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**ils**

09 SEPTEMBER — 30 OCTOBER 2011

**Lene Berg**

**Burak Delier**

**Avi Mograbi**

**Trevor Paglen**

**Superflex**

**Milica Tomić**

**CURATED BY What, How & for Whom/WHW**





BERGEN KUNSTHALL

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The conduct of states when faced with fascism is worth pondering, and the decisions made by the people are worth remembering. It is on account of those decisions, the battles fought and the sacrifices made by ordinary individuals that today we may say, in 1945, the people of Europe defeated fascism. Will they defeat it in 1995?



There is a definite connection between oblivion and the powerlessness of today. States organise oblivion, conclude pacts with fascism, may fall prey. People remember, resist and persist. Today, there is no anti-fascist front, there are individuals who refuse to resign to the existence of fascism, who know that there may be more to life than hatred, anxiety and war, and who have the strength to demand from the state to behave differently from the way states and powers-that-be behaved half a century ago.

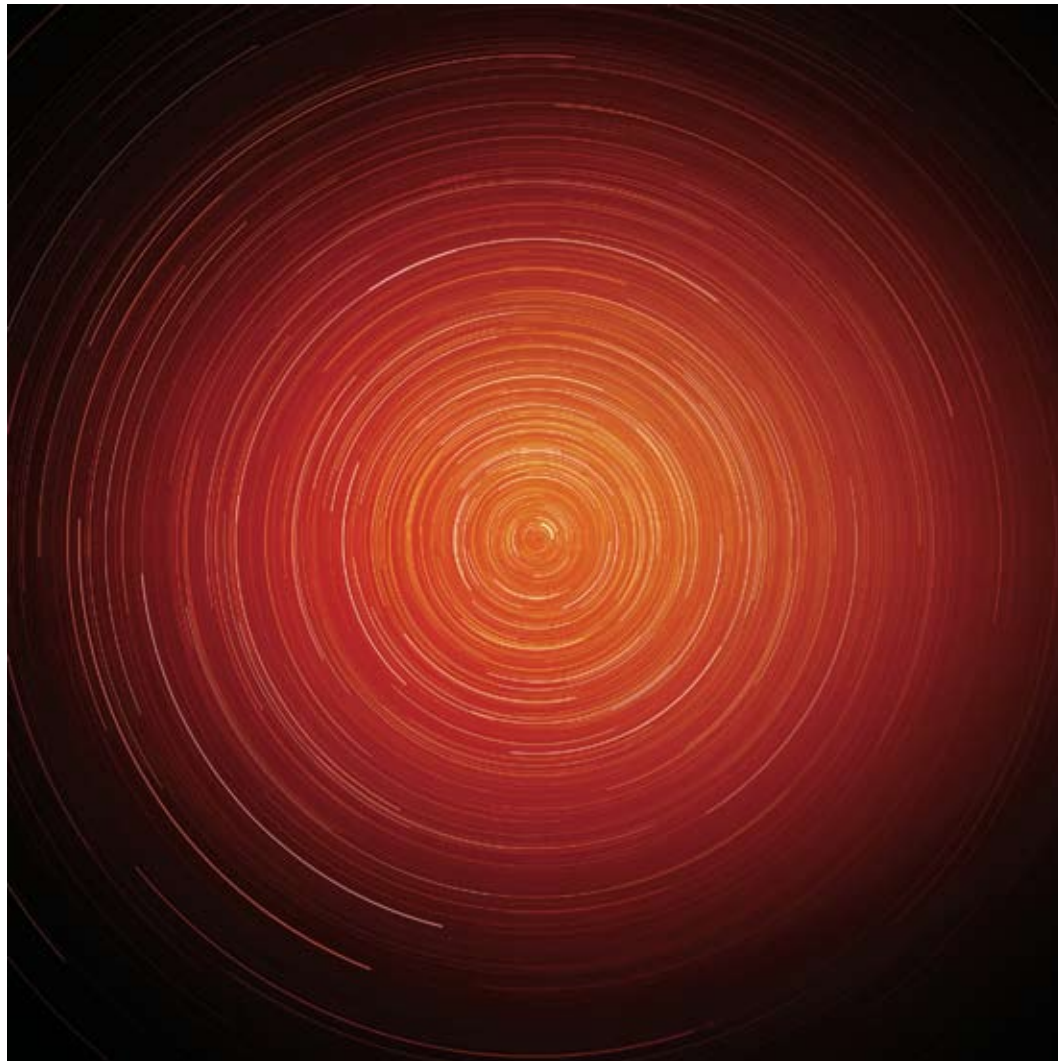
*Extravagantia II: Koliko Fašizma?* [Extravagantia II: How much fascism?]  
A selection from the book by Rastko Močnik, pp. 1-2,  
published at Red Thread e-journal,  
<http://www.red-thread.org/en/article.asp?a=19>

Installation view

Avi Mograbi: The Details, 2003

If we ponder the phrase, »the end of grand narratives has arrived«, we will see that a certain strategy is of decisive influence here. First of all, this »end« applies only to possible alternative narratives. The dominant ones need not even be narrated, the established structure squeezes them out of its own accord.

*Extravagantia II: Koliko Fašizma?* [Extravagantia II: How much fascism?]  
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**Trevor Paglen**  
STSS-1 and Two Unidentified Spacecraft over  
Carson City [Space Tracking and Surveillance  
System; USA 205], 2010

# Details

Lene Berg • Burak Delier • Avi Mograbi • Trevor Paglen • Superflex • Milica Tomić  
What, How & for Whom/WHW

★ The point of departure for the exhibition »Details« is **Rastko Močnik**'s collection of texts entitled 'How Much Fascism?', published in 1995.<sup>01</sup> In the midst of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, **Močnik** related the conflicts and the rise of fascist forces in geographies »from the Adriatic to Siberia« to the structural consequences of the introduction and reconstruction of peripheral capitalism. At the time of the establishment of several new state entities based on nationalistic ideologies, **Močnik** outlined the range of social conjunctures crucial to this process, commenting on their »anti-anti-Fascism« and cultural policies with racist undertones. He detected fascistic social effects within but also outside peripheries, relating them to general processes in the restructuring of the public sphere in late capitalism, and pointed out that »new local populism, new 'fascism', new right-wing extremism, are the ways in which we participate in European or even world history.«<sup>02</sup> His writing thus clearly opposed the discourse which at the time was upholding a false dichotomy between Western tolerance and multiculturalism, and the excessive, extremist ethno-nationalism of the regressive periphery.

A fundamental ideological shift has occurred in the meantime – there has not even been a declaratory proclamation of multiculturalism, and calls for the 'protection of the integrity of tradition and cultural values' have become almost obligatory rallying cries for Western politicians. Today, with an alarming right-wing ascendancy throughout Europe, we should direct our gaze beyond the 'peripheries' and towards the core of liberal democracy.

- <sup>01</sup> Rastko Močnik, *Koliko fašizma?*, Studia Humanitatis Minora, Ljubljana, 1995  
<sup>02</sup> Rastko Močnik, »Extravagantia II: How much fascism?«, e-journal *Red Thread*, <http://www.red-thread.org/en/article.asp?a=19>

In fact, since the time when **Močnik**'s texts were written, many things have taken a turn for the worse – one can mention Berlusconiism, this »functional and post-modern equivalent of Fascism«<sup>03</sup> that has become just one more thing to get used to; or the fact that for the first time since WWII people are being expelled from Western European democracies solely on the basis of their ethnicity, as with the recent deportations of Bulgarian and Romanian Roma from France.

**Močnik**'s basic postulate remains – the question is not 'fascism – yes or no?' but 'How much fascism?'. In a recent article, **Hito Steyerl** points poignantly to the need to address precisely this 'question of the level' in the contemporary rise of fascism:

»How many hairs does one have to lose to be considered bald? Or, in political terms: How much civility can the public sphere lose without lapsing into fascism? How much fear among minorities and how much radical neoliberal pauperization is permissible for societies to still qualify as democracies?«<sup>04</sup>

Obviously, open manifestations of fascism are fairly easy to recognize [just as more and more of them are appearing]; but we need to turn our attention to the silent fascism that is becoming normalized through the systematic violence seeping into the laws and everyday administration practices of the nation-states, and to assess the mechanisms of oppression and the various symptoms of contemporary fascism that are being presented as unavoidable, pragmatic necessities. In other words, we have to look at the details.

- <sup>03</sup> Paolo Flores d'Arcais, »Anatomy of Berlusconiism«, *New Left Review* 68, p. 140  
<sup>04</sup> Hito Steyerl, »Right in Our Face«, *e-flux* journal, issue 22, 01/2011

The exhibition takes its title from the work 'Details' [2003-2011] by the Israeli filmmaker **Avi Mograbi**. 'Details' consists of short, concise extracts from his longer docu-fictional films. **Mograbi's** films bring to the fore the suppressed background of systemic violence and the means of its individual execution, asking questions about its personal and collective consequences and continually dissolving the idea of 'direct cinema', in which the author and camera are supposed to behave like the 'fly on the wall', apparently only observing, but not influencing reality. The author prefers to see himself, in his own words, as the »fly in the soup«, explicating by this metaphor not only his engagement but also his implication in the situation. **Mograbi** often appears in his own films questioning the ambivalence of his own role and position and the ensuing ethical dilemmas, using video as a tool for active intervention in events. Actually, in his films the camera as object is often directly attacked and censored. The installation 'Details' at **Bergen Kunsthall** juxtaposes excerpts from **Mograbi's** films in sequences of cacophonous rhythm, suggesting the simultaneity and interdependency of instances of oppression and humiliation, indoctrination and resistance.

The issues of gaze, engaged observation and intriguing [and often conflicting] relations among camera, author and environment are also present in the works of the US-based experimental geographer and artist **Trevor Paglen**. **Paglen** uses photography and video to reveal hidden US military landscapes and agendas. When he approaches his subject as closely as possible to expose it and make it visible, what actually emerges out of invisibility is not objects as such, but an idea of who we are as a society. In the framework of a multidisciplinary practice that draws on the social sciences, detective work, astronomy and contemporary art, his works investigate secret military operations, CIA programmes, prison torture, satellite surveillance and the 'black world' of the hidden military-industrial complex. A series of blurry and imprecisely framed photos shows fragments of various officially non-existent localities related to the CIA's 'extraordinary renditions'. The details of aircraft, terminals, and fuel storage facilities were obviously shot from a distance, in secrecy and probably in haste. Extraordinary rendition is a covert CIA programme that has been kidnapping suspected terrorists since the mid-1990s, and taking them to a network of

secret prisons, i.e. »black sites«. This photo series obsessively documents unmarked infrastructure used for the transportation of these ghost detainees. Another covert infrastructure linked to the »extraordinary rendition« programme is the so-called »drone project«. Used in the »War on Terror«, the drone is a robotic aircraft system which functions as a self-directing military weapon where erroneous targeting often causes collateral damage. **Paglen's** video shows footage, hacked from satellites, of stationary military pilots communicating with drones in the sky, referring to the fact that such weaponry enables extra-judicial and extra-territorial 'anonymous' state violence as an effective model of political power.

**Milica Tomić's** work centres on issues of political violence, memory and trauma, with particular attention to the tensions between personal experience and media-constructed images. Her installation »One day, instead of one night, a burst of machine-gun fire will flash, if light cannot come otherwise«, named after a fragment of a poem by Yugoslav Communist writer **Oskar Davičo**, consists of a video and newspaper 'documentation' of the walking actions she carried out between September and October 2009, in which **Tomić** revisited forgotten sites in Belgrade where anti-Fascist actions were mounted during WWII. Her work addresses the erasure of the memory of the anti-Fascist struggle of the People's Liberation Struggle, and reveals its relevance to the present moment with its invisible forms of fascism embedded in the administration of social life. The video shows a tall woman, the artist herself, walking down the Belgrade streets carrying a grocery bag in one hand and a machine gun in the other. The camera follows her from a distance, capturing indifferent scenery; she walks completely unnoticed, nobody reacts. The sound in the background is composed from series of interviews that **Tomić** conducted with protagonists of the anti-Fascist and Communist movements in Belgrade, people who took part in the historical actions she commemorates. The atmosphere of apathy on the street is juxtaposed with passionate statements and convictions expressed by real protagonists in anti-Fascist movements. The action bears a symbolic dedication to the young members of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Initiative, who around the time the artist conducted her actions were accused of an act of international terrorism for protesting in front of the Greek Embassy in Bel-

grade in solidarity with demonstrators in Greece. **Tomić's** work could thus be viewed as a public intervention that symbolically rebuilds a non-material monument to the political imagination, its past and its present. By commenting on legislative limitations on the right to engage in civil disobedience and to use public space in general, the artist indirectly questions the counter-violence against terror sanctioned by an idea of the nation-state that justifies the suspension of all constitutional procedures and legal protections.

The consolidation and protection of the sanctity of the nation and national identities also figure in the works by **Superflex**, **Burak Delier** and **Lene Berg**.

The poster and mural by the Danish group **Superflex**, »Foreigners please don't leave us alone with the Danes!«, first produced in 2002 and since shown in different geopolitical and cultural contexts, refers directly to the growing anti-immigration policies of Denmark, but certainly resonates in a larger European context. Since the late 1990s political rhetoric in Denmark has focused on the threat allegedly posed by foreigners to the cohesion and norms of Danish society, generating a discourse involving open hatred of immigrants, and instituting racist laws against immigrants. Almost a decade since it was first produced, the work has not lost any of its actuality. Questions pertaining to »imagined communities«, both national and supranational such as the European Union, and to the construction of collective identities based on the distinction between 'we' and 'the others', promoting ethnic homogeneity and, implicitly, racism, seem to be plaguing Europe today, with Denmark as the 'case study' that may remind us that »fascism is not aberrant to the nation-state imaginary, but rather its limit case«. <sup>05</sup> In the decade since it was made, the discreetly humorous tone of **Superflex's** invocation to foreigners, which turns the threat of expulsion into a plea for them to stay, self-ironically alluding to a multicultural, if not truly international context in which contemporary art is produced and circulated, has taken on darker overtones.

<sup>05</sup> Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe, The passing of mass utopia in East and West*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, 2002, p. 17

The Turkish artist **Burak Delier** appropriates neo-liberal strategies of culture-industry production management and control. In 2007 **Delier** inaugurated an imaginary pseudo-company »Tersyon/Reverse Direction«, which in his own words »says 'No!' to populism, conservative politics and the repressive tools of governments«. Using this company as a tool to intervene in and comment on the social surroundings, the enterprise created real products, such as a demonstration jacket, the *Parkalynch*, which protects protesters on the streets from the police, and the *Madimak '93* fire-resistant suit—a reference to the Madimak/Sivas assault in Turkey in 1993.

A video installation »The Feasibility Research« confronts market-research interviews with focus groups composed of various marginalized members of Turkish society [Kurds, transsexuals, woman's rights activists, leftist students etc.], with a 'regular' business meeting where professional market researchers comment on the collected data. Exploring the ways in which the society of control, via psychology and research on consumer focus groups, coerces us by exploiting our desires, **Delier** addresses the invisible, »soft fascism« based not on violent repression, but on numb consumerism.

**Lene Berg** often uses the iconic aura of real historical figures to juxtapose them with a number of the political, gender and social issues that these figures might evoke today. The historical figures—often, and not coincidentally, male—are freely used as iconic content and artistic material for creating various uncanny and poignant constellations. Her new work »Norwegian Products [Quisling and brown cheese in a bell jar]« features a figure of **Vidkun Quisling**, the Norwegian politician infamous for his seizure of power in collaboration with Nazism, whose name serves as a general synonym for 'traitor' and 'Fascist collaborator'. A small paper-cut figure of **Vidkun Quisling** standing on a famous Norwegian cheese, displayed as a sculpture on a white pedestal, conveniently protected by a bell jar instead of a more museum-like glass case, curiously blends national 'shame' and 'pride' in an unexpected encounter between two 'products' of Norwegian society. The cheese and **Quisling**, under the claustrophobic glass cover, point to the absurdity of mechanisms for constructing national identity and representation.

The exhibition engages with disparate details and fragmented narratives, the 'short-circuits between the particular and the universal' that **Močnik** considers characteristic of contemporary forms of fascism, presenting a series of case studies whose 'local' particularity is tested against broader social changes, through works that invoke a sense of solidarity that goes far beyond mere tolerance. At the same time, the works presented actively engage with the question of the role of art in times when democracy is increasingly being displaced to expert bodies wholly unaccountable to the electorate, and there is little doubt that the art world and its institutions are not where the decisions are being made. Still, without attempting to show any easy way out of the impasse, the works presented point to the possibility that the writer and activist **Brian Holmes** explicates in a number of his texts as 'ethics of inquiry' and an 'exploratory politics of perception', which is a responsibility that art today cannot afford to miss out on.

