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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Keynotes and plenary

THE FREEDOM TO STAY. ON EMANCIPATION FROM NEGATIVE LIBERTY
(keynote)

Eva von Redecker

As a philosophical effort, critical theory does not just scandalize cruelty and suffering. It investigates how those are systemically produced, and points out how sometimes even our most progressive achievements cover up, or contribute to, injustice and oppression. In *On The Jewish Question*, Karl Marx famously criticized bourgeois freedom, newly won in the course of the French Revolution, as alienating and atomizing. Fast forwarding into our present, we witness that beyond ongoing capitalist rule, liberal orders facilitate a fascist turn. Around the globe, in the wake of neoliberalism, at the dawn of the Anthropocene, the appeal to "freedom" fuels fascist mobilizations. To understand this effect, we need to renew our critique of liberal freedom. It is not just egotistic, it is in fact possessive and easily breaks up into destructiveness. Emancipation into liberal self-ownership is not enough to extricate liberty from its abusive underside. Only by negating the abstract spaciality of possession can freedom turn social and ecological. I call the ensuing perspective that of a "freedom to stay": the right of species and people alike to flourish, and the promise of fulfilled and abundant time rather than mere mobility on a dying planet.

PALESTINIAN LIBERATION, RACIALISATION AND THE LIMITS OF
INTERNATIONAL LAW (keynote)

Robert Knox

Liberal invocations of freedom have typically been coupled with an expansive conception for the law. Law, and in political rights, are seen as the way to guarantee individuals with the widest degree of freedom from interference. Such a position has, of course, been frequently contested by Marxists – and indeed by Marx himself – who have often noted the bourgeois nature of this freedom.

In the current conjuncture, many have baulked at this analysis. In an increasingly vulgar capitalism, in which the 'legal order' is often understood as collapsing, law – especially international law – has appeared to offer a 'site of struggle'. Nowhere has this been clearer in the case of Palestine, where international law, especially in its explicit condemnation of genocide, has appeared to at least offer a defensive bulwark against an openly racist Israeli Zionism and US imperialism.

In this paper, I seek to reflect on this, situating (international law) within broader Marxist understandings of the history and nature of capitalism. I argue that international law has articulated a particularly racialised and bourgeois notion of 'freedom', which fundamentally conditions its existence as a 'site of struggle'. In so doing, I explore the role that international law has played in the racialisation of Palestine, as well as its role in facilitating the expansion and consolidation of the Israeli state and its racial projects. It is only in such an analytical context, I argue, that we can understand both the possibilities and limits of international law in the struggle for Palestinian liberation.

RESEARCH AS A SITE OF STRUGGLE AND FREEDOM: POLITICAL GRAMMARS OF LIBERATION (plenary)

Freedom of Movements Research Collective

What kind of political thinking about freedom is required to respond to the challenges of our present moment? What forms of knowledge production can support, complement and advance struggles for the liberation of Palestine and against state repression? This and similar questions have animated our work at the Freedom of Movements research collective.

Over the last years, we have worked on documenting the repression of the movement for the liberation of Palestine in Denmark, collecting testimonies of people who have faced political

repression at the hands of the police, the media, employers, politicians and state institutions. The pro-Palestine movement is a paradigmatic case in the sense that it reveals the contours of the Danish state's repressive apparatus: how it criminalizes dissent, how it uses anti-terror laws and anti-antisemitism policies to silence Palestine solidarity, and how it deploys the full weight of institutional power – from the police to the university – to enforce political conformity and pacify the struggle.

In this plenary, we reflect on the meaning of writing collectively while being engaged politically with the struggles and the people we study and document, working with them and alongside them. We challenge the notion that knowledge production is an individual and detached academic exercise that can only happen within 'academia'. We argue for forms of research that are collective and refuse neutrality, complicity and colonial 'objectivity'. Research that is politically-engaged and explicit (both in theory and in practice) of its commitments; and that take place outside academia, using militant spaces and other activist infrastructure. Knowledge production can and must be mobilized as a weapon in the struggle.

Freedom of movements is a collective doing activist research in Copenhagen – working with and learning from local movements and struggles. Over the last two years, they researched the political repression of the movement for the liberation of Palestine in Denmark. The collective was formed in 2015 as an effort to contribute to the migration struggles that were spreading in those years across Denmark's asylum and deportation camps.

Paper presentations

Updating the Strategy for the Liberation of Palestine

Aimen Remida

In 1969, the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine), the leading Marxist faction in the Palestinian liberation movement, famously published a document titled "Strategy for the Liberation of Palestine." Today, 57 years

after the publication of that document, the situation in Palestine, in the region, and in the world has drastically changed. Especially after October 7, 2023, there is an urgent need for an updating of the strategic thought of the revolutionary forces struggling for the liberation of Palestine. In this paper, I suggest revisiting the document of 1969 to detect the central elements of the strategy adopted by Marxist Palestinian militants in the 20th century and to assess the results of that old strategy in light of major events such as the Oslo agreements of 1993. Then, I attempt to identify the main points that need to be updated on the international, Arab, and Palestinian levels. Depending on the considered issue, the update of the strategy might take different forms: consolidation and actualization, adaptation and modification, and/or critical revision and radical change. Finally, I formulate some concrete suggestions for conceptualizing and implementing new strategic orientations. This occurs on the basis of an interpretation of the impact of recent geopolitical developments on the ongoing process of the liberation of Palestine.

Tomahawk. The dialectical inversion of freedom

Alejandra Juárez González

On the 28th of February of 2026, the army of the United States attacked a school in Iran due to its proximity to a military base. The attack was perpetrated during an operation in the Minab region, and as an ex-official of the US Navy has confirmed, the second hit took place when the survivors of the first one were gathering at the school yard to seek rescue. This perplexing act of imperial violence was conducted with a missile variety called Tomahawk. The name stems from the ancestral indigenous tool that was used and symbolised as an emblem of anticolonial indigenous struggle. Aside from the frivolous rhetoric inversion of the cultural significance of the Tomahawk, this paper seeks to analyse such inversion through a Marxist lens of dialectics. Establishing a connection with the notion of fetichism, this paper examines the use of "freedom" by the US military when pursuing its capitalist imperialist agenda, not only as a cultural appropriation but also, in connection to the dialectical relationship to universality and totality - where this claim of freedom is accompanied by calculated and brutal violence. Furthermore, this paper will inquire the role of capitalist expansion and its connection to colonial methods and

the struggles it generates as a necessary precondition for the global character of capitalism.

Feminist Freedom and the Meaning of Oppression

Amelia Horgan

This paper considers some marxist feminist attempts to theorise oppression, particularly as distinct from exploitation, in two important contexts. Firstly, it takes them as forming part of a wider set of debates about ideology, subjectification, and the reproduction of capitalist societies. Secondly, it understands them as contributing to a project of theorising—sometimes negatively and sometimes positively—communist freedom. It concludes with an assessment of this legacy, arguing that it should be seen as an important and importantly feminist contribution to attempts to understand and instantiate freedom.

Beyond Impunity

Anastasiya Kotova

The calls to 'fight impunity' have traditionally been the rallying cry in the fields of transitional justice and international criminal justice. The promise of ending impunity for the perpetrators of international crimes, in fact, has become the central justification of the emerging institutions of international criminal law. One of underlying arguments, which make 'fighting impunity' a successful slogan, is that absence of accountability may causally contribute to renewed violence or continued oppression. The individualisation of responsibility for mass violence, to which the impunity discourse contributed, has been thoroughly critiqued in the scholarship. However, in the recent years, the language of impunity has also been used by social movements and activists: their invocations of the concept are different in that they are less concerned with impunity of individual perpetrators and more attentive to impunity as a structural condition, as continued insulation from consequence of harm done. I take this concern with impunity as a structure as my starting point to offer an alternative account of this phenomenon that links it to imperialism and thus explains how impunity and violence may be causally connected while not being in a direct causal relationship. Rather than being interested in recovering

impunity for left politics, I argue that if we are concerned with peace and justice, it is the causes of structural impunity that we should address.

