colonialism. In Iran several decades later, Shariati deployed a related ontological concept in his critique of capitalism. Shariati saw **tawhid** not as a declaration of the Islam's monotheistic belief in one God as it is more traditionally understood, but as a description of the blurred metaphysical separations between self and other, human and nature, and Creator and creation. Shariati's **tawhid** was not only an ontological description but also a political assertion of a historical movement of the universe manifesting in the destruction of capitalism. Despite the specificity of their historical contexts and political projects, both scholars demonstrated how seemingly abstracted, ontological accounts of the relationship between self, other, natural, and divine within Muslim metaphysics can be creatively articulated for transformative political projects. I argue that these political articulations of Islamic ontologies may offer creative theoretical repertoires for contemporary movements attempting to usher vernacular spiritual idiom into the realm of liberatory political struggle.

Giannis Ninos (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens): Multitude in the Face of Hegel's Logic: Epistemological Investigations of the Ontology of Contemporary Social Movements

The concept of the multitude, elaborated in the works of Hardt, Negri, and Virno, signifies the leaderless nature and heterogeneous composition of contemporary social movements. Due to its descriptive utility, this concept is also employed by other scholars (such as Castells, Harvey, Laclau & Mouffe) who engage with contemporary social movements. While the concept of the multitude is often linked to changes in capitalism, such as post-Fordism, informatization, the social factory, the domination of the general intellect, immaterial labour, and others, its usage primarily lacks empirical and sociological grounding. In other words, there is a missing social ontology of contemporary movements that elucidates the concept of the multitude based on specific transformations in contemporary capitalism. While the multitude is often viewed as incompatible with Hegelian dialectics, I will argue that Hegel's Logic provides us with the most suitable framework to develop a Marxist understanding of

the multitude and identify its conditions within contemporary capitalism. Therefore, my focus will be on the role of appearance (*Erscheinung*) in Hegel's *Logic*, demonstrating how the concept of the multitude can be derived immanently from the Marxist analysis of capitalism. In doing so, I will first outline certain aspects of the capitalist restructuring that occurred in the latter decades of the 20th century, which are associated with discussions on post-Fordism and informatization. Subsequently, I will emphasize the social conditions that give rise to the multitude. In this context, I will contend that the crucial concept for a systematic understanding of the multitude and contemporary social movements is the concept of social field. Hence, by drawing upon Bourdieu's concept, I will argue that Hegel's epistemological framework enables us to develop a Marxist dialectical perspective on the concept of the multitude, incorporating claims of sociological grounding.

Mikkel Flohr: *Storming Heaven: Marx's Critique of Political Theology and the Possibility of "True Democracy"*

The proposed paper will recover and develop Marx's highly original materialist reconceptualization of democracy and constituent power in *Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of State* (1843). Through close textual analysis and theoretical recontextualization, I reconstruct Marx's deployment of these intertwined concepts as a central part of his critique of political theology, that is, the idea of the state as a sovereign subject transcending and exercising absolute power over society. Marx conceptualized democracy as the social foundation of all constitutional forms of the state, which simultaneously revealed the inherent possibility of overthrowing it and the system of private property that it was structurally integrated in, and constituting a continuous and collective non-sovereign form of self-determination he described as "true democracy."

room: rg01
marxist and critical cultural visions

Florian Endres (Princeton University): *On Seeing Dialectically: Photography and Abstraction*

Grasping the abstract dimension of the contemporary world might be one of the biggest aesthetic tasks, particularly in the case of photography — a medium praised for its supposedly privileged access to the concrete. The following paper seeks to explore the epistemological challenges and the ideological pitfalls photography needs to face when it seeks to represent and critique capitalism, which is a structural mode of production that exceeds our intuitive frame of reference due to its overwhelming complexity and the disparate orders of magnitude. Global capitalism is a peculiar "object" that is not only "too abstract" to be perceived directly, but also a perpetual crises in which abstractions, as such, play a constitutive role. The phrase "too abstract" works here usually both as a descriptive statement, referring to a quandary posed for representation, but also as a normative judgment denouncing that which makes these phenomena oppressive in the first place. The Marxist tradition however, so I want to argue, supplies us with a philosophical much more substantial "aesthetics of abstraction" (Sami Kathib) of which such common criticism falls short. The proposed paper employs both the concept of "real abstraction" developed by neo-Marxist Alfred Sohn-Rethel as well as Moshe Postone's historical-materialist analysis of the discontent with abstraction in relation to the specificity of the photographic medium. Three artists will serve as exemplary instances of tackling and negotiating the aesthetic task at hand: Allen Sekula's work on the global maritime industry, Richard Moss' project on the European board regime and Fazal Sheikh series on the human displacement in the Negev/Naqab desert. Each of these art projects highlight the necessary to circumnavigate a potential danger in photography vis-à-vis abstraction — namely the regression to a romantic, and thereby structurally dangerous, anti-capitalism.

Ghada Waked: *Contemporary Migrant and Refugee Image and the Spatial Fix: Exploring Narratives of Racism and Guilt*

This paper delves into the interconnectedness of image, imagination, and space, focusing on the experiences of migrants and refugees. It examines the intricate relationship between economic development, geography, and narratives surrounding guilt and racism within a capitalist system. By analyzing the influence of political ideologies, media representation, social discourse, and historical experiences, the paper sheds light on the social, economic, and political implications of the spatial fix. Drawing on the concept developed by David Harvey, the spatial fix emphasizes the reorganization of production, investment, and consumption patterns, which often perpetuates uneven development. Furthermore, the study explores how geography and economic development shape place identity and social cohesion, particularly in the context of changing economic landscapes and demographic shifts.

By examining a case study from Lebanon, this paper underscores the context-specific nature of these dynamics and the need for a nuanced understanding of their complexities.

Liam Jackson Abellán (Independent scholar): “A Life No Longer Formed Blindly”: Life/Form in Benjamin, the Soviet Avant-Garde and Beyond

It is fair to say that every revolution attempts a total overhaul of the forms of life of its epoch. Think no further than the fervent enthusiasm with which Jacobins, Bolsheviks and Maoists set about transforming not only culture and governance, but also every minutiae of daily life and even language itself. Against revisionary denunciations, this paper will attempt an inquiry into such a revolutionary need for forms, by tracing parallels with Walter Benjamin's theologico-legal theory of violence in his *Kritik der Gewalt*, as well as Werner Hamacher's re-reading of it. I shall foreground Benjamin's notion of 'divine violence' as the destructive suspension of any relation to the kingdom of ends – it is a violence of pure means, best exemplified by the proletarian general strike, which denies any political ends to its action. Hamacher expands this concept of 'pure means' into the notion of the 'affirmative'. The affirmative is the pre-condition for any formative impulse, the transcendental ground from which any capacity for form springs – thus, the affirmative is mediacy revealed in-itself, and no longer for-itself or others (ie: as means towards an end). I will argue that the affirmative lies at the heart of the revolutionary quest for form as the properly materialist-structuralist questioning of the possibility of form which marks the upheaval of any revolutionary situation. To end, I will advance a historicisation of the affirmative, offering a further dialecticisation of Hamacher's (and Benjamin's) implicit Kantianism, showing how the revelation of this transcendental category is dependent on the historical conjuncture proper to each revolutionary situation, and should not be thought of as a transhistorical a priori. Ultimately, the affirmative will be upheld as a radical alternative to Agambenian biopolitics and its revisionism, since the form-giving potential of any revolution worthy of its name seeks to re-form the most originary form of all, life (or byt in Russian, being a particular obsession of the Soviet avant-garde).

room: rb01
spatial dynamics of capitalism:
uneven development and marginalisation in india, kuwait, lebanon, and the usa

Panelists: Tania Bhattacharyya, University of Cambridge; Diala Lteif, University of Cambridge; Leah Montange, University of Toronto; Kanwal Hameed, Orient Insitut Beirut

Discussant: Mai Taha

“This panel explores the spatial dynamics of capitalism, focusing on uneven development, border regulations, and marginalization in diverse geographical and temporal contexts. Four papers analyze specific cases, in British India, Kuwait, Lebanon, and the USA, to understand the interplay between capitalist forces, infrastructure, and the creation of marginalized spaces.

The first paper highlights the struggles of the Indian merchant capitalist class to assert their claims to Aden amidst colonial capitalism around the turn of the 20th Century. It explores the spatial reordering and economic nationalism of the era. The second focuses on a marginalized neighborhood in 1960s Beirut, and the impact of the construction of a major highway on its development. The paper connects the Lebanese state's approach to space production with the legacy of French colonialism, emphasizing patterns of uneven development and social inequality. The third paper explores “superexploitation”, based on Marini's work in Latin America, within the global north, analyzing how border regulations condition the circulation of capital and people, perpetuate unevenness. The paper also addresses the renewal of racial and nationalist ideologies and their impact on current contradictions. The fourth paper explores the racialization and urbanization processes in Kuwait in relation to climate change. It examines the racialized dynamics created by the burgeoning oil industry, including the exclusion of certain populations and the shaping of Kuwait's geography.

Together, these papers highlight the spatial dynamics of uneven development, border regulation, and racialization within capitalist societies. They shed light on historical legacies and contemporary manifestations, revealing the interconnectedness of economic, social, and political factors in shaping uneven geographies and marginalized communities.

Tania Bhattacharyya : Adenwalla: Merchant capital, self-fashioning and the battle for Aden, 1917-1937

Between 1839, when Aden was conquered by British Indian troops, and 1937, when control of Aden passed into the hands of the imperial government in London, the administration of the affairs of Aden was in the hands of the Bombay Presidency. As a part of Bombay presidency, Aden invited the entrepreneurship and investment of a fledgeling Indian merchant capitalist class. This class, and its claims to Aden, had been shaped under the geopolitical and spatial reordering of the world under colonial capitalism. But the same capitalist order also produced the spatial unevenness that eventually curtailed this class's rise to economic and political power. When the British government reacted to the strengthening of post WWII Indian nationalism by proposing the transfer of Aden's administration from Bombay to London, these merchants erupted in protest, claiming that Aden belonged to Bombay, and ought to be allowed to send representatives to the future government of India. This paper studies the self representation of this small but powerful community of merchants through the petitions and newspaper articles by means of which they waged a long battle to retain control of Aden. They may have failed in their immediate objective despite derailing imperial plans for nearly two decades, but this "battle for Aden" illustrates how the economic nationalism of the early twentieth century in India was shaped as a "spatial fix" to the problem of geographic unevenness produced by colonial capitalism, and how notions of nation, national economy and community, while anticolonialist, were shaped under the forces of the same capitalist order.

Diala Lteif: My way or the highway: On infrastructure and uneven development in 1960s Beirut, Lebanon

Karantina —also known as Al Khodr or Maslakh part of the district of Medawar—is the neighborhood situated in north-eastern Beirut, bordered by the Charles Helou highway to the south, the Beirut River to the east, and the Beirut port from the west and north. Enclosed between local geography and infrastructure, the neighborhood has effectively become an island within the city. However, Karantina has not always been severed from its urban milieu. Up until the mid-1960s, it enjoyed access to the beach and the river, and perhaps most importantly, was at a walking distance from adjacent Mar Mikhael, Hadjin and Geitawi neighborhoods.

This paper focuses specifically on the Charles Helou highway. Part of a larger infrastructural project, imagined during the French mandate era (1923-1946) but only executed after the Lebanese independence, this segment of the highway reified the marginalization of Karantina within Beirut. In this paper, I draw connections between the Lebanese state's approach to the production of space and that of the French mandate era, where urban infrastructure becomes the immutable vessel for a French colonial legacy. The highway, as an irrevocable urban development, was indeed designed to definitively suffocate any future development in Karantina, and atrophy its relation to the city. In doing so, the highway created an unequal relationship between Karantina and the city, peripheralizing it as one of its essential poles of uneven development. I argue that the Charles Helou highway was part of a larger urban policy to rid the city of unwanted populations in the name of modernization, in its essence, a project of marginalization which generated a vital yet exploited class of laborers. The paper is based on 18 months of fieldwork, and mobilizes oral histories, archival research, and participant observation to understand the long-term implication of these state-led development of the neighborhood and its people.

Leah Montange: Capitalism needs unevenness, and borders enshrine it

Ruy Mauro Marini developed the concept of "superexploitation" in 1973, in order to elucidate uneven development and the peripheral position of Latin American countries in the global capitalist system. Recent commentators have connected "superexploitation" not only to labour relations in peripheral areas, but to labour situations in global capitalist centers such as the US, and especially to the race-labour regimes that many migrants with precarious legal status find themselves working within. In this paper, I draw out contour lines that connect superexploitation across the global economy. The regulation of borders conditions the circulation of both capital and people across an uneven geography, renovating opportunities for value expropriation across different iterations of the international division of labour. Meanwhile, unevenness is carried into national interiors through the renewal and renovation of racial ideologies that borders naturalize. Finally, I argue that racial and nationalist ideologies take on a life of their own, as do the regulations on circulation that they enshrine, creating new ripples and contradictions in the current conjuncture.

Kanwal Hameed: Race, Space, Carbon Capitalism & Climate Change: Kuwait as case study

This paper thinks about post-oil processes of urbanisation and racialisation, and the production of a racialized abyssal line in relation to climate change and its effects in Kuwait. The burgeoning oil industry of the 1940s onwards produced new dynamics of inclusion and exclusion at a number of intersections over time; between British colonial subjects and local precarious labourers, citizen and non-citizen workers, through labour law, and the shaping of the lived geography of Kuwait linked to the oil extraction industry. The paper navigates temporality and scale, beginning with a broad purview mapping the control of natural resources and the racial, socioeconomic and political ordering of life under carbon capitalism in modern Kuwait. It discusses the structure of oil extraction as a linking factor between the Kuwaiti and global carbon economy, and the relation between racialisation and spatial practices. Reading closely at the level of the racialised body and encounter with the effects of climate change, it brings theoretical reflections to 18 months of research including interviews, focus groups, a media and literature review carried out as part of the Sustaining Kuwait in Unsustainable Times LSE Middle Centre Project."

room: b102

developments in marxist theories of the state:
legality, democracy and constitutionalism

Vincent Harting (London School of Economics); Dimitrios Kivotidis (Birkbeck); Fernando Quintana (Queen Mary):
Developments in Marxist Theories of the State: Legality, Democracy and Constitutionalism

The past few years have been marked by a notable return to the question of the nature of the state amongst Marxist theorists – that question which, almost a hundred years ago, Lenin (1919) called one of the "most complex and difficult ones." On the one hand, in an age of multiple, intersecting crises, the role of the state in stabilizing the conditions for capital reproduction and accumulation, either through the use of constitutional and legal tools or the employment of sheer coercive force, is just too evident to be sidestepped as irrelevant. This naturally calls for renewing critical appraisals of the class character of the state and its role in concealing capitalist domination. On the other hand, it is still the case that state institutions seem to be fundamental platforms for working-class organization and democratic self-rule, and thus a relevant site in the struggle for collective liberation and practical construction. Consequently, there is a certain ambivalence in Marxist state theory and strategy, which is sometimes clearly negative, and other times the opposite. With no intention of reinventing the wheel, the purpose of this panel is to explore this ambivalence through different lenses, particularly focusing on the relationship between legality and politics, the exploration of the meaning and democratic value of the idea of constitutionalizing workers' political power, and the content of the idea of a socialist constitutionalism. The hope is that such an inquiry and conversation will help to enrich the already fruitful debate on the state, and thus offer more insights regarding theoretical and practical questions regarding socialist organization and struggle. Below you will find the three abstracts for the talks composing the panel.

Vincent Harting (LSE): Constitutionalizing Workers' Political Power: A Defence

If there has been a widely neglected strategic option for social change within the wide arsenal of the socialist tradition it has been the idea of constitutionalizing workers' political power – i.e., to create authoritative political institutions of exclusive access to them, through which they could channel and better articulate their interests. One exception to this relative neglect is Max Adler's (1919) proposal of constitutionalizing an elected, working-class Second Chamber alongside a traditionally elected parliament, which he thought would significantly improve the democratic power of the economically oppressed. In this talk, I aim to defend the credentials of this strategy from one challenge put forward by György Lukács (1920), who claimed that its endorsement represented a "new peak of parliamentary cretinism." The reason for this stark opposition was that, according to Lukács, constitutionalizing workers' political power entails eroding the supposed necessary autonomy of the workers' movement, as it would be now included within the apparatus of the capitalist state – a move that would only put down the revolutionary fire, and so be utterly reactionary. I shall argue that, while there is some truth in Lukácsian view, it nevertheless misrepresents the attractiveness of constitutionalizing workers' political power. In particular, I claim that it misconstrues the extent to which it erodes working-class autonomy, as well as the scope of its revolutionary potential (ignoring the need for complementing it with other forms of struggle), and that it begs the question as to how to stabilize working-class political resistance. Consequently, the hope is that such a discussion will shed light on a more appealing meaning of this kind of state-led strategy for radical social transformation, thus contributing to theoretical and practical questions of contemporary socialist politics.

Fernando Quintana (Queen Mary University): Legality and politics: Revolutionary strategy beyond legal fetishism

In the discussions about revolutionary strategy within the socialist tradition, Law has played a central role. In fact, the debates on 'reform or revolution' are also an implicit discussion about the relationship between law, capitalism, and communism.

As the predominant mode of social ordering, Law appears both as the obvious terrain of political dispute within capitalist society and as the natural instrument for any attempt towards building a new type of society. It's no surprise that subaltern groups, social movements, and left-wing political parties put the content of legal regulation in the centre of their struggle. However, if we follow Pashukanis' elaboration on a Marxist theory of Law, we should focus not only on changing the content of legal norms, but the form of law itself.

Pashukanis notes that the very form of legal regulation is a specific historical feature of capitalist society, and that it exists as the juridic reflection of the commodity exchange relationship. There is an inextricable link between the value form and the legal form. Consequently, any project for the overcoming of capitalist social relations is incomplete without a new mode of social normativity to replace the legal form with.

Latin American scholars have worked the concept of communal form as an alternative to the value form in organizing social life, combining Marxist insights with indigenous traditions (e.g. Rivera Lugo, 2012; García Linera, 2015). This paper seeks to explore the communal form as a possible alternative to the legal form, as well as the strategic implications of its adoption. The communal form implies a non-state centric organization of normativity. The ultimate claim is that the communal form offers a solid basis to envisage a strategy of legal rupture, that is, a simultaneous process of deconstruction of the legal form and (re)construction of emancipatory forms of normativity.

Dimitrios Kivotidis (Birkbeck): A Socialist Constitutionalism for the Twenty-first century

This paper aims to contribute to a Marxist conception of socialist constitutionalism with an explicit focus on the idea of democracy. It will begin by highlighting the limitations of contemporary heterodox approaches to constitutionalism and democracy (especially the LPE version of 'socialist constitutionalism' which draws inspiration from the Weimar constitution) for a comprehensive critique of the current predicament of capitalist crisis and imperialist war. Approaching the idea of democracy from a socialist constitutionalist standpoint and assessing its role and value for contemporary struggles for social emancipation necessarily involves challenging well-established ideas of the liberal viewpoint, such as the absolute antithesis between democracy and bureaucracy. It also demands an unwavering focus on the issue of class rule. For this reason, instead of the Weimar Republic, which we evaluate as a form of bourgeois state, we will draw inspiration from the Soviets as forms of institutionalising a new form of state power that seeks the abolition of state power altogether. We will focus on early twentieth-century revolutionary debates on the Soviets, the Constituent Assembly, the role of the trade unions and the role of the party and examine the constitutional significance of Lenin's description of the socialist constitution as a complex arrangement of cogwheels and multiple 'transmission belts'. Our ultimate claim is that from a socialist constitutionalist perspective democracy can be understood in three ways: i) as a relation of production, ii) as a benchmark to evaluate the process of socialist construction, and iii) as a process that leads to its own negation.

room: b103
with financial hegemony? a neo-regulationist
exploration of the moving hierarchy of structural forms in
europe since 2008

Ayoze Alfageme (University of Geneva); Cédric Durand (University of Geneva); Simon Grothe (University of Geneva)

Financial institutions are under pressure: price shocks and interest rate hikes have reduced the real value of accumulated assets. Though most financial institutions are both creditors and debtors which leads to frictions within the financial sector that undermines its coordinated power. Is financial hegemony ending? If so, how? This paper applies a neo-regulationist framework to analyze whether the period of 2008-2020 presents an interregnum. We outline four potential regimes of accumulation in which the contradictions of financial hegemony could articulate. 1) Back to secular stagnation: The current crisis presents merely exogenous shocks after which the implications of secular stagnation will revert, spiced by a somewhat more progressive new-keynesianism. 2) Fork against finance:

Quantitative easing programs froze unsustainable liability structures which led to large parts of financial relations being featured by Ponzi finance. A crisis due to external shocks threatened financial stability. However, moderate inflation and low real-interest rate offer a leeway to absorb the real devaluation of financial assets without major disruption in the financial system, a process de Brunhoff called a "slow motion financial crisis". Financial profits are squeezed and financial hegemony withers. 3) Progressive finance: Financial hegemony in Europe is ill-suited for the competition with China as well as dealing with the climate crisis and will, therefore, be reregulated. Additionally, industrial policies aimed at greening the economy will cause financing to swing back from consumer to investment finance. Finance is constrained to accommodate bigger structural constraints. 4) Watermelon path: Political responses to the polycrisis require revolutionary reforms. Competing industrial policies between geopolitical blocs lead to the socialization of core industries. Planning replaces financial markets as the main locus of socioeconomic coordination. Fictitious capital is fully inflated away to divert real resources from rentiers to green production. Financial profits are eaten away and financial hegemony ends.

room: b104
hmspen:
marxism and sex work

Benison Kilby (University of Queensland): Pornographic Work as Social Reproduction: The Marxist Feminism of Cosey Fanni Tutti's Magazine Actions

This paper will focus on the series of artworks *Magazine Actions* by the British artist, Cosey Fanni Tutti. Comprised of framed pages from pornographic magazines in which she had appeared between 1974 and 1976, the work was the central component of COUM Transmissions' controversial Prostitution exhibition held at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, from the 19th – 26th of October 1976. As one of the first instances in which an artist made an artwork documenting their own labour in the sex industry, the work was pioneering. It set an important precedent for contemporary artworks made by sex workers and those that examine sex work as a form of gendered labour. Despite foreshadowing recent debates around sex work and many issues that are central to feminism, the *Magazine Actions* have been under-recognised within art history. In the paper, I will analyse the series as a document of the gendered reproductive labour involved in working in the porn industry. Drawing on Marxist feminist scholars such as Heather Berg, I will argue that by appropriating the images created during her work as a porn model, Tutti inverted the extraction of surplus value that took place as she laboured on the production of pornographic magazines, thereby resisting the gendered labour of sex work. Additionally, I will examine Tutti's Magazine Actions and place the work in the context of other women artists using pornography in their art in the 1970s.

Theodora Becker: Prostitution and the commodity form

Feminist and socialist debates about prostitution began in the late 19th century, with the majority of both currents striving to abolish prostitution. Since the 1970s, (some) feminist-Marxist positions have argued that prostitution should be seen as (wage) work, hence the term ""sex work"". Simultaneously, radical feminist positions emphasize the violent nature and patriarchal power relations of prostitution.

This paper, which is based on my philosophical thesis, doesn't share either of these clear-cut positions, which neglect essential aspects of the sexual trade. Instead, it explores the question of how the ""commodity"" the prostitute sells relates to the capitalist commodity form, what this commodity actually consists of, and why the prostitute is, to use Walter Benjamin's term, ""commodity and seller in one"". It argues that one result of bourgeois regulation of prostitution was to force this trade in a form that resembles wage work while simultaneously refusing labour rights to prostitutes. The bourgeois suspicion against the prostitute, that she either forcibly sells herself or is a fraudulent criminal, is explained by the peculiarities of her commodity: The value of the commodity ""sex"" is essentially based on projections and desires. Prostitution can neither be reduced to a ""sexual service"" nor to ""buying women,"" but combines both aspects in itself. The customer's desire is directed at the prostitute herself and not only at certain sexual acts. The prostitute addresses this desire, especially by means of her advertising, but fulfills it only in appearance; this results (potentially) in a metaphysical surplus.

However, these peculiarities of prostitution are also subject to historical change, which is related to changes in the concept of labor and also in the role of sexuality in late capitalism. Understanding prostitution beyond wage labor also has consequences for the political struggle of sex workers, which focuses on its recognition as labor.

Robbie Warin (Oxford Internet Institute & Royal Holloway): The Platformisation of Sex Work: Camming, OnlyFans and Planetary Labour Markets

Adult service websites mediate the relationship between sex workers and clients, providing the digital infrastructure for buying and selling erotic and emotional labour. These digital platforms have largely been omitted from the literature on platform labour contributing to their exclusion from academic debates and policy reforms.

Based on research into working conditions on 4 international sex work platforms undertaken by the Fairwork Project, this paper will present preliminary research findings on working conditions for online sex workers. It will explore the labour process on sex work platforms, how workers' actions are constrained and shaped by the protocols, logics and rules encoded into their digital infrastructure. It will focus on how workers resist, game and hustle the platforms in a bid to maximise earnings, and how they circumvent them to form communities and exercise solidarity.

Secondly, this paper seeks to counter the exclusion of sex work from the platform labour literature through providing a theoretical framework to bring them into discussion on the same terms as other businesses within the platform economy. Analysis centres around two theoretical themes. The first of these is labour process theory and its framing of the platform as the point in which the social relations of work are fenced off and turned into relations of production. The second is the concept of planetary labour markets. Here the paper argues that digital platforms are reconfiguring the geographies of sex work labour markets; that they bring workers from radically different social, economic, cultural and political environments into direct competition; and that the platforms thereby act as a spatial fix, creating an on-demand work force.

room: bgl
roundtable on now we are in power:
the politics of passive revolution
in twenty-first century bolivia

Juan Grigera; Angus McNelly (University of Greenwich); Camila Vergara (University of Cambridge)

For much of the twenty-first century, the Marxist Left has looked to Latin America as a source of political and theoretical inspiration. Social movements and a wave of left-wing governments proclaiming twenty-first century socialism captured the imagination of many. Nowhere was this truer than in Bolivia, where indigenous coca grower Evo Morales rode to power on the back of some of the most powerful and radical social movements seen anywhere this century. Almost two decades later, following Morales fall from power following a coup d'état in 2019, unpicking the political and theoretical lessons from this moment of radical potential, advances and frustrations is a salient task if we are to confront the multidimensional crisis and build radical alternatives from the moment in which we currently find ourselves.

In this vein, I am proposing a roundtable on my book *Now We Are in Power: The Politics of Passive Revolution in Twenty-First Century Bolivia*, which was recently published with the University of Pittsburgh Press (<https://upittpress.org/books/9780822947783/>). The book centres on the left-wing government of Evo Morales (2006–2019) in Bolivia through the lens of passive revolution. It addresses a diverse set of themes, from the incorporation of left-wing social movements in progressive political projects, constitutional reform processes, the socio-spatial contradictions of progressive politics, the political economy of extractivism, nationalising projects and the role of strong leaders.

The roundtable will be composed of a diverse set of people who are from the Marxist canon but have different sympathies, work on different regions and have different thematic interests. Juan Grigera (KCL), who works on the political economy of development in Latin America, and Camila Vergara (University of Cambridge), who works on constitutional processes in Latin America, have already agreed to participate. I hope to have scholars working on the MENA, Africa and Latin America in the session in order to move the discussion beyond the regional context of Latin America and tease out common threads central to building alternative political projects at the peripheries of capitalism.

room: mal g13

raymond williams's **the country and the city** at 50 and vron ware's **return of a native**

Panellists:

Daniel Hartley is Assistant Professor in World Literatures at Durham University. He is the author of **The Politics of Style: Towards a Marxist Poetics** (Brill, 2017), and has published widely on world literature and Marxist theory.

Vron Ware is a UK-based writer and photographer with an international reputation for her work on race, gender, peace, militarism and ecology. Her most recent book, **Return of a Native: Learning from the Land**, is published by Repeater Books (2022).

Kai Heron

This year is the 50th anniversary of Raymond Williams's **The Country and the City** (1973). A wide-ranging and meticulous literary history of the capitalist transformation of the English countryside and its constitutive relationship with urbanization, it is widely viewed as one of his most important works. Arguably, however, some of its key lines of argument remain neglected by the contemporary left (e.g., its insistence that the abolition of the country-city divide remains a compelling element of Marx and Engels's thought). This panel seeks to tease out the contemporary relevance, and also some of the limitations, of Williams's book. Daniel Hartley and Vron Ware will each give a short 10-to-15-minute reflection on Williams's text. This will be followed by a longer presentation and discussion of Vron's recently published book **Return of a Native**, which resonates with **The Country and City** and in certain ways prolongs (whilst challenging and broadening) its line of thought into the historical present. The discussion will likely encompass such issues as the colonial history of the English countryside, rural class struggle (in dialogue with the work of Peter Linebaugh), ecology, and also the experimental form and nature of Vron's book.

room: mal g23

critical studies in marxist literature

Marcelo Ridenti (Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp)): Mario Pedrosa: a Brazilian Marxist and the Congress for Cultural Freedom

Mario Pedrosa became famous as a pioneering leader of Trotskyism in Brazil in the 1930s, later he became the greatest Brazilian art critic of his time, introducer of abstract art in the country. At the end of his life, he would be the number one founding member of the Workers' Party in 1980 (PT). Less well-known is his relationship with the anti-communist international left and the Congress for Cultural Freedom. His aversion to totalitarianism – that he detected both in Varguist nationalism in Brazil and Stalinism abroad – influenced his approach to the liberals while seeking to defend left-wing positions during the 1950s. The political process that resulted in the 1964 military coup led him to redirect his itinerary, which had previously turned more and more to the right, following the increasingly conservative tendency of his American friends, especially the so-called New York Intellectuals. He had got in touch with them during his five years of exile in the United States in order to escape Vargas' dictatorship. His trajectory helps us understand the modalities of collaboration, dispute, and international circulation of intellectuals critical to Stalinism during the Cold War. The text results from the research exposed in my book *O segredo das senhoras americanas: intelectuais, internacionalização e financiamento na Guerra Fria cultural* (Ridenti, ed. Unesp, São Paulo, 2022, 406 p.).

Joséphine Haillot (Cornell University): Michel Houellebecq's Post-Capitalist Realism

Since the publication of his third novel, **Plateforme**, Michel Houellebecq's admirers have routinely saluted him as both a prophetic social critic and a modern-day Balzac. On close examination of the reception of his work, the two terms appear to describe the same phenomenon: on one hand, Houellebecq is lauded as Balzacian for his skill in capturing contemporary realities; on the other, he is said to be prophetic for grasping what is to come, by sometimes uncanny gestures of foreshadowing or prolepsis. So construed, Houellebecq's œuvre invites analysis in terms of realism. For György Lukács, the power of the realist novel in its prime — iconically, **La Comédie humaine** — lay in its capacity to see beyond the fragmented reality of life under capitalism, to restore its totality.

Through this Lukácsian prism, I argue that an evaluation of Houellebecq's realism must begin with periodization.

His work is preoccupied by three historical “moments,” partly overlapping: the ideological ascendancy of “liberal-libertarianism,” born out of the revolutionary *illusions perdues* of May’68; the corresponding renaissance of a reactionary, illiberal anticapitalism; and the slow socio-politico-economic mutation towards what Houellebecq envisions as a “neo-feudal” order. My focus is on this last concept, taken up in recent years by a range of intellectuals (from Brenner and Dean to Kotkin) who have sought to understand, from different vantages, the post-2008 crisis of neoliberalism and the outlines of its possible successor(s). To what extent does Houellebecq’s diagnosis of the present “interregnum” correspond to these diagnoses? What do his fictions suggest about the social content of the new regime, its specific forms of exploitation and the prospects for resistance?

Houellebecq’s case, I suggest, is illustrative of larger politico-aesthetic trends. Does the contemporary French literary landscape bear witness to the emergence of a new realist paradigm? Are certain authors breaking free from the grip of “capitalist realism” – the rampant sense that it is impossible to envision systemic alternatives to capitalism? Or on the contrary, by imagining a dystopian alternative to existing capitalism (e.g. neo-feudalism), do they perpetuate the capitalist realism trend, consequently reinforcing the neoliberal consensus? We wonder, since Houellebecq was enthusiastically celebrated by Macron as a romantic chronicler of the disillusioned West during the Legion d’Honneur ceremony dedicated to the writer in 2019.

Lastly, against the backdrop of mounting dissent against Macron’s rule, itself representative of a wider shift from “progressive” neoliberalism to more overtly authoritarian modes of governance, can a literary movement grounded in realism still contribute to the cultivation of class consciousness, as Lukács hoped? Moreover, in an increasingly image-centric world, can literature, in any capacity, still facilitate collective praxis and foster the imagination of alternative post-capitalist futures?

Fintan Calpin (King’s College London): “I named it but I did not nail it”: Catachresis & Separation in Peter Culley’s Hammertown Trilogy

Peter Culley’s Hammertown trilogy maps the landscape of his hometown, Nanaimo BC, on the margin of the “semi-peripheral” Vancouver, a settler-colonial economy situated between British and American empires and shaped by a history of primary resource extraction and lately by global flows of finance capital. In this paper I look to Culley’s use of catachresis—misnaming, stretching or misusing metaphor—as a means of figuring a topography scarred by extraction and capital flight. For Anahid Nersessian, catachresis is one means by which Keats’s poetry articulates anxieties about “the emerging social fact of industrial labor” and its constitutive separation of people from the means of their own reproduction. Culley engages this rhetorical tradition to limn abstract structures and global processes as they are experienced in the local and particular. Rising from the level of the figure, catachresis organises Hammertown’s generic play, as Culley tries to name his contemporary Nanaimo in the language of Romantic pastoral and West Coast late modernism, neither of which quite nail it. I argue that this misnaming shouldn’t be read as a failure of mimesis but as a materialism of absences: a way of figuring objective social abstractions that, to quote Lukács, have “the same ontological rigor of facticity as a car that runs you over.” Culley’s catachreses position poetry as a way of thinking across geography and history such that the abandonment of sites of extraction and industry, just as much as the extension and intensification of these frontiers, can be seen as connected moments within the continuous reproduction of value and its constitutive social relations on an expanded scale: that is, within the deepening separation between people and the means of meeting their own needs.

Ewan Kerr (Glasgow Caledonian University): Transformative Trade Union Environmentalism: Political Imaginaries and Repertoires of Action

The looming climate crisis, and increasing awareness of the need for structural change, require that we reinvestigate the question of agency in climate politics: how will change be achieved, and who will achieve it? The trade union movement has been identified as one agent of change, although one that is still misunderstood and marginalised within the mainstream environmental movement who, it appears, demand that trade unionism adopt an entirely new set of political concepts and a new political vocabulary. To push back against the claim that trade unionism requires a profound transformation to answer the challenge of the climate crisis, this paper uses the analytical tool and methodological approach of immanent critique to outline and defend the theoretical logic and characteristics of a 'transformative' variant of trade union environmentalism. By critically elaborating upon the approaches to the state, political economy and sectionalism, this paper explores the theoretical terrain on which a transformative trade union environmentalism emerges. This is taken to be the existing contentious politics of trade unionism and consists of the ideological frameworks, conceptual resources and inherited traditions associated with a strong class analysis that shape the political imaginaries and repertoires of action of the trade union movement. It makes two important contributions. Firstly, it complements existing studies that have extensively documented the environmental and climate initiatives of workplace trade unions and national/regional trade union federations by thinking more deeply about the usefulness of existing contentious traditions, conceptual resources and ideological frameworks of trade unionism. These, are argued to remain useful points of reference for a working-class environmentalism as it is expressed through the trade union movement. Secondly, in exploring the logic of transformative trade unionism, this article seeks to demonstrate that an immanent critique can 'enliven the political imagination' of trade unionists and environmental activists regarding the future possibilities for trade union environmentalism: the paper engages in the creative and practical project of refining knowledge and theoretical precision about the prospects and possibilities for transformative trade union environmentalism by identifying critical forces at work and immanent possibilities for trade unionism to embrace a suitably radical form of climate politics.

Loreto Rojas Viver (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid): Between and against feminism and trade unionism: the potentials and limits of the feminist trade unionism proposals from a Marxist perspective

In this paper I would like to give some reflexions about the limits of the political proposals of feminist trade unionism, around a project of investigation in three trade union organizations in feminized and racialized labor sectors, such as domestic work, cleaning work and some agricultural sectors.

The proposal of feminist trade unionism emerges in response to the crisis of labor movement and of the classic unions, due to their role in the integration of the struggle in the State and in the defense of the interests of the employers and of the middle classes. Because of this, they are unable to respond to the interests of the most proletarianized sectors, such as those mentioned above, mostly composed of a feminized, migrant, undocumented and highly temporary workforce. In the face of this vacuum, experiences of union struggle emerge spontaneously on the margins of and against the big unions. In turn, due to the absence of a strong labor or communist movement, and given the rise of feminism in the last decade, many of these unions are framed under feminism, assuming it as a project that seeks to respond to the oppression and exploitation they suffer as migrant women, in the workplace and outside it.

However, here I want to ask myself about some of the limits that can be found in this struggles, with the intention of contributing to the advancement of the political struggle. Some of these questions could be, are they achieving the articulation of struggles that they propose? What political agents are they reinforcing? What relationship do they have with the State, does this mean progress or a weakening of the struggle? On these limits and others we will try to deepen with the aim of being able to make the struggle more effective.

Jens Aurich (International Institute of Social History (IISH)); Jeremiah Dittmar (London School of Economics): Strikes and Innovation: The Political Economy Of Invention in the Industrial Revolution

In **Capital**, Marx claimed that the history of technological innovation could be written as a history of responses to strikes and combinations by workers. We show that worker militancy did indeed drive inventive activity by

providing the first large scale empirical study of the relationship between strikes and patents in the classical period of the Industrial Revolution.

We assemble and analyse quantitative evidence on the pattern of technological invention, strikes, and employment during the core years of the Industrial Revolution in England. We study the period before and after labour unions were legalised in the 1820s, a change that led to a wave of strikes and revolts by workers and forced employers to reorganise production.

Our economic and historical analysis documents that worker mobilisation drove significant shifts in technology during the Industrial Revolution. We find that these relationships were most pronounced in the textile industry, which was the most dynamic sector of the British economy, and increased significantly after labour unions were legalised. After the legalisation of unions, the direction of invention shifted toward technologies that could be coupled with lower skilled and less organised labour, which meant disproportionately female and child labour. After the legalisation of unions, we observe large absolute declines in wages for adult male textile workers and relative increases in the wages of unskilled, female, and child labourers.

Our research provides systematic quantitative evidence complementing core debates within historical materialism, including recently reinvigorated controversies about the direction of causality between the relations of production and the development of the productive forces. We also show how capitalist technology evolved historically to exploit the social fragmentation of the labour movement. More generally, our analysis documents how political action can direct aspects of technological change that in turn shape the labour process, the distribution of income, and class formation.

room: dlt
thinking race and capital

Bafta Sarbo: Black Power and Class Struggle: Marxism in Walter Rodney's Life and Work

Mario Soares Neto (PHD Student at Faculty of Law of the University of São Paulo (USP)): Race in Marx's Capital

"his paper aims to contribute to the application of the historical-dialectical materialist method to the question of race, drawing on the backdrop of black struggles against racism and capitalism, primarily in Brazil but also in other parts of the world. In his seminal work, Marx demonstrated the contradictory character of the social relations of capital and the historical influence exerted by race and racial relations as concrete circumstances in the dynamics of the capitalist mode of production. Engels, in his 1894 Letter to Borgius, stated, "We see economic conditions as that which, in the final analysis, determines historical development. But race is itself an economic factor"". To consider race as an "economic factor" means to regard it as a philosophical category that unveils the racial determination of capital. This perspective is rooted in the challenge of abstracting determinations in historical-dialectical materialism, which concerns understanding the constitutive characteristics of the socio-historical reality of capitalism, deeply influenced by the socio-racial division of labor and racial ideology. Capitalism originated through the colonial-racial exploitation of labor, predominantly through black slavery in the Americas, serving as a historical form of capital accumulation. In this debate, the method that progresses from the abstract to the concrete necessitates reflecting upon race and the mode of production, specifically the colonial slave mode of production and Brazilian capitalism. This analysis draws on the theoretical, methodological, and political contributions of Brazilian Marxist authors such as Jacob Gorender and Clóvis Moura. Our article aims to formulate the notion of the racial determination of abstract labor and the racial determination of the value form, thereby highlighting the central role of race and racism in the dynamics of class and the exploitation of the labor power of the black proletariat—a particularity of the Brazilian socio-economic formation.

Victor Chung (University of Toronto): Racial Oppression in Capitalism is Path-Dependent

In recent years there has been a strong emergence of scholarly engagement with the relationship between racism and capitalism. Nancy Fraser's intervention into these debates with her 2022 publication *Cannibal Capitalism* argues that racial oppression has a structural basis in capitalism; in other words, the relation between racism and capitalism is structural according to Fraser. While Fraser provides a convincing and coherent presentation of the relation between racism and capitalism, she does not supply a meaningful generic definition of what a structural relation

would generally consist in. I argue that James Mahoney's sociological concept of path dependence can supply Fraser's structural relation with the necessary generic content to make her presentation complete. I further situate Fraser's presentation within the broader literature on racial capitalism.

Ashok Kumar (Birkbeck University): Crisis and the Production of Difference

This paper focuses on the crisis of the 1970s in the United States to propose that severe moments of capitalist crisis generate equally severe social transformations. Indeed, the severity of the crisis of the 1970s is well supported (Brenner 2002) but just as it necessitated a 'spatial fix' it also produced new embodiments upon old racial categories -- or a racial fix — to police the crisis, absorb its fissures, recuperate its ruptures, and accumulate and develop new terrains of profitability out of the crisis. The paper shows how this transformation of Black racialisation in America went from a relationship of separation for the purpose of labour exploitation to one of assimilation, or what Patrick Wolfe (Wolfe 2016) calls "disappearing", for the purposes of land dispossession. Indeed, urban black populations, not dissimilar to indigenous populations, needed to be 'destroyed to be replaced' following the economic crisis of 1973. The production of difference for exploitation reflected the need for a black reserve army of labour between 1915 and 1973. Following this period, the crisis and capital's drive to accumulate, required a fundamental transformation of social relations through the racial category of Blackness, dispossessing a now redundant surplus for the purposes of accumulation through land. I focus on this to argue that the character of an economic crisis (be it labour shortage, credit/debt, or the case herein of overaccumulation) defines the attendant production of difference that follows. Thus, in understand this relationship we can more effectively combat the twin phenomena of capitalist exploitation and racial subordination.

room: g51
philosophical radicalism

Kenneth Novis (University of Oxford): Spinoza: A Genealogy of Radicalism

The relation of the 17th-century Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza to political radicalism is a troubled one. Among others, Althusser calls Spinoza "Marx's only direct ancestor, from a philosophical point of view", and Plekhanov contends that "Marx and Engels never abandoned Spinoza's point of view". Since the beginning of Marxist investigations into Spinoza's philosophy, he has been customarily lauded as an ancestor to our movement. This paper seeks to both contextualise and challenge this view, drawing on left-wing political critiques of Spinozism, while recognising the place of Spinoza's philosophy in the history of radicalism. For this purpose, I seek to balance a description of the limits of Spinoza's philosophy with an investigation into how the inheritors of his philosophy, especially in the 18th-century surpassed those limits by means of partial rereadings and intentional misreadings of his works. Spinoza's most important 18th-century political interpreters, variously associated with the titles of *Encyclopédiste* or *philosophe*, while oftentimes declaring themselves outright *spinosistes*, depart from his ideas in important ways to arrive at a truly emancipatory vision. The history of the original propagation of Spinoza's ideas across France provides crucial context for contemporary French Marxist interpretations of Spinoza, especially those of Deleuze and Negri. With an understanding of the history and limits of Spinozism, I conclude by assessing the claims of both authors to their Spinozist heritage, and the value of their unspoken and often overlooked departures from 17th-century rationalist metaphysics.

Guilhem Mevel (Sciences Po Paris): The power of resilience: Praxis and self-emancipation as disalienating forms of struggle

The paradoxical times we experience can be best described by the fragmentation and the multiplication of capitalist contradictions under the neoliberal canopy. While the stagnation of productivity gains is compensated by expropriation and power restructuring in favour of dominant classes (Harvey, 2007), the intensification of class struggle should be understood in the context of the rise of authoritarian trends, identitarian exclusions and the confrontations of imperialist policies.

Despite these global dynamics of our time, class resistance lacks a consistent internationalist organization, while the prevalence of discursive antagonism over material solidarity denotes an inadequate development of class consciousness. In this context, the critical concept of alienation should be defended so as to expand collective resistance to capitalist predation. Indeed, beyond economist demands that can lead to a segmentation of

“economic-corporate” (Gramsci, 1971) groups, overcoming the fragmentation of the proletariat within a socialist counter-hegemony should not take the mere form of discourse, but also the concrete extension of praxis.

As neoliberal capitalism induces a major crisis of belonging, collective movements can recompose the logic of identities based on class reappropriation of production (the movement of praxis within the history). Learning from the failures of the alterglobalist attempts of counter-hegemony in the 2000s and the limits of left-wing populist movements in the 2010s, I will defend an actualized reading of Jean-Paul Sartre’s original framing of Marxism, completed by a Gramscian perspective. By conceiving class as constantly shaped by class struggle (Poulantzas, 1976), the dynamics of political resistance are integrated within the transformation of the social relations of production. As a consequence, identity is the concrete modulation of class relations: therefore, collective resistance takes a consistent anticapitalist orientation when re-articulating identities (including gender and race assignments) under the collective affirmation of praxis.

Jirí Ružicka (The Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences): *Genealogy of Marxist Humanism(s)*

The recent renewed interest in Marxist humanism also raises the question of its ideological roots and its genealogy. It is usually spoken of as a more or less homogeneous current that places the concept of human praxis and totality at the center of its reflection. In this paper, we will try to problematize this view and distinguish, using the example of Czechoslovak non and post-Stalinist Marxism, at least two (under)currents of Marxist humanism, which, although they may overlap on some points, are ultimately relatively distinct thought “projects” – the so-called existentialist, and the avant-garde one. We want to point out their different anthropologies and by doing so also the deeper historical roots of this split, namely the ideological debates on the left in the 1920s and especially in the 1930s. The paper also wants to raise the question whether this split can be found in other countries (not only) of the Eastern Bloc.

Mahyar Mohaghegh Dolatabadi (York University): *Iran’s Epistemological Aporia*

I wish to critically examine the epistemological underpinnings of differing Marxist perspectives on contemporary Iran. Despite predictions of its demise, the Islamic Republic has survived, adapting to sanctions, and building an economy beyond Western capitalist hegemony. The study addresses “The Epistemological Limitation” faced by Marxist theorists when approaching Iran, encompassing three dimensions: historical, political, and theoretical. The historical section explores the rise and subsequent suppression of the Iranian left, with a focus on the impact of the mass prison executions in 1988. The political dimension examines the limitations associated with the closed nature of the Iranian state and biases prevalent in Western sources of information. Two contrasting leftist models of the Islamic Republic are scrutinized, evaluating their capacity to comprehend the historical disconnect between Marxist thinkers and the evolving working class as a social force. The thesis argues that theorists often assume the validity of their chosen models, leading to epistemological limitations that hinder the exploration of alternative Marxist potentials. One model perceives the regime as a stilted yet evolving state, rooted in a strong social base capable of fostering an autonomous workers’ movement challenging Western capitalist hegemony. In contrast, the other model portrays the regime as weak, rife with social conflicts, lacking a significant social base, and susceptible to overthrow by an alliance of oppositional forces. To overcome this limitation, the proposal advocates for in-depth field research within Iran, focusing on the self-perception of workers as a political and social force. Collaborative engagement with union organizers and analysis of workers’ organizations will shed light on the extent of suppression experienced. This paper critically reassesses the implications of the epistemological limitation on the formulations presented by scholars like Matin, utilizing a theory of U&CD to demonstrate the influence of global productive processes on Iran. However, it emphasizes the need to question the validity of sources and acknowledges potential limitations in presupposing the theoretical axioms of a single side within the epistemological aporia.

room: r201
revisiting the proletarian standpoint

The notion that the proletariat has a unique role in communist revolution is a major tenet of Marxism, but is frequently met with skepticism in the 21st century. The long slowdown of industrialization and the rise of informal service sectors problematizes the old workerist formulas; the record of actually existing socialism seems to suggest that even societies founded on the dignity of labor can reproduce relations of domination; finally, reconstructions of Marx have called the theoretical standpoint of labor itself into question. However, the ambiguity of conditions of possibility for action in a society based upon alienation suggest that the standpoint question has not been laid to

rest. Without understanding the process in which proletarian subjects are objectified for capital, the ground of viable subjectivity will remain caught in the trap of bad faith: history is the result of either objective determinations or free subjective activity. The antinomies of communist revolution—determinism vs voluntarism, empiricism vs utopianism, organization vs spontaneity, party vs masses—follow from this false choice.

The motivating question of this panel is 'How does the specificity of the proletarian standpoint, vis-a-vis the capital relation, make revolution a necessary development?' Several recent interventions, such as those from Chibber and Mau, touch on, but ultimately side-step, this problem. We aim to reconsider the concept of the proletarian standpoint as the ground from which the process of material reproduction can be determinately related to possible political programs. Extracting different conceptions of 'the standpoint' in Lukács allows one to identify political strategies that practically reckon with the character of the proletariat as a potential revolutionary agent. Subsequently, conceiving of proletarian agency as unfolding from the radicalization of social needs – thus, exposing capital's determination of the value of labor power to political contestation through workers' struggles – concretizes how subject-object antinomies can be overcome.

Eden Young: Which Standpoint?

Standpoint theory has largely fallen out of fashion in academia. With regard to epistemologies concerned with the non-epistemic properties, analytical theories such as epistemic injustice seem to have taken its place. But should standpoint theory be left in the dustbin? Standpoint theory is part of the legacy of György Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* (HCC). In HCC, the standpoint of the proletariat plays a central role in determining the character of the vanguard and in justifying a Leninist political strategy more generally. At stake is the account of the proletariat's potential to develop class consciousness.

There are two conceptions of the standpoint to be found throughout HCC. In *Class Consciousness*, one finds the conception of the standpoint as the position from which a true analysis of the class position of the proletariat in capitalism is possible. In *Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat*, a conception of the standpoint is at stake that emphasizes the self-realization of the proletariat into a political subject. The first conception falls prey to Lukács' own critique of voluntarism, as it suggests the conclusion that all the working-class needs to become revolutionary is to hear the truth about their class position from the vanguard. The second conception, however, emphasizes the role of the subjective experience of reification. This account locates the revolutionary potential in the objective position of the proletariat without a sufficient account of how the subjective experience is turned into political agency, thereby veering towards the determinism of which Lukács accused the Second International. This talk identifies these two conceptions of the standpoint and their respective consequences for political strategy. It then takes a step towards resolving this tension in order to avoid falling into the voluntarist vs. determinist trap. In doing so, a new space from which to reckon with standpoint theory's demise is opened up.

Nathan Eisenberg: The Radicality of Proletarian Needs

Marx counterposes the self-realization of the proletariat to what he calls a 'class against capital', contrary to the common misconception that he opposes the 'class for itself' to the 'class in itself'. For Marx, the proletariat's autonomy is confined by the conflictual process of reproducing proletarians as moments of capital – and yet proletarian agency profoundly shapes development by destabilizing capital accumulation. With this formulation, Marx is making explicit the antagonism inherent to capitalist class relations. But is this antagonism sufficient for a historical dialectic of subjectivity?

In the proposed talk, I aim to connect two antinomies that revolve around the antagonism inherent in the proletarian standpoint. The first antinomy is that between economic struggles – rooted in the immediate needs arising from the labor process, division of labor, and conditions of social reproduction – and political struggles – orientated towards the communist horizon. The perennial question is whether economic demands can prove sufficient for politicizing the workers' movement. The second antinomy concerns the debate over the determination of the value of labor-power, which is calibrated to "historical and moral" consumption norms (a.k.a. the 'cost of living'). How do these norms develop? What is the relationship between capital's demand for labor-power and labor's structural power to make political demands?

I will argue that Ágnes Heller's concept of 'radical needs' allows us to mediate these antinomies and move beyond the impasse between 'political' voluntarism and 'economic' determinism. Beyond Heller, I will draw on the work of Riccardo Bellofiore, Ruy Mauro Marini, Guido Starosta, Jacques Bidet, Beverly Silver, Andrea Ricci, and Prabhat

and Utsa Patnaik to outline a possible intervention into the question of the relationship between the value of labor-power and the class struggle.

Lotte List (Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy, Copenhagen Business School): Master/slave, capitalist/proletarian, friend/enemy

Left-wing critical scholarship has long been drawn to the political thought of Carl Schmitt. Whereas liberal state theory sought to confine social conflict to the deliberations of parliament within the state, Schmitt with his theory of sovereignty and friend/enemy distinction based the constituent moment of the state in an underlying conflict. Through an engagement with Schmitt, thinkers of the left have sought to repoliticize what bourgeois ideology had depoliticized, in order to fundamentally challenge the claim to legitimacy of the bourgeois state.

However, using Schmitt to achieve this repoliticization is not unproblematic. In this paper, I argue that Schmitt's state theory is dependent on his negative philosophical anthropology. Any adoption of his terminology for political critique which does not recognize this anthropological basis runs the risk of perpetuating his specific view on human nature as a necessary condition for political organization. In order to uncover this problematic, I first analyze Schmitt's use of the category of the negative through a comparison with Hegel's dialectics. Schmitt was a dialectical thinker, I argue, but in contrast to Hegel, his dialectics were a formalistic and normatively empty eternal return of the negative.

Building on this, I then contrast Schmitt's friend/enemy distinction with Marx's concept of the capitalist/proletarian class struggle. Schmitt credits Marx with having formulated the essence of the political by systematically concentrating all class differences into this single dialectical dichotomy. Yet he also criticizes Marx for transforming political enmity into absolute enmity insofar as the latter allegedly fails to see that the capitalist/proletarian distinction is only a particular instance of the universal friend/enemy distinction. Against Schmitt, I argue that it is the historical specificity of class conflict which prevents the concept from folding into the abstract absolute of the friend/enemy distinction, and that this historical specificity relates to the historical malleability of humanity in Marx.

room: rg01
marxism, technology, power

Ellen Emilie Henriksen (École Normale Supérieure Paris - PSL, Chaire in Geopolitics of Risk): For an untimely future

This article is about the fixed future produced by an increasingly computed world. I argue that more than merely predicting, algorithmic time recognises the uncertainty of the future, which it attempts to fix through 'primed prediction' (O'Connell and Van de Wiele 2021). Up against an algorithmic future, politics must revoke the unforeseen and the creativity of chance. Any liberation must inevitably draw on the past, but also break with a prewritten: it must be untimely, as argued by Elisabeth Grosz (2004). Through critiquing what Aradau and Blanke (2022) refer to as 'algorithmic reason', I propose one of many possible criticisms of an computationally timed future, and a possible way to reclaim the untimely.

My article proceeds in 3 parts. (1) I discuss the concept 'algorithmic reason' and show its parallels to what Bridle (2018) calls 'computational thinking'. But where Bridle commences his account with the meteorological models of early 20th century, my narrative starts with the cybernetics of the 1940s and 1950s. Any historical beginning is intrinsically arbitrary, as a 'beginning' will inevitably contain traces of the past. Probability emerged long before cybernetics, and taming chance was far from new by the 1940s (Hacking 1990, 2006). I nonetheless start my account with the theories and technologies of cybernetics as their legacies are ever-present in the algorithmic reason of today (Geoghegan 2023). (2) I discuss the ontology of time underpinning algorithmic reason, which seeks to control the very unfolding of a future which is threatened by chance. (3) I offer one alternative against algorithmic time, which in part draws on Henri Bergson's philosophy of time. I argue for a commitment to an untimeliness which embraces difference and views chance as creative, as I reformulate uncertainty as a prerequisite for a future which differs from a time of monsters.

Les Levidow (Open University): Technology for counter-hegemonic agendas: Latin American concepts and practices

Technoscientific innovation has become a hegemonic symbol of beneficent progress in various senses: a social opportunity for better livelihoods; eco-efficiency improvements benefiting environmental protection, and economic

competitiveness in global markets. These putative benefits have helped legitimise profit-driven capital-intensive innovation. In practice, its design helps exploit (or expel) labour, plunder natural resources and perpetuate socio-economic inequalities.

In Latin America, alternative innovations and concepts have arisen from social movements resisting the hegemonic system. In particular: solidarity economy (EcoSol) initiatives have innovated technoscientific means of developing collective skills under their own control. Likewise short food chains (*circuitos cortos*) for closer, fairer relationships between producers and consumers, while avoiding profit-driven intermediaries. Innovation for those counter-hegemonic agendas is often called 'technology', understood as technology-in-use.

Adjectives highlight specific roles. In particular:

- Social technology denotes production methods which can be cheaply developed, consolidated, appropriated by the producers, and then easily replicated or adapted elsewhere.
- Socio-environmental technology facilitates practices that are environmentally sound, resource-conserving, socially just, economically viable, culturally acceptable, and easily replicable.
- Socio-territorial technology encompasses any product or process rooted in a communitarian initiative to reproduce its socio-environmental basis in resisting territorial threats, often by seeking secure tenure, food sovereignty and territory-wide alliances.

In particular, agroecological innovation has arisen through a convergence between movements for solidarity economy and agroecology. This EcoSol-agroecology convergence has facilitated stronger technoscientific alternatives and resistance against the dominant agri-food system. Such concepts and practices have been developed through horizontal knowledge-exchange, often called *diálogo de saberes*, whereby practitioners analyse their experiences with each other and with external experts including academic researchers.

Daniele Puccio (University of Leipzig): Technologies of Antiradicalism and Racist Repression in the US and Germany

Every social formation produces and reproduces a system of relations that organizes production and distribution. In the current social formation, capitalism, the mode and relations of production are inherently exploitative and produce other such relations, such as race, (settler-) colonialism or imperialism. Therefore, capital and the state require systems to sustain and reproduce them. Althusser distinguishes between the ideological and repressive state apparatuses. The former reproduces capitalist social relations through education and ideology while the latter are authorized to enforce them through threats or acts of violence and discipline radical challenges to it. My paper focuses on technologies of antiradicalism used by the repressive apparatuses and argues that they are inextricably tied to anticommunism, inherently racist and specifically deployed to discipline radical elements within the predominantly racialized groups. I will compare the US and Federal Republic of Germany as two crucial political economies of western imperialism from the early Cold War until today to illustrate for one their similarity and logical continuity despite using different operationalizations. Secondly, I argue that the character of these repressions is fundamentally racist and can be explained through a historical materialist analysis of the respective political economies, including their accommodation to the constantly changing demands of capital and imperialism. As examples, I start with the two major anticommunist laws in the FRG, link them to the current repression of Marxism and Palestinians in Germany and then compare them to the McCarthyist repression through the counterintelligence programs and current targeting of black radical organizations.

Irina Castro (Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra): [Cons]Science: Dissident Science and its Resistance

In contemporary societies, scientific knowledge presents itself as paradoxical. On the one hand, science, subsumed to capitalism and at the service of systems of oppression, feeds the machines of exploitation and makes people vulnerable. It is one of the heads of the capitalist hydra. On the other hand, springing from the contradictions of the subsumption process, resistances and alternatives emerge, which are broader than the scientific activity itself and articulated more generally with the struggles for emancipation. In this paper, I will reflect on scientific dissidence practices, their multiple forms of organisation and strategies, and how it is articulated more generally with social struggles, particularly environmental and feminist ones.

To situate the discussion that is sought here, the paper will be based on the scientific controversies surrounding transgenics and pesticides applied in agriculture. In other words, it will address the scientific controversies on biotechnological agriculture as a paradigmatic example of an uneven and combined process of subsumption of science under capitalism that has led many critical scientists to become dissent. Furthermore, I will reflect on how, from their dissident positions, new forms of knowledge emerge that have the potential for emancipation.

The entire discussion is informed by a historical dialectical materialist conception of nature, based on Engels's works and further developed by Russian scientists such as Nikolai Vavilov, Uranovsky, Boris Mikhailovich Hessen and by critical Marxist biologists such as Richar Levins and Richard Lewontin.

room: rb01
state, capital, history

Ottokar Luban: Left Socialist Networks for Peace in Germany during World War I

While the German Majority Social Democrats like almost all other European Social Democratic Parties of the belligerent countries supported the politics of their conservative governments there were groups in the German labour movement who practised inside and outside the organizations an active antiwar policy.

On the one hand, there were the moderate Social Democrats (Hugo Haase, Eduard Bernstein, Karl Kautsky) who realized a restrained policy with emphasis on parliamentary activities. On the other hand, the Spartacus group (Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Clara Zetkin) and the Left Radicals in Bremen (Johann Knief) applied with an offensive agitation for anti-war mass movements referring to a resolution of the International Socialist Congress of 1907. Due to the state of siege, these activities had to be clandestine for the most part.

This means building up a network for spreading the leaflets around the country using old party connections but also winning new followers. These Spartacus activities were connected with a network of opposite militants of the Metalworkers Union, known as Revolutionary Shop Stewards based mainly in Berlin. Another important supporter was the left pacifist network of the Federation "New Fatherland" (Bund "Neues Vaterland") which financed the intensive Spartacus agitation since March 1917. The cooperation between Spartacus Group, Revolutionary Shop Stewards and the Federation "New Fatherland" together with the help of the USPD parliamentary group was responsible for the success of the biggest anti-war mass strike in Germany in January/February 1918 with 750.000 participants.

The paper will show details of the networks, the connections between them, and also the difficulties due to the repression of the government authorities.

Mekhola Gomes (Amherst College): Rule through Blood: Kinship, Gender, Property, and Power in Precapitalist South Asia

Brahmanical patriarchy is a central conceptual framework for anti-caste and feminist scholars of and from South Asia to express the historical entanglements between social hierarchies of kinship, caste and gender. Through this analytic, in my paper, I argue that kinship, caste, gender, and state power came together in early medieval India to make the Brahmanical patriarchal social order. The early medieval period in India (ca. 200–800 CE) is marked by ruling lineages and Brahmins emerging as dominant holders of rights in land. This occurred through the transfer of rights in land to Brahmins by ruling elites. Such transactions were recorded in the form of copper-plate inscriptions. Through a focus on early medieval copper-plate land-grants, this paper traces two related historical processes. The first is the claiming of land-rights by rulers and Brahmins through the mapping of male lineage onto territory. The work of cultivation and other forms of agrarian labour and service were performed by non-Brahmin communities, who were in many instances dispossessed of their rights through land-grants. The kinship of these labouring and producing groups was never recorded within land-grants and thus intentionally erased from the historical record.

This paper argues that the simultaneous expression and occlusion of the kinship of ruling and labouring groups within records of land-transfers highlights how central the intersections of kinship, caste, gender, and state power was to the making of the precapitalist social order in India.

Marta Ill Raga (University of Ghent): Rent Against Home, Rent Against Care

As some authors claim, capitalism is increasingly becoming rentier in nature, for plus-value is increasingly derived from direct extraction instead of production, and inequalities are increasingly explained along the asset-haves / asset-have-nots divide (e.x. Christophers, 2020; Mazzucato, 2019; Wigger, 2021; Adkins et al., 2020). Against this backdrop, an ethnographic exploration of the tenant-landlord in the city of Barcelona conflict is explored, but this time, in a different light. In the analysis of residential rent relation, the 'residential' aspect is considered a crucial component, which means that residential land should not only be analysed as the object of market and juridical relations but a key factor of social reproduction from the perspective of the inhabitant, which, in our case study is the tenant. It is considered that the housing question in times of rentier capitalism is one expression of the care, social-reproductive crisis. Examined through the light of Social Reproduction Theory, this research provides ethnographic examples in order to argue that rent antagonises with the social-reproductive functions of the home and the household, presenting the residential rent conflict as an antagonism that takes place between rent and care. The point of departure to conceptualize this conflict is that tenants who own no real property are forced to enter into the rent relation to get access to a basic reproductive need: to have a dwelling in which, hopefully, they can bring all the resources, with their labour and time, to build a safe space, a home. Rent as an economic burden and market compulsion that imposes itself over the household poses a threat to the stability of the home and its main activity associated with it, with the dwelling and its surrounding spaces and neighbouring networks: residence.

Pedro M Rey-Araujo (UCL): Temporal Domination as Entrainment

Focusing on the temporalities of social reproduction, this presentation explores the extent to which the rhythms of capital dominate those of its non-capitalist conditions of existence. Transhistorically, social reproduction works by orchestrating myriad biological (e.g. those pertaining to the human body) and natural rhythms (from day/night alternation to agricultural production) over time, collectively mediated by concrete labor practices, themselves also rhythmically structured. In capitalist societies, while only a subset among the myriad tasks and activities whose undertaking social reproduction requires are mediated by value, the rhythms they embody become autonomized from those of their conditions of existence. How do the abstract market imperatives constitutive of capitalist societies order the social field?

We contend that a hierarchy of relative social effectivity characterizes their mutual interplay, manifested in their relative ability to entrain co-existing rhythms, that is, to attune the latter so as to make them provide for the former's conditions of possibility. It is our contention that, in capitalist societies, social rhythms subsumed under the value-form are dominant, that is, they exhibit a higher-order capacity to entrain non-capitalist co-existing rhythms than the opposite is the case. In capitalism, compulsions springing from the value-form adopted by social reproduction entrain and estrange biological and natural rhythms. Although the latter's specificity is never fully undone, the mediation by value of the metabolic relation between humans and nature results in a disruption of the rhythms of reproduction of its non-capitalist conditions of existence.

Eleonora Roldán Mendivil (University of Kassel): Super-exploitation and Social Reproduction: Situating Gender and 'Race' in Modern Capitalism

Super-exploitation has been used to comprehend the specific forms of centre-periphery value extraction within a modern capitalist economy (Ruy Mauro Marini, *The Dialectics of Dependency* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2022); John Smith, *Imperialism in the Twenty-First Century. Globalization, Super-Exploitation and Capitalism's Final Crisis* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2016)). Together with Bafta Sarbo we have made use of the concept of super-exploitation to analyse the forms modern racism take in Germany, suggesting that the degree of super-exploitation of migrant workers and their descendants gives ground to the racisms they will face in the country (Eleonora Roldán Mendivil/ Bafta Sarbo (eds.), *Die Diversität der Ausbeutung* (Berlin, Dietz Verlag, 2022)). Going one step further my paper asks if and how the concept of super-exploitation can be embedded within a Marxist understanding of social reproduction and gender relations. Are women as a group super-exploited within capitalism? Or do we have to analyse women within the working class as a specifically super-exploited group instead? If so, what are the relevant analytical factors to defend either hypothesis? Making use of statistical data

for Germany I present an analysis of super-exploitation encompassing the ways that the national and international division of labour shape gendered and racist formations in Germany and how this is shown via federal policy. My aim is to show that Social Reproduction Theory and the Theory of Super-Exploitation need to be brought together in order to understand the ways in which the working class is specifically fragmented and then pit against each other – worker against worker – by nationalist, racist and sexist rhetoric and policy. Germany is one of the most important economies in Europe. Politically there is no way past Germany within the European Union. Thus my study centres Germany as a prominent, yet often sidelined imperialist country focusing on the German economy as well as federal policy to underline my theory.

