In 2013, the world is entering the sixth year of the global crisis. In those six years, sparked by the unfolding events there has developed a burgeoning literature regarding the origins of the crisis. In many ways, this debate evolved from long-term disputes regarding the nature of the current phase of capitalism and its periodization (i.e., monopoly-finance capitalism; post-Fordism; finance-driven accumulation regime; financial-market capitalism; neoliberalism; high-tech capitalism; etc.) and has brought to light the epistemological and political differences between the various approaches.

As Magnus Ryner has pointed out, however, with a few notable exceptions the debate has shed insufficient light on the political articulation of the crisis and the interrelations between the political and the economic sphere.1 With regard to not only the origins of the crisis, but also and particularly the viability of exit strategies from it, the struggles over hegemony occurring during the crisis are essential. As Gramsci noted during the second-to-last organic crisis of capitalism, the 1930s Great Depression:

There is no question that immediate economic crises can in themselves not bring about fundamental changes; they can only prepare more favorable ground for the diffusion of certain approaches for thinking through, posing and solving, the questions that are decisive for the whole further development of the life of the state.2

Hence, complementing the Marxist and Marxian crisis debate, the goal of this paper is to shed some light on the political articulations of the global crisis and assess the interrelations between global leadership efforts seeking exit strategies from the crisis and the hegemonic struggles underlying their
agencies. The institutional arenas of those struggles are located within the (extended) state, which has undergone a process of internationalization during the post-War era. However, despite the development of forms of transnational statehood as “second-order condensations of relationships of forces,” most notably in the European Union, the organization of hegemony and the construction of historic blocs are still occurring largely at the national level. While looking at the struggle between Left-wing and Right-wing projects of leadership, therefore, this article will make reference to a number of core capitalist countries, but the main focus will be on the United States and Germany, the two dominant actors in NAFTA and the EU that have shaped the politics of exit strategies from the crisis in North America and the Eurozone.

Crisis and Crisis Exits: The Green New Deal and its Erstwhile Hegemonic Failure

The general relationship of capitalism’s crises, including the present crisis, and politics is one in which the outward appearance of political rule becomes frayed. Consensus armoured with force instead becomes force armoured with residual consensus. This poses the question of legitimacy and increases existing tensions between capitalism and democracy. In the hegemonic era of neoliberalism, the generic class-character of the political economy of the state budget was concealed behind a technocratic universal discourse that presented its purposes as self-evident. After years of millions and billions of dollars in shortfalls for funding education, health, and pension systems, the discursive veil shrouding national budgets has suddenly been torn away by the trillions of dollars that have become available for the socialization of losses in the banking sector and for combatting the debt crisis. Post-hegemonic rule can nevertheless keep itself alive as (a form of) domination even while it is not able to implement a coherent project for the renewal of rule through consensus. This is so either because the relevant social classes are blocking one another, or because there is a dearth of social opposition movements that have been historically necessary for the renewal of the capitalist relations of production as “lucky” or “historical finds.”

The present crisis of capitalism is organic. Organic signifies that it articulates itself on various levels simultaneously. The crisis is a crisis of accumulation, social reproduction, and ecological sustainability. It is further-
more a crisis of the particular world order that has the American empire as the guarantor of an integrated global capitalism.9

The erosion of neoliberal hegemony means that the social structures of accumulation and the regulatory foundations of capitalism, which were established at the end of the crisis of Fordism in the late 1970s, globalized after 1989–1991, and hegemonically generalized during the social-democratic era of neoliberalism after 1997–1998,10 are subject to renegotiation in the twenty-first century.

The fact that from the start the economic crisis was accompanied by a deep ideological crisis led to the intellectual development of comprehensive projects of post-neoliberalization. From the (Centre-) Right, to the (Centre-) Left, a Green New Deal was touted as the most coherent attempt at a solution for the structural accumulation problems and ecological contradictions of neoliberal capitalism. In the United States, it was demanded not only by long-term-oriented intellectuals of the capitalist class—such as the billionaire mayor of New York City Michael Bloomberg, notable conservatives such as Kevin Phillips,11 and Keynesians such as James K. Galbraith and Paul Krugman12—but also much earlier by Marxist economists such as David Harvey.13 The project for a Green New Deal has amounted to an attempt to overcome the crisis of accumulation and of ecology by shifting towards a “green capitalism.” Green technologies are seen to play a role similar to that of the automobile and petrochemical industries during the Fordist era, functioning as the base innovation of a new Kondratievian and Schumpeterian Long Wave of prosperity.

Beyond bourgeois intellectuals who have perceived the Green New Deal as the only viable (re-)industrialization strategy to solve the crisis tendencies in capitalism and maintain US hegemony, the Green New Deal’s broad social base has encompassed disparate, and in part even antagonistic, classes. The driving force of the project is a new green bourgeoisie, which produces in a less energy-intensive manner and which in relation to the production and technical development requirements of renewable energy is, especially in Germany, still partially dependent on the state. Subaltern actors such as sections of the labour movement are also part of the project. They are pushing in particular for an extension of the Green New Deal towards a Social Green New Deal.14 In addition, sections of the old core industries are involved.
Due to structural overcapacities/capacity underutilization and increasing international competition and coerced investment (as for example in the automobile sector), they have understood the necessity of having a debate regarding transformation, even though there are hopes that the universalization of the North American car civilization in the emerging markets—a death blow to ecological sustainability and the fight against climate change—will solve those profitability problems.

For the United States, the Green New Deal has embodied a type of forward strategy in the struggle against competition in trade coming from the BRIC states (Brazil, Russia, India, China), particularly China, as well as Europe and Japan. The structural financial power of the United States—referred to by the late Peter Gowan as the “Dollar Wall Street Regime”\(^\text{15}\)—and its grasp on global financial reserves could serve, within the framework of a Green New Deal, as public start-up financing and an important resource for a reconstructed American hegemony buoyed by a new base innovation and an accumulation engine with “green technologies” (e.g., wind turbines, solar panels, high-speed rail etc.). With Thomas L. Friedman’s clarion call “green the bailout!,”\(^\text{16}\) many of the Empire’s long-term-oriented intellectuals hoped that the Green New Deal would provide the United States with sustainable energy independence—one linked to neither offshore drilling nor the controversial new fracking technology, and one that could delink it from its dependence on Middle Eastern oil and thus geopolitical conflict.

In the context of the Centre-Left hopes of a “transformative Obama Presidency,”\(^\text{17}\) the about-face on policy towards a new state-interventionism—the (partial-) nationalization of core industries, the socialization of bank debts, hundreds of billions of dollars in economic stimulus, etc.)—appeared to many (Left-)Keynesians, who have understood neoliberalism purely as an ideology (of the market) instead of as a fundamental reorganization of the state and labour markets connected to a massive shift in the relationships of forces between (globally mobile) capital and (nationally bound) labour, to have signalled the end of neoliberalism.

