

[Spectres of Marx]

Marx', Gespenster



HAU

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Photos of cash machines in Germany, Greece, UK, Italy, Sri Lanka, South Korea and Hungary inspired by an idea of AlexandLiane

When so-called real socialism collapsed, Marx' analyses were declared to be washed up and some spoke of finally reaching the end of history, of the victory of the market and democracy. But in 1993 the French philosopher Jacques Derrida reminded us that the spectre of Marx would not dissipate so easily. It turns out he was right.

With the series "Marx' Gespenster" [Spectres of Marx] HAU Hebbel am Ufer ties into the topicality of Marx and attempts to track down innovative ways of articulating against contemporary forms of capitalism. In view of the capitalist permeation of society, the series will not only take a look at aspects of politics as a whole, but also and especially will present reflections by artists who are subject to day-to-day forms of self-exploitation and demands to self-optimize in their practice.

With

Phil Collins

Sylvain Creuzevault

Bojan Djordjev

Nahawa Doumbia

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Keith Hennessy

Fabian Hinrichs & Schorsch Kameron

Srećko Horvat & Teresa Forcades i Vila

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The Boggey- man

Jacques Derrida described Marx and his theory as the sceptre that ever-new holy alliances have sought to expel. Many emphasized that Marxism's project should have resolved itself together with the end of history. And yet its sceptre returns and haunts us. Today's challenge consists in accepting this legacy, and to use it to gain new insights into the climate crisis, the poverty that reigns across Europe, the refugee situation, the financial market's collapse, and the corruption that determines both big business and our political landscape. Written by **Alex Demirović**.

Some of you may remember the moment when – shortly after your childhood ended – an exciting new thought took hold of you, a thought that thrived on a rather metaphysical suspicion: could it not be that everything that surrounds us, from our sensory impressions to the categories in which we think, is merely a deception, and therefore an illusion? We followed that we could no longer trust in the appearance of this reality, since maybe it did not in fact exist. Or maybe it was categorically different than we thought and we could not even recognize it for what it was? Why should that which we see and think necessarily be true and certain?

It was this doubt, this very uncertainty, which also marked the beginning of the modern bourgeois worldview. And it was René Descartes, who in his *Meditations* sceptically pondered the question whether all the knowledge that he had gathered from teachers and books and which had over time been approved by peoples and societies, was not perhaps a delusion and mere appearance. Did they not once also consider gods, sirens, and unicorns real? Could it not possibly be that we are the victims of a treacherous god who wants to make us believe that everything is exactly the way that it appears to us to be. Who can tell us for sure that our lives are anything but dreams? Unfazed by and despite all of these doubts, Descartes set out to bring certainty back modern philosophy.

He argues that even if we call everything that surrounds us into doubt, we can at the very least be certain that we are the ones who raise these doubts. A subject who is able to consciously reflect upon itself can draw this

particular certainty from within itself and thus secure it. The thus defined bourgeois subject understood itself as self-constitutive, and therefore as creative. It in fact believed that it created the world through its own terminology and its own work, and was for this very reason also sure that it could truly recognize it. According to the *verum factum* principle, truth is verified through creation and invention. From this perspective, it seemed that modern subjects could arrange themselves in a world that was not only familiar to them, but that also provided them with the promise of both direction and orientation precisely because it was ‘their’ own, self-created world. This world would be the product of their work. It would in fact be a world that consisted solely of their own interiorities. Over time, however, this view proved to be a delusion. The bourgeois found itself surprised by the realization that while it had indeed set things in motion and explored the planet, and while these new developments promised enlightenment, progress, and prosperity, they also led to torture, war, and racism, all three of which could only poorly be justified through nature’s higher plans. The bourgeoisie was soon forced to realize that people resist and do not necessarily oblige; they fight, they flee, they cherish hopes that far exceed the status quo. As a consequence, the hope for a self-created world that resonates complete familiarity could never be fully realized. The once initiated dynamics got out of hand and became both inscrutable and uncontrollable. Harmony had to be manufactured, reality ignored, and contradictions denied: the egotistical actions of private market players did neither balance each other out nor did they lead to the common prosperity of all: the personal interests

of the masses were in addition not easily reconciled with a democratically negotiated common good. Misery and hardship remain omnipresent! The spirits, once summoned, now haunt us tirelessly. The bourgeoisie, which once sought to free itself from the dream-like quality of reality, now escapes into its own ignorance. In order to be able “to deny the existence of the monsters,” as Marx put it, the bourgeoisie had to “pull the magic cap down over [its] eyes and ears.”

Marx initiated a turn in the dreamlike appearance of the capitalist world; his writings sought to stir the world’s heavy sleep. Not unlike Descartes, he also begins with a dream; yet his is a dream, which the people want to awake from. Marx argues that the answer is not to be found in our inner lives; it can no longer be drawn from our constitutive consciousness. Instead, it can only be regained once we orient ourselves toward the external, and try to understand our time through its struggles and desires. Certainty can only be reached once one steps out of the dream of reality, which hovers like a nightmare over both the present and over a free and truly alert future. The dream needs to be explained and the imaginary, which holds the people captured in their own reflections and representations so that they continue to believe in the same spectres and spirits, must be articulated.

Capitalist reality is essentially paradoxical: it exists and yet it is not really there. Everything functions according to the ‘as if’ that also dominates religion. Cathedrals are built, condoms banned, chorals sung, and people killed ‘as if’ there really was an omnipotent God.



“A spectre is haunting Europe ...”

Bojan Djordjev > A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of Marxism. It [...] represents a constant critical shadow of capitalism, growing in importance each time that capitalism shows its teeth and each time it gets hit by crisis. The resilience that Marxism demonstrates in the face of altering intellectual modes comes from the resilience, exceptional elasticity and adaptability of capitalism, which requires a constant invention of new forms of anti-capitalistic theoretical critique and political struggle. In that sense, Marxism nowadays, more than a corpus of dusty XIX century texts and an archive or real-socialism, represents an umbrella term for theory that faces modern neoliberalism in the same way in which Marx faced classic liberalism – and which takes anti-capitalistic struggle seriously.

From Primož Krašovec, Dealing with Marxism Today is not a Matter of Loyalty but a Historic Task

Capitalist society, it follows, is a religion, and thus also a dreamlike reality: everything appears 'as if' the irrational, the fantastical, the spectral, in other words 'as if' value, work, money, commodities, and states were in fact real. Yet money is the spectre itself. While it is the valid and general form that prosperity takes, it is not itself a material good but rather a mere imaginary figment. One must in fact give it away in order to be able to indulge in and enjoy one's wealth. Money further loses not only its meaning as the measure of value, but also its worth, if it is not used to accumulate other riches. It is an illusion to think that money works for itself, and that its mere existence increases our wealth. Pure and productive work, rid of its particular societal form and function, does not exist at all: it is in contrast just another spectre that haunts us. Wealth is supposed to be the product of our work and our accomplishments. With the help of its own labour capacity, the individual creates practical value for the capitalist market. It is, however, quite possible that the individual's work or the value that it has created suddenly become worthless, or that both remain in demand but can no longer be attained because they have become unaffordable. Bourgeois society cannot grasp the circumstances that determine its working conditions. In addition, work often changes in appearance once labour capacity and the goods that it produces are transformed into commodities. These commodities assume, as Marx put it, a mystical, metaphysical, theological, even supernatural quality that forces the people, who idealize their self-created constraint by calling it the free market's natural law, to take action. So what happens? Work

is here understood as social collective labour. All of its single parts contribute to the greater whole. And yet this collective labour is not organized in a collective way. Instead, the individual owners of different capital goods are in command of it. They see to it that the 'dead' work that is embedded in the capital that they disburse for machines and resources is absorbed by the highest possible amount of 'living' labour capacity. The product that is created through these dynamics is then sold at the market. It is only here, through the process of selling and purchasing, that it is decided whether and to what extent the invested capital can be utilized. Here, where different products are compared, they begin to lose their distinct quality and are evaluated in the context of society's labour power at large. Only their almost eerie material objectiveness is in the end reminiscent of the fact that commodities embody the indiscriminate force of human labour that produced them. It is through this force that they could gain value and generated a particular price. Societal connectedness is thus reached through a mediator, the commodity. As a consequence, the conditions under which the individual works turn against itself. The individual becomes, in other words, dependent upon the value that its produced commodities and its own labour force have gained, and which can therefore be utilized at the market. It is for this reason that the commodity comes to embody the individual and its relations. And these relations are truly spooky: although the individual's labour capacity assumes a particular economic value, he or she can neither fully know nor exert control over its value. And yet it fully determines the individual's fate.