Murray Robertson (University of Roehampton): *The Messy Life of Care*

Care, broadly understood, is a well-trod topic for Marxist feminism. Yet in these unsettled times the relations of care which produce both individual being and social fabric are laid bare, underlining the importance of the topic's investigation. To this end, this paper explores the material and phenomenological 'messiness' of care, arguing that we should understand care as a complex condition of existence whose manifestations we can normatively judge. Further, I insist that care should be seen as a legitimate ground of moral and political contestation. We build the world we desire in part with the kind of care we wish to perform and receive.

In the paper I outline care's multifaceted messiness: the literally messy labour of dealing with the bodies of ourselves and others, the draining affective labour of caring emotionally, and the hard philosophical labour of caring for oneself; the inability for care to be fully fixed, solved, or escaped from, opposing the idea of care as a solely distributional problem; care's anti-solipsistic nature, entangling us in the world we live in and the people who live here with us, bleeding over the neat lines we attempt to box ourself in as discrete beings; the inability to cleave the care which sustains us from the care which reproduces our means of exploitation.

Instead of shying away from the forms of messy care described, I argue we should embrace them. We need a clear-eyed appraisal of care's scope in order to avoid easy solutions which are artificially neat and removed from the world. Care is not value-neutral, I argue. Our care constitutes ourselves and our world, and only by enacting the kinds of care we wish to see can we create a better world.

room: b103

book panel: with and against:
the situationist international in the age of automation

If once a term for radical artists' emancipatory struggle in the realm of culture, the avantgarde is now an empty signifier void of any revolutionary content. In the recently published book **With and Against: The Situationist International in Age of Automation** (Verso, 2023), Dominique Routhier revisits the history of the Situationist International (SI) to try to understand how and why the revolutionary aspirations of the historical avantgarde petered into a spectacularized participatory frenzy known as "contemporary art."

Reconstructing the SI's critical analyses of late capitalist society and art's role within it, *With and Against* argues that the defeat of the avantgarde ties into a set of deeper contradictions—epitomized by the twin ideologies of cybernetics and automation—in the postwar era's political economy. The study of the Situationist International, the "last avantgarde," thus teaches us that a critical analysis of capitalist society is never complete without a categorical critique of what the bourgeoisie calls "art", and vice versa.

Drawing on the critical legacy of the SI, the purpose of this book launch is to bring together art theorists and art historians to reflect on the relevance of Marxist art history today and to discuss broader questions of methodology that reflect their own individual research interests. The conversation will thus extend to a broader contemplation of research methodologies, historiographic narratives, and the challenge of periodisation.

Panellists will address questions such as: How does the legacy of the Situationist International inform and interact with their own research? How do we navigate the complex relationships between technological progress, class struggle, and revolutionary theory in historical analysis?

Overall, the discussion will strive to stimulate thought on the interplay between aesthetic detail, political economy, and their reflections within our current socio-political climate.

Dominique Routhier: Book Presentation

Dominique Routhier presents **With and Against: the Situationist International in the Age of Automation** (Verso Books, 2023). This newly published book revisits the history of the Situationist International (SI) and offers a novel set of (art) historical coordinates for theorizing the defeat of the avantgarde and the disappearance of the revolutionary perspective in art. Reconstructing the SI's critical analyses of late capitalist society and art's role within it, Routhier shows how the SI struggled with and against a set of deeper contradictions within the postwar era's political economy. Read through this prism, it becomes clear that the SI developed one of the most original if overlooked critical analyses of the then-nascent ideology of 'full automation'.

Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen: The Situationist International against the Danish Culture Stalinists

Following up from Dominique Routhier's analysis of the Internationale Lettristes' boycott of the festival at the Cite Radieuse in 1956, I propose to analyse another boycott undertaken by the SI. The boycott and campaign in 1963 against KP, Young Artists' Easter Exhibition in Aarhus. The newly promoted leader of the Scandinavian section, J.V. Martin launched a campaign against KP and its newly appointed cashier Willy Omme. Omme had opened a gallery, Galleri Moderne, in the small town of Silkeborg the previous year. Martin and the other members of the Danish section of the SI, Peter Laugesen and Herved Merved, published three leaflets in March 1962 denouncing the appointment of Omme to cashier of the yearly KP - Kunsternes Påskeudstilling. The campaign was carried out as a "defence of revolutionary playful art". On the basis of the boycott of KP in March 1963 I'll discuss the SI's contradictory notion of art.

Louis Hartnoll (University of Groningen)

room: b104
hmspen:
queer marxism

Isabelle Le Bourdais (York University): Thinking Reification and Queer Politics with Monique Wittig. *Les Guérillères*, *Le Corps lesbien*, and *Virgile*, non

As an alternative to gay bourgeois politics and against the logics of identity and representation, queer theory has, since the mid-1990's, often used the grammar of difference and deconstruction and drawn on approaches seen as hardly reconcilable with Marxism. Fortunately, the gap between Marxism and queer theory is being bridged by a number of important contributions such as Floyd's (2009) or Zappino's (2022). In this paper, I contend that revisiting the understudied work of Monique Wittig – novelist, theorist, and member of **Les Gouines rouges** (the Red Dykes) – allows for new insights into queer theory's potential articulations with Marxism.

Monique Wittig's novels and poetry are indeed a rare literary exploration of lesbian revolutionary dialectics, one that, as I argue with Landry & Le Guerrier (2018), offers a way to think beyond both identity and difference. Against Butler's interpretation of Wittig in **Gender Trouble** (1990), I show that Wittig's work is not one of lesbian separatism and does not reintroduce naïve humanism. In **Le corps lesbien**, she in fact portrays lesbianism as a violent and desiring process of transfiguration, carried by a de-centered and fragmented subject (j/e, t/u), thereby conveying the utopia not of pacified identity but of erotic imaginaries. As **Virgile, non** (1985), a parody of Dante's **Divine Comedy** further highlights, this lesbian paradise is unknowable and indescribable. Finally, in **Les Guérillères** (1968), lesbianism is shown to be a collective, universal, and revolutionary project. The dialectical structure of **Les Guérillères** emphasizes the political power of the novel as a method of universalization of the Other – a process ultimately culminating, in the book, in the negation of heterosexuality, and, I show, resembling the proletariat's negation of class-system. These three works, read together through a queer Marxist perspective, contain both

a critique of identity politics and *politiques de la différence*, while emphasizing queer politics' need for a revolutionary engagement with social totality.

Bogdan Ovcharuk (York University (Canada)): Queer Revolutionary Defeatism: Articulating Transgression within Radical Modernity through the Lens of Genet

As there is a need to revive 'revolutionary defeatism' within the global socialist movement to confront 'centrist' liberal imperialism and 'social chauvinism', so too emerges a need for principled queer revolutionary defeatism, a posture poised to resist the unholy alliance between rainbow capitalism and homonationalism. Yet, the question stands: How might one articulate such a position at a theoretical level from within the crucible of radical modernity? In recent literature, Kaji Amin (2017) presents Jean Genet's writings as a source of an alternative queer modernity worthy of resuscitation, while Bersani (1994, 2010) shows that Genet disseminates a social ontology that invariably betrays the concept of sociality. I contend that these interpretations tread Derrida's pathway, highlighting Genet's transgressiveness, yet they downplay the critical social and historical specificity of queerness under capitalism (d'Emilio 1993).

In this paper, I argue that Derrida's *Glas*, which counterposes Genet's queer transgressiveness and Hegel's modern philosophical system — and perhaps against Derrida's own intention — proffers a theory of queer revolutionary defeatism, imbued with historical and material specificity. I will explore the relationship between Genet's auto-fictional narrative in *The Thief's Journal*, as presented within *Glas*, vis-à-vis Hegel's account of the 'rabble' which emerges from what Marx further scrutinizes as the contradictions inherent in bourgeois civil society. Genet's reaction to the condition of the 'rabble' is to 'negate the negation' — to repudiate the bourgeois conception of sociality. Concurrently, his rumination on the loss of his communist lover in *Funeral Rites* reveals his rejection of bourgeois sentimentality, causing him to 'work through' the loss by fantasizing an intercourse with a Nazi officer. Far from aestheticizing politics, I argue, this fantasy and concomitant economy of desire illuminate his understanding that, with the loss of communism, bourgeois sentimentality inexorably ushers in fascism. In betraying both, Genet conjures up a theory of queer revolutionary defeatism, which is further corroborated in his elucidation of the paradox of revolution in his play *The Maids*.

room: bglt
eco-leninism and socialist strategy

Harry Holmes (PhD Student, Department of Geography, King's College London); Kai Heron (Birkbeck College, University of London); Charlotte Powell (rs21)

Over the previous years, progress has been made in reconsidering the relevance of Lenin's political thought and practice to contemporary environmental struggles. Various thinkers, including Malm, Heron, Dean, and Wall have all argued for attention to Lenin in ecological politics in discussions of climate politics today. This panel brings together several ecosocialist thinkers to explore further the contribution serious attention to Lenin may offer to environmentalism, from his approach to the capitalist state to his reflections on socialist strategy.

Harry Holmes: Lenin Smash! The dictatorship of the proletariat and ecological struggle

Theoretical-strategic approaches to the capitalist state in environmental movements tend to diverge between two poles. There are those who see the state as a neutral or 'wrest'-able formation which can be utilised to institute a radical ecological transition, or at least provide survival pending revolution. On the other hand, there are those who wish to avoid, usurp, or otherwise immediately smash the state, arguing it would be impossible to affect ecological transformation through state seizure. This paper argues for the continued relevance of Lenin's thought and practice regarding the dictatorship of the proletariat. It argues for the importance of the dual motion of the seizure and smashing of the capitalist state, against those who opt for either. It builds on the works of Balibar, Poulantzas and other theorists around state power since Lenin to renew, develop, and build on criticisms whilst retaining the kernel of insight provided by the concept. It uses this to develop an argument for the ecological dictatorship of the proletariat.

Kai Heron: The Eco-Leninist Wager

This paper proposes that Eco-Leninism ought to be approached as both a provocation and politico-strategic wager. As a provocation, Eco-Leninism invokes the figure of Lenin and the broader anti-imperialist Marxist tradition to impose the question of revolutionary transition at a world-scale. Against social and ecological theorizing that masks its anti-capitalist intent behind terms such as degrowth or decolonization, Eco-Leninism proposes in name and content that communism must remain the unwavering horizon of emancipatory collective struggle. As a politico-strategic wager, Eco-Leninism is a particular response to the question of transition. Unlike Marxist perspectives that eschew the question of transition entirely, or which limit themselves to economistic struggles for better working conditions, unions, or a green transition, Eco-Leninism argues that the goal must be to fight for and win the collective self-reproduction of the associated producers. Alberto Toscano has referred to Eco-Leninism as a kind of “tragic instrumentalism” turned to by some in the face of cascading climatic, social, and ecological crises. For others, Eco-Leninism unwittingly, or perhaps wittingly, repeats the worst of the historic Marxist tradition’s authoritarian tendencies. The paper concludes by rebutting both charges. Eco-Leninism is an expansive, indeed global, tradition of thought that includes, but is not limited to Lenin’s theory and practice. Leninism in this sense is emphatically non-dogmatic and is not easily rejected on the basis of the defeat or mistakes of one or another revolutionary struggle. Instead, Eco-Leninism is a process of reappraising the conditions of struggle, questioning political strategies, and enquiring about how to attain power for a coalition of the oppressed in times of ecological collapse.

Charlotte Powell: What can be done? Channelling Lenin for climate struggle today

The climate movement has been a site of debates and creativity around tactics and strategy in recent years. Similarly, Marxist thinkers and activists have also been engaged in debates around the long-term vision of climate justice and the strategy to get there. Can we ‘Green New Deal’ our way out of this or do we have to place our hopes in winning degrowth demands? On top of these discussions of the political horizon, there are longstanding debates around the kinds of action socialists and environmentalists wish to take. However, there remain unspoken or less considered questions of the ‘medium-term’. The ‘how’ of getting from the struggles of today to the victories that we hope for. What types of organisation are needed to carry this struggle to the next level? What is the makeup of the class forces that will be able to fight and win climate justice globally? What does it mean to put forward an eco-Leninist strategy in social formations lacking anything akin to a mass workers party? These questions are mirrored in ones which occupied Lenin from the 1890s to 1917. By reflecting on some of the key aspects of Lenin’s thought and practice during this period, this paper will make progress in developing an eco-Leninism capable of building strategies capable of grasping both the day-to-day concerns of climate action and laying a course to the revolutionary horizon.

room: g3
workers' inquiry:
the future of worker organising in higher
education

Sahil Kumar, Garima Singh (University of Michigan): A Workers' Inquiry in the Contemporary University: The Graduate Workers' Strike at the University of Michigan

What does class-struggle entail and necessitate from within the contemporary university? If the goal of the proletariat is to annihilate itself as a class, then it includes the annihilation of the bourgeois spaces that organize it as the proletariat. If the space that organizes the university-worker as a worker is the university, then the proletarian struggle inside the university is to annihilate the university. If the proletariat (and its segment that works in the university) is constituted (produced constantly) as the differentially and hierarchically individuated and internally segmented collectivity, then the unity of the proletariat can only mean the annihilation of its internal divisions and segmentations. In other words, the university worker must organize itself against those hierarchies and divisions to become a class-for-itself. Any critique of the university (in theory or in practice) then, must confront and engage with the division of labor and the segmentation of the proletarian subject that, at the same time, produces the university as a bourgeois space. In this presentation, through the case of the ongoing strike of the graduate student-workers at the University of Michigan, we attempt to articulate an internal critique of the university, which must at the same time also be a critique of our own activity against it, by discussing how the graduate student-workers' strike has already produced a critique in practice, of both its constitutive segmentation and the limits of its own movement. The case of the graduate student-worker is curious not only because it is pitted against all other segments inside the university but also because in the moment of struggle, especially a strike, it is first and foremost pitted against itself as an internally antagonistic segment. The graduate student-worker embodies within itself both a producer and a consumer in its relation to the same space: the university. As such, the graduate student-workers' strike at Michigan involved struggling, with each other, over striking productive and consumptive activity and the distinction between the two.

Editors of Notes from Below

In conversation with a respondent from UCU

room: dlt
panel discussion:
revolution: an intellectual history

Enzo Traverso; Matt Myers; Darren Roso; Michael Löwy

Revolutions destroy the 'homogeneous and empty time' of historical continuity. Instead of being understood through a chronological sequence, they should be interpreted as collective eruptions that take down the established order, break the linearity of time, and open new horizons of expectation. The concept of revolution is a key to understand our modernity, not only its social and political structures but also its ideas and collective imagination, until its aesthetic forms. This means apprehending their intellectual and even emotional dimensions, which are deposited in a fascinating historical landscape made of "dialectical images": locomotives, bodies, barricades, flags, rituals, material sites, paintings, posters, and symbolic landmarks. Working through the past is essential to navigating in the agitated waters of the present and fueling a new political imagination for the twenty-first century.

room: g51
marxism, labour and labour rights

Francesca Barp (Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung [HIS]): The Historical Genesis and Current Mobilization of Labor Rights on (Migrant) Domestic Work

Millions of households rely on a mobile workforce of women to clean, care and cook for the family, children and (especially) the elder - worldwide we speak of around 76 m. domestic workers. This is neither a new nor a regional phenomenon, but the reasons for domestic workers changed throughout time. While until the mid 19th century domestic workers, then servants, Dienstboten, criadas, were essential to keep a house running without easing

technology or running water, today the reasons lie mainly in long working hours, the necessity for double incomes, a lack of welfare as well as collective solutions to care crises, but also massive income disparities that enable some to hire others under precarious conditions. Throughout time though the migratory condition and with it often race; class positioning; and the gendered connotations of domestic work shape the law and perception causing for it to being prone to overexploitation. What can the legal history of (migrant) domestic workers' rights and their current aims to mobilize rights tell us about the societies they work in?

Drawing upon the genesis of laws in Argentina, the US and Germany regulating domestic work, their economic/ social embedding and researching current mobilization of the law, different routes to legalization and formalization but also the neglect of rights, accepted informality and struggles by (migrant) domestic workers become visible. It aims to deepen the understanding on how domestic workers are constructed as legal and political subjects, is about labor rights as much as it is about the history of productive and reproductive labor and its entanglement with race, class and gender. It is about the meaning of the private in law, about devaluating work but also about the self-determination of domestic workers to mobilize law in truly intersectional, though centrally class based, approaches to political and juridical mobilization.

Ismini Nikoleta Mathioudaki (Scuola Normale Superiore): The digital border and invisibility as a non-entrée practice: the case of Greece

In the framework of the contemporary digital border landscape, various concerns have been raised regarding the fundamental rights of those subjected to it, ranging from the right to privacy and data protection to the right of life and asylum. Although, while it is essential to retain a critical stance on digitalization, especially from a human rights perspective, it is also vital to not oversimplify it, and acknowledge that the digital border is not a one-sided coin. The visibility of those subjected to systems that compose the net that is the modern-day EU digital border has been increased through the latter, and especially during the first stage of their entry on the territory of Member States. Following the registration of individuals on national and EU databases it becomes almost impossible for the state to ignore their presence. This visibility can limit the state's ability to make arbitrary decisions, and especially those involving illegal pushbacks, and thus the prevention from applying for asylum. This can fuel the authorities' desire to prevent the creation of any digital footprint of those entering state territory, bypassing relevant legislation, with the aim of hiding them under a cloak of invisibility. Such practices are materialized with the aim of a) escaping accountability for their actions, such as push-backs or forced disappearances, both on a personal and a national level and, b) preventing the entry of third-country citizens before they become a "state concern", to the detriment of, among others, the right to asylum. This paper will examine such practices, focusing on non-registration practices, as well as into practices such as phone confiscation, and the destruction of phone cameras by national authorities upon arrival of third-country citizens. The methodology employed in this research will be based on a combination of empirical and legal analysis. More specifically, I will be conducting semi-open interviews with lawyers working in the field of refugee law, NGO workers, and third-country citizens, in order to gather data regarding invisibility as a non-entrée practice. Finally, the aforementioned practices will be looked into from a legal perspective, in order to define how these practices which can be characterized as "digitalized push backs" interfere with the right to apply for asylum, from a multi-perspectival viewpoint. The present research will contribute substantially to the existing literature, by creating a "reversed map" of the digital border, by looking into the violations derived from the non-subjection of individuals to the latter, as opposed to the biggest part of the relevant literature which examines human rights violations originating in the subjection of the digital border.

Jacqueline Kalbermatter (University of Basel): Contested migration control: On the relationship between utilisation and social reproduction of migrant labour power in Swiss logistics

Migration and border regimes play a key role in the regulation of labour power problems in global capitalism. This contribution argues that the analysis of control and management of labour mobility should not be limited to labour market. Indeed, both the availability of migrant labour power and the question of how it is acquired are of elementary importance for companies. However, migrant labour power bought on the labour market – no matter how cheap – is only of value to companies if it is transformed into actual work.

The contribution suggests integrating negotiations of control in the labour process with social reproduction of migrant labour power on a theoretical level and making this analytical perspective fruitful for the investigation of resistance as well as the daily work and life realities of migrants. In this sense, migration control is part of labour control and is understood as a conflictive field of negotiation concerning the utilisation and social reproduction

of migrant labour power on the basis of migration and asylum policy. Migration control is thus not only about the question of how the control of labour process is negotiated between management and workers, but also about how the control over the reproduction of migrant labour power is negotiated.

Using the example of a Swiss logistics company in which the majority of workers are women, the contribution shows how negotiations concerning the utilisation and social reproduction of migrant labour power are conducted and how they are intertwined. It will be illustrated how specific forms of migration control emerge depending on the organisation of work and forms of employment.

Radhika Saraf (Independent Scholar): Violence, Sexuality and Caste in the 1938 Bombay Strike

In 1936, at a meeting in Bombay's red-light district Kamathipura, the anti-caste leader BR Ambedkar called the prostitutes "a shame to the community." The women came from the (ex)untouchable Mahar caste and belonged to devadasi communities; ritually dedicated to a deity and not allowed to marry, they were often subject to sex slavery and child prostitution.

The same year, Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party (ILP), constituted primarily by (male) Mahar ex-soldiers, now employed in Bombay's textile and railway industries. Activating the notion of class, he argued for material deprivation as the basis for naming the Dalit rather than Muslim as political minority. In November 1938, the ILP organised a strike in conjunction with the communists, in which Mahar workers engaged in violence against women workers who did not stay away from work. I argue that this violence was predicated on the regulation of sexuality that became the site for the emergence of Dalit political subject-formation, with Dalit activists struggling against the sexual violation of Dalit women through customary ritual dedication. But the critique of women's enforced sexual servitude and efforts to transform Dalit intimate relations enhanced the authority of the male Dalit reformer, while rendering the subject of Dalit politics as male. The violence of the strike demonstrated a repetition compulsion that scapegoated the victim, in this case, the woman. In so doing, not only did it unveil the structure of the Dalit movement's own mimetic desire as caught within a fiction of representation, but also signalled a key moment in a longer history of the question of gender as the ideological terrain for reconstitution of the nation, brought to bear most ruthlessly less than a decade later in the displacement of the violence of Partition onto women's bodies and more recently in the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act agitations.

room: r201
global political economy and china

Luca Tausch (Economic Policies for the Global Transition (Università Roma Tre/Université Sorbonne Paris Nord)): Inter- and Intra-Country Ecologically Unequal Exchange: China's Role in a Multi-Tiered Hierarchy

Ecologically unequal exchange postulates that there exists an asymmetric transfer of biophysical resources from the periphery to the core. However, this theoretical notion fails to account for the complex role of the semi-periphery and the role of intra-country ecologically unequal exchange. To fill this gap, we rely on an environmentally extended multi-regional input-output model to provide empirical evidence for China's involvement in inter- and intra-country ecologically unequal exchange from 1987 to 2017. We identify the regions of origin and final consumption for four resource groups (e.g., materials, energy, land, and labour) and TiVA on the global and regional level. While being a net exporter of energy to all income groups, we show that China is a net exporter of land, labour, and materials to the core, but a net importer of land, labour, and materials from the periphery and the semi-periphery. On the regional level, we show that the East Coast zone is a large net importer of embodied energy and TiVA, while all other economic zones are net exporters of embodied energy to the East Coast zone. Overall, our findings provide evidence for the existence of inter- and intra-country ecologically unequal exchange. In particular, we show that while China continues to be exploited by the core, it has fuelled its ascent in the world-system by creating its own peripheries from which it extracts natural resources, as well as by creating extractive peripheries within its borders through a strategy of 'resource-self-exploitation'. Moreover, our study moves beyond a simple core-periphery dichotomy arguing that the ecological world-system must be viewed as a multi-tiered hierarchical system characterized by multiple core-periphery relationships of resource dependency, exploitation, and appropriation.

Guido Weksler (University of Buenos Aires): China as a break within the development dynamics of East Asia.
Specificity of chinese accumulation and future prospects

China appears as one of the “latecomers” in the East Asian region in terms of integration into the dynamics of New International Division of Labour (NIDL). Beyond its scale and its speed of economic growth, China’s capacity to develop and export products related to heavy industries and also to engage in R+D activities not only seems to surpass countries whose export industrialization process was relatively contemporary (Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia) but even challenges large-scale predecessors such as Japan or South Korea. On the other hand, other countries in the region such as Vietnam, Bangladesh or Laos that have shown signs of export industrialization after China seem to do so with a markedly more limited scope. This could account for a possible ceiling that could have been raised with the rise of China for the reproduction of one of the characteristic dynamics of this stage of the global process of capital accumulation: the cheapening of industrial production through continued offshoring to lower-wage areas in East Asia.

In this context, this paper presents the following objectives. The first is to present a set of evidence related to the technological content of exports in order to compare China’s modality of participation in NIDL vis-à-vis other countries in the region. The second is to provide a series of arguments on the specificity of China’s accumulation process that contribute to explain its differentiated trajectory with respect to its neighboring countries. Emphasis will be placed on the role of scale, the ability to differentiate the workforce and the accelerated pace of adoption of automation technologies after the global crisis of 2008. The third is to briefly discuss future prospects with respect to the hypotheses of a multiplication of reshoring and nearshoring processes and an increasing regionalization of international trade.

Sean Starrs (King’s College London): The Remaking of Global Capitalism? China’s Techno-Dependency and American Empire

Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin (2012) offered a magisterial conceptualization of the American making of global capitalism in the post-1945 period. Partially drawing upon Nicos Poulantzas, they laid out how a qualitatively unique aspect of American empire was the deep inter-linkages particularly in foreign investment between the United States and both its close allies and the “Third World”. These inter-linkages bound together their collective economic prosperity such that they would support American hegemony (albeit Panitch and Gindin often underestimated the extent to which this “support” also stemmed from the threat of US military power). As others have pointed out, this global expansion of foreign investment and trade was predicated on institutionalizing the free movement of capital around the world, and the United States was the biggest protector and promoter of globalization. Is this now changing? The 2016 election of Trump heralded a significant break with post-war US support for WTO-style “free trade” leading to a burgeoning techno-nationalist phase of globalization in which the US no longer supports China’s, and now Russia’s, full integration into global capitalism. These efforts ramped up under Biden especially in 2022 with the US leading an effort to essentially kick Russia out from Western-centered capitalism coupled with attempting to contain China’s further technological rise, especially in the all-important semiconductor industry. Partially by marshalling new supply-chain data from the Bloomberg Professional database, national profit-shares, corporate ownership, coupled with policy analysis, this paper shows how even the world’s most developmentally successful country since the 1980s—China—is still subordinated by its techno-dependency on the US. More broadly, these new dynamics could amount to a remaking of global capitalism in the twenty-first century, with implications for all, in the midst of deepening capitalist catastrophes from food shortages and war to poverty and ecocide.

room: rg01
book launch:
red africa:

reclaiming revolutionary black politics

Kevin Okoth (Salvage); Annie Olaloku-Teriba (Salvage)

This panel is a book launch for Kevin Ochieng Okoth’s Red Africa, out with Verso Books in October 2023. Red Africa makes the case for a revolutionary Black politics inspired by Marxist anticolonial struggles in Africa. The book argues that contemporary debates on Black radicalism and decolonisation have lost sight of the concerns that animated their twentieth-century intellectual forebears. Okoth responds to these debates by challenging the claim that Marxism and Black radicalism are incompatible, showing that both are embraced in the anti-imperialist Marxist

tradition he calls 'Red Africa'.

Red Africa challenges common misconceptions about national liberation, arguing that its horizon was never limited to the nation-building projects of post-independence governments. The book concludes that the Black revolutionary politics of anti-colonial activists like Amílcar Cabral, Walter Rodney or Andrée Blouin gesture towards a decolonised future that never materialised, but was instead betrayed, violently suppressed or erased. Yet we might still build something new from the ruins of national liberation, something which sustains the utopian promise of freedom and refuses to surrender. 'Red Africa' is a political project that hopes to salvage what remains of this Marxist anti-colonial tradition.

Okoth will be in conversation with fellow Salvage Editorial Collective member Annie Olaloku-Teriba to discuss the pitfalls of ontological theories of Blackness (from Négritude to Afro-pessimism); the history of race and racialisation in Marxist thought; the role of slavery—and specifically the transatlantic slave trade—in how we conceptualise Blackness today; and why some twentieth-century Black leftists chose to break with Marxism. Okoth and Olaloku-Teriba have both written and spoken extensively about these subjects in their work. This panel brings them together to discuss the future of Black radicalism post-Black Lives Matter.

room: rb01
marxism and eu law

Dimitrios Kivotidis (Birkbeck); Eva Nanopoulos (Queen Mary's University); Maria Tzanakpoulou (Birkbeck); Andrew Woodhouse (University of Liverpool)

The proposed panel seeks to outline a Marxist political economy approach to EU Law. At present, there has been an under-utilisation of Marxist methods in the analysis of the EU generally, and EU law specifically. This panel will feature a range of contributions that will offer an alternative to the dominant, liberal interpretation of the EU. The panel will draw on papers being prepared for an upcoming symposium in *European Law Open*.

Andrew Woodhouse (University of Liverpool): *The De-Politicisation of Decarbonisation Through Climate Rent: A Marxist Critique of the EU Emissions Trading System*

The EU Emissions Trading System is "the cornerstone" of the EU's attempt to address the climate crisis. This paper offers a Marxist political economy analysis of the system making two claims, focused on class implications, about the choice and implementation of the EU Emissions Trading System. First, the choice to address the climate crisis through an emissions trading system sustains the existing unequal power relations of the economic system. The deeply political questions over how we are to decarbonise our society are left to the power of capital and structured by a climate rent in the market. The majority of citizens are given no democratic or political control over the process. Second, the implementation of the ETS deepens wealth inequality, because it is built to maintain the international competitiveness of EU firms by ensuring costs are passed through to the customer. In so doing, the cost of basic goods rises, leading to a fall in the living standards of workers. The paper concludes by reflecting on alternatives to emissions trading, seeking the democratisation of economic production.

Dimitrios Kivotidis (Durham): *E Pluribus Unum ... Forum? A Marxist Approach to the EU's Democratic Deficit*

This paper will review these critical approaches to the EU economic constitution in order to unearth their limitations. Despite their fairly accurate analysis of the EU's democratic shortcomings, we claim that this heterodox literature has distinct limitations because it overlooks the class element in its calls for democratisation. In doing so it fails to indicate precisely why the EU is hostile to democracy. On the contrary, by adopting a Marxist approach to the EU and understanding it as a capitalist (supra-)state formation this paper will present the causal root of the EU's fear of democracy. A Marxist perspective is here understood as a theoretical approach that examines the socio-economic content of the integration process, focusing on the process of class struggle as it is carried out in the context of a capitalist economic system, that is, a system based on the private ownership of the means of production.

Maria Tzanakopoulou (Birkbeck): A Marxist discussion of the European constitutional project

This contribution reflects on what Marx would have to say on the European constitutional project. Starting from the principle that, for any constitutional project, as for any political project, the masses are the decisive element, this contribution focuses on the existence or otherwise of European collective subjects, namely of European classes. It distances itself from the view that there is a European constituent power, already there or in the making, and argues instead that both working and capitalist classes remain manifestly national. Based on the finding that class struggle is, in the final analysis, always mediated by the state, it is concluded that the European constitutional project has from the start targeted domestic orders, transforming domestic constitutions from the inside, rather than unilaterally or coercively imposing constitutional change. The constitutional transformations are not uniform but rather always depend on the outcome of class struggle domestically.

Eva Nanpoulos (Queen Mary's): EU Common Foreign and Security Policy

room: b102
studies in fascism

Anita Zsurzsán (Independent scholar): Making sense of fascism today: G.M. Tamás's theory of post-fascism

With global far-right, ultra-nationalist movements and authoritarian regimes on the rise, it's becoming more urgent to define whether or not we are dealing with new forms of fascism. Many experts set the alarm and claim that fascism is having a 'comeback.' Historically, fascism is a category used to describe the political establishments emerging between the two World Wars. Post-fascism is an analytical term that is used to describe the recent threat of far-right authoritarian movements that are somehow different from historical fascism in the twentieth century. The basis of the concept is the general understanding of fascism as a transhistorical phenomenon, and it can be used as a category to define systems of power after the Second World War.

Yet, defining post-fascism remains a challenging task because of the heterogeneity of global tendencies despite some shared features. The late Hungarian Marxist philosopher Gáspár Miklós Tamás was one of the most influential theorists of post-fascism. Tamás highlighted some of the shared features of global post-fascism like nationalism, authoritarianism, and conservatism, but he also examined the differences between post-fascism in Western and Eastern Europe.

In my presentation, I would like to better highlight the Eastern European context based on Tamás's definition of post-fascism. For Tamás, post-fascism in Eastern Europe represented a unique phenomenon of its own. Whereas in the West, post-fascism is rooted in the crisis of liberal democracy and late neoliberal capitalism.

Conrad Hamilton: The Apostate Fascism of Alexander Dugin

Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February, a monolithic narrative about Vladimir Putin has been diffused by the Western imperialist powers. Putin, so we are told, launched an unprovoked war against democratic Ukraine, thereby violating its right to self-determination. He is furthermore a fascist 'madman'—one can append the formula 'Trump = Putin' to this if they like—whose actions arguably constitute a genocide against Ukrainophones.

Reality, of course, is hardly so simple. It is true that the war in Ukraine was partly waged on the pretext of chauvinistic doctrines that Putin has helped spread since he took power. These doctrines serve to rationalize the "Jurassic Park" capitalism that has become a feature of post-Soviet Russia, and in particular the transformation of it into a peripheral petrol exporter at the behest of the St. Petersburg oligarchs. On the other hand, Putin's unwillingness to fully capitulate to the imperialist triad, his continuance of Soviet-era foreign policy, has permitted Russia to play a more progressive role in international affairs than the Western powers. This explains why much of the Global South—from China to India to Nigeria—refused to condemn its attempt to dislodge the Euro-fascist Kiev junta.

These contradictions are reflected in Russia's official ideology. The 'Eurasianist' political philosopher Alexander Dugin has been described as a sort of Rasputin to Putin—or, alternatively, as "Putin's Brain." By extension it is

assumed, in the West at least, that he must be an unambiguous fascist. A careful examination of his first major text, 1997's *Foundations of Geopolitics*, paints a more complex picture. The central thesis of the book is that—for Russia to re-activate the process of self-centred continental development that started after it ceased being a passageway to China due to the discovery of new sea travel routes in 1500, and ended in 1991—it must form an alliance with Europe against the United States (an idea not too far from Gorbachev's "common European home," that has since—in spite of a certain level of support amongst the European far right—now been eschewed by Russia in favour of alliance with China).

To the extent that Dugin substitutes material analysis for the mystifying language of geopolitics, calls for a revival of Orthodox religion, and freely flaunts his Nazi intellectual influences, *Foundations* is indeed worthy of the fascist epithet. Yet the text also has another side. The superficial description of Russia as a historical "empire" elides the fact that it did not, in either the tsarist or Soviet eras, have the same relationship to its 'colonies' as the West. In the tsarist era, Russia dominated marginal areas such as the Turko-Mongol steppes politically without exploiting them economically; in the Soviet era, wealth actually flowed from Moscow to poorer regions such as these, which were in many cases permitted to maintain their languages. This same lack of economic exploitation was apparent in its relations with the Global South, in which the USSR cautiously provided economic support for a number of anti-colonial struggles (against African apartheid, eventually in Vietnam and Cuba, and so on). While sympathetic to fascism, Dugin wants to construct his imperial vision on authentically Russian premises. Calling for "soil, not blood," he is thus forced to jettison one by one many of fascism's key principles—from biological racism to the primacy of private commerce to the conversion of large swaths of the world to exploitable peripheries.

room: b103
gaming the system:
board games, climate and radical politics

This is not a typical panel. Instead of presenting a paper, we will work together to understand, hack, and remake an environmental board game.

Beyond entertainment, games have been used in policy-making and advocacy contexts. Case in point: Monopoly, originally called *The Landlord's Game*, was designed to warn against the monopolistic dynamics of property markets, and to promote redistributive policies (e.g., land value tax). The *Landlord's Game* featured both a competitive and a co-operative ruleset called *Prosperity*, which was later scrapped when *The Landlord's Game* was plagiarised as Monopoly.

In capitalist societies, most games are commercial products that foster zero-sum competition between players. However, in recent years, co-operative games have been on the rise. While competitive games focus players on outsmarting one another, cooperative games allow players to engage in dialogue, discuss ideas, strategize, consider alternatives, and collectively address larger systemic challenges, such as a pandemic, a colonial invasion, or climate breakdown.

In line with these notions, we present a playful workshop centred on the theme of "Ecology and Climate." Participants will first play a commercial board game with an "ecological theme", and analyse its rules and underlying ideologies. They will then work in small teams to reconstruct it into a cooperative game. By realigning the game's goals and values, teams will create a playable system that addresses one or more aspects of the climate and nature crisis. Through this process, participants will experience firsthand the power of both cooperative play and cooperative making (co-design) as tools for addressing complex systemic challenges.

room: b104
marx: critical perspectives

Rafael Khachaturian (University of Pennsylvania): *The Many Lives of Bonapartism: The Eighteenth Brumaire as Method, Critique, and Conjuncture*

Recent years have seen a revival of interest in the concept of Bonapartism, prompted by the breakdown of conventional forms of liberal-democratic representation, the emergence of "charismatic" anti-establishment leaders, and the rise of new political formations on the right, especially in the semi-periphery but also the core. This new application of the term to different social formations requires asking whether Bonapartism a viable concept for

examining current transformations. What does the history of its past applications—not only Marx’s analyses of the nineteenth century, but also by Marxists during the interwar rise of fascism—tell us about its insights and limitations? Does a reliance on the term, at the expense of new theorization, in fact just “weigh like a nightmare” on the mind of today’s left?

This paper returns to the Eighteenth Brumaire to extrapolate a number of general principles from its specific historical context of the mid-nineteenth century, to reassert a Marxist theory of the state and the political. These are not limited to the relative autonomy of the state (Poulantzas) nor the relationship between the petty bourgeoisie and fascism (Trotsky, Thalheimer, and Gramsci). Just as importantly, the text also provides elements for thinking about the coexistence of concurrent plural temporalities (from the *longue duree* of capitalist development to the particular trajectory of the French state to the unique conjunctural moment of 1848-1851); how social classes cleave and coalesce into parties and organizations, such that they always demand representation on the political scene; why revolutions either become possible or foreclosed in specific conjunctures, as a dynamic interplay of structural necessity and historical contingency; and how ideology and the symbolic realm have a real, material bearing on class struggles and collective practices, enabling the formation of hegemonic blocs and projects. These points have often been neglected or downplayed, not only in Marxist analysis but among proponents of alternative approaches.

Shifting the discussion from “Bonapartism” as such to the materialist method of social analysis implicit in the Eighteenth Brumaire enables us to move from typological discussions about Bonapartist regimes today to the more generative question of what it means to conduct political analysis in accordance with the theoretical principles of historical materialism, in light of the current mutations in the form and content of the bourgeois-parliamentary state.

Kevin Anderson (University of California): *Temporalities and Geographies of Gender and Women’s Empowerment in the Late Marx*

In recent decades the writings of the late Marx -- 1869-83, the period after the first publication of **Das Kapital** -- have increasingly come to the fore. Although Marx published little in these years, his voluminous notebooks and letters on colonialism, multilinearity, and ecology have been at the center of most recent discussions of the late Marx. Yet Marx’s notebooks from this period also concentrated on gender and the family, something that has received less attention in recent decades. Building on previous work by Dunayevskaya (1982) and Brown (2012), this paper examines the whole of Marx’s considerations on gender during his last years. Looking directly at Marx rather than Engels’s **Origin of the Family** (1884), and basing itself in part on unpublished writings destined for the **Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe**, this paper will map Marx comments on gender and the family with regard to a number of societies across time and geography. The following topics Marx wrote about in this period of his life will be sketched: premodern Ireland and women’s relative social power; ancient Greece and women’s subordination, albeit with some nuances; ancient Rome’s formal subordination but practical freedom for women, especially over time; religion, law, and women’s subordination on the Indian Subcontinent in precolonial and colonial times, but with important countercurrents; women’s important participation in the Paris Commune of 1871; Native American women’s enormous social power, whether in Iroquois tribal assemblies or the Pueblo Indians’ storage system for food supplies that far surpassed that of the Spanish colonialists. This is an exploratory paper, based upon a draft chapter of a book tentatively entitled “Mapping the Late Marx: On Colonialism, Gender, and Multilinear Concepts of Revolution.” It will offer a fresh look on issues that have been debated at least since Engels’s time. It will do so by examining a wider range of texts and topics than was known to previous generations of Marxists. Among other things, doing so shatters the received notion that for Marx, premodern societies, once they developed social class structures, almost completely extinguished women’s agency, something that would begin to change only with the onset of capitalist modernity. Instead, a look at these texts shows that he saw premodern and precolonial societies – and not only Native American ones – as imbued not only by women’s subjugation, but also by women’s agency and empowerment.

Vincent Berthelier (Université Paris Cité): *Shall we praise Marx’ style?*

The recent English translation of Ludovico Silva’s *El Estilo literario de Marx*, as well as several similar and more recent studies (Steven 2021, Bies & Mengaldo 2020, Gandesha & Hartle 2017), question the literary and stylistic interest of Marx. Focusing on Marx’s style is taking the risk of reducing Marxism to an aesthetic posture or an artistic fantasy. But it also means combating Marx’s reputation for illegibility, and offering literary scholars and dandies a gateway to this crucial critical theory. There’s another, twofold risk here: that of making a pure apology for Marx’s stylistic

genius, and that of assuming that everything in his style is theoretically meaningful and a component of his system. A close-reading approach, concerned with “tone, rhythm, pace, pitch, mood, syntax, texture and so on” (Eagleton 2023), though relevant (e.g. the conceptual interest of using a Latin rather than Saxon lexicon), would even shrink the question to a German-speaking scale.

A rigorous stylistic approach will consist in reinscribing Marx’s style in the writing practices of his time, or in those of the authors who inspired him (Prawer 1976). It also means taking into account the dullness of Marx’s style, motivated by his scientific and didactic scruples, as well as the dialectical and anti-Utopian nature of his thinking (it can be shown through an analysis of Marx’s antimetaboles). Finally, I’ll insist on the fact that some salient aspects of his style (metaphors, typical portraits, allusions and quotes) also cover ambiguities and theoretical blind spots in his work, one of the most important being: to which type of public are his numerous learned and lyrical literary pages really addressed?

room: bglt
book panel: robert linhart
the sugar and the hunger
an inquiry into the sugar regions of northeastern brazil

Luiz Renato Martins, Roberto Della Santa and Panagiotis Sotiris

We are pleased to announce the publication of the first English language translation of Robert Linhart’s *The Sugar and the Hunger*, originally published in 1980.

This inquiry into the sugar regions of North-Eastern Brazil, juxtaposing heterogeneous traits of the impoverished workers’ stories into a vivid cinematic montage, is an indispensable factographic investigation into modern hunger.

The translation also includes an unpublished interview with Linhart from 1980 made by Jean Copans, giving an insight into the political and theoretical background of his investigation in Brazil.

The afterword by Luiz Renato Martins, a Brazilian Marxist art historian and journalist, who recently directed a documentary film *Conversations With Robert Linhart*, discusses the book against the backdrop of today’s practices of expropriation of land and food from peasants and urban poor.

Nick Houde (Independent Researcher); Laura Lotti (Other Internet Research Institute); Morshed Mannan (European University Institute); Tara Merk (CNRS, University of Paris II): *Web3 and Labor: A Worker's Inquiry into DAOs*

Decentralized Autonomous Organizations (DAOs) are blockchain-based organizations that enable people to coordinate outside of traditional structures with the aid of self-executing rules deployed on a public blockchain. "DAO contributors" are people broadly involved in using and maintaining DAOs, who have been largely ignored in the speculative hype around this new entity. While the term "contributor" invokes notions of open source contributions, the advent of blockchain-enabled token economies and fluid ownership structures have blurred the boundaries between worker, owner, contributor, and investor, fundamentally challenging the nature of how labor is conceived and contributors are protected. Today almost two million people are involved in DAOs. Consequently, understanding the role of DAOs and their contributors in the context of transnational labor markets and natively digital work environments operating at the margins of statutory worker rights, is of growing importance.

In this paper, after identifying the distinct nature of DAO work, we present the findings from our worker's inquiry of DAO contributors, consisting of 21 in-depth individual interviews and a 3-hour focus group with 22 DAO contributors working throughout the ecosystem. The goal of our inquiry is to identify DAO workers' motivations, day-to-day experiences as well as their needs and motivations to understand what this new labor environment affords, and what it may lack. We analyze our findings in reference to Seeman's (1959) five components of alienation to understand why contributors choose to work for DAOs and make actionable recommendations on areas that require improvement through collective action, new legal standards, and the extension of existing worker rights and welfare mechanisms.

Overall, we aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of work within DAOs and chart viable mechanisms that could be constructed to realize the hard-won labor and welfare rights that are at the core of desirable working conditions.

Paolo Ruffino (University of Liverpool): *Workers' visibility and union organizing in the UK videogames industry*

The paper investigates how the union IWGB Game Workers has been introducing strategies that allow members to be more closely in control of their visibility with bosses and peers. The videogame sector has been traditionally averse to unionization. Its compulsory network sociality, and the belief that game-work should be passion-driven, limit the expression of discontent and proposals for structural change. Drawing on 2 years of participatory observation (2019-2020) and interviews with board members, the article looks at how the union has been protecting members' anonymity and helping identify relations of power within the workplace while avoiding exposure. The strategies open new possibilities for workers' organizing and shed light on how labor is understood in a fundamental sector of the creative economy. The article analyzes the implications currently affecting the union organizing project: board members become over-exposed, and internal policies protecting anonymity are challenged by the promotional cultures of social media.

Max Haiven (Lakehead University): *Worker as Futurist: Speculative Fiction Writing as Workers Inquiry*

"Our *Worker as Futurist* project has brought together 12 rank-and-file current or former Amazon workers to write short, speculative fiction (SF) works about "The World After Amazon." In what we hope to be a pilot for a series of future similar activities with Amazon and other workers, this project aims to return to workers, at least in part, the prerogative to *speculate otherwise*. Workers at Amazon are compelled to labour to (re)produce a future-machine: a corporation that not only strives to generate profit for its shareholders but to aggressively subsume futurity itself into its operations, and that thereby forecloses the possibility of other futures [(Delfanti and Frey 2021). For its founder, Jeff Bezos, Amazon's future is a utopian ascension of humanity (him, particularly) into the stars. For the workers, it is a present-day hyper-capitalist dystopia, where the most cutting-edge AI-powered managerial, surveillance, robotics and logistics weaponry squeezes as much value as possible from human labour [(Alimahomed-Wilson and Reese 2020)].

In confronting this state of affairs, the *Worker as Futurist* project could never be a replacement for the kinds of

trade union and workers-council protagonism of self-organized workers, which has recently made headlines with unionization drives at several Amazon sites [(Chua and Cox 2023)]. But the project can help open a strategic space, among writers and readers, for the radical imagination that dialectically supplements material struggles, directly and indirectly.

At the time of writing, the project is in its second phase: a series of workshops to prepare the worker-writers to pen their stories, which we aim to help them edit and then publish later in 2023. In this presentation I introduce the project and its methods, its successes and its challenges. I frame it as triangulated by three traditions of militant research: first, a history of workers' writing workshops (such as the Worker Writers School of New York) and a recent trend in activist SF, notably the *Octavia's Brood* collection [(brown and Imarisha 2015; second, the participatory research strategy of *convocation* for the radical imagination [(Haiven and Khasnabish 2014)], which draws on the work of Cornelius Castoriadis [(1997)] and Robin DG Kelley [(2002)]; finally, the methods of *workers' inquiry*, which emerged from Marx and Engel's original questionnaires and found its greatest success in Italy among militant autonomist organizers in the 1970s. Recently, workers' inquiry has become important to organizers seeking to understand the recomposition of labour under platform capitalism [(Englert, Woodcock, and Cant 2020)].

It is on the basis of the third of these traditions that I pose the (appropriately) speculative theoretical question of this presentation. The gambit of workers' inquiry is that workers themselves, as the embodied subject of class recomposition, possess a special but obscured knowledge about the changing patterns of capital. This knowledge might be revealed or recognized or cultivated through processes of collective inquiry. Such a knowledge might then lead to militancy, organization and, importantly, the recognition of new opportunities to strike back against capital that could not otherwise be discerned, even by the most discerning theorists of capital. Is this correct? And, if it is, is the process of writing, and of writing SF in particular, especially useful or generative? Might it be in the "demonstratively unique" context of Amazon, a firm that built a retail and logistics empire on the sale of writing (books) and through its own internal SF narrative of ever-greater star-bound triumph [(McGurl 2021)]?

Austin Kelmoré: Game Workers Branch of IWGB

room: dlt
authoritarian capitalism, violence and dual power

George Sotiropoulos (International School of Athens) Gene Ray: Whose justice? Dual power at a time of planetary crisis and system-failure(s)

The paper will revisit the notion of dual power in order to assess its potency as the conceptual marker of a viable political strategy today. The key claim to be advanced is that the notion continues to carry substantial political potential, provided that its conceptual scope is critically clarified, a theoretical clarification which, among other things, requires that dual power is embedded to the current historical conjuncture.

For a term carrying such a significant historical legacy, associated as it is with the Russian revolution and Lenin's theorization of the event, dual power has been relatively neglected in contemporary critical theory, even among Marxist circles. There are, to be sure, notable exceptions, like Fredric Jameson's work on "the universal army" or more recent utilizations of the concept on the occasion of the Covid-19 pandemic and the development of grassroots forms of aid and mutual care. Yet, it is arguable that these attempts, including Jameson's, do not go further than an application of the notion to a new reality, instead of its critical re-conceptualization. In this respect, dual power still serves to signify the development of organizational forms invested with a capacity to do things independently from or indeed against state-power.

There is no question here of abandoning this semantic facet, after all the term was deployed by Lenin in view of a situation that such duality has reached a high level of intensity. What we want to do is delve deeper into the problem the concept grapples with, so as to expose some crucial dimensions, which exceed a narrow focus on political power and the organizational form that is capable to wield it. Specifically, we will argue that dual power makes sense relative to the existence of social forms of (re)production that are antagonistic to the social forms which the state encodes and helps to reproduce. Additionally, it will also be argued that on a theoretical-logical level the political forms embodying dual power (of which the soviets remain paradigmatic instances) and the social forms sustaining it are mediated by the category of normativity. For "dual power", ultimately, is not some formal property of autonomous institutions, but the latter's substantive capacity to advance a form of being and the conception of justice that informs it. Following this line of argumentation will allow us, on the one hand, to elucidate the distance

that separates us from the historical conditions in which the term originally developed. At the same time, it will lead to a clarification of the term's continuous salience as a critical and strategic concept.

Timo Dorsch (Institute for Human Geography, Goethe University Frankfurt a.M.); Börries Nehe (International Research Group on Authoritarianism & Counter-Strategies, Rosa Luxemburg Foundation): *Authoritarian Neoliberalism & the Political Economy of Violence*

We're experiencing a deep hegemonic crisis of neoliberalism, of (neo)liberal democracy and a profound authoritarian turn of global capitalism.

This last aspect has been widely discussed under concepts such as "authoritarian neoliberalism", "(right-wing) populism", authoritarianism, and the like. Powerful as many of these takes are to understand the "time of monsters", they also have their important shortcomings (Robles/Nehe, 2022). In particular, most of the literature from the Global North focuses either on the ideological mobilization pushed ahead by the far-right ("populism"), or on the "reconfiguring of the state into a less democratic entity", as Ian Bruff (2014) defines authoritarian neoliberalism.

Nevertheless, we know that capitalism is spatially uneven. Forms of government, surplus value production and subjectivities are differentiated accordingly and constituted heterogeneously (Mezzadra/Neilson, 2013). Thus, from a Southern perspective, what seems crucial to us to understand the current authoritarian transformation is the (re-)organization of violence: as a (semi)privatized, omnipresent and "illegible" reality that traverses societies in multiple ways, and which, in its diversity, constitutes a privileged mechanism for the (re-)production of social order.

In many parts of the South, to understand capitalism's authoritarian turn we have to go beyond the analysis of the state and ideology: on one hand, because formal liberal democratic statehood coexists with a parallel reality (a "second reality", as Rita Segato (in: Dorsch/Flörching/Nehe, 2022) calls it) of the exercise of power, of exploitation of nature and labour, etc.; on the other hand, because violence as such constitutes and produces a brutalization of society beyond ideology.

In our paper, we want to discuss the global economy of violence as a key component of the global authoritarian turn. We will focus particularly on the global entanglements of biopolitics and necropolitics in a global order which is inherently marked by its coloniality. How is the US' and Europe's increasingly neocolonial authoritarian politics and ideological mobilization connected to the production of death in the South? What political challenges for social struggles result from this, and how can we rethink emancipatory internationalist politics?

Roberto Andrés Vargas Muñoz (Universidad Católica Silva Henríquez): *Domination and abstract violence of capital in modernity Notes on Marx and the space time of capitalism*

In our presentation we address some epistemological-political problems derived from a categorical critique of capitalism. We argue that abstract and impersonal domination and abstract violence are two constitutive and basic moments of modern bourgeois society. From the late theoretical production of Karl Marx, especially from the money chapter of the *Grundrisse* and from secondary sources anchored in a categorical reading of his work, our findings show that the capitalist social formation is defined by its character highly abstract, which presupposes the subsumption of social interdependence to capital as the dominant social relation of modernity. This, on the one hand, supposes that individuals are involved in structures of social domination (abstract and impersonal) and, on the other hand, that they are mediated by a type of violence determined as an abstract thirst for value. Following the readings of Postone, Kurz and Heinrich, we argue that capital acquires a special social power in modernity.

Capitalists personify capital, that is to say, by means of their actions they update the movement of the value subsumed in the logic of capital, hence, it is not the capitalist who conducts the process, but the capitalist logic (the capital), whose social power turns things in things of value, in commodities. The social power of this logic does not depend on any law derived from individual, State or market action, neither any social class; nor capitalists nor workers. It is a social law that works hiding from society, is blind and independent from the conscience of the production agents. In its immanence, this law is organized from capital and its social characteristic consists in becoming the abstract universality of modernity as commodities and abstract labor are generalized as the simple and basic forms of social mediation.

The social form of modern domination not only works in the sphere or field of the economic, rather, it is found in

all areas of social life, daily life and habitual consciousness, which we call ""modern"" when they acquire, on the one hand, an absolute link (see Lefebvre and Jameson) by virtue of the abstract space that capital reproduces as a condition and expression of its form of social domination and, on the other hand, a social necessity (see Postone) with respect to abstract time, according to which, the magnitude of value functions as the basic element of modern mediation, based on abstract labor and which generally subsumes historical temporalities to the time of capital.

room: g51
studies in labour and labour power

Eleni Papagiannaki (Birmingham City University): Labour as the fusion of the physical, the digital and the biological - Re(in)stating labour and labour power within the narrative of the 'augmented workforce'

In the future of work literature, there are two main streams of thought: those envisioning the obsolescence of labour by technology and those that refer to their complementarity. The former face the question of what capitalist problem would such technologies solve. Starting from the premise that existing configuration of technologies is for capital's purposes to increase surplus value, this paper argues that not all possible technologies can be implemented within this mode of production. Capitalists automate for dropping the value per commodity to beat competitors and to increase obedience and command in production. Therefore, technologies including the fusion of physical, digital and biological are not developing outside capitalist economy, limiting the degree of labour's substitution. The paper also argues that in capitalism, labour power - and not labour - is commodified, and its use-value is its ability of creating more value than it has. Therefore, with a labour-like technology, capital would have to solve its thermodynamic inequality too.

The complementarity approach, conversely, includes the 'augmented workforce', a narrative of the World Economic Forum's (WEF) 4th industrial revolution. Historically, capitalism has deskilled the originally skilled worker, compartmentalised their work into simpler tasks performed by more employees; the separation of one skilled individual employee's physical-cognitive abilities leads to an advanced division of labour. One of the divisions refers to the distinction of productive-unproductive labour. However, despite the technical advancements, capitalists' rates of profit tend to fall. Consequently, capitalist solutionism to the falling rates considers a different technical change, through i) the productive technological enhancement of workers, and ii) the elimination of unproductive (circulationist) labour costs.

This paper views critically both approaches, developing a Marxist research framework. Placing labour power as a methodological tool of analysis the paper argues why augmentation contra obsolescence is more probable, but incapable of solving capitalism's inherent contradictions.

Faisal Hamadah (Maastricht University): Historical roots of Kafala

This paper applies Marx's theoretical account on the development of a 'reserve army of labor' resulting from the cycles of accumulation to the early oil industry in the Persian Gulf. It explores the history of the kafala system in relation to constructions of the Kuwaiti welfare state, and its reliance on Iranian migrant labor in the early moments of the nation state. It discusses how the phenomenon of migration and citizenship are structured through the generalization of the wage, and explores the ways that they are manifested in wider cultural concerns.

Takashi Satoh (Ritsumeikan University): What do proletarians sell?: Beyond commodification of Labor Power to Power over Labor

This paper introduces a novel theoretical construct to Marxian economics: the ""power-over-labor"" as the commodity that proletarians sell, which challenges the traditional interpretation of labor-power as a commodity. It underscores a contradiction in the Marxian perspective, where labor-power as a commodity implies an inalienable relationship between the laborer and their labor. This paradox persists as the laborer retains the ownership rights over their labor, yet the capitalist cannot own the commodity they purchased.

Our work posits that it is not labor-power that is sold, but the proletarian's power-over-labor. This shifts the focus onto the claim over labor exchanged in contractual agreements. The laborer has an obligation to work, forming a debtor relationship, while the capitalist forms a creditor relationship. This exchange commodifies the power-over-labor, not

the labor-power itself.

Understanding the true nature of this exchange elucidates the distinct relations existing in the circulation and production processes. During circulation, there is an apparent horizontal exchange, where the laborer sells their power-over-labor, and the capitalist pays wages for this claim to work. However, this transaction leaves the laborer with a debt: the obligation to work. Once production commences, this horizontal relationship becomes vertical, as the laborer works off their obligation and the capitalist exerts their power-over-labor.

As the labor is fulfilled, the laborer's balance sheet records an important shift. The debt disappears, replaced by 'capital'. Significantly, this 'capital' is not a tradable commodity but symbolizes the laborer's ability to generate wages. It effectively redefines labor-power as a form of capital that is only recognized ex post facto. This shift in understanding has profound implications for Marxian economics, challenging the traditional commodification of labor and redefining labor-power.

Nadia Hajal-Backleh (Birzeit University): Narrating Labor Migration in Global China: Between Neoliberal and Socialist Paradigms

Both Hsiao-Hung Pai's *Scattered Sand* (2013) and Leslie Chang's *Factory Girls* (2008) tackle the issue of labor migration in their non-fiction narrations with special focus on global China in attempt to unfold the lives and trajectories of rural migrants who – after 1970s/80s opening-up reform policies – flooded to industrial centers and abroad to improve their chances for a better livelihood. These narratives are significant. They tell real stories of migrants themselves and give space to their voices. They narrate migrants' experiences, their conditions, their opportunities and challenges. They also open a window to understand the nature and the reality of a phenomenal massive exodus which according to China's National Bureau of Statistics 2020 estimated 285.6 million – around 20% of total population of China (1.4 billion), and 35% of Chinese labor force.

Reading these narratives, however, reveals different framings of the problem, different ideas about migration under globalization, as well as different ways of knowing and understanding the living realities and labor conditions of these migrants. Chang's narrative reads migration as an act of freedom, desire, and independence. It celebrates the successes achieved by selected individual migrants who grab the opportunity and keep the hard work. According to Chang, whether educated or not, poor or rich, old or young, all lives are marked by instability and dramatic changes. Yet, one undoubtedly overcomes the hardships with resilience. Hence, contra Marxist theorizations, the experience itself is rewarding. It creates progress, change, and independent selves particularly among the females. In contrast, Pai's narrative reads mass migration among the poor as act of compulsion driven by multiple dispossessions and desperation. Unlike Chang, she brings into the narrative and intertwines migrants' stories with the forceful implications of historical and structural changes in modern China as well as the social realities determined by the rule of global capitalism and retreat of state. Her stories are narrated from the vantage point of labor and are overwhelmingly marked by alienation, immiseration, servitude, and dispensable lives. To her, the way out goes beyond the courage and resilience of individual migrants to require systematic and structural change as well as organized labor struggle towards socialism.

In my paper, I attempt to deploy a contrapuntal reading of both narratives to demonstrate how and why each narrative – although both tackling the crucial issue of Chinese labor migration – understands its nature, root causalities, and way-out strategies differently. The paper benefits from historical and cultural materialism to understand why and how Chang's narrative aligns more with neoliberal ideologies while Pai's anchors itself in socialist framing and the illusions of the former.

room: r201
marxism and political theorising i

Fernando Lizarraga (British Academy Visiting Fellow, University of York): Marxism and Absolute Hospitality

Struggles for a decent place to live –caused by rocketing housing crisis, massive flows of refugees due to poverty, environmental devastation, and war, amongst other capitalist evils–, pose practical and theoretical challenges to Marxism. The world has become an inhospitable place for humans and other species. Recent developments in Ecosocialism call for radical actions to (re) make a hospitable world by stopping and reversing climate crisis. From

a normative perspective seeking to sketch the contours of a desirable society, the lack of attention to the ideal of hospitality in the Marxist tradition seems puzzling. It has been suggested that hospitality is the opposite of alienation and that Marx's internationalism foreshadowed a hospitable world where alienation would be superseded and persons could finally feel at home on this Earth. Ancient nomadic societies practiced hospitality as a rule; it was sacred among the Greeks; early Christian communities deemed it a chief virtue; the French Revolution enshrined the right to hospitality only to abolish it for fear of the risks involved in creating a society without closure. In fact, classical models of hospitality, both historical and literary, were mostly perfectionist and isolated. Marx's vision advocated for a hospitable world community, able to satisfy everyone's needs. Socialist utopias such as William Morris's *News from Nowhere* pushed the limits of imagination towards societies based on gifts, pleasant work, environmental stability, the absence of coercion, and capable of accommodating dissent and difference. The ideal of absolute hospitality, coined by Jacques Derrida, might thus prove useful within a Marxist normative perspective. So, a hospitable socialism would be characterized not only by the abolition of alienation but also by unlimited openness to the other –both human and non-human–; non-instrumental reciprocity; transcendence of law and the State; and the ability to embrace uninvited others and unexpected events.

Heide Gerstenberger: What about the basic structures of capitalism?

"Ilen Meiksin's Wood's assertion that capitalism is characterized by the separation of the economy from politics is one of the cornerstones of the political strand which has become known as Political Marxism. It can be traced back to the writings of Marx and is also present in the form theory of the state which was inspired by Pashukanis. But our common sense refuses to accept that it is adequate for the analysis of globalized capitalism. I will explain, that there was, indeed, a historical moment in European societies when private appropriation (and hence "the economy") was separated from the state, will then go on to explain why these processes should not be mistaken as having constituted spheres of different functions, before pointing to historical developments in capitalist societies which clearly contradict the assumption that the economy is separated from the state (or vice versa). This, of course, calls into question some elements of Marxian theory that most of us have been used to take for granted. I will put up to discussion a concept of the most basic element in the relation between state and economy in capitalist societies which aims to take into account their very different historical realities.

Tamara Caraus (Centre of Philosophy, University of Lisbon): The workers had no country - now they are also 'illegal'

'The working men have no country', states the Communist Manifesto, a vision also expressed in another text Marx wrote in 1845: 'the nation of the worker is not French, nor English, nor German, it is toil, the wage slavery, the selling of oneself'. This vision was deemed inadequate even within the Marxist tradition on the pretext that it ignored the socio-economic disparities between the workers of different nations and the specificities of each nation. However, this vision has resurfaced in manifestos of migrant activism, such as *No One Is Illegal* and *No Borders No Nations*, which reveal how capitalism relies on the exploitation of migrant labour, how it fosters dispossession and drives migration, and how it extracts value from the dispossessed and mobile workforce, while the nation-state with its borders is just a means of control and criminalisation of the poor, and not of those with high purchasing power. Captive in methodological nationalism that views the nation-state as the ultimate unit of analysis, social science is often unaware of how its analytical categories, such as 'citizen,' 'immigrant,' 'temporary migrant,' and so on, are shaped by nationalist assumptions, so by using nation-state categories it inadvertently subscribes to the classification of poor mobile individuals as 'illegal'.

To overcome the nationalist theoretical perspective on migration, it is imperative to embrace Marx's methodological cosmopolitanism, which inherently examines the world as a whole through the analysis of the global circulation of capital, world market, world money, global division of labour, and so forth. This paper argues that the endorsement means a radical shift in migration studies and social science at large, encompassing the following aspects: i.analyzing the mechanisms through which migrant labour, a crucial dimension of wealth creation, is rendered invisible or obscured; ii.viewing migration as a 'total fact', encompassing not only immigrants at the borders of Western states but the entire world: the countries of origin, transit, and destination, the agency of migrants, and the underlying causes of migration; iii.exposing how the global migration regime controls the mobility of the impoverished and unskilled, simultaneously exploiting their labour and perpetuating global inequalities, by this revealing the legacies of colonialism and the patterns of neo-colonialism; iv.conceiving a decolonized approach to migration, where there are No Borders, No Nations and where No One Is Illegal, and which implies thinking the world anew by going back to Marx.

room: rg01
marxism, animals and the human

Billy Godfrey (Loughborough University, University of Manchester): Karl Marx, Animal Liberationist

Though the question of animal liberation intersects with the ecological crises of our age in numerous ways, even eco-Marxists have been slow to take it up. The idea that animal liberation is a bourgeois concern persists among many Marxists, while those working in animal studies tend to dismiss rare Marxist interventions because of Marxism's alleged anthropocentrism and human chauvinism.

Marx's natural scientific notebooks from the late 1860s give us reason to believe that Marxism and animal liberation are more compatible than has generally been asserted. Eco-Marxists have shown that Marx became interested in the latest developments in capitalist agriculture in this period, but his specific fascination with animals has received less attention. Throughout these notebooks Marx indicates his belief that nonhuman animals must be liberated from the capitalist system of agriculture that forces them to reach maturity much quicker than even their recent ancestors, which leaves them malformed, painfully proportioned, and increasingly susceptible to disease.

I argue that his engagement with this literature sharpened his wider ecological critique, informing his work on the robbery system of agriculture, the pollution of waterways, and the proliferation of deadly pathogens. These notebooks also reveal the extent to which Marx's work on the animal question informed other elements of his critique of political economy – we see traces of his research on animals throughout volumes II and III of **Capital**. Reading Marx in this way encourages us to reconsider the antagonism between Marxism and animal liberation and provides justification for further Marxist inquiry into the animal question.