The grand hopes of 2008 and 2009, however, turned into despair in 2010. The stimulus programs envisaged as the Green New Deal’s central building blocks failed. This is exemplified by the United States. Here, the $787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 was: too small to fill the...
$2 trillion economic hole resulting not least from local and regional austerity 
countertendencies; too incoherent and overall not green enough to kickstart 
“green capitalism”; and too market based, leading to an unprecedented 
downsizing of public-sector employment i.e., the exact opposite of New 
Deal-style public employment programs. The reasons for this failure, however, 
were political, given that the Obama administration was fully aware of the 
insufficiency of its proposal. Hence, given the relationship of forces, the 
words of the administration, most notably those voiced by Christina Romer, 
Obama’s reform-oriented Council of Economic Advisers’ chief, were not 
matched by its deeds.18

In hegemonic terms, the administration’s failure to construct what it called 
the “post-bubble economy” facilitated the re-emergence of the libertarian 
Right in the guise of the Tea Party movement. Paul Krugman, the Keynesian 
critic of the government, had predicted such an outcome early on. Shortly 
after Obama’s election victory and more than a month before the emergence 
of the Tea Party movement, he analyzed the end result of a hypothetical 
stimulus programme very similar to the one later adopted ($775 billion with 
$300 billion dollars in tax cuts) and wrote:

I see the following scenario: a weak stimulus plan (…) is crafted to win (…) 
extra GOP votes. The plan limits the rise in unemployment, but things are 
still pretty bad, with the rate peaking at something like 9 per cent and coming 
down only slowly. And then [Republican Senate Minority Leader] Mitch 
McConnell says ‘See, government spending doesn’t work.’19

With the rise of the Right and the ensuing global turn to a policy of 
austerity in 2010–2011, the Green New Deal has, for the time being, failed. 
The result has been an intensification of the crisis and its re-articulation as 
a new fiscal crisis of the state, onto which the problem of the banking sector 
losses have been shifted. In hindsight and to the surprise of many Centre-
Left observers,20 the prevailing form of crisis management suddenly appears 
as the opposite of transformation, that is to say the reconstruction of the old 
neoliberal capitalism by means of state intervention. The answer as to “why?” 
is to be found in the fears of inflation and state defaults on the part of the 
financial capitalist class, but it is also to be found in the historically specific 
political articulations of the crisis.
Interregnum and Crisis Politics: Simultaneity of Economic and Social Crisis, and Left Resistance

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had already considered as feasible a failure of the relations of production to adjust to the developed productive forces. This possibility conceals itself in the famous formulation: “the common ruin of the contending classes” from the *Communist Manifesto*. Almost 100 years later, Antonio Gramsci analyzed the historical constellations in which social classes block one another with the concept “charismatic leadership,” which he himself had adopted and redefined from Max Weber via Robert Michels. In accordance with another Gramscian term, the question regarding the political articulation of the crisis can be designated as an interregnum. By using the concept of interregnum, Gramsci designates transitional periods of the crisis in which “the ruling class has lost its consensus, i.e. is no longer leading but only dominant, exercising coercive force alone.” In this phase, according to Gramsci, “great masses have become detached from the traditional ideologies and no longer believe what they used to.” The crisis consists precisely in the fact “that the old is dying and the new cannot be born: in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.” The issue is whether in fact the protest movements of 2011 and 2012, which early on were compared with 1848, are an indication of the pending surmounting of the crisis interregnum.

That the crisis had to have a political articulation can be explained by the concurrence of economic and social crisis (with the exceptions of Germany, Canada, and some newly industrialized countries). Fifty million jobs were lost worldwide, while at the same time a large reserve army of the underemployed emerged. In parts of Europe, youth unemployment rose to such a level that the International Labour Organization is already speaking about a “lost generation.” Youth who recently completed tertiary education are not finding jobs, while their predecessors bore the brunt of precarization and thus became the first victims of mass layoffs. In Spain and in Greece, both hit hard by EU-enforced austerity measures, youth unemployment soon reached and hovered at 50 percent, eventually reaching 60 percent in Spain by January 2013. In Ireland, where youth unemployment reached and stagnated at 30 percent, painful memories of the human exodus from the time of the Potato Famine were re-awakened. It was precisely these young people—and with them many
of the precarious and highly qualified—who left their homelands to search for work. For those who could still find work during the recovery of 2009–2010, low-wage and often temporary and part-time jobs were replacing full-time and secure high- and mid-wage ones. “Generation internship” thus became “generation crisis.”

What’s more, in rich countries such as the United States in which financialized pension systems (alongside increasing private household indebtedness) have subsumed labour under finance capital, the prospects for an old age lived in dignity disappeared overnight. Furthermore, more than every fiftieth home was foreclosed upon (more than five million in 2009–2010). The numerous tent cities springing up from Sacramento to Providence brought memories of the “Hoovervilles” of the 1930s back to life.

With the social impact of the crisis, and despite the cushioning effects of economic stimulus packages, old forms of resistance reappeared. Attention was attracted not only by the isolated factory occupation and worker takeover of a bankrupt window factory in Chicago, or “boss-napping” in France to force the payment of outstanding wages, but also by the parallel general strikes in Greece, Italy, Spain, and France, while in Germany municipal “crisis alliances” were established in anticipation of social cutbacks. Worldwide large demonstrations such as “One Nation Working Together” in the United States with some 200,000 participants, or the “We will not pay for your crisis” protest in Germany received little media attention despite the fact that they brought together more people than even the biggest rallies by Right-wing movements such as the Tea Party in the United States.

Nevertheless, organized resistance remained on the whole fragmented and short of breath. Furthermore, the weakness of the anticapitalist movements correlated with the fact—registered with astonishment by increasingly self-doubting bourgeois observers—that the Left has not been profiting from the crisis politically. On the contrary, with few exceptions (the Centre-Left NDP in the May 2011 Canadian national elections), it is not only elections that were lost. New anticapitalist projects, such as the New Anticapitalist Party in France (NPA) or Die LINKE in Germany, had to concede that, to use one of Die LINKE’s former party-chair Oskar Lafontaine’s favourite formulations by Walter Benjamin, the wind, which had carried such parties to quite spectacular heights and expansionary prospects prior to the crisis, no
longer blew in the Left’s sails. In other words, the antineoliberal dynamic, which in Germany Die LINKE could force onto the agendas of the established parties between 2004–2005 and 2008, came largely to a halt. This is reflected also in opinion polls. From the almost 12 percent obtained in the national election in 2009 and the 15 percent it once attracted, the popularity of Die LINKE soon sank to 6–8 percent and has remained there into 2011, 2012, and 2013.