This shows the extent to which bourgeois society is entangled in the capitalist dream. This dream has, however, rather real and often evil consequences, since it must always appear as if it were real. It is this capital, which reins over our dead past and sucks both our labour force and our nature dry in order to be able to keep itself alive. In doing so, it creates a society of revenants, of 'undead.'

The ones who deny reality, the vampire-like representatives of a society of revenants, will regard those who want to step out of the dream of the past and emerge into a real present and an actual common good as ghosts. Marx famously said that: "a spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of communism." What we are dealing with is thus nothing less than a world theatre with all its tragedies and charades. Spirits of the past were summoned. From them we have borrowed names, battle slogans, and costumes: religions, spiritualisms, superstitions, sex, race, class, nation, people, capital, market, democracy, Plato, the apostle Paul, and the founding fathers. Marx wants to rid himself of these ghosts – or spectres. He wants to move beyond the historical narrative that weighs down the living. He wants to provide them with the chance to create their own conditions. Thomas Paine, participator in two revolutions, stated that there is no tyranny worse than that exerted from the grave. Marx lets ghosts be ghosts; he turns away from them. While the dead should bury their dead, the living should leave behind all hollow phrases, turn to new topics, and draw their poetry, as Marx said, not "from the past but only from the future."

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Translation: Mieke Woelky



"A spectre is haunting Europe ..."

Srećko Horvat > I am sorry, actually I don't have anything to add – the true spectre is already named in the Communist Manifesto.

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KAPPE



Melan- choly and Triumph

Srećko Horvat and **Pascal Jurt** speak about left-wing melancholia, emancipatory potentials, and the connection between the 'arabellion' and current migration movements.

Pascal Jurk: **The historical narrative which capitalism imposed is no longer convincing: after 1989, we were asked to believe that the age of revolutions was over. Revolutions happened in the past, but they always went wrong, and the general historical tendency was towards liberal democracy and capitalism. But, after the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, new forms of organizing (with the rise of Syriza in Greece or the Indignados and also Podemos in Spain) it seems that this narrative is no longer sustainable. Are we in the age of revolutions again?**

Srećko Horvat: I am sorry to be the advocatus diaboli here, but look at the current refugee crisis. This is the boomerang of the so-called „Arab Spring“. Although many of these movements, from Egypt to Tunisia, really started as genuine protests, they were soon taken over by the same old forces that unite to prevent any sort of real change. And if you take Libya or now Syria you will see that the very term “Arab Spring” is completely misleading and even wrong. What happened in Libya was nothing but a “coup d’état.” Now documents have been leaked that directly suggest a link between the concession agreements between Libya and the largest oil industry corporations in the world. They show all the unpaid debts for the exploitation of Libyan oil, in terms of the extension of these contracts based, quite reasonably, on Gaddafi’s proposal and the “response” of the West to these proposals – namely bombs and destruction of Libya. The debt that five major world companies owed Libya at this time exceeded a figure of tens of billions of dollars. Gaddafi has offered these companies to agree on their method of payment of the debt, even proposing a re-structuration of debt. But only a few weeks after Gaddafi’s constructive offers, the so-called “Arab Spring” began in Benghazi. And then, what happened after this business was finished? Tens of thousands of so-called “freedom fighters” from Libya were first transferred to fight for uranium in Mali and then most of them were sent to Syria to take off the head of Assad. Weapons that were used in Libya for the “Arab Spring” were thus transferred to Syria. And now this boomerang is coming back to Europe in the form of hundreds of thousands of refugees. So, not only would I not use the term “Arab Spring” anymore, I would be very cautious to speak about “revolutions” as well. Yes, you are right, we live after the “End of History” and it is again possible to imagine different alternatives to capitalism. But capitalism, as capitalist interventions in Libya or Syria show very clearly, is stronger than ever, it can – as in the case of Egypt or Tunisia – pretty quickly use

genuine protest energies and turn them against themselves. Or it can even – as in the case of Mossaddegh in Iran on 1953 or Salvador Allende in 1973 – orchestrate “revolutions” just in order to bring capitalism back into town.

PJ: **Frederic Jameson claimed that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism. One way of getting to capitalism is to think of it as a belief: a belief that capitalism is the only viable system, that other systems might be desirable, but impracticable – unrealistic in other words. I think, this is the continuing problem of social and political imagination: even now, can we really begin to imagine an alternative to capitalism? The movements are beginning to shift things, but capitalism still remains formidable. What do you think about that?**

SH: Precisely this is the problem. Let me put it like this: most of the measures that the “radical left” is proposing today, from preserving the welfare state to progressive taxation, would have been dismissed as “social democracy” only 40 years ago. It is great that we have economists such as Thomas Piketty, but don’t we live in tragic times if progressive taxation on wealth, which is meant to reduce inequality, seems so radical today? And, I am sad to say that, but it would indeed be radical today, because we can’t even imagine such a thing anymore. The same goes for the welfare-state: although only 40 years ago public and free health care or education was a common thing in many European countries, today it seems radical to fight for both. So in a way, the Left is seeking its future in the past. And here the opening pages of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* are more pertinent than ever. Marx contrasts the new revolution announced by the Communist Manifesto with the French Revolution, which was breaking into the future with its eyes turned to the past, finding recourse in the Roman ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. And Louis Althusser goes so far as to say that without the Roman political virtue, the leaders and protagonists of the bourgeois revolution would not have been able to mobilize either the masses or themselves. What we have today is a similar situation. In order to mobilize the masses and themselves, the “radical left” reaches back to “social democracy.” But the new revolution, to quote Marx, “can only create its poetry from the future, not from the past. It cannot begin its own work until it has sloughed off all its superstitious regard for the past.”

PJ: **Everywhere capital has been attacking humanity, pushing us to subordinate every as-**

pect of our lives to the logic of money, the logic of profit. Everywhere the methods have been fairly similar: attacks on labour conditions, educational reform, privatisation, increased authoritarianism, increased violence, cuts in the welfare state and in anything that even suggests that there could be a logic of development other than that of profit. In that, Greece is not so very different from Spain, Ireland, Britain, or Germany. Isn’t it so that, I suppose, the attacks have just taken a more dramatic form in Southern Europe?

SH: For years I have been claiming that the most innovative social movements, and now also political parties, are coming from the European periphery rather than from its centre. It was in 2009 in Croatia that students occupied more than 20 faculties in order to fight against the privatisation of education all around the country and started something they called “plenums,” which actually resembled the general assemblies that we would see a few years later in Zuccotti Park. The same goes for many grassroots movements, from the fight against evictions in Spain, which paved the way for Podemos, to the solidarity movements in Greece (social clinics, social kitchens, etc.), which in a way preceded Syriza. And why are these imaginative forms of resistance happening precisely in the countries of the European periphery? It is, as you say, because the attack has here taken a more dramatic form than in the centre, and these forms of resistance are counter-attacks. What is now needed, of course, are similar developments in the centre of the beast, in Germany and France.