Magnus Møller Ziegler (University of Copenhagen): 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 (**Monsters of the Market**, 2012), 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 with McNally 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 'capitalist grotesque', i.e., the specific kind of normalisation of monstrosity under capitalism, which takes the form of a colonisation of our corporeal being and experience of everyday life.

However, further to McNally I also argue that in order to properly understand Marx's application of this kind of language, we need to seek out its origin in Marx's first encounter with the so-called 'philosophical Communism' of Friedrich Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach, and (especially) Moses Hess.

I argue that Marx's continued use of this kind of language, which was emblematic of Hess and Engels in this period, also suggest a continued commitment to a theory of dehumanisation of workers under capitalism, which this language was employed to convey. It is not just that the workers are treated inhumanely; in the capitalist grotesque, they cease, in an ontological if not in a biological sense, to be human altogether.

Anna Sturman (University of Sydney): Building counter-hegemonic projects through climate crises: sharing strategic terrains of socio-ecological reproduction with other animals

As the symptoms of the climate crisis accelerate and intensify, the impacts of the Capitalocene on other animals are becoming more visible and increasingly unbearable to a growing number of people. These people include many in the imperial core, who have often been otherwise sequestered from the worst ravages of ecological degradation constitutive of capital's ongoing expansion. This development signals the opening up of new, strategic terrains of enquiry for attempts to coordinate Left organising across expansive terrains of socio-ecological reproduction and also heralds challenges, such as the strengthening of 'Nature' reification and associated reactionary projects. In this paper I bring into discussion strands of ecosocialist, materialist ecofeminist and multi-species justice scholarship,

to argue for an understanding of capital's appropriation of the lives of other animals as a key aspect of socio-ecological reproduction in-and-against-and beyond capital, and as such a vital thread for us to investigate and weave into progressive political projects. Beginning by situating other animals as implicated agents in the ongoing reproduction of our collective socio-ecological conditions of (re)production, this argument seeks to clarify ways in which non-human animals' lives, as parts of our collective metabolism(s), fit into the materialist ecofeminist 'double internality' of labour in-and against capital, in turn in-and-against the rest of nature.

To explore the possible strengths and vulnerabilities of deepening our appreciation of other animals in terrains of socio-ecological reproduction, I draw on recent fieldwork investigating spontaneous mobilisations of human care for, and protection of, farmed, domesticated and wild animals as part of the Black Summer Bushfire response in 2019/20 in the Shoalhaven, a local government area in New South Wales, Australia.

Hugo Lundberg (Gothenburg University): Non-Human Subjectivation and Legal Form

Critical legal scholarship has recently seen a wave of theorizing the non-human, for instance with regard to discussions on rights of nature and animal subjectivity. But such implicit critiques of humanism in law tend to be inspired not by the many Marxist variations of critique of humanism, but rather by post-humanism and new materialism. Scholars in the Marxist paradigm have been quick to critique these competing theoretical frameworks but have done so in ways that, albeit convincingly question blindness to capital's drive, the form of value and draw out the boundaries between the social and natural, have largely not set out to preserve or develop a critical perspective on non-human animals. Situating itself in the communist tradition, this paper critically examines attempts at formulating 'more-than-human' legal ontologies. Relying on communist legal theory - that of Evgeny Pashukanis' concept of legal form and in extension, how law subjectivates through the commodity form - I question underlying assumptions of legal ontology that the post-humanist theorizing of non-human animals rests upon through modes of exchange and circulation. Although not historically centered on the liberation of non-human animals, I suggest that a Marxist critique of humanism through legal form can highlight and explicate issues which risk becoming obfuscated by a post-humanist approach, but in doing this, communists need to seriously engage with questions of animality. Critically highlighting these differences could provide openings for new, communist theorizing of non-human animals and law beyond the limitations of both traditional Marxism and post-human approaches.

room: rb01
carceral capitalism

Matteo Tiratelli (UCL): Three regimes of accumulation: A history of prisons in England, 1900-2019

One of the foundational texts of Marxist penology, Georg Rusche and Otto Kirchheimer's *Punishment and Social Structure*, begins with the assertion that "every system of production tends to discover punishments which correspond to its productive relationships" (1939/2003, p. 5). Over the years, this focus on political economy has been supplemented by an interest in the extra-economic forces at play in the development of penal systems: crises of legitimation, the violence of anti-blackness, gender- and class-formation, the imperatives of "civilising" and "modernising" the state, and so on. But the core materialist insight – that there is some kind of "correspondence" between punishment and political economy – remains immensely influential. However, there are now an abundance of different accounts of the nature of that "correspondence", many of which are entirely contradictory. To make matters worse, in a perfect example of academic imperialism, the tragedy of mass incarceration in the United States has become the central problem to be explained, making an extreme outlier the dominant site of theory-making in the anglophone world.

Moving to a more representative case – the history of prisons in England and Wales over the twentieth century – this paper will attempt to advance a more systematic account of how prison systems "correspond" to political economy. In so doing, it will draw on newly compiled data tracking Britain's prison population from 1900 to 2019 to describe three regimes of incarceration – a liberal period of low and declining prison population from 1900 to the mid 1930s, a post-war consensus of steady growth, and the explosion of the 1990s and 2000s – and link those regimes to underlying economic changes.

Pedro Mendes Loureiro (University of Cambridge): The prison consensus in Brazil: neoliberalism, democracy and inequality

Brazil is amidst a decades-long prison boom: approximately 1,200 have been built since re-democratisation, in 1985, when only about 300 existed. Meanwhile, the number of incarcerated individuals in the country has grown tenfold, rising from 90,000 in 1990 to 900,000 in 2022. This coincides with the global rise of a 'political economy of punishment' as neoliberalism spread, but Brazil's case bears unexplained particularities.

The two most striking features of the Brazilian process are its momentum and its inertia. This relentless advance occurred under centre-right, centre-left, and far-right governments; through periods of austerity and of fiscal largesse; when poverty, inequality and social expenditures were rising or falling; and in moments of fast economic expansion and during acute crises. All of which makes extant explanations for this rise of incarceration insufficient. We argue this steady expansion has been enabled by a broad agreement – a veritable 'prison consensus' – that even more prisons must be built to 'humanise' them and reduce overcrowding. This holds across NGOs, organised crime, left and right parties, national and state-level governments, and national and international courts: all actors acknowledge the system is deeply problematic, but advocate for an ever-growing expansion.

We conclude by exploring how incarceration has been connected to patterns of capital accumulation. The carceral system is expensive but mostly public, generating few direct profits for capital owners; it detains large racialised, working-class populations, but with little indication of actually regulating the supply of labour; and it is embroiled in a state of perpetual crisis that risks threatening broader economic relations. As the prison systems continually fails forward, the selective control of populations occupies a growing role in social reproduction and the expanded circuit of capital, draining resources but generating residual profits through public debt and infrastructure and maintaining a fragile, unequal form of social control.

Ashley Bohrer: Capitalist Reproduction and the Carcerality of Care

This paper focuses on the dark side of social reproduction. Much of the SRT literature too uncritically valorizes the work of social reproduction (Understandably because of the long history of its erasure and devaluation, indeed, even its denial as labor). And while I fervently defend this pushback, this paper complicates the picture of social reproduction by showing that in addition to reproducing human life, care workers under capitalism also reproduce capitalist norms. We also socially reproduce not only what is good, but also what is abhorrent: institutions of social reproduction, both private (the family) and public (schools, eateries, etc.) are primary agents for the social reproduction of capitalist values: individualism, competition, punitiveness, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, ableism, and others.

At the heart of this relation is the way that capitalism requires that all labor we do out of love is weaponized for the reproduction of a system that produces our own (differentially constituted) subjection. It is this double-edged sword of love, care, and community that poses, I argue, the stickiest challenge of fighting contemporary capitalism. Rather than fall back on hackneyed analyses of 'complicity,' both Black feminism and Marxist social reproduction theory show the complicated interconnectedness of our own survival and our domination; it is precisely that what we do to survive, to nourish ourselves and our loved ones, to cultivate joy, and to gather the strength to fight another day – that all of these can be captured by capitalism, leaving little to no space of safety, no outside from which to attack. Hence, I argue that all care relations under capitalism, both those mediated by a wage and those performed out of love, can be helpfully thought of as relations of carceral care, undertaken by what Joy James calls captive maternals. I argue that this knot – that what is 'for us' is also 'for them' – is the central problematic of anti-capitalist resistance.

This formulation – that all which reproduces, sustains, and cares for us also simultaneously enables the system which harms, murders, exploits, and dispossesses us – shifts the conceptualization away from the ideology debates that have plagued anti-capitalist theorists and organizers. In some Marxist tendencies, the masses appear as simply mystified, even sometimes as stupid, requiring an elite educated vanguard to show them the truth. Organizers have often retorted that it is of course the working class who most clearly understands their exploitation, even if they use a different grammar of expression. These 'ideology debates' often assume that workers are unwittingly working in the interest of their own domination, when they could, easily or with difficulty, do otherwise. But what if this otherwise is always subject to, in the words of Olúfemi O. Táíwò, "elite capture"? What happens when it seems like our only options are to reinscribe our subjection or literally expire?

room: b102
dispossession, migration, and modern hunger

Bruna Della Torre (Universidade de Campinas); Luiz Renato Martins (Universidade de São Paulo); Ana Paula Pacheco (Universidade de São Paulo)

Beside the climatic and urban catastrophes linked to acute temperature fluctuations and episodes of environmental imbalances (including sanitary events), the massive migratory displacements and mass starvation – already assimilated as seasonal naturalized phenomena – turn the monstrous content of the current order into an abyss for legions of refugees.

In fact, given the suffering of scattered populations and species and of a general process in which the critical concept to understand it is dispossession, in contrast the confiscation via wage-earning prevails more as an aspiration than a daily scourge. In such a context, to fight against capitalism requires, in addition to topical anti-devastation clashes, totalizing criticism capable of revealing to the majority the predatory essence of the vortex of profit.

To dissect the historical course of this process in which the exploitation of labour mingles with the coercion of pro-lethal metabolic rhythms and extortionate-predatory practices, the panel will address four works, *Vidas Secas* (1938), *Le Sucre et la Faim* (1980), *Torto Arado* (2018) and *Salvar o Fogo* (2023), which deal with the ongoing oppression and flagellation of people in the Brazilian Northeast. In them, in addition to the specific scrutiny of forms of profit and exploitation, according to the historical moment of writing, the exercise of literary practices and investigation of the real is distinguished, all of which demonstrate that the practices of criticism, writing, and expression are also fighting strategies. In this sense, the comparative examination of the works of Graciliano Ramos (1938), Robert Linhart (1980), and Itamar Vieira Junior (2018, 2023) aims to offer aesthetic and historical reflection the opportunity to investigate the interweaving between objective issues of social struggle and historical forms of aspects of the subject's experience, which only come to light in art.*

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BRAZILIAN NOVEL AND THE COST OF LIFE: ARTISTIC EXPERIMENTATION IN *BARREN LIVES* (1938), BY GRACILIANO RAMOS

Nowadays, there is a strong tendency in the Brazilian novel to work with anti-aestheticizing forms of representing reality. Against what is conventionally named “imaginative literature”, the straightforward, biographical discourse which attempts to relate to the collective sphere has been a way to confront the abstract and aestheticizing patterns of everyday life, subordinated to the power of derealization of Capital. In Brazil, the most important attempts to work with the novel in an anti-aestheticizing sense took place in the 1930's and 1940's, when leftist writers sought to conjugate experimentalism and engagement, reconfiguring the Brazilian intelligentsia in political terms. It is at that very moment that the experience of the crisis of Capitalism (after 1929) — adding to precarious living conditions — resignifies the notion of artistic experimentation, as a field of open historical possibilities. In the Brazilian context, this meant emphasizing the idea of reconducting art to a daily praxis, i.e., its connection with the social revolution. This presentation proposes to discuss the book which is allegedly the best experience of anti-aestheticization in the Brazilian novel, *Vidas secas* (*Barren lives*, 1938), by Graciliano Ramos, seeking to understand how the “backwardness” of the local social matter — the representation of the Brazilian social fracture, from the confrontation between a class narrator and a family of refugees from the drought in the northeast of the country — conjugates with advanced aesthetics forms. Narratives techniques such as montage and the weaving of several points of view, struggle against the difficulties of representing poverty and against the loss of perspective that Capitalism has imprinted on life. Our presentation aims to understand how the experimentation in this novel is organized as a laboratory of voices in struggle, an experimental terrain for new political practices on the periphery of globalized capitalism.

LUIZ RENATO MARTINS is the executive-editor of *Cadernos do Movimento Operário* [Notebook of the Workers' Movement] (São Paulo, Sundermann/ WMF); researcher and doctoral supervisor at the Postgraduation programme in Visual Arts at the University of São Paulo, Brazil
FIRST NOTES ON THE CONTEMPORARY HELL

Le Sucre et la Faim (1980) by Robert Linhart investigates a modernizing experiment in the Northeast of Brazil in the wake of the 1964 civil-military coup. It precociously dissects a capitalist leap beyond wage labour based on the flexibilisation of the labour regime. A new class strategy in the sugarcane agroindustry emerges, foreshadowing in multiple ways the so-called neoliberalism.

The 1964 coup in Brazil not only quashed by force the movement of the Peasant Leagues but also triggered a social-demographic restructuring that dispossessed the peasant masses of their ancestral right to housing and small subsistence farming within the latifundio, leading to precarious, unsecured labour and housing deprivation. Such factors led, along with forced displacement and through induction by hunger, to chronic childhood diarrhea, effectively eliminating the right to offspring that distinguished the so-called “free labor” regime from that of the enslaved masses. Further damage followed: forced migrations to urban peripheries, transformed into camps of uprooted and hungry masses—dependent on arbitrary forms of labour and, at best, processed food—and thus condemned to malnutrition. Consequently, “modern hunger,” as Linhart terms it, crystallized as a preventive mode of control and dissuasion, hindering self-organization and social demands.

In brief, Linhart’s analysis, employing far-reaching metaphors (the concentration camps and nuclear bombs as figures), develops a critical and reflective perspective on class necro practices. It foresees the planned and catastrophic order that plunges the contemporary world into an abyss of structural unemployment and programmed genocides.

In short, concise, and powerfully creative in its literary and visual aspects, *Le Sucre et la Faim*, now recently translated into English, can foster a new strategy of reflection and struggle for the universal rights to work and life, crucial for saving the planet.

BRUNA DELLA TORRE is a Post-doctoral fellow at the University of Campinas and executive editor of *Crítica Marxista*)
ITAMAR VIEIRA JUNIOR, MODERNISM, AND ANTHROPOPHAGY

Extractivism is currently the largest industry in Brazil, whether from the perspective of commodity production, mining, logging, etc., or from the perspective of platform and financial extractivism, which replicates in urban spaces what is currently happening in the countryside. In this context, it is not fortuitous that *Salvar o Fogo* (2023) and *Torto Arado* (2018) have been the most commented Brazilian novels in recent years, both in Brazil and abroad. Itamar Vieira Junior depicts two crucial moments of the transformation of the countryside in Brazilian history: the end of the 1960s, with the repression of quilombola and peasant movements by the Military Dictatorship, and the transition from the 1990s to the 2000s, with the emergence of the called “agribusiness.” In both novels, the transformation is narrated from the perspectives of the native populations, which resisted these transformations for many centuries in Brazil. This paper addresses the two books considering the reformulation of the so-called regionalist tradition of the novel proposed by Itamar and his take on modernist anthropophagy, as well as its proposal of “export literature”. The purpose is also to explore how the books feature fundamental passages in the history of the countryside and famine in Brazil and give voice to characters and narrators excluded from literature until now, but at the same time re-edit the modernist decolonial proposal, which seeks to present the peripheral experience as an alternative, decolonial reason for the crisis of contemporary capitalist society. Finally, this paper aims to assess the narrative and composition techniques of both novels, that combine the modernism of William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* (and its exploration of the North American landholding) and the journalistic character of *Quarup* by Antônio Callado, one of the most influential novelists of the dictatorship period in Brazil.

room: b103
subjectivation, ecology and grief

Carlos Frade (University of Salford (Manchester)): Subjective disorientation and world-fleeing in the environmental movement: figures of subjectivation of the nonhuman/posthuman turn

When considering the prospects of preventing the worst effects of the impending climate disaster, little if any attention has been paid to the figures of subjectivation or simply the subjectivities involved in the environmental movement, and basically none at all to those defining the nonhuman/posthuman turn. Whilst there are some very good critical analyses of the constellation of ontologies associated with such ‘turn’ (from object-oriented ontology, speculative and agential realism, actor-network theory and assemblage theory, to, pervading the whole constellation, new materialism and posthumanism), there is a lack of analysis of what these entail for our subjective

stances and thus for the subjective equipment needed for the climate and social-environmental struggles ahead.

This is a very surprising lack, for two reasons: first, because what people ultimately want and strive for (which is what the subjectivities are about) must surely be of the utmost importance in diagnosing the possibilities that a very broad mass ecological movement able to bring about real change may emerge. Second, because the nonhuman/posthuman turn narratives and the subjectivities constitutive thereof enjoy a great deal of appeal and influence, particularly among the young but also on people who do not explicitly subscribe to them but, in a clear sign that their subjectivities have been conquered, resort to their language and express concern for 'the nonhuman'.

The twofold aim of this paper is thus to understand why these ontological narratives enjoy such pull and to explain why that influence is extremely detrimental to the struggle against global warming. To achieve that aim the paper will undertake what I call an analytics of subjectivation aimed to characterise those subjectivities in their main dimensions (ideational, affective and dynamic), to disentangle the nature and real status of their desires and longings, and to ascertain their relation with the actual causes of global warming. The paper will show that the nonhuman/posthuman turn subjectivities are figures of disorientation and depoliticisation the effect of which is massively on the side of subjective disarmament and escapism or world-fleeing.

Vesa Oittinen (University of Helsinki): 'Universal Human Interests' and Climate Crisis

In my paper, I will discuss the concept of "universal human interests" and its place in Marxist theory, especially its significance for a Marxist politics and ethics in the age of the climate crisis. The concept was launched in the 1980s by Mikhail Gorbachev (or rather, by his staff of writers) as one of the theoretical arguments in favour of the "new thinking". As such, it had of course not been unknown in previous Marxist thought; already Engels hinted in *Anti-Dühring* to the possibility of a "really human morality which stands above the class antagonisms". When used by Gorbachev, the main idea was that besides the particular class and national interests, there exist "universally human" interests, too, of which the preventing of the catastrophe of a nuclear war came at this time to the fore. During the Perestroika, there was among the Soviet philosophers an interesting discussion about the status of universal human interests and values, but it ended abruptly after the demise of the Soviet Union. Today, this idea has altogether vanished from theoretical discourses of the Marxists. However, the question of universal human interests has not lost its significance; on the contrary, its actuality has increased as we face the climate crisis. The need for "new thinking" is today yet more acute than in the 1980s, and the Left is in need of theoretical rethinking. Many Marxists have rejected the possibility of universal interests in a class society like capitalism. It would, however, be a pernicious political mistake to approach the climate crisis from an exclusively class-based viewpoint. In my paper, I will present the discussions of Soviet philosophers of the perestroika epoch, a discussion which is unknown in the West (and forgotten in today's Russia) but which might give new impulses for a historico-materialist reformulation of the idea of humanity. In addition, I attempt to show that there exists a solid methodological basis for the concept of universal human interests in the oeuvre of Marx and Engels themselves, starting from the idea of a "communal interest" as a mutual interdependence between members of society, which they discussed in the *German Ideology*. The final part of the paper deals with the illusions of the so-called "Ethical Socialism" of the turn from 19th to 20th centuries. The Ethical Socialists defended the idea of socialism as a goal for entire humanity, but did not start from the analysis of its presuppositions in material production.

Xinyue Liu (University of Oxford): Towards a Cinema of Ecological Grief

Film renders visible the deaths that are otherwise unavowed and allows us to live with nature in its wake. Yet film also marks a 'vanishing point,' as Nicole Shukin theorises, where moving images are both inconspicuously and viscerally contingent on mass animal disassembly. Film's erasure of more-than-human bodies coincides with the onset of industrial capitalism, whereby nature and its sentient beings are broken down into commodified images and fed into the relentless circulation of the global economy.

Focusing on human and more-than-human relations in a time of global crisis through filmic media and text, this essay outlines the urgent task of uniting the concept of ecological grief with moving image practices, defining the 'cinema of ecological grief' as an intersectional art movement that carries ecological losses through the work of mourning in the form of film.

Central to the project is the notion of grievability as postulated by Judith Butler, and the lack thereof in mainstream media. In contrast, the cinema of ecological grief uses moving images to bring wounded nature into view while

retaining its critical edge against the socio-political inertia plaguing late capitalism. The cinema of ecological grief thus looks for ecological consciousness in experimental genres—expanded cinema, auteur cinema, archival and recycled found films, and small-sized films. Similarly, it forms alliances with vulnerable groups—Indigenous filmmakers, immigrant video artists, and self-organised film collectives in areas and countries most affected by the ecological crisis. Combining scholarly and artistic endeavours and my own practice-led research, the essay considers ecology as intersectionality and envisions forms of ongoing collaborations.

Benoit Dillet, Sophia Hatzisavvidou: Overcoming the Sad Affects of Transition Politics

The idea of 'transition' is today ubiquitous in the discourse and policy of climate politics. In EU Climate Politics, it is the main driving idea behind the European Green Deal and efforts to achieve 'climate neutrality'. This paper probes the idea of transition as an all-encompassing notion that describes and evaluates our present moment and connects it to the future (Fressoz 2022). The premise of our argument is that the idea of transition affirms change as a linear process: a more ecologically sound phase will be reached at the end of the transition. In this sense, transition is a future-oriented process that serves to define our contemporary condition, one in which everyone and everything should be mobilised in the journey towards real sustainability. We argue that this association of ecological politics with a shift from one state to another opens spaces for envisioning and advancing different political imaginaries, as well as for experiencing different affects. Affects often disturb the communicative order of climate policy discourse (Brosch 2021). They can impact on perceptions of urgency and risk, policy support, action, or acceptance; they can hence augment the power to act or diminish it (Lordon 2016). Considering the importance of affects in political life, the paper contributes to discussions on the role of affects in climate politics and the idea that the climate crisis is an opportunity to change and democratise politics. Our analysis of transition politics shows that it can produce sad affects (e.g. eco-anxiety or grief) that diminish our power to act by dissociating people from the climate issue as well as from planetary concerns more broadly. Therefore, we sketch an alternative politics infused by positive affects: joy and pleasure.

room: b104
social reproduction:
critical studies

Melda Yaman (Assoc. Prof.): Social Reproduction as a Materialist Approach

Social reproduction theory is a materialist theory of (social) life and has its roots in Marxism. Historical materialist premises provide both a materialist explanation of social reproduction and women's role in it and a ground for the struggle with capitalism and patriarchy. In this paper, I will argue that the materialist conception of history and methodology that Marx and Engels developed in *The German Ideology* establishes the ground for social reproduction theory. For this, I will show that, first, their consideration of human beings as the product of their own labor, second, their evaluation of the production and reproduction of the human being as one of the three moments of history, and third, their thinking of human relations in a broader sense—*Verkehr* are significant contributions to social reproduction theory. I will also argue that social reproduction theory makes an essential contribution to rebuilding the Marxist conception of totality based on a materialist conception of history and materialist dialectics to encompass the entire life and society, by expanding the concept of labor, putting the production and reproduction of life at its center, and including reproduction work that is overwhelmingly performed by women.

Márcio Moneta (Federal University of Paraná): Can E. P. Thompson and social-reproduction feminism meet? On gender, capitalism and materialism

What does it mean to propose a materialist approach to gender? Isn't there an unfixable incompatibility between affirming the central determination of the mode of production and its relations, on the one hand, and stating the unavoidable sexualised character of the relations, on the other? This paper intends to relate E. P. Thompson's commentary on Karl Marx's critique of political economy with social-reproduction feminism -- more closely, with both Susan Ferguson's and Cinzia Arruzza's theoretical production. Fundamentally, ontological, but also theoretical-methodological issues are addressed. In brief words, it is possible to identify affinities between the forementioned approaches, such as the understanding of a capitalist society that, as a totality, goes beyond the direct determinations of capitalist mode of production; however, it is also possible to identify divergences between them, especially the one regarding the attribution of the character of necessity or contingency, of sistemacy or

historical openness to the relation between gender and capitalist accumulation. Finally, attention is given to some methodological meditation on the materialist approach to “sexual roles” (Federici, 2017) or, more broadly, to the symbolic or cultural forms that constitute gender relations; in this regarding, the works by Dorothy E. Smith and Paul Willis are of interest.

FTC Manning: Two sides of the same clipped coin: on the ontological underpinnings of Social Reproduction and Real Abstraction

If we consider social reproduction to indicate “the complex concatenation of social relations making up the reproduction of labor power” (Bhattacharya, 2017 p. 8), which is not far from “processes by which a social system reproduces itself” (Federici 2019 p 55), then what is it not? If everything going on in the world technically reproduces labor power, is there anything that does not fall under the umbrella of SR?

Most likely, SR does not comprise one aspect of human activity: abstract labour. As such, social reproduction represents both concrete labour and all other human activity which exceeds that labor. This makes it ripe for mobilization by Marxist Feminists who aim to break down the favouring of wage labor (and/or productive labour) as the site of the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production – noting that, rather, the totality of capitalist social relations is constantly reproduced by the totality of capitalist social activity, not just waged work. However, it also relies on a dualism of concrete and abstract that potentially betrays its aspirations.

This has some parallel in the use and development of the concept of “Real abstraction.” The concept has come to stand in for the “ghost walking economic categories” (Bonefeld 2020) of capitalism, such that money, labour, race, property, the concept of social equality, bourgeois ideals, and more, have been described as real abstractions, ostensibly to emphasize their impersonal, algorithmic quality of being “abstract” (as opposed to “real”) “things/ processes” that nonetheless have real effects on people and planet.

This paper explores the way in which these two concepts, social reproduction and real abstraction, both rely on an implicit dualistic ontology between real and abstract, which itself can only be held up by the very sorts of philosophical positions Marx critiqued.

I am motivated by a devotion to the value-theoretic and anti-redistributive critique of many theorists of “real abstraction,” as well as to the project of locating race and gender relations within the reproduction of capital taken up by many theorists of social reproduction. I will consider the philosophical presuppositions and assumptions taken up in these two threads of communist thought, and pose some challenges which I hope will yield fruitful debate and perhaps more overlap between the two important projects. I consider Caffentzis’ (2021) “clipped coins” as a metaphor to parse the comparison.

Talita Yaltırık (York University, The Department of Politics): A Dialogue on Alienation: Marx, Psychoanalysis and Social Reproduction Theory

Marx’s concept of alienation has been a controversial topic of discussion particularly in the twentieth-century Marxism. The implications of this controversy which is characterized by the divided reception of Marx between “early” and “late” Marx can also be traced in the dialogues between Marx, psychoanalysis and feminist theory. This interpretation of Marx is intertwined with a neglect of the distinction between objectification and alienation in Marx’s writings, which is noted by Avineri (1968) and Musto (2021). In this presentation, I re-examine the possibilities of Marx’s concept of alienation for a dialogue with psychoanalysis and Social Reproduction Theory by criticizing and going beyond this dominant interpretation. With this aim, firstly, I demonstrate the transformation of Marx’s concept of alienation from his “early” to “late” writings. Secondly, I critically engage with the literature on psychoanalysis and the concept of alienation. As Musto (2021) reveals, while Marcuse associates alienation with objectification, rather than approaching it historically, Fromm neglects the objective aspects of alienation. Despite the fruitful distinction between “constitutive” and “constituted” alienation to bring Marx and Lacan together, Samo Tomšič (2016) and Slavoj Žižek (2017) do not refer to the distinction between objectification and alienation. However, if psychoanalysis is examined through historical lenses as a theory and practice which have emerged in patriarchal capitalism, as Pavón-Cuellar (2018) shows, the dualistic separation of “psychic reality” from the body and “everything else” as the base of modern psychology can be associated with capitalism. Finally, I argue for the necessity of feminist contribution to this argument for unfolding the gendered aspect of this separation in patriarchal capitalism. With this insight, I trace the feminist literature on social reproduction and feminist critiques of Marx through the question of

labour by questioning the separation of production and reproduction in capitalist society through alienated labour.

room: bglt
book launch:
capitalism in the 21st century through the prism of value

Michael Roberts; Seongjin Jeong; Raquel Varela

Michael Roberts will present the themes in his new book, *Capitalism in the 21st century*. With Guglielmo Carchedi, they aim to show how Marx's law of value remains the best guide through which we can approach the key issues of the 21st century: climate change and global warming; financial crashes and crises of production in the capitalist mode of production; modern imperialism; robots, AI and LLMs; and the power of planning and the nature of the transition to socialism.

room: mal g14
panel discussion on christian schmid, henri lefebvre
and stefan kipfer, urban revolutions

Ayyaz Mallick; Gillian Hart; Kanishka Goonewardena; Christian Schmid; Stefan Kipfer; Alex Loftus

This panel on politics of space will discuss two recent books, which together draw on Henri Lefebvre, Frantz Fanon and other significant thinkers in the Marxist, anti-colonial and related political-theoretical traditions: Christian Schmid's *Henri Lefebvre and the Theory of the Production of Space* (Verso, 2022) and Stefan Kipfer's *Urban Revolutions: Urbanisation and (Neo-)Colonialism in Transatlantic Context* (Brill, 2022; Haymarket, 2023).

Christian Schmid's *Henri Lefebvre* surveys the theoretical context and intellectual sources of this prodigious Marxist philosopher's spatial oeuvre in French philosophy (Marxism, Surrealism, phenomenology) and German dialectics (Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche), reconstructing the historical development of its most original concepts including production of space, urban revolution, state and everyday life. It also evaluates the various receptions of Lefebvre while discussing a variety of appropriations of his thought in many research fields such as geography, urban studies, planning and architecture.

In *Urban Revolutions*, Stefan Kipfer shows how a range of spatio-political struggles—over pipelines in Canada, housing estates in France and shantytowns in Martinique—forces us to confront the (neo-)colonial aspects of capitalist urbanization in a comparatively and historically nuanced fashion. In so doing, he demonstrates how critical urban research offers a rich, if uneven, terrain upon which to develop the relationship between Marxist and anti-colonial intellectual traditions. Following a detailed dialogue between Henri Lefebvre and Frantz Fanon, Kipfer engages creole literature in the French Antilles, Indigenous radicalism in North America and political anti-racism in mainland France.

The panel will include brief reflections on both books by expert critics, responses by the authors and open discussion involving the audience.

room: mal g23
Monstrous Futures i

Entrenched post/neoliberal ideologies present challenges for those declaring a climate emergency and for the mobilisation of collective action in its wake. Recent research has looked at how the climate change crisis has become part of both aesthetic discourse and critical perspectives in culture and the arts - with the focus shifting from the representation of ecology and ecological disaster to future-oriented models of action and activism in relation to arts' expanded field of social practice. This double-panel (6 contributors) brings together a transnational group of thinkers, practitioners and curators engaged in interrogating the politics and potential of visual culture in our times of climate emergency—really a polycrisis of global racial colonial capital, premised upon socio-environmental oppression, expanding economic inequality, and militarised violence. Our papers address topics ranging from eco-socialism; radical futurisms; black aesthetics; social and activist environmental movements; the illiberal, or monstrous, Anthropocene; Cop City and counterinsurgency; planetary solidarities; grassroots activism; algorithmic governance;

and cosmological codes of capitalist apocalypse, mytho-politics, and racial fascism.

Our collective positions are pitched in opposition to the monstrous futures projected by authoritarian capitalism, and all stridently reject a post/neoliberal identity politics of metaphor. The panel will address the need for alliances between anti-capitalist and anti-racist movements, climate activism and indigenous decolonization, environmentalists and trade unions. Exploring Marxist models of praxis past and present and interrogating visual cultures and aesthetic regimes in relation to collective action and revolutionary imaginaries - we will ask what an eco-communism of the future might look like; who the revolutionary agent capable of transforming current politics and planetary disaster might be; how artists and art collectives have engaged in climate activism and new social compositions; and what art can and should do in the face of current and historical socio-environmental apocalypse/s and monstrous futures.

PANEL ORGANISERS: Prof TJ Demos (Art History and Visual Culture, UC Santa Cruz, Director Centre for Creative Ecologies) and Dr Sarah Edith James (Fine Art and Visual Culture, Contemporary Art Lab, Liverpool School Art, LJMU)

Sarah James, Liverpool School of Art, LJMU: "Unsettling Scores: Death by Water and Disaster Capitalism"

We are currently witnessing the next stage of the disaster capitalism first theorised by Naomi Klein in relation to warfare and counter-terrorism - as a neo-colonial extension of the military industrial complex. Now climate violence collapses into racial violence, and natural disasters wrought by the impending global ecological crisis are themselves an exploitable resource for vulture capitalism. This paper focuses on the practice of the Sierra Leonean musician and sound artist Lamin Fofana - whose recent work has built on the philosophies, writings and poetry of critical figures in the field of black studies including Sylvia Wynter, Amiri Baraka and W.E.B Du Bois. Fofana offers his experimental compositions as tools for critiquing the ecological destruction capitalism has wrought. 'Dark Waters: Voices from Beyond the Veil', published in 1920 by the sociologist, historian, and civil rights activist Du Bois - and its deft mobility across autobiography, history, poetry, and political and economic theory - proposes a framework for Fofana, and more generally I claim, for an ecocritical practice that lays bare the myths and structural racism of capitalism, and practises a commitment to racial justice and political equality. Mapping past perspectives on the ocean, capitalism and race onto the context of our current times characterised by disasters at sea, rising sea levels, flooding and tsunamis - I juxtapose Fofana's complex aural experiments with other examples of artistic praxis that merely produce a poetics of melancholia, or a polite environmentalism. Crucially, Fofana combines his focus on racial and ecological violence with an anti-capitalist critique attentive to class politics and forms of solidarity. But he also occupies multiple spaces - both within and outside of the art world - offering a critical call to pause, listen and collect ourselves; not only in terms of surviving monstrous futures, but as a means of envisioning, enabling, embodying and organising for a new world.

Anselm Franke, Zurich University of the Arts: "Myth's Coinages Washing Ashore: The Cosmological Codes of the Capitalist Apocalypse"

In this talk, I attempt a cross-reading of Aby Warburg's and Sylvia Wynter's inquiries into the cosmological codes of modernity, and suggest a new hypothesis regarding the relation between mytho-politics and fascism.

Tahani Nadim, Humboldt Universität Berlin/ Museum for Natural History: "On being done with"

In the context of nature conservation, a range of measures is deployed to maintain animal populations and habitats. These include enclosing lands, freezing biological tissue, and breeding (captive) animals. Scholars, practitioners and activists have pointed out the ways in which these practices reproduce the very rationalities and, importantly, infrastructures which are causing ecological devastation and social ruination. This paper examines the politics of conservation and asks about the kinds of endings it refuses and, more generally, the radical temporalities we might recover from critically attending to conservation practices.

room: g3
workers' inquiry:
delivery worker inquiries

Ignacio Elpidio Domínguez Ruiz (University of Barcelona); Fabiola Mancinelli (University of Barcelona); Olga Jubany (University of Barcelona): Legitimising casual labour relationships under algocratic governance: the case of Spain's 'rider law'

Labour struggles and mobilisations in Spain regarding delivery workers' employment and life conditions pushed the national government to pass in 2021 the so-called 'rider law'. Pioneer in Europe, this new legislation followed a series of court cases against food delivery platforms such as Deliveroo, Uber Eats, Glovo, and Just Eat and aimed to establish a legal framework for the labour relationship between companies and riders. More specifically, it tackled one key issue: the opaque use of algorithms as a corporate means to control and discipline casual labour relationships.

Drawing from research on the economic and political dimensions of digital platforms' corporate governance, this presentation analyses the role of algocratic governance in legitimising informal and subemployment labour relationships under contemporary capitalism. Rather than considering these forms of employment and control as a new phenomenon, we draw from the insights of Marxist and social reproduction theory to understand how algocratic governance legitimises and institutionalises informal and casual labour relations as contemporary, hegemonic and attractive forms of labour. We argue that algocratic governance fetishises and blurs corporate responsibility, both social and legal. In this respect, the 'rider law' offers a relevant vantage point to delve into the regulation of and fight against new or renewed labour relationships. Corporate governance, agency, ethics, and legality mix and intertwine under contemporary forms of informality and subemployment, and algorithmic control and decision-making become the main fetish and veil under which corporate greed hides in plain sight.

Jorma Apelt: "We organise in under 10 minutes" - Collective labour agency at the grocery delivery company Gorillas

My contribution follows and analyses the organising efforts of workers at the grocery delivery company Gorillas in Berlin. In 2021 workers successfully challenged their precarious working conditions, shutting down business as usual at the billion dollar start-up. Workers organised to form the Gorillas Workers Collective (GWC), engaged in wildcat strikes, warehouse blockades, popular mobilisation, media campaigns and established a permanent Works Council. My research engages with the organising experience of Gorillas workers through an inquiry into the power resources workers were able to leverage. The Power Resource Approach (PRA) offers insights into the structural, associational, social and institutional conditions for building power in work-based conflicts. Through an analysis of in-depth interviews with GWC members I show that workers were able to build power through two crucial dynamics. First, workers built associational power by leveraging institutional power. The ability of the GWC to build its capacity for collective action was enabled by the initial protection, access and resources granted by initiating the Works Council process. However, this also introduced a form-determined agency favouring expert knowledge and representational procedures. Second, the GWC was able to build workplace power by leveraging discursive power and exert pressure on Gorillas' growth model. Finally, I propose grounding the PRA in an analysis of class composition to locate agency within the structured antagonism between capital and labour at the specific workplace. The labour process organised by Gorillas and the social composition of its workforce are key to understanding the labour dispute. Gorillas' business model geared towards debt-fueled monopoly growth aimed to integrate a not only flexible but highly scaleable migrant workforce. Rising administrative difficulties resulting in missed payments were not tolerable considering workers' precarious conditions of reproduction. The political composition of class struggle was thus oriented towards disrupting Gorillas' growth model and increase protection in precarious times.

Nikos Charalampopoulos (Post-Doc Researcher on issues of political Violence, Department of International and European Studies, University of Piraeus, Greece): Exploring the Delivery Movement in Greece: Insights from Interviews with Delivery Drivers

This research presents findings from a qualitative study that investigates the delivery movement in Greece through in-depth interviews with delivery drivers. The delivery movement has witnessed significant growth in recent years due to the proliferation of online food delivery platforms. This study aims to provide insights into the lived

experiences, perspectives, and challenges faced by delivery drivers, shedding light on the labor conditions within this industry.

Drawing on a critical sociological lens, the study employed a qualitative research design involving semi-structured interviews with a diverse group of delivery drivers in Greece. The interviews captured their experiences, motivations, and perceptions regarding their work in the delivery movement.

The findings of this study reveal several key themes. Firstly, the interviews underscored the prevalence of precarious employment within the delivery movement. Many drivers reported working as independent contractors, lacking stable employment contracts and associated benefits. This precariousness was further heightened by fluctuating workloads and income instability, resulting in financial insecurity for drivers.

Secondly, the study highlighted the long working hours and physical demands faced by delivery drivers. Participants reported working extended shifts, often in adverse weather conditions, to fulfill customer orders within strict time-frames. These working conditions often led to fatigue and stress, impacting drivers' physical and mental well-being.

Moreover, the interviews shed light on the issue of low wages within the delivery industry. Many drivers expressed concerns about inadequate compensation, particularly considering the time, effort, and expenses associated with their work. The study found that drivers faced significant pressure to complete deliveries quickly, often compromising their own well-being in the pursuit of maximizing their earnings.

The interviews also illuminated the experiences of power asymmetry between drivers and platform owners. Participants reported feeling disempowered and lacking bargaining power in negotiations with platform management. Algorithms and ratings systems were identified as tools of control, which heightened drivers' anxieties about their job security and potential penalties.

Finally, the study revealed varying degrees of worker solidarity and collective action among delivery drivers. While some drivers expressed a desire for collective organizing to address their shared concerns, others felt a sense of isolation and individualism within the highly competitive delivery landscape.

This study provides valuable insights into the delivery movement in Greece by giving voice to the experiences of delivery drivers. The findings emphasize the need for improved labor conditions, including fair wages, job security, and enhanced worker protections. The study underscores the significance of worker empowerment, solidarity, and policy interventions to address the challenges faced by delivery drivers within this rapidly growing industry.

Sofia Negri (Queen Mary University of London); Belen Dambrosio (Sitrarepa Union): Solidarity stops of delivery workers union Sitrarepa in Argentina: breaking atomisation and building organisation

Sitrarepa is a union of delivery platform workers that emerged in Buenos Aires, Argentina during the strike wave in the sector that took place in several Latin American countries during 2020. Since then, the union has developed diverse strategies to strengthen the organisation and build power at different scales. Its core, however, are the solidarity stops that the union holds weekly at different geographical points in the City of Buenos Aires. These stops are located strategically in areas that delivery workers transit daily to do their jobs. Their objective is to build upon these places where delivery workers meet spontaneously due to the characteristics of platforms' labour processes a space for political organisation. A space where workers meet and share their grievances, tips and experiences working on the platform and hence, break the atomisation that the competitive ranking system of these companies produces.

This presentation will analyse the genesis of these stops, their significance for the emergence of social bonds and solidarity among workers, the social dynamics that shape them, their geographies and the challenges encountered by the union to sustain and strengthen them.

Moreover, the presentation is a result of the collaboration between a researcher who performed ethnographic fieldwork through a workers inquiry strategy and the union with which this was done.

room: dlt
100 years of the publication of
georg lukacs' history and class consciousness

Michael Löwy; Bruna Della Torre; Esther Leslie

Lukacs' magnum-opus of 1923 was a path-breaking enterprise. It immediately attracted criticism from the "orthodox" (communist) side: Laszlo Rudas and Abraham Deborin. Lukacs answered in a brilliant piece, *Chvostismus und Dialektik*, a hegel-marxist defence of the decisive importance of the subjective moment in the revolutionary process.

room: g51
trade unions, social struggle and climate change

Nicole Kleinheisterkamp González: Building bridges: industrial trade unions under a changing climate

I will present preliminary results and thoughts from my fieldwork on industrial trade unions' role in shaping Germany's "green" transition. I am comparing two industrial unions that are undergoing deep changes due to regional economic restructuring and job losses. These changes are primarily driven by the state's and capital's attempt to transition to a green economy. I have conducted research on the IG Metall union in the automobile industry and the IG BCE union in coal mining. Both sectors are key to the respective unions in terms of membership and power. The automobile industry is expected to lose many jobs in its transition to EV production because EVs need fewer parts than combustion engine cars and thus, fewer work hours. Some bleak estimates indicate a possible loss of almost half of automobile production jobs by 2030. Moreover, the coal mining sector in the North Rhine Westphalia region will phase out mining by 2030. Although negotiations between IG BCE and the coal mine company RWE Power have already concluded, it is still unclear whether former coal mine workers will find new perspectives in regional emerging industries, e.g. within a potential green hydrogen economy. My research focuses on capital-labor relations under a changing climate in those industries directly affected by decarbonization. I utilize in my analysis labor geography's concept of labor agency. Thus, I seek to understand how industrial unions develop visions of just transitions and how to derive from such cases lessons for mass working-class ecological politics.

Damian McIlroy (Queen's University Belfast, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics): Insurgent interregnum: the *détournement* of just transition

Just Transition is a critical proposition that originates within radical trade unionism, but the radicalness of the concept has been dulled and largely recuperated into environmental policy frameworks of the capitalist status quo. These frameworks are a terminal illusion that can no longer be entertained. This paper will argue that a just transition that genuinely protects workers, communities and the planet necessitates a deeper reflection on the current historical moment and the nature of abstract labour under global capitalism. Using a redeployment of Situationist theory within an Open Marxist paradigm this paper challenges that recuperated process and seeks to reinstate the possibility of a radical just transition through its **détournement**. The *détournement* of just transition, now seen as an insurgent interregnum, involves its total appropriation and recasting as a motive for rebellious mediations, protest and resistance. The fragments that form the basis of the insurgent interregnum will be drawn out by a critical examination of contemporary and historical examples of revolt and alternative ways of living that remain untranslatable to capitalist epistemology. The struggles of untranslatable social movements stand in their own autonomy and in defiance of capitalisms naturalisation of the historical moment. History is not stuck, nor has it ended and the future can be different. The state of untranslatability reveals what has been hidden and erased but also what can be recovered and rebuilt. The practices that inform a just transition, detoured as an insurgent interregnum, will be shown in this paper to lie beyond the symbolic gesturing and pseudo-obligations of national and international environmental planning frameworks. It will be demonstrated that erased bio-communal and indigenous alternatives to capitalist ways of living can be recovered, that they exist and have existed; and that their utility can be recognised and actualised in the present for a post-capitalist future.

Vincent Collins (York University): Labour Union Experimentation for a Just Energy Transition

Climate scientists are clear: drastic action to reduce emissions, and prevent climate collapse is required this decade,

that is, a transformation to a decarbonized economy. However, how such change materializes is less clear, with states yet to take meaningful action in curbing emissions, such that emissions rose globally last year. To date, literature has failed to attend to how labour unions, as a key site of organizing the working-class, offer the potential of securing transformative climate action necessary for decarbonization. Labour unions are engaged in experimentation in a bid to dictate the future of work (Ferrerias et al., 2020), and arguably no social actor is more consequential to shaping a clean energy economy than labour unions (Huber 2022). The emerging field of Environmental Labour Studies has begun to examine labour's engagement with environmental issues, and how unions are involved with the 'greening' of jobs and 'Just Transition' policies that provide for social dialogue and social protection in the coming energy transition (Rathzel, Stevis, and Uzzel 2021).

The research will present analysis of labour unions across three geographical locations as crucial sites of resistance and experimentation to shape better work and therefore, a just energy transition. The following research questions will be addressed: What critical economic and political variables have spurred union action on climate change? Are labour coalitions potential catalysts for building and rebuilding workers' power and securing climate action? What other kinds of institutional experimentation – in collective bargaining, union leadership, or external support - has been required to overcome political opposition and win government support? A critical political ecology approach informs the research, with the aim of helping to understand how workers interact with organizing around the climate crisis and the response of labour unions to the climate crisis. The objective of the research is that the focus will again be directed toward labour unions, their role in fighting for justice for workers and their communities, and the implications this collectivization could have for the climate crisis.

Feyzi Ismail (Goldsmiths College, University of London): The climate movement, the suffragettes and the meaning of militancy

Countless comparisons have been made between the suffragettes, who at the turn of the century used militant tactics to fight for the right to vote for women, and the climate activists of today, many of whom use non-violent direct action to urge the government to act on the climate and ecological crisis. The suffragettes formed the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903 under the slogan 'deeds not words' and vowed to secure the vote by any means, including attacking property. When Extinction Rebellion emerged in 2018, they adopted the slogan. They have also smashed a few windows in their time – legitimate, they argue, given the scale of the crisis. Just Stop Oil, too, have borrowed from the suffragettes with the targeting of art galleries and sporting events. The analogy has not been lost on the movement. The fact that the protesters aren't going away can only be a good thing for our collective future. But what should we in the movements take from the suffragettes, and what should we rethink? Was it their militant tactics that ultimately secured the right to vote for women? And what does it mean to be militant? We should understand the range of tactics the suffragettes used – on the one side, the direct action involving property destruction and the disruption of public events, and on the other side, the mass demonstrations, deputations to parliament and other forms of collective action – as two traditions of militancy within the movement. These traditions were tested most rigorously with the outbreak of the First World War. Whereas one tradition of militancy became increasingly limited and began to reflect an elitist politics that ultimately capitulated to the war, the other tradition had the potential to bring down the government and raise wider concerns beyond even the right to vote, particularly for the working class. If we are to raise our game in the climate movement by resolving differences on the strategic front, we need to understand this history and apply the lessons of the past.

room: r201
transgendered politics

Grietje Baars (City, University of London): Greve! Blocage! Manif Sauvage! Gender zbeul in the law factory and the promise of a Trans Marxist critique of law

Despite the materialist turn in Queer Theory, queer engagement with law has remained liberal (cf. Liu 2015). Queer Marxism has not yet seen any serious engagement with law, let alone a radical engagement. This is not surprising as 'straight' Marxism's engagement with law is thus far overwhelmingly liberal also. A rapidly growing radical critique of law by Pashunkanist commodity form theorists of law aims to change this. In this paper I propose that the abolitionist perspective found in certain strands of Trans Marxism offers a signpost out of the thicket of liberal legalism. Taking this route requires both an historical-materialist understanding of how gender, sexuality, and gendered and sexualised subjectivity have been and are configured (alongside race and racialised identity) to support the needs of capital, as well as an analysis of the role of law in this process. The missing piece in Queer

& Trans Marxisms as well as Marxism generally, has been an analysis of the *legal form*, the specific lawness of law – which is precisely what Pashukanis' commodity form theory of law provides. A Queered & Transed Historical Materialist (QTHoMo) Critique of Law is not only helpful for the understanding of capitalism as totality, but moreover crucial for overthrowing it. My paper develops this theory in the context of mass social uprising in France of 2023, a process which marks a sea change in attitude towards reformism and a renewed 'this time for real' commitment to revolution.

Charlie Bond (Concordia University): Logic of Gender or Logic of Cisness? Gender Normativity and the Commodity Fetish

In their path-breaking *The Logic of Gender*, Maya Gonzalez and Jean Neton read sex and gender as the embodied analogues of use and exchange value. More precisely, sex figures as the material body in which gender's abstraction 'naturally' appears, a figuration Gonzalez and Neton call "the gender fetish". In this paper, I ask what this analysis implies vis-a-vis capital's asymmetrical abjection of trans people. If, at the moment of capital's purchase, labour power is validated as a commodity, then capital's surplussing of trans life represents an exclusion from the commodity form. In Gonzalez and Neton's schema, however, that means no exchange value 'naturally' present in the body of a use value, no gender 'naturally' present in the body of sex.

Two possibilities follow. Either, Gonzalez and Neton commit an unpalatable, cis normie *reductio ad absurdum* in which trans people are ungendered and unsexed; or, we make some alterations to that analysis. I pursue the latter. Rather than an "anchoring" to sex and gender per se, I suggest that the commodity form of labour power inscribes its bearers in a normative optics of (cis)gender legibility. Indeed, where trans people are considerably less likely to find regular employment than those who are cis (McKinsey, 2021), trans modalities of doing sex/gender are excluded from capital's validation of bodies as those in which exchange value 'naturally' appears. By way of conclusion, I suggest that my argument scopes a relationship between the commodity fetish and normativity more generally. If, at the moment where labour power enters the commodity form, the body of its bearer appears as 'naturally' possess (an exchange) value, then only those bodies that command a wage, or comparatively high wage, appear naturally valuable and/or more valuable than others. The commodity fetish thereby clears a ground in which subjects coded as white, as 'abled', and/or heterosexual, are validated as normative subjects.

Eli Pine, David Reznik: Gender Hegemony: A Political Economy of Anti-Trans* Reaction

Our paper applies a rigorous historical materialism to anti-trans* politics in the U.S. today. Rather than affix blame to the Christian right, which figures prominently in mainstream accounts of the situation despite having been influential in American society for many decades, we ask: why here and why now? To offer provisional answers, we borrow conceptual frameworks and methods from Christopher Chitty's landmark *Sexual Hegemony* to analyze the rise of anti-trans* policies in the current conjuncture. Specifically, we argue that mutually reinforcing crises of late capitalism and U.S. empire manifest in a distinctive political economy of contemporary "red state" America, especially in Texas, its de facto center of accumulation/administration. Class conflict, falling rates of profit, and relative surplus populations within this social totality have conditioned a series of eugenic initiatives undertaken by state actors to try and rescue/attract capital by any means necessary. The anti-trans* project is such a measure in a series that includes border militarization, voter disenfranchisement, and anti-democratic movements. Common across these efforts is an attempt to reduce social "entitlements" to their zero limit, thus weaponizing what Marx calls the "historical and moral element" inherent in labor power's commodity valuation. As a case study, we offer a close reading of the infamous 2022 legal opinion authored by the then-Texas Attorney General. This work of jurisprudential ideology serves to coordinate an increasingly eclectic capitalist class formation to engage in genocidal class struggle by simultaneously refusing the bodily autonomy and existential validity of trans* youth, while also forcibly recruiting social institutions like education and health care to its cause. We close by proposing the radical possibilities of anti-capitalist solidarity to be found among/across oppressed and exploited populations.

Ciara Cremin (University of Auckland): Trans Woman Does Not Exist: Trans Otherness and the Class Struggle

In early 2023, the notorious 'women's rights' activist, Posie Parker (aka Kellie-Jay Keen-Minshull), toured Australasia to stoke anti-trans sentiment. In Auckland, Aotearoa, between 3000 and 5000 protesters turned up at her rally and successfully prevented her from speaking. The presentation asks the obvious question of why trans women are

subject to so much abuse and hostility. In doing so, it theorises a trans otherness and, reflecting on the composition of the protests, argues that transgender rights function as a vanishing mediator drawing a multitude of struggles together in unity against capitalism, (hetero) patriarchy, white supremacy and coloniality.

room: rg01
marxism and racial politics

Christian Chun (University of Massachusetts Boston): Racism and capitalism in the U.S.: Longtime partners in crime

The historical invention and ensuing enactments of racial discourses, identities, and practices have been essential in their purposeful enabling of capitalism in the US for over three centuries, with the divisions of enslavements and indentured servitude that continued with the post-Civil War sharecropping, much higher rates of unemployment among Blacks than Whites, and the former's lower wages for the same work. This talk, drawing on a linguistic ethnography, addresses what has been called the psychological wages of Whiteness (e.g., Du Bois, 1992; Roediger, 2007) and how this has prevented time and time again throughout the past 170 years or so the unified solidarity and actions of what has always been a diverse working class in the U.S. The talk features several in-depth interviews with people on how they perceive the role of race in their lives and society that illuminate the theoretical and critical debates on the role of race in aiding and abetting capitalism in the U.S., and how counter-hegemonic discourse approaches can be co-constructed to begin dismantling wages of Whiteness.

Michael Bray: The Modalities in which Solidarity is Lived: Race and Class "after" Black Lives Matter

Marxist critics of race-centered movements who insist upon class-based universalism as the correct strategic path are right regarding two core claims but wrong about their implications. First, the indictment they develop of liberal anti-racism is fundamentally sound. The inverse side of post-Civil Rights, 'post-racialist' aspirations is an idea of racism as a subjective disorder with collective, caste-like effects. Political responses, in this frame, take on a moralistic tone, blind to political-economic antagonisms and alienating to those unschooled in the jargon of diversity seminars. Yet, a tendency to equate this perspective with all political projects centering "race" betrays a notion of race isomorphic with the liberal one: largely static, prejudice-based, and fundamentally distinct from productive relations. This notion shapes the implications drawn from the second core claim: that the management of growing "relative surplus populations" has become a preoccupying concern of states, driving intensifying policing, surveillance, incarceration, border-enforcement, etc. The fact that this population is not entirely Black (and that not all Blacks are part of it) supposedly makes racism a self-evidently secondary explanatory factor. This question of surplus populations appears differently, however, when we grasp racialization as an ongoing historical process constitutively intertwined with the reproduction of violent controls over labor and resources, justified by "undeserving poor," threats to "civilization," etc. In this light, "race" is interwoven with class in a complex of categories and relational structures, repeatedly adapted to reproduce and obscure the very dynamics of exploitation and extraction to which these critics want us to return. Solely class-based analyses are no help in tracing the contradictory interrelations between the intensifying global precaritization of labor, the integration of international capital, and its interests, within nation-states, and the resurgence of far-right politics on tides of neo-racism and xenophobia. The final section considers this conjuncture through a critical analysis of key counterclaims to class-based universalism, including Stuart Hall's that race is "the modality in which class is lived," Robbie Shilliam's that "class is race," and Barnor Hesse's that Black Lives Matter augurs a split in "white solidarity" and a potential transracial alliance against "white sovereignty." Such ideas bear more promise for moving the "common sense" of mass race-centered movements towards anti-capitalist coherence. As the resurgence of the far right suggests the only road "back" to class goes through a full reckoning with race.

Jill Poeggel; Manueala Peitz: Between Black Marxism and Black Radicalism: Tensions in debates about race and capitalism

In the past decade, the discourse surrounding the interplay between race, class, and capital has gained prominence. However, despite the consensus on the need to address racism and capitalism together, the precise nature of their relationship remains elusive. This paper aims to explore this relationship by drawing upon Cedric J. Robinson's influential differentiation between the (Black) Marxist tradition and the Black radical tradition. We utilize this framework as a starting point to examine major tensions that have characterized the conceptualizations of the race-capitalism relationship over the past 150 years. To achieve this objective, we focus on three key aspects. Firstly, we

investigate the roles of universalism and particularism within each tradition. Secondly, we map the interpretations of historical materialism and culture by authors representing each tradition, exploring how they conceive the relationship between these concepts. Thirdly, we analyze how each tradition engages with the past and how these historical perspectives inform their understanding of the present and future. By elucidating the distinctive characteristics, areas of convergence, and potential pitfalls within the Black Marxist and Black radical traditions, this study sheds light on their broader implications for discussions surrounding race and capitalism. Furthermore, we explore how these traditions contribute to current debates on these topics.

Jesús Luzardo (Loyola University Chicago): *Racial Capitalism and the Returns of White Supremacy*

Charles Mills begins his ground-breaking text, *The Racial Contract*, with the claim that “White supremacy is the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today.” Though Mills takes white supremacy to be central for understanding the last 500 years of political rule in the West, he distinguishes between two main periods or modes of white supremacy: the period of *de jure* white supremacy, which begins with the conquest of America and includes colonization, enslavement, and other forms of state-sanctioned white supremacist violence; and the (current) period of *de facto* white supremacy which begins in the middle of the 20th century with the legal recognition afforded to “formerly” colonized peoples, and which operates primarily through more subtle and indirect forms of discrimination and privilege. Though framed in different terms, this periodization is also proposed by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Joel Olson in their respective analyses of white supremacy.

In this paper, I argue that such a periodization remains insufficient for theorizing white supremacy and its history. More specifically, I will argue that in focusing primarily on legal recognition, these accounts elide the constitutive role played by capitalism and colonialism in the ongoing reproduction and maintenance of white supremacy and whiteness, and thus lack a sufficient explanation for the ongoing power of white supremacy today. Turning on the one hand to Du Bois’ foundational historical materialist account of white supremacy and to the work of historians such as Theodore Allen, David Roediger, and Elizabeth Esch, and, on the other, to more recent transnational accounts of the relationship between racial capitalism and colonialism by thinkers such as Brenna Bhandar and Harsha Walia, this paper seeks to contribute to an account of white supremacy better suited to our era of re-emerging white supremacist extremism and fascism on a global scale.

room: rb01
marxist critiques:
central and latin america

Kit Wainer: *Neoliberal Reform and Political Transformation in Mexico, 1982–1988*

The presidency of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) in Mexico marked the opening of a transition to what might be considered a “normal” bourgeois state. The ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) jettisoned its corporatist connections to the labor unions and peasant organizations and forged tighter institutional alliances with Mexican capital. The party also responded to the global economic crisis of the 1970s and early 1980s by gutting social spending, privatizing public services, and helping capital substantially raise the rate of exploitation in the private sector.

Manuel Aguilar Mora’s conception of Mexican Bonapartism best describes the role of the PRI prior to the 1980s: It was a bureaucratic party that tried to stand above the interests of both capital and labor. In the 1980s, however, the PRI acceded to capital’s demands and implemented neoliberal reforms. Yet, Mexican capitalists never spoke with a single voice. The class was particularly divided on trade policies. Nonetheless, by the end of the decade the PRI had transformed itself into a fully capitalist political party and the state had become the ground on which individual capitalists could compete with each other for influence.

The Mexican experience raises important questions about what capitalists want from a state, what they want from a political party, and how a political party can represent a divided class.

Andres Cabrera (Goldsmiths): *Echoes of a Failed Revolution Amidst the Crisis of Hegemony: Chile, 2019-2023*
In October 2019, Chile experienced its most significant political event of the last fifty years. The so-called *Estallido* social not only confirmed the crisis of hegemony of the ruling classes in the context of late or ‘mature’ neoliberalism but also provoked a political scenario in which the people – in a state of rebellion – put pressure on the right-wing

government and the entire political party spectrum. The sacrificial offering made to the uprising by the political party system, particularly by the right-wing parties, was the 1980 Constitution; the main juridical legacy of the dictatorship. In this way, the three consecutive electoral victories obtained by the progressive and left-wing forces (the first referendum of 2020, the Constitutional Convention election in 2021, and the presidential election of 2022) appeared to confirm that the institutionalisation of the conflict would be able to mitigate the crisis of hegemony through the leadership of these new political forces. However, the fourth and decisive 'mother of all battles', the second referendum of 2023, showed the overwhelming rejection by the population of what had been called the 'world's most progressive' constitution. This result not only destabilised the beginning of Boric's government, but was also the prelude to an efficient counter-strike from the far-right. Taking into account this background, the aim of this presentation is to offer an explanation of the conditions of possibility that forged the electoral consolidation of the extreme right as a political force in the recent Constitutional Council election of May 2023, including both the inescapable debate on the causes of the defeat from a left-wing perspective, and the main political challenges that this ultra-conservative and potentially reactionary moment in Chile represents.

Oliver Dodd (Doctoral Candidate, University of Nottingham): *Marquetalia no Está Sola! The Origins of the FARC and the Colombian Civil War*

This paper re-examines the origins of the FARC-EP and the Civil War in Colombia. Drawing from archival documents and interviews with the protagonists of the guerrilla struggle, the origins of the civil war are examined through historical materialist theory. The paper shows how Colombia's historical configuration of social relations of production, state formation, and ties to the global political economy, influenced the way in which key social-class forces interacted in the period leading to the civil war. Far from a product of the Cuban Revolution or the voluntaristic willpower of guerrilla fighters, I argue in this paper that the FARC-EP and the origins of the civil war are rooted in a much deeper history of class struggle, characterised by three key dynamics. Firstly, the emergence of a powerful labour movement from the 1920s onwards, culminating in the assassination of the left-populist Jorge Gaitán in 1948, sentenced to death a radical-popular alternative and discredited the legal and urban political struggle in the minds of many. Secondly, the deepening dynamics of capitalist accumulation intensified class struggle and resistance in the countryside. As campesinos organised and sought protection from landed elite interests, a combination of dominant class forces mobilised to terrorise campesino forces into submission. These dynamics encouraged campesinos (including indigenous people) to organise zones of self-defence along collectivist principles. Supported especially by communists, these self-defence zones represented some of the few rural areas that were free of dominant class violence. Thirdly, failing to establish a condition of hegemony through the Frente Nacional, dominant class interests – collaborating with key labour movement figures – employed a strategy of repression against the self-defence communities. This decades' long trajectory of exclusion and coercion thus laid the foundations for a more mobile armed guerrilla strategy and the outbreak of a civil war from 1964 onwards.

Rafael Shimabukuro (University of Cambridge): *The Other Path: Liberation in Peruvian Neoliberal Thought*

This article examines how Peruvian neoliberal thought approaches subaltern groups and their desire for liberation. Through in-depth analysis of the work of Hernando de Soto, Peru's foremost neoliberal thinker, I argue Peruvian neoliberals such as de Soto are adept at identifying actually existing contradictions in Fordist capitalism, most important among which is the exclusion of many subaltern groups from the Fordist class compromise for racist and/or sexist reasons. Moreover, Peruvian neoliberal thought explicitly conceptualises the transition to neoliberalism as an opportunity for subaltern groups. De Soto's signature proposal is a land titling programme for private houses informally built on state-owned land, a process akin to accumulation by dispossession but seemingly benefitting subaltern individuals. More broadly, Peruvian neoliberals sell the 'free market' as an equalising alternative to the exclusionary socio-economic order present before neoliberalism. Importantly, however, Peruvian neoliberals cannot ultimately go beyond the limits of neoliberalism. Their concept of liberation is Western and universalising, falsely thinking of subaltern Peruvians as always already bourgeois, thereby ignoring indigenous and/or proletarian alternatives. They also rely too heavily on the belief micro-entrepreneurship leads to development and fail to recognise the multiplication of subaltern capitalists must necessarily require the multiplication of subaltern proletarians. Regardless of these limitations, in Peruvian neoliberal thought there is a revealing, unexpected and not entirely unfounded appeal to the desire for liberation of subaltern groups.

room: b102

imperialism and the production of space

Stefan Kipfer (York University); Kanishka Goonewardena (University of Toronto); Gillian Hart (UC Berkeley); Ayyaz Mallick (University of Liverpool)

Imperialism is an eminently geographical affair, but its spatial dimensions are not usually subject to close scrutiny. Much 'general' research on imperialism operates with static and undertheorized conceptions of space. Meanwhile, the bulk of contemporary critical geography is curiously disinterested in questions of imperialism. The current state of world order does however invite us to develop explicitly historical-geographical research on imperialism. Twenty years ago, the U.S.-led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan stimulated such research from a number of critical geographical vantage points. Today, new cracks in the armour of the U.S. Empire, debates about a 'new cold war' and the Russian invasion of Ukraine provide sufficient ground for a return to geographically inflected and historically nuanced strands of research on imperialism to ask: how does imperialism produce space? And what are the political implications of dialectical theorization of the relationship between space and imperialism? Contributors to this panel offer the following avenues into these questions: a critical review of David Harvey's contribution towards a historical-geographical-materialist conception of imperialism (Goonewardena), transformations of US imperialism in the 1980s (Hart), reflections on the work of Brazilian geographer Milton Santos (Kipfer), and an analysis of the concrete structuration of the economic and political terrains in Pakistan through imperialism (Mallick).

Kanishka Goonewardena: State, Space and Capital in David Harvey's Conceptions of Imperialism

This presentation charts the evolution of Marxist geographer David Harvey's engagement with theories of imperialism—from *Limits to Capital* (1982) to *The New Imperialism* (2003) to his most recent commentaries on the current state of global capitalism. It begins with a summary of Harvey's spatialization of historical materialism, particularly as presented in *Limits* and with special attention to the concluding section on imperialism of this classic work. It will be argued that the role played by the production of space—examined with such concepts as 'spatial fix', 'circuits of capital' and 'ground rent'—in the contradictions inherent to the expanded reproduction of capital are essential for making sense of Harvey's contribution to Marxist political economy. Next, we examine the theoretical architecture of Imperialism, which is anchored to the notion of 'accumulation by dispossession' rooted in Marx's account of 'so-called original accumulation' in the final section of *Capital* volume 1. On this basis emerges an assessment of Harvey's relationship to both classical and contemporary Marxist theories of imperialism, especially those of Rosa Luxemburg and his close colleague at John Hopkins University Giovanni Arrighi, the author of *Geometry of Imperialism* (1978) and *The Long Twentieth Century* (1994). While highlighting the originality of Harvey's contribution to a Marxist concept of imperialism, our consideration will also include the critical reactions to his work from various Marxists—from the standpoints of dependency theory, World Systems theory and other anti-imperialist Marxisms from the peripheries of Euro-America.