**Turning Rightward: The “Natural” Response to Capitalism’s Crises?** That the crisis led to larger and more effective social protest movements of the Left only in its fourth and fifth years (2011) and hence after the turn to global austerity should not, however, come as a surprise. Even during the last global economic crisis in the 1930s in the United States, a good five years went by between the 1929 crash of the New York stock exchange and the intensification of class struggle in the form of general strikes in Minneapolis, Toledo, and San Francisco in 1934 and the sit-down strikes in Detroit and Flint in 1936–1937. Outside of the Anglo-American islands, most countries turned to authoritarian, dictatorial, and fascist systems of rule that eliminated (often physically) the working classes’ organizations and leaders.

Crisis shake, convulse, and politicize the status quo. However, in particular among the classes that have something to lose, crises do foster existential angst. The political promotion of small property holders has become, since the time of Louis Bonaparte and Bismarck, a crucial strategic means for the ruling classes to diffuse class conflict. If you’ve got more to lose than your chains, you’ll think twice about rebelling against the wage-labour system! This understanding formed the basis of the conservative homestead exemptions reform movement towards the end of the nineteenth century in the United States (spreading to Central and Eastern Europe from there), as well as Thatcher’s sale of council homes to their occupants, and George W. Bush’s “ownership society.” In “disciplinary neoliberalism,” it is precisely private household indebtedness, through mortgages, car loans, student loans, and credit cards, which has become a splendid means of engendering compliant behaviour in terms of choosing a field of study and a career, and in proper comportment when in the workplace. Someone who is indebted may be
tendentially quite prepared to accept lower wages and poorer working conditions so as not to lose the portion of their property that is already paid for. To this must be added the aforementioned subsumption of labour under finance i.e., the working classes’ dependency on the financialized pension system and hence the general well-being of the stock markets in the Anglo-Saxon world, but increasingly in continental Europe as well. All of these help interiorize neoliberal market discipline and create neoliberal subjectivities.\textsuperscript{32}

The psychosocial “resources” of powerlessness and fear\textsuperscript{33} were also underlying the emergence of the new crisis corporatism in the institutionalized struggle between capital and labour. Particularly in Germany with its export dependence on one hand, and the discrepancy between union density and bargaining coverage on the other, existential angst was triggered within the trade union leaderships that strengthened their “Right-wing” factions—a key reason for the decline in support for Die LINKE during the crisis. The stimulus programmes for the temporal displacement of structural overcapacity in the automobile sector (i.e., cash for clunkers in the United States, \textit{Abwrackprämie} in Germany) were attributable, not the least to the political lobbying pursued by the United Automobile Workers and especially by IG Metall, whose leaders felt a political empowerment long absent under neoliberalism in Germany.\textsuperscript{34}

As a result, strike activity declined almost everywhere. In the United States, where the decline in industrial militancy has been most drastic since the breaking of the unions in 1981–1982, the decline accelerated during the crisis. While between 2006 and 2008, the private sector had recorded 12 major work stoppages involving 1,000 workers or more each, in 2009 these work stoppages dropped to a record low of two incidents with only 4,000 workers involved and a mere 74,000 workdays lost, compared to 61,000 workers involved and 1.6 million lost workdays in the previous year. And while major work stoppages in the private sector bounced back a little to seven incidents with 38,000 workers involved in 2010, the 256,000 workdays lost were roughly just one-thousandth of the overall average of workdays lost during the 1970s, but also still much below pre-crisis levels.

At the same time, the rate of exploitation increased and the wage share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined quite significantly. According to the ILO’s Global Wage Report 2012–2013, this was a global phenomenon:
global real wage increases were hit badly everywhere outside of Africa, dropping from 3% to 1% between 2007 and 2008, while the advanced capitalist countries’ wage share of GDP, which stood at 74.5% in 1975, declined from 66.76% in 2009 to 65.65% in 2010. Affected by the halving of wages in the partially nationalized auto industry, real wages sank in the United States by 1.7% between August 2010 and August 2011, while productivity during the same period increased by 0.7%, allowing for a recovery in the rate of profit. In short, these developments—the fear of decline in one’s social position, economic adjustment, and the crisis of the trade unions—represent a crucial difference between the advanced capitalist countries with their broad “middle classes” and the occupations and protests occurring in the oil-importing peripheral nations with correspondingly much smaller middle classes, such as Tunisia and Egypt, or, for that matter, Syria. Here, not only was the large decoupled precariat involved significantly in the protests, but the movement was also crucially supported by a new militancy, in particular on the part of the independent Egyptian trade union movement.35

The Shift to the Right (2009–2010) and the Logic and Plausibility of Right-wing Populist Social Patterns of Interpretation in the Crisis In view of the broad simultaneity of economic, ideological, and social crises, as well as the failure of the Left to benefit from the crisis politically, some discernible political articulation of the crisis was bound to emerge, and indeed this unfolded in several steps. From the start, a crisis of representation and a delegitimation of the political class occurred. With a few exceptions, such as Canada in 2011, governments fell and opposition parties took “power.” These were seldom voted into power on the basis of their programs and voter enthusiasm, but rather due to protest or a lack of alternatives.

Simultaneously, the fraying process of the political system under neoliberalism intensified, but primarily in the opposite direction than before the crisis. The neoliberal era was characterized by the erosion of classical social-democratic, cross-class parties whose neoliberalization in the wake of the Third Way led to either a turning away, or a turning towards, by large segments of the traditional proletarian/working class and upwardly mobile professional-managerial class core supporters, the “non-voting party,” to Right-wing populism,36 and in exceptional cases like the German national
elections of 2009, to new Left-wing parties by about one third of working-class voters. In view of the lack of experiences of exercising actual countervailing power and the lack of concrete collective-solidaristic alternatives, as well as the epidemic of social powerlessness that results from this, this process unfolded almost exclusively towards the Right.

The fraying of Christian-democratic and conservative parties to the benefit of the new Right-wing populisms has been a key “morbid symptom” of the onset of the interregnum. In the course of this, the institutional fear in the Centre-Right parties of the revolt coming from the far Right also seemed to be a type of distracting gunfire in relation to the “rational” policy of crisis management. The hesitation and timidity of Merkel in relation to the first EU bailout fund, the European Financial Stabilization Facility (EFSF), or even the renunciation of the Schengen Agreement by Sarkozy and the CDU/CSU in Bavaria in the face of the relatively small-scale 2011 Libyan refugee crisis, which ran counter to the humanitarian pretext of the NATO intervention in Libya, seems in no small measure to be attributable to this. Thus, Right-wing populist parties such as the Sweden Democrats or the True Finns, and Right-wing populist intellectuals like Thilo Sarrazin have been gaining in prominence precisely in the wealthier Northern European countries.