Past, Peasant, Freedom: The Peasants' War and the Politics of Freedom in Vormärz Germany

Andreas Tagmose Grønkjær

This paper examines why the German Peasants' War of 1525–26 became a key political reference point in the Vormärz and revolutionary era, and what this reveals about competing conceptions of freedom in nine-teenth-century Germany. From the 1840s onward, republicans, liberals, conservatives, and communists all invoked the Peasants' War, but to sharply different ends. For some, it represented an indigenous German tradition of popular sovereignty and democratic self-rule. For others, it symbolized the danger of plebeian revolt and the need to discipline the masses. I present the historiographical interpretations by Wilhelm Zimmermann, Carl Heinrich Wilhelm Hagen, and Wilhelm Bensen. The paper argues that the Peasants' War functioned as a strategic anachronism through which radicals could argue for the existence of an early idea of republican freedom: freedom as collective self-rule, liberation from feudal domination, or bourgeois order secured against popular revolt. Second, I challenge readings of Engels's *The Peasant War in Germany* (1850) as wholly distinct from earlier republican and Young Hegelian debates. His intervention emerged from an already established discourse linking historiography, revolution, and democracy. Finally, I focus on the slogan *Omnia sunt communia* ("All things are common"). In radical circles, this phrase condensed a powerful claim: that genuine freedom could not rest on private property and class domination. Renewed interest in the Peasants' War revealed the competing conceptions of freedom at work in the Vormärz.

Karl Marx's Idea of Immanent Freedom

Barnaby Raine

Are there other ideas of freedom in Marx than the negative freedom of non-domination stressed amid the neo-republican revival? Most scholars have thought so, but little recent attention has been given to their systematic reconstruction.

This paper turns to Marx's concept of 'free individuality' in the Grundrisse, read closely as the effect of a triple emancipation -- of time, space and subjectivity -- whose possibility is peculiar to capitalist production, given respectively (in Marx's treatment) by machinery, the cosmopolitan potential of the world market and the partial individuation involved in doubly free wage labour and the mediation of consumption by money. The paper finds Marx imagining a material freedom involving the supersession of labour and the nation-state, which social democracy later made its twin foundations in a dramatic inversion. Unlike analytic attempts to define freedom, Marx's free individuality eschewed timeless definitions of freedom and instead narrated a historically produced emancipatory subject as a divided subject: where the oppressive conditions of capitalist subjection (in the domination of time and space and the denial of free individuality by class hierarchy) also contained the objective and subjective resources for undoing that subjection. In arguing that Marx grounded his norms in his picture of a particular labouring subject and its associated objective conditions, the paper finally asks what it might mean to inherit Marx's concerns in a changed world. The paper concludes on a late twentieth century Black Marxist reading of the Grundrisse's discussion of free individuality, which asked whether deindustrialising Europe might have more to learn from the freedom Marx took to be immanent to Jamaican plantations than the freedom he treated as immanent to Manchester's factories.

Freedom and Republican Corporate Governance: From Shareholder Republic to Socialized Property

Benjamin Ask Popp-Madsen

The modern corporation is most the dominant legal form of contemporary capitalism. Since the 1980s, shareholder value maximization has been the hegemonic regime of corporate governance, hereby subjecting the demands of workers, civil society, and nature to the imperative of profit-making for the exclusive group of shareholders. This chapter will firstly provide a republican critique of the shareholder value maximization paradigm of corporate governance, demonstrating how relations between shareholders and workers, as well as other stakeholders, can be characterized as relations dependency, domination and unfreedom. Secondly, the chapter will draw on the

history of radical republicanism and socialism to propose ways of reforming the modern corporation into a legal form of non-domination and institutional vehicle for the generation of common wealth.

Why Socialists Should be Republicans

Bruno Leipold

The recent rise of socialist republicanism has been met by an even more recent set of responses sceptical of the value republicanism has for socialists (Cordelli 2025; Kandiyali 2022; MacRae 2024). This paper articulates three core reasons why the socialism most worth fighting for is a republican socialism. First, the republican conception of domination offers a unifying analysis of a range of oppressions which incorporate class subordination but are not reducible to it, thereby providing grounds for a genuinely common struggle for liberation. Second, republican freedom offers an attractive basis for envisioning what a society free from capitalism should be like: one where everyone has the material and social resources for living on their own terms, without the threat of arbitrary control by others. Third, republican political institutions provide the most plausible means by which socialism can be brought about, and the tradition's vast range of institutional proposals form an indispensable toolbox for putting an anti-oligarchic politics into practice. We conclude with a discussion of how these three contributions could inform a successful socialist politics in the 21st century.

The Legal Form of Equaliberty

Carl Wilén

In the area of radical and Marxist social theories of freedom, equality, and universalism, from the last decades, Étienne Balibar's proposition de l'égaliberté belongs to the most widely noted interventions. With the concept of equaliberty, Balibar opposes traditional Marxist reductionism, for which bourgeois freedom and equality are illusory phenomena belonging to the superstructure, or worse, instruments for domination conforming to the will and interest of the bourgeoisie or to the material or economic base of society. In the present paper, I engage with the actuality and limits of the concept of equaliberty based on the thought of the Marxist theorist E.B. Pashukanis. Pashukanis's importance to the problem of rights and universalism stems from the fact that he, for the first time

in the history of the Marxist critique of the legal order of capitalism, not only sought to steer clear of idealist theories of equality, freedom, and rights (also known as formalism), but also of Marxist reductionism and economism (also known as instrumentalism). To avoid formalism and instrumentalism, Pashukanis theorised the way in which the legal form of capitalism appeared in relation to the circulation, fetishism, and production of commodities. Based on a reconstruction of the Pashukanian critique, I demonstrate that while the concept of equaliberty helps prevent reductionism and outright rejections of rights and universalism, it encourages instrumentalist theory too. Yet, I also argue that the concept of equaliberty can be integrated as a local and subordinated yet significant supplement to the Pashukanian concept of the legal form.

Renegotiating Historical Materialism and Feminist Standpoint Theory

Eden Young

Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST) saw a revival in the 2020s after a period where attention was diverted to theories of epistemic injustice. Recent contributions to the field have attempted to theorize a feminist standpoint from empiricist premises, with the attraction of making FST more digestible for traditional academic epistemology. In this paper, I argue that empiricism is not a viable route for FST and explain how this outcome was prepared by developments in the field in the 1980s and 1990s. After Hartsock published her article *The Feminist Standpoint* in 1984, her theory was rightly met with charges of essentialism by Black feminists and other pluralist feminist epistemologists. By evaluating the field's development on a longer scale, I am able to tease out a necessary characteristic of FST and the role of 'experience' that cannot be accounted for by empiricism. That is, in responding to the essentialism in Hartsock's early historical materialist FST, the idea of a shared social location for women was too quickly abandoned. This reinforces the need for a non-contingent and non-essential epistemic advantage at the core of the FST. Finally, as a contribution to the aim broadly shared in the field of avoiding essentialism, I diagnose the essentialism of Hartsock's FST in her mistaken reading of Marx. Without thereby necessarily committing to a singular standpoint for all feminist movements globally, this critique deepens our understanding of the actual reach that FSTs can aim for.

From Vertrag to gemeinwesen: Communisms in Marx's early writings

Edwin Kalmteg

In contemporary Marxist debate Marx' doctoral dissertation, *Die Differenz der demokritischen und epikureischen Naturphilosophie*, is taking on a more prominent role as Marx' first serious engagement with Hegelian dialectics. Scholars such as Schimmenti, Barbour and Finelli have correctly understood the dissertation as Marx' first explication of the Hegelian dialectic. Through developing the Epicurean philosophy through Hegelian categories which, although unrealised, Marx developed a notion of the material, *erscheinen*, nature by way of an immanent critique. This understanding improves upon the competing readings of the dissertation exemplified in the work of Boer who posits it as a Marxist philosophy of nature that was ultimately accomplished by Engels in *Anti-Dühring*. The paper serves to enrich the previously elaborated reading in order to further understand the elaborated method as well as connecting it to Marx' conception of *Gemeinwesen* in his early writings. We will inquire into the method employed in these early texts in order to compare and contrast this to the one in the dissertation where he posits the covenant [*der Vertrag*] as the highest form of political conglomeration. These competing visions of freedom within Marx' oeuvre further allows us to elaborate beyond forms alone, to the question of what content Communist freedom entails. This would be an entirely novel contribution to a very saturated field of study. The paper is partly the continuation of Kalmteg's bachelor's thesis, "Communist Atomism" in which he elaborated the dissertation's ontological and historical consequences in connection with the critiques of what Heinrich has termed Worldview Marxism.