Gillian Hart: Transformations of US Imperialism in the 1980s

The Nixon regime's delinking of the dollar from gold in 1971, the 1973 OPEC oil price rise, and the defeat in Vietnam are widely seen as fatal cumulative blows to US hegemony. A contrasting view is that the Dollar Wall Street Regime – fluctuating exchange rates, lifting restrictions on financial movements, and the rise of new forms of finance capital – represented not a weakening of US global power, but rather its strengthening through the dominance of the dollar. In conversation with Giovanni Arrighi, Peter Gowan and others, this paper will suggest that the early 1980s signaled the emergence of new forms of US imperialism, marked by significant shifts in the interconnected financial, industrial, and military relations of the US to different regions of the non-Western world. Although linked to the neoliberal counter-revolution, these shifts are not reducible to it. Specific spatio-historical dynamics in different regions also played a role, as did the newly empowered Christian Right in the US. Of necessity very briefly, the paper will consider some of the contradictory processes that these shifts unleashed, which intensified after the end of the Cold War.

Stefan Kipfer: Imperial Landscapes: Learning from Milton Santos

This paper focuses on Milton Santos's geography of underdevelopment. Permeating his work is the basic claim that no approach is complete – and adequate – without taking into account the many ways in which imperial relations

of forcible underdevelopment permeate dynamics of urbanization in the modern world. Today, the relationship between urbanization and imperialism as a concept and a historical-geographical reality is not a widely shared topic in radical geography. Santos's work thus helps us broadcast more broadly, again, the need to pay special attention to imperialism as a force in comparative urban research. In the following, I begin by taking Milton Santos's discussion of Ruy Marini's Marxist dependista thesis on sub-imperialism as an entry point to Santos's approach to the geography of imperialism. The second section will elaborate on Santos's understanding of dependent urbanization, which he brought to the point with concept of the "two circuits" of urban economies. In the third section, I consider this part of Santos's work the labour process through which he arrives at a theory of the production of space in the late 1970s, when he suggested that space is not only a social product, but also a condition of history, a techno-organizationally solidified "dynamically inert" force that weighs on historical agency. Santos's theory of space has particular implications for state, politics and (socialist) planning, as I will highlight in section 4. It may yet help us bring Santos's approach to the imperial core to understand how imperialism becomes encrusted in daily spatial practices, here, too.

Ayyaz Mallick (co-authored with Tayyab Safdar): History, Structure, and Conjuncture: Pakistan and the Materiality of Imperialism

This paper discusses the concrete structuration of the economic and political terrains in Pakistan through imperialism. A political-economic quantification of the mechanisms and magnitude of unequal exchange and economic drain over the last two decades is carried out through various domestic and international data sources. This imperial-economic mooring is then brought into conversation with Pakistan's history. It is through this intersection of structure and history that the particular structuring of the social and political terrain in Pakistan may be elucidated. In turn, it is also this historical-structural perspective that helps makes sense of the concrete ways in which imperialism does (and does not) condition conjunctural shifts in the polity. Such a historical-structural and conjunctural framework also helps us tackle some of the polarized debates within and around the dependency/world-systems perspectives when it comes to understanding imperialism and its internality to peripheral social formations.

room: b103
marxism and studies on communism

Eugene Brennan (University of London Institute in Paris): A Communism of Thought: On Dionys Mascolo and the notion of intellectual authority

The writings of Dionys Mascolo contain a challenging set of propositions on communist intellectual practice which have not received the attention they merit. Primarily known as the co-author of the Declaration on the Right to Insubordination in the War in Algeria (the 'Manifesto of the 121'), the re-edition of his major 1953 work *Le Communisme* (Lignes, 2018) and the publication of a selection of his writings under the title *La Révolution par l'amitié* (La Fabrique, 2021) have brought renewed interest in his work. While there has also been uptake of interest in his work in radical circles, there has been little academic study of Mascolo's writings. Mascolo was dedicated to the search for a 'communism of thought' which found expression in various texts and collective interventions. Mascolo was a staunch materialist yet he places a surprising emphasis on the role of the intellectual. While acerbically critical of the bourgeois intellectual, he maintains that the communist intellectual does not find their source of authority within the masses, or some other external source. Revolutionary thought does find its authority in a kind of 'experience' but only to the extent that it calls into question the very notion of authority. In this paper, I trace this complex movement of thought and situate it in relation to some of the key influences. Mascolo's close friend Robert Antelme's experiences as a deportee, depicted in *L'Espèce humaine*, are central to Mascolo's thinking, as are the writings of Georges Bataille and Maurice Blanchot. With reference to these sources, I offer some propositions for understanding Mascolo's rich but enigmatic reflections on communist intellectual expression.

Jake Orbison (UC Berkeley): The Totalitarianism of Origins: Wertkritik's "Communist Individuals"

This paper attempts to think through the ambiguous relationship between value-form theory and political struggle by examining two moments in which Moishe Postone and Werner Bonefeld embrace Hannah Arendt as a theorist of revolution. In part, value theory's political ambiguity is a symptom of its practical refusal, the insistence that a "ruthless criticism of all that exists" cannot prescribe that which ought to be. However, Bonefeld and Postone

each hint at an idea of value-critical praxis by turning to Arendt's critique of violence and her theory of political action. Here I establish the connection between these expressions of radical-liberal politics and the authors' reinterpretations of Marx's critical theory, not as an effort to refute value-form theory, but on the contrary, to reflect self-critically on its importance for a Marxist humanist political analysis.

In "History and Helplessness" (2006), Postone uses Arendt to argue that struggles against Israel and U.S. empire express "a severe frustration of the faculty of action in the modern world," insofar as their violent concreteness does not and cannot target global capital as such. Bonefeld's *A Critical Theory of Economic Compulsion* (2023) positions Arendt as a champion of the council as "the spontaneous appearance of a new governmental form" that "learns by doing," unencumbered by party forms. Arendt's theory of revolution appeals to these thinkers, I argue, because its conditions of possibility are not to be found in the world, but instead in the innate political faculties of human beings. This runs counter to historical materialist analysis, in favor of a liberal humanism that first Marx criticized in "On the Jewish Question." With Arendt's concept of revolution as the inauguration of entirely original social forms, Postone and Bonefeld imagine an ideal of political struggle that belongs neither to Marx nor to the world—one that exists outside of history, capable of inaugurating, as Bonefeld puts it, "the classless society of communist individuals." To preserve the insights of value-form criticism, this paper argues, we must be able to incorporate them into a historical materialist concept of struggle.

Owen Walsh (University of Aberdeen): *Class-struggle Cosmopolitanism: Black Communists and Migrant Labour Protest in 1930s California*

This paper examines the solidarities between Black radical intellectuals associated with the Communist Party and migrant labourers in 1930s California. It makes the argument that the migratory and multiracial character of the Californian proletariat presented distinctive opportunities for the articulation of an expansive anti-racist politics grounded in a class-struggle perspective.

While the significance of Communist-aligned campaigns to the long struggle against Jim Crow capitalism has been the subject of numerous landmark studies in recent decades, the ways that these protest movements touched on bordering practices and the resistance cultures of racialised migrants has remained more marginal. By examining the archives of the *Western Worker* newspaper, the writing of radical journalist Loren Miller, and the California activism of poet Langston Hughes, the paper reveals significant engagements between Black Marxists and the struggles of racialised migrant workers. Against nativism, empire, and multiple forms of racism, Black Marxists in Depression-era California carved a vision of Black liberation that was routed through a capaciously inclusive class struggle.

Chelsea Ancliffe: *Rethinking Utopia: Communist Desire, Environmental Collapse, and a Post-Capitalist Future*

This paper explores the concept of utopia by examining the failures of the communist project in the 20th century and its relevance in addressing the pressing issue of the climate crisis. By reimagining revolution as an ongoing and emergent process, I hope to invigorate communist desire in the face of environmental collapse and stagnant capital. Drawing on Enzo Traverso's defense of the melancholy of defeat as "a hidden dimension of the left", this research locates communist desire within the specter of environmental collapse.

The necessity to learn from past revolutionary failures stems from two sources. Adamczak's exploration of the collapse of the USSR in their work "Yesterday's Tomorrow". Secondly, Benjamin's assertion that when we examine the present, we find ourselves in that "secret agreement between past generations and the present" whereby the "we have been endowed with a weak Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim. That claim cannot be settled cheaply".

I understand the utopian as "projects for social change considered impossible" (Marcuse, 1970) with Ernst Bloch's more fluvial Ontology of Not-Yet Being, whereby everyday actions are part of an ongoing and always actualizing utopia, utopian narrative (as idea and praxis) is situated in a space of 'always not-ready' (1995). Through the utopian impulse normalized structures are rendered unfamiliar, and through this cognitive estrangement, challenged (Jameson, 2005). By embracing the power of post-capitalist desire and embracing the fear of failure, we can redirect the ingoing construction of our society.

This paper calls for a shift in consciousness, encouraging a deep understanding of the past while nurturing radical

imaginaries for tomorrow. By exploring the intersection of contemporary environmentalism with historical struggles, hope to explore a political imaginary that embraces ongoing reevaluation, rejects complacency, and strives towards a post-capitalist utopia in the face of the climate crisis.

room: b104
real abstraction and codification:
marxian perspectives on the production of knowledge

Lorenzo D'Auria (Roma Tre); Pierluigi Marinucci (Roma Tre); roberto finelli (Università Roma Tre Italy)

Never in the history of humanity has the production and appropriation of knowledge been so central. It plays key roles not only in shaping high-tech sectors of the economy, but also in perpetuating 19th-century-style exploitation on most of our planet. Breakthroughs in artificial intelligence and cyber warfare go hand in hand with super-exploitation and an overall rise in slave labour. For this reason, a Marxian reflection on the relationship of science and technology to capital takes on a new and unprecedented urgency.

The authors in this panel keep their distance from utopian views on knowledge expansion present in some of Marx's writings (e.g., Grundrisse's 'fragment on machines') as well as from generalisations (such as Sohn Rethel's) on the relationship of money and the commodity form to abstract thought. The panellists' outlook, instead, draws on the concepts of 'real abstraction' and 'real subsumption of labour under capital'. The connection of capital to knowledge expansion is thus explored where labour force and capitalist machines make contact: not (contra Sohn Rethel) in the realm of circulation, but in production.

The knowledge crystallised in capital's means of production is as far removed as can be from the everyday life of workers. It replaces typical human traits, such as emotional tension and ambivalence, with more abstract ways of thinking based on a 'yes-or-no' logic. The aim being to synchronise labour processes, to make them predictable and homogeneous ex-ante — well before commodities are exchanged on the market. This abstraction of knowledge takes place through codification: a process with roots dating back to the externalisation of language through writing and which receives an unprecedented, self-catalytic impulse under capital. Crucially, codification enables the subsumption (contra Marx's 'fragment on machines') of both manual and mental labour. New forms of struggle aimed at resisting the transformation of pre-existing, concretely human, forms of knowledge into algorithms should be viewed in this light.

The authors as three researchers from the University of Roma Tre call this panel to the debate on Marxism and new technology.

Lorenzo D'Auria – 'Some reflections on codification from a Marxian perspective'

When the appropriation of surplus by dominant classes no longer passes *only* through force, taxation or religious symbolism but also through technical control of the *knowledge* involved in the transformation of input into output, then a specifically capitalist mode of production is at play. The author contends that codification is at the heart of capitalist control of knowledge; codification is defined as the transformation, through an explicit set of rules, of human experience, abilities and skills into a form of externalised knowledge that, precisely because of its external nature, can be reproduced at will beyond its context of origin.

Codified knowledge precedes capital. It can be traced back millennia, to the first systems of bookkeeping and writing. But under capital, codification has experienced unprecedented growth, a first critical turning point being the application of science to production. Another turning point is the separation of software from hardware: this enables codified output to be treated directly as input, thus causing its growth, from the last third of the 20th century, to become exponential.

The challenges posed to humanity by new forms of automation and artificial intelligence are viewed in this light. It is suggested that, other things being equal, the latest technological breakthroughs are not likely to diminish but rather increase the aggregate toil of labour, as has been the case for more than two centuries. The new breakthroughs are thus interpreted in light of the symbiotic encounter of two homologous, though distinct, expanding spirals: codified knowledge on the one side, accumulation of capital on the other.

Roberto Finelli - 'Information is not interpretation. A materialistic critique to AI'

'Information is not interpretation'. This distinction is fundamental to continuing to develop a Marxist critique of technology and in particular the new digital technologies. Information has always in human history been knowledge deposited in spheres external to the individual human being and always codified through certain systems of writing or cultural deposit. As such, it is public knowledge, transmissible, accumulable and accessible to all. Interpretation, on the other hand, belongs to a single living organism, in the case of the human being both biological and mental, whose primary purpose is the reproduction and expansion of its own life power. This constitutes the different perspective for everyone from which to organise and interpret the world. "Knowledge" is always an interweaving of "information" and "interpretation". Today, the capitalist workforce/digital machine system tends to generalise mental labour completely organised and directed by computer software. Turing's machine, which stands at the beginning of the digital revolution, transforms any information into strings of bits, generating a set of one-dimensional, bodiless procedures. The mental work it requires works on symbols and calculations and is also abstracted from the body. All this confirms the centrality of the Marxian theory of abstract labour as the keystone of capitalist society and its placement in the sphere of production instead of the sphere of circulation as theorised by Sohn-Rethel, which took away from the real abstraction the characteristic of being an interpretative category valid only for capitalist society. Reaffirming a biological-materialistic-cultural conception of the human being means opposing the increasingly dominant ideology of the infosphere today, according to which all reality is conceived as a massive information process and, consequently, the human mind itself is conceived as a calculating machinic structure similar to the way a computer works.

Pierluigi Marinucci - 'Comparison and recomposition of technique and technology in Marxian work: in search of a tool for the analysis of contemporary capitalist labour'

The object of this communication is to perform a review of the Marxian analysis of the primary constituents of "manufaktur" and "big industries" respectively.

The Marxian pages concerning the formation and characteristics of manufacturing necessarily refer back to the antecedents of classical economics, i.e. Smith and Ricardo, and take on, albeit in a critical key, the different characteristics of the thought of classical economics. In the case of the Smithian division of labour, this implies the persistence of a "qualitative" conception of the worker's action, strongly marked by individual capacity, however parcelled out. In this regard, the protagonism of the individual worker as part of a divided and segmented process can be read on the basis of the strong deficit that English economic-political culture shows in the systematisation of production processes on a scientific-quantitative basis.

This approach, ultimately anthropological in character, seems to find a strong correction in the pages Marx dedicates instead to Grosse Industrie, whose sense and objective is "resolve each process of production as considered in itself into its constituent elements and without any regard to their possible execution by the hand of man, created the new science of technology" (Capital, Marx 1974-83, I:456). Starting from the Marxian recognition of the denial of the anthropological (and anthropomorphic) nature of the labour process proper to the capitalist mode of production, it is necessary to carry out a reconnaissance of the theoretical and philosophical background correlated with the term technologie: through which emerges the presence in Marx, alongside the strong and visible legacy of classical political economy, of a link with the Germanic tradition, in principle rationalistic and not anthropocentric.

This allows for a parallel, or rather a comparison, between the concepts of technique (i.e. a human-based approach to the analysis of capitalist labour processes) and technology: which will be conducted mainly on technologisch-historischen Exzerpte and Manuscripts 61-63.

Ultimately, it is believed that this process of recomposing the technical approach on the technological one offers ample scope for an understanding, precisely through Marxian categories recomposed and updated according to resources within the Marxian theoretical corpus itself, of the current character of capitalist labour.

room: bglt
book launch:
the negative of capital

Jorge Grespan; Raquel Varela; Roberto della Santa; Michael Heinrich

“The Negative of Capital” deals with a subject that, despite being classic, was almost abandoned after the fall of the Berlin Wall, even in Marxist literature. In fact, the concept of economic crisis in Marx’s mature work only returned positively to the debate after the world crisis of 2008. However, much of what has been written since then runs into old problems of interpretation of the crisis, both of its cause and content, as well as of the modality of its occurrence. Instead of new solutions, the literature tends to resume traditional interpretations according to which Marx would have attributed the origin of economic crises to under-consumption or to the tendential fall in the average profit rate, or even to the predominance of financial over productive capital. Correspondingly, this literature generally insists on the usual discussion about the form of crises, that is, whether they occur as a strict cycle or as a permanent trend; whether they are determined by purely economic circumstances or depend on institutional and even accidental factors. To overcome these dilemmas, “The Negative of Capital” returns once again to the foundations of Marx’s critique of political economy and of Hegelian dialectic to characterize crisis as a concept correlated and opposed to that of capital. Thus, the content and form of this concept must be reconstituted inside out, as the “negative” of the concept of capital. In the book, crisis functions as a thread that makes the concept of capital explicit at each moment of Marx’s “Capital”, enriches its meaning and lays bare its fetishes. For only immersion in the negative can reveal the merely formal side of the impositions of capital, allowing us to assess its strength and the means to confront it.

room: mal g14
critical studies in the politics of education and health

Luis Arboledas-Lérida (Universidad de Sevilla): Competitive project-based public funding and the commodification of academic research: A Marxist analysis

Competitive project-based funding (CPBF, for short) is one of the most important mechanisms through which public funds are currently allocated to academic research. Its emergence and consolidation as a funding instrument in the most developed countries has gone hand in hand with the process of commodification of academic research. However, little is known about how CPBF fits into this latter process, or the extent to which the capitalist state has laid down the conditions under which research results take on the form of commodities and capital subverts the traditional relations of production established among academic producers—beyond reducing public funds to R&D activities. This is a gap in the literature which also has an important bearing on the struggles against capital in academia and the demands made upon the capitalist state in this regard. And it may be the result of an overemphasis on shrinking public budgets and the growth of private funding for R&D. Significant as these elements are, they cannot tell the whole story about the commodification of academic research. Correspondingly, this conference presentation analyses CPBF from a Marxian perspective. More precisely, it proposes to examine such a funding arrangement in the light of the determinations of the capitalist relations of production captured by the Marxian category of ‘formal subsumption of labour under capital’. It will then be shown that CPBF is one of the main mechanisms through which academic producers are stripped of its objective conditions of production; academic institutions become increasingly dependent on exchange with funding agencies and on the sale of the products of researchers’ labour—thus commodity production is generalised; and, by the same token, academic workers are formally subsumed under the yoke of capital. The ultimate purpose of this conference presentation is to debunk the idea that a significant increase in public funds for academic R&D and greater involvement of the capitalist state in the production of academic knowledge will reverse the commodification of academia and academic research.

Rejane Carolina Hoeveler (Universidade Federal de Alagoas (UFAL)): Social policies in Brazil’s last authoritarian governments (2016-2022): the imposition of the free market on health and education

The analysis of changes in Brazilian and Latin American social policies in the 21st century shows that capital-imperialism is increasingly present in the forms of domination that have been established on the Latin American continent. Capital-imperialism (FONTES, 2010) seeks to instruct and build inter-corporate consensus on neoliberal projects in various areas of public policy, such as the intense action for the expropriation of rights and privatisation of areas such as education, health, employment and security.

The large Brazilian business groups in health and education act jointly with foreign groups, opening frontiers of accumulation in these areas; this association also concerns cosmopolitan political action based on the philanthropization/mercadorization of health and education (VIEIRA & LAMOSA, 2020; ZULIANI, 2022; MARTINS, 2016; CORREA, 2022). These sectors conform an extensive mesh of what, based on Antonio Gramsci's theory, we conceptualize as private apparatuses of hegemony - which propagate the idea that public, state and state-funded systems would be obsolete, giving way to "public-private collaboration". Such discourse justifies paths opened up by the state for capitalist profitability in social protection policy itself in an accelerated manner in recent years.

Post 2016 coup Brazil has experienced a process of accelerated spoliation in social policies as a whole and especially in these areas, such attack being increased by the science denialist policies practiced during the Bolsonaro government (2018-2022). Our goal in this communication is to systematize the main setbacks in the areas of health and education in Brazil from 2016 to 2022, with emphasis on the advance of capital, with strong state action, and thus present partial results of our post-doctoral research in progress in the Graduate Program in Social Work at the Federal University of Alagoas (UFAL).

Caio Antunes, Joana Alice de Freitas, Lénin Tomazett Garcia, Peterson Pessôa: Education in Mészáros

István Mészáros maintains that education – understood in its broadest sense – occupies an absolutely central place in the process of production and reproduction of the social life of human beings. That is, to the extent that general social reproductive parameters are not automatically perpetuated, they have to be internalized, so that individuals end up adopting the ultimate horizons of a given social order as their own. If the general determinations of the reproduction of life deeply affect each sphere of human existence with some influence on education (understood in its broad sense), under the system of social metabolism of capital, education has the purpose of internalizing the alienated and reified general reproductive parameters of the system, in order to that each individual receives a kind of spiritual and material inheritance from the capital system and thus ensures the continuity of capital's social order. Therefore, a frontal challenge to education, by directly affecting the very processes of ideological internalization, represents a profound challenge to the social structure in question, and a radical social transformation of this social structure can only really happen with an effective contribution of education – again understood in its broadest sense.

Alexander Giannakouras (Brunel University): From the critique of political economy to the critique of public health: who benefits from health?

In capitalism we understand health primarily through work and death. In this sense, health may be seen as a function of capital. The discipline of public health then, is a technique of security that seeks to administer, through the police power of the state, the means through which capital accumulation is maintained. In other words, the police power of the state regulates labour power and the working body so that a steady and healthy enough supply of it, as capitalism's primary commodity, secures the functioning of capital. It is interesting to consider that through the institution of public health, following the New Poor Law, the modern bourgeois state was further consolidated because the centralised political administration and promotion of the 'healthy' working body permitted a rising extraction of surplus value. Health has become an abstract, universal category that must be pursued through greater access to technical means that maintain and promote it and that are initiated by policy. But health is a matter of exploitation and class struggle and not public health. To this end, is capitalism and health really mutually exclusive? Is health a matter of inequity, inequality and social justice? When Lenin speaks of the obsolescence of democracy in a future where communistic values prevail, we must understand that the obsolescence of the concept of health precedes it theoretically and follows it politically. The end of capitalist exploitation is the end of health. This paper engages the Marxist critique of political economy and Neocleous' expansive understanding of police power as the pivotal expression of the techniques of fabricating and reproducing capitalist order. This paper, therefore, explores the extent to which health, health policy and public health within capitalist relations of production fabricate the order and concerns of capitalism. On this basis, perhaps, an abolition of health (public or otherwise) may be most urgent.

Entrenched post/neoliberal ideologies present challenges for those declaring a climate emergency and for the mobilisation of collective action in its wake. Recent research has looked at how the climate change crisis has become part of both aesthetic discourse and critical perspectives in culture and the arts - with the focus shifting from the representation of ecology and ecological disaster to future-oriented models of action and activism in relation to arts' expanded field of social practice. This double-panel (6 contributors) brings together a transnational group of thinkers, practitioners and curators engaged in interrogating the politics and potential of visual culture in our times of climate emergency—really a polycrisis of global racial colonial capital, premised upon socio-environmental oppression, expanding economic inequality, and militarised violence. Our papers address topics ranging from eco-socialism; radical futurisms; black aesthesis; social and activist environmental movements; the illiberal, or monstrous, Anthropocene; Cop City and counterinsurgency; planetary solidarities; grassroots activism; algorithmic governance; and cosmological codes of capitalist apocalypse, mytho-politics, and racial fascism.

Our collective positions are pitched in opposition to the monstrous futures projected by authoritarian capitalism, and all stridently reject a post/neoliberal identity politics of metaphor. The panel will address the need for alliances between anti-capitalist and anti-racist movements, climate activism and indigenous decolonization, environmentalists and trade unions. Exploring Marxist models of praxis past and present and interrogating visual cultures and aesthetic regimes in relation to collective action and revolutionary imaginaries - we will ask what an eco-communism of the future might look like; who the revolutionary agent capable of transforming current politics and planetary disaster might be; how artists and art collectives have engaged in climate activism and new social compositions; and what art can and should do in the face of current and historical socio-environmental apocalypse/s and monstrous futures.

PANEL ORGANISERS: Prof TJ Demos (Art History and Visual Culture, UC Santa Cruz, Director Centre for Creative Ecologies) and Dr Sarah Edith James (Fine Art and Visual Culture, Contemporary Art Lab, Liverpool School Art, LJMU)

Imani Jacqueline Brown, Goldsmiths, University of London/Research Architecture: Beyond the Petrochemical-Plantation Horizon

The 'continuum of extractivism', which spans from settler colonialism and slavery to fossil fuel production and climate change, has charted Louisiana's horizons to the ends of the earth: At the mouth of the Mississippi River, two thousand square miles of land erode into open water at a rate of one 'American football field' every forty-five minutes; upriver, majority-Black communities succumb to extreme rates of cancer.

Louisiana's disintegration is an end-product of extractivism, a colonial cosmology that drives the accumulation of parcels of existence alienated from the whole by the force of segregation. Since the 1930s, over 100 oil and gas corporations have dredged 10,000 linear miles of oil access canals to drill ninety thousand wells, each up to ten thousand feet deep. Crude oil is transported through 50,000 miles of pipelines that terminate at 200 of the nation's most polluting storage tank farms, refineries, and petrochemical plants. Each facility occupies the grounds of formerly slave-powered sugarcane plantations. Historically, this region was known as Plantation Country; these days, residents refer to it as 'Death Alley'.

In Death Alley, the historically enslaved in their unmarked graves can't get their final rest... because they are still called to resist. In 2021, a coalition of activist residents, architects, and allies in collaboration with Forensic Architecture used historic maps, aerial photography, and satellite imagery to notice the groves of trees that interrupt the petrochemical-plantation landscape. We learned that these groves were stewarded by historically enslaved people, who planted magnolia trees to mark the graves of their loved ones, seeding pan-African ecological praxes in their new worlds.

With our eyes in space and our feet on the ground, we work across time and space at the frontlines of ecological resistance, where protest chants, birdsong, and trickling fresh water sustain life amid the ruins of extractivism.

Rizvana Bradley, University of California, Berkeley: “Unworlding, or the Monstrous Genealogy of Value”

Drawing from my forthcoming book, *Anteaesthetics: Black Aesthetics and the Critique of Form* (Stanford University Press, 2023), “Unworlding, or the Monstrous Genealogy of Value” reads the recent work of Sondra Perry to develop a critique of the metaphysical architecture of capitalist worlding, the phenomenological body-subject of worldly inhabitation, and their aesthetic reproduction in and through the logic of value. Perry’s artwork draws attention to the necessity of reckoning with transatlantic slavery, and the corporeal order of the world it fashioned, in any effort to refuse the ecocidal drive of global capitalism. Rather than simply contributing to analytics that inform contests over the distribution of surplus value, Perry directs us to the monstrous genealogy of value itself and its indissolubility from modernity’s ongoing imperative to cleave bodies from flesh and world from earth. Extending Eugene Thacker’s articulation of “dark media,” Perry’s hauntology of the flesh obliquely discloses the anoriginary condition of the (im)possibility for value and the value-form of the world—and thereby foregrounds difficult but crucial questions regarding efforts to build a world beyond the ecological catastrophe of capitalism.

TJ Demos, UC Santa Cruz: “Monstrous Anthropocene: Cop City and Counter-Counterinsurgency”

The monstrous Anthropocene of war ecology, counterinsurgency policing, and expanding militarism—exemplified in the current case of “Cop City,” the proposed mega-police training centre for Atlanta, Georgia, in the US—brings multiple challenges to ecocritical research methods. Police killology symptomizes the present entanglement of weaponised environments and capitalist administration that defines longstanding climate violence, abetted increasingly by algorithmic governance, facial recognition, and AI modes of climate control. Yet these formations of racial colonial capitalism are most often structurally excluded from environmentalist arts research. Given current transformations of the “longtermist” futurity of billionaire techno-libertarian imagination, the present conjuncture—better identified as the racial Capitalocene—demands a radical political aesthetics still to be defined, but potentially drawing on resources found in current practice, even while the latter may lack social compositions capable of systemic transformation. In seeking ways to imagine futures otherwise, this presentation proposes a prehensive arts, a militant research, in advance of specific politico-aesthetic practice, but prefigurative in the act.

Pete Firmin: The 2022–23 Royal Mail Postal Workers' Dispute: The Pitfalls of Partnership

Although not yet over, the deal negotiated between the union (CWU) leadership and Royal Mail management can only be seen as a defeat. What began as a dispute to defend working conditions and win a pay rise matching inflation, has seen the union recommending a pay rise well below inflation and major concessions on conditions. Recognising serious opposition to this deal among the membership, the union leadership has now postponed the ballot on the deal twice, and is attempting to persuade a hard-line management not help it sell the deal to the workforce. My contribution would be an attempt to examine how we got to this situation and what lessons can be learnt from it.

Clemence Fourton (Sciences Po Lille): Trade-union strategies under neoliberalism or the British strike spiral of 2022-23

The strike wave which started in the UK in 2022 is the first wave of industrial action since the establishment of the anti-union consensus, understood as one of the terms of the neoliberal consensus (Crouch 1997). That of the heads of the neoliberal monster which is arguably closest to the capital-labour nexus has manifested and strengthened ubiquitously since the mid-1970s, through legal, institutional, managerial and discursive devices (Christoph and Lenormand 2011). It is against this backdrop that this paper analyses the contemporary strike wave, both from a strategic and a theoretical perspective. First, these strikes have seen trade-unions attempt to circumvent the limiting framework they must operate within. This strategy, however, is ambivalent, as it also signals interiorisation, if not acceptance, of said limits. This paper therefore surveys contemporary trade-union strategies, and the extent to which they subvert and/or reproduce the anti-union consensus. Secondly, this analysis allows to revisit the "cycle of protest" (Tarrow 1993) category. If these strikes by and large exhibit the characteristics of a cycle, their being the first bout of industrial action of such an extent since the 1980s and being shaped by the anti-union consensus highlights that the metaphor fails to account for the historicity and contextuality of protest. This paper therefore suggests that conceptualising intense periods of social protest as spirals allows for a better understanding of how protests interact with conjunctures and their specific repressive modalities.

Jonas Marvin: The Breaking of the English Working Class: Oppression, Debt and Space at Empire's End

Class is back. Over the past year, a strike wave has brought trade unionism back to the fore of public life. But what were the conditions which produced proletarian dormancy for so long prior to this industrial upturn? In this paper, I will chart the long decomposition of E.P. Thompson's 'English working class', exploring the roots of this process through a multiplicity of factors bound up with post-imperial decline, deindustrialisation, and the neoliberal counter-revolution. The emergence of neoliberalism was primarily a struggle over the crises of Fordism, particularly as this productivist settlement was shaken by global capitalism's path towards global manufacturing overcapacity and overproduction. What ensued was a class struggle to determine whether the male breadwinning industrial worker upon which Fordism rested would radicalise and expand their conception of class struggle, or whether they would cease to exist as a class subject. In detailing this battle, I will weave together a story which sees this class subject defeated through the decimation of the social wage; the unravelling of Fordist spatial regimes and the emergence of postindustrial rustbelts; the rise of forms of privatised Keynesianism and 'overconsumption'; and the expansion of, in Marx's words, a 'stagnant surplus population'. I will conclude by analysing the potentiality of the ongoing and relative rise in trade union militancy in England. Specifically, I will diagnose the contradiction between an expanded 'stagnant surplus population' which engenders conditions of precarity and insecurity for wider layers of underemployed workers, and a 'sick proletariat' - as diagnosed by Artie Vierkant and Beatrice Adler-Bolton - whose tendency towards disability, demographic ageing and illness engenders a tighter labour market, enabling greater leverage for workers. It is this contradiction between the stagnant surplus population and a sick proletariat, I argue, that will become increasingly prominent as the cost-of-living crisis endures.

George Briley: Exploring the Labour Process of Centrally Managed Pubs and Bars

Many small and independent hospitality venues in the UK have struggled to stay in business since 2008. Whilst the number of pubs, bars and clubs decreased from 49,876 in 2008 to 37,845 in 2018, we also saw an increase in revenue

across the industry of 2 billion GBP in that same period (ONS, 2019). Alongside this, the total number of employees in pubs and bars around the UK in 2018 was around 450,000, a 21 per cent increase from 2001 (ONS 2019). Seemingly, the rise of centrally managed venues connected to national chains brings with it a greater number of bar staff working together in larger venues connected via multi-site pub companies.

How the centralisation of management affects the labour process in pubs and bars is ill-defined in the literature on hospitality work. Whilst macro numbers give an indication of trends, there is little colour or clarity in the understanding of this form of service work, and particularly how it is experienced by those engaged in this labour. How the labour process is intensified and how these intensifications are resisted or accepted remain unclear. As the size of shops and number of employees increases, this presents fertile ground for trade union organisation, but with extensive staff turnover rates in the industry, trade unions have struggled to build sustained levels of organisation across the hospitality sector.

Drawing on fieldwork carried out working in a centrally managed pub chain, this paper gives definition to the experience of work on the shop floor. It discusses how the reconfiguration and centralisation of capital in pubs and bars also produces new avenues for refusal and contestation at work. Using an ethnographic account it offers an examination of the labour process and trade union organising in the sector from the perspective of workers themselves. Whilst there has been some emergent organisation in the sector in recent years, it is rarely joined up or collective, with familiar labour organising principles seemingly unsuitable and organisational innovation desperately needed.

The particularities of the service labour performed in centrally managed pubs and bars in the UK offers a useful site to think through and discuss larger themes of work in the hospitality industry. With many young workers finding themselves trapped in this low paying industry, developing a more comprehensive understanding of the development of hospitality work is key for engaging young workers in the labour movement. The huge number of “green field”, never before organised workplaces of the hospitality industry should be of considerable concern to both trade unions and researchers interested in seeing workers take greater control in the economy.

room: dlt
expanding transgender marxism:
alienation, abjection and accumulation

Alex Adamson (Babson College); Alexis Davin (University of Bristol); Jules Gleeson (Unaffiliated)

“This panel aims to consolidate theoretical breakthroughs in materialist takes on sexuation, including Transgender Marxism (2021) and Invert Journal. Speakers will address current work and lively topics not yet fully addressed by these outlets: autonomous revolutionary feminism, femboys (and other “identities against identity politics”), and intersex liberation. The presentations together take trans and intersex life and experience as vital sources for the elaboration and development of materialist theorising. Using this subject matter brings together the analysis of the subjective experience of sex/gender, in the form of social identification, desire and self-consciousness, with the historical forms and conditions that determine how they are structured and can be acted out, in collective struggles and economic relations.

Alex Adamson, Babson College - Assistant Professor of Philosophy: Transgender Marxism in an Autonomous Frame of Reference: Marxist Humanism, Sylvia Wynter and Hi[r]storical Materialism

Abstract: This paper outlines the philosophical and epistemological foundations of transgender Marxism following the analysis of Sylvia Wynter on autonomous revolutionary forms of feminism. I hope to show transgender Marxism to be a particularly relevant form of analysis for contemporary anti-fascist struggles as it reveals the limitations of liberal inclusion as a long term solution to anti-trans violence. I begin with a brief account of Marx’s method of historical materialism and the concepts of alienation and negation as they frame his humanist critique of capitalism. I then connect my account of Marxist humanism to Wynter’s analysis of “autonomous” forms of feminism by extending her analysis to forms of queer and trans feminism through the concept of hi[r]storical materialism as articulated by transfeminist Marxist theorist and poet Nat Raha.

Alexis Davin, University of Bristol - PhD candidate in Philosophy: Femboys in the Factory: Trans Labour Beyond Abjection

Abstract: This paper takes forward Kay Gabriel's analysis of 'gender as accumulation strategy' as a lens to examine the differential relationships to value and valorisation that play out within trans and gender non-conforming identity categories. Starting from Gabriel's reading of the work of both Rosemary Hennessy and the Endnotes collective, I outline the idea of abjection, which aims to track the means by which individuals come to participate in different relations of labouring, exploitation and expropriation through ways they are socially marked beyond their mere status as free labourers. While Gabriel incisively identifies the conditions that produce the abjection of trans people as a whole, in this paper I examine how 'femboy' as a category acts as a strategy to navigate the contemporary landscape of reproductive and sexual politics, specifically through a disavowal of transness, and against trans forms of abjection. Through this case study, I aim to explore the concrete nature of the connections between processes of identification and gendered marking of individual with regimes of both sexual and racial desire and the extraction of value, both complicating the story we are able to tell about the internal heterogeneity of trans experiences of labouring, and the theoretical tools we have available to articulate how capital 'sees' its subjects.

Jules Gleeson, unaffiliated communist: 'Hermaphrodites Speak Out' - The Edgy Legacy of 1990s Intersex Advocacy

Abstract: Professionalisation of clinical treatment (and concepts) around typical development since the 19th century resulted in routinised harms and chronic neglect for those born with intersex physiologies by the mid-20th century. From the 1990s these came to be challenged by intersex advocacy groups, who drew heavily from earlier 20th century counter-culture in their strategy, community-building and slogans. This paper will provide a glimpse of the self-consciousness struggles these groups' activities began, and especially the challenge to typical divisions of labour posed by their purposeful mastery of medical idioms. What can historical materialism tell us about both the potency and limits of these approaches to grasping and overcoming dehumanisation?

room: g51
marxism and political theorising ii

Tom O'Shea (University of Edinburgh): Socialist Republicanism and Abstract Domination

Socialist republicans claim that proletarians are dominated by the capitalist class, while characterising that domination in terms of subjection to arbitrary power. This leads to an analysis of capitalism which stresses the need for forms of class struggle which will curb and ultimately eliminate the oligarchic power of capitalists in the workplace and in economic, social, and political life more broadly. Scholars such as Bruno Leipold and William Clare Roberts find some such republican themes in texts by both Marx and Engels, especially their respective accounts of wage slavery.

Other Marxist tendencies, however, pull against an analysis that foregrounds the unconstrained power of individuals and groups, and instead focus on abstract and impersonal laws that constrain us all. Consider in this respect Marx's claim that "the capitalist is just as enslaved by the capitalist relationship as is his opposite pole, the worker". Among the most theoretically influential advocates of this latter approach was Moishe Postone, who identified an "abstract form of social domination—one that subjects people to impersonal structural imperatives and constraints that cannot be adequately grasped in terms of concrete domination (e.g., personal or group domination)".

I shall consider the challenge that this account of abstract domination poses to the theory of class domination that emerges from socialist republicanism. In doing so, I will show how socialist republicans can make use of a structural conception of domination that can explain both interpersonal relationships of economic domination and wider class domination, without the radically depersonalised account of abstract domination found in Postone. This offers a middle path between the overly individualistic understanding of arbitrary power found in much civic republican philosophy and the often-gnomical appeal to an abstract domination rooted in the very temporality of modernity which underpins Postone's theory.

Davide Gallo Lassere (University Of London Institute in Paris): Counterpower - Dual Power - Counterpower

From a historical point of view, revolutionary movements have always conceived dual power as a way to prepare the ground for a post-capitalist society. In the socialist perspective, dual power gives rise to a long, gradual transition; whereas in the communist perspective the transition is accelerated and completed by an insurrectionary rupture. On the contrary, it would be necessary to redefine the question of dual power in terms of a theory of organisation: it would then be a matter of constituting a stable political scaffold capable of strengthening and deploying itself via the proliferation of counterpower cores. Dual power, therefore, as a permanent architecture for the self-organisation of movements and the government of society, which branches out through a thick network of counterpowers. Consequently, the elaboration and realisation of the political perspective of dual power is about the increase in might produced by the multiplicity and heterogeneity of counterpowers. But how to think and put in place a strategy that makes counterpowers the social precondition and political horizon to dual power?

Helena Zohdi (Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main): Travelling Theory from Below: Revolutionary Socialists and the theory and political practice of Marxism

Within the academic spheres of postcolonial theory, much has been written on how Marxism can be drawn on and, what the relations between Eurocentrism and Marxism are. Yet often arguments of the incompatibility of Marxism and postcolonial theories, let alone the "postcolonial world", ignore the frictions and differences within both canons. In practice, Marxism remains a core analytical framework for many emancipatory movements in the global South on a daily basis.

It is through agency of social actors in the global South that Marxism does travel, is translated, (re)read, debated, and embedded. As alternatives to capitalism and a better world are strived for globally, I focus on how activists from the global south – specifically members of the Egyptian organization of The Revolutionary Socialists – utilize Marxism as a framework for their political practice on the ground while producing knowledge beyond Western academia.

By examining on how members of the political organization of the Egyptian Revolutionary Socialists grapple with Marxism, I examine how debates on eurocentrism, dogmatism, decoloniality and beyond are engaged with and translated into theory and practice by Marxist social actors from the global South themselves. Through my anthropological field research with Egyptian Revolutionary Socialists in exile and the underground, I highlight that much of the academic postcolonial debates on Marxism and Eurocentrism often sideline the agency of social actors from the global South, their theoretical and practical endeavors, and own modes of knowledge production. This, I argue, should be given much more weight in a contemporary understanding of Postcoloniality, the Left and the crises we face.

room: g51a
marxism on nature

Camilla Royle: Capitalism, alienation and the turn to nature-based solutions

This paper brings together Marxist theories of mental distress with discussions of climate and ecological breakdown. The changing natural environment is widely seen as a source of mental distress, whether due to the direct effects of increased fossil fuel extraction and natural disasters or the unease created by the Covid pandemic and lockdown measures. Therefore, there has been much discussion of a supposed wave of eco-anxiety among the young. However, this term has been critiqued for its tendency to treat people's anger as an individual problem and to medicalise a rational response to global crisis as an anxiety disorder. It has also been noted that the language and concept of eco-anxiety itself is failing to find purchase with people around the world who are already experiencing the effects of climate breakdown. On the other hand, reconnecting with nature is seen as a powerful force in the treatment of mental distress. Activities such as gardening and walks in the countryside have been widely promoted by the UK government and others, with green social prescribing now part of the long-term strategy for the NHS. Although any intervention that can make a real difference in people's lives is welcome, these solutions do little to address the structural causes of either mental distress or inequity in access to green spaces. Furthermore, this strategy instrumentalises nature and suggests we can buy our way towards happiness. This paper will tie together the strands of thinking about the relationship between ecology and mental distress, arguing that an ecological Marxist approach to alienation is uniquely able to make sense of how capitalism both fuels distress and sells

reconnection to nature as a solution.

Cannelle Gignoux: From Natural Limits to Capitalist Infinity

In this talk, I'd like to return to the first debate that animated ecosocialism, in order to question the link between the ecological dimension of Marx's work and its ontological-epistemological dimension. The question of whether Marx's work contained conceptual tools or, better still, a theory capable of accounting for ecological issues was made explicit in an article that can be considered the founding work of ecosocialism, *Marxism and Natural Limits* by Ted Benton, written in 1989. Based on a number of references to the work of K. Marx, which formulate the idea of human dependence on nature, Ted Benton first proposes to consider Marx's historical materialism as an ecological methodology. It is from the anti-Malthusian developments that the concept of the labor process becomes, for Ted Benton, an anthropocentric concept, disconnected from environmental issues. According to Ted Benton, it was Marx's anti-Malthusianism that led him to argue in constructivist terms, enclosing natural limits in the specific historical social structure of capitalism. In this contribution, I'd like to show that Paul Burkett's responses to this article fail to save Marx from accusations of constructivism. This first ecosocialist debate, which separates Ted Benton's "neo-Malthusianism" from Burkett's anti-Malthusianism, already contains the seeds of the ontological issues that are the subject of current debates from political ecology to eco-Marxism: do we need a concept of nature? What ontology should be deployed to grasp the ecological crisis? By returning to the ontological premises on which Benton's argument is based, I will show that the concept of natural limits is necessary for our understanding of the crisis, while at the same time challenging the epistemological framework within which Marx grasped capitalism.

Ellen Kirkpatrick (University of Groningen/Macquarie University): Working Between Human and Non-human Nature: Using Labour as a Tool to Capture the Transformations of Planetary Life

Deforestation, ocean acidification, global warming and loss of environmental habitats due to expanding production is visibly altering planetary life. Accompanied by urbanization, humans and non-human nature are coming into closer contact resulting in the emergence of infectious diseases such as Covid-19. While zoonotic in origin, it spread through networks of local and production.

However, while the pandemic sharply illuminated the role of labour within social transformations, the question remains about the role of labour in transforming ecological relations. Drawing on a historical materialist approach, this paper explores the emergence and transmission of the Covid-19 virus through Bellamy Foster's conceptualization of 'metabolic rift'. This allows for a dialectical perspective of human and non-human nature which negotiates the distinctions between them. Humans and non-human nature are taken to mutually constrain, enable and constitute one another in a complex interchange. This is particularly significant when considering the ongoing transformations of a climate-changing world, and the corresponding effects on social life.

To do this, this paper empirically focuses on the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan, China where the Covid-19 virus was first detected. It examines how the virus jumped between non-human animals to humans through concrete production and labour operations locally, before travelling globally through market relations based on logics of circulation, trade and exchange. As a mediating relation, labour is an analytical tool which can create dialogue between the concrete and the abstract, as well as the local and global. It depicts the dynamic interconnections between humans and non-human nature.

room: r201
revisiting the mode of production debate

Andreas Bieler (University of Nottingham); Adam D. Morton (Sydney University); Chris Hesketh (Oxford Brookes University); Maïa Pal; Alessandra Mezzadri (SOAS)

The mode of production debate around the social property relations approach pioneered by Robert Brenner and Ellen Meiksins Wood as well as world systems theory by Immanuel Wallerstein and interventions by Jairus Banaji around forms of 'commercial capitalism' has continued to underpin diverse empirical analyses within a plurality of historical materialist approaches. This panel will re-evaluate this debate by drawing on so far neglected thinkers and engage with wider debates around racial capitalism and patriarchal forms of oppression.

Chris Hesketh – ‘Finding Space in the Modes of Production Debate: The Value of Latin America’

This article is inspired by several recent scholarly developments. First, there has been renewed interest in debates surrounding the concept ‘mode of production’. Second, there has been a passionate debate about how we understand core-periphery relations in relation to the broader question of capitalist development. Finally, it has been argued that, beyond opposition to neoliberal development there has also been a revival of Marxist theoretical perspectives and praxis in Latin America. However, despite some diverse work engaging with debates that use the concept ‘mode of production’ in the Latin American context, there has been no systematic attempt to look at major Latin America Marxist thinkers and their contribution to this debate. This article seeks to correct for this by looking at the key work of René Zavaleta and José Carlos Mariátegui as two of the continent’s most original Marxist thinkers. By doing so, I offer three distinct contributions. First I remove the mode of production debate from its relatively narrow, Eurocentric preoccupations, and secondly, I displace the largely temporal concerns of the debate (when was capitalism?) to give it a more spatial rendering (where is capitalism?). This opens the possibilities of thinking about co-existing differential spaces within a social formation. Lastly, this method of analysis is therefore able to give a realistic assessment of the social forces involved in contemporary struggles by specifying what social antagonisms exist and where alliances can be constructed. I conclude that an analysis grounded in modes of production is thus attentive to specificity and this provides a basis for thinking about transformative possibilities in and beyond Latin America.

Andreas Bieler and Adam D. Morton – ‘The Dialectical Matrix of Class, Gender, Race’

Is gender oppression a structurally necessary feature of capitalism? Is discrimination based on race in-built into the reproduction of racial capitalism? By assessing wider contributions within and between Marxism Feminism and Black Marxism this paper seeks to address the multiple oppressions of class, patriarchy and race. Intersectional and dual-systems theorising establishes an analytical differentiation of patriarchy and capitalism, or capitalism and racism, as spheres in an external relation. We argue that this *ab extra* theorising is at odds with Marx’s dialectics that avoids binary separations in its method of abstraction. As a result, we seek to dialectically revitalise understandings of class, gender and race through a philosophy of internal relations, as a movement of antagonisms *ab intra* comprising a social totality. We draw on arguments that distinguish the logical and historical presuppositions of capital alongside highlighting elements that capital incorporates, internalises and transforms as its results. This focus on logical and historical questions in relation to the origins of capital through conditions of primitive accumulation and its ongoing reproduction affirms patriarchal and racial oppressions as living dialectically in internal relation to capital.

Alessandra Mezzadri – ‘Forms of exploitation and social reproduction: notes on labour, value, and unfreedom’

Debates on forms of exploitation and social reproduction intersect, as they are both concerned, albeit in different ways, to map the boundaries of exploitation and labour surplus extraction in ways that may disrupt productivist frameworks narrowly focusing on the social relations of production organised around wage-labour. Both frameworks see exploitation as a complex category and concept structured and experienced in manifold ways, shaping and shaped by distinct social relations. This chapter traces the continuities and differences between debates on forms of exploitation and social reproduction, by placing particular emphasis on the intellectual contributions of Jairus Banaji and Silvia Federici. Stressing the complementarity of the analyses by these two scholars, the chapter discusses how combined insights based on their frameworks well capture the workings of informalised labour relations in the world economy; the ways in which labour surplus extraction take place across the productive/reproductive continuum; and the resilience of multiple forms of labour unfreedom in contemporary global capitalism. The chapter draws empirical evidence from long-term fieldwork across India’s Sweatshop Regime.

Maïa Pal – ‘Looking for the origins of capitalism in international law: or how to theorise social change from Pashukanis to Political Marxism’

Commercialisation and consequentialist models dominate the study of the origins of capitalism in the historiography of International Law (IL), including the commodity form theory of law. These models are based on the general assumption that the expansion of trade, coupled with colonialism and imperialism, is sufficient to explain the emergence of capitalism, and they generally ignore the transition (or Brenner) debate. In contrast, this paper argues that this is not sufficient and that the question of capitalist origins matters for two objectives: theorising how

social change occurs, and accounting for periods of transitional and non-transitional content in a historically broad conception of IL. This paper proposes to theorise jurisdiction as part of a dialectic with legal form to provide an alternative to commercialisation and consequentialism, which otherwise misses the relations between specific legal agents and practices in the history of capitalism. This means theorising social change from a critical approach to jurisdiction – through the work of Political Marxism and studies of empire - as well as from the Pashukanite structural determinacy of the legal form.

room: rg01
animals and the left i

Francesco Aloe (independent); Onur Alptekin (Koç); Ted Benton (Essex); Mariska Jung (Vrije Universiteit Brussel); Chiara Stefanoni (Lüneburg); Troy Vettese (European University Institute)

This is the first of two panels dedicated to the question of animals within the radical tradition. While the animal question was a lively issue for many socialist thinkers such as Thomas More, Robert Owen, and Percy Bysshe Shelley, Marxists has largely shied from the topic. While there have been many notable exceptions to this trend, such as Rosa Luxemburg and much of the Frankfurt School, more still needs to be done to remedy the 'orphaning' of animal rights on the left. We need studies on the role of animals within capitalist production, the figure of the animal within socialist thought (such as the 1844 Manuscripts), understanding why capitalism causes much greater biodiversity loss than previous eras, and imagining what animal liberation could look like in a socialist society.

From Machine-Bodies to the Horsepower: Ungulate Labour in Industrial Production in the Atlantic World, 1560-1780
Onur Alptekin

In this presentation, I focus on the historical role and increase of animal labour in industrial production (such as milling, plantation complexes, construction and military industries) in the Americas and Europe between 1560 and 1780. Labour of horses, cattle, donkeys and mules (in short, ungulates) historically contributed to the appropriation of wealth, accumulation of capital, production of value, and division of labour in both the colonial relations between Europe and the Americas as well as the distribution of wealth and power between the northern and southern regions within Europe. Incorporating animal labour (especially analyzing the different labour power of different species of ungulates) historically into the analysis of labour and theory of value, I propose a new interpretation for the analysis of the development of historical capitalism ranging from the analyses of ecology and climate to the organization and relations of production. Furthermore, I briefly refer to how those developments were intertwined with the development of mentality of Pereiran/Cartesian "machine-body" and the calculation of horsepower.

Animal Politics or Animal Police? Islamophobia and Animal Advocacy Politics
Mariska Jung and Jouke Huijzer

This article assesses the emergence and development of animal advocacy politics in the 21st century in the context of the concurring politicization of race and religion. Conventional accounts of animal advocacy parties overlook this entanglement. We deploy Rancière's political thought and apply a critical race theoretical lens to understand the multidimensionality of animal advocacy politics in relation to "the Muslim Question". We conduct a case study of the Dutch Party for the Animals because it is the main driver of the international animal advocacy party family. When failing to recognize the historical and contemporary workings of race, as well as race's intersection with religion in an European context, the party propagates what we call a colorblind, or in non-ableist terms, color-evasive animal politics. Ultimately, we hope our account inspires a future research agenda regarding politics that addresses the sociopolitical logics of both race and anthropocentrism.

Animals in Capitalist Societies: Conceptualizing the Anthropological Form
Chiara Stefanoni and Francesco Aloe

In the recent literature on the relations between capitalist societies and animal oppression, in particular within the field of Critical Animal Studies, the Frankfurt School (especially Adorno and Horkheimer) holds a prominent position. However, these attempts, while valuable, often remain confined to a cultural or transhistorical perspective.

They fail to fully capture the qualitative transformation in the human-animal relations brought about by the rise of capitalist social formations and its connection to the critique of political economy. In our contribution, we draw on an innovative development within Western Marxism itself – namely the New Marx Reading's social form analysis. Through this lens, we offer an original analysis of the human-animal relations in capitalist societies, specifically identifying a unique anthropological social form. We show how this form organizes the human-animal relations in a manner unprecedented in pre-capitalist societies. Its origins lie in the separation between humans ("free") and non-humans (at disposition of money owners). This separation is not at all "natural" but emerges from a historical process, forming the basis of the structural relationship of domination and exploitation examined by Marx in *Capital*. By conceptually elaborating on the anthropological form, we can gain access to the socio-historical conditions that shape the particular configuration of species relations and its historical evolution. Our essay explores two key aspects: 1) the historical trajectory leading to a redefinition of animals and meat, uncovering their changing purpose and function rooted in the mid-1800s crisis of social reproduction, and 2) the practices, institutions, and knowledge that constitute the food dispositif (apparatus) arising from these processes, with a focus on reforms in "public" slaughterhouses. Our aim is to contribute to the critical theory by refining our understanding of the complex interplay between capitalist societies, animal oppression, and the critique of political economy.

Biodiversity loss: Why it matters and what can be done?
Ted Benton

Biodiversity is the term given to the totality of living organisms, their complex, multi-level interactions, relations and combinations, constituting and immensely complex global biosphere. Humans are just one species nested within and dependent upon this complex web of life, but are currently making demands upon it and impacting on it in other ways that are well beyond its capacity to maintain and reproduce its basic system-properties. Sometimes this is recognised as an existential crisis, alongside climate change, but more often climate change is used as a catch-all concept to characterise in a vague way our devastating impact on the rest of nature. My argument is that it is crucial to recognise biodiversity loss as a distinct global crisis-tendency, no less urgent than climate change. It interacts strongly both with climate change and with policies to address climate change, but it has distinct drivers and distinct consequences. This is important because, for one thing, measures to alleviate climate change (such as mass tree planting) can be disastrous for biodiversity. Both crises need to be seen as symptoms of a deep contradiction in the relations between the dominant socio-economic system and the rest of nature ('life support systems'). Addressing each by piecemeal reforms independently of a deeper understanding of the socio-economic drivers of both risks potentially disastrous unwanted consequences.

But the problems only start here. The main driver of biodiversity loss is habitat loss and fragmentation resulting from intensive agriculture. This, in turn, is locked into a global food system upon which a growing human population depends. Progressive thinkers, even without seriously challenging a broadly neo-liberal conceptual framework, are increasingly recognising that land use, including the use of agricultural land, has to be transformed if catastrophic biodiversity loss is to be halted, but that, at the same time, ways have to be found of feeding the world's population, including its most impoverished and already malnourished groups. Food waste, manufacturing and processing, dietary balances, systems of provision and distribution are all being called into question, alongside the metabolic interactions between food production and the nature-given conditions that make it possible (Dimpleby National Food Strategy). I can only introduce discussion of a small part of this but will focus on problems posed by some current policies and analytical frameworks – DasGupta's economics of biodiversity, and associated concepts of natural capital, ecosystem services, externalities etc. In planning guidance, biodiversity offsets and 'net biodiversity gain' – rewilding, nature recovery projects, ELMs, '30x30' and other proposals.

room: rb01
marxism and crisis

Geoffrey McCormack (St. Thomas University): Canadian Capitalism in Crisis: A Classical Marxist Analysis

Canadian capitalism has become increasingly unstable over the last decade. While the organic composition of capital rose, the rate of surplus value fell, and unproductive activities grew. These processes precipitated a falling rate of profit alongside a stagnating net mass of surplus value. In the context of general over-accumulation, a debt-driven housing boom poses a significant risk to Canada's highly-leveraged financial sector, whose principal assets are mortgages to households. COVID-19 and attendant state intervention has only amplified these processes, and the shock of a new world recession could trigger a deeper crisis of Canadian capitalism.

Will Berrington (University of Warwick): Robert Brenner's 'Long Downturn' Meets Marxist Theories of Crisis

Within the humanities and beyond, scholars are increasingly taking up Robert Brenner's account of the "long downturn", which describes how, since the 1970s stagflation crisis, stagnant growth and productivity have come to define the world economy. Brenner's account has proved useful for these scholars as a periodising framework and a more materially grounded explanation for cultural change. However, for the Marxists among us, the issue comes that Brenner's account actively chooses "not to engage at all with Marx's enterprise". This is what this paper addresses. Not to claim that as card-carrying Marxists we should disregard Brenner's account, but rather to argue that if we are going to draw on it, then we should be aware of its Marxist critiques and how they change the parameters of struggle. Indeed, for his Marxist critics, Brenner's account leaves the door open to calls for liberal reformism. Left at Brenner, the downturn can be viewed as circumstantial and preventable, rather than demonstrative of "the inherent tendency to crisis that underlies the permanent instability of social existence under capitalism" (Clarke, 1994). This paper thus looks at how critiques of Brenner (Shaikh, Clarke, Roberts) – as well as rejoinders to recent books by Aaron Benanav and Jason Smith (Copley, Moraitis) – work to explain the downturn according to capitalism's inherent contradictions. To conclude, the paper argues that, if we do become downturn proponents, our decision to accept a certain explanation of the downturn aligns us with one of two options. Either crises like the downturn are contingent and may be prevented through reform, or crises are inherent to capitalism and may only be resolved through its abolition. Regardless of when (or if) the downturn subsides, this paper maintains that how we understand the downturn defines how we understand the culture and struggles that emerge under it.

Lutti Mira (University of São Paulo): The future of crisis: On Marx's ambiguous relation to utopia

In face of the many and widespread contemporary crises – political, with the rise and continuous leading role of the far-right; ecological, largely evidenced by day-to-day environmental catastrophes; and economical, as Neoliberal crisis continues to take place with no concrete economic alternative – utopia and dystopia have again occupied a significant role in public sphere discussions. In my presentation, I would like to reintroduce Marx's critique of utopia focusing on its logical dimensions: when Marx famously states in the Contribution to the critique of political economy that "the prehistory of human society" closes with the bourgeois mode of production, he interprets capitalism as the "last antagonistic form of the social process of production", entailing that the overcoming of its antagonisms in Communism would finally count as the beginning of the history of human society. This means that Marx's critique of political economy was based on a thorough opposition between pre-Communism and Communism. Within this radical conception of emancipation, utopia is somehow maintained, which calls for a reassessment of Marx's utopophobia, since, as Adorno states in Negative dialectics, Marx and Engels "were enemies of utopia in the interest of its realization". On the other hand, this very opposition of history and pre-history also entails that no characterization of post-capitalism is possible, or even desirable: to posit a certain number of positive characteristics of the emancipated state could have the opposite result of its initial intention, for Communism, as the non-antagonistic form of human society, fundamentally differs from every previous mode of production. In sum, by revisiting Marx's ambiguous relation to utopia, I would like to contribute to the broader discussion regarding how the left should interpret the traces of a different future in the present crises, revitalizing the idea of "foreshadowing of the future" that Marx first presented in the Grundrisse.

Silvia Lopez (Carleton College): Crisis as form: Rainha Lira by Roberto Schwarz

Roberto Schwarz has published an epic play about Bolsonaro's Brazil. To those of you who know his essayistic work, this may sound like a misunderstanding. The same Roberto Schwarz? His creative side is little known because it consists only of two collections of poems from his youth, which have not been reprinted, and a play, *A lata do lixo na história*, which saw its republication in the last decade. This new work is not simply one more creative intervention, but an epic critical exercise that brings us back to contemporary Brazil in theatrical code, while at the same time putting on the table a theoretical-practical aesthetic that functions as an X-ray of its own impasse. Sartre used to say that theatre, poetry and the novel were possible paths when the possibilities of the essay were narrowing. There are places and times when it is necessary to dramatise situations where fiction is in a better position to highlight them because reality exceeds it.

Roberto Schwarz is also a translator of Bertolt Brecht (*St Joan of the Stockyards*) and has exposed the highs and lows of current affairs with great critical skill. His text *Brecht's Highs and Lows of the Present* Brecht Schwarz begins by asking himself whether all work on Brecht should not begin by questioning whether his theatrical approach is still relevant, given that his aesthetic theses, political convictions and literary procedures have been severely affected

by the closing of the processes of socialist transformation. In his writings on theatre, Brecht always maintained a position of constant historicisation of the possibilities not only of his theoretical and aesthetic approach, but also of his theory as a practical approach. For Brecht, theatre is both. On the one hand the anti-illusionist staging that shows the procedures of theatricalisation, which allows the audience to realise the constructed character of the characters, and therefore of the reality they imitate. The practical part is that in reality it is also reality and our behaviours are part representation, therefore outside the theatre the roles in the play could be different, in the theatre as well as outside it, the behaviours are changeable. This was always one of Brecht's demands: that the staging in its denaturalisation should demonstrate the possibility that things could be otherwise. Heiner Müller said that to use Brecht without criticising him would be to betray him. Müller in his *Hamletmachine* and Schwarz in this rewriting of *King Lear* could not be more different, but both are faithful to Brecht in transforming him into a current source of rebellion and transformation.

room: b102
concepts of totality, freedom, and revolution
in the work of rosa luxemburg

Ankica Cakardic (Associate Professor at University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences); Sandra Rein (University of Alberta, Canada); Lori Turner (York University (Canada))

In this panel, three editorial board members of the **Collected Works of Rosa Luxemburg** consider ways to read Luxemburg through a broad range of philosophical concepts, concepts not usually found in conventional accounts of her work.

Ankica Cakardic discusses Lukács' claim that the foundational study initiating the theoretical rebirth of Marxism is Rosa Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital*. Sandra Rein explores the notion of freedom and how Luxemburg's work can be seen in light of a "turn to philosophy" in Western Marxism. Lori Turner examines ways to understand the poignant and evocative imagery found in Rosa Luxemburg's reflections on revolution.

Ankica Cakardic: *Algebra of Revolution: Marxism and Hegelianism of Rosa Luxemburg*

In this presentation I will discuss Lukács' claim that the foundational studies that initiate the theoretical rebirth of Marxism are Rosa Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital* and *Anti-Critique* and briefly show why we can read Luxemburg as a Hegelian. Although Luxemburg never elaborated a materialist theory of dialectics, she recognised that it was "the cutting weapon of Hegelian dialectic which allowed [Marx] to make such a splendid critical butchery". While criticising the Kantian and neo-Kantian philosophical tendencies in the social democratic movement and their diversion into a bourgeois "science", Luxemburg defends the achievements of Hegelian philosophy and links them to Marx's theory. Starting from these premises, György Lukács denounces the methods and questions of "vulgarised Marxism" and the "trivialisation of Marxism" in his *The Marxism of Rosa Luxemburg*, using Luxemburg's works as examples. Lukács introduces the idea of the category of totality as the bearer of the principle of revolution in science and points out that it is not the primacy of economic motives in explaining historical processes that distinguishes Marxism from bourgeois thought, but the point of view of totality. It is precisely in this sense that Lukács analyses Luxemburg as a Marxist and philosopher of totality and considers her to be one of his most important allies in emphasising the indispensability of Hegelian dialectics for revolutionary Marxist thought.

Dr. Sandra Rein: *Freeing the Philosophy of Rosa Luxemburg?*

As the works of Rosa Luxemburg are increasingly available in English --many for the first time-- her thought and its implications for our current moment are being engaged from many perspectives. In this paper, I provocatively ask if we can read a "philosophy" of freedom in Luxemburg's writings? Is Luxemburg herself a part of a "turn to philosophy" in Western Marxism? If so, what are the implications of this reading, particularly in an historical moment when "freedom" itself has been taken up by regressive, anti-democratic, and authoritarian movements.

In the paper, I return to key historical moments when the notion of freedom itself appears in Luxemburg's writings, even if not named as such. I also explore Luxemburg's relationship to "philosophy" proper and attempt to tease apart her conception of freedom vs current deployments that are better attached to notions of "license" than being "free". My engagement with Luxemburg is not only as a scholarly endeavour to "know" what she said — or even

assemble a political and revolutionary roadmap for organization and revolution-- but rather to attempt a reclamation of a "red thread" that runs throughout her works and activity that has a particular salience in a moment when "freedom" is the slogan of far right extremism and hyper-liberalism.

Lori Turner: Images of Revolution in the Work of Rosa Luxemburg

It is famously noted that Franz Rosenzweig composed *Star of Redemption* in snippets while on the Macedonian Front in WWI. Under duress, he wrote his thoughts on postcards and mailed them to his mother. Not long after (relatively speaking) Ernst Bloch reviewed Walter Benjamin's *One Way Street*; calling it a cabaret, a montage of philosophical ideas. His description draws our attention to the way Benjamin expressed his "philosophy of the street" as snippet-like postcards. Political/philosophical truths are preserved in these unmediated fragments, implying the revolutionary impulse to right past wrongs.

In a similar vein we could also recall Rosa Luxemburg's writings on revolution. On the run and under duress in 1905 and 1918, Luxemburg left behind a legacy of lessons to be learned from her participation in two unsuccessful revolutions. Her writings on revolution are packed with images. If it may be said that Rosenzweig wrote postcards from the Front, while Benjamin wrote postcards from Weimar capitalism in decline, then it may also be said that Luxemburg wrote postcards from the revolution. In each case, the future is open in the Blochian sense of "noch nicht".