At the same time, this “Italianization” of Europe’s political party systems carries with it the potential for a deterioration of the economic crisis because it poses tremendous problems for its future manageability by the fractioned bourgeoisie and its traditional parties. Drawing on Gramsci, it was Nicos Poulantzas in his book on the rise of historical fascism who pointed this out. The “appearance and rise of fascism” (le procès de fascisation), he argued, is facilitated by the fact that the combination of economic and political crisis (and, as a result, a crisis of representation) leads the middle classes/petty bourgeoisie to leave the traditional parties behind, resulting in the emergence of many new parties, some of which form the petty bourgeoisie into an independent political force. At the same time, this fragmentation of the political parties and of the political coherence of the historic bloc jeopardizes the bourgeoisie’s ability to manage the crisis. Poulantzas writes:

Throughout the rise of fascism we witness a proliferation [emphasis in original] of the organizations (including the parties) of the dominant classes and fractions. This proliferation is characteristic of the impotence and the insta-
bility of hegemony; while a non-fascist solution to the crisis would [...] require the fusion of these organizations into a single party of the bourgeoisie.37

Right-wing populist interpellations are flourishing precisely in the wake of the global shift towards “austerity”; this and social spending cutbacks, however, cannot be attributed merely to the weakness of the Left. Conversely, the feebleness of the Left is related to the fact that the Right-wing populism-crisis-nexus is quite logical. Economic crises are struggles over distribution and are fought with the use of ideological weapons. The function of Right-wing ideology consists of the legitimation and justification of social and, occasionally still, even political inequality.38 The basic category by which this is achieved is the maintenance of an allegedly natural inequality between human beings and social, ethnic, and/or racial groups. From Herrnstein and Murray’s The Bell Curve to Thilo Sarrazin’s record-selling non-fiction book Germany Abolishes Itself,39 this intellectual effort often takes the shape of a debate on inherited “intelligence.” The essential goal here is to prove “scientifically” the unequal worthiness of social groups.40

Thus Right-wing social patterns of interpretation provide a rationale for the old and new petty bourgeoisies (i.e., small-business owners and commodity producers; the (ostensibly) self-employed; lower- and middle-wage-dependent managers with authority over other wage earners; highly qualified and upwardly mobile wage earners; intellectuals in the state bureaucracies; etc.) seeking to maintain their social status. The life-long systemic and market conformity of large segments of these social groups, concealed behind the formulations “honest tax-payers”; “hard-working families”; “high-achievers”; “the little man”; and “law-abiding citizen,” facilitates the tilt towards authoritarian interpretative paradigms41 and the “brute bourgeois-ness” detected by the renowned “Deutsche Zustände” research group in the context of the “Sarrazin debate” in Germany,42 and ideologically represented in the United States by Right-wing populist organic “intellectuals” such as Glenn Beck, Sean Hannity, Bill O’Reilly, and Michael Savage.

These social strata defend their demands and economic rights with two distinct ideologies, which, however, emerge frequently in fused forms: an individual-capitalist and a collective-nationalist. Individually, one’s own conformity is invoked in rigid contrast to that of the alleged “nonconformists.”
To the extent that, in crises, human dignity is further reduced to the mere economic value that bourgeois capitalist exchange societies ascribe to it, “achievement” serves increasingly as the criterion for conformity and is the ideological armour of the petty bourgeoisie’s demands. The achievement ideology, which may take a “producerist” shape, is used to underpin the demand that other—allegedly unequal and therefore less deserving—social groups (“state-dependent/social entitlement dependent classes” i.e., Mitt Romney’s 47 percent alleged freeloaders who do not earn enough to be able to pay income tax) should bear the costs of the crisis. Collectively, given that in a globalized capitalist system operating in a system of nation-states, individuals are subjectified as part of “people-[as-]nations,” their demands are asserted in conjunction with their affiliation to the nation. In doing so, they operate consciously or unconsciously with a more or less völkisch mindset, which abstracts from both social class divisions and from the inherent crisis-prone nature of capitalism.

The targeting of the latest wave of immigrants and the “non-conforming elements” of the “autochthonic” population with an authoritarian rhetoric calling for punishment has two roots. On one hand, since their social and economic rights are granted and guaranteed by their status as citizens of their nation-state, (middle-class) Right-wing populists defend their own aspirations by invoking their nationality. On the other hand, the assumptions regarding a “classless society” and a capitalist system, which would function smoothly if only everyone simply “worked hard” and “abided by the law” the way they say they do, also ideologically necessitates the identification of scapegoats “causing” the economic turmoil. Defending one’s own status and identifying the “evildoers” therefore requires the exclusion of the “undeserving” groups from the national collective. Such exclusion is made easier if the historically subaltern social status of those groups is connected to forms of ethnocultural, nonconformism and nonassimilation, which facilitate stereotyping, “othering,” and the creation of “the enemy within.”

This also explains the relevance of Islamophobia for contemporary Right-wing discourse, whose rise in Western Europe and in the United States during this crisis in many respects resembles the rise of anti-Semitism during the “Long Depression” from 1873–1896—the fear of the non-assimilated Eastern Jews’ Halakha equals the contemporary fears of the “Islamist’s” Sharia;
the Eastern-Jewish cattle trader is today’s Arab or Turkish corner store fruit seller; yesterday’s Shtetl is today’s Arab or “Turkish ghetto”; the Eastern-Jewish Kippah, curls, and black dresses are today’s headscarf, long beards, and burqas; yesterday’s Yiddish is today’s Turkish or Arabic; yesterday’s alleged “desires for world domination” of the Jews are today’s fears of the Islamization of Europe and North America, and so on.47

The danger posed by Islamophobia resides in the fact that, from the perspective of the economically and politically dominant classes, it is not functional only in terms of diverting social anger, but also in terms of the inevitable need to instrumentalize racism to justify the enforcement of geopolitical and imperial interests in the oil rich and predominantly Muslim Middle East.48 Islamophobia from below is thus dangerously matched with Islamophobia from above.