The initial impulse to look into 'silent fascism' was prompted by the rise of far-right – fascist – sentiments and politics throughout Europe: in The Netherlands, Hungary, Finland, Sweden, Austria and the European Parliament, to mention just a few places. However, the exhibition »Details« does not focus on these changes in the contemporary political landscape of Europe; rather, it examines how specific developments that used to be associated with peripheral regions of Europe 'in transition' to democracy, have shifted and moved to the core of Europe, and examines their relationships with the 'structural changes' that go under the name of neo-liberalism and the consequent rise of certain manifestations of 'fascism'. The exhibition was conceived before the tragic events in Oslo and Utøya shook not only Norway, but also some of the ideological assumptions about 'Europe'. The resulting fact – that the themes of the exhibition seem at the moment to be almost uncannily topical in the Norwegian context – is a clear enough indication of the cognitive power of art and the potential of aesthetic experience for questioning reality and shaking up the moral complacency and political resignation that permit loss of control over the direction of social transformation. ■



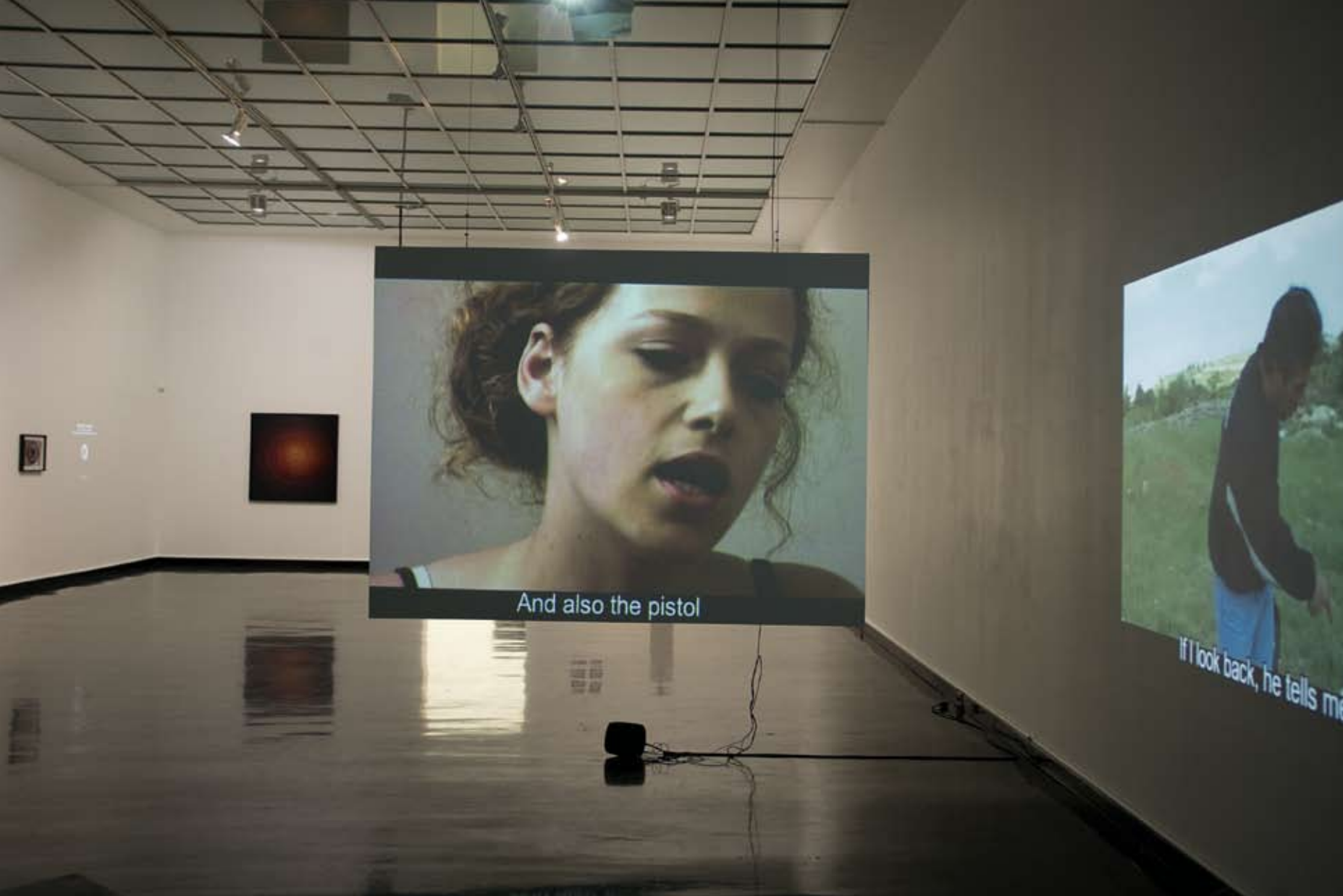
**Milica Tomić**

One day, instead of one night,  
a burst of machine-gun fire will flash,  
if light cannot come otherwise

[Oskar Davičo – fragment of a poem]

Dedicated to the members of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Initiative  
– Belgrade, 3. September, 2009.

action/intervention in the public space, Belgrade, 2009,  
photo: Srđan Veljović



The thesis that liberal democracy automatically produces fascistoid effects and that in a system of parliamentary rule the removal of such »reflexes« is a permanent task is seductive, albeit somewhat old-fashioned. In its more pessimistic variants, this thesis maintains that fascism is one of the possible responses to the internal contradictions of parliamentarianism, and that therefore classical liberal policies are not successful when fighting fascism. But even if we accept this, we may say, somewhat simplified view, we can note that, nevertheless, additional reasons are needed, special circumstances in which the »fascistoid by-products« of liberal democracy become truly significant. One of such special reasons may be if a sense of insecurity spreads among broad segments of the population. In the current circumstances of intensified social stratification, economic transformation and peripheral inclusion in the capitalist system, this precondition is certainly fulfilled. We can also define this reason differently: fascism may be a way of resolving a real crisis in the existing relations between the economy and exploitation.

*Extravagantia II: Koliko Fašizma?*  
 [Extravagantia II: How much fascism?]  
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»Details«, installation view  
 [Avi Mograbi, Trevor Paglen]



»Details«, installation view  
 [Avi Mograbi]

»Details«, installation view  
 [Trevor Paglen]



# Let's talk about fascism

Hito Steyerl

★ Yes, I mean it. Not about psychology or evil as such. Not about insanity or sudden unpredictable doom. You are trying to avoid the topic. The topic is fascism.

We have seen a similar avoidance after the attacks in Oslo and on Utøya. As if societies did not want to trust their own eyes and ears. The perpetrator<sup>01</sup> has extensively articulated his neo-fascist beliefs. Yet people are trying to avoid facing this fact. His act is not called an act of terror, but of lunacy. It is depoliticized and represented as a private deviation that unexpectedly struck the country like a natural disaster. It is thus divorced from the political dimension and becomes a private, individual action.

But this avoidance has something more to tell us. It points to a gap in representation itself. It originates in very serious epistemological and political issues that are deeply worked into the fabric of contemporary fascism and its resurgence all over Europe and beyond. More than this: they are embedded very fundamentally in the ways in which we perceive contemporary reality.

The fundamental problem is not a lack of morals, though. Nor is it a question of good or evil, sanity or illness. It is the issue of representation. On the one hand political representation, on the other cultural representation; and in fact thirdly of economic participation. What do all of these have to do with the public reactions to the recent massacre?

## POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

So what are political and cultural representation? More precisely: what are the disparities between and within these concepts? They rest on contra-

<sup>01</sup> I know he is presumed innocent, yet in this case it seems to be safe to speak of him as the perpetrator.

dictions that are irresolvable; and fascism seems to be a convenient jump cut to an attempt to explode these different aporias.

Let's start with the basics. Political representation in a liberal democracy is mainly gained by participation in the electoral process. This requires citizenship. True political representation is thus inadequate in all European democracies.

This is well known. But there are much more general and pressing issues now. Political power is increasingly being eroded. Who achieves or doesn't achieve political representation matters less and less. Even people with full political privileges, members of parties—even parliaments—are increasingly being ignored. Because whatever the people want, whoever they are, and regardless of who represents them, the contemporary sovereigns are mainly the 'markets'. The 'markets', not the people, are to be appeased, satisfied and pleased by the political class. In the area of economics, representation exists too. Participation in economic processes is measured by the ability to get credit, to own and to consume. This also explains the contemporary rage against what is essentially economic or consumer exclusion. Many contemporary riots do not have political goals—why should they, since political action proves powerless in many cases?—but strive for economic participation: the most concentrated expression of this is the looting of shopping malls.

This erosion of political power is one of the results of decades of redistribution of wealth, opportunity and actual power from the poor to the rich. While it was possible, the poor were appeased with credit and indentured shopping. As this no longer seems to work, economic participation becomes a battleground.

But what does all this have to do with fascism? On the surface, nothing. But these phenomena are



Burak Delier  
Tersyon, 2007  
[detail]

all symptoms of what could tentatively be called post-democracy. In post-democracy, politics is successively abandoned as a means of organizing the common.

Post-democracy is also felt within political institutions. Citizens of the European Union, for example, are faced with a host of institutions that are not democratically legitimized [among these, again, financial institutions, which are not subject to any political control]. The votes of citizens do not have the same weight, depending on their citizenship, thus creating different classes of political representation. Within Europe and beyond, oligarchies of all kinds are on the rise. Retreating bureaucracies are replaced with authoritarian rule, tribal rackets and organized vigilantism. The so-called monopoly of violence is increasingly being privatized, handed over to private armies, security companies and outsourced gangs. Forces that could be controlled democratically are weakening, while states and other actors impose their agendas through emergency powers or so-called 'necessity'. There have been so many examples of this over the last few decades that I don't even want to start listing them.

All of these symptoms intensify anxieties around the idea of political representation as such. Weren't we promised equality? Yes, we were. Wasn't the idea of democracy that we'd all be represented? No, we aren't. Political representation involves a certain arbitrariness and randomness—to a certain extent they are inherent in it,<sup>02</sup> but they seem to be accelerating at a tremendous rate right now. It involves instability, unpredictability and a large dose of futility.

#### CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

So how about cultural representation, then? What is it anyway? Cultural representation is [in many cases, visual] representation in the public realm. Via texts, advertisements, popular culture, TV—you name it. We don't need to go into this, you only have to look around you. The situation appears to be quite different here. There is an overabundance of representation of almost anything and anybody: in commercial as well as social media. This avalanche of representation has increased a

<sup>02</sup> For example Kojin Karatani: *Transcritique. On Kant and Marx*. [Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003]. p.151.

great deal with digital technologies. That things and people are represented culturally doesn't mean much, though. It just means that lots of images are floating around, hustling for attention.

What is the relation, then, between political and cultural representation? Between *Darstellung* und *Vertretung*, or between proxy and portrait, as Gayatri Spivak put it?

There is one. But it isn't the one that has traditionally been assumed to exist. Some 30-40 years ago, early Cultural Studies with its Gramscian implications understood cultural representation as some sort of visual democracy. The assumption went something like this: if people were represented culturally in a positive way, political equality would become more likely. Passionate battles over the idea of a politics of representation characterized a large part of the 80s [and in many places, way beyond them].

But we are now realizing that something in this equation went wrong; or, to put it more neutrally, something changed dramatically. While cultural representation of everything is undergoing massive inflation [coupled with the devaluation and degradation of most individual images, texts and sounds] political representation is not only uneven, it is also less and less relevant. The two realms also seem to be running wildly out of synch. The period of the exponential growth of all things represented, the era of the proliferation of circulating images and data, is also the period of the radicalization of anti-immigration policies, the institution of increasingly harsh border regimes, the growth of neo-fascist [some prefer to call them right-wing populist] movements and parties, and a general loss of the authority of politics.

If one were to push the point, one could conclude that there is almost an inversely proportional relationship between political and cultural representation. The more people are represented culturally, and the more they snap one another on their cellphones and submit to Facebook surveillance schemes, the less they matter politically. But this may be only partly the case. The real link is perhaps that both types function perfectly erratically and unevenly. They are both more portrait than proxy, and not necessarily very good portraits either.



Lene Berg, Norwegian Products, 2011 [detail]

#### GUDBRANDSDALS CHEESE RICH AND ROUND

This brown cheese is one of the things that make Norwegians—Norwegians. Our distinctly Norwegian cheeses are traditionally made from Anne Hov's original 1863 recipe.

Scanned cheese wrapper, July 2011

#### Today is Vidkun Quisling's speech on the University Square at 20:30 all cinemas will be closed.

Announcement in *Morgenbladet*, July 1941

#### THE COLLAPSE OF REPRESENTATION

And now the refusal to acknowledge fascism, even though it is proclaimed publicly and backed up with atrocities, as in the case of the attacks in Oslo and Utøya, becomes clearer—because this avoidance points to a blind spot that links the problem of representation with fascism.

Why is this so? It is because in fascism, representation collapses. It is short-circuited by attempts to avoid all the complications inherent in it, and to label representation as an alien and foreign

concept. Fascism claims to express the essence of the people by imposing a leader and by replacing cultural representation with caricatures passed off as simple truth. It tries to get rid of representation altogether.

And indeed there are many reasons to be suspicious of contemporary representation. In both political and cultural representation, the link between represented and representation seems to have become dramatically more complicated in recent years, and it very often disintegrates com-

pletely. Representation, as we know it, is heading for a crash—or rather it is nose-diving in a vertiginous tailspin.

In cultural representation, the concept of reality has been stressed to an unprecedented extent. Many of the rules and conventions of visual representation have become almost obsolete with the recent digital revolution. In the case of pictures, the so-called indexical bond of photography [which was always dubious] has been shattered by copy-and-paste technologies, accelerated fog-of-war campaigns and unprecedented opportunities for scams, misinformation and deceit. Traditional truth procedures—journalistic, legal and to some extent also scientific—have been replaced by digital rumour, widespread deregulation, the law of demand and Wikipedia-like, crowd-sourced ‘knowledge’. Of course, cultural representation has always been tricky. But the emergence of fascism 2.0 speaks to a period in which digital rancour can spread like wildfire, fueled by avatars who can hardly be linked to real people any more. Just as representation as such has been untethered from institutional control, its content has in many cases been divorced from any empirical reality. Don’t get me wrong. I don’t think the digital revolution is a bad thing. On the contrary, it has enabled many great advances in the free circulation of information. But at the cost of increased uncertainty and instability. There is no denying this either.

In political representation, one of the major realizations of recent years is that even those who are politically represented feel powerless, as power today seems to be coded more economically than politically. So, ironically, political representation starts to resemble cultural representation. It becomes more portrait than proxy, while its internal contradictions increase. Complications thus intensify, with both political and cultural representation.

#### FINANCE AND EPISTEMOLOGY

Maybe the common denominator of all these diverse slippages in representation is the notion of speculation. Speculation is at once a financial and an epistemological tool. In finance, speculation means to take a step whose implications cannot be safely predicted. Not all the information is [or can be] available at the time of taking the decision. Risk is thus increased, but presumably so is opportunity. Speculation also means that value is

increasingly unhitched from the object to which it refers. It does not refer to the thing in question any more, but to the context of its circulation and the affects attached to it. It represents mood swings around derivatives of derivatives. It is more like video feedback from a wildly agitated hand-held camera feed than a conventional still-image illustration [and by this I do not mean to imply that the latter is more truthful than the former—just more predictable].

It is not difficult to see how this relates to speculation as a tool of observation and research. *Speculari* means to observe in Latin. It is used as the Latin translation of the Greek *theoria* and describes the quest for the essence or origins of things behind their empirical existence. At the same time, it refers to a jump into the haze of pure appearance, as **Augustine’s** reflections on the recognition of God in a dark mirror suggest. According to **Hans Reichenbach**, speculation characterizes periods of transition in philosophy, when the questions exceed the possible rational means of answering them. Thus philosophical speculation also presents risks and opportunities. It presents the possibility of thinking outside the box as well as the danger of getting completely lost out there.

But speculation has also come to characterize many vernacular processes of representation. All the things that are not known, but are suspected. All the rumours that are not substantiated. All the complexity lost in compression. Viral videos, whose circulation multiplies in bubbles of representation, a thick coating of affect dripping from them. Grainy, abstract footage from war zones. The addiction to emergency and catastrophe, and their subsequent inflation on exponentially multiplying screens. The loss of confidence in images and any other referential values and their relation to whatever they refer to.

Many of the processes that characterize speculation in general—above all its risky and unsubstantiated relation to reality—are inherent in digital representation practices. Representation as such is extremely dynamized by speculation. The result is that the relation between referent and sign, between person and proxy, becomes extremely unpredictable—like many other contemporary phenomena. Speculation turbo-charges representation; it accelerates the tailspin that we are living through today.

This is not solely bad news. Speculation as a method opens up new freedoms of expression and thought, which on the other hand can easily be put to terrible use. Opportunities arise by the minute—and realities are destroyed and wasted simultaneously. This opens up new horizons of thinking, which in many cases end up as complete delusions. It is a harbinger of possibility and exploration, just as it plays into bigotry and bias.

This is where fascism comes into play. Where representation collapses or spins off into precipitous loops and feedbacks, fascism seemingly offers easy answers. It is the panic button for blocking off annoying remnants of reality.

By apparently doing away with the complications of representation, fascism manages to obfuscate that it is the highest form of contemporary speculative representation: its point of collapse, or of impact. The crash itself is at once over- and unrepresented. A blind spot filled with delusion and death. The irreversible parting of the ways with empirical reality.

The good news for fascists is that their ideology is so compatible with contemporary economic paradigms. Because it resonates perfectly with an ideology in which society is nothing and the individual’s greed and will to power are everything. In which tribe and racket rule supreme and flattened stereotypes hyperventilate. Especially in an era of first-person shooter games and online fanaticism, fascism seems like an ideal complement to ‘overdrive capitalism’: a built-in competitive advantage for Aryans. Not only does it promise to reintroduce a [completely speculative] referent for value, namely race or culture; conveniently, it also promises its target audience that it will be in the upper echelon of the class divide, because dirty and low-paid jobs will be dumped on ‘subhumans’. It presents a seeming alternative to the brutal equality of liberal democracy in which everybody is presumed to ‘make it’ or fail, by presenting itself as self-evident ‘truth’. In fascism, the abstract equality of capitalist liberalism is abolished by the collapse of class into race. It is a perfect ideology for lazy Aryans: you enjoy all the benefits of capitalism without actually having to work.

At this point we recognize that the words ‘Aryan’ and ‘race’ can be replaced with other copy-and-paste jargons that share similar premises. Most

terror attacks of the last decade have actually been initiated by right-wing extremists who want their respective cultures to remain ‘pure’ and exclusive, who hate women, communists and most minorities [minorities from their point of view, that is] and cook up an ideology centred around testosterone-driven masculinity. Not all of these ideologies are fascist, and there is no point trying to boil them all down to this notion. But all of them try to replace equality by uniformity—however they define the latter.