In my presentation I focus on Luxemburg's images of revolution through a Western Marxist lens. Included among the many that I explore are: the image of lightning, images of the Via Dolorosa, of paths illuminated by a star and of "word become flesh". I am interested especially in drawing attention to the extent to which messianic tropes suggest a continuity between political strategy and poetic/creative imagination. I make note of the fact that such imagery makes some Marxists uncomfortable. In the end, however, such images are not far from the lexicon of Western Marxism, especially seen in Walter Benjamin.

room: b103
art and property

In this panel, we will focus on art's property relations, and discuss the imbrication of art, aesthetics and their histories with forms of property and propriety. While Marxist research has developed a robust understanding of how questions of labour and value bear on art and culture, recent work by scholars drawing on critical legal theory and Black studies have productively expanded this framework to revisit the relationship of art and aesthetics to property, sovereignty, nationalism and racial formation. This research includes Brenna Bhandar's *The Colonial Lives of Property* (2018) and David Lloyd's *Under Representation: The Racial Regime of Aesthetics* (2018) as well as the exhibitions *Illiberal Arts & Illiberal Lives* (Franke, Stakemeier, 2021, 2023) and, most recently, David Joselit's *Art's Properties* (2023). Drawing on this growing body of work, the panel wants to consider how recent theorisations of the bonds between the modern liberal subject, nationalism and the property regimes of art add to the existing Marxist debate. How do perspectives on the central place that art, aesthetics and culture occupy within liberal imaginaries of ownership and possession shift the emphasis on labour and value within recent Marxist analysis of art? In order to address these and other questions, the papers within the panel include theoretical reflections as well as case studies, drawing on an archive from interwar Europe and the US to current developments in the field of contemporary art. Some key themes include histories of property; art and form; the destruction of art as the destruction of property; art, freedom and property; how artists build "property relations" into their work, and how they block or enable "ownership"; as well as an exploration of liberalism and nationalism within the historiography of art history.

Ciarán Finlayson: Every House Deserves a Happy Home: Curtis Cuffie between 'The Real Estate Show' and the 'African Village in America'

This paper looks at the work of Curtis Cuffie (1955–2002), an African American artist, truck driver, and handworker from South Carolina who made public assemblage sculpture on the streets of Lower Manhattan, primarily along the Bowery, where he lived unhoused for a decade, from the late 1980s until his death. Most of these works, installed illegally on fences, sidewalks, doorways, and illicit open-air markets, were destroyed by the police, the department of sanitation, and the grounds team at Cooper Union school of art.

It aims to situate Cuffie's work not only in the milieu of homeless artists beginning to receive institutional support through new socially-conscious arts nonprofits but also his peers in downtown bohemia: the hip gallery world populated by the likes of Rachel Harrison and John Kelsey; postnationalist Black self-organization in the cultural realm, as represented by Steve Cannon's *A Gathering of the Tribes* and Alex Harsley's 4th Street Photo Gallery; and the politically-minded conceptual artists supported by the Dia Art Foundation making installations and films about housing and art, in Lower Manhattan including Martha Rosler, Group Material, and Yvonne Rainer.

Bringing together new biographical research on Cuffie's life and practice with materialist analysis of New York City financial, housing, and crime policies of the era, this paper will reinterpret Cuffie's work in relation to two opposite notion of art and property: first, that proposed by the network of artists and squatters surrounding the New York art collective Colab Inc and the gallery and social center ABC No Rio; and on the other, the tradition of rural, Southern, African American yard work—in both its folk and Outsider iterations—for which Cuffie, as a landless transplant from the country, represents an important transformation.

Jenny Nachtigall: Form, Property, and Art History's Wayward Vitalism

In historicising current debates on art and property, this paper starts from two propositions concerning the role of art history within the liberal imaginary of property and self-possession. Firstly, I suggest that art historically, attempts to wrest art from proprietary relations often materialised in fights over differing conceptions of form. Around 1900, how to understand form wasn't just an academic quarrel over terminology, but an urgent and political task that intersected with life and with how to organise it. In devising formalism as a scientific method, the modern discipline of art history not only domesticated that urgency into a liberal policy of equilibrium and control; it also institutionalised a possessive relationship to works of art as autonomous, and as devoid of any tangible relation to the materiality and the contradictions of lived life. In the following decades different materialist counter-models to art history's proprietary formalism emerged; these included, for instance, Lu Märten's vision of "classless form", Carl Einstein conception of form as permanent revolt or George Bataille's mobilisation of the formless as an operation against classification and the ruse of stable meaning. While all shared a focus on questions of life and the living, importantly, none claimed an ontological alterity or vitality immanent to art. In the second part of this paper, I will propose that these divergent approaches to form can be understood as contributions to a wayward vitalism. Broadly speaking, and in lack of a better term, I use this notion to describe an aesthetic relation to life that does not belong to the modern delimitations of art (as upheld by art history and the museum until today) but entails forms of collective making, conviviality, or protest. Some of the questions that I want to think about in this paper are: What changes if we shift focus from art as modernity's great exception (from the laws of labour and value), and think of it as but one manifestations of a wayward vitalism? How to deal with art history's propriety impulse as a problem of/in writing?

Stephanie Schwartz: How to Erase the Nation? Ownership and Emptiness in Native Land

In 1942, the collective Frontier Films completed their final production: *Native Land*. Made up of acted vignettes and documentary footage, this feature-length film takes as its subject the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee Hearings (1936-1941) on employer violations of the rights of workers to organise and bargain collectively. Comparison with the Comintern-led productions of the Workers Film and Photo League (1931-1935) have shaped the film's reception and its status as evidence of the dissolution of radical documentary projects of the early 1930s. Resisting such historical determinism, this paper will argue that *Native Land* must be considered in the context of a range of cultural work attending to what Langston Hughes once referred to as America's 'native' fascism. Central to this talk will be a review of the claim that the reinvention of the nation in the wake of the Depression relied on the representation of a fascist enemy abroad.

Key to my intervention will be an interrogation of the magisterial shots of empty plains and prairies opening *Native Land*, which critics have argued naively reproduce the removal of Native Americans from the land. Historicising the film as part of the anti-fascist work of the collective, I refuse to read these shots in insolation or as fiction. Instead, I will mine the contradiction between the film's erasure and its defence of civil liberties. Doing so will not defuse the offense. Rather, it will recognise it as a means of representing what Domenico Losurdo has characterised as liberalism's paradox—namely, the insistence that 'true' freedom is the freedom to exterminate and own. A defence of civil liberties, the film suggests, and I will argue, is inseparable from an acknowledgment of the intersection of self-determination, homogenization and ownership shaping the 'native' land.

Larne Abse Gogarty: "Living the life you deserve": Aspiration and property in recent art from London

This paper addresses two recent exhibitions that took place at the ICA, London: Morag Keil's *Moarg Kiel* (2019) and R.I.P. Germain's *Jesus Died For Us, We Will Die For Dudus!* (2023), both of which thematised property relations through method and materials, particularly in relation to British culture, history and politics since the millennium. As I will argue, by examining these exhibitions alongside one another, we gain a more critical understanding of how culture, nation and property interlink, moving beyond dominant left-liberal narratives which tend to emphasise culture's role within gentrification, a position which often inadvertently serves to fatalistically situate cities like London as seamlessly dominated by billionaires and fin-tech firms, where all meaningful cultural production has declined. Surprisingly, such narratives are often established in contrast with how the immiseration of the Thatcher years are conceived of as having been "good" for culture in London and the UK more widely. Yet, by analysing how Keil's and Germain's exhibitions handled issues of social mobility and aspiration, we can consider how both artists examine property not only as a commodity, but also proprietary forms of subjectivity, and therefore illuminate a more historically and geographically specific perspective on the culture-nation-property nexus. By drawing on theories of uneven development alongside theories of the property relations embedded in modern aesthetic theory, I want to think about the worlds within worlds that make up London as a city, and how this links with Keil's and Germain's inquiries into wealth and poverty along lines that manage to avoid the inert forms of representation that typify how those states are usually rendered within culture.

room: b104

furio jesi:

mythos, marxism, and the machine

Furio Jesi (1941-1980) was an Italian Marxist historian and polymath who focused on the study of myth, mythology, and the manifestations of right-wing culture and ideology both in reactionary circles and in leftist ones. Despite a recent surge of re-editions of his books in his native Italy and translations of his work into English by Alberto Toscano and others, Jesi's thought still has not gained the attention he deserves amongst Marxist readers. Nevertheless, it may only be a matter of time before Jesi is also discovered outside Italy.

This discovery is the task of radical social critique, to which Jesi can provide a distinctive contribution, since he was particularly keen in studying the workings of "ideas without words": signifiers like "Fatherland", "Honour", or "Sacrifice". Even though – or precisely because – these constructs are empty at their core, they are particularly useful for ideological manipulations. They are modern myths passed on as unquestionable truths by state and capitalist actors, but also by a veritable "culture of the right", and as in any myth their effectiveness lies in the narratives and stories concocted to buttress them up. These narratives are reinforced through incremental repetition in propaganda, in the media, and in every level of culture, but especially by their very own temporality and by their machine-like functioning. In an age dominated by brevity, simplification, and the rise of a new fascism, Marxists stand to gain a lot from Jesi's reflections when analysing current ideological production and propaganda online, but also from his reflection on the temporality of these ideological production.

With this panel, we aim to bring together scholars studying Jesi's work and thought from different perspectives – in part to increase awareness of Jesi's oeuvre amongst attendees, in part to show the freshness, actuality, and the radicality of his studies and analyses.

Frank Engster (RLS Berlin): The gifted Furio Jesi

There is an author whose biography is as astonishing as his work, and who has been the cue for an entire generation of the intelligentsia of the Italian (new) left, from Pasolini to Eco to Agamben. While he is now being rediscovered in Italy, he is largely unknown outside of it – his name: Furio Jesi. That Jesi is largely unknown is all the more astonishing because his subject is more topical than ever. For what concerned him was the primordial catastrophe of the 20th century: the failure of a socialist alternative and the rise of fascism taking place in its stead. In order to explain this rise, Jesi developed a critique of ideology and power in his "mythological machine" that stands, as it were, between Foucault, Benjamin and Adorno and yet is independent, perhaps unique. This presentation will introduce the "gifted Furio Jesi".

Ester van Ackere (KU Leuven): Furio Jesi on revolutionary struggle, sacrifice, and the exposure to myth

Recently, the increase of a 'new right' has sparked international interest in Furio Jesi's work on right-wing culture and political myth. For Jesi, right-wing myths rely on what he calls, borrowing a term from Spengler, 'ideas without words': words suggestively representing 'secret' spiritual ideas of being, buried underneath the materialist 'rubble' of history. Right-wing culture promises the renewal of these 'mythic' ideas through the sacrifice of historical reality, turning right-wing culture in its most extreme cases into a 'religion of death'. Jesi warns, however, that the humanist and Marxist left are not immune to symbolic 'ideas without words' and a religion of death either, even though, contrary to right-wing culture, they emphasize the absence of myth and the freedom of humanity. For Jesi, the more feverishly a left-wing revolutionary struggle aims to de-mythologize right-wing symbols in the name of the metaphysical absence of myth, the more it will paradoxically remain bound to the sacrificial logic it aims to destroy. I will argue then that, for Jesi, left-wing movements can effectively overcome myth only when they are able to critically 'expose' themselves to it. Instead of either naïvely surrendering to or absolutely rejecting myth, left-wing struggle must actively yet critically open itself up to the mythic and sacrificial reasoning it aims to destroy. For Jesi, indeed, a repeated and deliberate exposure to the enemy allows the insurgents to stop over-symbolizing hostile surroundings and to overcome fear which, ultimately, opens up a space where a demythologized, symbolically neutralized and materialist focus on historical struggle becomes possible.

Giorgio Chiappa (FU Berlin): The Mythologist as a Reader. Furio Jesi's Writings on Literature

In this presentation, a brief overview of Jesi's contributions in the field of literary studies will be delivered. A scholar of German-language letters and culture at his core, Jesi wrote numerous essays and books on German and Austrian authors of the modern age, from E.T.A. Hoffman up to Thomas Mann and Bertolt Brecht, and he applied his style of mythological analysis to these texts — teasing out their more sinister and reactionary underpinnings (for instance in their re-enforcing extant mythological constructs with the strength and the pleasure of storytelling), but also trying to understand how they point to political alternatives in a poetic and enchanting way. In this presentation, attendees will receive some examples of the literary side of Jesi's research and studies – focusing particularly on his book *Secret Germany* and on his reading of Rimbaud's *The Drunken Boat*. A further aim of this talk is to illustrate how Jesi's way of tackling literary texts could be applied today to older and newer forms of narrative media.

room: bglt
marxism and india

Abhilasha Srivastava, Aseem Hasnain: Abjection, Caste, and Capital Accumulation: Sanitation Labour in India

This paper studies the interactions of social relations of caste and capital through the lens of urban sanitation labor in India. Sanitation labor contradicts the narrative of neoliberal growth led development in India, specifically through the persistent practice of 'Manual scavenging,' which entails the manual cleaning of human excreta and other domestic waste in urban centers. This essential work required for maintaining a clean environment, a necessary condition for capitalist production, is performed by caste-based unfree laborers. We bring together three strands of literature; Social Reproduction Theory, Value-abjection, and literature on caste to understand the nature of sanitation work, its relationship with the social relations of caste, and its interaction with the accumulation of capital in India. By interrogating the nature of work and its connection to caste and capital-based modes of productions, we aim to extend Nancy Fraser's theorization of the 'crisis of care' as a double crisis in the case of India. The neoliberal capital both uses and repels the social relations of caste to create the 'dual crisis of social reproduction' that further exacerbate the existing inequalities of class and caste in India.

Craig Brandist (University of Sheffield): Brahmanism: its relationship to class power and formative influence on the ideology of (post)colonialism

Brahmanism is 'a socio-political ideology with a variable religious dimension' (Bronkhorst). It is an extraordinarily successful ideology that emerged through a series of conflicts with competitors, has adapted itself to a series of sharply different forms of class rule and foreign domination. Drawing on Gramsci's discussion of how the Catholic clergy adapted themselves to changing modes of class rule and early Soviet Indologist Aleksei Barannikov's ideology critique of imperial Indology, we will trace the fundamental features of Brahmanical conceptions of language and culture in particular, and how these emerged, achieved and maintained hegemonic status. We then focus on one period to consider how central ideas were adopted by European philologists and shaped entire

disciplinary frameworks such as oriental studies and linguistics. The resulting conception then framed the ideological struggle between the colonial administration and Indian nationalist intellectuals marginalising dissident voices of 'organic intellectuals' emerging from anti-caste movement. Stalinist Marxism in India fundamentally failed to engage these issues, leading to a damaging split in the struggle for a classless and casteless society, the effects of which persist today. Consideration of the persistence of ideas derived from Brahmanism challenges some of the fundamental assumptions of postcolonial theory and requires a much more complex appreciation of the formation of colonial ideology. It also has implications for current debates on 'decolonising the curriculum' as well as understanding the structure and forms of dalit opposition to the ideology of 'Hindutva.'

Suddhabrata Deb Roy: The Struggle for a Working-Class Identity: Wages, Social Interactions and Social Reproduction Work in India

Women perform most of the necessary social reproduction labour. In India, such workers may be divided into three broad categories: (i) Homeworkers; (ii) Domestic Workers; and (iii) Scheme Workers (workers employed in different state sponsored programmes/schemes). While domestic workers can be categorised as being purely informal in nature, the scheme workers locate themselves at the borders of formal and informal labour, both economically and culturally. Unlike homeworkers, both of them do receive 'wages', but the nature of the 'wages' received by them makes them distinct from other workers.

Wages are a crucial part of the Marxist framework of analysis and occupy an important position within the Marxist method of analysing social reproduction. The paper argues that in the case of social reproduction workers in India, it is critical to move beyond mere wages, and focus on analysing the nature of wages and the social interactions around wages. The paper analyses the nature of social reproduction work in India, and its relationship to dominant modes of social interaction in urban areas and argues that this relationship is one of the key methods through which the workers self-identify themselves in relation to the broader class structure.

Drawing from around 150 Interviews conducted with homeworkers, domestic workers and scheme workers, the paper brings forward the central role that the nature of wages and modes of interaction play in the process of class construction in contemporary society. It problematises the nature of wages, social interactions and the cultural construction of social reproduction work in India, both of which play a critical role in the ways in which the social reproduction workers subjectively define themselves, both as workers and as sovereign human beings within their families, their communities, and the broader social structure.

Paromita Chakrabarti (HR College Of Commerce And Economics): Redefining Citizenship in India: State, Illegal Migrants and Public Protests

The National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC) and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) are two controversial measures that weaponise the law discriminating against Indian Muslims and threatening the secular framework of the Indian Constitution. With the aggressive implementation of the National Population Register, beginning in the north eastern state of Assam, that makes it mandatory for resident Indians to register and be on record, this three-pronged surveillance mechanism makes citizenship contingent on religious identity. The NRIC, NPR and CAA in combination produce a structure that can potentially exclude thousands of Muslims and render them stateless. This paper will first focus on how the right-wing BJP government's policy towards illegal migrants in India is a cover to pursue a more pernicious, blatantly racist and explicitly bigoted agenda of persecution and exclusion along communal lines. These controversial acts aid the state in its attempt to legalise the Hindutva project and construct the Indian Muslim figure as a dangerous foreigner, an illegal migrant and an undesirable other. The worst affected by this dangerous project will be the poor, the landless and the illiterate who will struggle to present documents to prove citizenship. The second half of the paper will study the massive nationwide anti CAA protests that emerged as a significant challenge to the BJP's right-wing majoritarianism and redefined politics and public space. Millions of people cutting across race, religion, caste and class, stood in opposition to the Hindutva project. Massive discontent against the redefining of citizenship along religious lines indicate that collective and public dissent in India can result in the undoing of the right wing Hindutva project, if sustained. In conclusion, analysing the radical potential of these public protests is crucial and particularly significant in the wake of fresh violence and repression in Assam over the NRIC mandate and the 2024 general elections which BJP will contest on the promise of a nationwide implementation of NRIC and CAA. The radical potential of collective resistance against the state, its authority and its capacity for violence needs to be harnessed and unleashed in order to reject communal politics, fight racial discrimination and resist any attempt to divide the working class.

room: mal g14
reading poetry for emancipation

Natasha Belfort Palmeira (Sorbonne Nouvelle); Betina Bischof (Universidade de São Paulo); Laura Gagliardi (Universität zu Köln); Anderson Gonçalves da Silva (Universidade de São Paulo)

Poetry will be treated in this panel as a decisive element for individual and collective emancipation (either by supporting the elaboration of an incisive critical-reflexive thought, or by impelling – as though mediately – to action), in a context in which the means of domination are multiplied and improved not only in the objective sphere, but also in the sphere of subjectivity. Because of its relative resistance to bowing down to that which is heteronymous (i.e., themes and forms dictated by hegemonic and authoritarian discourse), poetry remains an almost marginal form of expression. However, it is precisely this displacement in relation to what is imposed (the lowering of the subject, the domination of man and nature, the reduction of the capacity for thought and action) that gives poetry a great potential for demystification, unlocked by the mediation of critical reading. Poetry can be also a way of knowing the world, able to reveal not only structures of feeling and thought, but also, and centrally, what ideology hides. The way in which poetry works shows the contradictions of reality and of the relationship between subject and society. Due to its potential to emancipate, poetry should be elevated to a fundamental right. How can poetry be critically read today, considering it as a privileged means for stimulating the development of a consciousness committed to the struggle and social transformation? This panel seeks to answer this question based on exemplary readings of Brazilian poetry. Brazilian reality is the focus of analysis, but it will be understood in the light of world history: the forms of social and ideological domination inherited from the colonial past require specific strategies of emancipation; however, they reverberate the dynamics of the capitalist order, which subjugates everyone globally (even if unequally) and therefore interests everyone.

room: mal g23
book panel: the eye of the master:
a social history of artificial intelligence

The panel investigates the spectrum of automation theories and technological transformation with a focus on AI as the last stage of the automation of manual, mental, and care labour. Authors like Benanav (2020) relativize the impact of AI on employment and emphasise deindustrialization and stagnation tendencies, while Pasquinelli (2023) centres the valorisation process of platform capitalism and AI monopolies around a new discipline and metrics of labour. As Atanasoski and Kalindi Vora (2019) have pointed out, the project of AI and automation in general remains grounded on the 'surrogate humanity' and invisible labour of enslaved, workers, and women that have made possible the universalistic ideal of the free and autonomous (white) subject.

The panel invites us to explore and question a deep historical perspective spanning the theories of automation of the industrial age, the Time and Motion Studies from the United States and Soviet Union's Taylorism, the labour process theory debate, the positions of Autonomist Marxism, and more recently communisation theory. The panel engages also with the historical epistemology of science and technology and feminist and decolonial epistemologies.

Recent machine learning models, based on statistical techniques of correlation deploying billions of parameters, have marked the passage to a new paradigm that could be defined as the 'automation of automation.' The rise of Large Language Models (LLMs) has shown how the project of abstracting language via statistical analysis ultimately operationalised a key feature of the human qua 'political animal'. In this regard, LLMs extend the automation of the division of labour from task management to the sphere of social mediation.

Matteo Pasquinelli: The Labour Theory of Automation from Babbage to AI

Leonardo Impett: The Industrial Automation of Aesthetics in Machine Vision

Paolo Caffoni: Machine Translation as a Technology of Bordering

Senthil Babu: Measures of Labour and the Machinery of Calculation: Three Case Studies

Matthew Lee: 'Class' Composition: Working in a South London School

"This worker's inquiry will recollect and critically examine the roughly a year I spent working as a teaching assistant in a school. This school was new, having only opened a few years prior, and part of a mid-sized academy chain. In many senses it represented the archetypal school in contemporary Tory Britain, but it also had its own particularities that allowed for the opening up of novel paths of struggle. The school was based in a predominantly Black and South Asian working-class area in South London.

In my effort to reassess the class composition and forms of struggle that took place within my time working in this school, this worker's inquiry will be broken down into three sections:

The first section will be a description of the general composition of the school to set the background for the inquiry as a whole. This will regard the social composition of the different strata of workers (teachers, support staff, cleaning and maintenance workers, caterers, etc.), as well as students, as well as the technical roles each played within the functioning of the school.

The second section will be an account of a number of my experiences working that can offer us insight into school workers' struggles today. Examples will include an informal campaign that led to a 12% pay rise and more free periods; struggles within, but mostly against, the union; and the formation of a 'counter-subjectivity' amongst certain parts of the workforce.

The third and final section will then use these previous sections to present potential lessons for school struggles going forward, linking this to an analysis of the role the education system plays in capitalist Britain today, and therefore the potential ramifications class struggle in schools could have.

With the ongoing national school strikes in England, as well as the emergence of significant local struggles, such as the anti-academisation strikes at the Prendergast schools in Lewisham, we are in an opportune moment for intervention and escalation of the class struggle in schools. This worker's inquiry then aims to contribute to the pooling of our collective knowledge and experiences, in the hopes we can unleash the struggle that we desperately need to win as a class.

Elia Alberici: Rethinking Self-Valorisation. Notes from a Students' Inquiry

Nowadays, the Italian student movement is facing a period of deep crisis within universities. The impressive mobilisation of the so-called 'anomalous wave' against Berlusconi's neoliberal reforms for universities had its peak in 2008 and it was definitely defeated around 2015. Thus, the tools and techniques of organization for student politics, such as collectives and social centres, entered a period of crisis, which now calls for a radical rethinking and critique.

In order to do so, I will discuss some results of a students' inquiry carried in the context of the University of Bologna. In particular, I will focus on the theoretical and political meaning of the category of self-valorisation in order to imagine and practice a student politics today.

Firstly, I will provide a brief historical discussion of this category, which is usually associated with Antonio Negri's writings (known as Books for Burning) in the context of 1970s Italy. I will compare and contrast Negri's proposal of self-valorisation with the one advanced coevally by Romano Alquati (in the book *Università di ceto medio e proletariato intellettuale*); differently from the former, the latter addressed this category especially for students' struggles. According to Alquati, to put it very roughly, self-valorisation consisted of conflictual practices which claimed for an education addressed to autonomous aims, against the capitalistic need of an educated labour-power.

The results of this students' inquiry clearly testify how today students attend university in order to become professional workers, in other words, to enrich their human capital. Nevertheless, by reflecting on some students' pre-political, ambivalent, and spontaneous behaviours is possible to imagine a radical politics. In short, a claim against the impoverished education provided by the capitalistic university, which only aims at educating labour-

power for its production purposes. In this way, I will draw some remarks on how to think and practice a politics of self-valorisation today.

Nehaal Bajwa; Tom Cowin; Nicky Sharma; Fez Sibanda; Amy McGourty: *Who Is Sussex For? A radical exploration of place, belonging and resistance in the neoliberal financialised university.*

The privatisation, marketisation and financialisation of higher education in Britain has established a new type of academic subject and an economised common sense about the purpose of higher education (Vernon, 2018). The university is often invoked in the culture war, obscuring and legitimising ongoing cuts, particularly to arts and humanities courses. Cuts to higher education funding and welfare more broadly can be seen as a form of 'organised abandonment' (Wilson Gilmore, 2022; Harvey, 2018) of students, researchers, teachers and staff alike, particularly those experiencing intersecting oppressions. In our case, our campus is being gentrified using private capital, pushing lower-income students out of university accommodation and atomising the university community. Simultaneously, universities and housing providers are part of the UK's border regime, upholding and enforcing visa regulations while exploiting international students through high fees. The ongoing strike wave saw strong bonds of solidarity established and maintained between staff and students at the university, but these must be strengthened. We must look further than traditional union-based approaches to struggle, and instead seek to forge relationships of solidarity across groups of workers and students, all of whom produce and reproduce the university.

This paper will be based on an (ongoing) series of workshops which we, a group of doctoral researchers and UCU members, will conduct at the University of Sussex. Guided by Doreen Massey's (1991) question 'Who is this place for?' we will use participatory methods such as radical walks, storytelling and visual approaches, we will explore the ways in which we are abandoned by the university; the things we want to change; and how we will go about changing them. The purpose of the paper is to bring together folks from all corners of the university community, not just those engaged in knowledge production or who feel at ease engaging in political struggle. We expect that by sharing our methods of questioning powerful institutions of knowledge production, we can contribute to building a movement for social and spatial justice within the higher education sector.

room: dlt
althusser in dialogue

Geoff Pfeifer (Worcester Polytechnic Institute): *Of Automobility and Authoritarian Desire: Althusser, Deleuze, Structural Causality, and Authoritarian Subjectivity in Climate Politics and Beyond*

"Much has been written of late about the causes of our new authoritarian moment. In many corners of the academy the consensus is that one of the main causes is the alienation and economic degradation of neoliberal capital. This paper will not dispute that claim. It argues, however, that locating contemporary authoritarian movements and their attendant subjects in the neoliberal project and seeking to counter this turn also involves understanding, at a more micro-level the ways those authoritarian subjects are produced and reproduced by other material formations and institutions. Many of which are more proximate than economic and policy structures found in neoliberalism as a political ideology and set of policies and yet have authoritarian interpellative effects on individuals. I turn to Althusser and his elaboration of the idea of 'structural causality' and its connection to ideological interpellation as a means for investigating this alongside Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the ways that desire itself is structured and oriented by material forces outside of the subject.

The specific example I explore to help make sense of this is in the realm of climate politics. Andres Malm and the Zetkin Collective have recently very nicely made an Althusserian inflected argument that there exists a climate change denial Ideological State Apparatus that has had an outsized influence on the ways people think about climate and has allowed decades of authoritarian denialist policy to advance while only making minimal and marginal change (Malm and Zetkin, 2021). This is a much needed intervention and the work in this paper build on that by thinking, again, at a more micro level, the ways that such an ISA functions via structural causality in making many who generally believe in climate change and want broadly to work to remedy it unable to let go of certain material existences such as the one centered around the personal automobile, which as we know, is a major influence on climate. Drawing on literature in Urban Studies and Geography I show how the desire for continued automobility, even in the face of overwhelming evidence of its negative climate effects, is so well integrated into subjective existence for so many, that when confronted with policy changes that might reduce the usage of such technology, normally progressive and left-leaning people often turn away from those values and toward a more authoritarian

politics that prioritizes individual freedom to drive over the communal good of climate change mitigation policy. Linking Althusser's conception of structural causality and Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of desire's production can help make sense of this (and by extension, a host of other phenomena the push subjects toward a host of authoritarian politics) and also gives us ways to imagine confronting and shifting such authoritarian desire.

Thomas Carmichael (University of Western Ontario): Althusser and Mass Movements: Encounter as Rectification

In "On the Tendencies in Philosophy," the fifth and closing section of his "Elements of Self-Criticism," Louis Althusser, in the course of setting out the primary (useful) and secondary (theoreticist) tendencies in his own work, offers the striking observation that "the class struggle does not figure in its own right in For Marx and Reading Capital." For Althusser, this absence is simply symptomatic of the pernicious impact of the secondary (theoreticist) tendency in that work, but my paper argues that beyond any theoreticist tendency, this absence is part of a larger persistent dilemma in Althusser's thought that continues to resonate and even take on a new prominence in his late work.

My paper focuses particularly on Althusser's several texts in the later 1970s that address the crisis both in the Communist movement and in Marxist thought, and specifically on the various ways in which in those texts we find the assertion of the importance of mass movements outside the Party consistently placed alongside an insistence upon the absence of any adequate theorizing of the true nature of class struggle. In "The Crisis of Marxism," for example, a text based on a discourse Althusser delivered in Venice in November of 1977, he asserts, "you will not find in the Marxist heritage any real theory of the organisations of class struggle," and only a paragraph later adds, "And above all – the most important of questions for past and future – how can relations be established with the mass movement which, transcending the traditional distinction between trade union and party will permit the development of initiative among the people, which usually fail to fit into the division between the economic and political spheres Because we are witnessing more and more mass movements of the people arising by themselves . . .".

I then pursue this dilemma in the late work on aleatory materialism in which the notion of the encounter largely comes to stand in for the theorizing of struggle and in which the assertion of this importance of mass movements in the current conjuncture is inseparable from the efforts to recast the high Althusserian reading of Capital. My discussion here relies on still unpublished texts in the Althusser archive.

room: g51
capitalism and agribusiness

Chitrangada Choudhury (University of Zurich): Dismantling Agroecology: The Coming of the GM Cotton-Agrochemical Complex in an Indian Highland Frontier

This article traces the making of the GM cotton-agrochemical assemblage in highland eastern India. In this region of rich biodiversity and Indigenous systems of food and agroecology, GM cotton cultivation has seen a meteoric rise over the past two decades. I explore how these shifts mark a profound rupture that is fundamentally transforming the relationship among farmers, land, seeds and knowledge systems around food and agroforestry practices. I contextualize this ongoing material and knowledge rupture in the specificities of location - both in an agro-ecological space and in a socio-historical matrix of class, caste, region and gender. Thus what enables or erodes agroecological practices and ways of knowing is not simply the economic vulnerability of smallholder agriculture; but more fundamentally a caste-prejudiced logic in India that, on the one hand, dispossesses Indigenous communities of their land, seeds, and knowledge, and on the other denies the contributions of Indigenous knowledge, agriculture and food cultures towards sustainability and biodiversity. This coming together of industrial productivist logic with casteist prejudice is what I call casteist capitalism, drawing on Cedric Robinson's (1983) framework of racial capitalism. Casteist capitalism structures both state programs of 'tribal development' and agribusiness strategies in the region. Together they work to deride long-standing agroecological practices, and the communities which practice them as 'backward' and in need of reform towards a modern, commercial agriculture, as represented by chemical-intensive cotton monocropping. Ultimately, I argue that the ongoing undermining of agroecology is fundamentally linked to the production of highland eastern India as a frontier zone for state power and corporate capitalism mediated by grossly unequal caste relations.

Soledad Castro-Vargas, Marion Werner: Pesticides and the Agro-food Ecological Regime: A view from Costa Rica over the long twentieth century

This paper draws on Costa Rica's entanglement with chemicalized agriculture over the long twentieth century to unpack the role that pesticides play in capitalism. More than mere inputs, we argue that pesticides serve as key stabilizing agents in an ecological regime that depends upon the surpluses that these chemicals marshal: as marketed byproducts of extractive industries, as compounds that externalize harms by racializing workers and peripheralizing environments, and as biocides that tap organisms' susceptibility. The susceptibility of monocrops to pathogens, pests and weeds, and the erosion in turn of these target organisms' susceptibility to pesticides, creates a patchwork of biotechnical and chemical fixes that shifts and changes over time and space. If, for capital, the iterative reworking of this patchwork maintains accumulation via monocrop plantations, this arrangement also conditions land-based rural livelihood strategies developed in and around plantations. We develop our framework through an historically-grounded account of capitalist agricultural development and pesticide use in the southern Pacific region of Costa Rica. We take the contemporary challenges of parceleros/as, former agricultural workers and peasants who farm small plots, as our departure point. The aspirations and obstacles faced by parceleros/as committed to cultivating livelihoods and forging agrarian futures in the region calls for deeper attention to the shifting institutional orders, socioecological legacies, and contemporary generics boom that maintain pesticides over time at the center of our agro-food ecological regime.

Justin Paulson (Sociology and Political Economy, Carleton University): Trees into capital: forestry, dispossession, and accumulation in the Ottawa Valley

While the putative origin story of the Canadian economy is in the fur trade, those mercantile relations did not simply slide into capitalist ones. The genesis of Canadian capitalism lies rather in the timber industry of the Ottawa Valley: the dispossession of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg of the Kichi Sibi watershed and the introduction by European settlers of capitalist relations onto their lands, forests, and waters.

This paper focuses on the role of forestry in the political economy of settler capitalism in the Ottawa Valley before 1950. As the pines along the Ottawa river and its tributaries were turned first into square timber for the masts of the British navy, and then into pulp and paper for domestic consumption, the watersheds upon which the Algonquin people depended were commodified and their surpluses capitalized. Much of Canadian banking has its origins here (and the larger project of which this paper is a part includes an estimate of the minimum value remaining in circulation).

This was not a matter of Indigenous peoples being, in the words of forestry historian A.R.M. Lower, ""lightly brushed aside"", nor of their being integrated into a nascent capitalism. We use archival data to trace the ways that dispossessive extraction often displaced (without successfully erasing) one set of social and legal relations between people, the forests, and everything in them, by capitalist ones. For the settlers and timber barons, trees were commodities to be extracted, processed, circulated, valued; such relations were new to the forests, but not to the settlers. From the standpoint of the Anishinaabeg, the timber industry was an agent of primitive accumulation. The two sets of relations often co-existed side-by-side and continue to be contested, shedding light on the question of primitive vs. capital accumulation in settler colonial and settler capitalist studies.

Chris Little (York University, Toronto): Agrarian change and labour migration as co-constitutive factors in uneven development: a labour regimes analysis between Ontario and Guatemala

This paper analyses agricultural consolidation and the temporary migration of farm labour as co-constitutive factors within an uneven world economy, situating agrarian change in the Canadian province of Ontario and Guatemala in local, hemispheric and global context. It explores the relationship between these processes of change through the mediation of migrant labour flows, contending that amidst ongoing, rapid and enormous processes of concentration and consolidation in agriculture, we must understand both the role and perspective of labour amidst these shifts.

Drawing from theoretical work on uneven development, labour regimes, social reproduction and the agrarian question, the paper presents initial findings from fieldwork conducted with Guatemalan temporary migrant farmworkers. Data from interviews with these workers in Ontario, as well as connected research participants, will be presented. Worker perspectives on agrarian change and rural labour both in Ontario and in Guatemala will

complement research into the nature of consolidation in agriculture in both geographic locations and its relationship to changing patterns of migrant labour usage as well as changes in rural social reproduction.

The interview data will be analysed through a labour regimes approach, as set out in Baglioni et al.'s (2022) edited volume, in order to foreground class relations and labour's agency amidst structural constraints. The utilisation of Guatemalan temporary migrant labour by agrarian capital in Ontario will be explored as a 'nested' labour regime, with the individual workplace, production of specific commodities, the provincial farming system and the transnational relationship between home and temporary workplace being considered particular sub-regimes of a larger regime.

This transnational labour regime will be analysed as a mechanism of uneven development and its attendant processes of social differentiation, in order to argue that agrarian change and labour migration must be analysed in connection across the world economy, and through a labour-centric rather than capital-centric approach.

room: g51a
marxism, feminism:
theory and politics i

Lucely Ginani Bordon (York University, Political Science Department): The International Women's Strike and the question of a communist strategy: Forging a Politics of Social Reproduction?

Since 2017, the International Women's Strike has been held every year on March 8th in different locations and has been influenced by analyses of social reproduction. By adopting the term strike, the women's strike questions patriarchal mandates that naturalize certain tasks as "women's work", demonstrating the inescapable link between productive and reproductive labour and challenging an abstract and homogenous idea of class. Theoretically, this is the primary aim of Social Reproduction Theory in its Marxian form. SRT is methodologically committed to dialectical historical materialism and aims to theoretically integrate the different relations of oppression in the capitalist social totality. Yet, the translation of SRT's insights into a communist strategy and transitional politics for the present historical moment remains underdeveloped. Therefore, this paper seeks to investigate how the International Women's Strike movement is rethinking the question of Marxist strategy, and to consider some of its internal limitations thus far in forging a politics of social reproduction. Three preliminary considerations are offered. First, in a number of instances the IWS has successfully resisted the further privatization of social reproduction, claiming more resources for life and less for capital. However, to the degree that socialization of social reproduction work has sometimes been achieved through these struggles, the logic of life has nonetheless continued to run up against the enduring imperatives of capital and the logics of the capitalist state. Even when experiencing important successes, the strategic questions posed by the IWS have thus far been unable to move from defensive resistance to offensive forms of class struggle. Second, the IWS is certainly committed to building mass movements as a form of internal resistance against capital but does not necessarily support the idea that radical transformation can only occur through a mass revolutionary process. Third, although the IWS has demonstrated that it can develop class consciousness and revolutionary desire, it is not yet clear how its politics of social reproduction can contribute to a strategy of radical transformation capable of challenging capitalist social relations and the capitalist state.

Shambhawi Vikram (Research Fellow, Indian Institute of Technology (Delhi); PhD candidate, Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi)): 'Gender' and Humanist Entrepreneurship: Feminism in the age of neoliberalism

The rise in a phenomenon of 'self-help' culture, with an emphasis on the gender and the sexual is reflected in digital content through online campaigns and in the kind of organising by NGOs working towards. Such campaigns advocate towards a philosophy of an 'everyday' lived practice of politics. Sustainability imperatives and such like find traction through these platforms and logics (ecofeminist echoes such as the emphasis on biodegradable products and such like). I document instances of corporate run menstrual hygiene programs in India, often targeted in non-urban centres of the country and although I study contemporary menstrual discourses in India, the uptake of menstruation as an object of intervention in India is related also to its emergence in the realm of global health and sanitation within the International development industry. The International Development history has had a trajectory of engaging with standalone issues that gain prominence in discourse. For instance, the shift from maternal mortality to adolescent health and now menstruation makes for an interesting study of the causes and manners in which these interventions are conceptualised and sustained. India is a residual welfare state, in that the aggressive shift to neoliberal policies, there are a few welfare programs that continue to function for a small population while keeping

intact the logic of the consumer/user of a small section of urban, new middle classes (D'mello, 2009) in a relationship such that the State takes on the burden of creating that aspiration for the other population (Sangari, 2015). These shifts in policies are not occurring only through the question of menstruation, but the recovery of menstruation through menstrual hygiene management programs marking a specific kind of moralising discourse.

In this context, I will study how the category of 'gender' today lends itself so easily to a kind of 'humanist entrepreneurship' - a neoliberal project, easily co-opted by corporates and states. What really remains of feminist politics (still tied only to subversion?), reduced to gender, co-opted through gender mainstreaming. Has neoliberalism spelt the death knell for 'feminism'? Can theories of 'social production' aid in understanding the pathway?

Steve Hajjianni (KCL): Golden Spindles: Automation and Gendered Abjection in the Chapter on Machinery and Large-Scale Industry

I present a close reading of the chapter on 'Machinery and Large-Scale Industry' in Capital vol.1 informed by the theorization of value. Here, Marx reiterates the argument that it is only the labour that is 'necessary' to a particular historical and geographical context that 'counts' in the social relation of value, by employing the patently absurd example of a hypothetical capitalist's 'foible for using golden spindles.' 'The only labour that counts for anything', he writes, 'remains that which would be required to produce a steel spindle, because no more is necessary under the given social conditions.' Later, we see how this seemingly rational invocation of necessity accompanies the degradation of labour conditions along gendered lines, as the application of labour-saving technology appears just as extravagant as the use of golden spindles in local contexts where 'the women of the surplus population' can be put to work in abominable conditions for next to nothing. To the capitalist in pursuit of surplus value, every detail of a concrete labour process exceeds the formless and empirically unknowable limits of the 'socially necessary' as posited by value. Drawing on the concept of 'negative totality' elaborated in recent work by Chris O'Kane and others, I argue that this highlights a dynamic of negation which structures the capital-labour relation and drives the twin tendencies of automation and gendered abjection.

room: r201
rethinking marxist philosophy

Mike Wilkinson, Marco Goldoni: The Material Constitution in the Marxist Tradition: Its Rise and Fall and Rise

The aims of this paper are to track the development of the idea of the material constitution in the Marxist tradition and explain its historical trajectory inside and outside the Marxist canon. The paper focuses on four turning points in the social and intellectual history of the material constitution: its Marxist origins in the second half of the 19th century (Karl Marx and Ferdinand Lassalle, who coined the term); the crucial years of the Soviet revolution and the First World War (Vladimir Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg); the interwar period (Antonio Gramsci); and the tail end of the 20th century (Étienne Balibar and Antonio Negri). At each turning point, a certain slack between the concrete constitutional order and the codified or written constitution pushed scholars to revisit the idea of the material constitution. The paper notes a decline of interest in the material constitution after the Second World War, but also underscores the series of contemporary crises which have seen the notion return to the centre stage of constitutional enquiry. It thus highlights the insights offered by Marxist authors to grasp the material constitution in the 21st century, as well as the importance of the concept to Marxism itself.

Dimitrios Krassas (National And Kapodistrian University Of Athens): Alienation, Social Justice and Labor in Eastern Christianity and Marxism : A historical and theoretical sketch

During the second half of the twentieth century , there has been a revival of religious sentiment among the people linked not only with the rise of religious fundamentalism ,especially after the fall of the Soviet Union and the subsequent triumph of the end of history ideology, but with progressive and radical currents also, as in the case of Liberation Theology. This fact brings Marxists before serious questions ,not only about the persistence of religion in former socialist countries , but also about how to handle this new situation.

Many Marxist thinkers were fascinated by the influence religion had in human history and ideology, from Engels and Gramsci , to Bloch and Eagleton. Their sources were indicted by the historical and social framework they lived and

acted. Their focus was of course centered around the Bible and mainly Western Christianity, with the likes of Latin Fathers St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, Protestant theologians Martin Luther and Thomas Muntzer etc. There is an equally rich tradition in the East as well, which begins with the Greek Fathers of the Church and goes all the way into the 20th century. Rosa Luxemburg and Ernst Bloch are but two thinkers who incorporated eastern thought in their writings.

Marxists many times tend to forget that religion is not only the opium of the people, but a heart of a heartless world. The short presentation will discuss the thought of the eastern theology in connection to marxism, in an attempt to enrich the revolutionary Marxist thought and practice and try to bring forth what Ernst Bloch used to describe as "the warm stream of Marxism".

Andrzej Frelek (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences): The promise of mastery over mastery of nature: Adorno's critique of the transhistorical element in the domination of nature

In this paper, I argue for the importance of giving consideration to Adorno's emphasis on transhistorical aspects of the domination of nature and present his critical theory as a valuable framework for understanding the ecological crises we face. I assert that we need to extend our critical thinking beyond specific manifestations of the domination of nature in consideration of what leads us to perpetuate human and extra-human suffering in various forms of social organization.

I contend that addressing the present multitude of ecological crises requires a comprehensive approach to the problem of the domination of nature that extends beyond any single manifestation of it. Towards this goal, I explore Adorno's critique of the transhistorical character of the domination of nature found in the principles of instrumental reasoning, which finds in the capitalist mode of production its worst historical instantiation yet.

My interpretation posits Adorno's critique as a potential foundation for a critical theory that can warn us against the belief that solving any individual ecological problem or transitioning to a different mode of production would be enough in itself to eliminate the needless harm inflicted upon nature. In my view, this theory can serve as a potent basis for uniting various forms of socio-ecological struggles, especially due to its often unacknowledged emphasis on the necessity of a radical reconstruction of our needs and desires.

I conclude by emphasizing that for this reason, our current struggles necessitate the construction of a radically historical critical theory of needs—one that could move us to critique our attachments to socially constructed forms of desire we often understand as something given.

Holly Lewis: There's Peace in the Uncanny Valley, But None for Us: Strange New Humanisms

Louis Althusser's view that philosophy is a servant of ideology is easily affirmed by so much as glancing at the effective altruism (EA) movement as championed by analytic philosophers Nick Bostrom and William MacAskill. This paper will do a deep dive into their questionable causal logic, their teleological framework, and the assertion of a bold grand narrative and obvious bold solution. According to their math, future humans will live inside computer simulations on multiple planets and our current pursuit of—well, pretty much anything—stands in the way of trillions of future human star children.

The EA movement's obsession with the pure and unsullied nonexistent future humans at the expense of living people is racially-coded, techno-accelerationist utopianism. While EA is sometimes combined with transhumanism, and transhumanism is sometimes confused with queer and trans people, EA has nothing to do with trans people and is both heterosexist and eugenicist. This "hetero-futurist" movement bears a family resemblance to the late fascist (per Toscano) trend of "hetero-atavism". Like their futurist counterparts, hetero-atavists espouse a romanticized and mystical narrative concerning the moral sanctity of embryonic potential humans. In both cases, it is potential humans that matter—not the potential of existing humans.

This paper explores the mechanisms behind why these particular bad humanisms, these dehumanisms, are emerging at this particular conjuncture. Following Ernst Bloch, both hetero utopian fantasies are a sort of "swindle of fulfillment" but I will argue that they are emerging at this conjuncture as reactions to particular capitalist epiphenomena: automation, generative AI, the COVID pandemic, the housing market, and ecological crises. The paper will also examine why Marxists are in a state of collective decoherence.

However, these new bad humanisms aside, among other Black radical frameworks, I propose that engaging with Rosi Braidotti's perspectives might offer valuable insights into the complexities and contradictions of our era as we build the anti-capitalist narrative that centers the role (human) labor power plays in ending the system the effective altruists so desperately wish to accelerate and steer towards exterminationist policies. Despite my reservations regarding her vitalist 'matter-realism,' Braidotti's work presents a conception of 'life' that transcends the symbolic purity of the fetus (against the sinful, sexual and complicated adult body) and helps us think of a future where humans are more than philosophers' thought experiments or rational calculus, where vulnerability and actually existing social beings matter along with their horizons.

room: rg01
animals and the left ii

Rimona Afana (independent); Virginia Magnaghi (Scuola Normale Superiore); Nicola McCartney (CSM); Richie Nimmo (Manchester); Giovanni Tonolo (EUI); Troy Vettese (European University Institute)

This is the second of two panels dedicated to the question of animals within the radical tradition. While the animal question was a lively issue for many socialist thinkers such as Thomas More, Robert Owen, and Percy Bysshe Shelley, Marxists has largely shied from the topic. While there have been many notable exceptions to this trend, such as Rosa Luxemburg and much of the Frankfurt School, more still needs to be done to remedy the 'orphaning' of animal rights on the left. We need studies on the role of animals within capitalist production, the figure of the animal within socialist thought (such as the 1844 Manuscripts), understanding why capitalism causes much greater biodiversity loss than previous eras, and imagining what animal liberation could look like in a socialist society.

Nicola McCartney: Animal Drag

This proposition paper attempts to create space for a new field of interdisciplinary research I am attributing to Animal Drag. Animal Drag tries to work beyond, in-between, and outside of boundaries, binaries and dualisms. It is invested in creating a slippery, porous and inclusive space between gender, sex, race, sexuality, class, disability and species through critical and conscious acts of adornment and/or embodied performance that are entangled with the nonhuman animal, but which also asks, 'What's in it for the animal?' Patricia MacCormack, previously offered perspectives of the modified body as a transgressive and "plastic" state of "in between". [1] The Fashion theorist, Joanne Entwistle, argues that dress is a form of embodiment. [2] We can, by extension, deduce that sartorial expression, and therefore drag, can be an embodied experience. For the sake of Animal Drag, then, and taking the above into consideration, adornment through drag is defined in the wider sense as any form of body modification critically and consciously engaged with the nonhuman animal, be that material, habitual, or temporal embodiments, and as a state of becoming or being in-between. Each of these involves "putting on", adapting or altering oneself. Animal Drag, therefore, takes two juxtaposing elements against which Man defined itself as superior – adornment, as a sign of "Culture", and the nonhuman animal, as the antithesis of "Culture" – as its meeting point for active analyses.

To demonstrate Animal Drag in action, I will use a scene from *The Square* (2017), in which the actor Terry Notary performs as a primate in order to challenge the status quo of toxic masculinity, humanist thinking, and the artworld's white-elite, which is itself a microcosm of wider structural power imbalances. I will attempt to demonstrate how Animal Drag and its study pulls on other fields, in multiple directions, in an intersectional manner, to generate new and hopeful conversations around post-anthropocentric, non-normativity, which allow us to read works that engage in Animal Drag as political weapons across contemporary, capitalist cartographies. This paper proposes that Animal Drag should be engaged in late capitalist structures, like fashion and the artworld; it recognizes the unavoidable pitfalls of a neo-liberal society but demonstrates that there is space to create and consider a "system of representation that matches the complexity of contemporary nonhuman animals and their proximity to humans". [3] If all animals are now part of the market economy and each is as disposable as the other, then Animal Drag shows how multiple disciplines intersect amid contemporary capitalism, but its activity also challenges, parodies, or highlights the exploitation of these exchanges.

Richie Nimmo: Animal Labour, Nature and Accumulation: Between Posthumanism and Value Theory

This article contributes to critical understandings of animal work by articulating a posthumanist perspective on animal labour in capitalism, worked through Marxist value theory. It introduces the posthumanist challenge to

anthropocentric conceptions of work before summarising key strands of scholarship which have pursued this by positing various forms of animal activity and interspecies interaction as work, together with various research on animals and capitalism. These point to the necessity of – but do not furnish – a critical political economy of the specific role of animal labour within capitalism, which would necessarily mean engaging with Marx's analysis of capitalist accumulation, underpinned by his theory of value. Yet a conventional reading of value theory seems to reinscribe anthropocentric conceptions of labour by excluding animals from surplus value creation. This is explored in more depth by discussing two recent approaches to nonhuman work and value, each of which, it is argued, tends to undermine the cogency of value theory and its critical potency. The article concludes by positing an alternative posthumanist approach which situates animal labour in relation to capitalist accumulation by refocusing insights from Marxist political ecology to delineate a distinct framework for grasping the political economy of animal labour.

Giovanni Tonolo and Virginia Magnaghi: *Is it just about succulent gentrification? What's at stake with the Fiorentina steak*

The origins of the Fiorentina steak are traced back to the Medici celebrations in Renaissance Florence, when the family used to distribute steaks to citizens. Today, the t-bone steaks, usually weighing about 1.5 kg, are proudly displayed in the windows of the city's restaurants, feeding millions of tourists every year. For visitors, this has become a sought-after experience, and the "Fiorentina" is currently in the process of being included in the UNESCO World Heritage list. This presentation looks at the history of the Fiorentina steak from a historical materialist perspective, exploring its entanglement with the evolution of the Chianina breed in relation to changing production methods in the Tuscan countryside and the recent growth of tourism.

In the Roman Empire, the majestic Chianina cow was used as an agricultural tool and not as a source of food. During the Middle Ages, the region was overgrazed and the ox itself became smaller. With the reclamation of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the ox increased in size, becoming the subject of the first market shows. With the introduction of modern agricultural machinery in the 1960s, Chianina was "developed" solely to produce more and better quality meat. Today 32,000 Chianina cattle are estimated in Tuscany and Umbria (a quarter of the total number of cattle bred), while it has also been exported and bred in China, Russia, Canada, the US, Brazil and Australia. Thanks to its "improvement", 43 steaks can be obtained from each cow slaughtered. Florence's growing dependence on tourism has led to the commodification of the Fiorentina steak to meet the demands of a mass market. This phenomenon, which highlights the dynamics between food, capitalism, and culture, also raises questions about the impact of global tourism on local traditions and the environment, and about the consequences of the global expansion of a certain race (Chianina). It also encourages reflection on how food can be a lens to examine social structures and power dynamics.

room: rb01
modernisms of the plantationocene

Nick Lawrence (University of Warwick), *"Revolution within the Revolution: Anticolonial Environmentalisms in the Long 1960s"*

The mid-twentieth century saw both the rise of a non-aligned movement among newly decolonised nations intent on beating their own path to an emancipated modernity, and the use of capitalist agriculture as a weapon of Cold War geopolitics. In this context, the project of developing an alternative relation to the land, and more broadly a transformed understanding of the very terms of 'development,' became an especially urgent issue for writers and thinkers charged with carrying forward the energies of an anticolonial politics into the sphere of culture. Against the backdrop of the so-called Green Revolution, with its imposition of the use of industrial farming technologies, chemical fertilisers and pesticides, and monocultural production on a ramped-up scale, the search for an emancipatory model of socio-ecological relations took a variety of forms in policymaking and culture alike.

This paper reads mid-century experiments in environmental thought from the standpoint of eco-emergency in the present, with particular attention to the cross-fertilization of radical energies in African, Caribbean and North American writing. From the inspiration of Cuba's independent revolutionary example for poets such as Leroi Jones/ Amiri Baraka, to the connections between labour, scarcity and ecology in Edouard Glissant's poetics of antillanité, to the 'peasant modernism' of Bessie Head's agrarian fictions, the postwar challenge to neocolonial domination was increasingly inseparable from a militant 'green language' developed, out of necessity, in opposition to the capitalist world-ecology. Revisiting Fanon's political ecology of the soil, the paper will argue that, pace Fredric Jameson's influential reading, the post-1960s period did not herald capital's elimination of 'the last vestiges of Nature' so much

as the intensification of ongoing struggles against ecosystemic annihilation.

Christine Okoth (Kings College London), "Cultivation as Liberation in the Global Black 1970s"

This paper draws out those structures of solidarity and global visions of Black freedom articulated around the event of the 1974 Sixth Pan African Congress in Dar es Salaam by showing that Black artists, activists, and state representatives from the US, the Caribbean, and East and Southern Africa identified agriculture as a central pillar of Black liberation. It does so through a particular focus on the global circuits of Black feminist poetry of the 1970s. As Quito Swan notes in his analysis of the call for the 1974 Sixth Pan-African Congress in Dar es Salaam, organizers positioned technological innovation in relation to cultivation practices as a central path towards economic self-reliance. This argument mirrors the concomitant focus on agriculture in 6PAC organizer and environmental engineer Pauulu Kamarakafego's work with activists in Oceania and also encapsulates those visions of solidarity that were articulated in publications like Hoyt Fuller's *Black World/Negro Digest*.

This paper reads work by Sonia Sanchez, who was involved in the early planning of 6PAC, and Gwendolyn Brooks, who travelled to Tanzania three years prior to the Congress and collaborated with artists and poets who subsequently contributed to it, as a way to think through traditions of cultivation as liberation. Focusing on Black feminists from the United States who traveled to East Africa or were directly involved in the Congress, the paper seeks to develop a theory of global solidarity structured around claims about the potential of land and plot to facilitate Black economic, political and creative freedom on a global scale.

room: b102
cultural critique

Alexander Billet (Locust Arts & Letters Collective): *A Great Composer of Time: The Post/Anti/Humanist Socialism of Jóhann Jóhannsson*

At the time of his death in 2018 at the relatively young age of 48, composer Jóhann Jóhannsson had started to receive recognition for his strange and innovative film soundtrack compositions, having been twice nominated for an Academy Award, three times for the BAFTA, and winning one Golden Globe for his 2014 score for **The Theory of Everything**. What remains largely unknown are two things, which this paper will seek to examine: 1. How deep his catalog went, encompassing not just a wide array of film scores, but concept albums, experimental music, and even music for one film he directed himself, 2. That Jóhannsson was a socialist, and frequently incorporated themes involving labor, ecology, and future prospects for the human species in his work. Bill Morrison, whose 2011 film **The Miners' Hymns** featured music composed by Jóhannsson, called him "a great composer of time."

It is this temporal valence, concerning the *longue durée* of history, that animate Jóhannsson's socialist themes as they manifest in his music. Incorporating Marxist theories on temporality (in particular those of Vittorio Morfino and Peter Thomas), music theory, and recent debates over the role of humanism in Marxism, this paper will examine Jóhannsson's aesthetic framework through the analysis of four of his works: 2008's **Fordlandia**, the aforementioned **The Miners' Hymns**, 2020's posthumously released **Last and First Men**, and 2022's **Drone Mass** (also posthumous).

Michael Beron (Technische Universität Berlin, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung): *Work of the Monsters. (Post-)Work Imaginaries and the Return of Class Struggle in Late Capitalist Television*

"What line of work are you in?", Tony Soprano, main character of the celebrated HBO series **The Sopranos** is asked by his psychiatrist in their first therapy session. "'Waste management consultant'", he replies. A lie, of course, because as we well know, Tony is a boss of the local mafia: a notorious criminal, murderer, torturer – a monster, really. The discrepancy, however, played out in similar forms again and again throughout the series, not only exposes Tony as a liar, but on a deeper level points to a crisis of work – not only as an economic reality, but as a hegemonic political idea and ideological horizon (see Pfannebecker/Smith 2020: 47ff.). All the more so as a dark, twisted view on work and (capitalist) society as a whole is typical not only for the **Sopranos**, but can virtually be seen as a signature of the "'age of the sociopath'" (see Kotsko 2012: 1) in 21st century popular culture. One can say that we are dealing with a return of work as a problem (if not **the** problem) into the cultural imaginary, which has continued and even intensified up to the recent present. For the success of recent productions like **Squid Game**, **Succession** or **Snowpiercer** shows that, with increasing tendency, also questions of class and class struggle are

re-emerging (see e.g. Jameson 2011; Žižek 2012, Zelik 2020; Clark 2021) .

Pandemic disruption, widening social inequality and a growing disengagement from classical ideologies of work, some commentators conclude, allow us to finally question the central meaning of work for our lives and identities (Pfannebecker/Smith 2020: 12). Against this backdrop, my paper aims to analyze images of work in current television series as symptoms of a hegemonic crisis of work in the ""age of monsters"" – cultural expression and negotiation of collective anxieties and desires – and examine their potential for a critique of contemporary capitalism.

Cathy Porter: Larisa Reisner and the Journalism of the Bolshevik Revolution

I plan to discuss some of the debates after the Revolution about the role and purpose of the new journalism, as literature and agitprop, and the challenges, taking on the forces of world reaction and counterrevolution, spreading literacy, connecting with the masses in struggle, identifying the class nature of the struggle.

To show the evolution of Reisner's language, from her journalism after October for the Petrograd Soviet and the Bolshevik press, to her 'Letters from the Front,' her reports from Germany, and her last published work *The Decembrists*. To examine attacks on her writing, from Proletkult, Stalin, and the anti-Soviet right, and recent trends in Reisner studies in post-Soviet Russia - material newly released from her archives, memoirs and monographs by rehabilitated comrades, letters to Trotsky, publication of her previously censored works.

Cathy Porter's 'Larisa Reisner. A Biography' was recently published in the HM series, to accompany its forthcoming publication of 'Writings of Larisa Reisner

room: b103
book launch: state capitalism and development
in east asia since 1945

During the second half of the 20th century the theory of state capitalism became one of the leading Marxist theories analysing the nature of the so-called Communist states of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and East Asia. However, there have been only sparse attempts to apply the theory of state capitalism consistently to the development of East Asian countries including the People's Republic of China, the two Koreas and Japan. This edited volume considers how the theory that originated in the 1940s among various heterodox Trotskyists can illuminate the histories of East Asian countries since the end of the Second World War and the beginning of decolonisation. As well as examining the supposed communist countries of East Asia, the book asks whether the theory of state capitalism can be applied to other East Asian societies like Japan and South Korea. At its core, the book argues that state capitalism theory, as a component of a broader Marxist analysis, can offer a powerful and integrated account of capitalist development in twentieth century East Asia that transcends the artificial categories of 'state socialism', 'developmental state' and 'free market capitalism'. In so doing it seeks not only to deepen and extend Marxist analyses of East Asian political economies but to develop the theory of state capitalism itself. In this panel five of the authors of the book will present their contributions and reflect on the significance of the book as a whole.

Gareth Dale: State capitalism in the East Asian age

State capitalism, over the centuries, has moved eastward. The trend was first identified in late nineteenth-century Prussia, where Bismarck nationalised certain industries, essentially as war measures (mis-identified by the Kathedersozialisten as 'state socialism'). During the First World War, many states assumed muscular economic coordination roles, prompting theorisation of state capitalism by Nikolai Bukharin, among others. In the mid-twentieth century, the state-capitalist trend went global, with Keynesianism and corporatism in the West, ISI in the South, and Stalinism in the East. Since then, the centre of gravity, at least of extreme instances of the phenomenon, has been in East Asia, in the various forms of North and South Korea, Maoist and post-Mao China, and Vietnam. State capitalism in East Asia is under-theorised from a Marxist perspective; this is the gap that Owen Miller's book fills. In my paper I introduce the theoretical perspectives with which the volume is working.

Owen Miller: The implications of the theory of state capitalism for East Asian history and the implications of East Asian history for the theory of state capitalism

Drawing on the introduction to the book and the findings of the following chapters, this paper looks at the common threads of the development experience in Japan, the two Koreas and China, showing how state capitalism theory provides the most compelling explanation for these similarities across diverse political regimes and different periods. Particular attention will be paid to the way in which the developmentalist state capitalism of imperialist Japan interacted with the state capitalist developmental model established under Stalin in the Soviet Union of the 1930s and how these two models fed into the post-1945 development of decolonised North Korea, South Korea and China. In East Asia the shift away from the old imperialism of colonisation to the new imperialism of US-Soviet rivalry brought many profound changes, not least the establishment of new independent centres of capital accumulation (nation states), but these new states once again followed the state capitalist model as a means of pursuing victory in the all-consuming economic and political competition of the Cold War.

Jeong Seong-jin: State Capitalism and the Permanent War Economy in South Korea, 1950–72

Xi Jinping and other leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) characterise post-reform and the opening-up of Chinese society as “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics (SCC)” and present Marxism as the main ideology guiding Chinese society. In this paper, however, I argue that this process is far from the socialism that Marx envisioned and can be characterised as a form of capitalism according to his own definition. First, this paper explains the high growth of the Chinese economy post-reform in terms of the ‘Uneven and Combined Development (UCD)’ dynamics of global capitalism. It then reveals the post-reform basic capitalist nature and state capitalist specificity of Chinese society and identifies “the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation” (K. Marx) at work in Chinese society, namely the contradictions and crisis dynamics of capitalism and its imperialist tendencies. On this basis, it reveals that ‘Discourses on SCC’, the official ideology of China’s Party-State ruling class, denies and misrepresents the capitalist, state-capitalist, and imperialist reality of post-reform Chinese society, negating Marxian theories of capitalism and socialism. In sum, this paper critically reconstructs the existing theories of Chinese capitalism, which mainly rely on ‘Theories of Varieties of Capitalism (VoC)’ or ‘Theories of Variegated Capitalism (VC)’, by using Marxian perspectives on UCD and state capitalism to criticise ‘Discourses on SCC’

Mike Haynes: Looking Backwards - seeing the historical development of capitalism from the perspective of Japan, South Korea and China

Earlier accounts of the development of capitalism assumed that it was defined globally both by market forms and a colonial /neo-colonial division of labour. After the Russian Revolution many accounts on the left stressed that the ‘third world’ could not develop. Paul Baran argued that Japan had been the last country to escape ‘backwardness’ and this was due to special circumstances that were unlikely to be repeated. Decolonisation did not lead to economic successes and as late as the turn of the 1980s this pessimistic perspective was the dominant one on the left. The seeming partial successes of the Soviet bloc were explained by their alleged post capitalist forms. We can now see that this perspective was clearly false. The Soviet bloc has collapsed. But, while huge inequalities still exist, there has been some convergence and catch up and not least for South Korea and China. This paper asks: how does our understanding of the historical development of capitalism change if we look back on it from the perspective of ‘late comer successes’?

room: bglt
romantic anti-capitalism and nature

Michael Löwy; Marcelo Ridenti; Esther Leslie

Romanticism – not only as literature and art, but as a world-view – represents a cultural protest against the modern industrial (capitalist) society. Starting with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, there is a long tradition of romantic passion for nature, and critique of the capitalist ruthless destruction of the natural environment. Among others, one can mention the American painter Thomas Cole, William Morris and Walter Benjamin.

Lorenzo Feltrin (University of Birmingham): The Challenge of Convergence between Workplaces and Communities: Working-Class Composition, Technological Development, and Ecological Politics

This intervention deploys the operaista method of class composition analysis – according to which organisational forms should be constantly updated to keep up with the transformations of the working-class in different places and times – to working-class environmentalism. Continuing automation, long-range recruitment, and outsourcing resulted in a relative 'deterritorialisation' of the workforce of large-scale industry. Instead, fenceline communities – disproportionately composed of the most disadvantaged ranks of the working class – remain exposed to significant levels of cumulative industrial noxiousness (despite improvements due to green techno-fixes) but reap meagre benefits in terms of industrial jobs. This increases the chances of intra-working-class tensions between those employed in polluting industries but living far from them and those living nearby but working in other sectors. The result is a widening of the bifurcation between workplaces and communities, between 'technical composition' and 'social composition'. The challenge of working-class environmentalism today is that of generating a political re-composition, a convergence, of workplace and community struggles through common platforms geared towards breaking the job blackmail. On the one hand, the spaces in which workers reproduce themselves are the sphere in which they most directly experience an interest in fighting the ecological crisis. On the other hand, capital-intensive workplaces are the arena where there is more leverage to transform the production that generates this crisis. Such challenge is also one of convergence between different organisational forms, where convergence does not mean merging or becoming similar. Rather, convergence means cooperation between different organisations from their base, while maintaining the specificities that allow them to function for their respective working-class segments. However, this cannot happen by the fiat of theoretical preaching. In fact, opportunities for convergence tend to arise in situations of crisis, when and where the structures separating different working-class segments are shaken.