PJ: **Greece’s former finance minister Yanis Varoufakis has suggested that the spectre is that of democracy, and the powers of old Europe are as opposed to democracy in 2015 as they were to communism in 1848. Can you elaborate on this?**

SH: I remember that even before the ECB forced Greece to implement “capital controls,” Yanis wrote to me saying that a “coup d’état” is going to happen in Greece, but this time, it will be “not with tanks, but by banks.” And this is precisely what happened. It is not for the first time, though. Just before the “coup d’état” in Chile was going to happen, President Nixon called in CIA Director Richard Helms, Kissinger, and others to discuss what to do. There were two points of views, the “soft line” and the “hard line.” The “hard line” was simply to aim for a military coup, but the “soft line” was much more sophisticated – and it can be summed up in Nixon’s own words and the order he gave to the CIA: “make the

economy scream.” This is what happened in Greece. If you put a revolver to someone’s head and demand: “ok, now you can choose freely what will your fate be,” do we still call this democracy? The biggest miracle of Greece’s Referendum was that, despite the fact that the ECB used the revolver of a financial “coup d’état,” and despite the fact that the powers of old Europe did everything in order to stop a democratic referendum, the people of Greece weren’t afraid and proved that the spectre of today’s Europe is really – democracy.

PJ: In the last few years, there has probably been a tide on the left running back towards the state again (Syriza, Podemos etc.). Syriza was an enormous force in giving voice to hope, hope for a different world. How can we give voice to that hope again, to that dignity? What is the great challenge now that we move beyond some old illusions?

SH: The very fact that the Left is not afraid of power anymore is a huge step forward. You remember very well that during the so-called “Arab Spring” or the “Occupy Wall Street” movement, the Left still fetishized horizontal democracy in contrast to verticality. Instead of political parties, the motto of the day was “direct democracy” in the form of occupations and people’s assemblies. And don’t get me wrong, we still need that, but we also have to get rid of the illusion that by the very fact that we organise ourselves horizontally we can call the status quo into question. What Syriza and Podemos showed is that horizontality and verticality have to be combined. Or, to put in other words, a movement without a political party can’t really endure for long time, and a party without a movement will sooner or later transform itself into the traditional form of the parties that are now in power in all of the so-called “democracies.” You have seen that the biggest test for Syriza has been the referendum in July. When 62% of the people voted against the new Memorandum, the leadership decided to do what Brecht so beautifully described in his poem *Die Lösung* about the uprising of 1953 in East Germany. In the poem, the government, after the people forfeited their confidence, decided to dissolve the people and elect another. I do not claim that Alexis Tsipras had an

easy decision to make, but the Referendum could have been the point where the dialectics of horizontality and verticality could have been used for a different kind of *Lösung*.

PJ: You were also highly involved in the discussion on social movements like Occupy Wall Street or Indignados. The affect of revolt runs through many diverse artistic branches today. It serves as an incessant source and goal of highly heterogeneous articulations of desire. Do you feel like these political articulations and other forms of social movements can help to overcome a sort of leftist melancholic atmosphere? Do you think there is a new third form of critique that goes beyond the social and artistic critique?

SH: I think there are two main diseases among the Left today. The first you have correctly described as “leftist melancholy.” It was, as you know, first articulated by Walter Benjamin in his short text on “Left-Wing Melancholy” from 1931 and it still holds true today, especially after all the defeats that the Left has lived through. Unlike someone who is going through mourning (*Trauer*), the melancholic subject identifies with the love object, which it has lost and instead of acknowledging this loss, it sticks to it. This brings us back to Marx’ point from his *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. A large part of the Left today still sticks to objects that it does not perceive as lost so that it lives in the past instead of the future. Yet even in the part of the Left that welcomes the future, we encounter a particular problem. And this is the second disease, which I would call “Left-wing enthusiasm.” Take the Corbyn-mania today. It is definitely changing the political environment not only in Great Britain, and it is a huge achievement – just look at the 62,000 people who joined the Labour Party in the week after Corbyn’s success! But what I can see is that the same people who were praising Tsipras and then called him a “traitor” and accused him of “betrayal” after the Referendum are now having an orgasm because of Corbyn. But just wait a few months, until Corbyn makes the first moves that won’t fit the Leftist Imaginary – and you will have the same melancholy again and instead of facing our own impotence, we will accuse Corbyn of not giving us an orgasm. Art is necessary here because, un-

like most of the Left today, it is very well aware that we always deal with a “libidinal economy.” A protest, a social change or a revolution is not possible without the investment of desire.

PJ: Now that more and more, often unexpected, protest movements with seemingly inexhaustible energy have begun to shoot up all over the world, a series of burning questions also emerge in the cultural field: how can the art of today foster resistance to inscrutable economic structures in which this art to a great extent participates and from which it derives profit. What do you think about this?

SH: Yes of course, every art form, even the most subversive one, can be integrated into the system. But I am tired of all the moralism and the accusations that this necessarily means “selling out” or being co-opted by the very system that we are trying to oppose. I remember the moment very well when two years ago during the Subversive Festival, which I organized in Croatia, the Hollywood director Oliver Stone was asked by a seemingly subversive journalist what he thinks about the “subversion” of the Subversive Festival when he was driven by a Peugeot, our official sponsor, from the airport to his hotel. Here is what Oliver answered: “Come on, I come from Hollywood, in order to make a film you need infrastructure, you need cars as well, and the same goes for revolutions.” In other words, we have to admit the very fact that there is, unfortunately, no “outside” of capitalism, so what we should do is to brutally use capitalism against itself. ■



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SIHER MUKEN

Capitalism Kills

An interview with feminist Benedictine nun **Teresa Forcades i Vila**, whom the British newspaper *The Guardian* called one of the most influential voices within Southern Europe's political Left. Forcades speaks about the consequences of Southern Europe's austerity policies, Pope Francis, and the pharmacological complex.

Novi List: Spain carried out the majority of Brussels' demands and implemented harsh reforms. But what are the results?¹ What is the effect of the politics of harsh savings in Spain, since many people think that such policies are the best solution for our country?

Teresa Forcades: As a result of these policies, the gap between rich and poor has increased and Spain is today the second most unequal country in Europe (first is Latvia). 30% of the Spanish population is at risk of social exclusion not only because of the high rate of unemployment (23% in the general population, 50% among young people), but also because of the growing number of the 'working poor,' that is of people who, despite having a full-time job, do not make enough money to avoid exclusion.

NL: The government in Madrid says that Spain has overcome the crisis, but it seems that the majority of citizens don't feel that in their wallets. Is there anything like a "getting out of crisis"? Or do we have to, as many say, instead accommodate ourselves to a permanent state of crisis?

TF: The big banks in Spain, which needed the rescue money, have overcome the crisis and are making benefits again, yet the people are not. Why don't these banks give back the public money that they received? In the United States they have done so, why not in Europe? If you need money, the bank will lend it to you and then will expect that you pay this money back with interests. How is it possible that we, the people, are not going to receive our money back from the banks now that they have overcome the crisis? Who made the decision to lend money to the banks for free? The public debt in Spain right before the crisis was 19%, one of the lowest rates in Europe. The private debt (90% of which belonged to big banks) was 81%. The state took on most of the debt of the banks and now the public debt is so high that Spain had to cut its social budget dramatically, closing medical posts, hospital wards, operating rooms, and kinder-garden schools as a consequence. In order to 'get out of the crisis,' we need to audit the debt, as they are going to do in Greece, and then force the banks to pay back the public money that they received

with interests and hold them and the involved politicians responsible for their criminal decisions.

NL: Do you believe in change? Is there any alternative to the present capitalist system, some different economic and political model? Or are the ideologists and those who advocate neoliberalist theories right when they say that neoliberal reforms "don't have an alternative?"