But here is the point. None of what I have written about necessarily leads to fascism. It presents the context that facilitates its emergence: it doesn’t inevitably lead to it. The reason is simple. People have the choice. Anybody can choose to become a fascist or not. And most people, thankfully, have so far chosen not to.

And one can also choose not to ignore the problem. Instead of denying these challenges, we should face up to them. We should face up to the complete unhinging of reality by reintroducing checks and balances, by renegotiating value and information, by insisting on representation and human solidarity. This also includes acknowledging and opposing real existing fascism and its countless derivatives and franchises. Denying its existence means surrendering to a newly emerging paradigm of post-politics and post-democracy; to a complete turning-away from reality. ■

on the following pages

**Milica Tomić**

One day, instead of one night,  
a burst of machine-gun fire will flash,  
if light cannot come otherwise  
[Oskar Davičo – fragment of a poem]

Dedicated to the members of  
the Anarcho-Syndicalist Initiative - Belgrade,  
3. September, 2009

action/intervention in the public space,  
Belgrade, 2009  
photo: Milica Lopičić

The ideology of the rulers should be distinguished from the ruling ideology. The ruling ideology is the one that exists, in material terms, within the institutional network, and the current glue of the institutional network is the ethnic state. On the other hand, the ideology of the rulers, the ether of self-understanding of the ruling class, or at least the greater part of its factions, is the ideology of pacts concluded between the political class and other power groups [in the economy, administration, the machinery for producing public opinion, and only partially in »culture«]. It is also, which is of particular importance – a tool for establishing short-term »civic« consensuses on the horizon of the nationalist »grand narrative.«

*Extravagantia II: Koliko Fašizma?*

[*Extravagantia II: How much fascism?*]

A selection from the book by Rastko Močnik, p. 4,  
published at Red Thread e-journal,

<http://www.red-thread.org/en/article.asp?a=19>



# Collective Hatred:

Xenophobia, Sex + Some Fascism; or, Why Breivik Loves Denmark

Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen

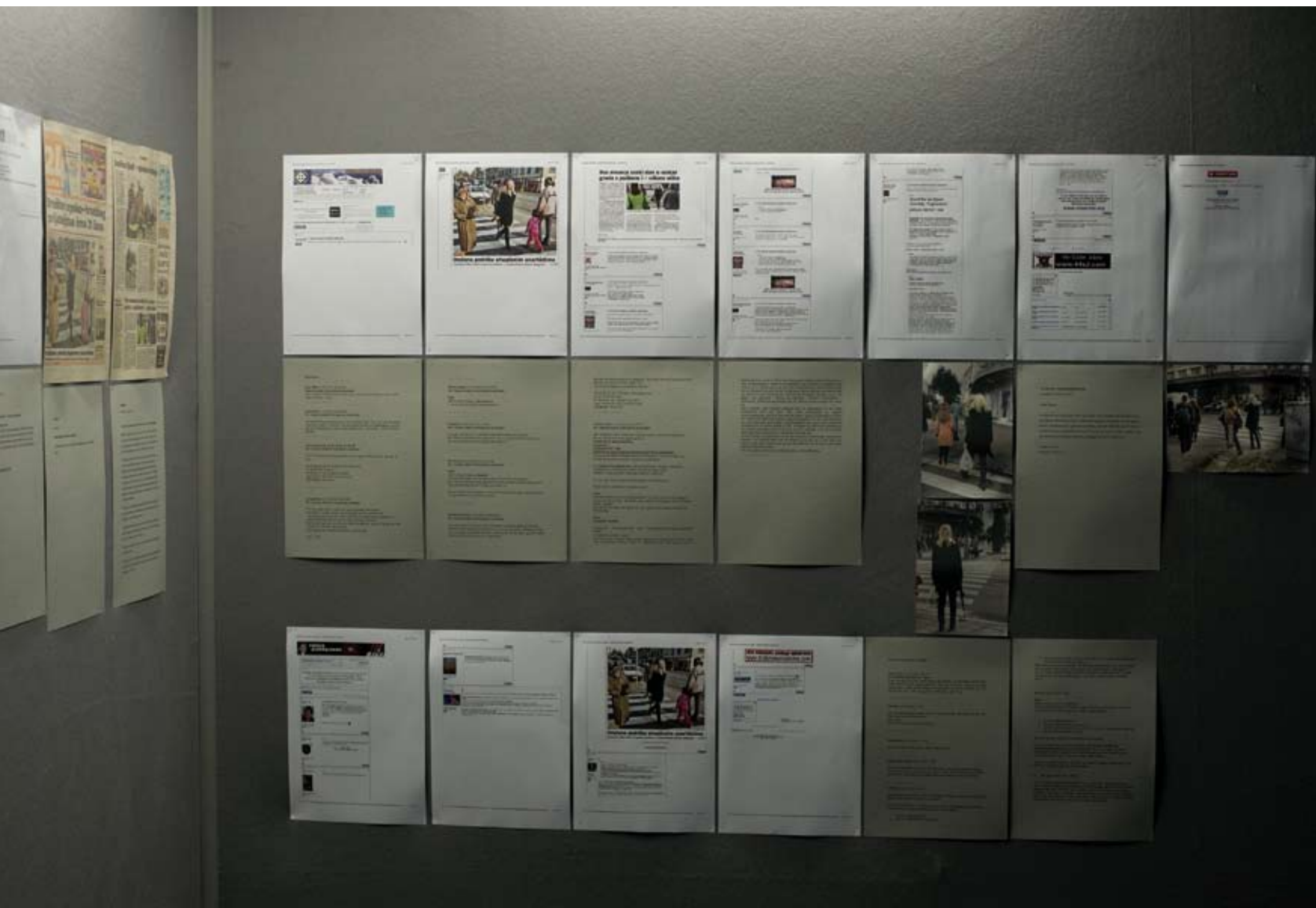


**Trevor Paglen**  
Workers; Gold Coast  
Terminal; Las Vegas, NV;  
Distance ~ 1 mile, 8:58 a.m.,  
2007

★ In his 1400+ page manuscript, »2083 – A European Declaration of Independence«, e-mailed to 1,003 addresses just before the detonation of a bomb in central Oslo, killing eight people, and a couple of hours before his shooting of 69 members of the Norwegian youth section of the Social Democratic Party on the island of Utøya on 22 July 2011, the self-proclaimed »Marxist Hunter« **Anders Behring Breivik** expresses his utmost admiration of the Danish debate on foreigners and Denmark's status as »one of the leading nations opposing Islamisation«.

It is no coincidence that **Breivik** singles out Denmark: in Scandinavia and Western Europe, Denmark has spearheaded the hegemony of anti-immigrant right-wing populism and the implementation of genuine race laws. Preventing almost any kind of immigration and asylum and controlling the everyday life of the foreigners who have managed to come to Denmark has become government-sanctioned policy supported by almost all parties in the Danish parliament. Since the mid-1990s the xenophobic Danish People's Party has campaigned against a perceived Muslim threat and advanced the idea of a certain Danish national identity that must be protected against invading hordes. Over the last decade this party, headed by **Pia Kjaersgaard**, has defined Danish refugee policy through its support of the conservative-liberal government. **Kjaersgaard's** party with its explicit racist, anti-Muslim discourse has been able to stage itself as the very embodiment of Danish identity, celebrating the Danish nation and its people. The two governing parties, the Conservative People's Party and the Liberal Party, as well as the largest party in opposition, the Social Democratic Party, now all regard racism as a key feature of the workings of the Danish nation-state and its state apparatus. These parties already started competing with the Danish People's Party for the racist vote in the late 1990s, and since then they have been unable to retreat from this slide towards full-scale racism as official policy in Denmark. The only explicit, uncompromising opposition to this regime comes from outside the established political system; namely the loosely organized youth movement protesting various interconnected events like the eviction of young people from the Youth House in 2007 and the forced deportation of asylum seekers on a more or less regular basis.<sup>01</sup> These protests take place, however, in a context where the Danish media rationalize racism as a necessary counterweight to rampant multiculturalism, so the protests must necessarily assume a defen-

**01** Cf. Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen: »On the Youth House Protests and the Situation in Copenhagen«, in *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, no. 6, 2009, pp. 222-229.



sive character, primarily by creating disorder and attacking the prevailing ideas. Although the financial crisis and the explosive events in North Africa and the Middle East will probably only heighten the anti-Muslim rhetoric in Denmark and Western Europe in the short term, there does seem to be something new afoot that will challenge the present racist neoliberal regime. Time will tell.

#### MALE FANTASIES

Klaus Theweleit's *Male Fantasies*, the freewheeling 70s Reich-Deleuze & Guattarian analysis of the German proto-Nazi militia, the so-called Freikorps, gives us fairly good insight into the subjectivity of the contemporary right-wing xenophobia of which Anders Breivik is an example.<sup>02</sup> As Theweleit uncovered in detail, the mili-

02 Klaus Theweleit: *Male Fantasies*, Vol. I & II [*Männerphantasien*, Vol. I & II, 1977-1978], trans. Chris Turner & Erica Carter [London: Polity Press, 1987 & 1989].

#### Milica Tomić

One day, instead of one night, a burst of machine-gun fire will flash, if light cannot come otherwise [Oskar Davičo – fragment of a poem] Dedicated to the members of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Initiative - Belgrade, 3. September, 2009 action/intervention in the public space, Belgrade, 2009 installation view [detail]

tarist and misogynist attitude of the nationalist quasi-mercenaries who played a role in the crackdown on the German Revolution in the years 1918-1923 was driven by a fear of dissolving boundaries—Germany's as well as their own bodily boundaries—and a resulting reactive need to affirm the body's hardness and invulnerability. According to Theweleit, the annihilating violence of the Freikorps which terrorized the cities and border regions of Germany after the end of the First World War was a desperate attempt to secure both the borders of the German nation and their own bodies against the possibility of lasting communist revolution and feminine contamination. The soldiers Theweleit analyses all show a phobic resistance to flows and movements of all sorts, associating these with the sexual and the feminine as well as communism. The Freikorps soldiers were losing control and therefore approached what they perceived to be threats to the integrity of both their nation and their bodies with a kind of thoroughly disciplined, annihilating violence that was meant to efface any recognizable trace of the imagined or real adversary. This violence bore a systematic resemblance to the symbolic order revealed in the many different forms of their fantasy production.

This sexually charged fear of the foreign body that Theweleit finds in the Freikorps is present in Breivik in his visual self-staging, where he poses as a militia soldier fighting for Europe, as a masonic high priest working for a higher cause, and as a heavily armed member of a Marxist Hunters firing squad prepared to do the dirty, but necessary job. The different uniforms, including the police uniform Breivik had on at Utøya, were necessary pieces of equipment or paraphernalia with which Breivik was able to transform himself into a mercenary or »Marxist Hunter« as it says on the sleeve of one of the uniforms he posed in. These outfits are not just some kind of camouflage. They are Breivik's very project. Armouring and strengthening himself by transforming himself into a freedom fighter on a mission hell-bent on re-establishing order, preventing Muslim immigration and the mixing and hybridity of the multiculturalism Breivik so feared. He wants to appear clean and uncontaminated. In the photos Breivik thus makes himself into a cool executioner and he is visibly filled with self-love and excitement. He is now the master of his own destiny, able to control and stop the flux and movements that threaten to undermine Europe as well as Breivik himself.

According to survivors from the shooting at Utøya, Breivik shouted with joy whenever he shot someone. There is a clear sexual dimension to the shooting. Breivik enjoyed the killing of the young people. He was manifesting his power, his subjectivity. He was on a mission, punishing the traitors that were creating disorder. He was defending Europe and recreating himself as the avant-garde of European defence against a powerful foreign enemy working in cahoots with internal forces ready to surrender and destroy the age-old Christian European civilization. Shaping the chaotic mass with force and violence, awakening people to a historical mission, stopping multiculturalism and violently annihilating the foreign

within. **Breivik** was more a god than a criminal, hence the narcissistic confidence evident in the photos, the self-satisfied look on **Breivik's** face. The uniforms signal control: **Breivik** is in charge, taking things into his own hands. That is also why he insists on appearing either in uniform with masonic decorations during the trial or, if that is not possible, in white tie and tails. Appearance is everything, appearing strong and in control enables **Breivik** to give birth to himself as an all-powerful subject unmediated by feminine mediation and uncontaminated by foreign influence. That is also why **Breivik** was willing and even eager to lay down his arms following the massacre, provided he was apprehended by uniformed personnel. »Mission accomplished. Will surrender to SWAT team,« he allegedly told Norwegian police over the phone. **Breivik** was by no means involved in a suicidal war on the system. On the contrary, surrendering, giving himself over to the symbolic authorities, was for him the ultimate victory.

Following **Theweleit's** psychoanalytic reading of the Freikorps, it is possible to see **Breivik** as driven by fear of bodily breakdown and European integration. In **Breivik**, these two fears coalesce. Together they constitute the driving force in his desperate desire to create a strong body and images of potency meant to signify a unified Europe rejecting foreign influence. In **Breivik's** manifesto Islam and feminism fuse into a dangerous substance that must be rejected by any means necessary. In his manifesto he writes about »female manipulation« arguing that feminism is undermining the West from the inside weakening it by emasculating men, thereby creating space for an Islamist takeover. **Breivik** constructs a personal narration in which he is himself feminized by his feminist mother and a culture characterized by unmanly norms and ruled by women like **Gro Harlem Brundtland**. The solution to this decline is obviously hardening oneself and trying to stage oneself as a potent man, a warrior taking matters into his own hands, minimizing contact with women, having no girlfriend but hiring »two high class model whores in Prague«, celebrating his coming act in highly planned circumstances that he can control himself.

**Breivik's** obsession with his own body and appearance, and his fear of foreign contamination are common features of right-wing xenophobia.<sup>03</sup> It is for instance a pivotal point in the rhetoric of the Danish People's Party, where the former member of the European Parliament **Mogens Camre** in particular has specialized in articulating scorn for the foreign Muslim body. **Camre** never misses an opportunity to speak about the vile appearance of Muslim women.

»It's a fact that many immigrant women are suppressed and malnourished because their husbands want to show their wealth by having a big, fat wife.«<sup>04</sup>

Like other right-wing racists, **Camre** of course pretends to be speaking on behalf of the suppressed Muslim women: it is for the sake of these repressed women that we repress [and wage war]. The references to headscarves, circumcision and halal food are used to create a negative stereotype of the foreign body staged as unassimilable to the already-established national community. In many respects,

03 Cf. Carsten Juhl: *Globalæstetik: Verdensfølelsen og det kosmopolitiske perspektiv* [København: Billedkunstskolernes Forlag, Det Kongelige Danske Kunstakademi, 2007], pp. 217-218.

04 Mogens Camre, comment in the television programme »Helt ærligt, mand«, DR [Danish Broadcasting Corporation] 10.09.1998.

the constant focus on the dress and food practices of Muslims are more important for the anti-Muslim Right wing than the religious rituals of Islam, highlighting that this is indirectly a question of biopolitics. In the disappearance of social bonds and boundaries, society is domesticated as a biological entity by excluding the imaginary barbarism inscribed in the Muslim body from a non-existent national community. In **Breivik**, the barbarism of biopolitical exclusion is twisted and re-inscribed in the existing social body—as symbolically scripted bloodshed.

#### DANISH DECADENCE

Even though there is a long prehistory to the present xenophobic misery in Denmark, it was in the late 1990s and especially with the election in November 2001 that the Islamophobic Right gained influence and recognition. Xenophobic worldviews and ideas had of course been present before, for instance in the Progress Party that crashed into parliament in 1973 with an amazing 28 seats [15.9 % of the votes] making it the second largest party at the time. Originally the party had also focused on income tax and cutting government spending, but during the 1980s the question of »foreigners« became the overriding issue under the slogan: »Make Denmark a Muslim-Free Zone.«<sup>05</sup> As a result of internal splits and disputes the party fell apart in the early 1990s, and in 1995 members from the Progress Party founded the Danish People's Party, creating a much more professional party completely controlled by its leaders. Several of these came from an intellectual right-wing organization called The Danish Association that had organized an endless number of meetings and discussions and agitated in the press, warning against the threat from Islam, since 1987. In Denmark the right wing has never been able to organize big demonstrations or actions in the streets, so the organization deliberately concentrated on spreading its xenophobic ideas through writings in the press, meetings and online. The storyline was the same every time: Denmark has to be defended against foreign threats, meaning primarily Islam but occasionally also the EU; multiculturalism is an attempt to destroy the Danish nation; the political elite has betrayed the common people. These claims became the politics of the Danish People's Party. In its own understanding the party formed the last line of defence against a fifth column of Muslims striving to take over the world.

The Danish People's Party offered a clear-cut world view at a time when the governing Social Democratic Party had embraced neo-liberalism and was reforming the Danish welfare society, and the other left-wing parties in the Danish parliament had difficulties situating themselves when it came to issues such as the EU and 'globalization'. As **Jørgen Goul Andersen** has shown, the withering of the traditional working class broke down former election patterns and the Danish People's Party was ready to pick up the disillusioned voters, stressing the threat from outside and demanding publicly financed social benefits reserved for »real Danes.«<sup>06</sup> It did not take long before the Social Democratic party joined the fight for the racist vote, and by the end of the 1990s the whole political

05 In 2010 there were only 363,634 immigrants, including descendants from so-called third-world countries living in Denmark, out of a total population of 5,534,378.