Sebastiaan Boersma: Black Study and the Workers' Inquiry: A Comparative Hermeneutic

In this talk I will briefly sketch a comparative hermeneutic between CLR James Notes on Dialectics from 1948, published first in mimeographed form and circulated among friends and dissidents of the Johnson Forest Tendency (a dissident group within the Trotskyist movement, that used Hegel to break out of the Fourth International), and Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's The Undercommons, a collection of essays published in 2013 by the autonomist press, Minor Compositions.

My talk is based on research that began as an inquiry with some of my fellow comrades at the University of California into why Marxists of the past returned to Hegel and how this return might be related to the renewed interest in the Hegelian dialectic among communists today. Both texts are based on a "labor metaphysic" that grounds, what James calls, the "creative self-activity of the proletariat"; and what Moten and Harney call, building on James (in this case, CLR and Selma), the "general antagonism" to any state-capitalist tendency. If, as I want to suggest, there is indeed an underlying conception of proletarian self-organization common to both theories, then – through this comparative hermeneutic – we can begin to see the difference that declining profitability makes to the representation of labor. What in Notes is "the total emancipation of labor," becomes in The Undercommons "the nonplace of abolition." I will, furthermore, read both texts in terms of the project of the "worker's inquiry"; a project that begins in 1880 as a questionnaire that circulated among the French working class, and was revitalized by the JFT, as a form aimed at grasping the relations between the genre system and the capitalist division of labor. And both texts, I want to argue, deepen the project of the worker's inquiry through a phenomenological mode of criticism and, in the process, invent a genre of Black study with, and for, a proletariat that sits somewhere besides the figure of the waged working class.

Raquel Varela (Universidade Nova de Lisboa); Roberto della Santa (Universidade Aberta): Workers Inquiry: rethinking inequality among working classes

In this paper we will present the result of the studies that we carried out through the workers inquiry in the education, automobile and dockers sectors. We will try to approach in the analysis themes such as alienation, meaning of work, separation between manual and intellectual work and digitization. We will argue that there is not a decrease

in the proletarian condition but an expansion of this condition, as well as we will reassess issues such as gender differences in light of the growing standardization of labor relations. We hypothesize that we are witnessing a decrease in the differences between sectors of the working classes with the expansion of automation and migration, and not, as is generally argued, an increase in inequalities among the working classes.

Ricardo Antunes (University of Campinas): Drifting Icebergs: Uberization of Labor in Pandemic Capitalism

The aim of our presentation is to indicate some of the main characteristics of uberized or platform labour that, despite its wide heterogeneity, have a persistent tendency to expand exploitation, spoliation and expropriation. In a context that expands alongside Industry 4.0, its main social consequences will be a quantitative increase in unemployment and, in addition, an even greater qualitative deepening of the real subsumption of labour to capital, typical of the era of cyber-industry.

To better understand these consequences, we will present empirical and analytical examples that allowed us to develop two central theses: 1) uberized or platform labour has been recovering levels of exploitation that existed at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, during the proto-form of capitalism, presenting an apparent paradox between informational and digital development and intense labor exploitation; 2) we are starting a new phase of financial and digital capitalism that is moving towards a new cycle of disanthropomorphization of work, of which ChatGPT-4 is the last creation that expands in the new digital factory.

Silvestre Gristina (University of Padua): Raniero Panzieri, a Marxian among Marxists. Peasants' Movement, analysis of Technology and workers' Inquiry at the Origins of Italian Operaismo

Raniero Panzieri is considered the father of the Italian operaismo, However, Panzieri's thought radically diverges from the best-known operaist theoretical options, such as those of Tronti and Negri. My contribution aims to go through some of the stages of Panzieri's philosophical elaboration, to show how his thought could be defined as classically 'Marxian' or historical materialist, rather than Western Marxist. Indeed, Panzieri's reflections on the working class and the conditions of capitalist production were not merely theoretical elaborations, but the result of the study of the material practices of organization of both capitalist production and the potential forces antagonistic to it, such as the peasants in the countryside and the factory workers. It will be shown how Panzieri rearticulated the dialectic between theory and practice, beginning from the study of workers' concrete practices of organization in the factories. In this sense, Panzieri's proposal redefines the whole theory-practice relationship through the idea of what could be considered the "extraction" of theories from spontaneous organizational practices. His program is presented as a materialist "manifesto", as it curbs the tendency of intellectuals to circumscribe and project reality through closed conceptual categories. It will be emphasized how Panzieri was one of the first who reactivated Marx's method of workers' inquiry, anticipating Alquati's idea of co-research and proposing a material analysis, able to discover non-theoretical forms of organization, and countering abstract and philosophical modes of theorizing, always exposed to the risk of a theoretical dogmatization. Crossing his thought, it will be possible to define Panzieri as a classic Marxian thinker – because he was faithful to Marx's historical materialism – and not as a canonic Marxist, complicating his collocation within the tradition of operaismo.

room: dlt
political marxist perspectives
on state formation and geopolitics

Markus Hansen: Natural Law, Intra-Aristocratic Struggle, and Agrarian Reform: The Consolidation of Danish Absolutism in the 18th Century

18th century Denmark saw tremendous upheaval. The unfolding of an agrarian crisis in the latter part of the century became the prime instigator for a wide-ranging discussion of the issue of structural reform in the countryside, which had been dominated by a manorial system for hundreds of years. Within the course of half a lifetime, from 1780-1807, rural serfdom was well on its way to being replaced by owner-occupancy, with the previously powerful class of lords on the wane. Through the application of a Political Marxist theoretical and methodological perspective, I argue that this process should be understood as an important part of an overall trajectory of consolidation of the Danish Absolutist state, established in 1660, through its specific relationship with the elite layer of the aristocracy of

vassal lords. This class enjoyed a much tighter connection to the Danish state apparatus, which all but guaranteed its reproduction through a series of privileges, the protection of their massive holdings in land, and well-remunerated offices, materially pitting them in opposition to the lesser aristocracy who had been the traditional contenders of political power.

By adopting an analytical framework that highlights the horizontal relations of conflict within the broader aristocracy, it becomes possible to see various intellectual, judicial, and cultural developments as specific articulations and tools of class struggle; tactics of reproduction and social advancement. In this paper, I focus on the development and use of natural law as a discourse in the period. I show how natural law has a direct class character, and how the appeal to ideas of natural rights from the 1750s onwards is to the benefit of the state and its vassal aristocracy, and to the detriment of the lesser aristocracy.

Armando Van Rankin Anaya: The Peculiarity of Spain's 'Colonial Strategy' and the Making of Colonial Mexico

What accounts for the specificities of Mexico's colonial polity-formation and the configuration of its social property relations, and how did the geopolitical context influence these aspects? This paper attempts to historicise Castile's colonial strategy towards New Spain over the 16th and 17th century in order to disentangle the shaping of such characteristics. Three main historical-empirical claims drive the paper. First, it argues that multiple Castile's sub-sovereign social actors –tied to a feudal-cum-absolutist rent-regime dependent upon practices of 'geopolitical accumulation' to secure their socio-political reproduction– instrumentalized the Crown to initiate colonial enterprises overseas. Secondly, it claims that New Spain's colonial polity-formation was shaped by the unique 'encounter' between Castile's international social actors and the Mesoamerican power structures, which were gradually conquered and colonised under non-modern patterns. The result of the 'encounter' was the materialisation of 'formal' and 'informal' mechanisms of claiming both juridically and pragmatically Castilian 'extra-territoriality' over the Mesoamerican territorialities. This dichotomy was neatly projected in a wide range of authority, sovereignty and social property relations that were regulated not by a unitary political actor but by multiple and often uncontrolled agents, linked to class interests on both sides of the Atlantic. The wider theoretical claim is that existing accounts within Marxism, neo-Marxism, and further contributions, have failed to emphasise these agents because they rely upon under-historicised and under-geopoliticised conceptualisation of statehood, modernity, and capitalism. In contrast to these contending approaches, the tradition of Geopolitical Marxism reaffirms the centrality of historicism and agency in the field of historical sociology. Inspired by this methodology, the paper unearths the key agents and their political innovations; geopolitics and major foreign policies that were at stake during the period under analysis.

Samuel Parris: Merchants and the Colonial Origins of the American Revolution, 1624–1776

The American Revolution is typically understood by Marxists and non-Marxists alike as a short-term reaction to Britain fundamentally restructuring the nature of its Empire, specifically in terms of fiscal policy, trade restrictions, abolition, and limits on territorial expansion. This paper challenges that assumption and argues that to comprehend why the thirteen colonies sought independence, requires us to analyse this transformation through a Political Marxist-inspired assessment of the complex entanglements engendered by competing British (capitalist) vs. French (mercantilist) social property regimes and geopolitical strategies going back to the early colonial period.

It was Britain's policy of intra-imperial free trade, spearheaded by the interloping merchants, that provided a platform for the colonists bid for independence in the late 18th century. While France formed quasi-feudal/mercantilist patterns of expansion, intra-imperial free trade not only allowed Britain's colonial merchants to establish new modes of socio-economic development, but it also provided them with significant autonomy over their political environment. From this position, leading colonists coalesced in legislative assemblies, entrenched an embryonic form of democracy across the eastern seaboard, and provided the institutions that catalysed antagonisms in the build-up to the American Revolutionary Wars.

Legislative assemblies developed through Britain's policy of intra-imperial free trade were the fulcrum of the American Revolution. They allowed disputes to be more localised and provincial than in different contexts, by controlling political demonstrations and structuring a network of resistance among separate and distinct colonies. From this powerbase, non-importation associations were coordinated, the Continental Congress was formed, and the Declaration of Independence was signed. Bringing geopolitics and foreign policy back into the frame thus outlines the integral, yet largely disregarded role interloping merchants and intra-imperial free trade played in the formation of the early American state.

Benno Teschke: What is Geopolitical Marxism? Radical Historicism and International Politics in Marxist IR

Political Marxism is best known for a series of innovative studies on the subject of country-specific transitions to capitalism. These studies work, as a rule, within the confines of single-country-studies (methodological nationalism) or comparative history. Inversely, Marxist paradigms in the field of International Relations (WST, Neo-Gramscian IR, UCD, Classical Imperialism/Neo-Leninism) 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 Marxist IR is over-sociologised and under-geopoliticised and if PM is restricted to single-country studies or comparative history, how can Geopolitical Marxism rectify and overcome this double problematic? 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.

room: g51
marxism and global politics i

Marlène Rosato (Sciences Po Paris): European defence policy and NATO: a global history since 1989

This communication proposes a global history of the European Union Defence Policy ("Common Security and Defence Policy" – CSDP) since the end of the Cold War. It reinvestigates the political conjunctures of the negotiations of the CSDP policy, that are: the inter-imperialist wars in the French and German sphere of interests (among other, the Ex-Yugoslavia wars, the Iraq war and today the Ukrainian war). The puzzle is the following: Which independence from the US/NATO has CSDP represented? Which fraction of capital has supported it? I will argue that, far from being against the US, CSDP crystallized a coalition of interests made by European conglomerates integrated into US financial capital – unsatisfied by the US unilateralist wars – and rival fractions of French and German capitals; coalition of interests to the favour of the former. Two theoretical questions will be explored: first, European Defence policy as a "secondary condensation of class struggles" from the neo-Poulantzian view (Ulrich Brand, Christoph Gorg, Markus Wissen, among others); second, the debate on "new imperialism" between neo-Gramscian (Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri), neo-Poulantzian (Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin) and inter-imperialist authors (see for example, Claude Serfati).

marija radovanovic (SUNY Binghamton): Encoding the American Empire: Digital Management of War, Labor and Nature

This paper explores the historical trajectory of digital computer development, and the method of systems thinking/systems dynamic as software undergirding the American empire, and becoming the foundation of the contemporary environmental movement. Systems thinking developed from a method of war management to the management of urban labor uprising and finally to a model of management of international proletariat cum planetary nature. During WWII, cybernetics and the digital computer were developed as command-and-control methods of warfare, starting with the anti-aircraft defense, and turning into a nuclear defense program as the American Cold War strategy software. During the late 1940s, systems dynamics was constituted as a framework of all systems, living and non-living, which were understood as self-regulating, and operating through a feedback loop. By mid-1950s, systems thinking established industrial dynamics, a method of professionalized industrial management, reshaping business enterprise in a manner analogous to warfare and premising the management of production management through a feedback loop. At the same time, as the Cold War officially commenced, the US politics of development was launched as a combination of foreign resource extraction and international labor management as the population question. By 1960s the rising unrest in the American cities – strikes, the anti-war movement, the Civil rights movement - was addressed through a codified study of urban population; the 1969 systems dynamic developed a model of urban

labor management – the “urban dynamics”. Finally, by 1970, clear signs of stagnation in the global rate of profit appeared; this was also the beginning of a decline of American world supremacy, while the anti-imperial struggle was setting the world ablaze. In 1972, the business elite Club of Rome commissioned a report on “world dynamics”. The report was premised on the notion of the “population growth problem”, encoding newly revived Malthusian anxieties about the proletarian uprising and the collapse of the social order, into the planetary management titled *Limits to Growth*. The Report proposed the management of the world working classes, referred to as “population” and of resources, through the systems dynamic method, with a goal of achieving end of growth, or “equilibrium”. The computer-based nature management of “overpopulation” became the foundation of the contemporary environmental movement – on April 22nd 1970, millions of Americans marked the first Earth Day, celebrating the emergence of a new global environmental consciousness, rooted in the “problem” of the growing world population. By 1999, the management of planetary nature became a mainstream notion, and *Nature* magazine published an endorsement and proposed a manual for “planetary nature management”.

Gautham Shiralagi (Columbia University): Planning for Finance: The crisis of capitalism and the transformation of the state in the Indian 1970s

Recent accounts of capitalist crisis have analysed financial transformation in the 1970s as a product of states’ efforts to escape the political contestations over resources (Krippner 2003, Streeck 2014, Copley 2022). These heterodox and Marxist studies have been concerned with the Global North, and focussed on the responses of state actors, eliding the response of capitalist firms to the crisis. We wish to ask first: why did state actors in developing countries, such as India, turn to the transformation of financial governance and the expansion of credit to resolve their own crises of accumulation in the 1970s? Second, how did distinct fractions of capital–commercial and industrial rather than financial, in India–respond to the crisis and shape the dynamics of state action?

This paper will, therefore, explore transformations in the provision and allocation of credit in the Indian economy in a decade of political contestation in the 1970s. After steady economic expansion in the 1950s and early 1960s, from 1965 onwards the Indian developmental regime was faced with declining investment, rising militancy amongst labour and social movements, and acute contestations over the future of development planning. Economists, however, have argued that the 1980s saw a decade of ‘business friendly growth’, a break with the so-called ‘Hindu rate’ of the development planning era (Rodrik and Subramanian, 2005; Kohli, 2006; Kar and Sen, 2016; Thiruvadanthai, 2018). The 1970s then, appear as at once the crucial decade for India’s developmental trajectory, and as characterised by a stark paradox. On the one hand, under Indira Gandhi, there was a step up in strategic forms of state direction–in the form of bank nationalisation and new controls on business; whilst on the other, the state repressed labour, expanded credit provision, and incentivised the growth of private investment.

Our paper will therefore, ask: how could the seeming politicisation of credit, through the nationalisation of the banking system, itself have become part of the process by which socialist alternatives were repressed over the course of the 1970s? We will, further, explore the institutional legacies of this crisis for the transformation of the capitalist state in India, framed within a comparative perspective. How can Marxist state theory help us understand the novel role of the financial apparatus of state power for articulating class fractions and managing crises of accumulation in the periphery (Poulantzas 1978, O’Connor 1973)? Do we need a distinct theory to grasp the Indian experience, distinct from accounts of depoliticization: either, through financialization in the Global North; or, focussed on the role of international institutions and structural adjustment in the developing world?

room: r201
marxism and contemporary left politics

Vladimir Bortun (Department of Social Policy and Intervention, University of Oxford): The rise and fall of the neo-reformist left: Lessons from Southern Europe

The recent elections in Greece and Spain have arguably seen the end of the neo-reformist left experiment of the previous decade. The rise of parties like SYRIZA, Podemos and the Left Bloc had come against the background of crisis and austerity in the Southern periphery of the EU, filling a vacuum between a neoliberalised social democracy and ossified communist parties. In 2015 we witnessed the electoral peak of these parties, most prominently SYRIZA’s electoral victory in January that year. However, all three parties have since entered a steady decline, both electorally and, most crucially, in terms of their role in the class struggle. From alternatives to the status quo, they have become part of it, albeit at various degrees. Thus, at least in Spain and Portugal, now it is the radical right that seems to

be the main political vehicle for the anti-establishment mood in society. Building on documentary research and semi-structured interviews, this paper argues that the failure of these parties – obstinately dubbed in the literature as ‘radical left’ – is down to the programmatic, strategic and organisational shortcomings of their neo-reformism, broadly defined as the attempt to recover post-WWII social democracy. Thus, the paper expands on previous work to further elaborate the notion of ‘neo-reformist left’ and its qualitative differences from the radical left in order to draw out the key lessons of the 2010s for the radical left today.

Ricard Munné: *Totality, socialdemocracy and independent power: a critique of the Socialist Movement*

This work pretends to be a critique to some ideas defended by an emerging political movement in the Spanish State so-called Socialist Movement. This incipient movement stands up for the idea that the struggles from the last decade are just partial struggles that can be absorbed by socialdemocracy, and that only a total struggle should be held. This work focuses on a critical analysis of three argumentatively chained concepts that appear on a representative text from de Socialist Movement. These concepts are “logic of totality”, which is criticized for being too static, functionalist and determinist, “socialdemocracy”, which is criticized for being too wide and for misunderstanding different cases, and “independent power”, which is criticized for not being sufficiently defined and for being arbitrary. In the end, this work suggests to escape from the inconsistencies of those three concepts by evaluating the revolutionary potential of political reforms **a posteriori** and not **a priori**.

Oisín Gilmore, David Landy (TCD): *After the post-political in a post-industrial country: the case of Ireland*

Across the West we have seen the rise of right-wing populism. In a world governed increasingly by a transnational elite operating through globalised and unaccountable legal structures, right-populists provide a believable response to the replacement of traditional communities and traditional forms of political representation by the community of capital and the politics of representation. In contrast the response of the left is unclear. At times it appears utopian, at times nihilist, at times cautious and at times more conservative than the resurgent right. Frequently, in the face of a globalised politics, ephemeral movements and fleeting political engagement, we hear laments for the absent parties, trade unions and national democracy that provided the basis for left politics in the twentieth century. There is a somewhat repetitive discussion of the demise of party democracy and the role of new communication technology, in particular social media, in forming new political identities and forms of mobilisation. Often in this, there is an implicit desire for the return of old certainties of the twentieth century, where a politics based on the industrial working class provided for both a left comprised of two wings of mass organisation in the party and the union and arenas where these struggles could be fought: the enterprise and national democracy.

In Ireland, normal Western left/right politics never emerged. The industrial working class remained small, and politics was instead articulated around the postcolonial question of relating to the former imperial power. Over the last fifteen years, perhaps freed of the nostalgia that burdens the left of other European countries, Ireland has seen the emergence of a remarkable series of struggles and movements. In this paper, we will consider contemporary international debates regarding social struggles since 2008 and drawing on the experience of Ireland we will caution against left-nostalgia.

Elliot C. Mason (Uppsala University): *The Primacy of Struggle in Fred Moten and Marx*

For Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, power precedes the subjects it oppresses: the authority that governs oppression brings subjects into being as subjects. In this scene of interpellation, struggle is understood only as a repositioning of subjects in relation to power. Fred Moten and Stefano Harney propose a very different temporality of struggle. For them, insurgency is primary. Power turns up at the ongoing struggle precisely because that struggle is already there, already in excess of power. Power arrives to subdue the struggle because the struggle has survived despite power. This temporality is exactly how Marx defines value in the Grundrisse; capitalist power achieves the illusion that it is primary by dividing labor, on the one hand, into dead and living forms, and, on the other, into productive and reproductive forms. Living labor appears to be the result of the gathering allowed by capitalist production. But what this desperately obscures, as Marx writes, is the fact that living labor was already ongoing, but was captured through formal subsumption into the production of value. Marx’s reading of the production of value reveals the expansive and subsumptive temporality of capital, and, crucially, shows us that our struggle is the energy appropriated into the economy’s continuing survival. Our struggle is primary, but has been stolen.

In this talk I focus on Moten and Marx as a way to access the primacy and antecedence of struggle, proposing power as a response to the fact that people are always already in struggle. That struggle is stolen from us. But in a suppressed and surviving form, it goes on. I hope to provide a point of access to that survival.

room: rg01
marxism, techno-politics and ai

Harry Halpin (American University of Beirut): Information Capitalism and the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall

Information capitalism itself emerged from larger capitalist dynamics and there is no reason to believe that information capitalism itself is invulnerable to crisis as theorized by Marx. Far from it. In contrast to liberal critiques of surveillance such as those of Zuboff, our hypothesis is that the turn towards surveillance capitalism and artificial intelligence is the last gasp of information capitalism as it attempts to overcome the secular stagnation that is consuming the entire global economy. Even blockchain technology is the latest and most extreme form of speculation that logically follows from capitalist investors attempting to overcome the tendency of the rate of profit to fall that has followed the centralization of information technology in a few oligarchical Silicon Valley companies.

Benkler and Srimcek have pushed for the line that information capitalism is actually a harbinger of a new form communism to come, with a series of latest technology developments from Wikipedia to the “sharing economy” thought to serve as a preview of a transition to a post-capitalist mode of production. In stark contrast, the evidence from the Snowden revelations onwards points to the fact that information capitalism has constructed also a new state-form a global secret state of pervasive surveillance out of the dominant imperial powers, an apparatus that is rapidly evolving from mere behavioral monitoring to behavioral control. Critical theory reveals its fundamental weakness, as theorists such as Dean and Fuchs fall into condemning the forms of exploitation and control enabled by the Internet rather than defining precisely this periodization of capitalism and its changes to the state-form engendered by the Internet. As the world spirals into dizzying crisis accompanied by the rise of Silicon Valley and alternative nationalized hubs of information technology in China and Russia build their own regimes of surveillance, there has never been a more pressing need for a radical analysis of the opaque world of information capitalism. Against readings of the Internet in either a positive or negative register, we will argue that the Internet economy will not cause an exit from crisis. The reverse is true: The Internet economy actually exacerbates the dynamics within capitalism towards crisis due to a decline in the rate of profit, and the rise of surveillance is a last ditch attempt to control the rising surplus population. This is shown by a tendency of the rate of profit to fall in terms of advertising revenue by internet platforms.

Jonas C. L. Valente (Oxford Internet Institute - University of Oxford): (Not so) artificial intelligence: towards a critical political economy of the work behind AI development

The field of AI is gaining momentum as a subject of discussion and academic concern. The impact it has had on the workplace has sparked increased interest in relation to worries about the consequences of automation, with pessimistic (Frey, 2019) or less threatening views (Benanav, 2020). A further area of discussion has focused on highlighting the situation of workers in microwork platforms performing a wide range of tasks in AI systems development, such as data labelling and model revision (Irani, 2015; Tubaro and Casilli, 2019; Gray and Suri). The topic is still beginning to be analysed by Marxist approaches (Dyer-Whiteford, 2019; Steinhoff, 2021, Walton & Nayak, 2021). But there is still a gap regarding the study of the work behind AI development, especially the so-called microwork, from a Marxist perspective.

The paper offers a historical materialist approach to the work behind AI systems development, with a focus on the microwork performed by workers through digital labour platforms. It draws from a study on world-leading cloudwork platforms and from a survey with 249 microworkers from 51 countries, which identified the working conditions of microwork platforms and challenges faced by those workers regarding different aspects of the labour process, such as pay, conditions, contracts, management and representation.

AI development relies on types of platform work. Workers (such as data scientists and developers) involved in the conception are based in tech companies with high-paying jobs. This group is what one calls “platform employed work”. In addition, it also makes use of “platform-mediated work”, encompassing millions of workers from hundreds of countries in charge of crucial tasks in the development cycle. We articulate Sohn-Rethel’s (2020) approach to the division between manual and intellectual labour with the overexploitation concept proposed by the Latin-American

dependency theory school (Marini, 2023).

room: rb01
theorising class i

Gianmaria Brunazzi (University of Milan): Race, gender, and the question of social agency: a return to Marxian class theory

In the Sixties, orthodox Marxism characterized classes as “the more-or-less spontaneous generation of productive forces and relations” (Thompson, 2013, p.14); today, after 30 years of liberal hegemony, capitalism endures while the *in se* and *per se* identities of Western working classes have been demolished.

In front of exploding interstate and interstate material contradictions and growing social tensions, one of the major challenges for Marxists is to redefine a class-based foundation for a revolutionary subjectivity, while considering the radicalisation of women and black people’s struggles, which for some decades have powerfully penetrated the core of any social issue.

Intellectuals like Bannerji, Federici, Bhattacharya, Fraser, Camfield, Ferguson, McNally, Roediger attempted to integrate race and gender into Marxist theory. However, they encountered a fundamental aporia inherent within its core. The problem arises from the fact that, as long as we conceive the organisation of class conflict, within the boundaries set by capital-centric rules of extraction, we cannot escape the reality that - as Ellen Wood (2015, p. 276), David Harvey or Charles Post would put it - “in the abstract, capitalism does not require racialised and gendered forms of exploitation”.

Although most Marxists would agree that class conflict takes precedence, from a metatheoretical perspective, over any system’s laws of motion, Marxism still tends to close the question of social agency within the binaries of given economic relations (See Mau, 2023).

This works aims to tackle the issue materialistically - i.e., moving to Marx and Marxist theory, from present-day class problems. The transformations observed in the post-Fordist era, including delocalisation and the emergence of smart working, along with the increased influence of the ideological dimension in class relations, disrupt any mechanistic understanding of the relationship between capitalist forms of exploitation and specific structures. These changes compel us to reconsider the hierarchical relationship between class struggle and one system’s rules of reproduction.

Within this context, starting from a revaluation of Marx’s “general illumination” metaphor, I delve into the unresolved fracture, in Marx’s writings, between his ascription of the primary motor of historical change to the contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production (think of the 1859 *Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*), and to class struggle (think of *The Communist Manifesto*). Theoretically finding a new primacy for class struggle would prevent us from categorising every historical episode where capitalism relies on pre-capitalist forms of extraction, such as *gender and race-based abuses*, fascisms, states of exception, clientelism, war capitalism, and imperialism, as mere exceptions or contingencies. Instead, it would consent us to integrate them at the core of a class exploitation system that operates through specific mechanisms of value extraction, because of historical reasons, and not because of theoretical necessity.

Gerardo Otero (Simon Fraser University); Efe Can Gürcan (Istinye University): Transcending Class and Identity Reductionisms: Towards a Collective Empowerment Theory

In this paper, we propose a Gramsci-inspired theory of the collective empowerment of subordinate groups, communities, and classes – the dominated. We develop this theory mostly to think about Latin America’s dependent capitalism, but it may well be applied to other contexts, including the United States and Canada or countries in the Middle East. Our central argument is that contestation by the dominated must take place both from the bottom up and from a state whose exercise of power has been gained, at least partially, by representatives of the dominated. In other words, the main overall claim in this paper is that collective empowerment, or the capacity to struggle for long-term interests, requires both efforts from below and from the top, using the state’s power to engage in societal action toward society’s transformation. To transcend class reductionism, we propose a reconceptualization of the relationship so that we can account for three critical mediations between what we call “class structural processes”

and “political-cultural formation.” In other words, there is no straight causal link between relations of production and political-cultural formation outcomes. The three main mediating determinants with varying causal links to class structural processes are regional cultures, state intervention, and leadership types. Our way of formulating the relationship between class structural processes and political-cultural formation outcomes is meant to transcend both class and identity reductionisms.

Arianna Introna (Open University): Dismodernizing the Working Class: On Monstrous Anti-Capitalist Modes of Resistance and Solidarity

As Compagna and Steinhart suggest, ‘Monsters simultaneously cross borders and demarcate them’ according to exclusionary paradigms entangled with conceptions of good and evil, normal and abnormal entertained vis-à-vis a specific community (2020, p.ix). My paper will develop the concept of ‘dismodernizing the working class’ to explore how disability politics can be generative of ‘monstrous’ modes of anti-capitalist resistance and solidarity. It will do so by discussing contemporary welfare action and disabled people’s organizing in the context of a post-pandemic cost of living crisis through the lenses of the theory of ‘dismodernism’ developed by disability theorist Lennard Davis. The ‘monstrous’ modes of anti-capitalist resistance and solidarity that I will trace fall across categories of class struggle that take as their reference point subjects defined by some connection to capitalism as a system of relations of production, whether in the form of engagement in waged work or of performing labour that reproduces productive labour. These categories, I will contend, entrench the position of productive labour as the hinge of both society and class struggle and produce the othering of subjects which entertain a non-relation to the sphere of production. Amongst the ‘monstrous others’ created by this normative framework are disabled people: in proportion as they are materially and symbolically marginalized vis-à-vis capitalist relations of production, disabled people exist as life at ‘the edges of capitalism’, where collective survival is best pursued through ‘relations of mutual aid instead of market competition’ (O’Hearn and Gruba i 2016, p.147). My paper will suggest ways in which disability politics can be entangled with, and contribute to, a ‘monstrous’ anti-capitalist politics of resistance and solidarity through a double process: by originating from outside the *working* class, and by working to ‘dismodernize’ the working class itself through the symbolic universalization of disability.

Jordan House (Department of Labour Studies, Brock University): Working Class Decomposition and the Rise of the Canadian Far Right

The Canadian working class, like others in advanced capitalist countries, is undergoing a process of decomposition. This is the result of structural changes to the labour market and broader economy produced by globalization and decades neoliberal restricting and austerity—but also the political defeat of social democracy in both the form of the New Democratic Party (NDP) and the trade union movement. As the Canadian state faces a deepening crisis of legitimacy, the absence of a viable left alternative has opened space for the rise of a new hard right. While mainstream commentators largely explain the rise of the right through a culturalist lens—denouncing abstract “polarization” or the propagation of right wing “contagion” by social media platforms—it is critical for analysis of the rise of the right to be rooted in political economy.

In response to the profitability crisis of the 1970s, neoliberal restructuring fundamentally altered Canadian society. Over the past half-century, the the adoption of new technology, offshoring, and the rise of the service economy has resulted in near-collapse of the trade union movement outside of the public sector. While compensation stagnates, workers face speedups, and and more workers find themselves in part-time work—or else self-employed.

The social and physic impacts of these processes on the working class—and to some degree, the society as a whole—is evident in the rise of social atomization and phenomena like “diseases of despair” and the “crisis of loneliness.” In the realm of electoral politics, workers have increasingly drifted to the right. Many unions have abandoned the traditional party of social democracy, the NDP—with some even throwing support to right-wing politicians. It is for these reasons that projects of working class recomposition are critical to stymying the rise of the right.

Isabelle GARO (Enseignante en classes préparatoires (Lycée Chaptal, Paris)): Penser avec Marx les questions stratégiques contemporaines

Face à la situation de crise globale du capitalisme mais aussi de celle de l'alternative, la question communiste est réapparue sur le terrain théorique au cours de ces dernières années. Cette résurgence, aussi riche soit-elle, est la contrepartie de la faiblesse politique de la contestation anticapitaliste. Mais elle est aussi un atout, qui permet relancer la discussion et de se confronter de nouveau à la pensée de Marx, après la longue « éclipse de la raison stratégique » des dernières décennies, pour reprendre les mots de Daniel Bensaïd.

Relu sous un tel angle stratégique, on découvre à quel point Marx avait lui aussi conçu le communisme non comme un idéal mais avant tout comme l'effort pour construire une voie politique de contestation radicale du capitalisme. Cette voie passe par l'invention permanente des moyens théoriques et pratiques pour y parvenir. Il ne s'agit alors plus de chercher la solution du côté d'un communisme pensé comme un ensemble de nouveaux rapports sociaux par avance descriptibles, pas plus que du côté d'une tendance souterraine irrésistible, invitant à contourner la question de l'État et de la prise du pouvoir.

Il s'agit donc aujourd'hui de repenser les médiations, qui rendent à la question communiste contemporaine son actualité concrète. Une médiation n'est pas ce qui relie un point de départ à un but prédéfini : elle construit et modifie à mesure la visée qu'elle se donne. Or, en cette période de crise politique et de fragmentation des luttes, il s'agit avant tout de construire collectivement une voie politique majoritaire, mobilisatrice, combinant contestations multiples et construction d'une alternative globale, radicalement démocratique et résolument anticapitaliste. C'est pourquoi une telle relance de la question communiste, qui se situe au point de rencontre entre l'élaboration théorique, les luttes sociales existantes, dans toutes leur diversité, et l'invention de formes politiques neuves, se présente comme un des chantiers les plus vivants du marxisme contemporain.

Panagiotis Sotiris (Historical Materialism Editorial Board): On the (im)possibility of a 'Left Government'. Some strategic questions revisited

Ever since the publication of Nicos Poulantzas's *State Power and Socialism*, there has been an open discussion on the possibility of a democratic road to socialism that avoids the pitfalls of both Stalinism and traditional socialdemocratic reformism. In the 2010s this debate resurfaced with the emergence of political movements that seemed to offer the possibility to implement such strategy. The defeat (and in certain instances capitulation) of such movements, has stressed the many difficulties of any strategy for 'left governance', to the extent that many have spoken about its impossibility the absence of strategic resources for such an endeavour. At the same time, the way such questions have been discussed so far makes evident the problem with the absence of any real strategic debate. The aim of this presentation is to attempt to revisit this debates and questions, beginning with Poulantzas's own contribution, in order to re-examine what could be the starting points for any plausible revolutionary strategy in the 21st Century.

Moara Assis Crivelente (Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra): What is the nation in contemporary anti- / decolonial struggles? Engaging with the strategies and tactics of oppressed peoples 'bursting into history'

Anti-colonial movements and newly independent states have pushed their way into an "inter-national society" where normative, liberal claims over equal rights coincide with an unequal order working through exploitation and oppression. In the 20th as well as in the 21th century, for many struggling for liberation the main category and instrument mobilized for that entrance is the nation and international law, in an operation most clearly expressed in the struggle for national self-determination as both a way in and a way to remain in a course of emancipation. Recovering Marxist debates over the national and colonial questions and anti-colonial, "third-worldist" thought and practice, this paper discusses what mobilizing that category and instrument entail in a new conjuncture with seemingly old problems. It builds on empirical research about and active engagement with resistance in Palestine and Western Sahara as two contemporary struggles for national liberation from foreign domination in which the nation still seems to be peoples' entry ticket as subjects in history, as Franz Fanon, Mahdi 'Amel, Amílcar Cabral, Che Guevara, J.P. Sartre and other intellectuals and fighters argued. The paper addresses the limits inherent to the categories and frameworks mobilized in these struggles by building on the reflections raised in ongoing debates

over strategy and tactics. It ponders how the subjects in those struggles have contributed to others by pushing their way into intergovernmental institutions, the big powers' foreign and domestic policy —even if oriented towards repressing them, and mass communication, in their "constant movement of becoming", as Marx put it. It thus revisits the potential of nation, preferably one stripped of its bourgeois form, and other forms of resistance for building strategical unity in contemporary movements of emancipation and decolonization.

room: b103

roundtable on stephen maher and scott m. aquanno,
the fall and rise of american finance:
from j.p. morgan to blackrock

A panel discussion evaluating and debating Stephen Maher and Scott M. Aquanno's new book, "The Fall and Rise of American Finance: From J.P. Morgan to BlackRock" (Verso Books, 2023). The panel features a diverse variety of perspectives on the left, and will critically engage the book's key arguments, including that financialization does not signal the decline or "hollowing out" of American capitalism; that the state has not been "captured" by dominant class fractions, but plays a relatively autonomous role in reproducing capitalist class power and organizing forms of financial hegemony; that neoliberal "shareholder capitalism" has been replaced by the consolidation of what Maher and Aquanno call a "new finance capital" since the 2008 crisis; and others.

room: b104

marxism, feminism:
theory and politics ii

Grace Whitfield (University of Sheffield): (A labour theory of) valuing care: productive and unproductive labour in England's social care sector

This paper conceptualises how care is valued under capitalism. Attempts to resolve the 'crisis' in care provision – related to workforce supply and unmet care needs – vary in their approach to care and value. Sometimes current structures of society are seen as failing to acknowledge the value of care, i.e., due to a gendered devaluation of care and/or notion that care is unskilled (Folbre and England, 1999), with the hope that value as social appreciation will translate into economic value. Another perspective opposes economic valuation of care at all, seeing exchange as deteriorating (practically and ethically) caring labour (Oksala, 2016). More broadly, social reproduction theory (SRT) (e.g., Bhattacharya, 2017), analyses the 'production' of labour power and compliant workers. Yet there are more direct relations between care and capital which value theory provides insight into: long term care recipients are often outside of the workforce – their care potentially legitimises capitalist systems and enables others to work, but it is also an area of surplus value extraction. To illustrate this extraction, I use the example of adult social care in England, where care is quasi-marketised, effectively privatised, and sometimes financialised (Horton, 2022). Care needs are variously expanded or diminished (depending on whether caring labour is 'productive' or 'unproductive', i.e., paid for by the state (Fine and Harris, 1976)), labour processes enable exploitation of care workers, and relative surplus value is sought via promised technological advantages. In using value theory to advance understanding of caring labour, I aim not to reject insights from SRT (Mezzadri, 2019) but to approach social reproduction as 'guided by the law of value' (Saad-Filho, 2022). In other words: theorisations of care should not be limited to a focus on extractions of value, but this focus is a useful place to start.

Eleri Fowler (Queen Mary, University of London): The Role of Care in Revolutionary Change

My paper will seek to highlight questions around the role of care in revolutionary change. Joshua Clover's belated addition of 'reproduction struggles' to his two-part 'historical and theoretical schema' of uprisings (the 'circulation struggles' of riots and the 'production struggles' of strikes) speaks to the undertheorisation of the significance of care in radical insurgency. If Amy De'Ath notes that, because of its 'inherently' 'affirmative' nature, Marxist feminists have advocated that reproduction is 'a key site of resistance to capitalist forces', what form could this antagonism take and what is its position within broader social movements? Drawing on the work of the Black Panther Breakfast program and the Women Against Pit Closures group, Ames Clarke argues care is a 'site from which revolutionary struggle is fed and nurtured'. Is care destined to only play a feminised supplementary function, maintaining other forms of action, or could it constitute a terrain of resistance itself? Furthermore, both the Autonomist Marxism of Wages for Housework and Gabriel Winant's arguments about changing post-industrial class composition reflect

what C. Wright Mills called the 'labour metaphysic'. Should struggles around care replicate the dominant form of the withdrawal of labour, even though this work is often unproductive and life-sustaining? As Precarias a la Deriva state, 'the strike is always interruption and visibilisation and care is the continuous and invisible line whose interruption would be devastating'. Finally, is care an inherently conservative activity that maintains the status quo? Or could its preservative capacities, protecting the lives of those rendered disposable under capitalism and forging new social relations, comprise a means of producing different futures, representing, in Alexis Pauline Gumbs' words, an 'intervention against the reproduction of sameness'?

Charlotte Nóra Szász (Leuphana Universität Lüneburg): Master, slave and the negative power of the unconscious

In this talk, I would like to discuss reading G.W.F. Hegel's master-slave dialectic as a struggle between the unconscious and conscious – situated within male subjectivity. This reading draws on feminist readings of the passage from Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit which often too easily take this struggle as synonymous to gendered power dynamics. However, the interpretations point to an interesting genealogy of this passage with its roots within love and Hegel's early Jena writings. I suggest continuing to read this passage quite orthodox at the structural point of location within the overarching argument of the Phenomenology, thereby taking seriously the duality or split that Hegel points to which is within the individual's self-consciousness making the other the unconscious counterpart of the subject.

Where the concept of recognition can therefore be shown to take its roots in the sexual difference within Hegel's work, it makes recognition between the sexes impossible at this point. The dialectic can be shown to unfold itself into an intrasubjective male fantasy when Hegel claims »the individual's unconscious spirit has its existence in women«. It shows the irrationality and impossibility in the struggle for recognition within a gendered dynamic, leading us to rethink feminist strategies of adaption and recognition while showing us the plausibility of the struggles of resistance.

room: bglt
on the italian edition of die wissenschaft vom wert:
a discussion about the science of value with the author

Riccardo Bellofiore (University of Bergamo (retired)); Stefano Breda (Freie Universität Berlin); Vittorio Morfino (Università di Milano Bicocca, Italy)

During the Summer of 2023 the Italian edition of *Wissenschaft vom Wert* [*La Scienza del Valore*] by Michael Heinrich has been published by Mimesis. The book is edited by Riccardo Bellofiore and Stefano Breda, and it contains a new 2023 introduction by the author. The translation is by Stefano Breda. It is based on the 1999 second edition, plus the 2017 postface to the seventh edition, and contains some 2023 addenda. It includes an Introduction by Bellofiore, a Note on the translation by Breda, and a Note on Althusser and Heinrich by Vittorio Morfino.

At the heart of the discussion are the topics treated in *Science of Value*: (i) the notion of theoretical field and methodological considerations; (ii) Marx's initial anthropological and essentialist views; (iii) Marx's break with his earlier critique; (iv) the architectonic of *Capital*, the methodological shifts and changes in some concepts; (v) Marx's critique of political economy as a critique of economic theory as a whole (in radical discontinuity not only with Neoclassicals but Classical as well); (vi) the internal relation between value, money, and price (then also the issue of the qualitative versus the quantitative dimensions of the theory of value); (vii) the theory of capital, in particular the conceptualisation of wage labour and credit as money; (viii) the dynamics of capital, with special reference to the tendential fall of the profit rate and crisis theories; (ix) the critique of political economy and socialism.

The Session presents three papers discussing Michael Heinrich's views from different perspectives, in a dialogical and sympathetic manner; and it includes a final intervention by the author.

Stefano Breda (Freie Universität Berlin) – 'The Science of Disenchantment: Michael Heinrich as a Theorist and as a Reader of Marx'

Disenchantment can be seen, in different ways, as the fundamental feature of the reading of Marx provided by

Heinrich in **The Science of Value**. In a sober and limpid style, Heinrich reconstructs the theoretical path that led Marx to the critique of political economy and its relationship to earlier economics (and beyond). But far from placing Marx on a pedestal and looking down on the rest of economic theory from it as if from a fixed and secure vantage point, Heinrich questions Marx himself by laying bare without discount the ambivalences and weaknesses of his critique of political economy.

To do so, he deploys a powerful instrument of analysis and interpretation: the framework concept of theoretical field. This framework allows Heinrich not to limit himself criticising individual errors of Marx, correctable or expungable from his theory without questioning its foundations, but to question the coherence of these foundations themselves, without fear of destroying more or less established myths. In doing so, Heinrich somehow stops being simply a reader of Marx and becomes himself an original theorist of capitalist relations.

But disenchantment is not only a characteristic of Heinrich's way of looking at Marx, it is also a characteristic of the critique of political economy itself as Heinrich reads it. Marx progressively constructs his own theoretical field to the extent that he increasingly destroys the granitic semblances of essentialism in philosophy and substantialism in economics, unveiling the social character of the objects of political economy.

However, investigating this social objectivity of capitalist relations requires a deeply dialectical approach for which the same disenchanted gaze that leads Heinrich to fundamental achievements may prove to lead at the same time to certain limitations.

Vittorio Morfino (Università di Milano Bicocca, Italy) – 'The symptomatic reading between Althusser and Heinrich'

As it is well known, Althusser introduced the concept of **lecture symptomale** [symptomatic reading] in 1968 in **Lire le Capital** [**Reading Capital**], thus opening to a non-religious reading of Marx. In my intervention, I will try to show how Michael Heinrich, through the excellent interpretative and theoretical endeavour he carried out in the *Science of Value*, revives in all its radicality the concept proposed by Althusser.

Heinrich precisely identifies the places in Marx's discourse and in the Marxist tradition where the Marxian **champ théorique** [theoretical field] is, so to speak, "occupied" or "invaded" by the discourse of Classical political economy, giving rise to ambivalences and inconsistencies.

These latter must be overcome, and it is here that Heinrich's interpretative attempt to go with Marx beyond Marx is most original and deserves to be thoroughly discussed.

Riccardo Bellofiore (University of Bergamo, Italy) [retired] – 'A new interpretation of Marx: a dialogue with Michael Heinrich'

In the first part of my Introduction, I first set out in some detail the main theses of Heinrich's **Science of Value** [**Scienza del Valore**], showing their originality. This is followed by a second part in which I give a picture of how his theoretical proposal is situated in the ongoing discussion on Marx, from the late 19th century to the present. In the third part, I will indicate the places where I believe the book requires a critical appraisal. I will finally mention in the conclusions Heinrich's portrait of the relationship between the critique of political economy and socialism.

I will consider some of the most controversial issues explored in *Science of Value*, opening a dialogue with Heinrich on his "interpretation" and "reconstruction" of Marx. My topics will be: (i) "money as a commodity"; (ii) "intrinsic value" as distinct from "absolute value"; (iii) the articulation of the concept of "labour"; (iv) the various meaning of the "socialisation(s) of labour"; (v) the necessity of a monetary "ante-validation" of labour and the financing of the production process; (vi) more generally the monetary aspects of the Marxian system; (vii) the development of crisis theory; (viii) the meaning of the "standpoint of labour".

These are all theoretical steps that, on the one hand, make it possible to reconcile the Marxian vision of value as determined in the unity of production and circulation with the equally crucial Marxian thesis of value as a process moving from the inside to the outside and, on the other hand, to show the compatibility of a vision of capital as abstract domination with a vision of exploitation as a specifically capitalist concept. Herein – in a novel non-distributive notion of exploitation – lies the ultimate foundation of the identity between the money value added in the period and direct labour as an objectification of living labour. Marx's theoretical core of a "monetary labour

theory of value" (this was the title of a 1989 article of mine in RRPE, probably the first instance of a use of the expression, but with labour at the core of it) is thereby developed and reconstructed as a macro-monetary theory of capitalist production.

Mine will basically be just an opening of my debate with Heinrich on a book that I view as the best on the topic in the last 50 years ago: a classic. Heinrich's other many books are widely translated (in English, French, Castilian, Portuguese, and other languages) and they are already very much disputed. Heinrich sometimes is rejected with too hasty criticisms from hostile fundamentalist Marxists, sometimes is acclaimed with fierce defences from friendly enthusiast followers which in the Anglo-Saxon arena for the most part have not yet read this book. It is my contention that no understanding of Heinrich's position is possible without digesting *Die Wissenschaft vom Wert*. And this book shows that Heinrich deserves better.

Marx's scholars need to seriously assess the challenges and claims of Science of Value, and any critique must stand up to its many important accomplishments.

Michael Heinrich will be present and will give some comments on the presentations before the general debate.

room: mal 354
book launch: patrick eiden-offe,
the poetry of class: romantic anti-capitalism
and the invention of the proletariat

Book Release: The Poetry of Class: Romantic Anti-Capitalism and the Invention of the Proletariat by Patrick Eiden-Offe (Brill, 2023)

Patrick Eiden-Offe; Daniel Hartley; Gabriel Winant; Francesca Raimondi

This is a book release panel for the English translation of Patrick Eiden-Offe's forthcoming book on the making of the proletariat in Vormärz Germany, due out with Brill in the Historical Materialism series, late 2023.

In the early 19th century, a new social collective emerged out of impoverished artisans, urban rabble, wandering rural lower classes, bankrupt aristocrats and precarious intellectuals, one that would soon be called the proletariat. But this did not yet exist as a unified, homogeneous class with affiliated political parties. The motley appearance, the dreams and longings of these figures, torn from all economic certainties, found new forms of narration in romantic novellas, reportages, social-statistical studies, and monthly bulletins. But soon enough, these disorderly, violent, nostalgic, errant, and utopian figures were denigrated as reactionary and anarchic by the heads of the labour movement, since they did not fit into their grand linear vision of progress. This book tells their story, and in so doing, reveals a striking similarity to the disorderly classes of today.

room: mal 355
lukács

Daniel De Nadai (UFRJ - Federal University of Rio de Janeiro): The category of progress in Marx through the lukácsian perspective

""Progress"" is a widespread word in the debate made by the current Marxist literature, especially considering the recent economic and climate crises. Beyond this literature, it is also very spoken by left-wing political leaders around the world. The critique of this notion followed by its claim of abandonment is the most common statement. It's a correct defense considering the liberal notion of progress developed since the French Revolution and the XIX-century philosophical debate. Nevertheless, we should be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Marx develops a distinct category of progress, objective progress, which has an ontological character. Progress is objective, although it posits a real contradiction. The reduction of the necessary time labor posits the possibility of removal of the natural barriers, which has to do with the humanization of the human or the explication of the social being. At the same time that it posits only emancipation as a (real) possibility, it also posits estrangements. Furthermore, if capitalism posits the equality between human beings for the first time in human history, on the other hand, it also posits forms of estrangement as race and gender - we consider it forms of estrangement because

estrangement is to not consider others as equal, to not see the humanity in the others.

Starting from the 1844 economic-philosophical manuscripts, Marx develops throughout his thought a social being ontology. In his most advanced political economy studies, from his mature phase, he structures better how is the form in which it appears. If this hypothesis that progress is not a valiative category in Marx, but an ontological one, we, fortunately, can keep alive the comprehension of the possibility of capitalism pointing beyond itself.

Giorgio Cesarale (Ca' Foscari University of Venice): Production, Reproduction, Crisis: Reinterpreting "History and Class Consciousness" Today

The aim of the paper is to contribute to a renewed understanding of Lukács' "History and Class Consciousness", by highlighting the discontinuity it achieved with respect to German Social Democracy and the way in which its main representatives – from Bernstein to Kautsky – were thinking the relationship between production, reproduction and crisis. Bringing the knot between totality and consciousness back to the forefront, and overcoming the general philosophical premises advocated by the late Engels, Lukács paved the way for a deeper understanding of reification as something from which the proletariat itself was not immune. The last part of the paper addresses how Lukács believes the 'ideological crisis within the proletariat' needs to be tackled in the transition to socialism in order to make the leap to the "realm of freedom".

Daniel Badenhorst (Macquarie University): The Young Hegel and the Nazis

While the second world war was still raging, and the Nazis held Germany and much of Europe in their grip, two exceedingly important Marxist thinkers were writing books on G.W.F. Hegel. To many of us today these may seem like strange priorities. Nevertheless, in 1938 György Lukács completed his famous *The Young Hegel* (published only in 1948 due to the war) and a few years later in 1941 Herbert Marcuse completed his *Reason and Revolution*. Both authors considered their works to be not only important but exceedingly timely. But what had Hegel to do with the war, and why did a fascist Germany instigate a reassessment of Hegel's philosophy? Focusing on the young Hegel in particular this paper will explore the philosophical context into which these two thinkers intervened and the intentions they had in doing so. It will also assess the relative success of both these interventions and the role they have played in shaping our understanding of the young Hegel's philosophy and project. Throughout, questions about the nature and limits of what Lukács calls the 'Marxist history of philosophy' will also be broached.

Pascal Braun: 100 years of history and class consciousness. A look back, a look forward

Almost exactly 100 years ago, Georg Lukács' best-known and most influential work "History and Class Consciousness" was published. This critical work, which was directed in particular against the encrustation of Marxism in the hands of social democracy and the Second International at the time, emphasised not least that history should not be understood as a supra-historical determinism, that capitalist laws of motion were not natural laws, but that this change of circumstances had to be brought about practically. Lukács diagnosed what Werner Seppmann once called the "long shadow of objectivism". With this fundamental critique of the Second International, Lukács achieved a high profile - especially in the West. History and class consciousness thus became the "bible of" so-called "Western Marxism" and gave the impetus to a new school of theory that drew in particular on the "Verdinglichungs" essay. The critical theory of the Frankfurt School should be mentioned here in particular.

The essay will deal in particular with the question of whether Western Marxism - especially critical theory, but also the New Marx Reading or Western Marxism-Leninism - not only does not overcome quite fundamental statements of Lukács' fundamental critique of the Second International, but rather - in a different version - repeats them. The central consideration here should be objectivism, which Lukács criticised - quite rightly - at the time. And finally, the question should and must be clarified as to what a rereading of the work is still capable of achieving today and what practical questions arise for Marxism, which has also failed in the West.

room: g3
theorising class ii

Pedro Meira Gava Ramos Barbosa (Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp). Campinas - São Paulo, Brasil.):
Marx and the social classes: Daniel Bensaïd's reading

****Introduction and objectives****

Our paper has as its main objective to analyze the notion of "classes" in the thought of Daniel Bensaïd (1946-2010). The text is organized in two major movements. First, the investigation of Bensaïd's philosophical foundation, which underlies his elaboration. Then, the analysis of his strategic conception of social classes.

****Materials and Methods****

The fundamental resource of the investigation was bibliographic research, especially of books by the author. We adopted as methodology the systematic interpretation of selected Daniel Bensaïd's texts. To apprehend the central nucleus of his elaborations, the analysis was directed to two of his most important works: **Marx l'intempestif** (1995) and **La discordance des temps** (1995). Chapters of later works in which this theme was revisited were also analyzed.

****Results****

As results, we identified the relevance of Bensaïd's philosophical reflections, which supports his elaborations. They contribute to elucidate his opposition to formulations influenced by positivism, typical of traditional sociology, which works with the logical genre of "definitions". Marx, on the other hand, inspired by a "logic of determinations" of dialectical matrix, seeks to follow the path "from the abstract to the concrete" in the unfolding of the object under investigation. This implies an apprehension of classes in their movement, in their conflict dynamics, in the dialectics of their conflict: classes are formed in and through struggle. The "strategic conception" of class involves a synthesis that dialectically articulates two distinct levels of analysis, the "logical order" (structure) and the "historical order" (history). Without disregarding the importance of other conflictual relations, Bensaïd insisted on the "centrality of the class struggle".

****Conclusion****

Daniel Bensaïd's contribution has proven to be relevant to the contemporary debate about social classes. Based on a dialectical approach, he avoids a unilateral and reductionist conception.

Kira Brenner (KCL): Class Composition and the State: An Autonomist Marxist Approach

This paper aims to synthesize an Autonomist Marxist theory of the state. Current Marxist state theory is insufficient for understanding states in the global South and changes to the state under neoliberalism, but Autonomist-informed state theory can correct some of the oversights in the existing theory. I argue that, like the German state derivation debate, an Autonomist theory of the state would understand the state to arise from relations of production. I incorporate key insights from the Autonomy of Migration and Autonomist Feminism traditions, particularly about how the state shapes the technical composition of the working. I discuss some of the issues with the relative autonomy and the understanding that the political is separate from the economic under a capitalist state, by placing a simultaneous economic and political relationship between the working class and the state at the centre of the analysis. By combining these insights with Autonomist Marxism's key contributions – Tronti's Copernican Revolution and class composition analysis – a theory of the state that is applicable to states both North and South emerges.

Dave Beech (University of the Arts London): A Marxist Critique of the Exploitation Theory of Class

Class Formation, Cultures of Class and Classed Life, I have identified several weaknesses in the contemporary analysis of class. Taken as a poor and narrow variant of the theory of stratification, the theory of class has become a mirror of the political crisis of class. One attempt to revive class as a political category in the 1980s was to add exploitation and domination to the criteria for identifying classes. Subsequently, it has become commonplace to

distinguish the Marxist theory of class from all competing theories of class by its emphasis on exploitation. In this paper I want to explain how the exploitation theory of class is better understood as an inadequate revision of the stratification theory of class. Exploitation is a necessary ingredient of a sociological theory of class that wants to draft in one of the conclusions of the economics of class without incorporating economic methods. In effect, exploitation is added to theories of class that operate at arms length from the analysis of the mode of production.

Alvaro Cabrera (University of Wisconsin-Madison): Capitalism, Class, and Collective Action: A multivariate approach

Political processes, social movements, and collective action inquiry have a large and long tradition in social science research. However, most of these studies have relied on traditional approaches to address such research, ignoring the effects that capitalism has on politics, political action, social movements, and collective action. This phenomenon has been repeated all over the globe, particularly in the Global North, in which repertoires of mobilization, political processes, and framing analyses have dominated the scholarly debate around collective action. Although some theories have been influenced by Marxism, none of them take capitalism and, thus, class as central in their analyses. Drawing on Marxist collective action theory, Erik Wright's class model analysis, multivariate regression analysis, and the ISSP Survey (ISSP 2014 – Citizenship II, N = 49.807), the purpose of this paper is to examine the influence that class structure has on participation in different activities of collective action. In consonance with the theory, the results show that belonging to the working class has a negative effect on participation in collective action. Conversely, the upper classes show positive effects in collective action. Lastly, belonging to middle groups doesn't show any significant effect.

room: dlt
political marxist perspectives
on the transition to capitalism

This paper compares the English and French liberal traditions with reference to the evolution of each society's respective social-property relations or class contexts from the Early Modern period to the 19th century. Despite their discursive commonalities, I claim that the absence (France) or presence (England) of dynamic capitalist development is the pivotal factor which differentiates the social function that liberalism as an ideological force played in each historical context. While liberalism in England was the product of and ancillary to capitalism, French liberalism was primarily the standard-bearer of political moderation against state centralization and despotism. My paper equally seeks to reflect on the role of liberalism and republicanism in the transition to capitalism in France. I argue that while in England, laissez faire liberal political economy was the ideology appropriate for its early developmental context, in the cases of late developers such as France, ideologies which emphasize organization and state intervention prove to be crucial for the spurt out of economic backwardness. It was therefore not liberalism or republicanism which supported the transition to capitalism in France, but rather a socialist doctrine – Saint Simonianism – which accompanied its capitalist development. Instead, liberalism up until the Third Republic was not a capitalist ideology in France, but was primarily focused on theorizing a constitutional geometry that could inhibit arbitrary rule, limit the advance of cultural egalitarianism, and promote novel intermediary groups.

Stephen Miller UAB (The University of Alabama at Birmingham): The Physiocrats and Diderot on the Transition to Capitalism

The argument of this paper, following Ellen Meiksins Wood and David McNally, is that the Physiocrats, namely Quesnay and Turgot, called for a transition to capitalism in eighteenth-century France. For Quesnay and Turgot, the transition required an economic cycle—like Marx's description of reproduction in *Capital*—in which the year's surplus would be reinvested to generate more surplus. The state had to change mores so that the landed classes would reinvest surpluses rather than spend them wastefully in the towns on luxury goods.

A further argument of this paper is that Diderot, a regular at Physiocrat gatherings, rejected this vision of capitalist accumulation. He advocated equality before the law, popular sovereignty, liberty and property, but argued that wealth should be used, not to create more wealth, but for use values, what he called conveniences, or items of enjoyment such as the arts. Such items drew attention to the virtues and talents of the nation. Diderot thus seems to have had some intuition of Marx's aspiration in *Capital* for an association of free people emancipated from the capitalist compulsion to produce for production's sake ceaselessly and blindly.

Meriam Mabrouk (Birkbeck, University of London): Political Marxism in Morocco: The production of sovereignty and the British North West African Company (1875-1895)

How can sovereignty be conceptualised in a non-European space that is neither strictly feudal, nor capitalist? To answer this question, this paper approaches the founding of the British North-West African Company (1875-1895) in Tarfaya as an instance of the differing trajectories of British and Moroccan sovereignties, and their malleability as historical-ideological constructions. Through this venture, the desert acted as a hub for British strategic interests and informal imperialism, and as a centre for competing projects of supranational sovereignty: those of Morocco and of Europe. Further, the desert was a space both for the reproduction of British empire and capitalism, and for the subversion of such patterns, notably through the dynamics shaping self-governing nomadic communities. Against interpretations that homogenise predominantly Muslim societies, rendering social formations into immutable, linear historical units of analysis, viewed through the 'fatal affliction' (in Harry Harootunian's words) of developmentalist perspectives on modes of production, this paper uses the British North-West African Company as an instantiation of the complex ways in which agency and sovereignty were articulated in the Maghrebi sphere. Drawing on archival sources in Britain and Morocco, this paper moves in three steps. First, it critically engages with the concept of 'sovereignty' in Political Marxism, whilst mobilising the concept of Bay'aa (a socio-political contract of allegiance) as a challenge to European legally-defined sovereignty – highlighting the contradictory manifestations of both. More specifically, this paper explores the epistemological and ontological implications of viewing sovereignty through an Anglo-European geographical lens, which leaves the nature of social relations and the historical trajectory of Morocco unexplored. Second, it provides an overview of the formation of the company and the broader political dynamics shaping its commercial dealings; and lastly, it analyses the dialectic between state and society, as well as the context-specific changing political roles of space and legitimacy.

Danny Colligan (CUNY): The Transition to Capitalism in Prussia

Germany's nineteenth-century transformation from a sleepy, half-timbered land into the leading industrial power of Continental Europe was a striking success of economic development. Most accounts of this changeover stress the novel way in which catch-up development was carried out, utilizing heavy industry, universal banks and protectionist tariff policies. However, existing accounts of German industrialization usually gloss over the question of why this economic dynamism took hold in the first place.

I seek to answer this question with an investigation into the overwhelmingly agricultural economy of pre-unification Germany. This investigation focuses on the lands of east-Elbian Germany, which comprised the core regions of the state that would eventually politically unite Germany, Prussia. Throughout most of the eighteenth century, Prussian agriculture featured characteristics typical of relatively stagnant contemporary European agriculture. However, the scholarly consensus is that by the nineteenth century midpoint at the latest, the Prussian countryside was exhibiting economic growth and technological progress indicative of the presence of capitalist agriculture.

Most accounts of the transition in Prussian agriculture locate its beginnings in the various agrarian reforms passed by the Prussian government in the wake of Prussia's 1806 military defeat by Napoleon. However, this account will advance a novel explanation of the transition to capitalism in Prussian agriculture which pinpoints its origins in developments that preceded the reforms. The distinctive nature of the Prussian path to capitalism can, I argue, be explained by two phenomena: first, the rural credit institutions established in the wake of the Seven Years War which unintentionally ensnared Prussian landlords in a condition of market-dependence; second, the unprecedented population growth in east-Elbian Germany which, due to the practices of impartible inheritance, produced a market-dependent peasantry, coincidentally at approximately the same time that Prussian landlords were compelled to expand their farming operations.

room: g51
marxism and money

Edemilson Paraná (LUT University, Finland): Money as a social relation: an analysis of the monetary power of the State in the MMT
This article discusses the following ideas proposed by the Modern Money Theory (MMT): i) the postulate of money

as a creature of the state; ii) that economic growth can be achieved through fiscal deficits; and iii) that the state action can enable the attainment of full employment. Such ideas imply a significant monetary role carried out by the state, a role that is evaluated here in light of a Marxist conception of money as a social relation. We emphasize the hierarchically superior power of the state in this regard, but also its limits, highlighting some barriers to the application of MMT prescriptions. On the one hand, we show that there can be substantive effects of fiscal and monetary policies on real production; on the other hand, we problematize the notion of full employment in light of the limits imposed by class struggles on the role of the state as the employer of last resort.

Laurent Baronian (CEPN, University Sorbonne Paris Nord): Money and Capital: a critique of monetary thought, the dollar and post-capitalism

The fundamental thesis of this book on which relies my presentation is that there is a fundamental contradiction within money, between its function as a general medium of exchange for goods and its function as a store of value. The whole history of monetary thought, but also the whole monetary history itself, thus finds its mainspring in this very contradiction between what I have come to see as money's two fundamental modes of being: money as a form of general exchangeability, and money as a general form of value.

Marx's theory of money is something quite different from a commodity theory of money or a labor-value theory of money: a genesis of money's modes of being, and what Marx calls general equivalent is the contradictory unity of these modes of being. In this way, the traditional functions of money are distributed in a new way: under the form of general exchangeability, money's functions as a unit of account and as a medium of exchange must be included, while the general form of value is expressed through money's function as a store of value.

The book is divided into four parts: the first traces the genesis of money, inspired by Marx, and sets out what I have called money's modes of being; the second part covers the history of monetary thought, from the debate between the banking school and the circulation school, launched by the Banking Act of 1844, to Modern Monetary Theory and its Green New Deal; the third part is devoted to the dollar, the history of its hegemony, its vicissitudes, and its relationship to gold and other currencies in international monetary systems from the First World War to the present day; Finally, the fourth part, entitled ""The Politics of Money"", reports on the transformations of the banking and financial system under the NEP in Soviet Russia, with a view to building socialism, and concludes with an examination of the emergence of crypto-currencies and recent models of Central banks digital currencies, analyzing their promises and the transformations they imply for today's capitalism.

Raven Hetzler; Sam Salour: The Value of Money: A Contribution to the Critique of Marx's Theory

Given the contemporary concern with inflation, we return to Marx's theory of money and find it wanting. The issue for us, unlike much of the secondary literature, is not whether Marx needs or does not need a money commodity. We argue that even when gold is money, it is logically inconsistent and empirically questionable to suggest, as Marx does, that the value of money is determined by the socially necessary labor time required to produce the money commodity (an issue that is entirely separate from the so-called Transformation Problem). By tracing the development of classical monetary theory, we show that Marx was ultimately unable to overcome the contradictions inherent in the classical theory of money. In particular, he failed to reconcile his rejection of the Quantity Theory of Money with his production-based theory of the value of money. The problem is resolved if one clearly distinguishes between moneyness and the social validity of an object as money. It follows that the value of money is determined in the realm of national currencies where no money acts as the general equivalent. We believe that this distinction not only allows us to clarify long standing problems that have haunted Marxist monetary theory, but also to lay the foundation for a fruitful critique of Modern Monetary Theory that has recently become so popular.