Freedom as an Empirical Phenomenon

Egil Karlow

At the centre of Marx and Engels' work was the question of how the Enlightenment ideals of freedom and equality could be realised. The failure of historical attempts to do so, they argued, was linked to a more general problem - namely how ideas within class society are treated as if they stand above material reality. The notion of freedom is still shaped by the same kind of idealism. Freedom, influence and agency are treated as ready-made philosophical concepts that politicians and managers

are expected to implement from the top down. In academic research they are examined in much the same way, by asking to what extent reality lives up to these ideas. In this process, freedom loses its revolutionary potential and becomes part of practices of control and subordination. Following Marx and Engels, freedom should instead be studied from below, as an open empirical phenomenon. In my own academic work (Karlow, 2022, 2025) I take on this task in research that follows the everyday work of staff in preschools. The Marxist starting point implies a dual focus – on the one hand, on subjective aspects such as meaning and will; on the other hand, on material conditions such as actions, organisational forms, and resources. Drawing on Vygotsky (2012), the research seeks to understand how these aspects are related to each other within ongoing activity. Freedom is thus understood as a composite phenomenon, which Gould (1978) describes as “consist[ing] in the active relation between the subject’s will or desires and the external conditions for their fulfilment.”

Planning with Machines: Historical Technologies, Limits of Calculation, and the Political Economy of Planning

Eleni Papagiannaki

This paper investigates how historical planning experiments were shaped and constrained by the technologies available for economic calculation, coordination, and control. Instead of treating planning as a purely theoretical or institutional problem, it examines planning as a concrete practice of class struggle mediated by material technologies including input-output tables, statistical apparatuses, cybernetic models, analogue and early digital computing, and wartime logistics infrastructures. Drawing on comparative historical research, the paper presents a series of “planning dossiers” examining key episodes of socialist and capitalist planning: the socialist calculation debates, Soviet industrialisation, wartime command economies, and early cybernetic experiments. Each case analyses the dialectical interaction between class interests, economic models, and technological forces of production, foregrounding both what planning achieved and what it was structurally prevented from achieving. The paper develops a conceptual framework identifying recurring contradictions across these episodes: technological limits (I-O matrix size & computational capacity), epistemic barriers rooted in commodity fetishism and

alienated knowledge, and political tensions between centralised, democratic, and isegoric forms of coordination. This historical materialist analysis speaks directly to the present conjuncture. The deepening crisis of capitalist reproduction, combined with rapid advances in digitalisation and artificial intelligence, has renewed serious interest in socialist democratic planning. The paper argues that engaging rigorously with the material and technological conditions of past planning efforts is essential if contemporary left movements are to move beyond both techno-utopian enthusiasm and defeatist scepticism.

Capitalism and the Generational Rift: Towards a Gen Z Socialism

Elias Koenig

Marxist theorists have long shunned generational theory, arguing that it serves to obscure other more fundamental aspects of the political economy, such as class and market rule. At the same time, it appears that the current crisis of capitalism is experienced by many young people across the world in distinctly generational terms. Recent years have seen a wave of 'Gen Z' protests in countries across the Global South, including Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Kenya, Madagascar and Morocco, often led by loose collectives that explicitly identify as generational subjects, such as 'Gen Z Mada' in Madagascar, or 'GenZ 212' in Morocco. This paper builds on previous work (presented at HM 2025) to argue that both form and political content of the Gen Z protest wave are shaped by the effects of a persistent global accumulation crisis and the associated resurgence of rentierism, state capitalism, imperialist warfare as well as ecological breakdown. The standard references in bourgeois generational theory, Karl Mannheim's 1928 *Problem of Generations*, as well as the work of William Strauss and Neil Howe, fail to make sense of capitalism's central role in shaping the generational experience. I develop the notion of a 'generational rift' as an alternative framework to discuss the problem of generations from a Marxist perspective. Drawing on recently published work by Timothy Mitchell (2026), I argue that the generational rift points to the temporal dimension of capitalism's metabolic rift, leading succeeding generations to repay the costs of present extractions. The target of generational hatred should, thus, not be the boomer, but rather the nepo baby - and by extension capitalism itself: the system

the structurally produces futurelessness as a generational condition.

The Praxis and Structure of Liberal Rights

Ellen Verde

I am interested in re-visiting the liberal approach to rights (which construes freedom as the freedom from something) and the relevant Marxist critique. In turbulent times, more people on the traditional left turn to classic liberal concepts of freedom. The (once) critical left project becomes more focused on defending concepts, previously contested by the left and upheld by the bourgeois legal system. Constitutional rights have a specific structure, a higher order in the legal hierarchy of norm, and a particularly effective way of protecting them. Constitutional norms are thus especially powerful as governing techniques. In doing so they present a particular concept of both (arbitrary) power and the freedom from it. The primary functions of constitutional rights are so called constitutional justice and individual justice. These corresponds with the Marxist critique of rights. Both as an inherently egotistical concept, separating man from citizen, and as separating deeply political questions from the politics sphere. This Marxist critique of rights is a critique of form and not of substance. When the left begins to speak of (legal) rights it uses a language which is quite literally inherently liberal. It is necessary to connect the Marxist critique to the praxis of modern constitutional rights in order to understand what the turn to rights actually implies.

The Non-Identity of Freedom: Marx, Adorno, and the Limits of Republican Communism

Emma Gustavsson

The republican turn in contemporary Marxism, Leipold, Roberts, and recently Mau, reads Marx's critique of capitalism as a critique of bourgeois freedom carried out in the name of freedom as non-domination. Communism, in their reading, is freedom. What this framing omits is what Marx identified in the Grundrisse: exchange-value is the real basis of all freedom and equality, and its realization proves itself as unfreedom. Bourgeois freedom is treated as incomplete, awaiting radicalization,

rather than as a form-determination whose coercion is internal to its realization.

This paper asks whether freedom is the norm of Capital's critique or its object, and answers: its object. Drawing on the Grundrisse on equivalent exchange, the doubly free worker of Capital, Mao's mute compulsion, and Adorno's Negative Dialectics, I argue that Capital derives form-determinations rather than exposing appearances. The republican inference from deficiency to fulfillment requires an affirmative dialectic the categories do not support. Determinate negation yields not a positive communist freedom but the non-identity of the concept itself.

If freedom in its bourgeois form has coercion as its condition, a communist politics articulated in the name of freedom risks reproducing the form it seeks to abolish. Communism is better theorized as the abolition of the social relations that produce freedom in its capitalist form than as freedom's realization.

The social form of animal labour under capitalism

Esben Bøgh Sørensen

What do animals do when they labour for humans? Within critical animal studies, animal labour has long been a central concern. A major question has been how capitalism shapes the living conditions of farmed animals and human-animal relations in agriculture through forms of domination, alienation, and exploitation. More recently, scholars have also asked whether animal labour under capitalism contributes to the production of value. Yet the question of animal labour under capitalism has rarely been addressed through a systematic application of Marx's critique of political economy. In this paper, I argue that animal labour under capitalism does not produce value. Rather, animals' productive capacities are captured by the capitalist process of production mainly as constant capital. More specifically, I argue that animals in capitalist agriculture function primarily as living instruments of labour and raw material, taking different determinate forms as fixed and circulating constant capital. Drawing on examples from the pig and dairy industries, I suggest that an analysis grounded in these specific capital forms offers a useful basis for understanding of the logic of animal production within the wider capitalist food system. At a moment when animal agriculture is recognised as a major driver of global warming and ecological destruction, clarifying the

social form of animal labour in capitalist production is essential to understanding how the appropriation of animal life, the exploitation of human labour, and the devastation of ecological conditions are bound together within the compulsive movement of capital accumulation.

