

## Summaries

### **Ellen Bareis, Peter Bescherer, Britta Grell, Armin Kuhn and Erwin Riedmann: Revolting Cities**

Despite the frequent occurrence of urban revolts both in the global North and South, their causes, meanings and scope remain poorly understood. With reference to Albert Camus and E.P. Thompson, the authors analyze those insurrections as the expression of subjective outrage incited by the violation of shared notions of social justice. Claiming that left-wing perceptions of revolts are often distorted by ignorance and fears of the »dangerous classes«, the article explores three points of an older, but highly topical debate: the relationship between revolts, revolution and emancipation; the urban as a critical site for social and political struggles; and finally, the (broken) links between contemporary social movements and rebellious uprisings. The authors plead that our view of what is political be reconsidered, and that the biases and exclusionary mechanisms of left-wing movements be examined.

### **Wolfram Schaffar: The Revolt that Dared not Speak its Name – the Red Shirts in Bangkok**

The protest of the so-called Red Shirts in Bangkok lasted from early March 2010 until they were violently cracked-down upon in April. As such, it was the longest and most violent uprising in modern Thailand. However, neither the social base nor the demands which were put forward in speeches and printed material can explain the momentum of the protests nor the extent of violence used by the government. Drawing on constructivist theories of space, the author interprets the specific localities of the protest sites. He argues that, on a symbolic level, the mobilisation articulated a strong criticism of the socio-economic status quo in Thailand. In particular, the protest at the Rajprasong crossing targeted the economic role of the monarchy. This was seen as an intolerable breach of a taboo by the powers that be.

### **Richard Pithouse: The Uproar of the Slums: A View from South Africa**

The essay offers general comments on the discourse of the Third World slum among the metropolitan left, as well as a brief examination of the situation on the ground in South Africa. It suggests that some of this discourse is overly apocalyptic and unable to recognise the social value of urban land occupations or the progressive politics that sometimes emerge in shack settlements. The South African case-study shows that the shack settlement has been both a site of popular radicalism and a site of popular reaction.

### **Gregor Kritidis: »At some Point, Tears Take Revenge. The Renaissance of Anarchism in Greece**

With the social uprisings in December 2008, the Greek social crisis appeared in full force. The erosion of already limited welfare state integration led to a de-legitimising of all societal institutions and, above all, of the dominant forms of political representation. The other side of this development constitutes the strengthening of anti-institutional currents, oriented towards anti-democratic and anarchistic positions. In particular, young activists experiment with new forms of action and organization and radically question the established powers. Given the crisis of the Greek state debt, these developments gain further momentum.

**Ellen Bareis and Manuela Bojadzjev: Beyond Demands and Organisation – Uprisings in the French Banlieues**

The uprisings in the French *banlieues* during the winter of 2005 had no political effects. At least, this is the conclusion of numerous analyses published soon after the events that did not recognise any political organisation resulting from the spontaneous protests, primarily because no explicit demands were articulated. The authors refuse such an interpretation and address the challenge that these uprisings pose to our understanding of the political. Addressing the historical as well as everyday dimensions of the conflict, they analyse the transformations in urban policies in the *banlieues*, showing the importance of migration struggles to this process. How do we understand processes of political subjectivation at times in which social groups are excluded from status, rights, social, political and cultural relations and activities due to citizenship, poverty and urban segregation?

**Simone Beate Borgstede: St. Pauli Hafenstr.äbe, Hamburg, 1981-87: The Battle of Hearts and Minds**

In the 1980s, some houses in St. Pauli Hafenstr. in Hamburg's inner city were squatted and became the focus of political campaigns around housing issues and the right of poor people to live an independent life, media campaigns, police oppression and resistance. Squatters belonged to diverse grassroots movements or were simply people who needed a place to live. In the process of resistance, squatters developed forms of internal communication and communal life. Based on the experience of their diversity, their solidarity led to activities on various fields that were not always cohesive, but allowed the community to act even under difficult conditions. The author argues that this, and the increasingly militarised evictions of their flats in the winter of 1986-87, led to solidarity throughout the city, throughout Germany, and even neighbouring European countries. The evicted flats were reoccupied, houses and streets were barricaded. Although they would need eight more years in order to win over the hearts and minds of the people, Hafenstr.äbe stayed!

**Richard Gebhardt: The »Sarrazin-Syndrome«**

The book *Deutschland schafft sich ab (Germany Does Away with Itself)* by Thilo Sarrazin, former CEO of the German Federal Bank, has outsold any other political title with 1,1 million copies sold as of October 2010. Sarrazin's work is replete with highly controversial and questionable biologicistic arguments. He seeks a discourse shift in order to rehabilitate socio-genetic population policies, in particular restrictive legislation against Muslim migrants and the autochthonous underclass, as legitimate parts of political mainstream policy. The book is best viewed as a symptom for an organic crisis within German political culture and the striking incompetence of the political elite to respond appropriately to a challenge brought on by one of their own.