In any case, the crisis fosters all possible variations of social-Darwinist desolidarization and a simultaneous nationalist resolidarization. The “others” are made into scapegoats and regarded as the “true” perpetrators of the crisis of an economic and social system that otherwise is supposed to function smoothly. In this way, abstract capitalist social relations, which are nevertheless experienced concretely (through bosses, coworkers, neighbours “on the dole,” etc.), are personalized and the contradictions and crises inherent to capitalism are extraterritorialized. In the United States, for instance, rage is directed towards the (racialized) poor who had subprime mortgages foisted onto them by profit-hungry banks, or who were successful in obtaining credit from the federal government for the purchase of their home on favourable terms, but who always believed capitalism’s stability would provide enough jobs to be able to pay them off. In short, as Poulantzas correctly notes with regards to far-Right parties born during times of economic crises, “[t]he first party programs were basically no more than a ‘catalogue of petty-bourgeois [resentment].’”49

The paradox is that, in Europe for example, the protests supported by Right-wing populists against the bailout of Greece, Cyprus, Portugal, Italy, and Spain; against Eurobonds and the European Stabilization Mechanism (ESM) etc., profitted from the legitimate antineoliberal outrage at social cutbacks that had been building up during the social-democratic era of neoliberalism from 1997–1998 onwards. The opposition against the elite’s
crisis management, which attempts to shift the costs of the crisis onto European workers and seeks to utilize the crisis to fundamentally restructure states and labour markets in (Southern) Europe, thus attaches itself to recent discourses about the decline in social services and growing domestic poverty.

With regards to the opposition against austerity, it therefore would be a political mistake to dismiss every criticism of the ESM that is articulated, together with the resentment against “lazy Greeks,” as hopelessly protofascist. With regards to the non-hermetic fluidity of ideology and the general openness to political intervention, distinctions between a racist comment on one hand and a coherent racist Weltanschauung must be made. In the end, ideological struggles occur between opponents of the ESM who are still undecided about whether the financial resources of the wealthier European taxpayers go into the pockets of “lazy Greeks” and the so-called “Club Med,” as Right-wing populists would have it, or go into the coffers of Southern and Northern European investment banks at the expense of workers and welfare states in both Northern as well as Southern European countries. In Germany, for example, Die LINKE’s steadfast opposition to the ESM is already starting to pay off in terms of a growing recognition, even among staunchly anticommunist and conservative circles, of its credibility in the cause of saving German taxpayers’ money.

Conformity Camouflaged in Hyper-rebelliousness: Right-wing Populism as the Authoritarian Radicalization of Liberalism and the Rise of the Nonvocational Charismatic Leader In political terms, what is crucial for Right-wing populism is its Janus-faced character. This consists in the fundamental contradiction between its hyper-rebellious rhetoric and its hyperconformist actuality.50 The hyper-rebelliousness of Right-wing populism manifests itself in the dualism between “the people” and political elites, and the angry invocation of the authentic will of the people (beyond the invisible or invisibilized class antagonism). The Tea Party thus calls on “real Americans” (meaning the community of law-abiding, productive members of society) to “wake up” and “take their country back” —formulations that are eerily similar to the ominous incantations of “Germany, Awake!” and “Germans, defend yourselves!” during the rise of fascism.
The hyperconformism of Right-wing populism is expressed in the fact that Right-wing populists, despite their radical rhetoric, do not embody a break with the political system, that is to say with the old, delimited, liberal-democratic parliamentary decisionmaking processes. Their emergence is simply an expression of the parliamentary institutions’ mounting failure (widely recognized and bemoaned across the political spectrum) and an embodiment of the ultra-liberal and authoritarian radicalization of liberalism in crisis. Behind its direct-democratic and plebiscitary verve, which problematizes the growing disconnect between the leaders and the led, as well as the growing tendency to authoritarian/state-of-exception forms of rule, lies the old liberal dualism between those being represented and those doing the representing. Its concern is not for a different, non-bourgeois form of democracy, but about credible representatives and leaders. The complexity of political interest mediation between the social classes condensed in the apparatuses of the extended state is reduced by Right-wing populism, itself never short on a supply of easy answers and simple solutions, to the need for such leaders.

From this emerges a charismatic form of rule, which Franz Neumann conceptualized as “Caesarist Identification,” which is an integral part of bourgeois democracy and yet thrives especially during its crises. In such times, charismatic leaders with decidedly “non-vocational” political profiles emerge. Their characteristics include, firstly, their political “outsider” status, and secondly that they are perceived as being independent of, or as standing above, social classes and “special” interests. The “non-vocational,” “different,” and credible politician is furthermore someone who appears to be free from party discipline, career opportunism, self-enrichment, corruptibility, and everything else that has led to associations of politics as “dirty” and “just about power.” The ironic thing is that these are more or less normal elements of politics in bourgeois democracy, but, during an economic, political, and/or ideological crisis, they lead to Right-wing populist revolts when a growing portion of the population no longer feels represented by the old representatives, who are referred to as “Washington” (in the United States), or the seemingly indistinguishable “block party” in Germany—a reference to the GDR reflecting (West) Germany’s traditional anti-Communism, inherited from the fascist era.
Among the Right-wing charismatic leaders of this crisis, one finds very different non-vocational politicians, such as Tea Party icon Sarah Palin in the United States, who, with her rhetorical use of terms such as “folks” and “awe shucks,” evokes subalternity; or the (fallen) AC/DC-T-Shirt-wearing and man-of-the-people-stylized aristocrat Karl-Theodor Freiherr von und zu Guttenberg in Germany.54

The rise of charismatic leaders is an expression of the crisis of the liberal political form and its extension into an authoritarian longing for another—in the Carl Schmittian sense—decisionist political leader;55 a leader who by means of his or her charisma represents the common good and is perceived to reign over the (invisible) classes. Just how far the crisis of powerlessness and the messianic longing for liberation without self-liberation extends can be read from the example of the subaltern and antivocational Tea Party politician Christine O’Donnell, whose slogan in the Delaware senatorial race during the 2010 US congressional election was “I’m you!”

Liberal-Parliamentarian Dysfunctionality and the Intellectuals’ Depression Charismatic rule and leadership are particularly pronounced in the United States. On one hand, this is so because of its presidential majority voting system in which the president is directly acclaimed by the people and enjoys command over the individual party platform lawmakers,56 and on the other hand because its political system is dominated by two essentially classical-liberal parties, while the labour movement, despite advanced industrial-capitalist development, has never been able to establish a class-based, mass-political party capable of breaking through this relation of the individually acclaiming and the acclaimed charismatic (or Bonapartist) leader with forms of class politics.57 Against this background, it is understandable that Right-wing populism, particularly in the United States in the form of the Tea Party, could put its stamp on politics in the first phase of the crisis and function as the mass base that finances the old fossil-fuel industries and the inflation-paranoid owners of wealth needed to take the Green New Deal to its grave.