TF: I believe in God. And because I believe in a God who has created human beings who are loving and free, I cannot accept a system that treats people as if they were commodities and allows 1% of the population to accumulate more richness than the remaining 99% (see the last Oxfam-Intermón report, 2014). What is the alternative? It is not communism or socialism, as we have known it. I would start by acknowledging that 'private property' cannot be an absolute right in each and every Constitution. This is in accordance with the social doctrine of the Catholic Church ('Laborem exercens,' 1981). Yet one does not need to be religious to vote for it. It should instead be common sense in a world that produces several times more goods than those needed to satisfy the needs of all people, and then allows that a very tiny number of people pile them for no good reason while others starve.

NL: Is it possible to bring about changes in a peaceful way?

TF: Jesus tried and was killed. And so were Gandhi and Martin Luther King, together with countless anonymous others. By that I mean that it is possible to work to achieve changes in a peaceful way, and for me it is the only way that has any chance of succeeding, but those who want to work this way have to know that their work, despite their peaceful will and means, will cause violent reactions.

NL: Can you imagine a Europe without social rights? Is Europe possible without the social state?

TF: In the measure that the social rights and the social state are linked to the capitalist system, I would like to see them substituted by a better social justice, one that would be

compatible with the workers' self-organization in cooperatives that they own and control.

NL: Angela Merkel say that Europe contains 7% of the global population, 25% of the global GDP, and 50% of global social givings. According to her opinion, that is unsustainable. What do you think?

TF: If we continue to allow a pharmaceutical company to charge 500€ for a single pill (the case of Sovaldi, the new treatment for hepatitis C), of course it is unsustainable. Germany struck a deal with the pharmaceutical company Gilead to bring down the price of its 12-week treatment with Sovaldi from 56.000€ to 41.000€. This means that each pill went down from 666€ to 488€. Sovaldi is not a curative treatment and most patients need to be treated longer than 12 weeks, sometimes until they can have a liver transplantation. Most of the social expenses today go to private companies. Pharmaceutical companies and insurance companies are more profitable than banks. Social expenses could be immensely reduced if basic social needs were not met with the help of profit-making companies. Yet in the EU, we are doing exactly the contrary.

NL: What do you think of the Greek Syriza? What will be the result of their confrontation with Europe's financial-political establishment?

TF: I believe their only chance, as Costas Lapavistas put it, is an exit from the euro-zone, particularly if it can be a negotiated exit. There is no way that Syriza can implement their social program while remaining part of the euro-zone.

NL: Mainstream media describe Syriza and similar political groups as radicals in order to try to discredit them. But what is more radical: Syriza's political program or the political situation that made Syriza's political program necessary and brought it to public awareness?

TF: I would call the EU politics of austerity criminal. In their book 'Why austerity kills,' public health specialists Stuckler and Basu demonstrate that for each 80€ that are cut in social

¹ The interview was first published in the Croatian Newspaper 'Novi list' on 9th May 2015. In the spring of 2015 Spain followed the request of the EU-commission in Brussels to implement further reforms of the stability programme.

spending, the general mortality of a country rises by 1%. This means that thousands of people die as a direct result of these policies.

NL: Spain will have parliamentary elections this autumn. One of the favourite parties is Podemos, which is considered a sister party of the Greek Syriza. Would Podemos' coming to power ease the way towards an alternative and more humane model for Europe?

TF: I think so. The problem is that Podemos is moderating its social program in order to gain access to more voters. It is important that they gain power but they have to achieve that with a social basis that is ready for radical change. I don't believe in any change that does not come from below.

NL: What went wrong with the traditional leftist parties in Spain and in Croatia? Will traditional social democracy ever recover from the historical defeat that it experienced in the last two or three decades, es-

pecially in the last couple of years during the economic crisis, in a time when social democracy was so desperately needed?

TF: Social democracy tried to reform capitalism. I believe it is irreformable. It needs to be replaced.

NL: How do you explain the fact that Pope Francis has lately become a more decisive and sustainable advocate of workers and their rights, especially the rights of migrant workers, than the majority of leftist parties that should have been defending those rights in their primary programs?

TF: Pope Francis said clearly that 'capitalism kills.' He meant it and I agree. It is time to build an alternative to capitalism from below. The majority of the left parties are part of the system and are not ready to replace it. In Spain, most of them have huge debts to the banks.

NL: Contrary to Pope Francis, the Catholic Church in Croatia still lives in other times. It

is mainly concerned with its own ideology and its ideological confrontations, and not with the social problems of its own people. Will the changes that Pope Francis anticipates ever exercise an influence on the various national churches? Do you already feel these changes in Spain? Do you feel changes due to your activities? Has it become easier for you to be in the Church and express your attitude? Do you experience fewer attacks from the conservative branches within the Church?

TF: Yes, I have experienced fewer attacks from conservatives since Pope Francis took office. The change has been sudden and striking. The Internet blogs that used to constantly criticize me have disappeared. To all socially-minded Croatian Catholics that think that they don't belong to such a conservative Church, I would like to say: don't give up, God is with you! ■



"A spectre is haunting Europe ..."

Sarah Vanhee > "A spectre is haunting Europe ..." a young woman said, "the spectre is: there are alternatives. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre ..."



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This World Is Not Enough

Nina Power calls for a new pedagogy without a capitalist agenda. In her essay, she discusses Phil Collins' documentary *Marxism Today*, which observes how three former GDR teachers of Marxist and Leninist theories respond to the fact that their knowledge has become obsolete after the fall of the Berlin wall. Power asks how knowledge can, in our age of individualism, show us how to escape and emancipate ourselves from all too firmly fixed 'truisms.'

Are all knowledges equal? We live in an age in which the three unhappily related claims – 'that's just your opinion', 'everyone's an individual' and 'well of course we're the product of our environment' – exist side-by-side, contradictions be damned. Every teacher will have come up against a version of these claims at some point or another – often they are spoken as if they were the last word, with a shrug, as if to say argument over. It is too easy to say 'well, these positions are simply ideological', although of course they are. They are also symptoms.

What produces the possibility and ubiquity of these assertions? If no one way of looking at the world is deemed to be better than any other, where all frameworks jostle for position in the marketplace of ideas, what is left for ped-

agogy to do? If capitalism is both the form and content of all contemporary knowledges, what role for the teacher other than as a kind of temporary shepherd through the fields of 'transferable skills', the valleys of debt and the clouds of anxiety, towards precarious employment opportunities in supposedly greener pastures?

Phil Collins' "marxism today (prologue)" (2010) explores in a moving and occasionally melancholic way what happens to knowledges when they are no longer part of a larger political project. What, he asks, happened to all those teachers of Marxism-Leninism in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) after the fall of the Berlin Wall? The three women he interviews all respond with greater and lesser degrees of adaptability and distance, though all

remember their time spent teaching with fondness, even when their students were less interested in the minutiae of exploitation and dialectics than they were in learning how to make bread or other practical skills. One former teacher, who remains unemployed, refuses to eat bananas or drink Coca-Cola – such was the ideological use these products were put to following reunification. Another, having devoted her PhD to examining the Chicago School, found the transition to capitalism easy, although she resents the flatness of a life dedicated to making money and consuming. And the third ends up running a dating agency, all the while regretting the punitive regime that saw her daughter become an Olympic gymnast for the GDR.

But while state communism may no longer exist in Europe, having been replaced by varying degrees of oligarchy, asset-stripping, privatisation, financialisation and austerity in both the core and periphery nations, its spectre haunts the possibility of thinking otherwise. As Étienne Balibar puts it in *The Philosophy of Marx*: 'The events which marked the end of the great cycle during which Marxism functioned as an organizational doctrine (1890-1990), have added nothing new to the discussion itself, but have swept away the interests which opposed its being opened up'. Balibar argues that only now, in a world without actually existing socialism (China's residual capitalist communism and North Korea's repression notwithstanding), can we return to Marx once more: 'Freed from an imposture and an illusion, we gain a theoretical universe'. The teachers of Phil Collins's film thus occupy multiple worlds: committed to varying degrees to the economic and humanist project of the GDR, they nevertheless understand that this period is closed, even as their various knowledges of this former world live on.