Class Fractions Between Productive and Reproductive Work in the Anthropocene

Eskil Halberg

Amid ongoing debates on class coalitions in the struggle to confront climate breakdown, this paper foregrounds a critical yet underexplored division within the working class in a Danish context: that between productive and reproductive labor. On one hand, Matt Huber emphasizes the central role of traditional blue-collar workers in advancing a just transition. On the other, Stefania Barca offers a compelling account of the foundational importance of reproductive labor in shaping an ecologically sustainable future. Drawing on empirical material, this paper tries to examines contemporary class fractions between productive and reproductive work within the context of the Danish competitive state and accelerating climate crisis. The Danish labor force appears to be undergoing a process of class fragmentation, in line with Nicos Poulantzas' concept of class fractioning. In export-oriented industrial sectors—among the largest CO₂ emitters—workers seem to have entered into a tacit compromise with industrial capital, balancing job security with continued profitability. Conversely, the reproductive sector, which employs a substantial share of the Danish workforce, faces intensifying political pressures aimed at reducing work autonomy, austerity and increasing efficiency. While this sector is highly unionized and often more militant than its private-sector counterpart, it remains structurally disadvantaged Denmark's export-driven economic model. Within this framework, the climate transition is frequently framed as a zero-sum choice between ecological transformation and welfare improvements. Against this backdrop of class division, the paper asks: is it possible to forge a broader working-class coalition capable of addressing the challenges of the Anthropocene?

Can legal subjects act in the public interest?

Esma Çinar

According to Evgenyy Pashukanis, the legal subject is the product of capitalist society. In the context of commodity exchange humans relate to one another as autonomous isolated entities possessed of a will. These entities are bearers of abstract rights including the right to own property and the freedom to enter into contracts. Given the centrality of the abstract individual to legal norms, Marxists have been sceptical of the emancipatory potential of the law. Marx himself wrote of political rights that they split humans into two: citizens afforded equal rights and members of civil society who are free to act without regard for others. Civil society is the world of work, property and private law and its members are assumed to be self-interested. Political rights take this separate sphere of life for granted. The idea that legal subjects are self-interested individuals is reflected in legal admissibility standards: in order to have standing in court, individuals must prove they have a personal interest in the outcome of a procedure. This restricts the range of actions legal subjects can take in their capacity as legal subjects. There are nonetheless many attempts to limit the freedom of capital via civil court procedures. Organisations frequently challenge private companies in court through so-called public interest litigation. While its goals are often modest, e.g. restricting the actions of a single company, this strain of political activism nonetheless represents an attempt of legal subjects to blur the line between civil and political society precisely in the area where this line is most explicitly maintained.

A critical rhetorical geography of the anti-gender movement: The trans*atlantic transfer of rhetoric, politics, and capital

Frida Hviid Broberg and Frederik Appel Olsen

In recent years, the anti-gender movement has seen massive growth and gained political influence across Europe and the US in a coordinated transnational effort to roll back anti-discrimination efforts, reproductive rights, LGBTQ+ rights in general, and trans rights in particular (Corredor, 2019; Datta, 2025). Further, the movement plays a central part in the resurgence of fascist mobilization with resistance to 'gender ideology' serving as the symbolic glue that links the programs

and rhetoric of far-right populist parties across continents. This presentation examines the transatlantic movements of rhetoric alongside capital that expands anti-gender ideology as part of the overall fascist project. We apply a critical rhetorical geography approach (Appel Olsen et al., in press) to describe how geographical distinctions are operationalized in right-wing rhetoric, serving to disavow the material networks of anti-gender campaign capital flowing across the Atlantic. Talking Denmark as a starting point, we show how fears of "American conditions"—with "woke" gender "ideologies" creeping in—effectively perpetuates attacks on trans* rights that are, ironically, intimately bound up with US capital-backed anti-gender campaigning and heavily inspired by US and UK anti-gender rhetoric and politics.

Legal Form and Transition: Freedom, From Right to Public Good

Hedvig Lärka

Between pure right and the withering away of law is not a wall but a spectrum of transitional form. Yet very little has been written about law in transition, or the determination of legal form and content by the composition of class power. Pure right and pure economics may represent – from a critical perspective – an undistorted access of capital to the variety of means by which surplus value is generated. But during what Utsa and Prabhat Patnaik called the dirigiste era, transitional forms developed from east to west; from center to periphery. Individual interest gave way to an emerging notion of public good and right dissolved, slowly, into what Pashukanis had called "technical regulation". The system of right approximated sublation, through its seemingly immanent transition into socialist productive relations. However, unable in a fundamental sense to replace surplus value as organizing principle, the transitional development of public good fell into crisis and collapsed. In its wake, this article develops understanding of the relations between legal form, transition, and crisis.

'Free work': A Marxist perspective on critique of work in crip theory

Helene von Tabouillot

In his critique of Adam Smith, Marx describes 'work' as a "liberating activity," and states that work is a prerequisite for "real freedom." Contrarily, in their 2023 'Crip Negativity', Smilges suggests 'life strike' as a strategy to resist an ableist job market. In this paper, I aim to synthesise crip-theoretical critique of work and Marx' multiple understandings of 'work' in order to sketch a positive liberation for persons with disabilities, who may well be excluded from a 37-hour work week, but not necessarily from fishing in the afternoon or criticising after dinner, as Marx puts it.

Aesthetics of the (un)desired

Iben Holck

In my PhD project, I attempt to critically engage with architecture and its relation to the Ghetto Politics through a historical materialist understanding of "aesthetics". The analysis moves between "land" and "landscape", between political financial interests in making the land profitable and professional work of creating "aestheticized landscapes of order" (Rajaram 2006), weaved together in the process of privatizing non-profit public land. While architects and urban planners create an atmosphere around their work as a social mission, I look at moments in which tenants' acts of resistance - struggling over commons in the erasures of tenants' gardens, protesting stigmatized experiences of securitization designs, disrupting mass-demolitions - scratch this self-image. From these starting points, I have drawn lines from Danish modernist housing projects social-democrat failed utopic visions to an Israeli cargo fatal plane's crash into an immigrant occupied housing project in Amsterdam, spreading toxic cargo designated for ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, only to resurface as a blueprint for Danish urban planning, to the Danish state's colonial mass-displacement of indigenous peoples in Kalaallit Nunaat and relocation of 1% of the population to Block P in the name of industrialization, to the "war on terror"'s urban securitization. I draw heavily on Tafuri's (1973) idea of architecture and urban design as an "ideological cover", detached from the source of the contradictions it claims to

solve, but the Ghetto Politics racializing anti-immigration sentiments requires more than isolated class-critique, why decolonial thinkers work on the aesthetic and the powerful construction of "sensus communis" (Chuh 2019) has been invaluable.

Land, Freedom, and the Wage: Cultures of Work in Agrarian Socialism

Jacob Seagrave

Critical interest in agrarian socialism has surged in recent years as entwined climactic, economic, and social crises deepen and accelerate. Yet many leftist accounts of these anti-capitalist projects often fall into either a simplistic celebratory style that sidelines important questions about class composition or market and state overdetermination, and on the other hand, a real utopian sociology that reifies these forms into a comparative study of workers' democracy. Instead, by drawing on ethnographic research conducted on agricultural cooperativism in Southern Spain, this paper examines the significance of class cultures of work in the generation of vernacular visions of concrete freedom. By foregrounding the issue of utopian desire, and its complex and frustrated instantiation in conjunctural economic projects – especially the highly ambivalent form of the cooperative – I will explore the ways in which communist ambitions are lived out through transitional forms and concepts alongside inherited moralities of work. In dealing with such oppositions as waged/unwaged life, workerism/peasantism, productivism/humanism, puritanism/hedonism, I will consider the controversy of work-as-freedom within Marxist theory and its role within contemporary agrarian struggles in the Global North.

"No, I don't want no scrub": Capitalism, Masculinity, and the Struggle for Freedom and Dignity

Jeannette Søgaard

Why has masculine self-worth and dignity become so tied to productivity and economic provision? This paper argues that productive masculinity is a historically specific and relatively new form of masculine ideal produced through capitalist labour relations.

Building on the work of Sears and O'Brien, I examine how the labour movement simultaneously challenged capitalist exploitation while also reproducing aspects of capitalist gender relations through its struggle for the family wage and family welfare. Drawing on Danish legislation on male provision, workers' newspapers, and reports from social welfare professionals between 1870 and 1950, I trace the historical formation of productive masculinity on the Danish left that alienated women and queer-people from the worker's struggle.

Masculinity as a disciplinary category continues to shape contemporary politics. As the material foundations of the breadwinner ideal have been eliminated and living conditions have become increasingly precarious, reactionary right-wing movements, the manosphere and selfhelp- industry have somewhat successfully offered men a way to reclaim dignity through ideals of independence and autonomy.

The left has struggled to offer alternatives that do not mostly lapse into moral judgments on "healthy" and "toxic" masculinity and demands healthy masculinity to be vulnerable and to accept dependence. I argue that alternatives must distinguish between masculine autonomy and emancipatory autonomy ie. between freedom understood as separation from others and freedom as achieved through collective power and community and offer a radical critique and relief from a system that produces productive masculinity.