06 Cf. Jørgen Goul Andersen and Tore Bjørklund: »Radical Right-Wing Populism in Scandinavia: From Tax Revolt to Neo-Liberalism and Xenophobia«, in Paul Hainsworth [ed.]: *The Politics of the Extreme Right: From the Margins to the Mainstream* [London & New York: Pinter, 2000], pp. 193-223.

spectrum had taken a radical turn to the right that culminated in the election in 2001 when the liberal **Anders Fogh Rasmussen** formed a government with the Conservative People's Party backed by the Danish People's Party. The new government took on the nationalist agenda of the Danish People's Party and launched a so-called »Battle of Culture« where Danish values were highlighted and presented as threatened by foreign forces and mocked by the left wing who had allowed Danish culture and spiritual life to slowly wither away. 9/11 was evidence of this »clash of civilizations« that necessitated a fierce and strong response. Muslims were a permanent threat to »our way of life« and it was natural as well as necessary to treat them as second-rate citizens. The result of this process was the creation of something we might term Danish national-democratic authenticity-totalitarianism, a particular mixture of democracy, racism and fascism.<sup>07</sup> At home Muslims and the left wing were targeted as possible enemies, and abroad Denmark participated in the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. Each year saw new measures in racist policy, including deportation of Iraqis back to a country in a state of civil war, deportation of Roma, denaturalization of convicted immigrants, banning of the hijab and tightening of immigration rules.

In Denmark today we have race laws and politicians from all major parties using a language of colonization and resistance. Xenophobia has become naturalized and is part of everyday behaviour and language. Extreme views have become mainstream. The Minister of Development and Integration, **Søren Pind** from the Liberal Party, wrote on his blog hosted by the daily **Berlingske Tidende** last year:

»These people [refugees] should not be a part of the open society. It is not fair that the Western world should feed these people who want to kill us. We have a right to defend ourselves and the life we have freely chosen.«<sup>08</sup>

This is a discourse of hatred and fear. The response to this perceived threat is a liberation struggle. As member of parliament, the pastor and writer **Søren Krarup**, one of the chief ideologues in the Danish People's Party, states:

»We are in a resistance fight that is probably more comprehensive and radical than during the German occupation [during the Second World War] because what we are fighting is nothing less than a complete annihilation of Danish freedom, Danish democracy and Danish culture.«<sup>09</sup>

The »Battle of Culture« was part of this liberation struggle against what **Brian Mikkelsen**, then Minister of Culture, later appointed Minister of Economic Affairs, called »a medieval Muslim culture in Denmark«. The refrain has been constant:

»It might sound offensive but Islam is a totalitarian regime that has thousands of deaths on its conscience. The headscarf is a symbol of this regime and the Koran can be compared to **Hitler's Mein Kampf**.«<sup>10</sup>

**07** Cf. Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen: »The Turn to Liberal State Racism in Denmark«, in *e flux journal*, no. 22, 2011, online at: <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/203>

**08** Søren Pind, in *berlingske blogs*, 2.01, 2010.

**09** Søren Krarup, in *Jyske Vestkysten*, 5.02, 2006.

**10** Søren Krarup, speech in the Danish Parliament, 23.04, 2007.

**Mogens Camre** received the biggest salvo of applause during the 2001 Danish People's Party conference when he ostentatiously shouted:

»The Islamic fundamentalists have declared war on the West and we have no defence if we don't locate and eliminate the enemy among us regardless of skin colour.«<sup>11</sup>

As the quotes from **Søren Pind** and **Brian Mikkelsen** make clear, the Danish People's Party is not alone in regarding Islam as a new totalitarianism, opposed to 'Western Enlightenment values' like freedom, poised for world domination and about to take over Europe and Denmark. The Conservative People's Party and the Liberal Party shared this xenophobic view.

#### NEW [RACIST] RIGHT, OLD [NATIONALIST] LEFT

The Danish People's Party is one example of the New Right that appeared in the late 1990s and early 2000s throughout Western Europe, united by a violent rejection of immigrants and Islam. As sociologists and philosophers like **Martin Barker** and **Étienne Balibar** have argued, within the last three decades the old race-based racism of the old far right has been replaced with what has become known as cultural racism where it is no longer biology and notions of evolution but cultural differences that legitimize discriminatory political practices like those in Denmark.<sup>12</sup> The biological racism operative within Nazi ideology in the 1930s, for instance, no longer plays a central role in the West, although it is still very much present in the new member states of the European Union, where it connects to a history that was disconnected during the Cold War, thriving on the tremendous inequality resulting from the extreme neoliberalization after the fall of the Wall.<sup>13</sup> But in Western Europe the 'racialist' racism has been superseded by a focus on culture and cultural difference. As **Martin Barker** wrote as long ago as the early 1980s, the discourse of 'inferior races' has been replaced by references to 'different ethnic backgrounds' or 'cultural differences' that are regarded as basic and unchangeable, as a kind of organic substance. The core of the new racism is thus not race but national identity, which is looked upon as closed in on itself and defined by an unchanging essence that can nevertheless come under some kind of attack or threat from a foreign culture. The foreigner is necessarily a potential threat to the national culture or identity that has a core [religion, language, sentiment and history]. The national identity, or what **Balibar** terms »fictive ethnicity«, can only be shared by the dominant group bound together by 'natural' ties of kith and kin. A foreigner can never belong to this group, and a foreign culture necessarily represents a contamination and subversion of the organic national culture and its integrity. But it is not only foreign cultures that threaten the national culture. 'Internal' forces that are hospitable to these cultures also threaten to undermine national identity. In a classic inversion, the dominant xenophobic majority in power represents itself as a victim of both foreign and internal assaults.

**11** Mogens Camre, speech at the Danish People's Party 2001 conference, 16.9.2001.

**12** Martin Barker: *The New Racism* [London: Junction Books, 1981]; Etienne Balibar: »Racism as Universalism« [»Le racisme: encore un universalisme?«], in *Masses, Classes, Ideas: Studies on Politics and Philosophy: Before and After Marx* [La crainte des masses. Politique et philosophie avant et après Marx], trans. James Swenson [London: Routledge, 1994], pp. 191-204.

**13** Cf. G. M. Tamás: »On Post-Fascism«, *Boston Review* summer 2000, online at: <http://bostonreview.net/BR25.3/tamas.html>.



The racist notion of culture has been put to widespread use over recent decades not only by the various anti-Muslim right-wing parties that have been gaining ground in Western Europe, but also by liberal and centre-left parties in several countries. From the 1990s onward the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has repeatedly expressed concern over the way the mass media in several European countries including Denmark, Britain and Holland engage in inflammatory campaigns against asylum seekers and refugees, perpetuating cultural racism in Western Europe. As **Richard Seymour** recently wrote in *International Socialism*, what has happened in the last two decades is that »segments of liberal opinion have adopted the New Right's agenda on race relations, often swallowing wholesale the culturalist arguments on immigration and citizenship that were crafted in opposition to multiculturalism.« But the spread of racism has been much wider; as **Seymour** continues:

»The centre-left has also increasingly embraced the idea of a progressive nationalism. In a way that mirrors the New Right, they hold that social solidarity and cultural diversity are opposing aims.«<sup>14</sup>

According to this idea African or Asian people are not inferior, but it just so happens that they cannot be assimilated into a white Western European nation like Denmark or Britain. It is not a question of different races, but it is only possible to create social solidarity among those belonging to the tribe or the national community. This notion of culture has spread to parties across the classical political divide between right and left. Socialist and social democratic parties in many Western countries have adopted this idea and put it to use. Denmark is just one example.

The historical background of the widespread xenophobia and racism in Western European socialist parties is of course related to the nationalization of the various Western European working classes that took place with the First World War, when the German Social Democrats voted in favour of war and after the defeat of the revolutionary movement around 1917-1923, when the internationalist dimension also disappeared as a perspective from Soviet Marxism [cf. **Stalin's** idea of »socialism in one country«]. During the 20th century the Western European working class rarely showed any kind of international solidarity, participating instead, after the Second World War and the ethnic purification of Europe, in the building of national welfare democracies that prevented any kind of internationalism and in no way advanced the abolition of the financial and state apparatus that **Marx** envisaged as the precondition of the establishment of a different society.<sup>15</sup> The Western European working class repeatedly voted in favour of consumption for a closed national community, transforming its agenda into middle-class reformism. The movement towards xenophobia was thus prepared in advance. The international solidarity of the proletariat in the West has never amounted to much, at least not so far. The integration of the white working class in the state only strengthened the ethnic cohesiveness of the national democracies.

14 Richard Seymour: »The Changing Face of Racism«, in *International Socialism*, no. 126, 2010, online at: <http://www.isj.org.uk/index.php4?id=638&issue=126>

15 Already in *The Communist Manifesto* from 1848 Marx presents the 'action programme' of communism, namely the abolition of private property and the nation state. The first 'element' was later expanded to include the abolition of the money and wage form. With this re-conceptualization this remains the basic communist 'action programme': undoing the capitalist money economy and ending the separation of humanity into nations.



**Superflex**  
Foreigners, please don't leave us alone with the Danes!, 2002

Installation view

#### NEO-LIBERAL ATOMIZATION AND SMALL NUMBERS

The return of xenophobia and racism in Western Europe also has to be seen against the historical background of the neoliberal globalization that has swept the world with increasing force since the end of the 1970s. In Europe, **Thatcher's** Britain led the way, busting unions and sabotaging the social 'safety net'. But more or less all over the world, neo-liberalism meant privatization, relocation of the means of production, deterritorialization of capital, increasing competition among workers by expanding the labour market, and dissipation of the welfare state. Although the paradigm was implemented at different tempos across Western Europe, by the mid-1990s neo-liberalism was the only game in town. The centre-left had embraced neo-liberalism wholesale, as was the case with **Tony Blair** and Danish Prime Minister **Poul Nyrup Rasmussen**. As **Perry Anderson** phrased it in 2000, with a characteristic slight hyperbole:

»There are no longer any significant oppositions—that is, systematic rival outlooks—within the thought-world of the West. [...] Whatever limitations persist to its practice, neo-liberalism as a set of principles rules undivided across the globe: the most successful ideology in world history.«<sup>16</sup>

16 Perry Anderson: »Renewals«, in *New Left Review: New Series*, no. 1, 2000

Adopting neo-liberalism as the premise of any political economic policy did seem inevitable; neo-liberalism was simply the new normalcy. The result was a dramatic transformation of more or less all Western European societies. Everywhere the state was reformed and restructured, taking on features, mechanisms and organizational models from the market and the private sector. As **Michael Hardt** and **Toni Negri** argue, what took place was a radical restructuring of the Welfare State, diverting the enormous economic powers of the state to different ends, above all the exclusion of labour from the site of production as well as the exclusion of the traditional process of negotiation.<sup>17</sup> The mutual recognition of capital and the working class and the mediation of the Welfare State were replaced by a structure where workers were nothing but apolitical commodities. Although food riots and later the alterglobalization movement protested this development, it was carried out with surprisingly little protest most places. The thorough restructuring of everyday life just happened, and it was rarely possible to unite the different protests that did take place in a broad anti-neo-liberal or anti-capitalist struggle. Under the banner of freedom, progress and efficiency, neo-liberalism swept away all collective structures, enabling the total marketization of society.

The 30+ years of the 'Washington consensus' thus resulted in massive shifts destroying collective standards and increasing social atomization. The new racism and its xenophobic discourse was a consequence of this feeling of insecurity and erosion of common values. The neo-liberal emptying-out of social bonds went hand in hand with a politics of social alarm, fear and xenophobia, what **Paul Gilroy** has called »securitocracy«.<sup>18</sup> In this situation where neo-liberalism had emptied its subjects of any collective content and turned them into clients and consumers, racism and xenophobia supplied citizens with an identity and a sense of belonging. In that way xenophobia was a very effective lightning rod for class anger, deflecting it against so-called foreigners in order to absolve neo-liberalism of all responsibility. The immigrant became the enemy, a negative figure defining the identity of the Western European middle class. As **Jacques Rancière** recently wrote, in that sense the new xenophobia is a logic of the neo-liberal state, it is »a passion from above«.<sup>19</sup> As **Arjun Appadurai** reminds us, »minorities do not come preformed«. Minorities are produced in the active sense. **Appadurai** continues: »They are produced in the specific circumstances of every nation and every nationalism.«<sup>20</sup> After emptying society of collective structures neo-liberal globalization proceeds to produce new symbols of othering and belonging. In Western Europe the new minority is primarily the Muslim, who today plays the role the Jew played in the 1920s and 1930s in Fascist and Nazi discourse. The beard and veil of the Muslim has replaced the beard and kippah of the Jew. The threat from Judaeo-Bolshevism is today the threat from Islamist terrorism. As before in history, fear, hatred and alarm are paving the way for a corporate, strong state, a police state ready to handle any kind of threat, real or imaginary.

- 17** Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri: *Labor of Dionysus: A Critique of the State-Form* [Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994], pp. 239-245.
- 18** Paul Gilroy: *Darker Than Blue: On the Moral Economies of Black Atlantic Culture* [Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 2011].
- 19** Jacques Rancière: »A Passion From Above« [»Racisme, une passion d'en haut«, 2010], trans. Jonathan Collerson, online at: <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2010/ranciere230910.html>
- 20** Arjun Appadurai: *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger* [Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2006].

This is not fascism in the old sense from the 1930s with a mass movement active in the streets. This may be the case in parts of Eastern Europe, but in Western Europe the new extreme Right still uses a purely electoral strategy and has no presence in the streets comparable to the Nazi movement in Germany in the inter-war period or **Mussolini's** Fascists in Italy in the 1920s. The similarities between a party like the Danish People's Party and Fascism are obvious, of course: Islamophobia plays the role anti-Semitism played earlier, as **Shlomo Sand** and **Sabine Schiffer** among others have argued.<sup>21</sup> Muslims are systematically dehumanized and universal values are rejected in favour of national communities, and violence is accepted with reference to the so-called »Islamic terror threat« invading Iraq and Afghanistan and »the flood of refugees« when it comes to migrants drowning in the Mediterranean or sent back to countries riven by civil war. But fascism as a popular mass movement outside the state trying to take over the state and excluding all other political perspectives is not on the agenda in Western Europe. Not yet, at least. The effects of the current economic crisis might change that as the crisis deepens and creates further social turbulence and political polarization, although we are not yet in a situation comparable to the economic crisis of the 1930s. But the state is in a deep crisis and will, in the absence of political options, undoubtedly resort to dictatorial means; the state of emergency after 9/11 shows that beyond dispute. But again we are not there just yet. So far capitalism has been able to impose law and order without extermination and within the framework of parliamentary democracy. That is no comfort, of course, as xenophobia and racism appear to be the defining logic of nation-state-based democracy; **Hannah Arendt** already showed that in her analysis of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.<sup>22</sup> The conclusion is clear: parliamentary representative democracy in its present form embedded in the nation-state must be not merely rethought, but downright abandoned. At least then we would be halfway towards realizing **Marx's** communist 'action programme' ending the separation of humanity into nations. As **Alberto Burgio** argues, racism is and will remain a constituent part of the capitalist nation-state system. Racism and xenophobia are a structural feature of this system and will not disappear unless the whole social order is radically transformed.<sup>23</sup> ■

- 21** Shlomo Sand: »From Judaeophobia to Islamophobia«, *Jewish Quarterly*, no. 215, 2010, online at: <http://jewishquarterly.org/2010/07/from-judaeophobia-to-islamophobia/>; Sabine Schiffer and Constantin Wagner: »Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia – New Enemies, Old Patterns«, *Race & Class*, no. 3, 2011, pp. 77-84.
- 22** Hannah Arendt: *The Origins of Totalitarianism* [New York: Harcourt Brace, 1973].
- 23** Alberto Burgio: *Nonostante Auschwitz. Per una storia critica del razzismo europeo* [Roma: DeriveApprodi, 2010].

Thanks to **Carsten Juhl** and **Morten Visby** for critique and inspiration.



Video stills from  
**Avi Mograbi: The Details, 2003**



on the following page  
**Lene Berg**  
Norwegian Products, 2011  
Installation view [detail]

# A few words about Norwegian Products

Lene Berg



★ The fact that I have put brown goat cheese, also called G35,<sup>01</sup> and **Vidkun Quisling** in the form of a cardboard figure together in a bell jar doesn't mean that I think they stand for the same thing. Brown goat cheese is one of Norway's national symbols. **Vidkun Quisling** probably would have liked to be a Norwegian national symbol but he failed miserably at this as well as at many other things. Today, not many people talk about him. In 1945, Quisling was executed for high treason. But his surname lives on in, for example, the Oxford English Dictionary where it is synonymous with the word traitor. The word *quisling* is a Norwegian contribution to English, a language that has given us so much in return. But just to get this straight: I like goat cheese. I don't like **Quisling**.

The special thing about Norwegian goat cheese is that it's brown, but that doesn't necessarily make it fascist. **Vidkun Quisling** wasn't brown in the literal sense of the word. He was a blue-eyed blond type but he was definitely 'brown' ideologically—as in 'brownshirt'. He wanted to combat Soviet Communism and Anglo-Saxon Capitalism and saw Nazi Germany as the only possible ally in

that struggle. It is also well known that he wasn't the only Norwegian citizen who shared such opinions during the 1930s and 1940s. But where did all the others go? Most of them weren't shot like him. When I was growing up, I hardly met anyone who had been on the wrong side during the war. Only as an adult did I understand that it was a physical impossibility that all Norwegian Nazis, sympathizers and collaborators had disappeared from the face of the earth in 1945; and a statistical impossibility that I didn't know anyone who was related to any of them. You didn't hear them and you didn't see them. They didn't exist. Norway as a completely homogeneous place was always doubtful but that doesn't stop people from longing for it.