At the same time, the Tea Party movement’s ascent with the establishment of a Tea Party caucus in Congress and the purging of moderate Republicans, the RINOs (“Republicans in Name Only”) is part of the crisis
interregnum because, from the perspective of capital, it blocks long-term “rational” measures such as the Green New Deal necessary for the renewal of capitalism and US hegemony. The Gramscian and regulation-approach insight that reforms and revitalizations of the social structures of accumulation in capitalism depend on opposition from below finds a rich empirical testing ground in the United States, where the historic victory of transnationalized capital over labour and its other domestic enemies at the end of the 1970s seems to manifest itself in a growing dysfunctionality and “ungovernability” of the political system.

Its degree can be measured in the growing frustration among leading bourgeois intellectuals and has led to amazing manifestations of this, such as Thomas L. Friedman’s pious wish that the United States could “be China for one day”\textsuperscript{58} and the proclamation by Frances Fukuyama, the former triumphalist of liberal democracy and neoconservatism, that “the US has little to teach China.”\textsuperscript{59} In fact, the depiction of the United States as a “plutocracy” ruled by the power of money has become a mainstream idea expressed by seminal intellectuals across the political spectrum,\textsuperscript{60} which is the reason why criticisms of campaign financing made by Occupy Wall Street have been so welcomed by many of them.

In any case, the comprehensive austerity policies implemented since the 2010 congressional elections are not least the expression of the Tea Party’s influence on direct and indirect power. At the same time, the Tea Party (as a significant minority) has run the risk of disenchantment and of being perceived as part of the ruling class enforcing unpopular decisions; austerity measures become increasingly unpopular the more closely they are connected to concrete social programs, such as Social Security and Medicare, that are appreciated by the majority of Americans. Indeed, the Tea Party movement seems to have misinterpreted the 2010 election results as a mandate to repeal trade union rights,\textsuperscript{61} which backfired and led to a short-lived resurgence of the public-sector labour movement as exemplified by the 2011 Wisconsin Uprising and the 2012 Chicago Teachers Union strike. At the same time, the lasting power of Right-wing populist ideology can be seen in the failed recall election of Wisconsin governor Scott Walker, which cannot be explained simply by money or the general unpopularity of recall elections, but also by the state of the labour movement in the United States and its problems in
addressing the concerns of all working people. One of the most disturbing
effects of the crisis has been that the percentage of Americans having a
favourable view of unions fell dramatically from 58 percent before the crisis
(January 2007) to 41 percent in the crisis (February 2010) and it has barely
recovered from this decline.

**Age of Austerity, Age of Occupy, and the Perspectives of Overcoming
the Crisis Interregnum**  It is not a coincidence that the new protest
movements of 2011 and 2012 correlate with the global turn towards austerity
and the slide back into recession. The protests developed in waves and in
interaction with one another. Thus the principle of the “Arabellion”—the
sustained and peaceful occupation of symbolic public (and in New York
speculatively expensive private) spaces—inspired the Spanish “Indignados”;
the workers’ movement in Wisconsin; the protest movement against the
effects of neoliberalism in Israel; the Chilean and (later) the Québecois student
movement and Maple Spring; and the popular resistance against austerity
in Greece, Portugal, and again in Spain. In the middle of September 2011,
the Occupy Wall Street Movement emerged and likewise drew inspiration
from the occupation models attempted in Egypt and Spain. It quickly gained
in popularity and appeal and became a global phenomenon within a month.

The mobilizations of 2011 and 2012 have been remarkable both in terms
of scope and in terms of a radical reassertion of the language of “class.” At
the same time, they should give some pause for thought. Despite, or precisely
because of, the spontaneous character of the Indignados and the Occupy
protests, it seems they have, at least for the short period of time that
movements can exist without the formation of long-term-oriented political
organizations, succeeded at what until this day has eluded the established
mass organizations of the Left (i.e., the trade unions and the Left-wing
parties): the capture, channelling, and direct representation of the growing
social anger about the crisis and about the unequal distribution of wealth
that formed its immediate background. The question is why this is the case?
It appears that it reflects a central moment of the crisis interregnum: while
neoliberalism is in crisis, political Left class formation has not recovered from
the historic defeat encapsulated in the demise of communist parties and the
neoliberal transformation of social-democratic ones. As a result, the forces of
opposition are not strong enough to challenge it, which is one central reason why the far-Right has benefitted so much from the crisis politically. While the desire for solidaristic alternatives to capitalism in crisis exists, the deep-seated mistrust of institutions reflected in the neoliberal crisis of representation extends to all institutions, including those of the dominated classes. Overcoming this mistrust and recreating collective mass organizations seems to be the biggest challenge the Left faces today.

The development of Left political formations after the emergence of Occupy has been mixed at best. In the United States, Occupy appears to have helped spark a new wave of labour militancy in 2012: stretching from the CTU strike, the Wal-Mart supplier and retail workers’ strike, to the New York fast-food workers’ strike. At the same time, neither the hopes for a Left-wing challenger to Obama nor efforts in the direction of a new Left party undertaken by intellectuals and political activists such as Richard D. Wolff and Stanley Aronowitz have borne fruit.  

Meanwhile in austerity-stricken Southern Europe, most notably in Greece but also in Portugal and Spain, the Left has made an astonishing return. Regardless of what a concrete revolutionary realpolitik would look like in the context of the Greek crisis, the Greek elections from May and June 2012 and the rise of Syriza, the Coalition of the Radical Left led by Alex Tsipras, have shown that the Left is capable of gaining credibility and mass support in a very short period of time, albeit under conditions of a far-reaching elimination of democratic accountability and a most severe humanitarian crisis. At the same time, the resurgence of the Left in parts of Southern Europe stands in stark contrast to the continued weakness of Left parties and the strength of Right-wing populist sentiments in austerity-enforcing Northern Europe. Although Jan Marijnissen’s Socialist Party in the Netherlands, which doubled its support since the last parliamentary elections to roughly 20 percent in opinion polls, seemed poised to become the second-strongest party in the early national elections of September 2012, this failed to materialize. In Germany, Die LINKE lost crucial elections in the Western states in 2012 and 2013 and is now very close to jeopardizing its Western enlargement, which until 2009 appeared irreversible. Meanwhile in France, the new socialist president François Hollande, who ran on a fairly progressive platform for an actual decrease in the retirement age, a 75 percent tax on all incomes above...
100,000 Euros, and who uttered some moderate criticisms of the Fiscal Compact and austerity while making demands for new Europe-wide stimulus programs, didn’t take long to disappoint after his victory. Hollande not only never intended to unravel the Fiscal Compact i.e., the neoliberal restructuring of the Southern European states and labour markets, but also failed with his tax increase on the wealthy due to a Supreme Court ruling. He is now imposing on France the same kind of harsh progressive-competitive restructuring program pushed through by the German social democrats and Greens after 2002–2004. It is because of this type of example that the widespread mistrust of the established parties of the political Left, in the widest sense, are justified and need to be taken seriously before they can be addressed.