Synthetic capital and the promise of overcoming ecological limits

Joachim Peter Tilsted

The function of oil, gas, and coal as energy carriers appear to be on the line, with geoeconomic tensions affecting both fossil and cleantech industrial pathways. The future of fossil capital, however, is dictated not only by energy transitions and action to address climate change, but also by its relationship to what we refer to here as 'synthetic capital'. The notion of synthetic capital captures the functions and power of fractions of fossil capital that revolve not only around energy supply but also the production and circulation of synthetics in all their varieties. Through a reading of the material and cultural roles that synthetic materials have played and continue to play in patterns of mass production and consumption central to modern capitalism,

we demonstrate that synthetic capital complements fossil capital by promising to overcome the limitations to accumulation imposed by constraints on natural resource extraction. The notion of synthetic capital brings to the surface new relations and frontiers in ongoing and contested energy transitions and affords theoretical insights on the entrenched nature of fossil hydrocarbons within late capitalism. In this way, synthetic capital complicates the dichotomy between renewable and fossil energy which otherwise serves to obfuscate their entanglements.

We Have the Recipes – Now We Need the Ladles: Power, Production, and the Cookshops of the Future

Johan Alfnsson

In recent years there has been a renewed interest among Marxists to write the recipes for the cookshops of the future. Some do so broadly, such as degrowth communism (e.g. Saito), while others theorize more concretely (e.g. Benanav). Despite their differences, these visions share an overarching goal: abolishing value production, democratizing production, and increasing human freedom. Without arguing against them, this paper shifts focus: we need to know what future we struggle for, but also how to reach it. As Marxists we know that those with the best ideas do not write history, those with power do. Without power, ideas remain in the pub or the bookcase. Often the emphasis is on organizing, but organizing is only potential power. The failure to translate collective into structural power is evident in many contemporary protest movements. Drawing on Walter Korpi's power resources theory, collective resources function as power resources only if mobilized to challenge capitalism's fundamental dynamics: private ownership and market dominance. Historically this has been the workers' movement's goal. Yet as shown in Endnotes 4, material changes, smaller workplaces and fragmented labor, have made collective organizing harder, even though the working class remains the vast majority. Since democratizing production remains the goal, struggle must still center on the labor market, where capitalist unfreedom is felt most acutely. This paper proposes that if politics and action are directed toward strengthening labor market power, we will be better positioned to confront capital and strive toward the utopias envisioned by contemporary thinkers.

Visions of Freedom: Accelerationist and Degrowth perspectives

Kristian Paris

In this paper I explore two seemingly contradictory ideas of post-capitalist freedom within contemporary Marxism: the accelerationist and the degrowth perspective. Accelerationist approaches (Bastani; Srnicek & Willams) conceptualize freedom in terms of the transcendence of material scarcity through technological advancement, automation, and the maximal development of the productive forces. Accordingly, post-capitalist freedom is understood as the minimization of necessary labour and the realization of material abundance. By contrast, degrowth theorists such as Kohei Saito, Stefania Barca, or Eva von Redecker articulate freedom as grounded in the revitalization of communal and cooperative modes of social organization. This entails the reduction of production and consumption, the decommodification of social life, and the restoration of socio-ecological relations. Rather than accelerating the productive forces, degrowth calls for a democratic and ecological reorganization of the mode of production, aimed at repairing the metabolic rift and transforming the social relations that sustain it. Thus, freedom is not equated with abundance, but with the capacity to collectively determine and sustain non-exploitative modes of life. I argue that these divergent visions of post-capitalist freedom emerge from two historically grounded understandings of capitalism's relation to technology. Accelerationist theories tend to treat technology as an emancipatory tool that can be repurposed to overcome capitalism. Degrowth perspectives, however, emphasize that technology and the productive forces are socially constituted and dependent on capitalist relations of domination and exploitation. From this standpoint, the realization of freedom requires not the acceleration of existing technology, but their critical reconfiguration or refusal.

Conditions and strategies for ecosocial revolt and freedom

Kristoffer Willert

In this presentation, I'll raise the question about the conditions and strategies for building broad-based consent with respect to class formation and class interests in the midst of planetary breakdown. Building on the populist insights in a recent Danish publication on the climate crisis (Climate and

Class, 2025) about how the climate struggle needs a material basis (class struggle) rather than a cultural or moral one, and the authors' attempt to outline a radical and inspiring reform policy toward the end of the book, my aim is to suggest some ways to think about two key elements that the book does not develop sufficiently: strategic considerations regarding 1) how to create a socio-political situation in which the radical policies the authors propose become possible (the question of seizing power), and 2) how to prepare for the situation in which such policies can be implemented, and not least the economic consequences this will entail due to capital strikes and capital flight. The presentation thus contains strategic reflections on how an ecosocialist society or set of policies could emerge, as well as how an ecosocialist society can be sustained in the face of capital's inevitable counterrevolution. I'll reflect on the political potential of a few recent examples, among others the Mamdani campaign in New York.

The social reproduction of coercion in schools

Line Dahler-Eriksen

Schools are institutions in which children spend most of their time doing things that they do not choose themselves. Historically and today this means that schools are sites of various and changing forms of coercion. In this paper i explore children's varied and ambiguous relationships to coercion in school seen through lenses of feminist social reproduction theory (Bhattacharya 2017; Ferguson, 2017) and childism (Biswas et al 2024). The paper draws on fieldwork in two Danish public schools, including interviews with schoolchildren, analysing their verbal accounts as well as bodily reactions to and engagement in practices of discipline, punishment and coercion. In the material the relationship to coercion shows up in everyday situations as negotiations of rules and authority as well as in negotiations of bodily, energetic and collective autonomy. Social reproduction theory allows a view of how this concrete bodily work is embedded in the school and in social structures more broadly. I argue that schools are sites of social reproduction through which children are produced as and produce themselves and others as subjects of some legitimized forms of coercion, that is constantly negotiated. Childist perspectives opens up for a radical critique of the naturalization of children's subjugation, and I draw on this to discuss how (and

whether) the children's practices can be understood to offer critical alternatives to how school is done today.

The political economy of logistics in a changing climate

Linn Andreou Brolin

Climate change not only exaggerates labour's structural disadvantage relative to capital but poses new challenges for capitalist accumulation. As firms are increasingly pressured to speed up the circulation of commodities within logistical networks, even minor disruptions in supply chains can lead to major crises for businesses. Strong winds, heavy rainfalls and floods imply financial and operational risks which have consequences for labour processes. The burden of higher costs and unexpected expenditures resulting from anthropocentric environmental hazards appears to reflect existing power dynamics of market rule and class antagonism. In this presentation, I show how trade unions and employers' representatives respond to extreme and unpredictable weather events, and how risks are navigated among organised interests in logistical spaces and political orders.

The study indicates that port operators, shipping companies and distribution enterprises seek to enhance flexibility in production processes under volatile environmental conditions. For dockworkers, seafarers and truck drivers, this implies struggling against surveillance technologies, coercive employment arrangements and disciplinary management practices. By conceptualising climate change as an intensifying moment in capitalist supply chains, the analysis reveals how labour precarity and ecological instability are products of capital's pursuit of seamless circulation and endless striving to accelerate turnover time to squeeze out revenue. Examining the political economy of logistics through the lens of dialectically intertwined relations of capital, labour and nature, I argue that climate change should be understood both as a result of the economic imperative of competition and profit-seeking, and as obstacles and opportunities for capitalist value creation.

Sustaining Life under Precarity: Social Reproduction, Identity, and Agency among Informal Female Agricultural Workers in Yanamarca, Peru

Luz Mayta Barrera

This article examines the identity and agency of informal female agricultural workers in the rural Yanamarca valley of Peru, focusing on the relationship between care labour, coercion, and conditions of freedom. Grounded in Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) and Gender Systems Theory (GST), it contributes to Marxist feminist debates by analyzing how the organization of reproductive labour structures women's possibilities for action under capitalism. Agency is conceptualized as a situated capacity exercised within conditions of material inequality, rather than as full autonomy.

This type of research is particularly relevant in Latin American contexts, where the high levels of labour informality and limited state welfare provision mean that the reproduction of everyday life depends largely on women's unpaid or precarious labour. Here, care is not a private responsibility but a structural condition that sustains the labour force while remaining largely invisible.