Brown goat cheese and **Vidkun Quisling** are both products of Norwegian people and culture. If a 'We' exists, as in 'We Norwegians', **Vidkun Quisling** must be said to be part of that 'We', just as brown goat cheese is part of what 'We Norwegians' have in common. Of course I don't think that a man can or should play a similar role to a piece of cheese or that he is the other side of the cheese. Nor do I think that it's fascist to eat the same brown cheese as everyone else does in the same country for breakfast every day; or that we should start erecting statues of traitors and other reprobates and put them on goat cheeses all over the country to remember them by. We don't build monuments to perpetrators. We build monuments to winners and sometimes to victims. And it was with this in mind that I decided to force two rather contradictory parts of my cultural heritage together in a bell jar. The idea was to see whether these two Norwegian products thus assembled could function as a friendly reminder that the construction of national identity as we know it requires omissions; often very large omissions, and what is omitted

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<sup>01</sup> G35, also known as *Gudbrandsdalsost* or *mystost*, is the common name of one of the many brown goat cheeses that are made in Norway. The G stands for goat, the 35 stands for the percentage of fat produced at a certain point during the cheese-making process. G35 is not a pure goat cheese because it contains quite a lot of both cow's milk and cream that gives it a pronounced sweetness. It is my personal favourite, but many grown-ups prefer the »real goat cheese« [*ekte geitost*] made from pure goat's milk.

can often tell us as much about a nation's history and culture as what is included. As a matter of fact, what is omitted is also something that we, as in 'We Norwegians', have in common.

Considering the way Norway is described at the moment, it's easy to forget that many struggles have been waged on Norwegian soil between Norwegian citizens. It wasn't only during World War II that Norwegians fought on different sides. The fact that Norway, with fewer than five million inhabitants, has two official languages, as well as the Sámi news on the radio every day, may serve as a clue; illegal surveillance of those of different opinions is another. But that is another story—or rather many other stories which are all parts of the same narrative. The problem is that the story is a very difficult one to tell and it is not so easy to agree on how it should be told.

Perhaps it's just as well that **Vidkun Quisling** and all those who thought like him remain a closed and more or less forgotten chapter in the history of Norway. It is not so easy to remember **Vidkun Quisling**. Apart from his act of treason, I am not really sure what he should be remembered for at all. As far as I know, he never said anything particularly memorable and he never did anything particularly heroic. He wasn't charming, or full of ideas, or anything else you must be to be remembered long after your death. The image that remains of him is one of a rather sad figure, not unlike **Peer Gynt**, a failure, a liar, a man marked by delusions of grandeur and a distant distorted sense of reality. Yet he was undoubtedly Norwegian, a complete Norwegian product, and the memory of him may serve as a counterweight to the many nostalgic accounts of an idyllic and homogeneous country called Norway where nice, tolerant and down-to-earth people are automatically produced.

I believe that the big question is whether one can weave the tragic, the extreme, the abortive, the controversial, the megalomaniac, the idiotic and the totally misunderstood into a national identity. Most probably an impossible task, but this was what I wanted to contribute to, and all I came up with was this bell jar containing a half-eaten piece of cheese and a cardboard figure. I am quite sure **Quisling** would have preferred a bronze plinth in



a significantly larger format; but fortunately he is not the one making the decisions here. As to the goat cheese, I don't think it cares much about how it ends its days. And it is probably this conspicuous lack of conviction that makes a cheese like the G35 easy to like and easy to rally around as a national symbol. Incidentally, they also make a brown goat cheese in Argentina, or so I've been told. ■  
Berlin • 16/08/11

### **Milica Tomić**

One day, instead of one night, a burst of machine-gun fire will flash, if light cannot come otherwise  
[Oskar Davičo—fragment of a poem]

Dedicated to the members of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Initiative  
- Belgrade, 3. September, 2009.

action/intervention in the public space, Belgrade, 2009,  
photo: Srđan Veljović



**Burak Delier**  
Tersyon Feasibility Research, 2011  
Tersyon, 2007  
installation view

# On Post-Fascism

How citizenship is becoming an exclusive privilege.

G.M. Tamás

Burak Delier, Tersyon, 2007



★ I have an interest to declare. The government of my country, Hungary, is—along with the Bavarian provincial government [provincial in more senses than one]—the strongest foreign supporter of **Jörg Haider's** Austria. The right-wing cabinet in Budapest, besides other misdeeds, is attempting to suppress parliamentary governance, penalizing local authorities of a different political hue than itself, and busily creating and imposing a novel state ideology, with the help of a number of *lumpen* intellectuals of the extreme right, including some overt neo-Nazis. It is in cahoots with an openly and viciously anti-Semitic fascist party that is, alas, represented in parliament. People working for the prime minister's office are engaging in more or less cautious Holocaust revisionism. The government-controlled state television gives vent to raw anti-Gypsy racism. The fans of the most popular soccer club in the country, whose chairman is a cabinet minister and a party leader, are chanting in unison about the train that is bound to leave any moment for Auschwitz.

On the ground floor of the Central European University in Budapest you can visit an exhibition concerning the years of turmoil a decade or so ago. There you can watch a video recorded illegally in 1988, and you can see the current Hungarian prime minister defending and protecting me with his own body from the truncheons of communist riot police. Ten years later, this same person appointed a communist police general as his home secretary, the second or third most important person in the cabinet. Political conflicts between former friends and allies are usually acrimonious. This is no exception. I am an active participant in an incipient anti-fascist movement in Hungary, a speaker at rallies and demonstrations. Our opponents—in personal terms—are too close for comfort. Thus, I cannot consider myself a neutral observer.

The phenomenon that I shall call *post-fascism* is not unique to Central Europe. Far from it. To be sure, Germany, Austria, and Hungary are important, for historical reasons obvious to all; familiar phrases repeated here have different echoes. I recently saw that the old brick factory in Budapest's third district is being demolished; I am told that they will build a gated community of suburban villas in its place. The brick factory is where the Budapest Jews waited their turn to be transported to the concentration camps. You could as well build holiday cottages in Treblinka. Our vigilance in this part of the world is perhaps more needed than anywhere else, since innocence, in historical terms, cannot be presumed.<sup>01</sup> Still, post-

fascism is a cluster of policies, practices, routines, and ideologies that can be observed everywhere in the contemporary world; that have little or nothing to do, except in Central Europe, with the legacy of Nazism; that are not totalitarian; that are not at all revolutionary; and that are not based on violent mass movements and irrationalist, voluntaristic philosophies, nor are they toying, even in jest, with anti-capitalism.

Why call this cluster of phenomena *fascism*, however post-?

Post-fascism finds its niche easily in the new world of global capitalism without upsetting the dominant political forms of electoral democracy and representative government. It does what I consider to be central to all varieties of fascism, including the post-totalitarian version. *Sans Führer, sans one-party rule, sans SA or SS, post-fascism reverses the Enlightenment tendency to assimilate citizenship to the human condition.*

Before the Enlightenment, citizenship was a privilege, an elevated status limited by descent, class, race, creed, gender, political participation, morals, profession, patronage, and administrative fiat, not to speak of age and education. Active membership in the political community was a station to yearn for, *civis Romanus sum* the enunciation of a certain nobility. Policies extending citizenship may have been generous or stingy, but the rule was that the rank of citizen was conferred by the lawfully constituted authority, according to expediency. Christianity, like some Stoics, sought to transcend this kind of limited citizenship by considering it secondary or inessential when compared to a virtual community of the saved. Freedom from sin was superior to the freedom of the city. During the long, medieval obsolescence of the civic, the claim for an active membership in the political community was superseded by the exigencies of just governance, and civic excellence was abbreviated to martial virtue.

Once citizenship was equated with human dignity, its extension to all classes, professions, both sexes, all races, creeds, and locations was only a matter of time. Universal franchise, the national service, and state education for all had to follow. Moreover, once all human beings were supposed to be able to accede to the high rank of a citizen, national solidarity within the newly egalitarian political community demanded the relief of the estate of Man, a dignified material existence for all, and the eradication of the remnants of personal servitude. The state, putatively representing everybody, was prevailed upon to grant not only a modicum of wealth for most people, but also a minimum of leisure, once the exclusive temporal fief of gentlemen only, in order to enable us all to play and enjoy the benefits of culture.

For the liberal, social-democratic, and other assorted progressive heirs of the Enlightenment, then, progress meant universal citizenship—that is, a virtual equality of political condition, a virtually equal say for all in the common affairs of any given community—together with a social condition and a model of rationality that could make it possible. For some, socialism seemed to be the straightforward

**01** Multiculturalist responses are desperate avowals of impotence: an acceptance of the ethnicization of the civic sphere, but with a humanistic and benevolent twist. These avowals are concessions of defeat, attempts to humanize the inhuman. The field had been chosen by post-fascism, and liberals are trying to fight it on its own favorite terrain, ethnicity. This is an enormously disadvantageous position. Without new ways of addressing the problem of global capitalism, the battle will surely be lost. But the new Dual State is alive and well. A Normative State for the core populations of the capitalist center, and a Prerogative State of arbitrary decrees concerning non-citizens for the rest. Unlike in classical, totalitarian fascism, the Prerogative State is only dimly visible for the subjects of the Normative State: the essential human and civic community with those kept out and kept down is morally invisible. The radical critique pretending that liberty within the Normative State is an illusion is erroneous, though understandable. The denial of citizenship based not on exploitation, oppression, and straightforward discrimination among the denizens of »homogeneous society,« but on mere exclusion and distance, is difficult to grasp, because the mental habits of liberation struggle for a more just redistribution of goods and power are not applicable. The problem is not that the Normative State is becoming

continuation and enlargement of the Enlightenment project; for some, like **Karl Marx**, the completion of the project required a revolution [doing away with the appropriation of surplus value and an end to the social division of labor]. But for all of them it appeared fairly obvious that the merger of the human and the political condition was, simply, moral necessity.<sup>02</sup>

The savage nineteenth-century condemnations of bourgeois society—the common basis, for a time, of the culturally avant-garde and politically radical—stemmed from the conviction that the process, as it was, was fraudulent, and that individual liberty was not all it was cracked up to be, but not from the view, represented only by a few solitary figures, that the endeavor was worthless. It was not only **Nietzsche** and **Dostoevsky** who feared that increasing equality might transform everybody above and under the middle classes into bourgeois philistines. Progressive revolutionaries, too, wanted a New Man and a New Woman, bereft of the inner demons of repression and domination: a civic community that was at the same time *the* human community needed a new morality grounded in respect for the hitherto excluded.

This adventure ended in the debacle of 1914. Fascism offered the most determined response to the collapse of the Enlightenment, especially of democratic socialism and progressive social reform. Fascism, on the whole, was not conservative, even if it was counter-revolutionary: it did not re-establish hereditary aristocracy or the monarchy, despite some romantic-reactionary verbiage. But it was able to undo the key regulative [or liminal] notion of modern society, that of universal citizenship. By then, governments were thought to represent and protect everybody. National or state borders defined the difference between friend and foe; foreigners could be foes, fellow citizens could not. *Pace Carl Schmitt*, the legal theorist of fascism and the political theologian of the Third Reich, the sovereign could *not* simply decide by fiat who would be friend and who would be foe. But **Schmitt** was right on one fundamental point: the idea of universal citizenship contains an inherent contradiction in that the dominant institution of modern society, the nation-state, is both a universalistic and a parochial [since territorial] institution. Liberal nationalism, unlike ethnicism and fascism, is limited—if you wish, tempered—universalism. Fascism put an end to this shilly-shallying: the sovereign was judge of who does and does not belong to the civic community, and citizenship became a function of his [or its] trenchant decree.

This hostility to universal citizenship is, I submit, the main characteristic of fascism. And the rejection of even a tempered universalism is what we now see repeated under democratic circumstances [I do not even say under democratic disguise]. Post-totalitarian fascism is thriving under the capacious carapace of global capitalism, and we should tell it like it is.

There is logic in the Nazi declaration that communists, Jews, homosexuals, and the mentally ill are non-citizens and, therefore, non-human. [The famous ideologist of the Iron Guard, the suave

more authoritarian. The problem is that it belongs only to a few.

A few interesting articles in English concerning recent developments: Harry Ritter, »From Hapsburg to Hitler to Haider,« *German Studies Review* 22 [May 1999]: 269-284; Jan Müller, »From National Identity to National Interest: The Rise and Fall of Germany's New Right,« *German Politics* 8 [December 1999]: 1-20; Michael Minkenberg, »The Renewal of the Radical Right,« *Government and Opposition* 35 [Spring 2000]: 170-188; Jacob Heilbrunn, »A Disdain for the Past: Jörg Haider's Austria,« *World Policy Journal* 28 [Spring 2000]: 71-78; Immanuel Wallerstein, »Albatros of Racism,« *London Review of Books*, May 18, 2000, pp. 11-14; Rainer Bauböck, »Austria: Jörg Haider's Grasp for Power,« *Dissent* [Spring 2000]: 23-26.

**02** See G.M. Tamás, »Ethnarchy and Ethno-Anarchism,« *Social Research* 63 [Spring 1996]: 147-190; Idem., »The Two-Hundred Years War,« *Boston Review*, Summer 1999, pp. 31-36.



essayist **E.M. Cioran**, pointed out at the time that if some persons are non-human but aspire to humanity [i.e., Jews] the contradiction might be sublated and resolved by their violent death, preferably, according to the celebrated and still-fashionable aesthete, by their own hand.]

These categories of people, as the Nazis saw them, represented types crucial to the Enlightenment project of inclusion. Communists meant the rebellious »lower type,« the masses brought in, leaderless and rudderless, by rootless universalism, and then rising up against the natural hierarchy; Jews, a community that survived the Christian middle ages without political power of its own, led by an essentially non-coercive authority, the people of the Book, by definition not a people of war; homosexuals, by their inability or unwillingness to procreate, bequeath, and continue, a living refutation of the alleged link between nature and history; the mentally ill, listening to voices unheard by the rest of us—in other words, people whose recognition needs a moral effort and is not immediately [»naturally«] given, who can fit in only by enacting an equality of the unequal.

The perilous differentiation between citizen and non-citizen is not, of course, a fascist invention. As **Michael Mann** points out in a path-breaking study,<sup>03</sup> the classical expression »we the People« did not include black slaves and »red Indians« [Native Americans], and the ethnic, regional, class, and denominational definitions of »the people« have led to genocide both »out there« [in settler colonies] and within nation states [see the Armenian massacre perpetrated by modernizing Turkish nationalists] under democratic, semi-democratic, or authoritarian [but not »totalitarian«] governments. If sovereignty is vested in the people, the territorial or demographic definition of what and who the people are becomes decisive. Moreover, the withdrawal of legitimacy from state socialist [communist] and revolutionary nationalist [»Third World«] regimes with their mock-Enlightenment definitions of nationhood left only racial, ethnic, and confessional [or denominational] bases for a legitimate claim or title for »state-formation« [as in Yugoslavia, Czecho-Slovakia, the ex-Soviet Union, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Sudan, etc.]

Everywhere, then, from Lithuania to California, immigrant and even autochthonous minorities have become the enemy and are expected to put up with the diminution and suspension of their civic and human rights. The propensity of the European Union to weaken the nation-state and strengthen regionalism [which, by extension, might prop up the power of the center at Brussels and Strasbourg] manages to ethnicize rivalry and territorial inequality [see Northern vs. Southern Italy, Catalonia vs. Andalusia, English South East vs. Scotland, Fleming vs. Walloon Belgium, Brittany vs. Normandy]. Class conflict, too, is being ethnicized and racialized, between the established and secure working class and lower middle class of the metropolis and the new immigrant of the periphery, also construed as a problem of security and crime.<sup>04</sup> Hungarian and Serbian ethnicists pretend that the nation is wherever persons of Hungarian or Serbian origin happen to live, regardless of their citizenship,

**03** Michael Mann, »The Dark Side of Democracy: The Modern Tradition of Ethnic and Political Cleansing,« *New Left Review* 235 [May/June 1999]: 18-45.

**04** See Mark Neocleous, »Against Security,« *Radical Philosophy* 100 [March/April 2000]: 7-15; Idem., *Fascism* [Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997]. The evolution from »l'état social« to »l'état pénal« has been repeatedly highlighted by Pierre Bourdieu.

**05** Georges Bataille, »The Psychological Structure of Fascism,« [November 1933], trans. Carl R. Lovitt, in *Visions of Excess*, ed. Allan Stoekl [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993], pp. 137-160. Concerning the problem of masses and violence, see Etienne Balibar, *Spinoza and Politics*, trans. Peter Snowdon [London: Verso, 1998], pp. 105, 115-116. Also: Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley [San Francisco: City Lights, 1988]. An interesting liberal critique of Bataille's theory of fascism can be found in Susan Rubin Suleiman's »Bataille on the Street,« in Bataille: *Writing the Sacred*, ed. Carolyn Bailey Gill [London: Routledge, 1995], pp. 26-45. Bataille's critique has to be understood within the context of the anti-Stalinist, revolutionary ultra-left. Two volumes of correspondence whirling around Bataille, Souvarine, Simone Weil, and the mysterious Laure [Colette Peignot] have recently

with the corollary that citizens of their nation-state who are ethnically, racially, denominationally, or culturally »alien« do not really belong to the nation.

The growing de-politicization of the concept of a nation [the shift to a cultural definition] leads to the acceptance of discrimination as »natural.« This is the discourse the right intones quite openly in the parliaments and street rallies in eastern and Central Europe, in Asia, and, increasingly, in »the West.« It cannot be denied that attacks against egalitarian welfare systems and affirmative action techniques everywhere have a dark racial undertone, accompanied by racist police brutality and vigilantism in many places. The link, once regarded as necessary and logical, between citizenship, equality, and territory may disappear in what the theorist of the Third Way, the formerly *Marxissant* sociologist **Anthony Giddens**, calls a society of responsible risk-takers.

