

Summaries

Wolfgang Fritz Haug: The World Falls Apart, the Centre Cannot Hold? The Crisis of the Political in the Interim of Two World Orders

»Migration is the mother of all problems.« This statement of the German Minister of the Interior in a session behind closed doors of his party's M.P.s can serve to make clear by contrast what Haug's analysis is about. Translated into common speech it means that the presence of so many refugees is the main cause of all evils, and that Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, is to be blamed for that presence. Following the guiding question ›how is all this possible?‹, Haug, beginning with the German scene, gradually unveils the term ›refugee crisis‹ as a screen word that obliterates the ›genetic traces‹ and causal connections of a widespread popular fear and unease which is, almost everywhere, driving liberal capitalist democracies into crisis. The analysis focuses on the underlying motivational mix. As soon as one grasps the phenomena as symptoms, one level after another appearing to be causal reveals itself to be symptomatic as well. Following the traces of driving contradictions, the investigation leads through ever-broader contexts, from the German to the European and to the ›Atlanticist‹ level of ›the West‹, until it moves from the stage of the world order to the below-stage of human existence, where politics, economics and ideology are intertwined. By this procedure, a kind of lab experiment, Haug puts the foundational assumption of historical materialism to the test. It presumes that an historical-critical analysis of technology in its social application reveals »the active relation of man to nature, the direct process of the production of his life, and thereby it also lays bare the process of the production of the social relations of his life, and of the mental conceptions that flow from those relations« (Marx, *Capital I*, Fowkes, p.493). By deciphering, on the one hand, the conditions, contradictions and dynamics of Hightech Capitalism in its current phase and their disruptive effects on the popular conditions of life and work, and the challenges for politics and government on the other, the analysis also lays out the conditions, possibilities and necessity of progressive politics. All this is accompanied by a media analysis of how the leading German press reflects and/or joins the corresponding struggles.

Peter Wahl: Out of Control. Globalization, World Order, and the Crisis of the Political

There is an increasing loss of control by the ruling forces globally over several policy areas, such as climate change, finance and geo-political conflicts. The elites lose capacity for problem-solving even in their own interest. This constitutes a threat to humanity. Main reasons are the derailing of globalization, the emergence of a multipolar world order, the failures of multilateralism and the increasing complexity of all social relations.

Hans-Jürgen Bieling: The »Crisis of Politics« as an Expression of Societal Shifts of Power and New Lines of Conflict

The current crisis of the political reflects the difficulties of political parties to process a new cleavage between neoliberal cosmopolitanism and populist nationalism within the given setting of public communication, interest mediation and decision-making. These difficulties are not temporary but »organic«. While the previous hegemony of neoliberal cosmopolitanism is eroding, populist nationalist forces are not hegemonic yet. Their activities are, however, steadily nourished by a political economy of social insecurity. They deploy specific crises as »windows of opportunity« to articulate given fears of loss and to promote nationalist imaginations.

Kolja Möller: From the Crisis of Popular Sovereignty to Transnational Destituent Power

This article engages with the return of constituent power as site of struggle in contemporary politics. More specifically, it distinguishes between authoritarian, cosmopolitan and jacobin-republican approaches. However, the real contradictions of the global social question strike back and put pressure on a conception of popular sovereignty which is restrained to the national dimension. This will ultimately amount to a new, second crisis of constituent power. Reacting to the first crisis of constituent power, which evolved under neoliberal auspices, the return to the »national« people falls prey to address the real contradictions. It is prone to collapse from staging the power of the people into a powerless gesture when facing global interconnectedness and pressing challenges, such as the economy or migration policies. Finally, it is argued that the regression to a »French« jacobin-republican conception, as it has once again become popular on the political left, still displays these inherent flaws. Against this backdrop, it seems more promising to conceive of constituent power as destituent power: It takes its starting point neither in cosmopolitan-liberal nor jacobin-republican ideals, but starts from within the global social question and works through its contradictions. Thereby, more promising scopes for popular political action within transnational constitutionalism can be identified.

Tobias Kämpf: The Digital Transformation from the Perspective of Forces of Production: How are Capitalism and Labor Developing?

The paper argues that digital transformation is driving forward a new phase of capitalism – comparable to the upheavals of industrialization in the 19th century. For a full understanding a social theory approach based on a thorough analysis of labor is necessary. The concept of informatization explains digital transformation as a leap in productive forces, revolutionizing the modern world of labor. This new phase of capitalism is not »post-industrial« but establishes a new quality of industrialization targeting even knowledge work now. New insecurities and the fear of status loss – above all in the middle classes – become a driving force of new right-wing parties.

Alban Werner: Under the Spell of Immediacy: On Right-Wing Populism, Digital Publics, and Hegemony Effects

Unforeseen levels of escalation in political arguments in Germany, bafflement of established political parties and remarkable effectiveness of radical right-wing populist initiatives in political arenas are closely related. Interpellations from the populist radical right are amplified by a »regime of immediacy« which grew out of the interaction of social media as a productive force and the new publics they helped create. By unleashing previously dormant political subjectivities and collectivities, the regime of immediacy helps to create the audiences to which radical right wing populists then offer »symptomating« interpretations of newsworthy events that fits their agenda. Regardless of their originators lack of agentic, strategic and hegemonic capacities, amplified right-wing discourses work their way through the »layers« of political tectonics, unsettling established arrangements between and within other political actors and parties. Their effects even reach a meta-political layer, shifting distributions of power governing up to this point.