With the contemporary landscape dominated by varying degrees of unemployment, poverty, rising inequality and the destruction of the welfare state, why should we not return to the structured kinds of knowledges that attempt to give an explanation for why things are thus and so? We are perhaps so accustomed to accepting the argument that grand narratives crumbled to dust around the same time as the wall did, that we can no longer think in grand systemic terms, despite the fact that omnipresent narratives of globalisation, networks, the planet and interconnectedness surround us, some 'progressive' (faster internet speeds!), others negative, or ripe for paranoia (the NSA, ecological disasters). We are nevertheless falsely constrained by these multiple stories, and all the while things get demon-

strably better for a tiny minority and profoundly worse for the vast majority.

I want to examine each of the three claims that I identified at the outset as a way of thinking about the role pedagogy can play in unpicking these quotidian 'truths', and how they play into the perpetuation of false stories about the ways in which discourse and action function today. We may want to celebrate 'debate' for its own sake, and the interchangeability of postures and positions, but this empty form of equality sure as hell also suits those who simply get on with mining the world and its inhabitants for profit.

That's Just Your Opinion

Implicit in this claim is the idea that opinions are always reducible to the single person who holds them, and as such all opinions are dismissible a priori by virtue of the fact that they operate as a kind of expressive pre-emptive auto-ad hominem. Opinions are like arseholes, the saying goes: everybody has one. It would similarly seem that it is impossible not to have them; and yet they are curiously weightless, opinion being the opposite of 'proof' or 'argument', although it is not at all clear, in the context in which this phrase is usually uttered, that proof or argument would make any difference. Opinions are presupposed to be resistant to learning, to being changed – 'that's just what I think', as if it were a thought intolerable to alteration.

Opinions are like stones in the gullet, impossible to fully digest or evacuate. They signal an end to the learning process (and of course I don't mean that this is something specific only to students; on the contrary). But what does this shrug of a sentence really indicate? In a sense, that this is all that is allowed of contemporary subjects – a worthless claim by a speaker who knows that nothing changes as

a result of its utterance. Opinions are the opposite of performative statements – nothing changes, incorporeally or otherwise. The world continues to turn. A series of opinions is the opposite of a worldview. On the contrary, it is the admission that worldviews are dead. We could call this capitalist nihilism.

Everyone's An Individual

Despite the extremely recent historical development of the concept of the individual, it is now imperative that everyone is one, at every moment. Despite the highly dependent and collective nature of humanity, the individual – homo economicus makes love to the legal subject and gives birth to itself – is the baseline unit of all understanding, however isolating it may be to live like this, without participation or collectivity. But of course we do not yet know what it is to be a full individual: if communism understood individuals as bearers of a now-defunct collective project, and capitalism reduces its subjects to productive consumers dominated by the commodity-form and frightened by the law which, despite being everywhere, is barely taught and rarely understood, what can we say about what is missing today? Why the insistence on asserting individuality, when in fact we live half-lives at best?

The individual is the token whose combination is not greater than the sum of its parts, but which, like a casino chip, stands in for something that quickly gets forgotten once the game begins. If everyone is an individual ('I'm not!'), then individuality means very little other than as a minimal recognition of the legal and economic imperative to work, consume and, more often, accumulate debt. Rare moments of collectivity could form the basis of a model of a critical pedagogy, but this would have to be predicated on the dismantling of competitive measurements (exams, essays, etc.).



"A spectre is haunting Europe ..."

Phil Collins ➤ A spectre is haunting Europe. Sadly, this time starring Daniel Craig in the unconvincing rendering of the British State as apparently sophisticated renegade. Stifle yawn loudly. Wonder once more at the presumed pleasures of corporate entertainment as Ministry of Defence recruitment strategy. Stick a pin in a map and idly recall the actions of the British Secret Service in Ireland, in the miners' strike, in Libya, in Iraq, in the G20 protests, in Afghanistan. Buy DVD. Order T-shirt. Talk about special effects. Sing theme tune. Repeat.



We're The Product Of Our Environment

Despite the individualistic emphasis of the first two claims, this third is what really underpins them – no exit; we are fully determined by circumstance; everything we think, do feel and want is preordained and inescapable. We could describe this as (bad) science and (worse) sociology in the service of despair. It definitively puts a stop to further discussion. So we're all individuals (incommensurably different), everyone has a (worthless) opinion, and this opinion comes from a region beyond our control. It's a wonder anyone reads or speaks at all. Against this miserable fusion of existential and conceptual stagnation we have the idea held by the former teacher in Collins's related 'Marxist' film, "use! value! exchange!" (2010), that education meant that one was no longer 'just a blind victim of history'.

There are already those who refuse to be the victims of history, and pedagogy here is not the enemy from above, reasserting the need to jostle in the marketplace clutching transferable skills while drowning in debt and anxiety. There is a whole network of possibilities for free education (free as in not costing anything, not free as in 'liberal'). There are those who sneak free lectures in the less security-riddled institutions, those who share skills and expertise in open universities and protest camps. There are autodidacts, driven not by market-imperatives but by the will to learn (and pupils without will and autonomy, and teachers without the ability to convey the enthusiasm of independent learning are liable to become mere pawns). There are moments when ideas become flesh and the world jolts into a curious kind of technicolour clarity. Without structures of explanation there can be no material battles over the content, only a kind of sense of being carried along by the

stream towards educational and existential dead-ends.

As teachers and pupils, and both at the same time, we should ask ourselves: what would it mean to teach to a different horizon? To refuse to accept the passive statements of capitalist ideology that masquerade as freely chosen thoughts? To teach as if there was a different world, or at least a more accurate way of depicting this one? We need to get behind the conditions that create these postures of despair – materially (abolish debt), temporally (abolish work) and existentially (abolish capitalist 'logic'). To teach from out of the future whose blueprint already exists in the traces left behind by a materialist pedagogy that remembers the past, stares the present in the face and understands that the future belongs not to the few, but to the many. ■

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This text was originally published in August 2015 as part of White Screen, an online project by The White Review and Film & Video Umbrella, which explores the relationship between artists' film and new writing. A German version was published in the HAU-Publication #9 "Marx' Gespenster" [Spectres of Marx] in October 2015.



"A spectre is haunting Europe ..."

Teresa Forcades i Vila ➤ A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of anti-capitalist populism. With almost one fourth of the population of the European Union (123 million out of 508 million) below the poverty line and 50 million in plain misery, the political institutions of the EU have entered into a most unholy alliance with the big transnational corporations in order to exorcise it. One of the names of this alliance is TTIP (free trade agreement between the EU and the USA), a frontal attack against the very essence of democracy. This time the Pope doesn't seem to be quite ready to join and has been accused himself of anti-capitalist populism. In fact, where is the party in opposition that has not been decried as anti-capitalist populists by its opponents in power? Where is the opposition that has not hurled back the branding reproach of anti-capitalist populism, against the more advanced opposition parties, as well as against its reactionary adversaries? European democracies are choked by debt and those who denounce it are dismissed as populists. Two things result from this fact:

1. Anti-capitalist populism is already acknowledged by all European powers to be itself a power.
2. It is high time that anti-capitalist revolutionaries come together and openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the Spectre of Anti-capitalist Populism with a manifesto of the party itself.

Turbu- lence of Mi- gration

For a long time, Marxism had little to say about the process of migration itself. Mark Terkessidis highlights the complex relation between theories of racism, migration's autonomy, and the formation and reformulation of Marxist theories. He problematizes the leftist dialectic, highlighting the way in which it has to come to terms with the feminist and post-modern struggles of our times. Written by Mark Terkessidis.