The most profound attempt to analyze the phenomenon of political exclusion is **Georges Bataille's** »The Psychological Structure of Fascism,«<sup>05</sup> which draws on the author's distinction between homogeneity and heterogeneity. To simplify, homogeneous society is the society of work, exchange, usefulness, sexual repression, fairness, tranquility, procreation; what is heterogeneous:

includes everything resulting from *unproductive* expenditure [sacred things themselves form part of this whole]. This consists of everything rejected by *homogeneous* society as waste or as superior transcendent values. Included are the waste products of the human body and certain analogous matter [trash, vermin, etc.]; the parts of the body; persons, words, or acts having a suggestive erotic value; the various unconscious processes such as dreams and neuroses; the numerous later elements or social forms that *homogeneous* society is powerless to assimilate [mobs, the warrior, aristocratic and impoverished classes, different types of violent individuals or a least those who refuse the rule—madmen, leaders, poets, etc.]; ... *violence, excess, delirium, madness* characterize heterogeneous elements ... compared to everyday life, heterogeneous existence can be represented as something *other*, as *incommensurate*, by charging these words with the **positive** value they have in *af-fective* experience.<sup>06</sup>

Sovereign power, according to **Bataille** [and to **Carl Schmitt**<sup>07</sup>], is quintessentially heterogeneous in its pre-modern sacral versions [kings ruling by Divine Right]. This heterogeneity is hidden in capitalist democracy, where the sovereign is supposed to rule through an impersonal legal order that applies equally to all. Fascist dictatorship is in business to uncover or unmask it. This explains the link of fascist dictatorship to the impoverished, disorderly, *lumpen* mob. And this is exactly, I should add, what gets lost in post-fascism. The re-creation of sacral sovereignty by fascism is, however, a fake. It is homogeneity masquerading as heterogeneity. What is left in the homogeneous sphere in the middle is the pure bourgeois without the *citoyen*, **Julien Sorel** finally and definitely robbed of his **Napoleon**, **Lucien Leuwen** deprived of his **Danton**. Fascism, having

been published: *Laure: Une rupture*, 1934, ed. Anne Roche and Jérôme Peignot [Paris: Editions des Cendres, 1999]; and Georges Bataille, *L'Apprenti sorcier*, ed. Marina Galletti [Paris: Editions de la Différence, 1999]. As to another radical critique of fascism in the 1930s, see Karl Polányi, »The Essence of Fascism,« in *Christianity and Social Revolution*, ed. J. Lewis, K. Polányi, D. K. Kitchin [London: Gollancz, 1935].

**06** Bataille, »Psychological Structure,« 142. See the two intriguing drafts to the essay on fascism: »Cet aspect religieux manifeste ...« and »En affet la vie humaine ...« in Georges Bataille, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 2 [Paris: Gallimard, 1970], pp. 161-164. Also: Antonio Negri's theory of constituent power and constituted power in his *Insurgencies*, trans. Maurizio Boscaqli [Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1999], pp. 1-128, 212-229.

**07** On the parallel between Bataille and Carl Schmitt, see Martin Jay, »The Reassertion of Sovereignty in a Time of Crisis: Carl Schmitt and Georges Bataille,« in *Force Fields* [New York, Routledge, 1993], pp. 49-60; Bataille's essay on »Sovereignty,« *The Accursed Share* vols. 2 and 3, trans. Robert Hurley [New York: Zone Books, 1933].

put an end to the bourgeois realization of Enlightenment [i.e. to egalitarian capitalist democracy], transforms the social exclusion of the unproductive [from hermits and vatic poets to unemployable paupers and indomitable rebels] into their natural exclusion [i.e., extra-legal arrest, hunger, and death].

**Bataille's** work comes out of the French objectivist sociological tradition, from **Durkheim**, **Mauss**, and **Halbwachs** through **Kojève** to **Paul Veyne**, wherein political repression and exclusion are not interpreted in moralistic and psychological, but in anthropological terms—as a matter of establishing identity. **Bataille's** revolutionary critique of the exclusion of the »heterogeneous«—the »useless,« people who are not »responsible risk-takers«—is based on an understanding of society, sexuality, and religion, a combination of **Durkheim** and **Marx**, if you wish, that might offer an alternative of our contemporary, on the whole Kantian, resistance to post-fascism. Our moralistic criticism, however justified, customarily precludes the comprehension of the lure of the phenomenon, and leads to a simplistic contempt for barbaric, benighted racists, rabble-rousers, and demagogues, and a rather undemocratic ignorance of peoples, fears, and desires.

An alternative line of argument, suggested by this tradition, begins by observing that the breakdown of egalitarian welfare states frequently means a shift in the focus of solidarity, fraternity, and pity. If there is no virtually equal citizenship, the realization of which should have been the aim of honest, liberal democrats and democratic socialists, the passion of generosity will remain dissatisfied. A feeling of fellowship toward kith and kin has always been one of the most potent motives for altruism. Altruism of this kind, when bereft of a civic, egalitarian focus, will find intuitive criteria offered by the dominant discourse to establish what and whom it will desire to serve. If civic politics cannot do it, racial feeling or feelings of cultural proximity certainly will. Identity is usually outlined by affection and received threats. He who will define those successfully wins. Nobody is better at describing this *identity panic* than **Bataille**.<sup>08</sup>

The half-mad pornographer and ultra-left extremist, as **Bataille** is still regarded in petto, cannot be well received by self-respecting social theorists, I believe, but curiously his theory is borne out by the acknowledged standard work on the Nazi regime, written by the greatest legal hawk of the German trade union movement, happily rediscovered today as the first-rate mind that he was.<sup>09</sup> In contradistinction to fanciful theories of totalitarianism, the great **Ernst Fraenkel**, summing up his painstaking survey of Nazi legislation and jurisprudence, writes that:

[i]n present day Germany [he is writing in 1937-39], many people find the arbitrary rule of the Third Reich unbearable. These same people acknowledge, however, that the idea of »community,« as there understood, is something truly great. Those who take up this ambivalent attitude toward National-Socialism suffer from two principal misconceptions:

08 See Jean Piel, »Bataille and the World,« in *On Bataille: Critical Essays*, ed. Leslie Anne Boldt-Irons [Albany: SUNY Press, 1995], pp. 95-106.

09 Ernst Fraenkel, *The Dual State* [1941], trans. E.A. Shils, E. Lowenstein, and K. Knorr [New York: Octagon, 1969]. See also: David Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution* [Garden City: Anchor Doubleday, 1967], pp. 113-151.

1. The present German ideology of *Gemeinschaft* [community] is nothing but a mask hiding the still existing capitalist structure of society.

2. The ideological mask [the community] equally hides the Prerogative State [**Fraenkel** distinguishes the »normal,« so-called Normative State providing chiefly for civil law and the quasi-totalitarian Party state subordinated to the *Führerprinzip*] operating by arbitrary measures.

The replacement of the *Rechtsstaat* [Legal State] by the Dual State is but a symptom. The root of evil lies at the exact point where the uncritical opponents of National-Socialism discover grounds for admiration, namely in the community ideology and in the militant capitalism which this very notion of the *Gemeinschaft* is supposed to hide. It is indeed for the maintenance of capitalism in Germany that the authoritarian Dual State is necessary.<sup>10</sup>

The Autonomy of the Normative State [»homogeneous society«] was maintained in Nazi Germany in a limited area, mostly where the protection of private property was concerned [property of so-called Aryans, of course]; the Prerogative State held sway in more narrowly political matters, the privileges of the Party, the military and the paramilitary, culture, ideology, and propaganda. The »dual state« was a consequence of the Schmittian decision of the new sovereign as to what was law, and what was not. But there was no rule by decree in the sphere reserved to capitalism proper, the economy. It is not true, therefore, that the *whole* system of Nazi or fascist governance was *wholly* arbitrary. The macabre meeting of the Normative and the Prerogative is illustrated by the fact that the German Imperial Railways billed the SS for the horrible transports to Auschwitz at special holiday discount rates, customary for package tours. But they billed them!

People within the jurisdiction of the Normative State [**Bataille's** homogeneous society] enjoyed the usual protection of law, however harsh it tended to be. Special rules, however, applied to those in the purview of the Prerogative State [heterogeneous society]—both the Nazi Party leaders, officials, and militant activists, above the law, and the persecuted minorities, under or outside it. Before fascism, friend and citizen, foe and alien, were coincidental notions; no government thought systematically to declare war on the inhabitants of the land, who were members [even if unequal members] of the nation: civil war was equated with the absence of legally constituted, effective government. Civil war from the top, launched in peacetime, or at least under definitely non-revolutionary circumstances, turns sovereignty against the suzerain of the subject. The main weapon in this methodical civil war, where the state as such is one of the warring parties, is the continuous redefinition of citizenship by the Prerogative state.

And since, thanks to Enlightenment, citizenship [membership in the political community], nationality, and humanity had been synthetically merged, being expelled from citizenship meant, quite literally,

10 Fraenkel, *The Dual State*, p. 153.

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exclusion from humanity. Hence civic death was necessarily followed by natural death, that is, violent death, or death *tout court*. Fascist or Nazi genocide was not preceded by legal condemnation [not even in the stunted and fraudulent shape of the so-called administrative verdicts of Cheka »tribunals«]: it was the »naturalization« of a moral judgment that deemed some types of human condition inferior. And since there was no protection outside citizenship, lack of citizenship had become the cause of the cessation of the necessary precondition of the human condition – life.

Cutting the civic and human community in two: this is fascism.

This is why the expression, albeit bewildering, must be revived, because the fundamental conceptual technique of civic, hence human, scission has been revived, this time not by a deliberate counter-revolutionary movement, but by certain developments that were, probably, not willed by anyone and that are crying out for a name. The name is post-fascism.

The phenomenon itself came into being at a confluence of various political processes. Let me list them.

#### DECLINE OF CRITICAL CULTURE

After the 1989 collapse of the Soviet bloc, contemporary society underwent fundamental change. Bourgeois society, liberal democracy, democratic capitalism – name it what you will – has always been a controversial affair; unlike previous regimes, it developed an adversary culture, and was permanently confronted by strong competitors on the right [the alliance of the throne and the altar] and the left [revolutionary socialism]. Both have become obsolete, and this has created a serious crisis within the culture of late modernism.<sup>11</sup> The mere idea of radical change [utopia and critique] has been dropped from the rhetorical vocabulary, and the political horizon is now filled by what is there, by what is given, which is capitalism. In the prevalent social imagination, the whole human cosmos is a »homogeneous society« – a society of useful, wealth-producing, procreating, stable, irreligious, but at the same time *jouissant*, free individuals. Citizenship is increasingly defined, apolitically, in terms of interests that are not contrasted with the common good, but united within it through understanding, interpretation, communication, and voluntary accord based on shared presumptions.

In this picture, obligation and coercion, the *differentia specifica* of politics [and in permanent need of moral justification], are conspicuously absent. »Civil society« – a nebula of voluntary groupings where coercion and domination, by necessity, do not play any important role – is said to have cannibalized politics and the state. A dangerous result of this conception might be that the continued underpinning of law by coercion and domination, while criticized *in toto*, is not watched carefully enough – since, if it cannot be justified at all, no justification, thus no moral control, will be sought. The myth, according to which the core of late-modern capitalism is »civil society«, blurs the conceptual boundaries of citizenship, which is seen more and more as a matter of policy, not politics.

11 See G.M. Tamás, »Democracy's Triumph, Philosophy's Peril,« *Journal of Democracy* 11 [January 2000]: 103-110. On alarming alternatives to politics as we know it, see Jacques Rancière, *La Méésentente* [Paris: Galilée, 1995], pp. 95-131.

Before 1989, you could take it for granted that the political culture of liberal-democratic-constitutional capitalism was a critical culture, more often than not in conflict with the system that, sometimes with bad grace and reluctantly, sustained it. Apologetic culture was for ancient empires and anti-liberal dictatorships. Highbrow despair is now rampant. But without a sometimes only implicit utopia as a prop, despair does not seem to work. What is the point of theoretical anti-capitalism, if political anti-capitalism cannot be taken seriously?

Also, there is an unexpected consequence of this absence of a critical culture tied to an oppositional politics. As one of the greatest and most level-headed masters of twentieth-century political sociology, **Seymour Martin Lipset**, has noted, fascism is *the extremism of the center*. Fascism had very little to do with *passéiste* feudal, aristocratic, monarchist ideas, was on the whole anti-clerical, opposed communism and socialist revolution, and – like the liberals whose electorate it had inherited – hated big business, trade unions, and the social welfare state. **Lipset** had classically shown that extremisms of the left and right were by no means exclusive: some petty bourgeois attitudes suspecting big business and big government could be, and were, prolonged into an extremism that proved lethal. Right-wing and center extremisms were combined in Hungarian, Austrian, Croatian, Slovak para-fascism [I have borrowed this term from **Roger Griffin**] of a pseudo-Christian, clericalist, royalist coloring, but extremism of the center does and did exist, proved by **Lipset** also through continuities in electoral geography.

Today there is nothing of any importance on the political horizon but the bourgeois center, therefore its extremism is the most likely to reappear. [**Jörg Haider** and his Freedom Party are the best example of this. Parts of his discourse are libertarian/neoliberal, his ideal is the propertied little man, he strongly favors a shareholding and home-owning petty bourgeois »democracy,« and he is quite free of romantic-reactionary nationalism as distinct from parochial selfishness and racism.] What is now considered »right-wing« in the United States would have been considered insurrectionary and suppressed by armed force in any traditional regime of the right as individualistic, decentralizing, and opposed to the monopoly of coercive power by the government, the foundation of each and every conservative creed. Conservatives are *le parti de l'ordre*, and loathe militias and plebian cults.

#### DECAYING STATES

The end of colonial empires in the 1960s and the end of Stalinist [»state socialist,« »state capitalist,« »bureaucratic collectivist«] systems in the 1990s has triggered a process never encountered since the Mongolian invasions in the thirteenth century: a comprehensive and apparently irreversible collapse of established statehood as such. While the *bien-pensant* Western press daily bemoans perceived threats of dictatorship in far-away places, it usually ignores the reality behind the tough talk of powerless leaders, namely that nobody is prepared to obey them. The old, creaking, and unpopular nation-state – the only institution to date that had been able to

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grant civil rights, a modicum of social assistance, and some protection from the exactions of privateer gangs and rapacious, irresponsible business elites—ceased to exist or never even emerged in the majority of the poorest areas of the world. In most parts of sub-Saharan Africa and of the former Soviet Union not only the refugees, but the whole population could be considered stateless. The way back, after decades of demented industrialization [see the horrific story of the hydroelectric plants everywhere in the Third World and the former Eastern bloc], to a subsistence economy and »natural« barter exchanges in the midst of environmental devastation, where banditry seems to have become the only efficient method of social organization, leads exactly nowhere. People in Africa and ex-Soviet Eurasia are dying not by a surfeit of the state, but by the absence of it.

Traditionally, liberation struggles of any sort have been directed against entrenched privilege. Equality came at the expense of ruling groups: secularism reduced the power of the Princes of the Church, social legislation dented the profits of the »moneyed interest,« universal franchise abolished the traditional political class of landed aristocracy and the *noblesse de robe*, the triumph of commercial pop culture smashed the ideological prerogatives of the progressive intelligentsia, horizontal mobility and suburban sprawl ended the rule of party politics on the local level, contraception and consumerist hedonism dissolved patriarchal rule in the family—something lost, something gained. Every step toward greater freedom curtailed somebody's privileges [quite apart from the pain of change]. It was conceivable to imagine the liberation of outlawed and downtrodden lower classes through economic, political, and moral crusades: there was, crudely speaking, somebody to take ill-gotten gains from. And those gains could be redistributed to more meritorious sections of the population, offering in exchange greater social concord, political tranquility, and safety to unpopular, privileged elites, thereby reducing class animosity. But let us not forget though that the social-democratic bargain has been struck as a result of centuries of conflict and painful renunciations by the traditional ruling strata. Such a liberation struggle, violent or peaceful, is not possible for the new wretched of the earth.

Nobody exploits them. There is no extra profit and surplus value to be appropriated. There is no social power to be monopolized. There is no culture to be dominated. The poor people of the new stateless societies – from the »homogeneous« viewpoint – are totally superfluous. They are not exploited, but neglected. There is no overtaxation, since there are no revenues. Privileges cannot be redistributed toward a greater equality since there are no privileges, except the temporary ones to be had, occasionally, at gunpoint.

Famished populations have no way out from their barely human condition but to leave. The so-called center, far from exploiting this periphery of the periphery, is merely trying to keep out the foreign and usually colored destitutes [the phenomenon is euphemistically called »demographic pressure«] and set up awesome barriers at the frontiers of rich countries, while our international financial bu-



**Trevor Paglen**  
Large Hangars and Fuel Storage; Tonopah Test Range, NV; Distance approx. 18 miles; 10:44 am, 2005

reaucracy counsels further deregulation, liberalization, less state and less government to nations that do not have any, and are perishing in consequence. »Humanitarian wars« are fought in order to prevent masses of refugees from flowing in and cluttering up the Western welfare systems that are in decomposition anyway.

Citizenship in a functional nation-state is the one safe meal ticket in the contemporary world. But such citizenship is now a privilege of the very few. The Enlightenment assimilation of citizenship to the necessary and »natural« political condition of all human beings has been reversed. Citizenship was once upon a time a privilege within nations. It is now a privilege to *most* persons in *some* nations. Citizenship is today the very exceptional privilege of the inhabitants of flourishing capitalist nation-states, while the majority of the world's population cannot even begin to aspire to the civic condition, and has also lost the relative security of pre-state [tribe, kinship] protection.

The scission of citizenship and sub-political humanity is now complete, the work of Enlightenment irretrievably lost. Post-fascism does not need to put non-citizens into freight trains to take them into death; instead, it need only prevent the new non-citizens from boarding any trains that might take them into the happy world of overflowing rubbish bins that could feed them. Post-fascist movements everywhere, but especially in Europe, are anti-immigration movements, grounded in the »homogeneous« world-view of productive usefulness. They are not simply protecting racial and class privileges within the nation-state [although they are doing that, too] but protecting universal citizenship within the rich nation-state against the virtual-universal citizenship of all human beings, regardless of geography, language, race, denomination, and habits. The current notion of »human rights« might defend people from the lawlessness of tyrants, but it is no defense against the lawlessness of no rule.