Aaron Bruckmiller: Elements of Emancipatory Populism

Whether and how can the widespread popular discontent be transformed into an emancipatory strategy? How do central elements of it differ from their reactionary counterparts? Such an emancipatory populism is to be built around a soft and open »us« against a hard »them« (the elite). It has to call for an end to its own pre-conditions – that there are ruled and rulers. Hence, emancipatory populism must focus on dismantling relations of domination with the perspective of overcoming them.

Miguel Vedda: Heinrich Heine and Karl Marx as Essayists. On the Emergence and Functions of Critical Intellectuals

With the example of the controversy between Ludwig Börne and Heinrich Heine during the Restoration in France, the article examines the latter's practice of »essayism«, which is much more than a genre of literary production. Derived from the Latin term »exagium«, which refers to the practice of »weighing«, it designates an experimental method of research that starts out from real life experiences and expresses an ethical-political position that is aware of the manifold contradictions of social life. Marx was one of the greatest essayist of the 19th century, not only in the literary sense, but also in the wider sense of relating to the world. His critique is not imposed from the outside, but developed from within the inherent contradictions of society. Rediscovered primarily by José Carlos Mariátegui, Ludovico Silva and other theorists in the Latin-American context, essayism is to be seen as a fundamental dimension of Marxism.

Buchhandlungen, die das Argument-Verlagsprogramm führen

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| Augsburg | Probuch, Gögginger Straße 34 (0821/579173) |
| Berlin | Argument-Buchladen, Reichenberger Straße 150 (030/611 39 83) Motzbuch, Motzstraße 32 (030/2115958) Schleichers Buchladen, Königin-Luise-Straße 40/41 (030/841902-0) Schwarze Risse, Mehringhof - Gneisenaustraße 2a (030/6928779) |
| Bielefeld | Eulenspiegel Buchladen, Hagenbruchstraße 7 (0521/175049) |
| Bremen | Buchladen im Osterort, Fehrfeld 60 (0421/785 28) |
| Düsseldorf | BiBaBuZe, Aachener Straße 1 (0211/34 00 60) |
| Erfurt | Buchhandlung Contineo, Magdeburger Allee 90 (0361/7314536) |
| Essen | Heinrich-Heine-Buchhandlung, Viehofer Platz 8 (0201/820700) |
| Frankfurt/M | Unibuch, Jügelstraße 1 (069/775082) Karl Marx Buchhandlung, Jordanstraße 11 (069/778807) Herbert Bärsch Nachf. GmbH, Hostatostr./Albanusstr. 29 (069/314032-0) |
| Freiburg | Jos Fritz, Wilhelmstraße 15 (0761/26877) |
| Göttingen | Buchladen Rote Straße, Nikolaikirchhof 7 (0551/42128) |
| Hamburg | Buchhandlung im Schanzenviertel, Schulterblatt 55 (040/4300808) Buchladen in der Osterstraße, Osterstraße 171 (040/4919560) Heinrich Heine Buchhandlung, Grindelallee 26 (040/441133-0) |
| Hannover | Annabee, Stephanusstraße 12-14 (0511/1318139) |
| Heidelberg | Buchhandlung Schöbel & Kube, Plöck 65 (06221/26036) |
| Hildesheim | Amei's Buhecke, Goschenstraße 31 (05121/34441) |
| Kassel | ABC Buchladen GmbH, Goethestraße 77 (0561/777704) |
| Kiel | Zapata Buchladen GmbH, Wilhelmplatz 6 (0431/93639) |
| Köln | Der Andere Buchladen, Weyertal 32 (0221/416325) |
| Konstanz | Buchladen zur Schwarzen Geiß, Am Obermarkt 12 (07531/15433) |
| Mainz | Cardabela, Frauenlobstraße 40 (06131/614174) |
| Marburg | Roter Stern GmbH, Am Grün 28 (0542/24787) |
| München | Basis-Buchhandlung, Adalbertstraße 41b-43 (089/2723828) |
| Münster | Buchhandlung Rosta, Aegidiistraße 12 (0251/449026) |
| Nürnberg | Buchhandlung Libresso, Bauerngasse 14 (0911/225036) |
| Reutlingen | Jakob Fetzer Buchladen GmbH, Georgenstraße 26 (07121/239080) |
| Schweiz | Bern Münsterergass Buchhandlung, Münsterergasse 33 (031/3102323) |
| Österreich | Wien Lhotzkys Literaturbuffet, Taborstraße 28 (0043/1 276 47 36) |
| Niederlande | Utrecht De Rooie Rat, Oudegracht 65 (031-30-2317189) |

Frauenbuchläden, die das Argument-Frauenprogramm führen

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| Augsburg | Frauenbuchhandlung Elisara, Schmiedgasse 11 (0821/154303) |
| Düsseldorf | Buch am Dreieck, Blücherstraße 3 (0211/4644050) |
| Göttingen | Laura GmbH, Burgstraße 21 (0551/47317) |
| Idstein | Hexenbuchladen, Obergasse 11 (06126/6437) |
| Leipzig | Frauenbuchladen Tian, Könnerritzstraße 92 (0341/4797475) |
| Mannheim | Frauenbuchladen Xanthippe, T3, 4 (0621/21663) |
| München | Lillemor's Frauenbuchladen, Barerstraße 70 (089/2721205) |
| Tübingen | Frauenbuchladen Thalestris, Bursagasse 2 (07071/26590) |