A long time ago, I gave a talk on the subject of 'interculture' at the DIDF, the 'Föderation der Demokratischen Arbeitervereine.' The DIDF is a large association with a long tradition in Germany. Within the association, workers of Turkish and Kurdish descent, who traditionally identify with socialism, organize themselves. After I presented my paper, one of the association's speakers voiced his opinion and told me that he disliked ideas like the one I had just offered, because they would split the working class. The speaker further argued that workers of both German and Turkish descent essentially had the same interests and should thus unite in their struggle to realize their common goals. At the time, it had been quite a while since I had last heard this sort of (vulgar) Marxist argument – and I assume that today, such views are rarely voiced in the DIDF anymore. When we founded the platform 'Kanak Attack' in the 1990s, its contributors came from a great variety of Leftist groups. And yet they all seemed to have similar problems: leftist organizations, regardless of where they came from, lacked both the (theoretical) assets and the (practical) will to confront issues of migration and racism.

In many leftist organizations – and I am here speaking about the whole spectrum, from the Socialist German Student Union (SDS) to smaller leftist groups (so-called 'K-Gruppen') to the branch of the social-democratic party in Germany (SPD) that remained bound to a Marxist tradition – the so-called 'guest workers' or 'foreign workers' were for a long time simply considered a sort of better or more noble proletariat. They appeared to be the 'real' working class, as they were not corrupted by the Nazi regime or the welfare state. What is more, they were also not infiltrated by the reforms and conformism that characterized both systems. Instead, these immigrants were people with 'real' problems, who in addition came from

countries with genuine communist parties. And indeed, many of the migrants who came to Germany in the 1960s were members of organizations like the Italian 'Lotta Continua' and made use of the 'international solidarity' that it offered. And yet the clichés that dominated the German discussion of the guest workers' political orientation was of no interest to the workers themselves, since they did not regard themselves as potential German citizens, but instead intended to return to their home countries after a temporary stay in the 'guest' country.

Their children, however, the second-generation immigrants, no longer considered themselves 'guests' in Germany. As a consequence, Germany's Left experienced a situation that can be compared to the situation of African Americans in the 1930s and 1940s, which Ralph Ellison described so vividly in his novel *The Invisible Man*. In Ellison's book, the protagonist encounters a communist 'brotherhood.' At first sight, the group's revolutionary, seemingly 'colour-blind' attitude appears to create a room in which the protagonist is indeed recognized as a modern subject. When one of the white – and rather drunk – comrades asks him to sing a Black 'spiritual,' the other 'brothers' for instance clearly overrule his demand by identifying it as a racist demand. Soon, however, it becomes evident that the brotherhood is mainly interested in turning the protagonist into their 'Black leader,' a second Booker T. Washington, who, so they hope, will help them to recruit new (African American) party members. While he is allowed to address problems that African Americans face, he has to subordinate his own to the party's political agenda. When he delivers a speech in Harlem and his strong connection with the audience leads to an almost ecstatic atmosphere, the party criticizes his irresponsible behaviour and registers him for a training event. This sancti-

on shows that the same paradoxical mechanisms that are at work in society also apply to the smaller cosmos of the party: in both systems, the universality of sameness and the particularity of Blackness remain incompatible as long as the practice of exclusion, which both groups continually reproduce, remains in function and at work.

Karl Marx described this paradoxical situation in his text "On the Jewish Question." Jews could, of course, not be called immigrants. And yet the diasporic experience led to comparable problems. Marx was firmly convinced that Judaism would disappear once society would become fully 'emancipated' from the reality of Judaism, which for him meant "huckstering and money." Marx believed, consequently, that the existing paradoxes would be neutralized in and through this dialectic. He overlooked the fact, however, that religion is not merely ideology. It also provides answers to urgent metaphysical questions. What is more, every form of marginalization inevitably fosters a particular lifestyle, one that does not automatically disintegrate once the mechanisms of discrimination and repression are brought to an end. Studies that were conducted in the context of the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies have shown that social groups such as the working class, youth culture, or immigrant groups use their social resistance to produce and affirm a particular identity, which in turn then comes to determine their societal status.

Historically, Marx's dialectic of human emancipation has become obsolete. Feminist and post-modern critics have rightly noted that difference perseveres and cannot be annulled or neutralized. And although the Marxist methodology could in fact be helpful when trying to explain how the social practice of exclusion is organized, it has always had a hard time

with the 'smaller struggles' of young people, women, or immigrants. Such struggles were often dismissed as a "side contradiction" (Marx) or unnecessary fuss (Gerhard Schröder once called them, rather colloquially, "Gedöns"). Post-Marxist theorists like Stuart Hall, Robert Miles, and Etienne Balibar have, however, produced very convincing new conceptualizations that target racism. Yet these theories develop highly complex, hybrid arguments that no longer rely on Marx's dialectical materialism.

Marx and Engels had relatively little to say about the process of migration itself, despite the fact that many forms of contracted labour could already be observed during their lifetimes. In their texts and letters, both men for instance voiced their rather dismissive opinion of the Irish immigrants who came to England in the middle of the 19th century. They believed that these immigrants could become potential splitters in the fight of the working class because they often functioned as 'wage squeezers' on the labour market. At a later point, when Marxist and then post-Marxist theories had already evolved further in the context of decolonialization and globalization, a new branch of 'dependency theories' and 'world-systems theories' emerged. In these theories, migration was, to put it simply, regarded as part of the unequal trade-off between centre and periphery.

The perhaps most elegant theoretical post-

Marxist approach that tackled the issue of migration was the idea of the 'autonomy of migration,' which theorists like Vassilis Tsianos, Manuela Bojadzijev, and Serhat Karakayali developed in Germany. In this approach, the idea of 'workerism' is combined with writings from the so-called 'Regulation school.' As a consequence, migration is framed as a social movement and a creative force that continuously challenges the nation state's composition and arrangements. According to these theorists, the state does not regulate migration. It merely erects, as a response to the movement of migration, a 'migration regime' that seeks to assert the state's authority – but never quite succeeds to fully do so.

Quite obviously, this theory has long diverted from the original emphasis of Marxism: fundamental aspects of capitalism do no longer play a central role. Instead, this newer theoretical thread is mainly concerned with the relation between the individual subject and the state apparatus. And yet the social movement of migration can indeed be observed today. While the state trusts in the reliable work of its migration regime – one must only think of the Schengen agreement, Dublin II, etc. – migration in fact defies this regime by way of its own autonomy. At the moment, one can observe the state's various attempts to regain control over the migration movements. In the midst of this new 'crisis,' the people have stepped in with an unprecedented willingness to help. Interestingly, this new activism works in

the end against the idea of migration as something autonomous, since refugees are in this context cast as poor victims whom one feels sorry for. It is for this reason that the people's activism and their willingness to help in fact counteracts the yearlong efforts of organizations like 'The Voice,' Karawane, Lampedusa in Hamburg, or the camp at Oranienplatz in Berlin, all of whom tried to establish the idea of the refugee as a political subject. Their status as political subjects allowed the refugees to protest both the reasons that forced them to flee their home country and the limited mobility, social inequality, and structural discrimination that they experienced in their new environment. It appears, in the end, rather difficult to locate and capture this complex situation in post-Marxist theory. This may be why Nicos Papastergiadis states that the 'turbulence of migration' never ends. ■

*Mark Terkessidis is a journalist as well as an academic with a focus on racism and migration. In his book *Die Banalität des Rassismus*, which was published in 2004, he defines racism not as prejudice, but rather as part of the societal value system. In his 2010 book *Interkultur*, Terkessidis argues that the idea of integration as the assimilation to a fictional majority has long become obsolete. He demands that the state's institutions should therefore become more open to the diversity of its different demographic groups. In his most recent publication *Kollaboration* from 2015, he presents a new and different idea of social connectedness and pleads for a new societal beginning.*

Translation: Mieke Woelky



“A spectre is haunting Europe ...”