Findings show that these women's participation in the labour market is driven by the need to sustain household reproduction amid insufficient wages and minimal state support. This produces a constant articulation between productive and reproductive labour, generating a condition of "coerced care." At the same time, women develop forms of agency to manage this tension, including selecting employers, relying on social ties, and choosing flexible work arrangements that allow them to combine income-generating activities with caregiving duties.

The article highlights a central paradox: care labour operates both as a site of coercion and as a terrain where limited forms of freedom are negotiated, revealing women's structural role in sustaining the economic system.

Beyond Deliberation: Rethinking Climate Citizens' Assemblies through a Radical Politics of Assembling

Mads Ejlsing

In recent years, climate citizens' assemblies have emerged as democratic innovations intended to enhance the legitimacy of climate governance. They entered the political arena through a wave of mobilizations over the past decade where activist movements demanded citizens' assemblies as institutional

responses to the failures of representative liberal democracy. Within the research literature, however, climate citizens' assemblies are usually approached as "deliberative mini-publics" designed to improve the quality of public reasoning through structured conversations among randomly selected groups of citizens. This has situated them within a liberal tradition foregrounding formal inclusion, procedural legitimacy, and consensus-seeking. In this presentation, I argue that climate citizens' assemblies are better understood against a radical political history of assembling. Across diverse traditions – from the Paris Commune and later council-democratic movements, to anarchist practices of horizontal organization, and feminist perspectives on the significance of gathering – assemblies have long functioned as spaces for articulating new demands, organizing struggles, and experimenting with forms of self-government. Here, a key distinction emerges between state-led assemblies embedded in governance structures and community-based assemblies rooted in collective organizing. So far, climate assemblies have largely taken the earlier form. While creating new spaces for engaging with the climate crisis, they have channeled energies of climate mobilization into consensus-oriented consultation. Situating them against a radical history of assembling opens up a key question: Are these assemblies merely consultative devices, or can they become spaces for citizens to organize and exercise political power?

Popular Power. On property and public agency in the Chilean electric infrastructure

Maria Cariola

Chile's electrical infrastructure has expanded rapidly in recent decades, driven by mining, data centers, and ambitions to export green hydrogen. This growth has occurred under a privatized, price-liberalized market with limited state planning. It has transformed large areas—especially in poorer regions—into sites for solar and wind energy, primarily serving extractive industries, exports, and low value-added sectors. This model has sparked increasing social criticism, focused on territorial dispossession, the marginalization of small consumers, and calls for greater state involvement in electricity distribution. However, these critiques often do not fully confront the underlying market structure, including price formation and the central role of profit. Electrical infrastructure is key to an

industrial policy oriented toward public needs. Chile's history shows moments—particularly in the 1930s, 1960s, and 1970s—when popular movements challenged private control over such systems. Drawing on this tradition, the presentation argues that transforming electrical infrastructure into a form of popular power would require redefining electricity as more than a commodity, curbing extractivist consumption, and implementing deliberate, democratic planning of the grid. This also entails renewing a Marxist critique of private property to inform viable political alternatives.

Materialist Histories of Philosophy: The Case of Lucien Goldmann

Marie Louise Krogh

Over the past couple of years, new attempts to conceptualise a historical materialist approach to the study of intellectual history have flourished. These have overwhelmingly been framed as exercises that rethink the notion of 'context' and the interplay between its discursive and socio-political connotations. In this paper, I will seek to push these debates by asking specifically what constitutes not the context but the object of this form of history. I will do so by turning to a little known 1948 text by Lucien Goldmann – *Matérialisme dialectique et histoire de la philosophie* – in which he draws on Georg Lukács to develop a materialist approach to the history of philosophy. I will outline the basic tenants of this approach as it touches on ideas, thoughts, theories, systems, and discursive ensembles and make the case for a more careful delineation of what precisely it is we seek to contextualise in the historical materialist approach to intellectual history.

Climate justice, legal form, and the question of class

Marie Thøgersen

In the shadows of the nerve-racking question of how we might speed up climate action to a level sufficient to save the planet before a definite planetary ecological breakdown, another question is looming: how will the burden of this transformation be distributed? The concept of 'climate justice' refers to the idea that those who have done the most to cause the climate crisis—and who have the most resources—must also do the most to fix it. Persistent struggle for climate justice has resulted in

the incorporation into environmental law of the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' (CBDR), which essentially recognizes that the Global North should carry the main burden of the green transition. This paper critically examines the limits and potentials of law in general and the CBDR principle in particular in obtaining climate justice. Locating climate breakdown within the political economy of capitalism, it argues that class struggle must be at the centre of an analysis of climate justice. The paper therefore examines how class responsibility might be addressed through law. It suggests that within a legal form structured around formally equal sovereign entities, responsibility for climate change can be distributed only among states. The CBDR principle reflects this limitation, which conceptualizes climate justice only in regional terms. Meanwhile, the transnational class relations that have driven fossil-fuelled accumulation remain legally invisible.

Disseminating the common sense of capital: Teaching corporate finance at Copenhagen Business School

Mathias Hein Jessen

The triumph of neoliberal dogma came about not least through its dominance within the economics profession, economic think tanks and economics curricula taught around the world. Where scholarship has predominantly focused on the transformations of state, public and global governance, less focus has been devoted to the transformations of corporate governance, finance and accounting, although these practices have been central to embedding neoliberal ideas in corporate practices. The triumph of 'financial economics' taught at business schools has been pivotal to mainstreaming and legitimizing what scholars have termed the 'neoliberal common sense of capital' through agency theory, net present value (NPV), EMH (efficient market hypothesis) and CAPM (capital asset pricing model) as the sole means of assessing corporate value and valuation. This way of thinking has been absolutely central to financialization and the dominance of shareholder value corporate governance and its devastating effects on, amongst many others, inequality and climate.

The paper analyzes the role of Copenhagen Business School in disseminating the 'neoliberal common sense of capital' through

mapping the development of introductory courses in corporate finance. Despite its strategic aim of 'transforming society with business' and developing 'transformational capabilities' through the educational portfolio, the teaching of corporate finance has barely changed. The paper maps the development and standardization of corporate finance courses at CBS and analyzes the curriculum and its dissemination of the neoliberal common sense of capital, focusing on the periods after the dot.com bubble, the Financial Crisis, and the adoption of the new CBS strategy in 2020.

The Sovereign Now: Thinking Childhood as a Place of Freedom

Mikkel Bygum Hove

Mens marxistisk teori har produceret vigtige analyser af arbejde, ideologi og kapitalistisk reproduktion, er spørgsmålet om barndommen i dag ofte teoretisk sekundært. Kapitalismen er imidlertid aktivt investeret i den tidlige socialisering af subjekter og i dannelsen af kapaciteter, begær og relationer, der er kompatible med kapitalistisk socialitet. Oplægget argumenterer derfor for, at kommunistiske frihedsbegreber må forholde sig til subjektivitetens og ufrihedens materielle reproduktion i barndommen. Med afsæt i Alfred Lorenzers materialistiske socialisationsteori diskuteres, hvordan kapitalistiske samfundsrelationer sedimenteres gennem tidlige affektive og relationelle formationer. Samtidig organiserer samtidens barndomsinstitutioner i stigende grad børns rumlige, tidslige og affektive erfaringer på måder, der tilpasser subjekter til kapitalistisk socialitet og begærsstrukturer allerede før voksenlivet. Oplægget genbesøger Oskar Negts begreb om "emancipatorisk minimum" nødvendigt for subjektets kapacitet til at modstå det kapitalistiske voksen- og arbejdslivs ufrihed. Herfra udfoldes et konstitutivt paradoks i emancipatorisk pædagogik: Pædagogikker orienteret mod autonomi, kritik, leg og ikke-instrumentelle relationer kan samtidig producere subjekter, der er dårligere rustet til friktionsfri tilpasning til kapitalistiske krav. Oplægget undersøger desuden, hvordan appeller til barnets bedste ideologisk set kan fungere reproduktivt for kapitalistiske samfundsrelationer, særligt når beskyttelse mod konflikt, risiko og ubehag løsriver sig fra kritik af de samfundsmæssige forhold, der producerer ufriheden i første omgang. Dette rejser spørgsmål om forholdet mellem beskyttelse og eksponering i subjektivitetens dannelse. Der

argumenteres for, at fremtiden kun mulig, dersom vi opdrager nye generationer til frigørelse.