#### VARIETIES OF POST-FASCISM

It is frequently forgotten that contemporary global capitalism is a second edition. In the pre-1914 capitalism of no currency controls [the gold standard, etc.] and free trade, a world without visas and work permits, when companies were supplying military stuff to the armies of the enemy in wartime without as much as a squeak from governments or the press, the free circulation of capital and labor was more or less assured [it was, perhaps, a less equal, but a freer world]. In comparison, the thing called »globalization« is a rather modest undertaking, a gradual and timorous destruction of *étatiste* and *dirigiste*, welfarist nation-states built on the egalitarian bargain of old-style social democracy whose constituency [construed as the backbone of modern nations], the rust-belt working class, is disintegrating. Globalization has liberated capital flows. Speculative capital goes wherever investments appear as »rational,« usually places where wages are low and where there are no militant trade unions or ecological movements. But unlike in the nineteenth century, labor is not granted the same freedoms.

*Spiritus flat ubi vult*, capital flies wherever it wants, but the free circulation of labor is impeded by ever more rigid national regulations. The flow is all one-way; capital can improve its position, but labor—especially low-quality, low-intensity labor in the poor countries of the periphery—cannot. Deregulation for capital, stringent regulation for labor.

If the workforce is stuck at the periphery, it will have to put up with sweatshops. Attempts to fight for higher salaries and better working conditions are met *not* with violence, strikebreakers, or military coups, but by quiet capital flight and disapproval from international finance and its international or national bureaucracies, which will have the ability to decide who is deserving of aid or debt relief. To quote **Albert O. Hirschman**, *voice* [that is, protest] is impossible, nay, pointless. Only *exit*, exodus, remains, and it is the job of post-fascism to prevent that.

Under these conditions, it is only logical that the New New Left has re-appropriated the language of human rights instead of class struggle. If you glance at *Die Tageszeitung*, *Il Manifesto*, *Rouge*, or *Socialist Worker*, you will see that they are mostly talking about asylum-seekers, immigrants [legal or illegal, *les sans-papiers*], squatters, the homeless, Gypsies, and the like. It is a tactic forced upon them by the disintegration of universal citizenship, by unimpeded global capital flows by the impact of new technologies on workers and consumers, and by the slow death of the global sub-proletariat. Also, they have to face the revival of class politics in a new guise by the proponents of »the third way« à la **Tony Blair**. The neo-neoliberal state has rescinded its obligations to »heterogeneous,« non-productive populations and groups. Neo-Victorian, pedagogic ideas of »workfare,« which declare unemployment implicitly sinful, the equation of welfare claimants with »enemies of the people,« the replacement of social assistance with tax credits whereby people beneath the category of taxpayers are not deemed worthy of aid, income support made conditional on family and housing practices believed proper by »competent authorities,« the increasing racialization, ethnicization, and sexualization of the underclass, the replacement of social solidarity with ethnic or racial solidarity, the overt acknowledgment of second-class citizenship, the tacit recognition of the role of police as a racial defense force, the replacement of the idea of emancipation with the idea of privileges [like the membership in the European Union, the OECD, or the WTO] arbitrarily dispensed to the deserving poor, and the transformation of rational arguments against EU enlargement into racist/ethnicist rabble-rousing—all this is part of the post-fascist strategy of the scission of the civic-cum-human community, of a renewed granting or denial of citizenship along race, class, denominational, cultural, ethnic lines.

The re-duplication of the underclass—a global underclass abroad and the »heterogeneous,« wild ne'er-do-wells at home, with the interests of one set of underclass [»domestic«] presented as inimical to the other [»foreign«]—gives post-fascism its missing populist dimension. There is no harsher enemy of the immigrant—»guest worker«



**Trevor Paglen**  
Morning Commute [Gold Coast Terminal] /Las Vegas, NV/Distance ~1 mile/  
6:26 am, 2006

or asylum-seeker—than the obsolescent *lumpenproletariat*, publicly represented by the hard-core, right-wing extremist soccer hooligan. »Lager louts« may not know that *lager* does not only mean a kind of cheap continental beer, but also a concentration camp. But the unconscious pun is, if not symbolic, metaphorical.

We are, then, faced with a new kind of extremism of the center. This new extremism, which I call post-fascism, does not threaten, unlike its predecessor, liberal and democratic rule within the core

constituency of »homogeneous society.« Within the community cut in two, freedom, security, prosperity are on the whole undisturbed, at least within the productive and procreative majority that in some rich countries encompasses nearly all white citizens. »Heterogeneous,« usually racially alien, minorities are not persecuted, only neglected and marginalized, forced to live a life wholly foreign to the way of life of the majority [which, of course, can sometimes be qualitatively better than the flat workaholic, consumerism, and health obsessions of the majority]. Drugs, once supposed to widen and raise consciousness, are now uneasily pacifying the enforced idleness of those society is unwilling to help and to recognize as fellow humans. The »Dionysiac« subculture of the sub-proletariat further exaggerates the bifurcation of society. Political participation of the have-nots is out of the question, without any need for the restriction of franchise. Apart from the incipient and feeble [»new new«] left-wing radicalism, as isolated as anarcho-syndicalism was in the second half of the nineteenth century, nobody seeks to represent them. The conceptual tools once offered by democratic and libertarian socialism are missing; and libertarians are nowadays militant bourgeois extremists of the center, ultra-capitalist cyberpunks hostile to any idea of solidarity beyond the *fluxus* of the global marketplace.

Post-fascism does not need stormtroopers and dictators. It is perfectly compatible with an anti-Enlightenment liberal democracy that rehabilitates citizenship as a grant from the sovereign instead of a universal human right. I confess I am giving it a rude name here to attract attention to its glaring injustice. Post-fascism is historically continuous with its horrific predecessor only in patches. Certainly, Central and East European anti-Semitism has not changed much, but it is hardly central. Since post-fascism is only rarely a movement, rather simply a state of affairs, managed as often as not by so-called center-left governments, it is hard to identify intuitively. Post-fascists do not speak usually of total obedience and racial purity, but of the information superhighway.

Everybody knows the instinctive fury people experience when faced with a closed door. Now tens of millions of hungry human beings are rattling the doorknob. The rich countries are thinking up more sophisticated padlocks, while their anger at the invaders outside is growing, too. Some of the anger leads to the revival of the Nazi and fascist *Gedankengut* [»treasure-trove of ideas«], and this will trigger righteous revulsion. But post-fascism is not confined to the former Axis powers and their willing ex-clients, however revolting and horrifying this specific sub-variant may be. East European Gypsies [Roma and Sintj, to give their politically correct names] are persecuted both by the constabulary and by the populace, and are trying to flee to the »free West.« The Western reaction is to introduce visa restrictions against the countries in question in order to prevent massive refugee influx, and solemn summons to East European countries to respect human rights. Domestic racism is supplanted by global liberalism, both grounded on a political power that is rapidly becoming racialized. ■

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# A Postscript to 'Post-Fascism'

Preliminary Theses to a System of Fear

G. M. Tamás



Capital is running round the globe chasing cheap wages. It is running in the opposite direction, too, in a quest for competitive consumer demand. It is running after opportunities for lucrative investment. It is running to places with low taxes. It is running to find stable government or civil wars in need of weapons and mercenaries. Unless it stumbles against national frontiers, that is, law, it is running so fast it appears stationary, impossible to localise. So fast it seems to be everywhere, which it isn't. Law—that is, national frontiers—does not and do not really arrest its omnidirectional and multidimensional run, its velocity exacerbated further by the near-emptiness of the rarefied medium in which it swishes soundlessly.

Labour tries to walk around the globe in search of higher wages and cheaper prices. It stumbles perpetually against national frontiers, that is, law. It cannot afford to be partial to lower taxes, as it is aware that it may need the state, that is, the dole. It needs the state with its boundaries, that is, law, the very state and law that stops it from being, through a comparable velocity, a worthy rival to capital, as capital is not only an adversary and a competitor but also a source of bounty which is being sought. Labour will have to share its revenue with the state to slow down capital. Thus, it will need speed even more than before. But labour is slow, very slow, through its own fault. It has allied itself with law, that is, taxes. Capital, virtually unimpeded now in its speed, synonymous with invisibility, abstraction and elegance [please don't pay any heed to the contradiction in these terms] becomes young, elegant and austere, similar in its formal principle to the minimalist, slim, even anorexic architecture of the best new art museums. It is revolutionary. It is clever. It is directionless. You don't hear it. What you hear is

the tick-tock of stiletto heels on flagstones, the modish swarm of its abstract, slim admirers in black. Labour is terribly slow, it is backward. Its intellect is rejected, as only one kind of intellect is needed, the kind that won't be slowed down. Especially not by law, designed now to enhance circulation, that is, speed. Labour is fat, labour is Bermuda shorts and Hawaii shirts, the apparel of late Fordism. Very colourful and loud. Very visible. Very reactionary, very regressive. Sedentary and fearful. So is the state. Still based on physical force, hence on corporeal contact, propinquity. Noise. Smells. To pass, you'll need to shove somebody who might tread on your toes. The state now is not something, it is an obstacle to something. So it is manned by yahoos.

However new the medium, the style, the urgency and the accoutrements, the need of capital to reduce production costs and maximise profits is perpetual.

The speed of the hunt for the advantageous valuation of value does not only describe something in space [that is, time contracted digitally and otherwise], but qualitatively, too, through increased productivity, which is, of course, another contraction of time; in this case, of labour time. The global race or contest, always characteristic of capitalism, has only now become generalised, as there are no remaining non-capitalist pockets that have made the run unidirectional [colonialism]. The running of capital and the slower flow of the labour force [this, too, sped up by technology] makes observers consider all obstacles, all stops obnoxious and harmful.

Humans, though, have seen such stops as home—at least until now. Home is wherever there is no rush. Home is where external compulsion is supposed to slow down or be arrested altogether. Where 'value'

in the Marxian sense remains outside; the 'private' is allegedly not for sale and, more importantly, it is not believed to be produced, it is thought to be just there, as it were, naturally: immobile like a tree. As **Christopher Lasch** reminded us, marriage was considered to have been a »haven in a heartless world«. But the stop in the global run called 'home' had always been besieged by bourgeois doctrine: in the guise of 'the family' it was the seat of procreation/reproduction, the centre of consumption and, politically, an element of 'civil society' along with the market, Öffentlichkeit, NGOs, parties, trade unions, sports clubs, churches and the rest. Electoral systems are based on residential districts where people are inhabitants of homes, thus 'private citizens'. Home ownership is based on differential rent. Hence, the commodification and reification of the home [that is, the colonisation of the 'private', the dilution of bourgeois individuality, the mobilisation of the home-dweller] is not exactly a novelty.

Mediated as it is through rent, mortgage, credit, transportation; through heating, water, sewage, electricity, telephone, postal, cable and satellite television, radio, Internet, GPS and other networks, and through the construction industry, police surveillance and school districting, the home is nevertheless a stop in the global running, in the midst of the storm of production, accumulation, circulation and redistribution. For it is, simply, where people sleep. Whatever brings the family members or roommates together, it is usually not production. Not activity, but passivity. Biological and affective ties [if you include inheritance, which is bio-economic in character] rather than the direct cash nexus. Food, sex, rest, a sense of security and inwardness and, above all, an all-encompassing, enveloping idea of the 'stop'. Being inside, being indoors, being at home chiefly means an interruption of perpetual motion.

By analogy, the boundary—the nation, the state, law—came to be regarded as a kind of stop as well, a shelter from the global running, round and round, of capital and labour, from the speed of valuation [production, accumulation, circulation, redistribution] and of technological innovation, from 'change' [to give it its official, ideological, bourgeois name]. By extension, the political analogon of 'home' will be spread to 'the boundary' [nation, state, law] which is also a check on movement, and therefore appears as home. This analogy is the founda-

tion of romantic-reactionary thought, especially in the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, and now finds itself a niche in some left populist [green and other] ideological architectures. 'The boundary'—that is, a political limit to capital—is, of course, the very opposite of a home, being institutional and public. But boundaries are an expression of what is inside them. In this case, what is inside the nation-state is both a limitation on, and the enforcement of, capital, mostly the imposition of an extrinsic measure of sale and purchase, of the capital/labour, price/wage imbalance and the like, including the crux of the matter, the labour contract. The labour contract which—bringing together capital and labour—is essential in starting the fusion of producer and means of production which starts production and circulation [of value] is by necessity founded on freedom [it takes place between free agents to seal an agreement for mutual gain]. Freedom is an inevitable precondition of exploitation—especially, but not exclusively, in a market régime.

The nation-state appears at first as a check on the free flow of capital and of labour, inasmuch as regulation of any sort is a slowing down, an interrupting, a stop, albeit temporary. But the modern state also regulates in order to ensure speed, that is, the free movement of the subjects in the production and exchange process without hindrances from irregular forces of illegitimate violence and unreasonable tradition. If 'the boundary' [nation, state, law] is 'a home' at all, it is a home to a contradiction: to freedom [freedom from biopolitical bondage such as the privilege of noble over ignoble birth replaced by the randomness of competition tempered by the hierarchy established through inheritance and 'social' and 'cultural' capital]; and a home to social protection that may very severely circumscribe the freedom of the contract [through taxation and redistribution and through workers' rights, consumers' rights, through affirmative action, gender equality and ecological legislation].

'Home' in late capitalism is presented as a freedom from flow. 'Home', i. e., family and its social protection by law, defended by state coercion, seems stationary, a synonym for permanent. Freedom from change conceived as compulsory, but arbitrary rootlessness. Needless to say, it is an illusion for the most part, but a notable illusion. It is notable mainly for its recent transformation

whereby social protection [the welfare state and redistributive egalitarianism] has come to signify a frightening threat to the safety of 'home'.

One of the more important paradoxes of the age is the concomitant transformation of egalitarianism—purportedly a view conceived in the interest of the majority—into an 'élitist' doctrine, that is, a minority viewpoint. Political victories [electoral and ideological] and opinion poll majorities, mistakenly but understandably dubbed 'populist', have been achieved by opposing so-called social legislation [mostly, various forms of aid to the needy], an opposition sustained by those who would apparently profit from what they are now inclined to reject. People very much afraid of the ruthless energy of the global race appear to be contributing willingly to the demolition of their own [social and national] home.

This is a major ideological transformation with very serious political and cultural consequences, and is in dire need of analysis.

It is not merely class struggle from above [although it is very much that too]; it also takes into account the transformation of the main structural conflict in capitalist society—the result of a mighty 'passive revolution'—that makes it decidedly biopolitical. This biopolitical turn is in part decidedly regressive—it rehabilitates origin and status as a basis of group formations against which bourgeois revolutions have been fought—and in part 'advanced', 'ultra-modern', pretending to the supercession or sublation of class conflict, removing the centre of the fundamental social contradiction from 'property' to 'the human condition'.

Let us summarise these changes first as they appear in the doxa of the age, and then offer a few scattered critical remarks.

**01.** Technological change—from automation/robotisation to digitalisation, nanotechnology to the latest wonders of biochemistry—has, for the first time in history, made human physical [muscular] effort marginal in the production of goods. This has been accompanied by an unprecedented growth in productivity and work intensity that had made the majority of the global workforce superfluous for ever. Structural unemployment is not a problem any longer, however general, noxious and necessary, but essential to the 'human condition'. The majority of humankind will not be productive [of value] ever again.

**02.** Work—as the main socialisation model in capitalism—ceases to exist. Institutions in capitalism have been devised to assure the mobilisation of the *homme moyen sensuel* to participate in 'alienated labour', that is, in activities which are divorced from individual aspirations but are the only means for the have-nots to survive. Mobilisation and coercion have served this purpose among legally and juridically equal citizens, uprooting pockets of subsistence economy, crafts, independent farms and the like. In classical bourgeois society, people have spent their lives in institutions: school, army, church, club, trade union, mass party, sports associations, organised leisure activities, commercial popular culture, the popular press and radio, fans' and supporters' groups, nations, families and so on. Group membership in the hierarchical institutions of the state and of civil society were paramount. This institutional character of Fordist capitalism has been blown away, fractured into smithereens by the dwindling need for employees.

**03.** In spite of these transformations, one fundamental given of these societies has not changed: there are still only two legitimate sources of income in modernity: capital and labour. Both are becoming more and more marginal, minority phenomena.

**04.** Whatever is being gained by increased productivity and the retrenchment of employment, resulting in the sharp decrease in global real wages, hence the radical lowering of global production costs, makes the resources needed for consumption [competitive demand] fraught with uncertainty. Consumer markets still need the participation of the masses who have been robbed forever of the wage-type of earnings. For production and trade to go on, consumer demand will have to be financed somehow. The first panicky solution—hence the current debt crisis—has been the immense lending based on fictitious capital. Work as a legitimate resource of consumption, therefore of livelihood, has been largely replaced by credit, a second-level socialisation of circulation and demand. Similar questions had been resolved in the past by a state version of this [the 'welfare state'] offering incentives for accumulation, investment and re-investment in an orderly, regulated fashion. This advancement of social credit was guaranteed by sovereign state power and by territorial expansion [colonialism]



Trevor Paglen, Drone Vision [Videostill], 2010

which was meant to finance non-productive wages in the 'advanced economies' [read: white nations] mostly in the state sector, making inner peace and order possible, while keeping the increasingly imaginary labour model of socialisation intact. The depletion of such state resources and of the social democratic policies directed at financing consumption [including housing, transport, education etc.] through the neo-conservative counter-revolution [1970s to the present] resulted in the appearance of an unheard-of conundrum.

