

Summaries

Sami Nair: The Impotence of the European Left

The actual crisis not only shows the ruthless character of neoliberal and financial capitalism. It also accentuates the impotence of progressive forces, especially the European Left, in offering a credible alternative to the disruption of the neoliberal system. The diverse cut-backs undertaken by European governments are to the disadvantage of employees while ensuring capital income. At the same time, the crisis could be an opportunity for the political left to reaffirm solidarity, to propose realistic and socially-progressive solutions as well as a credible exit out of the present situation. In order for this to happen, however, coordination among the European Left in terms of strategies, initiatives and so on is indispensable – but still missing.

Etienne Balibar: On the Dialectics of Violence

The essay (which includes references to Spinoza, Weber, Arendt, Derrida, Adorno, Camus, Simone Weil, Achille Mbembe, Alain Badiou, Zygmunt Bauman), is a renewed attempt at articulating the political and the impolitical (or the »other scene« of politics, which accounts for its tragic dimension). Starting with a sketch of the phenomenology of extreme violence with its »ultra-subjective« and »ultra-objective« tendencies, it continues with a deconstruction of such categories as *evil*, *violence*, *death* pointing towards the negative anthropological side of »action«, and concludes with a reflection on the dilemmas facing any politics of the transformation of the structures of domination, which must combine insurrection, resistance, and civility.

Raul Zelik: Consensus by Terror – Reflections on the Hegemonic Effect of Ruling Political Violence

The author argues that the »productive« aspect of repressive violence in the formation of hegemonic relations is rarely taken into consideration. He discusses extreme cases of political repression as they characterised Latin American military dictatorships from the 1960s to 1980s, as well as the recent history of paramilitarism in Colombia. Torture, massacres, and a kind of dramatisation of political violence continue to shape communication, social relations and the self-perception of individuals in these societies. The negating power of repressive violence tends to elicit certain »gouvernemental« effects. »Negative«, »interdicting« aspects of power coincide with »productive« ones that form the subjectivity of subaltern classes.

Wolfgang Fritz Haug: On Violence and Hegemony

Since the US has announced the »global war on terror«, the liberal and conservative feuilletton has paid much attention to Giorgio Agamben, who bases his theses on the concepts of Carl Schmitt, the »clerical-fascistic and then nazi theorist« (Brumlik), in order to deny the legitimacy of liberal democracy and juridical order. The fact

that Agamben also uses some thoughts of Walter Benjamin has made his approach attractive among many leftists who associate with this name the Marxist friend and dialogue partner of Bertolt Brecht. Based on Agamben, Raul Zelik has tried to demonstrate with the example of Columbia that naked, terrorist violence plays a »creative« role. According to him, the absolute torture, mutilation and slaughter of people as »naked life« produces by itself hegemony, which would, if it were true, unhinge the theory of hegemony of Gramsci. Haug deconstructs this amalgam of Benjamin, Schmitt, and Foucault and tries to integrate different forms, by which people react to naked violence, into the Gramscian concept of hegemony.

David Salomon: Of Rules and Exceptions. On Law, Violence and Hegemony

In questions of force and hegemony, law is of central relevance. Brecht's learning play, »The Exception and the Rule«, provides a model for the role of domination in legislative norms. In fact, such norms hardly merit criticism under existing relations of violence. Similarities can be drawn to Walter Benjamin's argument that the »state of exception« had actually become the rule. Unlike Carl Schmitt, Brecht and Benjamin do not diagnose the state of exception as a means to destroy, in nihilist fashion, the idea of (the rule of) law itself. The rejection of any kind of rule-of-law nihilism – a lesson learned by the Left of the 20th Century – is an essential feature of any counter-hegemonic strategy for the present.

Timm Ebner and Jörg Nowak: Structure as Rupture. Alternatives to the Authoritarian Post-Althusserianism within Badiou and Zizek

In recent years philosopher Alain Badiou and cultural scholar Slavoj Zizek have lined up as vanguardists of communism, using genuinely religious concepts as means to their most radical political solutions. In this mission they see themselves as successors to the project of Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser. The article seeks to define the central axes of Althusser's project, comparing it to Badiou/Zizek's refusal of any pluralistic approach. This entails a critical revision of a common reading of Althusser's »Aleatory Materialism« of the 1980s which too quickly concludes that these late works break completely with the most popular texts of the 1960s.

Wolfram Adolphi: Hegemony and Power in the GDR

Wolfgang Fritz Haug's approach to the hegemony-power problem opens interesting paths to a deeper and more differentiated understanding of the sharply disputed 41 year long history of the GDR, 1949-90. How can we explain that today, a majority of East Germans regard the GDR as generally positive? The author tells two parallel stories – a narrow one about a revolution from above, carried out on Soviet bayonets; and a more long-winded one about the hegemony of basic socialist values. The article discusses the hegemonial force of the compromise between the »new class« and workers after 1953, the »hegemony on air« of Western radio stations and the fight for hegemony in 1989-90.

Ursula Schröter: Notes of a Citizen-by-Accession

In light of the categories of hegemony and violence, the author reflects on East German facts and sensitivities of the past 20 years. Taking the example of women's active careers and the birth rate of East Germans she is able to show that the »western norm« has a weak basis. Her contribution is both a respectful and at the same time very critical view of the policies on family and women of the German Democratic Republic.