In Scandinavia, the far-Right (Sweden Democrats, True Finns) and not the Left has also benefitted from the crisis. Interestingly enough, beyond Southern Europe the Left’s progress has occurred in Eastern European countries outside the Eurozone e.g., in the Czech Republic, where the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia has been commanding support from 19 to 22 percent of the population and was victorious in the local elections of 2012 alongside the social democrats; and in Ukraine, where the Communist Party almost doubled its number of votes despite being part of a government coalition. This is an interesting development in view of the Left’s inability to join governing coalitions without facing delegitimization.

Going into 2013, the new (more or less) spontaneous movements and the Occupy movement are in crisis precisely because of the lack of the kind of long-term-oriented political organizations that are necessary to challenge neoliberalism, and without which even the strongest social movement is going to collapse eventually. At the same time, movements such as Occupy are likely to re-emerge in the context of the current and looming struggles over distribution in the age of austerity. The question is whether “Occupy 2.0” will have the potential to trigger a transition to a new political consciousness helping to overcome the crisis interregnum and the mistrust of Left political parties.

The originator of the Occupy movement—the Canadian magazine “Adbusters”—identified disappointment with Obama as the impetus for the mobilizations. Opinion polling of the participants has revealed that next to
the general heterogeneity of the movement (which also attracted Ron Paul followers and scattered anti-Semites), the majority of demonstrators have been disillusioned Obama enthusiasts. In their eyes, Obama did not keep his promises: regulating the banking system; helping foreclosure victims; combatting the crisis of (youth) unemployment and underemployment; encouraging bottom-up wealth redistribution; and limiting the growing influence of money on politics. The Occupy and related movements appear to amount to an important learning process: it is not the delegation of political will that will lead to transformation (as suggested by Right-wing populist conformity masked as hyper-rebelliousness), but only democratic self-organization and social mobilization. Pointedly, one could say that Occupy manifests a return to the recognition contained in the verses once sung by countless millions of workers from “The Internationale,” according to which “[t]here are no supreme saviours neither God, nor Caesar, nor tribune” and “[p]roducers” have to “save [them]selves” and “[d]ecree the common salvation.” Therein lies the real potential for tackling the problem of the de-democratization of Liberalism in the course of the neoliberal turn.67

To be sure, if and when Occupy 2.0 (re-)emerges,68 it can hardly succeed on its own in bringing into existence an effective countervailing social force. Without support and a lasting connection to the central pillars of democratization in capitalism, that is, the organized interest representation of wage earners in the form of trade unions, as well as long-term-oriented political organizations i.e., anticapitalist parties capable of becoming hegemonic and translating spontaneous momentum into political power, an Occupy 2.0 can be only the bargaining chip of those political forces that use it to implement new room for manoeuvre for green-capitalist reforms, which up until now have been obstructed by the combined power of the old industries, financial asset holders, and their Right-wing populist abettors. It thus would share the fate of so many co-opted anticapitalist movements that helped capitalism achieve a new hegemonic lease on life.

At the moment, the United States seems poised for a re-industrialization and export-oriented growth strategy from which workers have little to gain given that a further wage-share decrease and robot-based automation are the central pillars of this effort.69 At the same time, as Obama’s 2011 hopes for a co-optation of Occupy (e.g., in his Osawatomie, Kansas, speech) and his
2013 State of the Union address indicate, the administration has not given up completely on those aspects of the green-capitalist perspective compatible with the new trajectory, and a change of course is at least possible under conditions provided by a deteriorating crisis in combination with class struggles from below.

That the danger of co-optation is real arises from the contradictions of the Occupy and related movements. One of these is the contradiction in the development of a new post-interregnum consciousness in relation to the state itself. The fact that one of the main demands of the movement has been limiting the influence of “money” on politics appears to reflect this transition process. On one hand, it indicates the emergence of a consciousness that the current political system is “broken” because of the effects of the social polarization of wealth inherent in capitalism on the political process; on the other hand, this consciousness is quite compatible with the illusion that the problem can be corrected, for instance, by combatting lobbyism and repealing the *Citizens United* ruling, so that the market place of ideas is, so to speak, repaired.\(^70\)

Nevertheless, if the productive alliance among the trade union movement, the Occupy and related movements, and new political organizations succeeds, the latter could be the much sought after connecting link to “labour-community coalitions,”\(^71\) “right to the city” movements, and the “urban revolution” as envisaged by the likes of the late Neil Brenner, Peter Marcuse, Margit Mayer, and David Harvey,\(^72\) which could then create, within the strategic terrain of global cities, the foundation for a counterhegemonic project of the Left. That an increasing number of trade unions as well as the political Left supported the protests and have shared their experiences and social interpretive paradigms has been an important development.

The lessons learned by Occupy ought to be echoed by political parties of the Left. The most progressed example of such learned lessons is the campaign of Jean-Luc Mélenchon of the Left Front in France. Although his impressive mass mobilizations and smart attacks on the far-Right candidate Marine Le Pen failed to translate into equally strong showings during the French elections, and led to a defeat in the symbolically important battle for third place against Marine le Pen, Mélenchon managed to mobilize his candidates around a message that took the problem of charismatic leadership and the
Mélenchon argued that electing him was not going to solve any problems, but only by becoming organized oneself and by promoting the social movements to push him politically would this occur. Thus, Mélenchon may be representing at the political level what the Occupy movement is representing at the level of society.

The task ahead, in any case, looms large. To fail to take account of the interregnum, the deep crisis, and the greatly increased mistrust of the established mass organizations and parliamentary representation would be one of the biggest mistakes of the Left today. Political charisma as an expression of the crisis of liberal political systems also affects the Left, as the experience with the appeal of the “Leftist” Obama or also of Oskar Lafontaine in Germany shows. Once Obama was elected, the social mobilization that carried him into office disappeared, and once Die LINKE had been elected as a strong opposition party into regional and national parliaments and voters realized that this alone did not change their economic situation instantly, Die LINKE soon appeared as just another party, allowing for the (short lived) rise of the German Pirate Party, which absorbed large portions of Die LINKE’s volatile protest vote. As long as the limits of liberal political representation are not breached, any Left political formation runs the risk of being overwhelmed and deprived of its mystique by delegated political action and expectations. Yet whenever the Left is not strong enough to pose the question of power, the bells start to toll for the dystopian perspectives of the far Right.