**05.** The social and economic powers of states have been radically reduced precisely at the moment when there is no other authority to which the new non-productive majority can turn in order to ask that their survival [living standards, upward mobility, material improvement] be ensured as a condition of human life in organised society ['civilisation']. This was also the moment when the powerful dominant ideology began in earnest to differentiate between civic and social equality, the synthesis of which was promised by

the now forgotten catharsis of 1945 [see the series of 'social constitutions' adopted by 'anti-fascist' electoral majorities in Italy, Austria, France, Germany etc. in the nineteen-forties and fifties, not to speak of the Soviet bloc]. This was the time when the old conflict between liberty and equality [propounded by old-style aristocratic liberalism, a reaction to the French Revolution] was revived, when equality was defined again as 'envy' and 'resentment' exploited by a cunning totalitarian ruse. This was a quite successful ploy in pre-empting the demands of non-productive, but empirically hard-working majorities for unlimited credit—since wages for non-productive labour are nothing but [disguised] credit, and wage rises are nothing but increased credit. Neo-conservative governments [and all present governments of the developed countries are neo-conservative] are in no position to deliver that. Time spent on alienated activities is not labour time in any 'natural' way, it may be labour, and again, it may be not.

**06.** The decrease in the social and economic powers of the state does not mean a decrease in the sum total of its powers; that is, the capacity of the state to exercise legitimate coercion of one kind or another. On the contrary, in this case: the state finds itself in a position to decide—to be constrained to decide—who will get state resources to survive and who will not, which in contemporary society means that it has the obligation and the privilege of deciding between life and death.

**07.** For it is imperative for contemporary states—in a situation where production and accumulation are growing and the mass of producers is decreasing apace—to find the criteria according to which some groups will be entitled to state resources [beyond capital and labour] made legitimate by legislative and juridical fiat, and which groups will not.

**08.** The legitimization of social life and social death meted out to some of those concerned is forced upon governments. A clear case

is the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the United States. Since financing the non-productive lower middle classes through wage increases and direct gifts from government was culturally impossible, the US Government—through state institutions like Fanny Mae and indirectly subsidised banks and insurance companies—financed housing for these social groups through mortgage credit. When capital had to say no to this [the losses being considerable], class rule was re-established by foreclosures and the crashes of credit institutions serving state goals by trying to keep the middle class alive. The crisis—an instrument of capitalist discipline—has shown that there was no escaping 'the stark choices' facing the state. The choice is dismal: either they had to crunch credit and condemn hundreds of millions of people to abject poverty and thereby limit consumption, which would reduce demand and destroy production as well as profits and assets, or they had to finance credit by helping to create and recreate fictitious capital which would force them to increase taxes, inducing capital flight and a further retrench-



Trevor Paglen, Drone Vision, 2010, [still]



ment of production, thus creating essentially the same outcome.

**09.** The only solution is to reduce the number of people dependent on credit guaranteed by the state and to keep consumer demand at acceptable levels through exacerbated inequality – by keeping productive wages very low in the newly industrialised countries [such as China, India, Vietnam and so on].

**10.** But how can they determine which groups are to be deprived of any ‘social rights’, i. e., of non-market resources for non-productive populations [those in public service, the ‘service industries’ that are no industries at all, in the ‘caring professions’, in education and research and arts, and others described below]?

**11.** The answer is twofold: both moral and biopolitical. In one of the major shifts in Western [or European] history a thorough reformulation of political legitimacy has taken place, without the major mainstream observers having had an inkling – as usual.

**12.** First, the fine old contrast between the propertied and the propertyless was made to vanish ideologically, with those with ‘legitimate revenue’ [capital and labour] on one side, and those without ‘legitimate revenue’ on the other. In continental Europe, there is talk about ‘active’ and ‘passive’ populations. The ‘passive’ populations – the unemployed, the old-age pensioners [the ‘retired’], the students, the ill, the people caring for small children or for aged relatives [especially, of course, ‘single mothers’], the marginal, the unemployable, the mentally deficient, the handicapped, the homeless, the vagrants, the urban nomads, in some places the ‘useless’ artists, scholars, researchers – sometimes including the precariat – are considered worthless, parasitical, ‘undeserving’. The techniques of inclusion, positive discrimination, social assistance – except maybe the ineffectual ‘retraining’ and ‘lifelong learning’ with their emphasis on reintegration into production – are thoroughly compromised. These populations are being punished, discriminated against, harassed, deliberately starved, encouraged to die soon. In a society where work as a socialisation model has long ago ceased to function, work is being extolled as a chief virtue without a negation of eudæmonism and hedonism [and its demotic sub-bourgeois version, consumerism]. Pre-

vious versions of liberalism recognised the rôle of luck, of random distribution of rewards as an unintended by-product of freedom, but they usually refrained from considering luck a virtue – otherwise they would have had no reason to defend it. Present-day governments mean to punish misfortune and they are ready to declare, in pure Nietzschean fashion, that social position [including any position within the social division of labour] is an expression of intrinsic energy and merit. But where Nietzsche was propounding and lauding slavery, contemporary governments have to deal with non-workers. What is at stake is not the repression of subaltern, lowly workers, but the legitimisation of the social [and then the biological] death of those who cannot work, since their work is being performed by machinery.

**13.** The selection [I am conscious of the connotations of this term, but they are not Darwinian here as we are not speaking of natural selection] of those who are condemned to social death in accordance with their bodily characteristics and instinctual behaviour [health, age, sometimes gender and sexuality] and the cultural stigmata assimilated to the corporeal in the prevailing popular fantasy, is purely biopolitical. So are the punishments – reduction of bodily comforts, shelter, heat, light, nourishment, clean air, medication, hygiene, exercise, protective clothing, psychophysical pleasures derived from alcohol and drugs etc. Morally, the withdrawal of equal dignity, the stigmatising stereotypes, the open, public and official contempt for the unfortunate [informally severe in these competitive societies anyway] is cutting society in two. Here, the exploited proletariat appears as a privileged class, as it is considered – in contradistinction to the New Idle – sound and worthy. Although oppressed, it is recognised as a full member of the capital-labour continuum. It is not ‘unwaged’.

**14.** All this would of course lack persuasive force if it were not coupled with racism and xenophobia, versions of ethnicism. Ethnicism is not simply a political opinion or ideology [of which more in a minute.] Ethnicism, at least at this juncture, is a symbolic strategy which designates the randomly selected target of biopolitical selection as foreign, that is, as a non-member of the political community. As the typical beneficiary of social assistance, always presented as fraudulent, non-deserving ‘sponger’, ‘criminal’, ‘welfare

**A specific, but quite important form of the delegitimation of equality and of egalitarians is anti-communism. The scheme is identical: an occult, dangerous, doctrinaire élite with salvationist ideas, remote from the real, this-worldly preoccupations of ordinary folk. Just like the despised ‘human rights activists’, ‘professional anti-fascists’ or, in Anders Behrens Breivik’s patois, ‘cultural Marxists’ [he is quite right, this is what we are] who are opposing the new biopolitical dispensation...**

queen’, Sozialschmarotzer, ‘illegal alien’, is symbolically foreign, his or her actual origin is of no consequence. This is how egalitarians are becoming – in the official ideology – ‘élitist’ as they are made to appear as defending the remote, the atypical, the alien, the minority against ‘us’; which is nonsense, but egalitarians and progressives are provoked to behave as if they are opposed to the ethnicist mainstream which is not a majority but an opinion [although not simply an opinion.] The problem is precisely that the non-productive strata, taken together, are the majority; only the scapegoats among them are a minority. This is how ‘our community’ is being protected. A specific, but quite important form of the delegitimation of equality and of egalitarians is anti-communism. The scheme is identical: an occult, dangerous, doctrinaire élite with salvationist ideas, remote from the real, this-worldly preoccupations of ordinary folk. Just like the despised ‘human rights activists’, ‘professional anti-fascists’ or, in Anders Behrens Breivik’s patois, ‘cultural Marxists’ [he is quite right, this is what we are] who are opposing the new biopolitical dispensation...

**15.** The crisis and mainstream politics [they are both the creators and the creatures of each other] have managed to design a double society: those of imperfect body and morality, and the sound core of society. The task is to exclude the former and to make them accept their inferiority – and to persuade the remaining proletariat to be the gendarme of biopolitical power.

The state of exception redefining friend and foe within national societies and nation-states remains the fundamental characteristic of post-fascism as I defined it in my essay a decade ago. Its model remains the rescinding of Jewish emancipation by the Third Reich. The transformation of the non-citizens into *homines sacri* is unchanged as well. Erecting tall dykes against migration, even at the price of slowing down capitalist fluxus, is still its main instrument. But the transformation of citizens into non-citizens on moralistic and biopolitical grounds – with such ferocity – is rather new. As long as there is no synthesis between the transcendental identity of the working and non-working, but mainly between the productive and non-productive social groups as opposed to capital as such, something very like fascism will prevail. Drafting the exploited and oppressed producers as the enforcers of the rule of capital also remains, as in the 1920s and 1930s, the main danger. It is not only extremists and fools of the far right who are a threat. It is the widely accepted semblance of the unity between legitimate earners – capitalists and producers – united politically against the ‘passive’ and the alien which is placing everyone in jeopardy.

To crush this fake unity we need people who have the courage to propose disunity and to love conflict, a conflict redefined in opposition to moralising biopolitics. ■

on the following pages

**Burak Delier**  
Tersyon, 2007

# THERE ARE THINGS THAT YOU CAN DO WITHIN THE SYSTEM. FOR EVERYTHING ELSE THERE'S PARKALYNCH!

## WHAT IS PARKALYNCH?

**PARKALYNCH** IS LYNCH-PROOF! IT SHIELDS YOU AGAINST STICKS AND STONES, TRUNCHEON BLOWS AND PUNCHES! PARKALYNCH IS THE GARMENT FOR THOSE WHO KNOW THAT THERE IS BARBARIC VIOLENCE BEHIND THE VALID VALUES OF THE SYSTEM. PARKALYNCH HAS NOT BEEN PRODUCED FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE POWER, BUT FOR THOSE WHO READ HISTORY IN REVERSE.



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## Hito Steyerl

Filmmaker and writer. Written and visual essays about traveling images and their relation to spectacle, history and violence.

Teaches New Media at University of Arts Berlin. Shows include documenta 12, manifesta 5, biennials in Shanghai, Gwangju, Taipei, Berlin and many other places.

Solo shows at nbk Berlin, and Henie Onstad Art Centre, Norway among many others. One of her favorite works is the thorough dismantling of the facade of the Linz Art School, a large Nazi building [2009] sitting on main square.

Recent books include: *The Color of Truth* [2008] • *Beyond Representation* [forthcoming] • *The Wretched of the Screen* [forthcoming]. ■

## Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen

is an art historian and cultural critic. He is Associate Professor at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen. He is co-editor of the journal *K&K*. He is the author of *Den sidste avantgarde* [2004] • *I sammenbruddets tjeneste*, with **Das Beckwerk** [2008] • *Avantgardens selvmord* [2009], and *En anden verden. Kritiske epistler om de seneste årtiers antikapitalistiske satsninger inden for kunst og politik og forsøgene på at udradere dem* [2011] and co-editor of a number of books, among others, *Totalitarian Art and Modernity* [2010], and *Expect Anything Fear Nothing: The Situationist Movement in Scandinavia and Elsewhere* [2011].

He has published articles about anti-capitalist activism, the revolutionary tradition, and the Situationist International in journals such as *Multitudes*, *Rethinking Marxism*, and *Third Text*. Recent publications include »On the Turn to Liberal Racism in Denmark« in *e flux journal*, no. 22, 2011, and »Scattered [Western Marxist-style] Remarks about Contemporary Art, Its Contradictions and Difficulties«, *Third Text*, no. 109, 2011.

Other recent activities include the exhibition »This World We Must Leave« [made in collaboration with **Jakob Jakobsen**] at Aarhus Kunstbygning 2010. ■

## G.M. Tamás

is a Hungarian philosopher and prolific writer of essays. He emigrated from his native Romania to Hungary in 1978 and taught for two years at the University of Budapest. After being fired for publishing [and signing openly] illegal tracts, he has become a leading figure in the East European dissident movements. He was elected to Parliament in 1990 and became Director of the Institute of Philosophy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1991. In 1994 and 1995, respectively, he stepped down from both. **Tamás's** works have been translated into 14 languages. ■

## What, How & for Whom/WHW

is a curatorial collective formed in 1999 and based in Zagreb, Croatia. Its members are **Ivet Ćurlin**, **Ana Dević**, **Nataša Ilić** and **Sabina Sabolović**, and designer and publicist **Dejan Kršić**. WHW organizes a range of production, exhibition and publishing projects and directs Gallery Nova in Zagreb. What, how and for whom, the three basic questions of every economic organization, concern the planning, concept and realization of exhibitions as well as the production and distribution of artworks and the artist's position in the labor market. These questions formed the title of WHW's first project dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the Communist Manifesto, in 2000 in Zagreb, and became the motto of WHW's work and the title of the collective.

Recent exhibitions include 11th Istanbul Biennial »What keeps Mankind Alive?«, Istanbul, 2009 • »Hungry Man, Reach for the Book. It Is a Weapon«, Printed Matter, New York, 2010 • »Ground Floor America«, Lakeside–Klagenfurt and Den Frie–Copenhagen, 2010 • »Art Always Has Its Consequences«, former building of MOCA Zagreb, 2010 • »One Needs to Live Self-Confidently... Watching«, Croatian pavilion at 54th Venice Biennial, 2011 • »Second World«, steirischer herbst, Graz, 2011. ■



# Details

**History warns us all of intellectual responsibility only too gladly by bashing us on the head; we have made mistakes, but only get to perceive them as such afterwards. Notwithstanding the sirens beckoning into darkness, we are obviously still not committed enough to enlightenment; we do not sufficiently deal with prejudices. And when these prejudices gain material existence in the apparatuses of oppression and exploitation, then what would once have amounted merely to cleaning the edges of the sphere of theory assumes the false value of analysis.**

*Extravagantia II: Koliko Fašizma?*

[*Extravagantia II: How much fascism?*]

A selection from the book by **Rastko Močnik**, p. 2, published at *Red Thread* e-journal, <http://www.red-thread.org/en/article.asp?a=19>

## **SUPERFLEX**

[artists' group founded by **Jakob Fenger**, **Rasmus Nielsen** and **Bjørnstjerne Christiansen** in 1993 in Copenhagen]

**Foreigners, please don't leave us alone with the Danes!, 2002**

Wall painting, poster



## **Lene BERG**

[b. 1965, lives in Berlin]

**Norwegian Products, 2011**

Sculpture, photos, postcards

Translation of text on signs:

**GUDBRANDSDALS CHEESE**

**RICH AND ROUND**

**This brown cheese is one of the things that make Norwegians–Norwegians.**

**Our distinctly Norwegian cheeses are traditionally made from Anne Hov's original 1863 recipe.**

Scanned cheese wrapper, July 2011

**Today is Vidkun Quisling's speech on the University Square at 20:30 all cinemas will be closed.**

Announcement in *Morgenbladet*, July 1941



## **Avi MOGRABI**

[b. 1956, lives in Tel Aviv]

**Details, 2003–2011**

6 video projections



## **Trevor PAGLEN**

[b. 1974, lives in New York]

**Workers; Gold Coast Terminal; Las Vegas, NV; Distance ~ 1 mile, 8:58 a.m., 2007**

C-Print

**Morning Commute [Gold Coast Terminal] / Las Vegas, NV/Distance ~1 mile/6:26 am, 2006**

C-Print

**Large Hangars and Fuel Storage; Tonopah Test Range, NV; Distance approx. 18 miles; 10:44 am, 2005**

C-Print

**Drone Vision [Videostill], 2010**

Archival pigment print

**Drone Vision, 2010**

Video intercepted from a communication satellite [edited], 5 min

**STSS-1 and Two Unidentified Spacecraft over Carson City [Space Tracking and Surveillance System; USA 205], 2010**

All works courtesy of Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne

## **Burak DELIER**

[b. 1977, lives in Istanbul]

**Tersyon, 2007**

Installation

**Tersyon Feasibility Research, 2011**

Installation.

Video:

*The Field Research*, 24 min

*The Meeting*, 21 min



## **Milica TOMIĆ**

[b. 1960, lives in Belgrade]

**One day, instead of one night, a burst of machine-gun fire will flash, if light cannot come otherwise [Oskar Davičo–fragment of a poem]**

action/intervention in the public space, Belgrade, 2009

Dedicated to the members of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Initiative – Belgrade, 3. September, 2009.

Video, media documentation

Video 10'

Sound: Interviews with the partisans, members of the IIWW People Liberation Struggle [*On Love Afterwards*, Milica Tomić, 2003]

Interviewee: Šime Kronja, Jelena Kadenić, Radošin Rajević, Dimitrije Bajalica

Camera/sound: Staša Tomić

Editing: Miloš Stojanović

Sound design: Vladimir Janković Slončič



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This book is published on the occasion  
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**BERGEN KUNSTHALL**

September 9 – October 30, 2011

Exhibition produced by **Bergen Kunsthall**

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**What, How & for Whom/WHW**

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**Hito Steyerl**

**Gáspár M. Tamás**

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# **Details:** Lene Berg • Burak Delier • Avi Mograbi • Trevor Paglen • Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen • Hito Steyerl • Superflex • Gáspár M. Tamás • Milica Tomić • What, How & for Whom/WHW

The point of departure for the exhibition »Details« is **Rastko Močnik's** collection of texts entitled 'How Much Fascism?'. In the midst of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, **Močnik** related the conflicts and the rise of fascist forces to the structural consequences of the introduction and reconstruction of peripheral capitalism, relating them to general processes in the restructuring of the public sphere in late capitalism.

Today, with an alarming right-wing ascendancy throughout Europe, we should direct our gaze beyond the 'peripheries' and towards the core of liberal democracy. **Močnik's** basic postulate remains – the question is not 'fascism – yes or no?' but 'How much fascism?'

Open manifestations of fascism are fairly easy to recognize [just as more and more of them are appearing], but we need to turn our attention to the silent fascism that is becoming normalized through the systematic violence seeping into the laws and everyday administration practices of the nation-states, and to assess the mechanisms of oppression and the various symptoms of contemporary fascism that are being presented as unavoidable, pragmatic necessities.

In other words, we have to look at the details.