Bill Dunn (Kingston University): Bitcoin, blockchain and beyond: a cautionary note about writing on cryptocurrency and about writing off cryptocurrency

The paper presents a contribution to a critique of an abstract formalism in much of the literature on cryptocurrency and, among critics who recognize that it represents poor money, of a tendency to write off the social threat it poses. For Marxists, it is easy to identify profound flaws in claims made by the originators and many supporters of cryptocurrencies that they are the future and that such a future is liberating. Like most critics, we can point out

that most cryptocurrency fails to meet the most basic criteria of what makes for money. However, recognizing that money is a social relation not a thing allows some leftist commentators to qualify the criticisms; suggesting that forms of cryptocurrency and the underlying technologies can potentially be used for alternative anti-capitalist purposes. This line of criticism is radicalized here to suggest that arguments made by opponents too often downplay cryptocurrencies' significance. Monetary outcomes are ultimately determined by social power not by the requirements of an abstract economic rationality. The shortcomings of monetary forms need not preclude their extension. Powerful backers resource cryptocurrencies and blockchain technologies and it is likely that applications will continue to grow. While they are unlikely to simply replace the money of leading states, cryptocurrencies can potentially become important within complex monetary hierarchies, further removing money from critical scrutiny and democratic control. This commentary on cryptocurrency then becomes a contribution to a broader Marxist understanding of money and critique of attempts to reduce it to particular commodity, state-money or credit forms.

room: g51a

against the cheapening of trans-species lives:
animals and labour under capitalist
abstraction and commodification

Do ukan Dere, Deniz Diler, Zeynep Gizem Haspolat

Within the global network of industrial animal agriculture, the lives and labor of both nonhuman animals and human workers are caught in a loop of continuous control, manipulation and exploitation with the aim of extraction of maximum surplus value. The entire lifetime of animals is determined by the time of production as they are purposefully bred, enclosed, transported and killed for their bodily fluids and body parts that have become profitable commodities. Animal agriculture is also one of the most dangerous and low-paid branches among all industrial sectors for human workers. Workers are subjected to repetitive processes with high incidence of injury in which they struggle with the speed of machines as well as controlling the animals who resist. Inside this loop of subsumption, both the animals and human workers function merely as abstract and exchangeable components of capital accumulation processes, whilst local producers are also dispossessed of their livelihoods in the face of the continuous expansion of industrial production and the transnational trade of animals and their "products" .

Despite the boasts of the sector for the "animal products" that are generated (measured in tonnes rather than lives), what actually proliferates within and because of industrial animal agriculture is sickness, injury, death, toxic greenhouse gases and zoonotic pathogens that endanger the livability of the whole planet. It is not only this ecological concern, but also the centrality of nonhuman animals to the capital accumulation that requires an intersectional approach to the liberation struggles and trans-species solidarity. Over this background, this panel will focus on these overlooked yet crucial issues via the following questions:

What are the conditions under which nonhuman animals are produced as capital, for capital, with capital? How do human and nonhuman labor get integrated in and cater to this production? What are the conditions under which nonhuman animals are produced as cheap(ened) commodities and what kinds of costs are veiled behind this process of cheapening? How does life and labor get abstracted in the process? What is the role of biotechnology in the regulation of vitalities of nonhuman animals and human workers? And most importantly, amidst ecological crisis and a pandemic that proves the permeability of human and nonhuman animal health, how can we establish the grounds for a trans-species solidarity that unites the movements that strive for human and nonhuman animal liberation?

Toward A More-than-Human Approach to Labor, Value, and Class: A Basis for A Trans-Species Solidarity and Liberation?

Dogukan Dere

Today, the very functional, and even central role of animals throughout the history of class societies are already revealed to a significant extent. Animals were among the first slaves as well as the first commodities. Different modes of production, different social relations of production, and technological breakthroughs led to different ways in which animals were incorporated into social production, reproduction, and consumption processes. However, despite its essential and crucial role, "the animal" is widely overlooked or oversimplified by the political economy in general and by Marxists in particular. The ideological -speciesist- biases behind such a widespread approach have been shaken significantly during the recent decades. On one hand, various studies have been revealing the

immensely central role of animal exploitation in capitalism; on the other hand, there is an abundance of research that makes it impossible to ignore the conscious, sentimental, agentic characters of animals trapped in these exploitative and murderous processes. To sustain our commitment to truly historical and dialectical materialism, we must uncover this ideological curtain and face the challenge of addressing the animal in our political economy and consequently revolutionary praxis.

In this presentation, I will engage with current attempts to conceptualize animal-capital relations in general and animal labor in particular. What are the positions and relations in which animals are forcefully captured under contemporary capitalism? Tools, slaves, unwaged proletarians? The primary references of discussion will be the canonical texts of Marxist political economy as well as the recent scholarship on the political economy of animal labor, especially Jason Hribal, Dinesh Wadiwel, Christian Stache, and Les Beldo. I will try to present deficiencies, contradictions, and limits of speciesist approach to the labor and difficulties we are currently facing as we try to go beyond these prevalent speciesist boundaries. Subsequently, I will offer a possible categorization of the current animal-capital relations. Last but not least, my presentation will end with a discussion on the tasks ahead of us to go beyond the speciesist limits of the current dominant readings in order to construct a historical and materialist understanding of the oppression of animals and expand our analyses of class, labor, value towards non-human animals, with the hope of the possibility for trans-species solidarities, revolutions, and liberations.

Abstraction and Real Subsumption within the Animal-Industrial Complex: Key Biotechnological Elements of Regulating Trans-Species Vitalities
Deniz Diler

Every year, at least 78 billion land animals and more than 150 billion farmed fish are slaughtered to primarily become food. Within increasingly intensifying production systems, their exploitation and commodification is marked by a diverse range of biotechnological-biotechnical innovations employed to speed up growth and the disassembly line by regulating vitalities as abstract populations for the capitalist production of meat and other “products”. It can be argued that the lives and bodies of these animals are abstracted from the environment within which they evolved with other organisms to become “efficient” commodities, only valued for their profitability for the animal industries, whilst suffering, disease and pollution are set aside as externalities. Drawing upon the concepts of abstraction and real subsumption that have been recently extended to include non-human nature in the discussions of multispecies oppression and exploitation, this paper argues that the animal-industrial complex homogenizes not only the vitality and reproductive capacities of each individual animal, but also the distinctive qualities of different species (i.e. their particular biological, historical, material being) via key biotechnological operations that are commonly used across the complex. Through concrete examples from these prevalent biotechnological elements operationalized for capital accumulation in intensive production (e.g. feed-conversion ratio, genetic selection, extreme confinement, medication, artificial insemination and automation), the paper attempts to demonstrate how “farmed” animals are regulated and over-(re)produced as abstracted populations. This abstraction is irrevocably related to “abstract labor”, as the productive activity of human workers is also homogenized to become increasingly controlled and replaced by machinery.

Keywords: Animal-industrial complex, exploitation of animals, biotechnology, real subsumption, abstract labor.

The Cost of Cheapened Lives: Live Cattle Imports in Turkey
Zeynep Gizem Haspolat

Since the early 2010s, the Turkish government has been implementing the “cheap meat policy,” an import-oriented program that incentivizes agribusinesses to import live cattle on an unprecedented scale to decrease the price of red meat. Whereas European countries were important for “dairy cow” imports, Latin American countries like Uruguay and Brazil proved to be countries of import for cattle imported for their meat. Despite becoming harder to sustain with radical devaluation of the Turkish currency in the last couple of years, the late 2010s have witnessed an intensification of this policy, making Turkey one of the high-ranking countries in live cattle imports.

This paper will address the costs of this policy, unpacking the emphasis on cheapness. The cheapness in question here, is the outcome of a production and circulation regime that deems nonhuman animal lives, particularly ones exploited in the food production regimes, expandable. The ecological impact of this policy, including the conditions of transport, and more importantly the effect of this policy on the local producers are discussed, if at all, as an externality. The aim of this paper is highlighting these two unaccounted for “costs” and calling for a way of defying this regime of cheapening lives in a way that includes nonhuman animals into the struggles against exploitation and oppression.

room: r201
perspectives on racial capitalism
hosted by spectre: a marxist journal

Zachary Levenson (Spectre Journal/Florida International University); Gargi Bhattacharyya (University of East London); David McNally (Spectre Journal)

This panel examines recent Marxist work within the problematic of racial capitalism. It seeks to clarify the political and theoretical origins of this problematic and its potential for generative development in relation to new innovations in Marxist research. Exploring the Marxist roots of racial capitalism, Zachary Levenson will survey the emergence of the concept from within the South African left of the 1970s. Gargi Bhattacharyya will reflect on the potential to deepen racial capitalist analysis through the prism of social reproduction theory. David McNally will address the question of the production of surplus value within New World plantation slavery as a modality of racial capitalism.

room: rg01
planning theory i

Elena Hofferberth: Planning beyond growth The case for economic democracy within ecological limits.

Degrowth and post-growth economics has emerged as a particularly fruitful approach in the debates about the reorientation of economies in the Global North towards environmental sustainability, equality, need satisfaction and democracy. This perspective promotes 'a planned reduction of energy and resource use designed to bring the economy back into balance with the living world in a way that reduces inequality and improves human well-being' (Hickel 2021, 1, emphasis added). Despite the (explicit or implicit) appreciation that degrowth will require 'planning' and 'coordination' there is strikingly little engagement with, debate on, and research into what exactly 'planning for degrowth' could look. In view of the challenge that the social-ecological transformation of our economic system poses, this gap urgently needs to be addressed. By exploring the degrowth-planning nexus, this paper seeks to lay a foundation for this effort.

We start by outlining the basic tenets of degrowth and post-growth economics. We then critically review the existing degrowth and post-growth literature with view to its engagement with planning and scrutinise the reasons why planning has so far largely been neglected in this research. In a subsequent step we delineate the specific questions, requirements and challenges that arise for planning in the context of degrowth. To open of avenues for advancing the intersection between degrowth/post-growth and planning we sketch a possible design for planning processes beyond growth. We propose this framework not as an ideal model but rather as a readily available inspiration for academics, campaigners and policymakers that can be taken as a basis for discussion and adjustment in specific contexts. In this sense, it can be conceived as a bridging framework to navigate the social-ecological transformation by both building on already existing institutions (including firms, community networks, public institutions, state apparatus, etc..) and by enabling the emergence and strengthening of alternative ones (all to facilitate the reorganisation of existing provisioning systems in line with the outlines of consciously delineated boundaries).

Michael Albert: Building Global Ecosocialist Democracy: The Role of Citizens Assemblies in Planning a Just Transition

It is urgent that we go beyond the critique of capitalism towards the elaboration of concrete ecosocialist utopias. Imaginative scholarship on ecosocialist futures is growing, but it contains two main blindspots. First, these approaches tend to focus on the ideal end-point of ecosocial transformation rather than the transition process. Second, ecosocialists – particularly those who advocate some form of degrowth – rarely think through an implicit tension within their programs: between the claim that ecosocialist transitions in the global north must involve reductions in aggregate material-energy throughput, and that they must simultaneously be determined by "democratic planning." In this paper I'll address these blindspots by sketching a possible scenario for the emergence of global ecosocialist democracy, while examining how the institutionalization of more participatory democratic processes may assist the struggle for degrowth in the global north. I will give particular attention to the role that "citizens assemblies" (CAs) can play as a mechanism of democratic planning and longer-term ecosocialist transformation. Despite their rising prominence in global climate politics, the potential role of CAs in facilitating ecosocialist degrowth transitions has for the most part been ignored. This may be because recent experiments

with climate CAs have been largely top-down and toothless consultative exercises that are far from perfect from an ecosocialist standpoint. But I will argue that they represent important institutional innovations that can be further radicalized to form a key component of democratic ecosocialist planning at local, national, and global scales.”

Marius Bickhardt (Sciences Po Paris / Centre Marc Bloch): Capitalism as reproductive bioeconomy: revisiting capital's law of population

Against eco-Malthusian theories of demographic overpopulation (Garret Hardin, Paul Ehrlich and the Club of Rome), Marxism generally refutes the concept of a « redundant population » (Malthus) caused by population pressures on scarce resources, by drawing on the Marxian concept of « relative surplus population », which does not refer to « a positive increase of the working population that would exceed limits of wealth being accumulated » but which is relatively « superfluous to capital's average requirements for its own valorization ». In Capital Vol I Marx therefore describes a « law of capitalist production which really lies at the basis of the supposed 'natural law of population' ».

Weighing the strengths and limits of this concept, I want to show how the critical matrix of anti-Malthusianism had an « anesthetic effect on historical materialism » (Wally Seccombe) with respect to at least three different domains. 1/ Gender, kinship relations and the sexual division of labor (cf the debate about the birth strike in German social-democracy in 1913 when Bebel, Luxemburg and Zetkin opposed to the demands of sexual autonomy an anti-Malthusian and pro-natalist theory of class struggle conceived as proletarian proliferation, at the expense of women's rights). 2/ Ecology. (cf David Harvey's productivist reaction to the Club of Rome, since « his critique of neo-Malthusianism has made him reluctant to recognize any natural limits because he too hastily identifies their recognition as guilty of 'Malthusianism' » (Saito)). 3/ Demography. Finally, Robert Brenner's attack on the reigning neo-Malthusian orthodoxy in the journal Past and Present displays a tendency to deny any explanatory power of demographic phenomena. Brenner's tendency asserts the primacy of class struggle dynamics, which according to Wally Seccombe « effectively dismisses any incorporation or active feedback of demographic forces into his model of class relations and class struggle tendencies ».

Between the sixties and eighties, a set of critical thinkers in philosophy, anthropology, history or feminist theory (such as Francoise d'Eaubonne, Leopoldina Fortunati, Wolfgang Harich, Claude Meillassoux, Wally Seccombe, Herbert Marcuse and Hans Magnus Enzensberger) began to criticize the anti-Malthusian matrix, sometimes explicitly attempting to correct the fallacies in the Marxian concept of capital's law of population. In my paper, I want to show how the demo-ecological revision of the reproduction process of capital, which aims at an understanding of capitalism as a reproductive bioeconomy dependent on demo-ecological flows, can be grounded itself on the immanent pitfalls, ambiguities, and inconsistencies in Marx' concept of law of population. For two reasons, which are directly linked to his anti-Malthusianism, Marx provides only a reductive analysis of the reproduction process, i.e. capitalist production « viewed [...] as a connected whole, and in the constant flux of its incessant renewal », by neglecting both its ecological and demographic dimensions. However, by integrating Justus von Liebig's theory of metabolism Marx implicitly recognizes the possibility of an absolute overpopulation, at odds with his anti-Malthusian matrix of artificial scarcity. By theorizing a historically specific market incentive for child labor acting as a « premium to procreation », he points to a theory of demographic reproduction, at odds with his naturalistic reduction of procreation to the « workers instinct of self-preservation », his defense of the family wage, which endorses a presumably natural sexual division of labor against the destructive tendencies of capital against the family .

The revision of the law of population inside of the framework of the reproductive bioeconomy of demo-ecological flows can take Engels famous definition of historical materialism as the analysis of the « production and reproduction of immediate life » as a starting point: « According to the materialistic conception, the determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of immediate life. This, again, is of a twofold character: on the one side, the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing, and shelter and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social organization under which people of a particular historical epoch live is determined by both kinds of production. »

Marx' notebooks of his readings of 18th and 19th century population theorists documented in the Londoner Hefte provide another source for the reproductive bioeconomic framework. With respect to demographic regulation of the surplus populations in ancient times (Greece and Rome), Marx refers to the « forced celibacy » of the enslaved populations, as it would have been cheaper to buy slaves in oversupply on the market than to raise their children. Emigration, colonization, and enslavement of the excess children of landowners who do not inherit enough land, but also infanticides and forced celibacy of slave - these are the regulatory mechanisms of the ancient population

discovered by Marx.

Dougie Booth (University of Exeter): Social Dividend Socialism: Labour Autonomy in a Participatory Planned Economy

In this chapter, we propose an alteration to Pat Devine's model of participatory planned economics in which socialist wage labour is replaced by a social dividend. We argue that, in the existing planning literature, the challenge of balancing democratic control, economic feasibility and labour autonomy has not been properly resolved. Devine's model of participatory planning has thus far come the closest to realising this balance. However, it does not sufficiently realise labour autonomy. We argue that the wage relation necessitates a regime of labour control which undermines the possibility of having a sufficient degree of labour autonomy. As such, wage labour must be replaced by an alternative means of distribution: a social dividend which is disconnected from participation in the workplace, instead, based on a communist principle of distribution.

We draw on Cole's conception of a social dividend, in which society provides sufficient funds to all to cover their material necessities. We outline that this fits naturally into a process of negotiated coordination, wherein additional funds would be allocated to meet differing needs that arise on the basis of natural, historic and social conditions through democratic deliberation.

Whilst pushing for the abolition of wage labour, we acknowledge potential problems. We argue that the complete decoupling of contribution and consumption would require a period of transition wherein pocket-money wages would be maintained. We defend our proposal from two further objections. First, we address the concern that without wage labour there would be labour shortages. Second, we address the accusation that, without a mechanism of discipline or incentives, workplaces will shirk their responsibilities and fail to realise the democratic plan. In our conclusion, we highlight that social dividend socialism, whilst presented as an engagement with participatory planning, holds relevance for other models of planned economics when considering the question of distribution.

room: rb01
peace that feels like war:
subjective and objective reality
in the art of late capitalism

Dr Angela Dimitrakaki, University of Edinburgh; Dr Angeliki Roussou, University of Manchester

The panel discusses contemporary art and visual culture that investigate and document the social experience of non-peace in capitalist societies. The panel deploys the terms 'non-peace' to refer to psycho-social situations that are structured by profound unease, strife, contexts of persecution and orders of a 'war' feeling generating the extreme anxiety that permeates the peace time of capitalist 'normality'. The panel comprises two papers that look at different practices and moments of such non-peace registered through cultural-artistic contexts. Both papers address the relationship of an objective and subjective 'sense' of reality in circumstances of slow terror that capitalist hegemony tries to present as acceptable.

The first paper considers Bonnie Camplin's *The Military-Industrial Complex* (2015, nominated for the Turner Prize), a work that comprises different media in a study room. The study room brings together evidence to articulate the production of a 'consensus on reality', according to the artist. This includes testimonies of five so-called 'super-soldiers' who describe events that one might find hard to believe; yet the testimonies support each other generating an effect of 'truth': an agreement on what must be real. The paper will focus specifically on how this consensus is mediated by the relationship of warfare to processes of 'making sense'.

The second paper will present the lens-based collective *Depression Era* that formed in Athens in the 2010s as a response to the immense pressure of capitalist structures on the working classes and to the sense of an imploding reality. Seen as a 'crisis', the latter corresponded to mass pauperisation but also a feeling of unpeace that became pervasive across social strata and that brought forth a visual culture of 'making sense' - again. The paper will look at the disparity between the staunch social activism of the *Depression Era* collective (possibly one of the largest lens-based collectives in Europe at the time) and the members' often eerie, questioning photo-images, crafted as tentative records of an incomprehensible yet objective capitalist reality.

Rose-Anne Gush (IZK, TU Graz): Sacrificial Energy: notes on lithium and art

This paper considers artworks that engage with 'energyscapes' the settings where capital finds its energy infrastructures, where energy is optimised for capital's growth, in particular looking at the aesthetics of lithium. 'Energy' points to intangible notions connoting life and liveliness, power, vigour, effort, force. Hermann von Helmholtz's essay, 'Über die Erhaltung Der Kraft' (1847) inaugurated energy's present-day 'conservation' definition. The term then expanded to include a technical sense, and was linked to crisis in the 1970s. This crisis gave rise to the invention of the rechargeable lithium battery for the electric car – that was soon after abandoned, to be renewed today in the EU's current phase of 'Green revolution' and energy onshoring, against the background of permanent wars (in Ukraine etc.), and imminent climate collapse. Lithium's history is bound up with its role as a remedy against bipolar disorder. Its presence in the earth provided the site of therapeutic bathing grounds. In drinking water lithium is known to lower depression and suicide rates. Anastasia Kubrak (2021,) describes 'lithiated' lemon soda, sold as a mood enhancer just before the Wall Street crash of 1929. With each minor and major depression, lithium served to restore energies. In Aesthetic Theory, Adorno describes the artwork as essentially a forcefield or process or relation that materialises as a process of becoming. Interestingly, Adorno describes the constituent parts of an artwork as 'centers of energy that strain toward the whole on the basis of a necessity that they equally preform. The vortex of this dialectic ultimately consumes the concept of meaning'. This paper explores the mediation and consumption of energy within art by artists such as Maryam Jafri, Karrabing Film Collective, On-Trade-Off, Denise Ferreira da Silva and Arjuna Neuman. Through an analysis of this exemplary work, the paper will unpack how art that takes energy materials as its content, medium and material, thinks energy.

room: b102:
re-imagining the emancipatory subject
in arab radical politics post-1967

Samuel Carlshamre (Lund University); Abdallah El Ayach (Princeton University); Natasha Gasparian (University of Oxford); Ziad Kiblawi (University of Oxford)

The defeat of Arab armies in June 1967 was a watershed moment in social, political, and cultural history of the modern Middle East. This was expressed in intellectual and artistic circles in the Arab world in the form of intense debate surrounding the function and commitment of cultural practices. Politically, the June War sealed the fate of pan-Arabism and in its place came the question of the national liberation of Palestine. With the "New Left" just under formation, soviet-style Marxism and Comintern politics were superseded by theoretical innovation and socialist and communist action groups. The term *iltiz m* (commitment) was freed from the fetters of existentialist humanism and became the signifier of the recommencement of materialist tendencies. Under the aegis of a historical materialist national culture, the past (of Arab thought) was to be reread in order to retroactively fashion a tradition for a socialist horizon. Challenging a liberal developmentalist or culturalist Arab civilizational claims of economic or cultural underdevelopment, radical intellectuals sought to theorize the grounds of critique. Figures like Mahdi Amel introduced the concept of the Colonial Mode of Production while Sadiq Jalal al-Azm diagnosed in culture the means of its own stuckness. In art, realism, as a method rather than a style, became the artistic handmaiden for the Palestinian Revolution.

Samuel Carlshamre: Lund University: Conceptualising the Radical Subject in Arab Marxist: Discourse on Tradition Post-1967**

"In historical discourse, the signs of reception or destination are commonly absent: we find them only when History gives itself out as a lesson..." – Roland Barthes

In the aftermath of the war against Israel in 1967 Arab society as a whole went through a period of soul searching. The developmental optimism of the previous decade was transubstantiated into a modus of "self-criticism after the defeat", paired with a theoretical turn towards questions of how to deal with the shared cultural heritage/tradition (Turath).

Within Arab Marxism this took the form of a departure from a Bandung-inflected commitment to the inevitability of third world ascendancy, towards a critical re-engagement with issues of political contingency and alternative ideas about radical temporality. Was the cause of the Arab left intrinsically to be understood as intrinsically bound up with

this particular idea of progress, or should rather the rejection of modernity (“capitalist” or in general) be posited as the precondition for achieving some alternative mode of development?

In this paper I will focus specifically on how this turn was expressed in the set of terms used to denote the political subject addressed or presupposed by the authors writing on the topic of Turath. How can this “traditional” turn be traced in the mode of understanding the radical political subject? What valorisation is contained or presupposed in the usages of terms such as The People (al-Sha’b), The Working Class (al-Tabaqa al-’Amila), The Toiling Classes (al-Tabaqat al-Kadiha), The National Liberation Movement (Harakat al-Tahrir al-Watani)?

It is my hope that, through the lens of the particular case of the Arab left in its time of radical reappraisal of its attitude towards the past, the paper will provide insights into the structure of radical historical discourse in general, in terms of “the signs of reception or destination”.

Samuel Carlshamre is a PhD-Student in Semitic Languages at Lund University, Sweden, working on a dissertation entitled *Materialising Tradition: Arab Marxists as readers of Turath*. Apart from his academic work he works as a press secretary for the Swedish Left party and a translator from Arabic, currently working on an anthology of Classical Arabic philosophy.

Natasha Gasparian (University of Oxford)

****The New Sensibility: Reconfiguring Commitment in post-1967 Beirut****

Following the eclipse of Gamal Abdel Nasser as the Arab world’s model leader (*az-za im*) and patriarch—its master-signifier—after the Arab defeat of the 1967 June War, newly radicalized painters, playwrights, and poets in Beirut looked to militant models of subjectivity to rearticulate their commitment to national liberation and socialism, while simultaneously seeking to construct, rather than merely depict, social reality. Until 1982, when the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was forced out of Beirut during the Israeli siege of Beirut and the Sabra and Shatila Massacres in the Palestinian refugee camps, commitment (*iltizam*), formerly conceived in Sartrean existentialist terms, was reformulated within a language of revolutionary mass politics and reconfigured through new forms of artmaking. Anxiously seeking to ground their idealization of the Palestinian guerrilla combatant (*fida i*) in concrete Leftist heroes such as Che Guevara, artists mobilized realism, not as a style but as an operative method. Echoing Fanon, artist and intellectual Kamal Boullata noted, in 1970, that the form of realism deployed did not simply introduce figuration into an otherwise abstract pictorial field or represent a change in iconography; it cultivated an entirely new sensibility (*hassassiyya jadida*). This New Sensibility (as both the name of militant art and literature after 1967 and the new mode of perception it inspired) took on a multitude of appearances in painting, theater, film, and literature that assumed both demystifying and defamiliarizing functions (the former thought to be a function of realism; the latter, modernism), often prompting encounters in readers and spectators—in little magazines, large-scale paintings, films, and portable works on paper and posters. Challenging the thesis that this new sensibility was a resigned, self-reflexive, (post-)modernist response to the preceding decades’ notion of commitment, this paper will reconsider the implications of the Arab left’s discursive and ideological shift from a pan-Arab nationalism to an adherence to the Palestinian Revolution.

Natasha Gasparian is pursuing a DPhil in Contemporary Art History and Theory at the Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford. She is the author of *Commitment in the Artistic Practice of Aref El-Rayess: The Changing of Horses* (2020). Natasha is a member of the Beirut Institute for Critical Analysis and Research (BICAR).

Ziad Kiblawi (University of Oxford): *Agents of Erosion: National Culture and the National Bourgeoisie***

1967 prompted wide-scale dissatisfaction with hegemonic ideological trends such as Arab nationalism, Syrian nationalism, Ba’athism, existentialist humanism, and orthodox Marxism and sparked a series of self-critical public debates. The defeat undercut all debates and reinforced the false dichotomy of “takhalluf” (underdevelopment) / “taqaddum” (progress). Culture concepts of authenticity returned to the fore of the intellectual debate and became central to discussions on Arab heritage and tradition (Arab “authenticity” and “particularity”).

Years before publishing his *Theoretical Prolegomena* (1973) – known for its quasi-Althusserian attempt at theorizing Arab social formations as governed by a “colonial mode of production” and the wholesale rejection of idealism and Sartrean humanism – Lebanese Marxist theoretician Mahdi Amel had a sustained engagement with Jean-

Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon. In June 1964, Amel published a two-part essay in **Révolution africaine** on Fanon's revolutionary thought. Amel's reading of Fanon was motivated by an imperative to cast a corrective to counter what he believed to be opportunist readings of Fanon which had stripped him of his revolutionary drive.

This talk will trace the transformation of Amel's Fanonism in relation to the role of national culture (from an "authentic reconciliation with the self" to an instrument in the materialist negation of all bourgeois ideology) and the status of a national bourgeoisie (from a parasitic structural class to a structural impossibility in the Colonial Mode of Production). This paper will introduce a Mahdi Amel that is unknown to the western reader and reveal the centrality of Fanon to his so-called Althusserianism.

Ziad Kiblawi is a translator of Arab critical theory and a DPhil candidate in History at St Antony's College, University of Oxford, where he is working on an intellectual history of Arab social and political thought in the 1950s–1980s. He works on the historiography of modern political thought, critical theory, and modern art in the Middle East. His most recent publication is Mahdi Amel on Edward Said: Mechanisms of Expansion in the Reproduction of Knowledge and Capital. Ziad is a member of the Beirut Institute for Critical Analysis and Research (BICAR).

Abdallah El Ayach (Princeton University): Symptomatic Culture and the Incongruous Spirit

In the wake of the Arab defeat in the June war of 1967, Arab intellectuals took an 'inward turn' emphasizing 'self-criticism' as the task of critique. The defeat made visible the limits of the political revolution effectuated by the petit bourgeois leadership, and its nationalist ideology, of the National Liberation Movement. The political revolution fell short of overcoming the persistent problem of 'belatedness', which troubled Arab intellectuals since the dawn of capitalist modernity in the Arab world. The dominant temporality of 'belatedness' was perceived as encompassing the whole social structure of 'Arab society'. To compensate for the failures of political revolution in transforming the temporal structure, Arab intellectuals turned towards cultural critique to emphasize the need for cultural revolution in effectuating a social transformation. This paper will discuss the critiques presented by two prominent Syrian intellectuals of the 1960s, the modernist poet Adonis, and the rationalist Marxian thinker Sadiq Jalal al-Azm. In the works of both intellectuals, culture was taken as both the symptomatic site of the pathologies of Spirit/Geist in the Arab world and the site within which newness must emerge to overcome the inhibitions of social transformation. While Adonis portrayed the problem of spirit as one of nihilism grounded in a transhistorical cultural 'pastism', anchoring him in a reactionary position, al-Azm diagnosed an incongruous spirit rooted in reason and its social institutionalization. Discussing the works of both intellectuals, this paper will argue that culture after 1967 was understood as signifying the relation between consciousness and existence, but its relative autonomy and partial determination made it responsible for the transformation of social existence. Following the suggestion offered by Raymond Williams, this paper will show that culture appeared in the 1960s as a symptom of an inhibited general social process of transformation.

Abdallah El Ayach is a graduate student in the History department at Princeton University. His research focuses mainly on Marxist intellectual history in the Arab world between the 1960s and 1980s. He was previously a doctoral fellow at the Orient-Institut Beirut where he presented his research on Arabic translations of continental philosophy published in the 1980s. He was also an Mellon fellow under the project Extimacies: Critical Theory from the Global South. Abdallah El Ayach is also a current member of BICAR – Beirut Institute for Critical Analysis and Research.

room: b103
what is social reproductive work?

Sara Farris (Goldsmiths, University of London); Sue Ferguson; Maud Perrier (University of Bristol)

Maud Perrier: From stratified childcare labour markets To Maternal Worker Power

In contrast to domestic work and gestational surrogacy, waged childcare has received less attention by Marxist feminists despite the ethical questions it continues to raise about the distribution of reproductive labour. Discussion of family abolition as a solution to reproductive capitalism significantly leave out what fair reproductive futures might look like beyond the communal household (Lewis, 2018; O'Brien, 2022). This paper focuses on what the activism and organizing that happens in and around contemporary waged childcare in the developed neoliberal economies. I

lay out how the category of the maternal worker -elaborated from my research with activist nannies, nursery workers and NGO workers in organizations led by racially minoritized and migrant mothers-speak to this ethical challenge. This article starts by charting the conditions under which these different maternal workers can share space and power democratically with care receivers, and shows the techniques these activists have developed to produce solidarity through a process I call 'maternal worker power' within and beyond their workplaces. The paper argues for analyses that bring social reproduction theory and black feminist analyses into closer conversations to grasp the organizing that is characteristic of stratified formations of reproductive labour.

Sara Farris: Theories of care and social reproduction

The late David Graeber, writing a few months into the Covid-19 crisis in 2020, invited us to consider not the Pandemic, but neoliberalism, as a dream, or nightmare, to awake from. The exposure of the essentiality of care, of our very dependency on care, brought about by the pandemic, he maintained, was actually our wake-up call. In particular, it imposed on us to ask two questions: why are those activities that sustain our life so undervalued? What kind of society is one in which the practices that are most important to us (i.e., the nursery teacher who makes sure our children do not get hurt; the caregiver who keeps our elderly parents alive, or the cleaner who makes sure our offices or houses are clean and enjoyable) are the ones which are paid the least? Both the frameworks known as social reproduction theory and the ethics and politics of care have addressed these questions for a long time. Yet, in the last ten years alone publications and discussions centred on care and social reproduction have multiplied, though the conceptual distinctions between these concepts and approaches is not always clear. This paper will focus on the similarities and particularly the differences between the theoretical frameworks that inform the politics of care and social reproduction particularly in light of their different political implications.

Sue Ferguson: Written on the Child's Body: Alienation, Play and Social Reproduction

This presentation explores how capitalist regimes of social reproduction engender an ongoing, if never complete, polarization between play and work through organizing children's embodied relationships to themselves and to their natural and social environments. While much has been written about the ways in which capitalist ideologies shape childhood and children's subjectivities, in foregrounding the work/play continuum of children's own social reproduction, I stress crucial praxeological dynamics within capitalist forms of life-making and alienated labour. Such an analysis can help us think through what the left can do to undo those dynamics, both within workplaces and beyond.

room: b104
western marxism and the
contribution of perry anderson

Darren Roso: Some Comments on Anderson's "Western Marxism"

Without a doubt, Perry Anderson's *Considerations on Western Marxism* has defined the contours within which much of the New Left has thought about the relations between Marxist philosophy, the critique of political economy and political strategy and tactics of the communist left. The pathbreaking nature of the work should not however detract from the untenable presuppositions implicit in the essay. Unlike other criticisms of Anderson that focus on the untenable geographical divide between East and West from which it is possible to read certain convergent themes that undo the divide or rectify specific issues pertaining to individual thinkers, this paper will instead make the case that Anderson's untenable suppositions pertain to the tripartite nature of Marx's breakthroughs in the domain of the new practice of philosophy, the critique of political economy and the critique of politics. Anderson makes three basic moves in his remarkable essay. First, Anderson presents the nature of Marx's breakthrough as involving historical materialism, against which all philosophical articulations of Marx's work can be read as the pre-Marxian superimpositions of thinkers like Spinoza, Rousseau, Kant and Hegel; second, Anderson treats the critique of political economy from the vantage point of its concrete application to social formations, rather than possible ways of elaborating it through theoretical reflection; third, Anderson presents politics from the vantage point of strategy and tactics, without enough attention to the critique of politics. Historical materialism is a construction that becomes an obstacle to the interpretation of efforts to think the nature of Marx's materialism, which requires philosophical reflection, efforts to elaborate the critique of political economy and Marx's unfinished critique of politics.

George Souvlis (University of Thrace, Department of Political Science): Perry Anderson's Antonio Gramsci: a rereading

This paper aims to address the complex relationship between Perry Anderson and Antonio Gramsci. The former writer despite the fact has been the key intellectual influence of the British Marxist historian from his early 1960's work on the British state until his current study on the Heirs of Gramsci has not received any special focus with the exception of few articles. The argument that I make in regards to this issue is twofold: the Gramsci's Marxism that informs his work is a conjunctural one meaning that the understanding that Perry Anderson promotes in his studies is selected according to the political conjuncture rather than from a strictly academic reading of his writings. This approach, in turn, ends up in a contradictory evaluation of the work of Italian Communist leader, something that is not acknowledged by Perry Anderson and which has certain implications both for his political outlook and the politics that Antonio Gramsci promoted. In order to exemplify my argument I periodize this relationship in three distinct historical phases. The first period covers briefly the early research of the British historian on the origins of the British state in which Gramsci is the key theoretical influence that informs them. The second one focuses on the emblematic text of Anderson on Gramsci's thought, "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci" that published in 1976 and has defined to a great extent the way the English speaking audience has received the work of the Sardinian communist leader. The last one will examine Anderson's late research output on the Heirs of Gramsci. This historicization aims in that way to demonstrate both the lasting influence of Gramsci's work on the historical writings of Perry Anderson and the inherent contradictions of it.

Stephan Hammel (University of California, Irvine): What is Excluded by 'Western Marxism'

On Hegel's account of conceptuality, negations are determinate: mastery excludes slavery, being nothingness. Clarifying a concept, then, can be a matter of discerning its opposite. This strategy is especially appropriate to the category 'Western Marxism,' which, apart from referring to literature suffused with Hegelianism, is named in a way as to invite curiosity about its implied counterpart. Should they have that curiosity, readers of the text that introduced the term, Perry Anderson's 1976 *Considerations on Western Marxism*, might be struck by the scope of what falls outside the concept. In the first place, there is what Anderson calls the 'classical tradition,' which includes nearly the whole of Marxist writing before the Second World War, exceptions made only for early contributions by authors who became prominent afterward. Post-war Marxists who were neither especially distant from, nor expressly critical of, official Communism are similarly out-of-bounds. Anderson is sufficiently pessimistic about the continued relevance of these 'non-Western' Marxisms as to recommend that, insofar as they engage with them at all, contemporary Marxists devote their efforts to identifying theoretical errors and limitations inherent in them.

This pessimism derives from a historical analysis that understands the decisive post-war conditions to be Stalinism in the USSR, economic prosperity in the imperialist bloc, and the stability of bourgeois democracies. Nearly half a century on, none of these conditions persists. Russia has rejoined the community of capitalist states, and these are routinely confronted by both economic and political crises. This presentation argues for abandoning Anderson's Cold War model for understanding the historical trajectory of Marxist theory as a precondition for usefully reevaluating the literature his key concept excludes.

room: bglt
book launch:
marx's theory of value in chapter 1 of capital

Book Launch: *Marx's Theory of Value in Chapter 1 of Capital: A Critique of Heinrich's Value-Form Interpretation*

Chapter 1 is the most important chapter in *Capital*, as well as the most difficult and the most controversial. An influential interpretation of Chapter 1 in recent decades has been the so-called "value-form interpretation" of Marx's theory in general and Chapter 1 in particular. The most important proponent of the value-form interpretation today, both in Germany and in the English-speaking world, is Michael Heinrich, and Heinrich's work has emphasized the first chapter. Heinrich's latest book in English is a detailed commentary of the first seven chapters of Volume 1 of *Capital*. The publication of an English translation of Heinrich's book is an important event in Marxian scholarship and it is important to critically engage with this important book in order to advance our understanding of this critical foundational chapter. This book emphasizes the quantitative issue of whether the magnitude of value and socially necessary labour-time are determined in production or also depend on exchange and demand, which has been the main issue in the controversy over the value-form interpretation.

For this launch, Fred Moseley will present some of the core theses of the book, responses will then be given by both Winfried Schwarz and Michael Heinrich.

room: mal 354
keywords for value and culture

Sam Fisher (King's College London); Tomos Hughes (University of Warwick); Josh Jewell (University College Dublin); Sean O'Brien (University College Dublin); Harry Pitt-Scott (University of Warwick); Thomas Waller (University of Nottingham); Harry Warwick (University of Warwick)

This roundtable asks why the uptake of value-form theory has been so great among Marxist literary and cultural critics. As the editors of *After Marx: Literature, Theory, and Value* (2022) have persuasively argued, recent years have seen a "collective rethinking of what a Marxist approach to literature might be, and do" that responds to economic and cultural trends dating back to the 1960s. And yet, in our opinion, while a conjunctural analysis goes some way to clarifying the disciplinary context, it fails to fully capture the affinity between literary studies and value-form theory. The emphasis on form, for example, suggests a more deep-seated, elective affinity between the two fields that hinges on modalities of reading. Emerging out of Adorno's classroom at the University of Frankfurt in the 1960s, critics associated with the **Neue Marx-Lektüre** like Hans-Georg Backhaus (1980) and Helmut Reichelt (1982) argued that the form through which Marx presented his ideas, and the way in which we read him, are not secondary to but rather constitutive of the critique of political economy. Furthermore, the key problem of value-form theory is itself a representational dilemma, namely: how to read for a social substance (value) that is both omnipresent and determining yet abstract and difficult to figure?

This roundtable considers the implications of value theory for cultural analysis broadly construed. In this, we build on recent Marxist scholarship considering the different representational logics of capital's value forms (La Berge 2014), the role of figuration in the representation of abstract social relations (Jameson 2011), the relationship between value and aesthetic categories like the gimmick (Ngai 2020), the aesthetic implications of "real abstraction" (Vishmidt 2018), and the extent to which cultural production can be "subsumed" under capital (Brown 2019; Beech 2015). We will think through the literary reception of Alfred Sohn-Rethel's influential concept of "real abstraction" (1970) and Moishe Postone's work on "impersonal domination" (1993). Furthermore, we will discuss related work by the **Wertkritik** writers on the form-determination of labour (Trenkle 1998; Kurz 1986), the value dissociations of gender and race (Gonzalez and Neaton 2014, Scholz 2009), and the collapse of modernisation (Kurz 1991). By examining the conceptual terrain shared between value theory and aesthetic theory—abstraction, figuration, representation, expression, appearance, form and content—we aim to point to new directions in Marxist criticism. What is to be gained, or lost, in moving back and forth between the critique of political economy and theories of aesthetics? Is the "form" in "value form" the same as the "form" in "aesthetic form"? What can a literary approach offer to ongoing debates about abstract labour, exchange society, and crises of accumulation?

Like many a good Marxist initiative, the idea for this roundtable emerged out of a **Capital** reading group. As we plodded through the first few chapters of volume one alongside Michael Heinrich's **How to Read Marx's Capital** (2021), we found ourselves frustrated by the latter's inattention to Marx's language. Although Heinrich has done much to remedy popular misreadings of **Capital**, we felt that he bracketed the literary aspects and rhetorical flourishes of Marx's writing in favour of the supposedly more scientific claims about value, labour, and exchange. Yet, as Ludovico Silva argues in **Marx's Literary Style** (1975), the stylistic superfluities of Marx's writing are in fact constitutive elements of his scientific project: one cannot separate the hard scientific wheat from the disposable literary chaff without vitiating the totality of Marx's project.

The second iteration of our reading group pivoted to a "keywords" focus that allowed us to bring the concerns of literary studies, value-form theory, and the Marxian critique of political economy into conversation with one another. We read Nicholas Brown and Dave Beech and discussed the subsumption of artistic labour; we read Søren Mau's **Mute Compulsion** and wondered about its uses for literary studies; we read Fredric Jameson's **Representing Capital** and spoke about the concept of "figuration"; we read Roberto Schwarz's essay on "objective form" and talked about the project of dialectical criticism; we discussed the cultural registration of growth and the aesthetics of degrowth; we read Aaron Benanav and Jason E. Smith on automation and spoke about the culture of the long downturn; and we read Ludovico Silva's work on the relationship between science and style in Marx. Growing out of a discussion that has been ongoing for two years, this roundtable will be organised around the following

keywords:

- Autonomy
- Abstraction
- Figuration
- Form
- Growth
- Stagnation
- Style

We use these keywords, not only as a lens through which to approach Marx's project, but also as a set of tools with which to think the process by which aesthetic experience mediates the subterranean machinations of the value form. In discussing the intersection between literary studies and value form theory, we will consider cultural objects by writers such as Ralph Ellison, Samuel Delany, Gwendolyn Brooks, Jesmyn Ward, Manuel Antonio Almeida, and artists like Albrecht Dürer and Leonardo Cremonini.

room: mal 355
feminist political struggles

Rhiannon Lindgren (University of Oregon): Against the Couple-Form: Transforming Care in Family Abolition

In "Abolition of the family: the most infamous feminist proposal," Kathi Weeks (2021) joins queer and trans marxists such as Sophie Lewis and M.E. O'Brien to advocate for the application of abolitionist politics toward the problem of the family. For these authors, similar to analyses from Social Reproduction Theorists, the tensions and harms within family formations are located principally in the function of the family's role in privatized social reproduction, namely as the primary site at which humans meet their most basic needs: feeding, housing, washing, and emotionally recharging. Far from advocating for further state invention to separate individual families, family abolitionists seek to imagine care and the social relations which such activities uphold as otherwise. While the structural analysis and utopian horizons offer an incisive critique of the family under capitalism, the practical political directives which emanate from the family abolitionist critique are less discernible. In my paper, I concretize the potential of family abolitionist politics through the rubric of reproductive struggle by offering a critique of the couple-form. In so doing, I argue alongside sociologists of polyamory that certain forms of nonmonogamy further entrench a liberal ideology, in which private property and self-possession are sovereign. Furthermore, these practices fail to challenge the privatized form of caring relations embedded within the couple-form. Only when practices of care and the relationships which form through them are consciously and collectively aimed at challenging the current conditions of neoliberal social reproduction, can we consider challenging the couple-form as revolutionary political activity. In enumerating the criterion of family abolition as reproductive struggle, I clarify the ways certain caring formations either fail or succeed in the goal of creating a society in which the processes of life-making and nurturance need not be contained within and distorted by the violence of the family form.

Fatima Gabriela Soares de Azevedo (University of Porto): Feminist social movements: resistance and theoretical tools

How is the organisation of life changing in contemporary capitalism? Current social movements have pointed out the repercussions of financeirization (LAPAVITSAS, 2013) and the adoption of neoliberal politics in everyday lives. Besides COVID-19 pandemics, the mediation of essential goods and services pressures households to have more income and to perform more unpaid tasks. The State disengagement on social reproduction, with labour, pensions, and other legal reforms, brings extra responsibilities to families. In a Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) framework (BHATTACHARYA, 2017) (VOGEL, 2013) (FERGUSON, 2020) (VARELA, 2021), this project analyses Portuguese and Brazilian feminist social movements to explore the social impacts of the finance mediations to access education, pensions, and health in households located in distinct capitalist territories. The project seeks to fill in the gap of Marxist financialization and social movements studies, regarding the characterization of women, mothers and other social movements activists as workers that have a singular experience on social reproduction due to their participation in social reproductive work. We argue that the proposition of Social Reproduction Theory and its analyses on capitalist dependence of the social reproductive work – that produces the conditions for the production of value is the most accurate feminist-socialist framework to understand nowadays dynamics.

Tal-Hi Bitton (University of Oregon): Dialectics of Reproductive Struggle in Palestinian National Liberation

On the 75th anniversary of the Nakba, and three decades after the disastrous Oslo Accords, the Palestinian liberation movement is in a moment of new-found promise. After the Accords, Palestinians have suffered increasingly militarized Israeli colonization; the Palestinian Authority has been inept in protecting Palestinian civil society, instead regularly colluding with Israel and employing police violence to ensure its hegemony within the colonial situation; and neoliberalism has degraded social welfare while encouraging Arab and Israeli capitalist marketization and financialization. Despite this, Palestinian liberation has found renewed international fervor when Palestinians successfully protected 58 families from being dispossessed of their homes in Sheikh Jarrah in 2021. I argue that these present heightened contradictions demonstrate how Palestinian liberation is a reproductive struggle over conditions of lifemaking against Zionist deathmaking. I first examine, following Raja Khalidi and Adam Haneih, how the PLO's Marxist composition focused too narrowly on the national question, such that the PLO failed to anticipate the trappings of the Oslo Accords, on the one hand, and neoliberal, capitalist immiseration of Palestine, on the other hand. This has led to a reified, masculinist, and narrow ideology of Palestinian liberation, which corresponds to Palestinian women being historically marginalized in the liberation movement. Following Rosemary Sayigh, Laila al-Hamdani, and Nada Elia, I track how Palestinian women were consigned to reproductive labor in civil society and struggle, yet through politicizing around their reproductive labors they came to a more incisive, holistic conception of anti-imperial and -colonial struggle. Because these people and their developed conscious understanding of their situation were marginalized, their practical and theoretical developments within Marxist Palestinian struggle were suppressed. Moreover, I argue that national liberation might be advanced more in this moment by centering reproductive struggle, taking our lead from the revolutionary labors of Palestinian women.

room: g3
marxism, dependency, inequality

Lorenzo Fusaro (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana): Rethinking Dependency

As part of a wider project, this paper will critically review how dependency and dependency relations have been understood and conceptualised – while providing ideas through which these notions might be further elaborated. In doing so, I will engage with both the classical theories of dependency –focussing especially, but not exclusively, on the “radical” strand within the literature including the works of Ruy Mauro Marini, Theotonio Dos Santos and Vania Bambirra– and the recent assessments offered by Claudio Katz (2019) and Ronaldo Munck (2022), amongst others. I will argue that a return to both the work of Karl Marx (above all: The general law of capitalist accumulation) and Antonio Gramsci (primarily: his understanding of international relations), who anticipated several themes later developed by dependency theorists, might complement, and strengthen the conceptualisation of dependency and dependency relations.

Isabelle Darmon (University of Edinburgh): Equality, not sufficiency! Critical theoretical perspectives on the inequality-unsustainability nexus

‘Sufficiency’ has become a watchword of part of the eco-activist movement, particularly but not only linked to degrowth. Even though inequality is a central concern of eco-critical and eco-activist scholars, as illustrated by Jason Hickel’s plea that ‘reducing inequality needs to be at the very heart of climate policy’, inequality is not the (first) call. In this paper I first explore why, one key reason being that equality and environmental sustainability are still often treated as two challenges potentially in tension with each other, with equality suspected of pertaining to a distributive worldview. There is an ongoing feeling that climate chaos is rooted in the collective excesses entrenched by the growth compact, even though this moral assessment is at odds with the structural understanding of the systemic character of capitalist accumulation that eco-critical and degrowth scholars themselves chart. Secondly, and conversely, drawing on eco-Marxism and feminist critical theory, I approach inequality and unsustainability not as two parallel challenges but as a ‘nexus’ historically powered by specific mechanisms of fossil, metabolic as well as ‘green’ accumulation. Inequality is there the product of three deeply intertwined processes of exploitation, expropriation from means and conditions of existence, and differentiation, hierarchization and unevenness of statuses. I show how such three-pronged inequality is itself generator of unsustainability, as the uneven distribution of the operations of the fossil/metabolic and green/metabolic machines alongside the inequality axis generates, upholds, and multiplies unsustainability. Thus I argue that adopting a nexus approach to inequality and unsustainability offers a critical theoretical method that can hopefully shift the sufficiency movement away from the moral terrain towards the class politics needed today for socio-ecological transformation: from ‘sufficiency!’ to ‘equality, and thus sustainability!’

Tomas Rotta (Goldsmiths, University of London): Was Marx Right? Development and Exploitation in 43 Countries, 2000-2014

The period 2000-2014 encapsulates a unique moment of intense globalization where nearly all countries followed the capitalist mode of production. We assess Marx’s hypotheses about capitalist development and the tendency for profit rates to decline for this period using a newly constructed dataset of Marxist variables (profit rates, exploitation, composition of capital and shares of productive activity) for 43 major economies, derived from world input-output data and national accounts. We find a decline in the world rate of profit measured using Marxist definitions. After the 2008 financial crises, the rate of surplus value stagnated but capital intensity continued to increase. Our results hold across a range of specifications about what constitutes productive economic activity in the classical framework. At a cross-country level, rich countries became increasingly dominated by unproductive activity. China absorbed much of the world’s share of productive activity and kept the labor share constant at the world level. The Marxist rate of profit on total capital declines with per-capita GDP and the rate of surplus value (exploitation) is higher in countries with a higher share of productive economic activity.

Krista Lillemets (Freie Universität Berlin): Rethinking the capital-labour relation from the viewpoint of the periphery

The aim of this presentation is to critically rethink the concept of labour which is central to classical Marxism. I propose to do it from the viewpoint of empirical realities in social and geographical peripheries. Since Marxist political economy defines capitalism by wage labour, the double free labour, forms, in which the capital-labour relation does not take the free exchange between living labour capacity and objectified labour, are relegated to

the past or considered as anomalies, exceptions or residues in capitalist mode of production. Consequently, these forms in social or geographical peripheries are “unthought” from the theory of capital. In that sense, the notion of labour, central in classical Marxism, presents limitations in taking into account the coerced (unfree) labour in historical capitalism as well as contemporary modalities of labour appropriation based on expropriation in conceptualising of capitalist labour and capital production. Partly, the limitation in incorporating peripheral realities in the global social theory is related to the enduring asymmetry in the global production and circulation of knowledge, which has produced a historic “Northern bias”. In view of that, I propose to discuss peripheral knowledge production about the capital and labour relation from the perspective of coerced (unfree) labour in historical capitalism. I will examine the contributions of Brazilian historical sociologist, Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco (1978; 1984) and black feminist philosopher and sociologist, Denise Ferreira da Silva (2019; 2022) to the rethinking of the notion of private property regime, commodification of labour-power and expropriation as a mode of capital accumulation based on “total violence” from the viewpoint of modern colonial slavery in racialised capitalism. Finally, I will scrutinise, how these contributions regarding the historical capitalist labour may provide elements for the analysis of contemporary forms of labour appropriation based on expropriation characterising increasingly the global working-class.

room: dlt

Sam Salour: The second Brenner debate: A reappraisal in light of the debate on secular stagnation

In 1938, Alvin Hansen proposed the concept of “secular stagnation” to account for the slow dynamism of the US economy. In 2013, Larry Summers’ revival of the same concept to account for low rates of growth in advanced capitalist economies has generated a heated debate amongst economists of all persuasions offering radically different explanations for this phenomenon. It is surprising that hardly any reference is made to the works of Robert Brenner who has already argued in 1998 that the advanced capitalist economies had entered a long downturn since the 1970s. After a review of the recent debate on secular stagnation, I look at the debate engendered by Brenner’s work and argue that his framework withstands the theoretical and empirical critiques that at the time seemed so devastating. I show that Brenner’s historical narrative, by bringing together different sides of the debate, can provide a unified explanation for secular stagnation.

Samuel Knafo: Rentierism and the Eternal Return of the Political in Marxism

Rentierism is often presented as a return of political forms of accumulation under neoliberalism. From this perspective, the late neoliberal era witnessed the rise of predatorial strategies of accumulation in response to overaccumulation. With traditional strategies based on production becoming less effective, capitalists would have moved onto more rentier strategies supported by active political measures. The paper uses this debate to reflect on the question of the political in Marxism. It does so by revisiting the contributions and limits of Political Marxism an approach that was initially based on a commitment to put the political at the center, but which ended up being seen as doing the opposite. I highlight how the problem stems from a tendency to downplay the role of the political in capitalist accumulation. Revisiting the debate on the transition to show how the political has always been a central part of the process of accumulation, I then propose a framework for rethinking the history of capitalism, and more specifically the changing patterns of accumulation under neoliberalism, as a product of changes in the political, and the dominant forms of power, rather than an economic evolution driven by a logic of the market.

Maïa Pal: Historicising the Foundations of Digital Capitalism: Class Struggles, Legal Form, and Imperialist Infrastructure

This paper responds to the provocation of McKenzie Wark that capitalism is no longer the dominant mode of production in light of new class configurations enabled by the advance of digital technologies. We bring Wark’s account into dialogue with insights from Political Marxism, Critical Infrastructure Studies, and Marxist Legal Theory, arguing that the fundamental relationship, which Wark contends exists between ‘vectorialist’ and ‘hacker’, is insufficient to presage a foundational reshaping of the mode of production in itself. First, the class struggles emblematic of ‘digital capitalism’ have not (yet) displaced the centrality of the ‘legal form’ and legal subjectivity in reproducing fundamentally capitalist exchange relations. In effect, the ‘vectorialist-hacker’ struggle has not (yet) produced new forms of litigation and accountability that were not present already, and have not transformed the way in which capital subjects qua legal entities are represented as abstract property owners. Second, the class struggle described by Wark exists within a ‘digital capitalist’ world set among a geopolitical context of capital accumulation, which requires state and non-state infrastructure space, such as described by Easterling’s concept

of 'extrastatecraft'. Although this space is pushing further the boundaries of legal invisibility, it remains consistent with the way in which capitalism has been expanding for a couple of centuries, notably through processes of extraterritorial management of territory. More specifically also, for digital capitalism to function, this space remains materially grounded, e.g. in maritime cables that remain subject to classic (neo)imperialist struggles between contending institutions and dominant actors.

Javier Moreno Zacarés: Capitalist Development, Housing Provision, and the Dilemmas of the State

The housing problem is an ever-burning issue in contemporary capitalism. Part of the problem resides in the fact that housing is not just a mass-produced commodity, but a speculative asset designed to yield land rent. Whereas the capitalist mode of production has historically made food or clothing cheaper and more abundant, it has failed to address problems of affordability and scarcity in housing, since keeping supply low and prices high is the whole point of rent extraction. Housing, however, is not other speculative assets either, like art or government bonds. It is a vital element for the reproduction of the workforce, and the fact that it tends to get more inaccessible over time poses serious dilemmas to capitalist economies and the states managing their contradictions. The aim of this paper is to examine how this contradiction has manifested, and been addressed, at different stages of capitalist development, from the transition to capitalism to the present era of secular stagnation. Arguing that the contradiction between the residential and rentier functions of housing is fundamentally irresolvable, the paper shows how different arrangements to temporarily suppress it have only made the problem resurface over time, albeit in different forms that reflect the layering of past attempts to address it. To illustrate this argument, the paper will cite historical examples of the Spanish case, extracted from a recently completed book-length study on this topic (Residential Capitalism: Rent and Extraction and Capitalist Production in Modern Spain, 1834-2020).

room: g51

marxism and global politics iii

Arne Kušej (Inštitut za delavske študije (Institute for Labour Studies)): Constructing the New World Order: The Genesis, Structure, and Political Implications of Post-Cold War Anti-Communism

Our paper will present the history of right-wing – but ultimately liberal – ideologies that have been constructed around the fear of an emerging totalitarian New World Order (NWO). Deeply rooted in the United States' political, economic, and cultural hegemony, ideas and attitudes relating to NWO have become widespread across the post-Cold War "West", leading to what some researchers have called a generalized "culture of conspiracy". Despite the defeat or weakening of actually existing socialism(s), the official end of the Cold War, and the subsequent inability of socialist movements to mount an effective offensive against global capital, contemporary modes of conspiracy culture in the West have remained fixated on the ""communist"" enemy as an actually existing, and even institutionally powerful, threat, one that is paradoxically seen as embodied in various contemporary capitalist institutions and in many prominent capitalists themselves. Bizarrely, in the 21st century, the old "specter of communism" haunts Europe and the United States not in the form of workers' uprisings, but in the form of "Big Tech", "Big Pharma", "Woke" multinational corporations, George Soros, Bill Gates, the WHO and the UN, all of which can be seen as representatives of NWO.

We will trace the history of these anti-communist notions from their early developments in the work of the John Birch Society to their more recent manifestations in right-wing liberal populism and its demand for a renewed "bourgeois revolution" that is supposed to liberate the individual and "the people" from alleged totalitarian structures of control. We will examine how the evolving conservative propaganda against NWO and for reviving a "true capitalism" relates to issues of race, feminism, sexual liberation, economic liberalism, technology, religion, and popular culture. Finally, we will outline what these ideas and attitudes mean for actually existing socialist struggles in a time of capitalist crises.

Shifana Niyas (Trinity College Dublin): Politics of Piety and Global Capitalism

The private and intimate lives of Muslim women have been critical in the consolidation of power in the Western domain in relation to the building of empires as well as contributing to the production, justification, and perpetuation of Islamophobia. In addition, western empires have drowned their imperial propaganda with abstract and vague notions of feminism and women's equality, especially in Muslim-majority countries, often stifling the voices of Muslim women. It is neoliberal feminism that enables the oppression of formerly colonized women. Additionally,

this ideology actively supports the military-industrial complex, one of the world's largest sex-consuming industries. This means that there is a thriving sex-porn industry behind a thriving military industry. There is a predatory quality to this manufactured desire, especially in relation to the bodies of Muslim women who wish to privatize their sexuality. Despite its use as fetish pornography as well as its association with the oppression of Muslim women, the hijab has continuously cultivated anxiety regarding the Muslim figure in contemporary global politics.

The Muslim woman is fundamentally portrayed in opposition to the white woman, and as such they remain a market that capitalism has not fully exploited and explored. In this process, they are denied not only their voices through the process of infantilism, but also their suffering has been essentialized to a binary of religious and non-religious practices, disregarding the prescriptive forms of labour and roles available under global capitalism. It is thus evident that Muslim women are made hyper-visible while attempts are made to shrink the spaces that they previously occupied in the public domain.

As is argued in this paper, capitalism views Muslim women as a potential market for expansionism, with her piety standing between her and that market. In light of this, this paper will focus on the politics of piety under global capitalism.

Bárbara Mações Costa (École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne): Habitation vs. Improvement: Proletarian Islands in the Carnation Revolution

On August 3, 1968, the Portuguese dictator António de Oliveira Salazar fell from a chair. A month later, memory loss and incoherent speech required emergency surgery. Ten days later, he suffered a stroke and fell into a coma, ending his thirty-six years in office. His departure started a new top-down reform period known as the Marcelist Spring, after his successor, Marcelo Caetano, who sought to renegotiate the country's semi-peripheral position within a new world order of financial globalization and neocolonial geopolitics. Faced with widespread international condemnation and mounting internal contradictions, the regime fell with the military coup of April 25, 1974.

The coup inaugurated a nineteen-month revolutionary period in which a totalizing land reform and a mass redistribution of housing took place. In this context, the capitalist contradiction of "habitation versus improvement" identified by Karl Polanyi took centre stage, with the power struggle reversed on the side of habitation. Land, labour, and housing movements, mediated by a dual power relationship between the state and popular committees, created the historical conditions for a dialectical approach to the environmental and housing questions.

In this context, the state-sponsored SAAL program was created as a coalition of "technical brigades" composed of construction technicians and neighbourhood committees. Its goal was to build a people's design for master plans, infrastructure, housing, and social institutions, from daycare centres to community gardens. During this process, the SAAL-North produced a series of projects focused on reinventing the working-class housing typology of the ilha ("island"), and Álvaro Siza wrote a text considering the hypothesis of "the proletarian island as basic element of the urban tissue." What was taken from these islands was not their stylistic configurations, but a system of communal relations based on a series of threshold spaces mediating between the individual house, the proletarian bairro, and the bourgeois city.

room: g51a
marxism, development and ecology

Jackqueline Frost (University of London Institute in Paris): Anti-nuclear Marxism and Caribbean Cold War Ecology

The invention of nuclear arms irremediably transformed the horizon of global revolutionary struggle, forever reconfiguring the development of socialist and communist politics on a planetary scale. As E.P. Thompson argues in 1982, "today's hair-trigger military technology annihilates the very moment of 'politics,'" suggesting that class conflict and the construction of new social relations cannot be imagined without accounting for the world-destroying threat of the Bomb. Opening the New Left Review's edited volume, *Exterminism and Cold War*, Thompson's "Notes on Exterminism, the Last Stage of Civilization," claims that our species has entered its final stage—one characterized by the self-destruction and "mutual ruin of the contending classes"—an assertion that carries strong resonance for today's climate apocalypse. The edited volume, which features articles by leading British and American theorists on nuclear armament and geopolitical strategies in the "New Cold War," stages largely-forgotten, specialist interventions concerning atomic warfare and planetary disaster from a Marxist perspective. Considering recent

nuclear threats on the European continent, “post-atomic” militarism seems to carry renewed relevance for political theorists today.

The first part of my presentation will reconstruct the early 1980s debate between Edward Thompson and American social theorist, Mike Davis, on the significance of nuclear weapons and of terrestrial catastrophe for global political processes. In particular, I will take up the analysis of “world imperialism” within their respective articles. In this regard, Davis argues that the Cold War should be understood primarily as a form of imperialist containment of Third World revolutionary movements, and mobilizes the notion of “extended deterrence” to explore the future of nuclear imperialism. Imperialism, for Davis, had itself “become nuclear” during the post-1959 phase of anticolonial liberation struggles. If one returns to the history of Bandung, Non-alignment, or Nkrumah’s “positive neutrality,” one is struck by the importance of nuclear imperialism for questions of post-colonial sovereignty. If these connections have been obscured since the “end” of the Cold War, research into the politics of decolonization must not overlook the significance of potential nuclear catastrophe within the historical trajectory of anti-colonial militancy.

Particularly after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, Caribbean societies in the midst of decolonial worldmaking were influenced by the world-shaking threat of nuclear disaster. Caribbean militants, politicians and intellectuals were lucid to the reality of building a new world of human relations against the backdrop of planetary apocalypse. In the second part of my presentation, I will turn to a number of Caribbean anti-colonial figures whose work expressed links between nuclear imperialism and a political ecology of terrestrial integrity. To this end, I will undertake a politico-historical analysis of the “post-atomic” politics of Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Wifredo Lam and Sylvia Wynter. I will show that long before the Euro-American Marxist critique of nuclear war, Caribbean leftist intellectuals generated an anti-nuclear politics focused on the ecological aspects of atomic catastrophe. Through these connections, I will suggest that we think formal decolonization and anti-nuclear ecology together as a point of historical reference for the current ecological crisis.

João Prates Ruivo (Goldsmiths, University of London): Soil Politics - Erosion, Resurgence, Resistance

Thinking through soil as a shared medium of resistance across scales of exploitation, I will focus my presentation on the current ecological struggles in Alentejo, a rural region in the south of Portugal affected by the rise of agro-chemical monocrop plantations. By engaging with the voices of local workers, residents, scientists, and activists, I interrogate how the issues of environmental contamination and the protection of habitats and landscapes intersect with the rise of environmental racism.

While “precision-agriculture” is argued to eventually replace human labour altogether within the plantations, an aspect advertised by investors and celebrated even by some ecological movements, the increased automation of agricultural practices has led to a further precarization of seasonal labour, that is often conducted by migrant workers under conditions that have been described as modern-day slavery. Simultaneously, their presence in the region has been weaponised by fascist discourses, that target immigrants as one of the nefarious consequences of industrial agriculture. Supported by neo-Malthusian theories that correlate resource exhaustion with overpopulation, the toxicity of monoculture has contributed to furthering colonial amnesia. In a region where land-tenure was structured historically around the exploitation of African slave labour, I argue that a contemporary critique of the socioenvironmental transformations cannot but acknowledge and reflect from the conditions afforded by and endured by racialised workers in the plantations in the present.

Following from Amílcar Cabral’s seminal work on soil erosion in the region, I have been documenting the changes in the landscape from the perspective of the current environmental and political struggles. Reflecting on my engagements with the collective modes of organized struggle that have emerged in Alentejo in recent years, I inquire what possibilities exist for resisting the ongoing reduction of humans and their environments to a mere metabolic condition?

Rabea Berfelde: Socialisation, Planned Economies and the Climate Crisis. Towards a Radical Democratic Theory of Needs

The presentation develops the contours of a research project I am currently working on. The research project works on a theory of socialisation and uses it as a framework to work on the vision and normative foundations of an ecological socialism. Current and historical debates on socialisation argue that the transformation of property relations is a necessary condition for a comprehensively different social life and economy (Blumenfeld 2022).

These debates are brought into dialogue with the contemporary discussion of democratic planned economies (Grünberg 2023, Groos 2021, Dapprich 2020, Hahnel 2021, Cockshott and Cotrell 1993, Saros 2014), with a particular focus on the argument that a planned economy enables a socialist mitigation of the climate crisis (Planning for Entropy 2022, Durand, Hofferberth and Schmelzer 2023, Vettese and Pendergrass 2022). These theories often make implicit assumptions about needs, e.g. that a planned economy would allow for a more needs-based economy, but do not explicitly address what needs are and how they are socially constructed and mediated. It is also argued that planned economies represent a more rational and efficient mode of production. What is notably missing from the discussion is that this rationality is not given, but has to be actively and normatively constructed. In order to fill this research gap and to work on the normative foundations of a socialism in the face of the climate crisis and a radical democratic theory of the formation of needs, the project brings together theories of socialisation, planned economies, human-nature metabolism and ecological socialisms.

room: r201
marxism and techno-critiques

Vali Stan (University of Amsterdam): Big Tech Rentiership and the Techno-Feudal Hypothesis

This contribution is positioned within the wider debate on the techno-feudal hypothesis, or the prospect of an emerging order that, by privileging the extraction of rents over the production of surplus-value, resembles pre-capitalist formations. I focus on the five large North American firms in information and communications technology traditionally grouped under the “Big Tech” moniker, aiming to discern their role in this alleged departure from established models of capitalism. Using financial statement data, I examine the evolution of Big Tech revenue streams, expenditures, and asset compositions in the period following the 2008 crisis. Moreover, I compare these economic patterns with those of other large non-financial global firms. In interpreting the results, I contrast the techno-feudal understanding of Big Tech with four paradigms that are consonant with the former, while reaching diverging conclusions. These are: 1) intellectual monopolisation; 2) platformisation; 3) assetisation; 4) the financialisation of non-financial corporations. Instead of stressing the seemingly feudal traits of Big Tech capital accumulation, I argue for conceptualising these firms as specifically capitalist monopolies. On one hand, their market positions are enabled by favourable regulation of intellectual property rights. On the other, the firms resemble natural monopolies (like public utilities), given the network externalities and scale economies associated with their platform models. This perspective facilitates a more concrete understanding of the material basis behind Big Tech’s rise, as well as of how this monopoly position may be ultimately curtailed.