Notes

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25. For Lenin, a “revolutionary situation” was characterized by such fissures among the ruling classes in which not only “the lower classes [do] not (...) want to live in the old way” but also “the upper classes [are] unable to live in the old way.” He also pointed out, however, that not every revolutionary situation leads automatically to a revolution but depended on “the ability of the revolutionary class to take revolutionary mass action strong enough to break (or dislocate) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis, ‘falls’ if it is not toppled over.” The question is what happens in a situation, such as today, which appears to be the first crisis of capitalism without a significant political Left, let alone one potent enough to pose the question of power. It was Nicos Poulantzas, drawing on Gramsci and the historical experience of fascism which Lenin lacked, who pointed out that in a situation of economic and political crisis when the ruling class is losing its grasp on (hegemonic) power, and at the same time the Left is too small or too weak to effect change, which significantly ameliorates the hardships of the population, that far-Right forces fill the vacuum. See V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works* 21 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), pp. 438–454 and N. Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship* (London: NLB, 1974), pp. 139–143.
26. It will be interesting to see whether, as a result of the crisis and at least in the United States, we are seeing the rise of a “generation socialism” (in the widest sense), given the sudden disapproval of capitalism and approval of socialism among Americans under 30 identified by Rasmussen Reports (9 April 2009) and Pew Research (28 December 2011) as well as the related disbelief in the “free market” detected by GlobeScan (6 April 2010). These developments are, of course, affected by the far Right’s accusations of Obama and Western Europe as “socialist.” At the same time, they have to do with what Mortimer Zuckerman has called the “low-wage, part-time epidemic” in the United States with merely 28 percent of all jobs lost but 58 percent of all newly created ones belonging to the low-wage sector (Wall Street Journal 5 November 2012).


28. The most impressive documents of this self-doubt have emerged as a result of the discussions sparked by some of the most influential liberal-conservative intellectuals such as Charles Moore and Frank Schirrmacher in Germany. See C. Moore, “I’m Starting to Think that the Left Might Actually be Right,” The Telegraph (22 July 2011); F. Schirrmacher, “Ich beginne zu glauben, dass die Linke recht hat,” Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (15 August 2011); and F. Schirrmacher, “Demokratie ist Ramsch,” Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (1 November 2011).

29. O. Lafontaine, “Wir wollen uns als eine Partei gegen den Zeitgeist verstehen.” Speech at the First Party Convention of Die Linke in Cottbus, Dispar (June 2008), pp. 12–21. What was intended was the attractiveness of Left-wing transitional demands: In Germany, Lafontaine was referring in particular to the abolition of the unemployment insurance reforms infamous known as “Hartz IV,” the abolition of the retirement age extension to 67, the introduction of a minimum wage, and the troop withdrawal from Afghanistan. The original Benjamin passage reads “What matters for the dialectician is having the wind of world history in his sails. Thinking for him means: to set the sails. It is the way they are set that matters. Words are his sails. The way they are set turns them into concepts.” W. Benjamin, “Zentralpark,” in W. Benjamin, Gesammelte Schriften [Collected Works] Vol. 1.2 (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), p. 674.


33. When the Schröder government in Germany implemented its neoliberal labour market reforms (the “Agenda 2010”), Oskar Negt coined the term “resource of fear,” which he associated with neoliberal precarization. See, for example, O. Negt, “Trabanten des Kapitals: Angststoff – der jüngste Angriff auf die Lebenszeit,” Der Freitag (14 May 2004).


35. The interesting parallel between the West and its middle classes and the situation in oil-exporting Arabellion nations appears to be that, as opposed to Tunisia and Egypt, the increase in the price of oil in the last 10 years kept living standards in Libya at a high enough level to convince enough people inside and outside of the military to defend the Qaddafi regime despite its neoliberal reforms (e.g., privatizations, public-sector job cuts, etc.) and high (youth) unemployment; cf. E. Crome, Der libysche Krieg des Westens (Berlin: Edition Ost, 2011) and I. Solty, “Krieg gegen einen Integrationsunwilligen? Die politische Ökonomie des libyschen Bürgerkriegs und der westlichen Intervention im Kontext der Krise des globalen Kapitalismus,” Prokla 163 41/2 (2011), pp. 295–316.


37. Poulantzas, Fascism and Dictatorship, p. 75.
42. W. Heitmeyer, *Deutsche Zustände* Vol. 10 (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2010).
45. In the German debate, Heitmeyer’s “Deutsche Zustände” research group refers to these as “privileges of the established” (“Etabliertenvorrechte”).
50. The term “hyper-rebellious” is adapted from Georg Lukacs, who in his Nietzsche chapter in *Destruction of Reason* discusses Nietzsche’s appeal to the middle classes with their radical(ized) individualist and elitist mindset using the term “hyper-revolutionary.” See Georg Lukacs, *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft* (East Berlin: Dietz, 1954), p. 249.
51. Likewise, the nationalist, anti-EU discourse in Germany has established the pejorative term EUSSR.
54. This is also one of the reasons why Max Weber developed his concept of “charismatic rule” with direct reference to the US political system. See, further, M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1980), pp. 554–555, 853, and 862.
55. On the historical origins of the American special path, see I. Solty, “The Road Not (to Be) Taken: Why There is No Linkspartei in the United States. The American Sonderweg and the structural barriers to popular third parties in the U.S. political system,” in *Capital & Class* 94, 32/1 (2008), pp. 49–70; on the historical and long-term challenges this American anomaly


60. Compare the list compiled in Solty, Die USA unter Obama, pp. 68–69.


64. S. Aronowitz, Left Turn: Forging A New Political Future (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2005).


67. In this context, the main debate seems to be between those Centre-Left people who are criticizing what they perceive as “post-democracy” and are limiting, with Colin Crouch, their desires to a re-democratization of liberalism and those such as Michael Brie and Frigga Haug who are promoting a new set of struggles between democracy and capitalism. The latter writers assume a general incompatibility between democracy and capitalism and envision some form of socialist democracy as the long-term goal brought about by some form of “revolutionary” or “radical realpolitik” modelled after Rosa Luxemburg’s understanding of the art of politics in-and-against the state that may help overcome the undialectical and stale polarizations of (spontaneous) movement vs. party/institutional politics. See further Crouch, Post-Democracy; M. Brie, Radikale Realpolitik. Plädoyer für eine andere Politik (Berlin: Dietz, 2009); F. Haug, Rosa Luxemburg und die Kunst der Politik (Hamburg: Argument, 2007).


69. Solty, Die USA unter Obama, pp. 54–66.

70. In State-theoretical terms, there is a notion hidden behind all this that the problem of the capitalist state resides with the actors in the state institutions and not in the condensed social relations of power in the extended state. In a manner of speaking, a Miliband instrumentalist conception of the state dominates over a Poulantzasian social-relational conception.


73. The Pirates are essentially the Left-liberal version of Right-wing populist naivety and believe in the “non-vocational politician” with regards to a real politics of change.