Keith Hennessy ➤ A spectre is haunting Europe... Everyone's ghost has a different name. Debt, iPhone, Syria, love, Nike, Viagra, Disney, apartment, stock market, marriage, James Bond. More important than the spectre is the structure of haunting. Everyone is running, afraid of the whip, gun, wage, salary, of death. Anxiety haunts the body. The bodily precarity haunts the world. Scrambling in the dark, you are the spectre, and its host. This is a confusing time full of necessary dancing.

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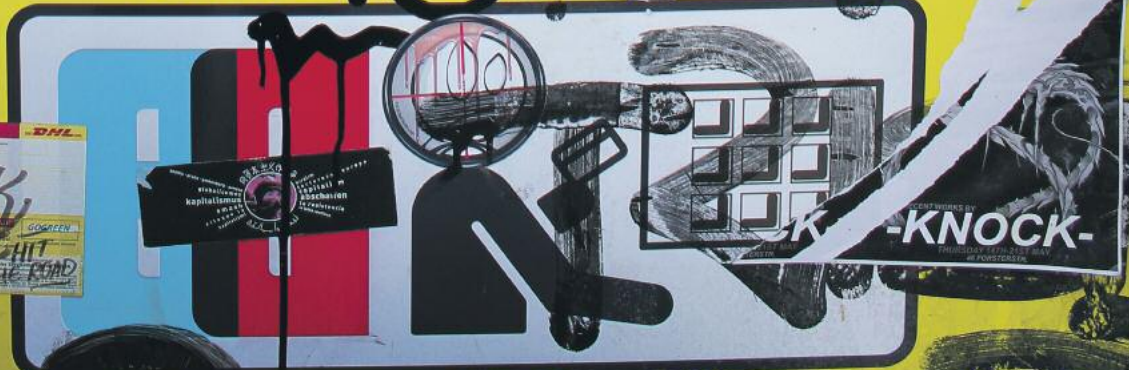


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**Why the relationship
status of materialism
and queer feminism is
'complicated.'**

Not only did the spirit of capitalism never exist or was ever anything other than a multitude of Marxist specters, it also never consisted of only one main contradiction. At the very least since the Russian revolution, the fight against capitalism went hand in hand with demands for the emancipation of sexual politics.

Bini Adamczak writes about butches and kings in the Red Army. She lends her voice to those who did not want to reduce all social contradictions to the main contradiction between capital and work.

Everything will get better, the future will be bright! That is the motto that everyone believed in, at least all bourgeois citizens of the nineteenth century. But even their counterparts, the representatives of the communist proletariat, shared, at least until the middle of the twentieth century, this belief in a better and brighter future. Yet while the bourgeois thought that everything would gradually evolve in a progressive without the investment of drastic changes (evolution), the proletariat was convinced that crucial changes were the precondition for such subsequent improvements (revolution). The fact that society grew richer every year did after all not mean that the number of poor people decreased in proportion. It was for this reason that many of those who were excluded from the idea of bourgeois progress turned to socialist parties. The German socialist party – the SPD at the time – had for instance made it very clear in their Erfurt program from 1891 that they did not only fight the exploitation and oppression of waged workers, but also defied any form of exploitation and oppression, regardless of whether it was directed against a social class, a party, a sex, or a ‘race.’ After the capitalist nation-states’ so-called progress had led to World War One in 1914, the Russian revolution instilled new hope, particularly in women and people who did not identify themselves within the hetero-normative paradigm. And at first, these hopes were anything but disappointed. With the revolution, the right to legal abortion, both sexes’ right to divorce, the decriminalization of adultery, and the annulment of the sodomy law (which had previously prohibited homosexuality) were implemented and enforced. In Moscow, one could find international communes led by gay communists. Drag kings could become legitimate members of the Red Army. Participants of the revolutionary debates decided upon the destruction of the family, demanded

the legalization of incest, and advertised the practice polygamy. In this post-revolutionary spirit, manifests written by artists and scholars went so far as to demand the rejuvenation of the elderly with the help of blood transfusions. They sought to wake the dead from their sleep, populate planet Mars, and use modern reproduction technologies to completely abolish the sexes.

Fighting together...

From the beginning on, the fight against capitalism and for economic self-determination was closely entangled with other struggles, such as the struggle for the self-determination of one’s sexuality and gender. While some communist branches subsumed all social contradictions under the more general heading of the main - economic - contradiction, many did not agree with this subordination. Karl Kautsky for instance, who became the leading voice of international social democracy after Marx and Engels, went so far as to define the revolution of all production conditions as not more than a method. He argued that if someone proved that the emancipation of humanity could best be realized on the basis of the private property of production goods, he would be ready to throw the socialist doctrine overboard – yet not in order to abandon but rather to reach its initial goal of emancipation. The possibility for such proof was, of course, nowhere in sight. It appeared, on the opposite, as if the hetero-sexist matrix had in fact been developed and solidified on the basis of the private property of production goods. The category of the homosexual itself was, for instance, a bourgeois construction that served the purpose of destroying friendships that threatened to destabilize a person’s complete loyalty to the state’s institutions. In a similar way, the idea of two biologically distinct genders was also only enforced

in and through modern medical discourses. Previous to this discursive construction of two mutually exclusive categories, a person’s gender was assumed to be less fixed and more flexible. Femininity and masculinity were understood as different states within the same continuum. Prior to modern capitalism, in the feudal period for instance, a person’s sex and sexuality were neither firmly rooted in the body nor in the soul. Just like class, they instead categorized a person and delineated his or her societal status. While these categories appeared to regulate and constrain a person within rather fixed and static borders, these borders could quite easily be transgressed.

... against the capital-sexist hetero-matrix

These dynamics are brought to light in one of the most fascinating Master’s theses (Diplomarbeit) that I have ever had the fortune to read. In her yet to be published study, Uta Schirmer observes three lawsuits. Her examples trace the stories of three men who were, between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century, brought to trial and accused of actually being women. Some of them changed back and forth between both genders merely by dressing differently. Dressing as a man enabled them, for instance, to become soldiers and earn a decent salary. When they lost interest in waging war, they deserted from the army and, while incarcerated, transformed themselves back into women, possibly because the military court could at the time only convict men. Others got married and answered questions regarding their large breasts by stating that they were not an uncommon occurrence among men. And when their inability to pee while squatting raised similar doubts, they went so far as to hit their wives in order to reinforce – rather successfully - their manly strength. Because pre-bourgeois court trials lacked the criteria to cle-

arly determine a person's physical gender and forensic doctors were still unheard of, judges did neither ask for the motifs that had led to the gender change nor did they raise the question of the accused person's 'true' identification. The issue of an individual identity emerged only later, together with the concept of capitalism. Only a society that compares apples to pears or likens sex workers to bicycles because both cost the same, only a system that does not hesitate to use standardized grading systems to evaluate vastly different learning practices and applies the same punishment of imprisonment to severely distinct breaches of the law will find it feasible to understand vastly diverse sexual and gender-related practices as expressions of the individual's innermost being.

The question of queer progress

It is this idea of identity, one that is intricately linked with capitalism, that queer movements seek to question and subvert. With a nod to Michel Foucault's definition of criticism as the art of not being governed, I suggest to frame trans-criticism as the queer desire to not be identified in such a way. One of the main characteristics of all communist movements, the mobilization of other excluded or oppressed social groups, is certainly also one of the defining and constitutive traits of the queer move-

ment. This movement, which is itself a product of exclusive practices within the women's as well as gay and lesbian movements, is acutely aware of the fact that every new claim that is made in the name of a particular movement runs the risk of producing new exclusionary practices, which will at some point return in the form of a boomerang of new demands and challenges. This is why the decidedly open form of 'queer' welcomes the amendments that the future holds. Yet at the same time, this perspective resonates with the old idea of evolutionary progress. It is in fact reflected in theories like those developed, rather famously, by Judith Butler: the fight for social integration and recognition creates identities, which produce new exclusionary practices. These then in turn lead to the creation of new identities, which again fight for their integration and recognition, and so on and so forth. On the one hand, one could argue that society is gradually opened up in and through this democratic game. On the other hand, the rules that govern this game remain unchanged. What certainly gets lost in this process is the idea of a qualitative revolution that does not only eradicate old identity categories but tackles the concept of identity itself.