Beyond Liberal Democracy: Five Theses about Council Democracy

Mikkel Flohr and Benjamin Ask Popp-Madsen

This presentation advances the argument that council democracy offers a viable, historically tested alternative to liberal democracy. Drawing on the historical experiences, theory, and practice of the workers' and soldiers' soviets in the Russian Revolutions, this presentation seeks to recover and reconstruct the historical context and content of council democracy. It aims to demonstrate that council democracy constitutes a significant but overlooked radical democratic alternative to contemporary liberal democracy, particularly pertinent in the present political conjuncture where liberal democracy faces a sustained crisis of legitimacy. The proposed presentation will outline central components of a theory of council democracy, based on the experience of the Russian Revolutions, in the form of five theses that contrast it with liberal democracy. Firstly, council democracy diverges from liberal democracy insofar as it ensures real, rather than formal, popular self-determination by basing decision-making in local assemblies and employing imperative mandates and recall mechanisms. Secondly, it employs delegation rather than representation, maintaining instruction, direct accountability, and recall of delegates. Thirdly, it is a federative political form, emphasizing decentralization and the active participation of various local bodies in contrast with the unitary, sovereign state form. Fourthly, it acknowledges the class-specific nature of democratic institutions, explicitly aligning with the working classes against capitalist structures. Finally, council democracy merges constituent and constituted power, allowing for continuous institutional renewal and direct involvement in governance.

Running Away from the Dishes? Toward an Ecological Understanding of Freedom (and Care)

Mikkel Krause Frantzen

"Doing the dishes is not like freedom ... taking care lacks freedom's entertainments and its exceptions" writes Anne Boyer in her cancer memoir *The Undying* 2019, capturing a long-standing

association between housework and unfreedom. Taking this claim as its point of departure, this paper asks how we might rethink freedom, housework, and ecology beyond the assumption that freedom begins where care ends. How is doing the dishes not like freedom? Could doing the dishes perhaps be, like, like freedom? To arrive at an answer to this question, the paper proceeds through a series of historical and theoretical constellations. First, it revisits Tove Ditlevsen's 1956 essay "Flugten fra opvasken", where the dream of escape from repetitive housework emerges as a central figure of (artistic) freedom. Second, it turns to Angela Davis's argument in the 1981 essay "Women, Race and Class The Approaching Obsolescence of Housework: A Working-Class Perspective" that liberation does not require the elimination of housework but its socialization. Finally, the paper situates these critiques of housework within contemporary ecological thought. Discussing arguments by Alyssa Battistoni, Pierre Charbonnier and Dipesh Chakrabarty, I consider how modern, capitalist forms of freedom have depended on fossil-fuel extraction and the externalization of care onto both human and more-than-human others. Against this backdrop, the paper concludes by outlining the speculative contours of an ecological concept of freedom as the freedom to depend differently, to make care the medium of life rather than its hidden cost. Not freedom from care, but freedom through care transformed.

Control, Contention, and the Politics of Space in Hasankeyf, Turkey

Müserref Cetinkaya

This thesis investigates the factors that lead to the fragmentation and building of the counterspaces through the case of Hasankeyf. Based on 12 interviews conducted primarily with local residents who experienced the long trajectory of the dam project, the study explores how local people experienced and lived through the dam project. Findings reveal that, in Hasankeyf, the destruction of the old city, the threat of displacement, the dispossession through urgent expropriation, the selectively applied relocation law, and the repressive environment shaped by long-standing state intervention all illustrate how a dam project can function as a counterinsurgency strategy, designed to fragment and undermine counterspaces by strategically displacing potentially insurgent population. Despite these structural and political-economic mechanisms of

control, people developed distinct forms of social ties, networks, and mutual trust, relying on the spatial and physical configuration of old Hasankeyf. These practices, in turn, revealed "the potential" for the formation and consolidation of counter-spaces. Thus, this thesis contributes to ongoing debates on the spatial configuration of power and the possibility of formation of counterspaces.

Communist freedom and the concept of property

Rosie Woodhouse and Will Spendlove

This paper seeks to establish the validity of the claim that a properly historical materialist conception of freedom is thinkable only as a concept of property. To make this claim legible we begin by showing how the construction of the three principal sociological objects of Marxism – dispossession, exploitation, and competition – presuppose a specific historical theorisation of property which delimits the concept of freedom that their absence implies. These frameworks are respectively Lockean (dispossession), Justinian (exploitation), and Kantian or Hohfeldian (competition). If these negative figurations of freedom rely on critical re-appropriations of various pre-Marxist conceptions of property, then more recent positive conceptualizations of freedom within the Marxist tradition tend to bracket the question of property altogether – thinking specifically, here, of recent republican readings of Marx. Each of these negative and positive conceptions are, we suggest (in accordance with a Hegelian-Marxist project of a phenomenology of property), partially true. And by partially true we mean that they do not in themselves provide what this conference demands; namely, a communist conception of freedom. Our suggestion is that a communist conception of freedom, which is the object of a phenomenology of property, entails a specific dynamic of the relation between need and change. The idea of freedom from property blocks the possibility of change precisely because it takes the question of need for granted, thereby ceding to its existing definition; which is the present legal form of property, private and otherwise. What relation between need and change, necessity and possibility, might freedom as property require?

The Soil Beneath Tingbjerg: A Sanitized Copenhagen, A Failed Utopia

Semine Long-Callesen

The presentation examines the waves of gentrification that Copenhagen has undergone; the traces of this process left in Tingbjerg's soil; and the pre-war urban planning that continues to impact and stigmatize tenants today who live under the so-called Ghetto Law. It draws a line from the soil's role in 19th century struggles over land ownership between the nobility and farmers; its use for "kolonihaver" as a strategy against working-class revolts; to social-democratic housing utopia and today's real-estate fantasies. The presentation's focus point is two housing projects - Dronningegården in the city center and Tingbjerg in the city periphery. In response to severe housing shortage, Denmark's first sanitation law was implemented in 1938, with mass-demolitions and displacements as the politically favored tool in the name of modernization and health. The first sanitation project was the clearance of Adelgade-Borgergade's working-class neighbourhood. The project was led by architect Eiler Rasmussen who would soon lead the development of Tingbjerg too: An entire new neighbourhood that mixed the displaced inner city working-class tenants with other classes. The presentation disrupts the romanticized narrative of Tingbjerg/Dronningegården as a prosperous moment in Danish Welfare history and the Social Democratic idea of linear development towards more rights. It examines how public housing projects were also private property speculation, how dreams of a utopian city collapsed when only caring for housing needs, disregarding negative effects of displacements, a struggle that continues today with the Ghetto Law demolitions that displace poor tenants and turn public housing into private property for wealthy white owners.

Mobilization, Organization and Resistance of Data Workers in the Global Production of Machine Learning Systems

Søren Bøgh Sørensen

In recent years, scholars have investigated the resistive practices of data annotation workers in the global production networks of machine learning models using insights from Beverly Silver, Erik Olin Wright, as well as Cindy Katz'

conceptualization of resistance, reworking and resilience. This has led to a plethora of work celebrating the agency of data workers and platform workers more broadly, which emphasizes the different “hidden transcripts” utilized by workers to mitigate the worst consequences of algorithmic control in the labour process on digital labour platforms. However, scholarly work has so far not analyzed the more overt mobilization and organization efforts by data workers in the Global South. Building on in-depth interviews with data workers and data worker organizers in Nairobi, Kenya, this paper details not only the practices of micro-resistance of data workers at the point of production but also the emerging mobilization and organization of workers in associations and unions. The analysis of these practices of resistance and movement building, however, moves away from celebratory accounts of worker agency by emphasizing the structural conditions in relation to which these practices are played out. This is not to denigrate the often creative and impressive tactics employed by data workers in Kenya, but rather to present a more sober and realistic analysis of the many constraints and obstacles associated with challenging capitalist power structures in the global digital economy.

Communist Freedom

Søren Mau

In recent years, the concept of freedom has become increasingly central in communist theory, for good reasons. In this talk, I will argue that the concept of freedom is crucial both to the critique of capitalism and to articulating visions of a post-capitalist society. Based on a discussion of historical and contemporary concepts of freedom, I will defend a communist conception of freedom that brings together republican, democratic, ecological, and decolonial perspectives.