Andrea Comair (Princeton University): Trouble with ELIZA: The libidinal economy of display before the digital screen

At a time when Audio-Visual technique had already revealed its effects on conditions of viewing, ELIZA, a computer psychoanalyst software produced at MIT’s Department of electrical engineering in 1964, constituted an interruption pertaining to the problem that display poses. ELIZA simultaneously encapsulates three categories constituting a logic of display: the commodity, the screen, and what it reflects/presents (and what I am naming the automaton). The story of ELIZA’s scripting (as trick) and subsequent staging (as magic) shows that there is an elusive, aesthetic, and auratic register that persists, despite its unmasking. This apparatus presents an uncanny moment concerning the magic of technology. It is the ultimate fetish that obfuscates an existential lack and obscures its failure from the user. The staged apparatus functions within its illusion, enabling affective identification, desire, and enjoyment, a trick that surpasses attempts of demystification. With the advent of the digital screen, the thesis departs from ELIZA to grapple with three categories of objects that construct the nexus of relations between the agents at play within display, namely, the subject/object, the staging apparatus, and the screen providing their mediation. I contend that the three instances are gendered attractions entailing a script, a commodity/woman, and a commodity/screen that conjure forth the elusive spectrality of the aesthetics of display. The ELIZA program encapsulates both the historical function of computer interactions before the use of digital monitors or screens, and the space within which the user had to occupy to interact with the digital apparatus, originally, sitting before the printed computer transcript. This situation also involved a powerful interpellation of users/subjects that points to the situation facing an object/subject on display, that is, staged for view.

Jonas Valente, Manoel Dourado Bastos, Helena Martins, Cesar R S Bolaño: (Not so) artificial intelligence: towards a critical political economy of the work behind AI development

The field of AI is gaining momentum as a subject of discussion and academic concern. The impact it has had on the workplace has sparked increased interest in relation to worries about the consequences of automation, with pessimistic (Frey, 2019) or less threatening views (Benanav, 2020). A further area of discussion has focused on highlighting the situation of workers in microwork platforms performing a wide range of tasks in AI systems development, such as data labelling and model revision (Irani, 2015; Tubaro and Casilli, 2019; Gray and Suri). The topic is still beginning to be analysed by Marxist approaches (Dyer-Whiteford, 2019; Steinhoff, 2021, Walton & Nayak, 2021). But there is still a gap regarding the study of the work behind AI development, especially the so-called microwork, from a Marxist perspective.

The paper offers a historical materialist approach to the work behind AI systems development, with a focus on the microwork performed by workers through digital labour platforms. It draws from a study on world-leading cloudwork platforms and from a survey with 249 microworkers from 51 countries, which identified the working conditions of microwork platforms and challenges faced by those workers regarding different aspects of the labour process, such as pay, conditions, contracts, management and representation.

AI development relies on types of platform work. Workers (such as data scientists and developers) involved in the conception are based in tech companies with high-paying jobs. This group is what one calls “platform employed work”. In addition, it also makes use of “platform-mediated work”, encompassing millions of workers from hundreds of countries in charge of crucial tasks in the development cycle. We articulate Sohn-Rethel’s (2020) approach to the division between manual and intellectual labour with the overexploitation concept proposed by the Latin-American dependency theory school (Marini, 2023).

Marc-Antoine Pencolé (Affiliated to the Sophiapol research center, Paris Nanterre University ; Lecturer, ETRs (CRC) research center, Paris Cité University): Surveillance as Technologically Mediated Reproduction of Contemporary Capitalism

The notion of « surveillance capitalism » recently emerged as one of the main tools to theorize digital mediations. A certain confusion remains, regarding its exact meaning, due to the variety of critical settings in which it is implemented. First, we discuss different kinds of pluralization of the concept of « capitalism », in order to identify two strategies behind the claim of a new centrality of surveillance in capitalist relations : 1) a mild concept of surveillance capitalism, where today’s surveillance is but a technological extension of capital’s function of control and supervision of the labor process – as described in *The Capital* –, and 2) a maximalist version, where surveillance technologies are becoming a tool of exploitation or dispossession of social activity following a shift in the core mechanisms of accumulation.

Then, we propose a third strategy that thinks of the constellation of surveillance devices (the « surveillant assemblage ») as a technological fix in the sphere of reproduction. Drawing insights from social reproduction theory, our claim is that, beyond the lack of explanatory power of the mild conception, and the cumbersome presuppositions of the strong concept, the huge development of surveillance technologies, in the private and the public sector, is finally better accounted for by 3) a theory of surveillance as a technologically mediated reproduction of the subjective and institutional conditions of capitalist accumulation in a context of critical instability.

room: rg01
neoliberal environmental thought

Panel abstract: The century-long socialist calculation debate has long required the left to take its neoliberal adversaries seriously. Here, three scholars examine how the multi-faceted neoliberal movement apprehends the environmental crisis while preserving the market-based order. Isabel Oakes studies the ordoliberals, the West German branch of the neoliberal movement, and how they understood environmental issues before the explosion of the green movement in the 1960s. Apolline Taillandier tracks the collaboration between neoliberal and libertarian movements within the tech sector in recent decades. Klaudia Prodani traces how neoliberal theory is translated to policy and changes in ecosystems by looking at rainforests in New Guinea.

Apolline Taillandier: Homesteading in Outer Spaces: Transhumanists and the Anarcho-Capitalist Critique of the State

Transhumanism proposes that future genetic, computer or space technologies will transform humanity into immortal, postbiological, or postterrestrial ‘posthumanity.’ Although early twentieth century transhumanism was often tied to Marxist views, transhumanism today is most prominent in liberal, libertarian, or neoliberal forms. This paper

analyses printed and online debates by 'extropians,' a group of transhumanists especially active between the late 1980s and the mid-1990s, who advocated cryptography and biotechnological self-transformation as ways to realise a capitalist anarchy. Anarcho-capitalism, in their view, would be a stateless society ordered through free markets and cryptographic technologies allowing individuals to salvage their property and avoid government taxation or surveillance.

In this paper, I argue that while studies of techno-libertarianism describe it as an essentialist escapist ideology aiming to overcome the Earth's limitations or the finitude of the body, transhumanist visions of post-statist and posthuman societies were in fact eminently concerned with materiality and money. I explain how extropians justified 'homesteading' or individual appropriation of resources not under sovereign rules, such as digital spaces, international seas, and outer space, and how they envisioned individual private property as the foundation of a future world organised into small-scale, purely voluntarily communities. I show how their arguments for the morality and efficiency of capitalist anarchy departed from most libertarian arguments by Ayn Rand, Murray Rothbard or Robert Nozick, how they related to 1990s cyberculture discourse and debates over software and online regulation, and how they tied to a broader neoliberal imaginary of decentralised, scale-scale organisation as a way to allocate limited resources. My aim is to help clarify the political imaginary underlying current cryptocurrencies, the recasting of Lockean liberalism in neoliberalism since the 1970s, and the centrality of private property in current techno-utopianism.

A History of Green Ordoliberalism: The Theoretical Foundation of a Socio-Ecological Market Economy?
Isabel Oakes

In his exploration of ordoliberalism during his 1978 and 79 lectures at the Collège de France, Michel Foucault observed how the destroyed German post-World War II state sought to re-legitimise itself through the creation of a 'radically economic state'.¹ This manifested in the price liberalisations and expansion of the German export sector that, according to the free-market narrative, led to the incredible economic success of the 1950s – the Wirtschaftswunder. This allegedly also marked the inception of the social market economy framework in Germany which intended to harmonise economic progress and free market competition with social stability and security and still guides German policy making today.

With climate politics constituting an important pillar of German politics and society, the social market economy has expanded to include environmental considerations. As identified by German politicians across the political spectrum and official government documents, this framework is now described as a 'socio-ecological market economy'. Germany is seen as a global leader in environmental initiatives; however, it remains one of the largest polluters in Europe, and continues to support and expand environmentally destructive industry. Can these contradictions be explained by the perception of an enduring social market economy framework that prevents the emergence of truly radical political initiatives?

My research offers a much-needed investigation into the intellectual foundations of Germany's environmental policy. By historicising the term 'socio-ecological market economy' and tracing its roots back to the interwar period, my research demonstrates the contradictions of its current assumptions such as techno-optimism and market-centricity. As the climate crisis is as much a crisis of ideas and concepts as it is a material one, it is important to understand and challenge the ideas, and the origin of the ideas, that underpin modern societies.

Troy Vettese: Elinor Ostrom: Neoliberal Theorist of the Commons

room: rb01
marxism, state and capital

Ilias Alami (Uppsala University): The Specter of State Capitalism

The talk draws upon a series of papers recently published on state capitalism, and a work-in-progress book-length manuscript co-authored with Adam D. Dixon. The book contributes to the development of state capitalism as a reflexively critical project focusing on the morphology of present-day capitalism, and particularly on the changing role of the state. It aims to bring analytical clarity to state capitalism studies by offering a rigorous definition of its object of investigation, and by demonstrating how the category state capitalism can be productively construed as a means of problematising the current aggregate expansion of the state's role as promoter, supervisor and owner of capital across the world economy. Rather than the negation of an abstract model of free-market capitalism, or

the rise of a nationally scaled variant of capitalism, we posit contemporary state capitalism as a global process of restructuring of the capitalist state (including in its liberal form) underpinned by secular transformations in global capitalism, such as the consolidation of new international divisions of labour, technological developments, the worsening of industrial overcapacity and capital over-accumulation, and financialisation. The political mediation of these transformations results in the combined expansion of state-capital hybrids (e.g; sovereign funds, state enterprises, state-owned banks) and of muscular forms of statism (techno-industrial policy, national development strategies, economic nationalism), which develop in cumulative and combinatorial forms, producing further state capitalist modalities. This is a particularly potent dynamic in contemporary state capitalism, and its tendency to develop in a spiral that both shapes and is shaped by world capitalist development.

James Foley (Glasgow Caledonian University); Ewan Kerr (Glasgow Caledonian University): COVID-19 and State Transformations: The Case of Scotland, Devolution and the UK

According to many traditions of political theory, how states behave in exceptional circumstances reveals much about their underlying nature. The COVID-19 lockdowns arguably rank as the most abrupt and consequential transformations in modern state-society relations outside of wartime. However, particularly in the Atlantic states, the resort to exceptional measures and emergency powers did not simply recapitulate the “totalising” state controls implied by mobilisations for warfare in earlier eras. Indeed, the COVID-19 lockdowns emerged within path-dependent liberal paradigms and thus largely achieved both mass consent and political support. Politically, this is reflected in the extraordinary levels of compliance even as governments made draconian restrictions on civilian life and the normal functioning of the capitalist economy. To illustrate the new emergency politics, this article explores how these wider state transformations interacted in the particular – and often peculiar and dysfunctional – case of Scotland’s devolved relationship with the United Kingdom (UK). This focus on Scotland offers a useful illustration, since, despite having a nationalist devolved government formally pressing towards independence, Scotland’s decision-making on COVID-19 during its most deadly first wave was not significantly different from the UK’s. Nonetheless, vast differences emerged during the pandemic in terms of authority and legitimacy. This research claims that both effects – the perceived conflicts and actual convergence – are linked to the systemic dysfunctions of earlier processes of state transformation. Far from enhancing the responsiveness of state power to citizen demands, multilevel governance in the UK resulted in endemic polarisations between levels which were only marginally reflected in scope for policy differences: instead, competing authorities used the structures to disclaim and disperse accountability.

Michael McCarthy (Marquette University): All Politics Are Conjunctural: Emancipatory Theory & Democratic Ruptures

In *State, Power, Socialism*, Nicos Poulantzas attempted to carve out a middle path for emancipatory political theory between the so-called roads of reform and revolution. Though his theorizations of the state offer useful insights for how to move beyond this impasse, they are nonetheless beset by the problem of “abstractionism.” This talk argues that a more conjunctural theory of capitalist democracy is necessary to identify the conditions under which such a middle path can be traversed. I term these social and political transformations “democratic ruptures.”

room: b102
marxism and political theory

Iván Alvarado Castro (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid); Diego Parejo Pérez (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid): Community praxis as subjectivation process. A ‘long revolution’ proposal (for marxism)

“The emergence of new forms of collective political action in the current European context, in the face of an advance of totalitarian forces, responds to practices of resistance that are framed in partial fragments of social reproduction (Tithi Bhattacharya). The bourgeois “‘long revolution’”, as Raymond Williams puts it, has come to constitute a subject that reproduces, even in its radical practices, capitalist realism. However, this contradictory subject can be constituted from other coordinates, from the common, that possibility of questioning the subject as a collective, present in Jodi Dean, capable of generating a transformation of the economic and cultural framework: to be a subject desiring its own emancipation.

To generate these processes capable of configuring new structures of feeling requires a new project that aspires to move from resistance to counter-hegemony, combining the articulation of local communities in global strategies.

While austerity policies have given a pre-eminent role to communities as sites of articulation of mutual support in the face of state withdrawal (Peer Illner), they are also a site of political contestation. Communities are laboratories of subalternity (James Scott), places of articulation of resistance to old, more generalising forms. Starting from these concrete scenarios can allow us to overcome the limits to which the logic of capital subjects communities. Thus, framed in a context capable of dialogue with the global, it can reconfigure processes of political subjectivation from praxis, from the possibilities of new common horizons.

The great challenge for Marxism, which we are questioning in this paper, is how to articulate these practices in a counter-hegemonic strategy that is capable of adapting to the present moment: how to build from difference without ceasing to be counter-hegemonic; how to constitute our local communities in a new modern Prince?"

Hedvig Lärka (University of Gothenburg): Struggle to See: A Critique of Social Form Theory

Among Marxian scholars, there is a tendency to regard capitalism as an object totality or some other sort of *thing*. This thingness, endowed with causal force, in which theories of capitalist accumulation is dressed, forecloses accounts of the causal force of the capital relation. Furthermore, it suspends capitalist social forms in set definitions, robbing them of flexibility and explanatory potential, whilst impeding the emergence of new forms such as of law and state. In this chapter, I take social form theory as a starting point, along with its method of systematic dialectics, and I reconstruct this method as to produce a new yet immanent notion of validity. The result is an (onto) epistemology of forms, calibrated toward the finding and grounding of notions or relations, through the iterative accounting for of difference. This system or language preserves social forms, and the method through which they are found and presented, in abolishing the object totality on which their validity traditionally rests. Within this reconstructed systematic dialectics, the capital relation may and should always be found and presented anew; with time settling into the center of social understanding. This way, the struggle or refusal at the heart of value form, may be iteratively grounded through its effects, in a dialectical movement of validity.

Toni Prug (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka, Croatia): Public wealth and egalities: historical development of social forms in public production

During Marx's life, governments almost exclusively produced collectively consumed punitive services such as police, courts, and military. Gradually, governments got involved in a vast range of additional productive activities, such as infrastructure, housing, urban planning, sport, culture. Most prominently, public education, health and care were developed. Today such activities contribute fifth of GDP in the OECD countries. Since the direct goal of these tax financed activities is not surplus value, and their outputs do not take the form of commodities, determinate abstractions developed by Marx do not capture their character.

The presentation will propose that by reading Marx's work as a scientific methodology we can theorise such government activities as distinct social forms of production existing within various social formations. It will be argued that value-form and social form Marxist literature, combined with the work of Michael Lebowitz, provides a way to investigate social and economic determination of forms and real mechanisms in the production of public wealth within capitalist social formations. Thick historical concepts of public production, public wealth and egalities will be outlined.

Although historically public wealth was almost exclusively produced to maintain and legitimise the social order, with the development of capitalist social formations workers' struggles for equality and democratisation, based on solidarity in meeting needs, pushed for the development of new social forms of public wealth. When products such as public education, health and care are allocated according to criteria and free of charge at the point of use, they should be investigated as egalitarian social forms of production whose character goes beyond the mere functionalism often attributed to them. National economies and legal forms that limit the reach of such egalitarian public productions will be discussed through the notion of egalitarian global wealth.

Iker Jauregui Giráldez (Universidad Complutense de Madrid): The Cost of Human Capital's Life

"Cost" is one of the key categories of capitalist political economy. As with other elements that shape the idea of social reproduction in a capitalist sense - such as wages, labour or consumption - "cost" is part of both objective (the "cost of life" as an effect of impersonal economic cycles, linked to price fluctuations, for example) and subjective

representations and explanations. In the political economy of American neoliberalism, the category of cost is linked to the category of investment. According to human capital theories, formulated by authors such as Jacob Mincer, Th. Schultz or Gary Becker, for individuals living under capitalist conditions every cost is an opportunity cost. Thus, according to this scheme, the expenses linked to consumption and the costs and “rewards” associated with labour are both proportional functions of a subjective and private investment strategy.

In a context where the “cost of life” is at the centre of social and political life, it is more than relevant to question the conception of “cost” in the hegemonic neoclassical political economy. To what extent does this conception redefine the link between production and consumption? To what extent does it result in a new way of conceiving wages and, with it, exploitation? And, in the current context of capitalism’s social and legitimacy crisis, to what extent is this paradigm still a prevailing one?

In short, the aim of this paper is to critically rethink, from a Marxist, non-Foucauldian perspective, the category of human capital as a category of the political economy of the present.

room: b103
new directions in contemporary marxist art history

Luisa Lorenza Corna (UWE Bristol); Mark Crinson (Birkbeck); Jacopo Galimberti (IUAV Venice); Nick Thoburn (University of Manchester)

Taking its cue from the book *Images of Class* by Jacopo Galimberti (Verso, 2022), this roundtable will discuss the present state of Marxist art History. Galimberti’s work explores the relationship between art and politics, focusing on artistic practices and discourses that emerged in ‘60s Italy, concomitantly to the Marxist strand known as operaismo. The book starts off by presenting a set of methodological propositions. These include, the refusal of reflection theory, the reframing of political movements as sociocultural formations encompassing an ‘aesthetic component’, the deployment of the category ‘creative misreading’ to interpret the relationship between political instances and artistic forms. In the discussion we will put to test the book’s methodological scheme by looking at the analysis of individual case studies presented in the following chapters. But we will also consider the strengths and pitfalls of the book as a starting point to address what we think are the contemporary challenges of Marxist art history. These are, amongst others, the deployment of Marxian categories to call into question the discipline of art history as a whole, the need to renegotiate Marxist art history’s position in response to the dangers of incorporation within academic discourse, the importance to address how political, economic, technological transformations inform the scope of our research and the forms of its dissemination.

room: b104
foucault, poulantzas and marxism

Matteo Polleri (University of Paris Nanterre): Mapping Foucauldian Marxisms

In the historical phase of the so-called “post-Marxism”, once the “Marxist triangulation between science, politics and philosophy” disappeared (Therborn, 2008), several thinkers have found in Foucault a useful resource for renewing, re-founding, or surpassing Marxism. They have thus developed hypotheses that try to address the main challenges of our present. Rather than from philological questions on the roots of Foucault’s thought, these reflections are based on what has been called the “feedback effect” (Laval, Paltrinieri, Taylan, 2015). They start from questions such as: what is the effect of reading Marx after and through Foucault? Is it possible to develop a critical theory of society combining their respective concepts? Each of these theoretical attempts has crossed Foucault’s best-known notions (e.g., “biopolitics”, “neoliberalism”, “forms of life”) with Marxist frameworks. And each of them has done so in a singular way, creating an original variant of contemporary critical theory.

We propose to define these works with the formula “Foucauldian Marxisms”. They are theories that, while related to the history of Marxism, make systematic and creative use of Foucauldian concepts. Analyzing capitalist globalization, criticizing neoliberalism, and reflecting on different methods of social theory, thinkers as diverse as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (between Italy and the United States), Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval (in France); Rahel Jaeggi and Martin Saar (in Germany) have developed original theses, giving rise to what, with an expression employed by Cinzia Arruzza in another context (Arruzza, 2013), we might also call the “dangerous liaisons” between Marxism and Foucauldian thought.

In the paper, I will try to sketch a map of the Foucauldian Marxisms that have developed in the last two decades. This conceptual map is not meant to be neutral, but rather tries to be critical. The historical reconstruction will be followed by objections that can be raised from a reading, albeit not systematic, of Marx and Foucault. On the one hand, the specific features of each variant of Foucauldian Marxism will be presented. On the other hand, I will highlight the problems to which such works run into.

Chris James Newlove (CRMEP): The last Foucault: In and beyond Neoliberal logic

Contemporary understandings of Neoliberalism that employ Foucauldian concepts such as those by Byung-Chul Han, Thomas Lemke and Michael Hardt and Toni Negri, rely on a misunderstanding of both Neoliberalism and Michel Foucault's oeuvre. This paper argues that thinkers of Neoliberalism have conflated Foucault's favourable understanding of Gary Becker's concept of 'Human Capital' in The Birth of Biopolitics lectures with his later discussions of 'the care of the self.' This paper will argue Foucault is sympathetic towards Neoliberalism in a specific period, however his last lectures on the 'subject' and 'truth' are an attempt to define the relationship between the intellectual, philosophy and politics. Foucault's final lecture, The Courage of Truth, represents a return to the post-May 68 theme of the revolutionising of everyday life. An uncritical adoption of Foucault's concepts from across his career has harmed our ability to understand the specific qualities of Neoliberalism as a capitalist strategy.

Gregor Clunie (Glasgow Caledonian University); James Foley (Glasgow Caledonian University); Ewan Kerr (Glasgow Caledonian University): Poulantzas, Politics and the Political Practice: Re-Assessing State Transformation

This article has the aim of assessing Poulantzas's notions of the state, political practice and "the political" in light of recent literature on state transformation. The essence of Poulantzas's methodological reimagining of Marxism was to make the state the unifier of the various levels of and contradictions within a social formation. Political practice, in this sense, inherently focused on the state as its object. However, Poulantzas's methodology innovations fell out of favour, above all due to transformations in the capitalist economy and international architecture of power that challenged the universality of the nation state. Reimaginings of Marxism thus took an explicitly anti-Poulantzian outlook, focusing on spontaneity, historicism and economism - or else the "hyper-politics" of identity. This article claims that the ongoing legitimacy of Poulantzas's approach is reflected precisely in these problems. The process of state transformation has undermined the specificity of politics as such. As a result, the growing spontaneous incredulity and disenchantment within capitalism finds no outlets or expressions. Symptomatic of these trends are the breakdown in cohesion between the various levels of capitalist order; accompanied by the derangement and directionless nature of grassroots political practice.

Ignasi Bernat Molina (Universitat de Barcelona): Poulantzas and the crisis of social-democracy in Spain

In State, Power and Socialism Nicos Poulantzas thought a possible route to socialism through electoral means and social mobilization. Actually, the last wave of mobilization in Southern Europe after the Great Recession of 2008-2011 seemed to open the possibility for this strategy in some of these countries such as Portugal, Greece and Spain. In this paper my aim is to scrutinize this period in Spain where the PSOE and Podemos' government was seen as the epitome of this smart strategy. However, revisiting another Poulantzas' book such as the Crisis of the Dictatorships can help us to understand some of the limits of this strategy when applied in Spain by these two parties and to analyze the rise of the far-right in Spain.

room: mal 354
climate change:
strategic perspectives

Liam McLoughlin (University of Technology Sydney): A Gramscian Approach to Australian Climate Movement Strategy

In the context of the Australian Government's failure to tackle the climate crisis and the limited impact of movements seeking transformation, questions of strategy have become crucial. The writings of Italian communist Antonio Gramsci are a rich theoretical and methodological source for examining the strategic priorities of the climate

movement. His theory of hegemony and philosophy of praxis are used to examine the efforts of the civil and political society forces fighting for climate action, including Indigenous and environmental campaigning groups, worker organisations, and the political party, The Greens. Interim findings point to the incorporating capacity of the Australian Labor Party, ENGOs, and trade unions, effectively eschewing movement demands. Preliminary analysis of interview data also indicates some evidence of subaltern autonomy and alliance-building, most notably in the school climate strikes. Finally, the research suggests the development of a close relationship between the knowledge of organic intellectuals, and the feelings of the people, is at the heart of the success of The Greens in some locations. Taken together, these findings highlight the sophisticated ways in which the Australian state confines subaltern struggles for climate action, but also the potential for these forces to escape containment and build an independent source of power.

Daniel Neofetou: Climate Activism and Ecological Leninism

In 2010 and the years immediately following, there was a remarkable worldwide upsurge in direct political action. In the UK, this energy was largely sublimated into the ill-fated effort to make Jeremy Corbyn prime minister. However, climate activism is one area in which direct action has in fact intensified in the last decade in the UK, with groups such as Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil engaging in spectacular interventions, most significantly road obstructions and, in the case of the latter group, performative actions involving paint as a projectile. At the same time, despite the failure of the left to attain state power in any significant Western economy, Andreas Malm has convincingly put forth the argument that what is necessary is so-called 'ecological Leninism,' wherein every opportunity must be taken to wrest the state in the direction of preventing climate catastrophe.

Now, popular opposition to the direct action of climate activists is often dispelled by the left on the grounds that the crisis which we face is so acute. However, if what is required is indeed 'ecological Leninism,' it is hard to imagine how this crisis could be substantively addressed without popular support. In this paper, I want to interrogate this seeming circularity, and ask whether the voluntarist actionism of climate activists has its limits, and if different tactics are in fact necessary.

Fraser Amos: Towards proletarian-ecological worldview marxism

Matthew Huber's 'Climate Change as Class War' promises "a new "ecological" and Marxist understanding of class" which conceives the struggle over ownership and control of the means of production as a struggle over our relationship with nature. Whilst Huber's orientation of eco-marxist theory to strategy is an important one, this paper argues that in the passage from one to the other Huber recoils from this ambition, eliding of crucial forms of class location, subjectivity and struggle. By way of a critique immanent to these theoretical starting points this paper seeks to elaborate broader coordinates for a proletarian ecological worldview adequate to the articulation of class in itself into class for itself.

Expanding Huber's focus on industrial labour as the central site of the production of value and the environment to encompass knowledge, peasant and socially reproductive work, it clarifies their place in eco-socialist strategy and ecological reconstruction. Considering how production is subtended by the enclosure of ecologies as taps for its inputs and sinks for its wastes through the state further illustrates the stakes of articulating labour with environmental struggles Huber tends to discount. Overcoming Huber's disinterest in the centripetal flow of the use-values around imperial centres and its scaffolding by the financial, political and military architecture of US Empire further illuminates the imperial constraints facing proletarian-ecological struggle.

This allows us to read Huber's conclusions regarding political and labour strategy in the US as critically limited by a forced abstraction of proletarian ecology from its colonial contours, political constitution and division of labour. Whilst moving beyond Huber's one-sided critique of degrowth as PMC ecologism to address the questions of material throughput it raises pushes us to elaborate his objective of decommodification as a socialisation of reproduction within a vision of relational abundance.

The First Detroit Recovery: Manufacturing Decline and the Path of Redevelopment, 1970-1990
Dwjuan Frazier/University of Minnesota

This paper argues that the shift to redevelopment initiatives as the cornerstone of local economic policy in deindustrializing cities during the 1980s and 1990s was a direct consequence of the profitability crisis in US manufacturing that arose starting in the late 1960s. It uses Detroit as a case study, and thereby examines the decline of the automobile industry. I situate the auto industry within the totality of world market forces – the most fundamental dimension of the capitalist system – to show that declining manufacturing dynamism in Detroit and beyond was principally owed to the dramatic expansion of horizontal capitalist competition in the postwar period. Secondly, I chart the political constraints imposed on local actors – politicians, union leaders, rank-and-file workers, and community organizations – as a consequence of deindustrialization, the retreat of federal funding to cities, and the increasing limits of the redistributive state. Underlying these dynamics was the slowdown in capital accumulation that was the result of a challenge to US manufacturing profitability. These conditions formed the backdrop to the contestation over the future direction of industrial bedrocks such as Detroit, out of which redevelopment emerged as – and remains – the foremost path to recovery.

The Dynamics of Capital Mobility in the US Tire Industry, 1966-2008
Charles Post/City University of New York

The determinants and dynamics of capital mobility, and the resulting regional “de-industrialization,” have not been well investigated. The common sense in both the business and labor publications is that firms move to find the cheapest labor, lowest taxes and least government labor and environmental regulation. Clearly these factors play a major role in corporate decisions on where to locate new manufacturing plants. However, wages, taxes and state regulation alone cannot not explain when and why some older plants are closed and others are retooled. This study proposes to investigate the determinants of plant closures and re-toolings through a thorough study of the US tire industry between 1966 and 2008. Using Rubber World and Modern Tire Dealer’s Annual Facts Directory, I produced a data base that traced factory closings, openings and expansions in the industry between 1966 and 2007. I use the theory of real capitalist competition elaborated in Anwar M. Shaikh’s Capitalism: Competition, Conflict, Crises to analyze how both the “vintage of capital” (age of buildings, infrastructure, etc.) and the “vintage of labor” (union contracts, wage rates, etc.) become decisive factors in whether a plant is closed or re-tooled.

Comments: Kim Moody/University of Westminster

room: g3
workers' inquiry:
international inquiries

Danai Avgeri (University of Cambridge): In and against the workfare/welfare state: Humanitarian workers in Borderland Greece

Existing inquiries on care work and migration has predominantly focused on labour performed by migrants, with citizens typically assumed to be employers or recipients. Nevertheless, scant attention has been devoted to the complexities arising when NGOs or state institutions engage citizens to provide care work for migrants. This situation has become more pronounced in Greece, where NGOs and workfare programs have been utilised to address operational shortcomings in the Greek 'reception system' since 2015-6. Within this context, precariously employed or unemployed locals are enlisted to offer services to migrant beneficiaries of humanitarian programs, often as beneficiaries of workfare programmes themselves. This paper examines the construction of this beneficiary continuum and the role of the humanitarian sector as a workfare/welfare state catering to the minimal social reproduction needs of 'surplus populations' and precarious workers. Through interviews conducted with workers and trade unionists engaged in asylum and migrant welfare services in Greece, this inquiry suggests that the reorganization of socially reproductive labour under austerity exacerbates exploitative forms of employment and discipline of those who resist their working conditions, as well as the increasing convergence of care and control for service users. Importantly, the deliberate production of destitution among migrants by the state is used as a lever intensify humanitarian labour, thereby establishing an endless feedback loop that proves detrimental to both working-class locals and migrants. The paper invites discussion on the class composition of state and NGO labour and the potential for working and struggling within—and against—the crumbling modern welfare state and its outsourced and privatized iterations.

Phethani Madzivhandila (South African Federation of Trade Unions): Trade Unions and the Changing character of the Working Class

Trade Union movements that are strong and independent have always been critical to inclusive prosperity. Workers have secured better pay by organizing large-scale, disruptive strikes. For example, the United States has recently seen a wave of unionization in traditionally anti-union workplaces like Amazon and Starbucks, in which workers successfully unionized after long years of protracted struggle in order to secure better pay and inspire hope that things can turn around.

However, in many Global South countries, the days of trade union movements attracting hundreds of thousands of workers to the streets for stay-away pickets are long gone. This, combined with the changing nature of work and the general character of the working class, has posed an almost existential crisis for trade unions.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, trade unions in many African countries played a powerful and critical role in organizing widespread demonstrations and strikes that resulted in the overthrow of previous autocratic regimes and ushered in democratic transitions. However, in today's time, bourgeois laws prohibit workers from exercising their rights to organize, strike, and act in solidarity, suffocating organized labor.

In contrast to the global north, the number of formally employed people in various global south countries is less than that of those who are unemployed. This paper argues that our organizing for the inevitable confrontation with capital must transcend workerism and let the conditions dictate how we organize.

Despite these dark chapters in global labor history, this paper contends that the ever-changing nature of the working class provides many new reasons to be positive. Union membership is growing in the Global North, and worker organizations are gaining headway in crucial sectors such as retail and higher education. Young workers have begun to challenge some of capitalism's most fundamental assumptions, rekindling interest in democratic socialism and reimagining work beyond capitalism.

Benjamin Anderson (Simon Fraser University); John Jenkinson: Building Autonomous Power: Solidarity Networks in Precarious Times

From COVID-19 to the so-called labour shortage of 2021-2022, the last three years have revealed a renewed

discourse on labour markets and working conditions. Alongside this discourse, workers in a variety of industries have been organizing to fight the rollbacks, redundancies, and concessions imposed in response to the pandemic and its related financial crisis. From Amazon warehouse workers, to hospitality workers, to informally employed platform workers, the global precarious are rising up.

In addition to traditional labour movement tactics, one tool that has proven powerful and flexible in the COVID period and beyond is the autonomous solidarity network. Built from the model of the worker centre, a labour solidarity network is conceived of as a decentralized grouping of workers, organizers and allies, usually operated virtually and at arms-length from formal union structures.

Following the methodological foundation of workers' inquiry, this presentation reports on interviews with workers and organizers involved with worker centres and solidarity networks, distilling their experiences and observations into a set of common practices that characterize worker organizing efforts taking place in a number of Canadian workplaces, including hospitality, migrant work programs, platform services, and artisanal industries. It was conducted as part of a solidarity-building campaign by the Craft Brewery Workers' Alliance of Canada (CBWAC), an autonomous network of brewery workers committed to building class consciousness and organizational capacity in their industry and beyond. In addition to this solidarity-building initiative, the paper reports on the benefits and challenges that CBWAC has faced in working at arms-length from a large international union, positing that an autonomous approach is beneficial for both worker organizers and traditional unions - whether or not the union acknowledges this.

room: dlt
the impossibility of consciousness:
materialism at its limits
hosted by salvage

Richard Seymour; China Miéville; Ray Brassier

In the age of ecological spoliation, in which the material abundance of the earth is being destroyed in a process of violent conceptual abstraction, new materialisms, vitalisms and object-oriented non-materialisms proliferate. The 'hard problem' of matter has become urgently relevant. But so too, given the need to imagine hedonic freedoms that are not reducible to impossible dreams of eternal 'growth', has the 'hard problem' of consciousness.

This panel asks: have we ever been materialists? What do Marxists make of the problem of consciousness, which is of the revolutionary, practico-critical essence of our project? Historical materialism is not metaphysical materialism, but must it nonetheless be rendered externally coherent with a completely physicalist portrayal of reality? Might it fruitfully appropriate "eliminative materialism", in which the problem of consciousness is found to be a non-problem or an illusion? Or must it, to grasp what Marx and Engels called "active side", insist on an idealist moment, understanding consciousness as neither material nor reducible to material causation? If history is the terrain of freedom, must it also be the terrain of Geist? Is the Marxist dialectic even coherent without that wager?

room: g51
marxist ecology:
philosophical perspectives

Isabel Jacobs (Queen Mary University of London): Evald Ilyenkov and Late Soviet Ecology

The paper explores ecological motifs in the work of late Soviet Marxist Evald Ilyenkov. I reconstruct Ilyenkov's view on nature in his materialist cosmology. More specifically, I revisit Ilyenkov's reception of the biosphere and his notions of cyclical time, alchemy and solarism. I hope to provide some fresh insights into Ilyenkov's role in late Soviet environmentalist thought.

José Sarrión-Andaluz (University of Salamanca (Spain)): The reception of ecologist thought by Spanish Marxism

In the 1970s, in the final years of the Franco regime, the most influential Marxist thinker in Spanish socialism at the time,

Manuel Sacristán (known for his anti-Franco activism that cost him expulsion from the University of Barcelona and for his translations into Spanish of Gramsci and Lukács, as well as for his role in the introduction of contemporary logic in Spain) was in a political crisis following the invasion of Prague by the Soviet Union on the one hand, and the conservative drift of Eurocommunism on the other. It was precisely at this moment of crisis that he came into contact with the Club of Rome report on **The Limits to Growth**, as well as with the philosophical elaborations of the first Marxist ecologists, such as Wolfgang Harich and Rudolph Bahro, among others. As a result, political journals of enormous importance were born, such as **Materiales** and **mientras tanto**, and a school of Marxist ecological thinkers of enormous influence in the Spanish-speaking world emerged, whose presence continues to this day. In this way, Manuel Sacristán became the first Spanish-speaking Marxist ecologist, being a pioneer in this sense.

The purpose of this paper is to offer a systematic overview of the ecosocialist elaborations of Manuel Sacristán and the Marxist School of Barcelona, characterised by three axes: the critique of idealist philosophies of nature, the critique of the naïve progressivism of the socialist tradition and the defence of a new politics of socialist science. Manuel Sacristán's approach, much closer to Gramsci's critical and praxeological conception of Marxism than to an Althusserian scientific or Lukácsian classicist conception of Marxism, proposed a shift in the debates on the epistemological and ideological function of science towards an ontological, political-practical axis of science. This theoretical conception was accompanied by a practical-political activism in the creation of the Anti-Nuclear Committee of Catalonia and various political-cultural projects that have left their mark on the Spanish and Latin American socialist tradition up to the present day.

Alejandro Pedregal (Aalto University); Alberto García Molinero (Universidad de Granada): The ecopolitical unconscious of *Tricontinental* (1967-1971): The search for a social metabolic sovereignty in the Third World

This paper focuses on the ecosocial traces of the Cuban Third World solidarity institution OSPAAAL, through its magazine *Tricontinental*, from 1967 to 1971. In these issues, a series of articles and graphic works presented a pioneering revolutionary ecosocial concern in relation to aspects such as the question of land, its distribution and management, key in the struggles for liberation and national sovereignty, attending to agriculture as a practice of metabolic mediation with nature. And with it, to the need to decommodify its production and guarantee a socially just development to compensate for the social rifts caused by the colonial-imperial capitalist order. Combining Cuban, Latin Americanist and internationalist accents, *Tricontinental* also condemned the ecological impact of the predatory production of transnational corporations and their extraction of natural resources in the Third World, exploring alternative models to it. Debates on productive models, unequal exchange and ecological contradictions within developmentalism opened *Tricontinental* to a suggestive understanding of what we call the epochal Third Worldist "ecopolitical unconscious." The magazine's ecosocialist traces connect with the concerns of modern political ecology and, as such, their study could shed new light on the development of ecosocialist practices in the periphery of the capitalist world-system.

Giorgos Velegrakis, Antonis Faras: The Political Ecology of Technology Maintenance: Why it matters?

Maintenance of technology refers to the activities and processes that are carried out to keep a technology in good working condition, to prevent its failure and to ensure its continued functionality. It can include activities such as regular inspections, repairs, upgrades, and replacements. It is an important aspect of technology development and use, but it is often overlooked or undervalued in capitalist societies.

Within Marxist theory, the relationship(s) between technology, labour, and social relations are largely researched. Marx himself pointed out that industry and technology can only reach their higher phase of automation and productivity through the division of labour - the "transformation of workers' operations into more and more mechanical ones" and the process of capital accumulation. In these terms, he focuses on a double movement in the capitalist mode of production: while the productive forces of large industry depend upon science and technology for their establishment and consolidation, the latter are related to the development of material production for their own progress.

Over the last few years, in a parallel path, several scholars have provided important insights regarding on the relationship between the maintenance of technology and the capitalist mode of production. Parts of Luxemburg, Sweezy, Gibson-Graham, Harvey, and Schumpeter offer new understandings of how the capitalist mode of production together with capital's temporalities shape the maintenance of technology. Furthermore, Edgerton's work on technological lock-in highlights how the maintenance of technology is shaped by factors such as network

effects, sunk costs, and path dependence, which make it difficult to replace existing technologies. Nevertheless, what has been under the radar of maintenance scholars, is a political ecology understanding of maintenance. Proper technology maintenance is crucial for achieving ecological sustainability by extending technology lifespan and reducing resource consumption. Holistic technology maintenance approaches minimize waste generation and environmental impacts associated with extraction, manufacturing, and disposal. Such practices contribute to the preservation of natural resources and the mitigation of climate change. In this paper, we would research whether we can recognize maintenance as a political act with transformative potential. By extending the lifespan of technologies, reducing resource consumption, and minimizing environmental impacts, maintenance practices challenge the dominant logic of profit maximization and offer alternatives for a more environmentally conscious mode of production and a just society. Understanding the political ecology of technology maintenance also opens avenues for collective action and social change. The question of why the political ecology of technology maintenance matters is essential for unpacking the power dynamics, social implications, and environmental consequences embedded within maintenance and development practices. By examining technology maintenance under a critical political ecology lens, we can on one hand challenge the prevailing capitalist order and on the other to offer insights into the production of and experimentation with different socio-ecological entanglements.

room: g51a
proletarian struggles

Amir Fleischmann (University of Michigan): The Sword and the Trowel: Workers Councils and the Rule of the Poor

From Plato to James Madison, democracy was associated with the threat of the rule of the poor and abolition of property. This way of understanding democracy was submerged for much of the 20th century – as democracy became equated with bourgeois constitutionalism. Today, we need a theory of democracy that isn't merely predicated on the formal equality of liberalism, but on the material equality of socialism. For working people to truly govern themselves, democracy must have redistribution both as its condition and goal, as the means to achieve popular governance and the end of popular governance. There has been a resurgence in scholarship on workers' councils – or soviets – that examines this form of workers' self-rule. In contrast to radical democracy (e.g., Breugh, 2016; Wolin, 1994), which tends to view democracy as a temporary upsurge that cannot be institutionalized, workers' councils model how the working class could rule in a sustained way. My paper adds to the literature on workers' councils in two ways. First, I clarify that workers' councils are important, not just due to their novel institutional form, but because their very existence is premised on redistribution: council democracy comes into being through the seizure of the means of production by workers. Recent literature – such as Vergara (2020) and Popp-Madsen (2021) – miss this critical point when they propose council systems or valorize square movements, like Occupy Wall Street, that are detached from the workplace. Second, in contrast to literature that opposes workers' councils to the Leninism of the USSR, I engage with Lenin to demonstrate the limits of spontaneous struggle and the key role of the party in transforming the mass of individuals into a class for itself. Through these contributions, my work identifies the factors that make democratic movements threatening to the ruling class.

Pedro Álvaro Hervalejo Sánchez: The end of the Catalan Process? Looking back at a decade of pro-independence mobilisation (2009-2019)

With the recent cooling down of the political climate in Catalonia, some have announced the end of the intense cycle of political mobilisation and confrontation known as the Catalan Process. This paper offers a Marxist perspective on some of the deeper issues that have shaped ten years of social and political strife in Catalonia, looking at both national conflict and class struggle. The main focus is to assess the strategic importance of the Catalan pro-independence movement, including its relationship to wider struggles in the context of the EU. This involves an analysis of the role played by the various social and political actors, as well as of the Spanish governmental response and its place in the global tendency towards authoritarianism. Also, this study provides with a lessons learned approach to the changing forms of activism present in Catalonia during the stated time period, bringing back relevant themes within the historical socialist tradition such as party, hegemony and power.

room: r201
marxism, art and architecture

Tobey Pan (The University of Edinburgh): On the Methodological Gap in Feminist Art History

Art history is a salient locus of feminist interventions for over half a century. Feminist art historians challenged the canon by raising important questions such as 'Why have there been no great women artists?' (Nochlin, 1971) and 'Is adding women to art history the same as producing feminist art history?' (Pollock, 1988). However, what exactly feminist methodology is for art history remains ambiguous. In 2019, Angela Dimitrakaki remarks that 'feminist art history has not pursued, through its salient militant category (woman artist), a life-work dialectic with analytical persistence' and proposes the project of rewriting art history as a history of labour (Dimitrakaki, 2019). In this paper, I will examine the methodological gap in feminist art history and point out the problems with the left's theorisation of artistic labour.

I will first explore the contradiction in hegemonic feminist art history embedded in the abovementioned methodological gap: feminist art historians attempt to reject the 'women' category assigned to them by the canon but work to prove the legitimacy of the category. As much as this category is problematic, jettisoning them might also entail a degree of complexity. Driven by such rejection, the focus is often reduced to the context of the artwork, neglecting the important question of how, in the disguise of categorisation, art is qualified and disqualified according to the standard that created those categories in the first place. The necessity of rewriting art history as a history of labour thus lies here: alternative ways of interpreting artwork would only nurture a more diverse pool of winners and losers because there are more interpretational frameworks available that would help the marginalised fit into the centre. Those who cannot make it into the mainstream are those who lack 'quality' and are weeded out by the free hand of the market and its main tool: competition.

But does the contemporary (western) left adequately theorise artistic labour? Although left thinkers such as Dave Beech criticise the aristocratic root of contemporary art's anti-work politics—artists demanding wages as entitling privilege—artistic labour is still regarded as an exceptional (unproductive) form of work in this context. Beech implies that it is not the distinction between an artist and a worker but capitalism's 'systemic privileging of value production over the production and maintenance of material wealth' that should be questioned (Beech, 2019). I find this argument insufficient because Beech bases his argument entirely on the value of the artwork and takes for granted the existence of (the artist's) labour-power. The contemporary left may not be as revolutionary as they seem to be after all: they imply a negotiation with the social systems and structures—a reformist approach in disguise of a revolutionary-in-progress—rather than a confrontation with the capitalist mode of production.

Xavier Wrona (Après la révolution - Riot éditions - Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Saint-Étienne):
Anatole Kopp and Architecture as Communist Knowledge for Transforming the World Order

In his book *When the modern wasn't a style but a cause* (1988), French Marxist architect and historian Anatole Kopp tells the largely forgotten story of how architecture, in the first half of the 20th century, was initially a largely collectivized field of research, involved in the concrete and radical transformation of the world order towards forms of communism. Surprisingly, considering the troubling state of the world, a contemporary reading of Kopp's work allows for an optimistic hypothesis: the possibility of severing architecture from capital and transforming the discipline into a horizontal field for the production of communism.

The massive addition of contemporary architects to the economy of capital as well as the inextricable ties of building production to the ongoing globalized ecocide may make such a hypothesis appear far-fetched. Kopp's writings are no less exempt of contradictions, especially with regard to the architect as a bourgeois figure of individual genius. But Kopp's account of architecture's role as a discipline and its participation in 20th-century attempts to construct communism allows for thoroughly reconsidering what was attempted then, as well as of our possible undertakings in the future.

Kopp unveils part of a tradition of architectural knowledge that does not limit itself to building production but which can be part of massive emancipatory processes. He derails the dominant Foucauldian discourses which understand architecture solely in oppressive terms. Notably, Kopp makes us wonder what use can be made of the organizational skills of the thousands of architecture schools scattered all across the globe, once their population parts from their active contribution to the global disaster, and moves again towards emancipatory goals.

carina Brand (De Montfort University): *Painting, Petroleum and Neoliberalism in 1980: The Energy Unconscious at Work in the 'New Spirit of Painting'*

This paper revisits the early 1980's making the case that neoliberalism marks a distinct historical moment where we returned to petroleum. The role of North Sea oil in supporting and supplementing Thatcher's Government has been explored fully and we need to rethink neoliberalism in terms of energy. Understanding heightened financialisation as not immaterial but rooted in physical extraction. The 1980's is simultaneously seen as the 'rebirth' of painting', while art critics dismayed at this new speculative desire, I want to draw on Patricia Yaeger's concept of the energy unconscious to ask if the return to painting in many ways captured the heightened destructive nature of full extraction. If like Graeme MacDonald's reading of Star Wars 1980's painting captured the desire for excess denied in the oil shocks of the 1970's. The paint, colour, size, subject matter of the white male artists who dominated the scene, work in concert with the ideological death drive of neoliberal accelerationist policies. These policies equally affected the arts, as big oil seeps into the UK art institutions in the late 1970's. I will look at the work of Phillip Guston, Eric Fischl and Malcolm Morley to consider if what we see is a petro-aesthetic, asking if we can we read the work through the lens of petroleum to uncover ideology at work in a pivotal moment where petro-capitalism doubled down. However, in contrast to the often-outright dismissal of 1980's painting I want to assert that the work of the aforementioned painters carries both hallmarks of this petro and financial soaked culture, but also unconscious critiques.

room: rg01
planning theory ii

This is the second of three panels on planning theory. Planning theory was an extensive field both inside and outside socialist countries during 1917-1989. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, only a small number of such theorists remain. The solution to the inefficiencies and authoritarianism of socialist political economy is not vagueness or studied neglect, but rather critical incisive research. Will socialist economies rely on market-mechanisms, powerful algorithms, small-scale barter, or in natura total plans? Are plans dependent on universal metrics such as value, utility, labour time, or energy? How will plans be decided upon democratically? These panels look to historical and theoretical examples to think through these issues.

Automating away the Centre? Optimal Planning and the Menace of Bureaucratisation
Max Koch-Grünberg

Within wider discourse on economic planning, the talk critically interrogates practical challenges in applying optimisation algorithms to achieve allocative efficiency on the scale of national economies. In questioning whether contemporary information technology solves the shortcomings of Soviet command planning, the talk engages with three fundamental problems optimal planners would face, namely the concern of computational complexity, the challenge of generating the economic data necessary for the constitution of such a system, and ultimately the relation of optimisation solvers to a hierarchy of ends. Besides epistemic concerns, the greatest risk of such a planning framework is constituted by the possibility of a slow descent into an authoritative system that would mirror the Soviet experience because it will demand bureaucratic institutions to supervise the entry of economic data and to set weights and constraints to fine-tune the model.

Revisiting Marx's Concept of Socialist Planning
Tom O'Brien and Donal O'Coisdealbha

The first English translation of the 2nd Edition of the 'Fundamental Principles of Communist Production and Distribution' by the Group of International Communists in 2020 has brought renewed focus on Marx's concept of socialist planning. This overlooked classic of the 1920s council communist movement was a response to both the Socialist Calculation Debate and Soviet economic policies of the time. It sought to extrapolate the consequences of Marx's writings on Communism and his critique of the Capitalist mode of production. The work lays out the basic formulation for a society of free associated producers, based upon an open and rational system of labour time accounting. This approach solved the famous imputation problem, yet ignored the issue of how to integrate natural non-labour inputs into the accounting schema. It also ignored the Austrian critique of the lack of an exploratory function in socialism, a function that competition and private property perform in capitalism. We will argue in our paper for a re-examination of Labour Time as the basis for a socialist economy.

Socialization of Nature

Jacob Blumenfeld

In this talk, I will lay out three different political-philosophical strategies for relating to nature in the Anthropocene. The first strategy comprises all those attempts to bring the power of private law to the rescue of the natural environment. I call this the legalization of nature, and I hope to show its strengths and weaknesses. The second strategy encompasses the effort to create new moral concepts, frameworks, and values for relating to nature, land, and the biosphere in general. I call this the moralization of nature, and I hope to show its potential and limits. The third strategy involves the tremendous task of democratically planning the economy in a way that incorporates human and non-human interests, breaking the primacy of the market as the main mechanism for determining the use of nature, and challenging the underlying property relations that govern our conduct toward the natural environment. I call this the socialization of nature, and hope to show its prospects and challenges.

Democratising production: Karl Polanyi's socialist planning with the market
Helmer Stoel

In recent academic debates on social and ecological transformation and post-capitalism, the issue of economic planning has reemerged. The promise of new technological developments, such as big data and AI, has reignited interest in economic planning and its transformative potential. Yet in these debates the 'social conditions' of democratic planning have received less attention. I argue that Karl Polanyi's insights on economic planning remain highly relevant in this context. In *The Great Transformation*, he famously described the ideal of a self-regulating market as a 'stark utopia' that was in fact imposed, whereas the protective measures of society emerged spontaneously. He summarised this paradox in the provocative formulation: 'Laissez-faire was planned; planning was not.' The alternative he proposes can be found in his early work. In the context of the socialist calculation debates of the 1920s, he refused the choice between the 'free market' or marketless centralised administered planning, into which Ludwig von Mises wanted to entrap socialism. With his 'functional socialism', influenced by guild socialism and Austromarxism, he presented a decentralised vision based on a functional division between consumer and producer associations that would decide upon prices. Yet, contrary to those that present him as an early Third Way ideologue, this presupposed a collective reappropriation of the economy. As such, Polanyi's work still provides us with an interesting position on socialist planning in the current era of technological change and societal transformation.

room: rb01
socialist strategy in the united states:
the contribution of kim moody
hosted by spectre: a marxist journal

"This panel will examine Kim Moody's contributions to strategic discussions among US socialists on three key questions-- the Democratic Party, the continued relevance of workplace struggle and industrial workers, and the logistics industry and the turn-over time of capital.

Presenters:

Ian Allison, British Trade Unionist and Independent Scholar
Katy Fox-Hodes, University of Sheffield
Charles Post, City University of New York

Comments from Kim Moody

room: b102

striving for transformation:
intersections of spinoza and marx in the interregnum

Jeremy Gilbert (University of East London); Jason Read (University of Southern Maine)

Striving for Transformation: Intersections of Spinoza and Marx in the Interregnum

The intersection of Spinoza and Marx is in some sense an aberration in the history of philosophy. It is neither a relation of direct influence nor critical opposition. Yet this has not stopped generations from thinking through the intersection of two thinkers separated not only by years but by fundamentally different philosophical orientations and critical objects. Spinoza's critical object was the forms of subjective belief and obedience that sustain theocracy; Marx's critical object was the capitalist mode of production. The most recent wave of this intersection begins in the late sixties with the works of Louis Althusser, Alexandre Matheron, and Gilles Deleuze, and continues up through the present in the writing of André Tösel, Frédéric Lordon, and Franck Fischbach. It is no accident that this period of theoretical reflection coincides with the end of the cycles of struggle and rebellion that defined the long nineteenth century and the victory of the neoliberal economic and political model as a new subjection. Spinoza's central political question, "why do people fight for their servitude as if it was salvation" becomes all the more pressing in an era in which many clamor not only for jobs but also for "freedom" from protections and regulations. In the age of reaction it is all the more essential to engage the intersection of Spinoza and Marx in order to think through the intersection of the mode of subjection and mode of production. The papers collected here address this intersection in multiple ways: through examining Frédéric Lordon's onto-anthropology of institutions; the second through an investigation of Spinoza's theory of psychic life as an alternative to Freudian theories; and the final paper looks at the way in which Spinoza and Marx's different registers of determination are the basis for rethinking the limitations of theoretical and political practice in André Tösel's finite communism.

The Limits of Freudo-Marxism

Jeremy Gilbert, Professor of Cultural and Political Theory, University of East London

One of the most important contributions made to historical materialism by the Spinozist tradition has been a set of alternative account of the psycho-social to those derived from attempts to fuse Marxism with psychoanalysis. But why should any such alternative be sought, and what is the difference between a Freudo-Marxist psychology and a Spinozist Marxist theory of the self?

While a tradition of Marxist scepticism towards Freudian thought can be traced at least as far back as Volosinov writing in the 1920s, most attempts to formulate a Marxian theory of subjectivity, identification or unconscious processes - most attempts, in fact, at a Marxist psychology of any kind - have proceeded by way of a synthesis between Marxism and psychoanalysis. This paper will suggest that few such attempts have succeeded in preserving anything that was recognizable as historically materialist in their models of psychic life, and that Spinozian thought has often proven a more fruitful resource than Freudianism for the formulation of socialist psychologies. Ultimately this will not be a polemic against psychoanalysis, and will argue for the continued utility and importance of psychoanalytic ideas and methods in dialogue with those of other traditions, but will also argue that such dialogue must not, as often happens, lead to a retreat from Marxism's radical critique of liberal individualism.

Finite Communism: Determination and Action Spinoza and Marx

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One of the points of contact between Spinoza and Marx is their insistence on the determined nature of our existence. As Marx famously argued, human beings make history under conditions they do not choose but inherit from prior generations. Spinoza framed a similar idea in a more metaphysical register, arguing that every finite thing is determined by another to exist and operate an effect in a certain and determinate manner—situated in an infinite causal nexus. It is through both the similarity and difference of these two articulations of causal determination, one historical, the other metaphysical, that I argue it becomes possible to think together action and transformation. As André Tösel argues, every action is doubly determined, shaped by both material conditions and social relations, by praxis and poesis. This double determination not only makes it possible to understand the intersection of collective and individual transformation, as stemming from changes in forces and relations of production, but more importantly it paves the way for an understanding of what he calls "finite communism." Finite communism is a communism that begins from the situated and limited perspective of a given historical moment and, from this, posits that any action will necessarily be determined as much as it is determining. Following, Jean Matthys recently published Althusser lecteur de Spinoza:

Genèse et enjeux d'une éthico-politique de la théorie, I argue that this focus on the finite and determined nature of action and reflection makes possible not only a new understanding of what is at stake in the Spinoza/Marx intersection, but also a new basis for thinking of theoretical and political interventions.

room: b103
revisiting the critique of political economy

Patrick Murray (Creighton University); Jeanne Schuler (Creighton University): Three Pseudo-Concepts Generated by the "Bourgeois Horizon" that Obstruct Social Theory and Practice: Wealth-in-general, Utility, and Instrumental Action

Social theory and transformative social movements need good concepts. Achieving good concepts requires a horizon of discourse that allows for them. That horizon must get beyond the bifurcating mindset that Marx calls the "bourgeois horizon," a term he applied to Proudhon's mix of philosophy and political economy. Much of modern philosophy and social theory is caught in the "bourgeois horizon." What we call factoring philosophy bifurcates; it makes phenomenological false moves by treating as separable what is distinguishable but not separable. Factoring philosophy establishes the "bourgeois horizon." Several of the most influential notions in social theory—notably in economics—result from false moves.

Marx and Engels write that a mode of production (Produktionsweise) is always a way of life (Lebensweise). In the *Grundrisse*, Marx states the phenomenological kernel of historical materialism: "All production is appropriation of nature on the part of an individual within and through a specific form of society." The "illusion of the economic" arises within the "bourgeois horizon" because production is treated as separable from its social form, summoning the impossible: production-in-general. Capital fosters this illusion, as Martha Campbell notices: "What is, for Marx, the extraordinary feature of economic activity in capitalism" is "that it claims to create wealth 'pure and simple' and [to be] organised by this purpose."

Tony Smith examines three prominent alternatives to Marxian value theory: neoclassical economics, Weberian social theory, and Neo-Ricardian (Sraffian) economics. We match these with the notions of utility, instrumental action, and production-in-general, respectively. Smith argues that none can compete with Marx's theory of value. We agree, but these are pseudo-concepts, not lesser concepts. Because each notion presupposes production-in-general, there is nothing for them to be the concepts of. The ascendance of the pseudo-concepts represents a breakdown of social theory to which Marx's critique of economics provides an answer.

Ksenia Arapko: Engels' Critique of Political Economy

On the 80th anniversary of Friedrich Engels' 'Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie' (1843), revisiting the young man's first critique of political economy, one that preceded Marx's own, is in order. The essay that directly prompted Marx to turn to political economy in late 1843 has receded into the background of contemporary scholarship on Marx and the development of his critique of political economy. Although over the course of his studies Marx moved beyond the early stages of Engels' engagement with the figures and theories of the discipline, the essay not only provided a starting point for Marx's critical engagement with political and national economy but even carried much of the positions of Engels' analysis of 1843 in his late or 'mature' critique of the first volume of **Capital** and beyond. To appreciate Marx's evolving critique therefore requires an understanding of the influences that bear on Engels in his disparagement of the doctrines of political economy and its proponents.

Gabriele Schimmenti (Università degli Studi Roma 3): Beyond the Symbol. Marx and the Sociality of Hieroglyphics

In my paper I will deal with Marx's concept of "social hieroglyphic" (gesellschaftliche Hieroglyphe). I aim at showing how Marx's metaphor implies a deep criticism of the capitalistic mode of production and of its main form of knowledge, i.e. political economy. In the first step, I will discuss some aspects of Marx's concept of value-form (Wertform) in *Capital*, highlighting the systematic context of his reference to the hieroglyphics and how this metaphor is connected to the scientific discovery of the intimate relationship between value and labour and to fetishism. In a second step, I will try to reconstruct some sources of Marx's concept of hieroglyphics, taking into account his so-called Bonner Hefte (1842). In the last step, I will take into account Marx's notes (1851) on W. H. Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico* as a proof of Marx's critique of the symbolic language (MEGA2, IV/9, p. 411 ff.). I will show how the hieroglyphics intended as an oral language, instead of a symbolic language, probably contributed to reveal to Marx the materiality of social production.

Demet Dinler (Historical Materialism Editorial Board and University of Sussex): Value, Real Abstraction and Post-

Capitalism

How to transform the capitalist system we experience as an abstract, alienating force independent from us? How to design post-capitalist practices and institutions which will not reproduce this abstract force? In this paper, I am using the theoretical insights from the way value and capital are theorised by Nicole Pepperell and Jim Kincaid as emergent properties of local practices, none of which would reproduce capital in isolation from the broader assemblage in which they are currently suspended. In critical engagements with existing debates on value and their political implications, I argue that post-capitalism should be understood as the repurposing of existing local practices for new emancipatory ends. I illustrate my argument with an ethnographic study of the cut flower sector and suggest that markets and prices can be re-configured in a way to produce fairer and egalitarian outcomes rather than reproducing capital.

room: b104

book launch:

the ruthless critique of everything existing: nature and
revolution in marcuse's philosophy of praxis

Why Marcuse now? Marcuse was the most radical member of the Frankfurt School, so radical that he has become the bogeyman of the far right. His political theory was based on an original philosophy that has yet to be understood in its full scope and ambitions. This book traces Marcuse's contribution from his early phenomenological Marxism to his late reflections on the environment. Marcuse not only supported struggles against imperialism and race and gender discrimination, he addressed the roots of the problems in the new phase of consumer capitalism. He studied with Husserl and Heidegger, two important figures in the phenomenological movement. Their influence shows up in his early analysis of Marx's Paris Manuscripts of 1844. This was a path breaking study of the ontological interdependence of human beings and nature in Marx's thought. After joining the Frankfurt School, he enriched Marxism with original interpretations of Hegel and Freud. His most popular book, **One-Dimensional Man**, was read around the world and influenced the New Left. Already aware of the environmental crisis by the 1970s, he argued that nature is devastated by capitalist science and technology, and he demanded radical change in the human relation to nature. Today, under pressure from the public, science and technology increasingly conflict with the imperatives of capitalist enterprise. Marcuse offers theoretical resources for understanding this conflict. His thought can contribute to the contemporary movement to save the environment.

room: bglt

issues in social reproduction

Sahil Kumar (University of Michigan): Social Reproduction and the Production of Value

The importance of the labor performed in the sphere of social reproduction is today generally accepted among Marxists, however, the question of whether such labor produces (Surplus) Value or not remains disputed. In the debates that were generated within the feminist movement of the 70s, while Mariarosa Dalla Costa and others (Early Social Reproduction Analyses) had argued that social reproduction is productive of Value, Lise Vogel and others (Social Reproduction Theory) maintained that while social reproduction is indispensable and fundamental for the reproduction of the capitalist whole, it does not produce (surplus) Value. For Vogel the labor of the housewife produces use-values, but not exchange-values, and consequently, no (Surplus) Value. In more recent times, this debate can be seen reproduced in the positions held by the SRT group and those held by Federici, Mezzadri, and others. In the present paper, contrary to the position held by SRT, I will argue that the sphere of social reproduction is productive of (Surplus) Value, basing my arguments on insights from (among others) the recent critique of Heinrich's position by Lietz and Schwarz. I will further claim that SRT's own project of developing a Unitary Theory of capitalist society is what is at stake in this debate on the question of the Value of social reproduction. A Unitary Theory of Capitalism is not possible without taking into account the key category that makes Capitalism itself a unitary, unified, and universal system, i.e. Value.

Navpreet Kaur (Miranda House, University of Delhi, India); C Saratchand (Satyawati College, University of Delhi, India): Value and Capitalist Social Reproduction: Theoretical and Empirical Considerations

Previous statements of the law of value often involve the claim that the magnitude of value of a commodity equals

the amount of socially necessary abstract labour time that is contained in it. However this formulation begs a number of questions. First, does abstract labour emerge at the site of capitalist production or during the unity of capitalist production and circulation? Second, what is the role of money in the law of value? An answer to these questions requires a reckoning with “another” dimension of the law of value as a spontaneous process of allocation of workers (who expend different types of concrete labour) and means of production (which themselves contain labour) to various branches of capitalist production. But the existence of money implies that the law of value involves, at the very least, the spontaneous allocation of workers (who expend different types of concrete labour) and means of production to various branches of production and to the reserve army of labour (involving inter alia unused production capacity or unsold inventories). However an effort to discern the relations between both these dimensions of the law of value, still leave opens the question of how labour power of workers is reproduced in the capitalist system. We argue that a formulation of the law of value needs to involve the allocation of workers between activities involving the expending of labour that is productive for capital, the reserve army of labour and domestic work. Drawing on primary surveys in two villages in Rajasthan, India we will seek to ground our theoretical arguments on the links between value and capitalist social reproduction involving interacting crises in both processes. These links also involve a dialectical interplay between social oppression and exploitation resulting in intriguing social asymmetries among women in different types of rural households.

Maria Georgouli Loupi (Goldsmiths, University of London): The reproduction of the Greek middle class: revisiting Social Reproduction Theory

For Wally Secombe in the 1970s, women’s unpaid domestic labour reproduces both forces and relations of production, on an everyday basis and on the level of ideology. As various feminist scholars have pointed out since, this unpaid labour is assumed to be taking place within households whose ideotype can be described as: white, middle-class family home. This ideotype has been criticised from the likes of A. Davis, M. Luxton and T. Bhattacharya for ignoring historical and social reality, substituting middle- for working-class families, ignoring the experiences of women of colour under colonial capitalism and erasing women performing paid domestic labour in middle-class households.

Employing the categories and classifications of historical materialism and Social Reproduction Theory, like paid domestic workers, as an entry point into the concrete historical reality of late 20th century Greece is a prerequisite for analysing the (biological and social) reproduction of self-identified middle class families. Based on the above, in this paper I will review how Greek households from petit-bourgeois and higher working class strata constructed their self-image through adopting practices traditionally characterising the middle class - like the employment of domestic workers; and how they reproduced, using this purchased domestic labour.

Erik Hansson (Uppsala university): 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.