Yet even within the capitalist system, trusting in steady democratic progress proves deceptive. We tend to imagine the future as a conti-

uation of the trajectory of the past. Just as capitalist growth, we assume politics to also develop steadily in order to produce a freer and more open society. This perspective enables us to look back at the 1950s and dismiss its social limitations and constraints. At the same time, capitalism's inner contradictions lead to ever-new economic crises that potentially lead to so severe changes in the political landscape and thus also have an immediate effect on queer-feminist politics. In her autobiographically inspired novel *Stone Butch Blues*, Leslie Feinberg grants readers a powerful insight into the connectedness of queer politics. She states that whenever the number of available jobs decreases, violence against butches and trans men increases. Hetero-normative men unite in this atmosphere of intensified competitiveness in order to shove them off the job market. In phases of acute economic crisis, one of many reactionary political strategies consists in decreasing the unemployment rate by simply excluding immigrants and women from the job market. This 'strategy' alone shows all too clearly why solidarity and connectedness are an absolute necessity. While it is certainly possible to lead the individual fights for emancipation separately, they can only be won when brought and fought together. ■

Bini Adamczak lives and works in Berlin Kreuzberg. She is the author of two books (Kommunismus für Kinder, 2004; Gestern Morgen, 2007) as well as a performer (Little red, Amsterdam 2006, Timerepublic, Brüssel 2007) and an artist (Perverser Universalismus, Wien 2006, Mirrors & Masks, Oslo 2012) who prefers working by herself to being creative in and through her relations to others.

A different version of this text was initially published under the title "Fort sprung: Queer Communism – Communist Queer" in 'Hugs and Kisses' (Oct. 2009).

Translation: Mieke Woelky



"A spectre is haunting Europe ..."

Andros Zins-Browne ➤ A spectre is haunting Europe – in 450 chars. o less I wz askd 2xpress my opinon ab. whut. My 1st react wld B2 say time, the instrmentizn of asmuchas poss. +the accel. tht givs us such poor qualT of it. But w/ jst 269 chars. 2go, that mayB 2lng 2try2 'dress. Phaps nsted Ill say sthg bout the nstitution itslf that poses the q. but tot reprodz the condits of pduction it wnts 2crit. U might B ntrestd 2no it def finds itslf in a hypocrit pos when it wishz 2'dress the probs w/ xplai





Festivalkalender

Do 12.11.

19:30 / HAU2 / Deutsche Premiere

Sylvain Creuzevault
Le Capital et son Singe /
Das Kapital und sein Affe

Französisch mit deutschen Übertiteln / Kategorie C

Fr 13.11.

18:00 / HAU3

Houseclub präsentiert:
Patrick Wengenroth
! Geld?

Zusammen mit Schüler*innen der Hector-Peterson-Schule / Eintritt frei

19:30 / HAU2

Sylvain Creuzevault
Le Capital et son Singe /
Das Kapital und sein Affe

Französisch mit deutschen Übertiteln / Kategorie C

20:00 / HAU3

Max Linz

Ultra High Definition Kinoki / Deutsch

22:00 / WAU

Party

mit MC Daisy Chain u.a. / Eintritt frei

Sa 14.11.

17:30 / HAU3 / Deutsche Premiere

Bojan Djordjev

The Discreet Charm of Marxism –
a six course dinner piece

Englisch / Begrenzte Platzkapazität, Reservierung empfohlen /
Kategorie C (inkl. Essen & Getränke)

20:00 / HAU1 / Premiere

Fabian Hinrichs & Schorsch
Kamerun

Ich habe um Hilfe gerufen. Es kamen

Tierschreie zurück. / Deutsch / Kategorie B

So 15.11.

17:30 / HAU3

Bojan Djordjev

The Discreet Charm of Marxism –
a six course dinner piece

Englisch / Begrenzte Platzkapazität, Reservierung empfohlen /
Kategorie C (inkl. Essen & Getränke)

20:00 / HAU1

Srećko Horvat & Teresa

Forcades i Vila

Spectres of Democracy

Moderation: Isabell Lorey / Englisch / Kategorie E

Mo 16.11.

14:00 / HAU3

Houseclub präsentiert:
Patrick Wengenroth
! Geld?

Zusammen mit Schüler*innen der Hector-Peterson-Schule / Eintritt frei

20:00 / HAU1

Fabian Hinrichs & Schorsch
Kamerun

Ich habe um Hilfe gerufen. Es kamen

Tierschreie zurück. / Deutsch / Kategorie B

20:00 / HAU3

STAN & de KOE

The Marx Sisters / Niederländisch mit deutschen

Übertiteln / Kategorie C

Di 17.11.

19:00 / HAU3

Bojan Djordjev

The Discreet Charm of Marxism –
a six course dinner piece

Deutsch / Begrenzte Platzkapazität, Reservierung empfohlen /
Kategorie C (inkl. Essen & Getränke)

20:00 / HAU2

Keith Hennessy / Circo Zero

Turbulence (a dance about the

economy) / Englisch / Kategorie D

20:00 / HAU3

STAN & de KOE

The Marx Sisters

Niederländisch mit deutschen Übertiteln / Kategorie C

Im Anschluss: Publikumsgespräch

Mi 18.11.

19:00 / HAU3

Bojan Djordjev

The Discreet Charm of Marxism –
a six course dinner piece

Deutsch / Begrenzte Platzkapazität, Reservierung empfohlen /
Kategorie C (inkl. Essen & Getränke)

20:00 / HAU2

Keith Hennessy / Circo Zero

Turbulence (a dance about the

economy) / Englisch / Kategorie D

20:00 / HAU3

STAN & de KOE

The Marx Sisters

Niederländisch mit deutschen Übertiteln / Kategorie C

Do 19.11.

20:00 / HAU1

Chris Kondek & Christiane Kühl

Anonymous P. / Deutsch und Englisch / Kategorie C

Fr 20.11.

20:00 / HAU1

Chris Kondek & Christiane Kühl
Anonymous P. / Deutsch und Englisch / Kategorie C
Im Anschluss: Publikumsgespräch

Sa 21.11.

18:00 / HAU3 / Premiere

Nathan Fain / Maria Rößler
Right Is the Might of the Community:
a lecture performance on future

democracy / Englisch / 45min / Kategorie E

19:00–23:00 / HAU3 / Deutsche Premiere

Sarah Vanhee

Oblivion / Englisch / Kategorie D

20:30 / HAU2 / Deutsche Premiere

Andros Zins-Browne

The Middle Ages / Kategorie D

So 22.11.

17:00–21:00 / HAU3

Sarah Vanhee

Oblivion / Englisch / Kategorie D

18:00 / HAU3

Nathan Fain / Maria Rößler

Right Is the Might of the Community:
a lecture performance on future

democracy / Englisch / 45min / Kategorie E

19:00 / HAU2

Andros Zins-Browne

The Middle Ages / Kategorie D

20:00 / HAU1

Nahawa Doumbia

La Grande Cantatrice Malienne /

Konzert / Kategorie C

12.–15.11., 17.+18.11.,
21.11., 19:00–23:00, 22.11.,
18:00–21:00 / HAU2

Phil Collins

marxism today (prologue) / use!
value! exchange!

Deutsch mit englischen Untertiteln / Eintritt frei

Chris Kondek / Christiane

Kühl / Klaus Weddig

SHOOT OUT. Tauschen, Jagen, Klauen,
Besetzen, Saufen, Verzicht.

Deutsch mit englischen Untertiteln / Eintritt frei



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