

Ca-1: "Capitalism, Time, Humanity" [in English]

Sunday 16 October, 11.00–12.15, Palme

David Zachariah: "Economic Laws of Motion of Capitalism"

(CMS Stockholm)

Marx famously aimed to lay bare the economic laws of motion of modern capitalism in *Capital*. In this popularized talk we first review some basic economic laws through the lens of classical physics. We show the inner mechanism of financial systems and clarify the distinction between real and symbolic appropriation in capitalist economies. Finally, we illustrate how a small set of principles can give rise to a rich set of patterns that are observed empirically.

Paula Rauhala: "Reconstructing Hans-Georg Backhaus's 'Materialien zur Rekonstruktion der Marxschen Werttheorie'"

(Doctoral student in Philosophy, University of Tampere, Finland)

As Stefan Bollinger (2008) has showed, the movement of 1968 is often conceived erroneously as an exclusively western phenomenon.

Along with the 1968 movement an interest in Marxian theory, especially on Marx's critique of political economy revived – not only among the students and scholars of West-European countries such as France, Italy or West-Germany, but also in the countries of the Eastern bloc. After all, one of the inspirers of the new readings of the *Capital* was the publication the "Grundrisse" in 1939-41 in Soviet Union and 1953 in GDR.

One of the interesting meeting points for the researchers of both blocs was Germany, due to the common language of both German states. The West German *Neue Marx Lektüre*, and the *Capital*-renaissance among West German students and scholars from the 1960's onwards is usually understood in juxtaposition with the eastern Marxism-Leninism. This perception, based on the self-understanding of this school, might be accurate in some respects. However, it seems to me, that the eastern Marx-research influenced much more on its formation than it is usually understood.

At least the eminent forerunner of this school, Hans-Georg Backhaus knew the research of the Soviet bloc very well. In his key texts from the late 1960's and mid-1970's (*Dialektik der Wertform*, *Materialien zur Rekonstruktion der Marxschen Werttheorie* I, II, III) Backhaus comments on such an important East German scholars as Wolfgang Jahn, who studied extensively bourgeois economists views on Marx's theories of value and surplus value, the eminent economist Fritz Behrens, and Walter Tuchscheerer, who researched the genesis of Marx's *Capital*. Besides commenting on Soviet economics textbooks Backhaus comments on important Soviet philosopher Evald Ilyenkov's understanding of Marx's method and the work of Vitaly Vygotsky, known as a MEGA-

editor, who also wrote important studies on the formation of Marx's Capital. How much these authors, among the others who are not mentioned here, influenced the formation of the Neue Marx-Lektüre, which still inspires many students of Marx and Marxism?

Jon Wittrock: "Marx within the Matrix: Marx, Human Enhancement, and the Other Community"

(Ph.D. in Political and Social Sciences, Södertörns högskola)

This paper considers responses to the relation between Marxism and evolutionary biology. It rejects both a Marxist rejectionism of evolutionary biology, as well as a rejection of Marx based upon a reading of the result of evolutionary biology, e.g. as presented by Peter Singer's "A Darwinian Left". Rather, it argues, the evolved nature of human beings adds a layer of inherited structures, to which a Marxist ought to relate critically. To put it succinctly, biological nature becomes a layer of the "muck of the ages", it is something to which we must relate critically, just as Singer argues. But in so doing, we need not reject Marx, or replace a Marxist left with a "Darwinian" left. There are two aspects to this. Firstly, descriptively, we may consider whether human, biological nature really puts the kind of constraints on potential socioeconomical arrangements that Singer implies, and if so why. Secondly, normatively, there is no reason to dismiss post-humanist or trans-humanist proposals to change or "enhance" human nature, genetically, technologically, or by chemical means. What is important is to consider what kind of political agenda such strategies may serve, and what shared, social world they are supposed to create. Following from the above, we can restate the question which lies at the core of communism as a project of political change: which is that "other community" towards which we strive, and which ought to replace existing, capitalist sociopolitical arrangements?