Peter Mayo: Gramsci, the Southern Question and the Mediterranean

The article focuses on Gramsci's discussions of the Southern Question to illuminate some current dynamics in politics and culture in the Mediterranean. After portraying different conceptions of the Mediterranean Mayo analyses the situation regarding mass migration from South to North (an expression of the intensification of globalization) which represents one of the major challenges for social solidarity facing people of this region. He examines and draws on how Gramsci outlined North-South solidarity in Italy (between proletariat and peasantry) to explore possibilities for a broader transnational form of North-South solidarity, rooted in political economy and an understanding of colonialism. He also suggests some educational strategies with this purpose in mind.

Inez Hedges: Violence and »Performative Memory« in the Construction of Palestinian Identity

The trauma of Palestinian displacement in 1948 (the »Nakba«) and the defeat in 1967 have been watershed moments in the construction of Palestinian identity. Palestinian cultural expression, whether in film, fiction, poetry, or art, returns again and again to these two historical moments. The work of memory is described here as »performative« in the sense that it creates shared world and ultimately helps to forge a collective identity.

Cynthia Cockburn: Gender Relations as Causal in Militarization and War: A Feminist Standpoint

Based on research among women's antiwar organizations worldwide, the author argues that patriarchal gender relations intersect with economic and ethno-national power relations in perpetuating a tendency to armed conflict. The feminism generated in antiwar activism tends to be holistic, and understands gender in patriarchy as a relation of power underpinned by coercion and violence. The cultural features of militarization and war readily perceived by women positioned in or close to armed conflict, and their sense of war as systemic and as a continuum, make its gendered nature visible. If gender relations are one of the root causes of war, a feminist programme of gender transformation is a necessary component of the pursuit of peace.

Lisa S. Price: Feminist Analyses of Violence Against Women: An Abbreviated Journey

This article describes men's violent, intimidating and coercive behaviours toward women as a socially embedded process, one which grows out of gendered relations constituted by an ideology of male supremacy. It defines such behaviours as »men's sex/sexual violence«. It portrays a certain form of masculinity as hegemonic and points to how this construct influences men's understandings of themselves, other men and women. It draws specific links between the ideology of male supremacy and violence against women and maps out how gender oppression interacts with other systems of oppression often to produce an exponential of violence.

Frigga Haug: How to Understand Violence against Women?

In discussion with the essay by Lisa Price, the author develops the question of domestic violence in Marxian terms as the male ruling over the labor power and the sexual body of women. To begin she analyzes domestic brutality as belonging to the prehistory of the humankind, but argues that the development of the systemic nature of violence against women is inscribed in the order of capitalist society and profit-making. And as consequence the due overcoming of capitalist society needs the changing of the actors, a self education of the male sex as well as the empowering of the female one.

Jane Kilby: Judith Butler, Incest, and the Question of the Child's Love

In contrast to Judith Herman, who understands incest exclusively in terms of power, Judith Butler insists on the importance of the child's love for our understanding of incest. Butler's thinking in this respect is suggestive but underdeveloped, while also holding considerable implications for how we might understand the role of violence in social life. This article develops and assesses her thinking on the child's love and its relation to the question of violence and trauma more generally. At issue is the question of how we are to understand violence. Is it always motivated? Is it always destructive? And finally are there limits to what can be understood?

Judith Butler: On Violence. A Selection of Excerpts from Judith Butler's Work with an Introduction by Jane Kilby

Since 9/11, Judith Butler has set herself to thinking about violence, arguing, as these statements make clear, that violence is both wrong and wrong-headed, always motivated, a potential for us all, the condition of our being and the condition for non-violence.

Vesa Oittinen: Past and Present Paradigmas of the Lukácsian Intellectual

Georg Lukács explained the rise of Stalinism in the 1930s by resorting to Hegel's philosophy of history as well as to analogies with the French Revolution. The Hegelian scheme delivered a teleological perspective which seemingly made it possible to get along with Stalinism, if not to accept it. Many other intellectuals of the Left used

the same coping mechanism during this period. One of them was Nikolai Bukharin who only broke with a similar interpretation in 1937, declaring the »unhappy consciousness« of Communist intellectuals facing Stalinism. The exemplary cases of Lukács and Bukharin make evident how problematic it has been for the Left to rely on a Hegelian theory of history. The Kantian model, which views the history as an open process, is discussed as a possible starting point for a more adequate concept of historical processes.

Christian Sigrist: Amílcar Cabral

Born in 1924 in Guiné-Bissau, Cabral studied in Cape Verde and Lisbon. In Portugal he became a spokesman of the anti-colonial movement. As an agricultural engineer, he organized an agrarian census which documented the ethnic division of resources and cultivation. Attempting in vain to reach a peaceful arrangement with Salazar to obtain the sovereignty of Cape Verde and Guiné-Bissau, in 1963 his party (PAIGC) started an armed struggle in Guiné which achieved the liberation of the countryside. A political genius, he based his revolutionary praxis on empirical research, bringing together technical knowledge and the social sciences. His insistence on the unity of Cape Verde and Guiné-Bissau incited the opposition of Guinean nationalists which finally ended in Cabral's assassination at Conakry in 1973. His assassination, however, could not hinder the independence of Guiné and Cape Verde.

Klaus Meschkat: Historical Socialism – A Glance at Latin America

20th century communism is not irrelevant for present political projects of left-wing anti-imperialism. The author deals with some aspects of the intervention of the Communist International in Latin America, showing the importance of Stalin's victory after 1928 in shaping revolutionary organisations and their representatives. Latin American communists educated in Moscow were generally not affected by Stalinist purges, one of the reasons why there was little concern among Communist parties of the subcontinent about their Stalinist past. A confrontation with a problematic past is an indispensable precondition for any plan to create a new International.