Revolutionary Violence and Revolutionary Subjectivity: Trajectories of Development from British India to Neoliberal India

Suddhabrata Deb Roy

Violence has been a much-discussed aspect of revolutionary politics globally. In South Asia, the trajectory of studies on revolutionary violence has mostly revolved around the Maoist

movement. However, revolutionary organisations in colonial India such as the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA), the Jugantar Federation, and the Anushilan Samiti had also associated themselves with revolutionary violence. Most of their contributions to the development of a theory of emancipatory violence has often been relegated in contemporary social theory. This paper analyses the socio-political development of revolutionary subjectivity through anti-statist and anti-government violence in India. The paper brings forward a critique of the contemporary Maoist perspective on violence as it exists in India and compares it with the revolutionary Marxism of the anti-colonial revolutionary organisations which operated in British India. The paper shows that early South Asian Marxism provided a highly nuanced view of human emancipation and freedom by focusing on revolutionary violence as a tool to envisage the formation of an organisational form suited to realise radical freedom from colonialism and imperialism. In doing so, the paper presents certain original readings and translations of Indian revolutionaries - including their autobiographies, letters and journals - which put them at odds with the dominant contemporary Stalinist and Maoist political formations. Through this, the paper discusses the positioning of the 'Individual' within these organisations and the ways in which they related individual subjectivity to human emancipation while retaining a core allegiance to Marxism and Socialism.

Corporeal Freedom: What radical embodied cognitive science can do for the Marxist understanding of the body

Sune Vork Steffensen

As argued by Søren Mau, Marx's insistence that "the first fact to be established is the [corporeal] organisation of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature" (Marx, 1845) has been an underexplored dimension of his thought. Marxist scholarship has paid little attention to how social relations become incarnated in the corporeal organisation of real individuals, and hence to the bodily conditions for both unfreedom and emancipation. This paper argues that Radical Embodied Cognitive Science (RECS) provides Marxism with the theoretical tools to investigate this corporeal dimension. Drawing on my recent integration of RECS and Marxism, I demonstrate how RECS strips cognitive science of its Cartesian heritage and conceptualises cognition, not as inner mental

gymnastics, but as an ecological, corporeal activity through which organisms navigate their environment. I will argue that this cognitive ecology matters for a Marxist theory of freedom in three ways. First, it substantiates Marx's concept of corporeal organisation by showing how bodies are cognitively attuned to their environment through perception, action, and experience. Second, it illuminates how capitalist social structures inscribe unfreedom into our corporeal organisation as embodied constraints on perception, action, and metabolism. Third, it allows for an ecological understanding of how language constitutes a weakly eusocial corporeal organisation, which implies that the body is never entirely individual. Freedom, therefore, must be collectively enacted within zones of entanglement where the non-deterministic character of corporeal activity opens spaces for resistance and transformation.

Freedom from Commodification: Marxist Ecofeminism and Climate Apocalypse

Tim Christiaens

Environmental politics has significantly altered traditional approaches within Marxism. Not only do environmental concerns pose a profound challenge to the old Marxist faith in technology and capitalist development as a necessary route towards socialism, but the magnitude of environmental collapse makes any kind of political organising look hopeless. According to Stefania Barca, ecocapitalist realism dominates the social imaginary with the end of the world being easier to imagine than even the slightest change in capitalist relations of production. However, apocalyptic imaginaries have historically produced some of the most fervent political movements in human history. In his posthumously published *The End of the World*, the Gramsci-inspired anthropologist Ernesto De Martino documents how narratives of impending world collapse in Christianity and Marxism have historically motivated people to fundamentally alter their way of life and instigate social revolution. According to De Martino, apocalyptic imaginaries have the capacity to instill new, counterhegemonic projects. I argue that today's apocalyptic environmentalism can have a similar potential if it is coupled with a positive collective project of rebuilding life beyond capitalism. In the Marxist ecofeminist writings of Silvia Federici, Stefania Barca, and Anna Tsing, one finds such a counterhegemonic project that identifies commoning

practices and human/non-human social relations in the reproductive sphere as a new political subject. They argue for cultivating a web of life that has freed itself from commodification and its subjugation to the capitalist accumulation cycle. This web of life would be free to autonomously develop its own relations of reproduction and subsistence.

Free everyone right away: Aesthetics and Abolition

Veronika Schultz

Different scholars have mobilized abolitionist thinking in the fields of arts and cultural studies, especially abolition of the bourgeois notion of art and its institutions (Maraud 2023, Catwings 2025, Routhier 2025). In his book, *Die Überlegenheit der Unterlegenen* (2024), Daniel Loick aims to formulate "[...] a general theory of the aesthetics of counter-communities." Understanding aesthetics as forms of life and thinking with Peter Weiss' aesthetics of resistance and Saydiya Hartman's description of Black fugitive aesthetics, Loick argues that beauty here is located "not in harmony, but in conflict and struggle." This paper engages with considerations of aesthetics and abolition, but tries to slightly shift the focus towards the question of what an attention to aesthetics could provide for an abolitionist – specifically prison abolitionist – thinking, as well as for the political movement? How can we understand the role of aesthetics in abolitionist thinking and praxis, in opening up an abolitionist horizon? Borrowing the title of this paper from a song called *Isolation* [solitary confinement, my transl.] by Danish-Somali rapper Jamaika (ft. IBO), I situate these considerations in a contemporary Danish context of an ongoing expansion of the carceral system. Drawing on a background from literary and cultural studies, I aim to think with and alongside the artworks of poet Haidar Ansari and musicians Jamaika and Gilli who, in different ways, depict experiences of the prison system. My focus is on notions of freedom developed across their work, and the role of anti-carceral care and mutual aid in these artistic imaginaries.

Generative AI & the labour aristocracy

Vinit Ravishankar

The training and deployment of generative AI models is profoundly expensive; at present, capital expenditure on infrastructure alone is expected to total \$7t by 2030. None of the major firms engaged in developing these models has yet achieved profitability; regardless, it is clear that the path forward lies in the deskilling of labour, weakening collective bargaining, and thus enabling wage suppression. The spheres of labour likeliest to be affected by the deployment of generative AI are (today) rather diverse, encompassing software development, research, and graphic design. Critically, in the past decades, it is precisely these spheres of labour that have remained relatively well-compensated across the production process: industrial labour, on the other hand, has faced stiff international competition and discipline through global supply-chains and capital mobility. Consequently, the vast number of commodities entering the global market combined with a steady increase in income inequality led to the creation of a subsection of workers with rising consumption power, who identified an acceptable personal "freedom" in the development of market capitalism. This identification has not been entirely irrational, and has been the cause of much depoliticisation, particularly in the global North. I argue that the crisis engendered by generative AI's widespread deployment – with the wage discipline that it implies – should therefore be seen as an unintentional opportunity for political praxis. And in light of the death of "acceptable" freedom through the market, rethinking our notions of freedom must form a core part of this praxis.

'Molecules of Freedom': Natural Gas in the United States Government's Agenda of 'Energy Dominance'

William Westgard-Cruise

Over the past decade, the United States has become the world's dominant supplier of natural gas, surpassing Russia, Norway, Qatar, and Australia by a wide margin. Much less recognized is the fact that the United States is also the world's leading exporter of gas turbines, a capital-goods sector that has increased in importance in recent years. In a context of declining competitiveness in key manufacturing sectors, notably

expressed in the failure of General Electric to compete with European and Chinese wind turbine manufacturers, profitable investment in the United States has increasingly shifted into fossil fuel extraction and the production of related means of production. This paper analyzes the domestic and international promotion of natural gas under the Trump I, Biden, and Trump II administrations as a response to an intensifying crisis of overaccumulation and the declining competitiveness of many US-based manufacturing complexes. First, it argues that the rapid expansion of energy-intensive data centre infrastructure associated with the contemporary AI arms race has been a key driver of demand for natural gas and associated means of production. Second, it examines how wars sponsored and prosecuted by the United States in Eastern Europe and West Asia have increased demand for US-produced liquid natural gas (LNG). Behind the spectacle of the Trump White House, a bureaucratic administration continues to function as the general political representative of the total social capital, guiding profitable investment and mobilizing geopolitical power to manage the contradictions of a late imperial economy increasingly reliant on fossil fuel exports.