The Sy‖abus

Academic

G. A. Cohen's Historical Materialism: a Feminist Critique

Paula Casal | Journal of Political Ideologies

"...G. A. Cohen's reconstruction and defence of Marx's theory of history...claims to be able to explain the emergence and diffusion of different ideologies by their effects on productive development [but] cannot plausibly explain the presence of sexist ideologies...Cohen's orthodox version of Marxism is a conservative ideology...the idea of a right-wing Marxism no longer seems as odd as it sounds."

How the SPD Lost the Future: the Party's Crisis as a Loss of Future-Imagining

Liam Byrne | German Politics

"...the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), once Germany's party of progressive change...has become disoriented ideologically, and structurally dislocated from swathes of its traditional constituency, because it has lost the capacity to imagine and pursue alternate futures...Its acceptance of the post-Fordist liberalisation project is partially a product of, as well as a contributor to, this loss..."

Food as a Weapon? The Geopolitics of Food and the Qatar–Gulf Rift

Natalie Koch | Security Dialogue

"...Qatar's external logistics networks are essential for maintaining its food supply...The ongoing rift between Qatar and its neighbors in the Arabian Peninsula...raises a number of questions about an old idea: that of food as a 'weapon'...tracing the securitizing discourses about food security...[helps] explain the causes and effects of the food embargo in the ongoing Qatar–Gulf rift."

Pinochet in Prague: Authoritarian Visions of Economic Reforms and the State in Eastern Europe, 1980-2000

Tobias Rupprecht | Journal of Modern European History

"[The] fascination with the military dictator Augusto Pinochet is an indicator for widespread authoritarian visions among various political and intellectual elites during the transition period...Pinochet served as a...source of inspiration for a non-democratic path to an efficient economy...the 'Chilean model' was used by anti-communists and liberal economists...as a source of legitimacy..."

"A Revolution Is a Force More Powerful than Nature": Extreme Weather and the Cuban Revolution, 1959–64

Mikael Wolfe | Environmental History

"...the governments and media of both Cuba and the United States perceived environmental and geopolitical factors as being intertwined when explaining Cuba's socioeconomic travails. Although weather events alone did not determine the progression of the Cuban Revolution, their varied effects nevertheless shaped the formative years of the revolution by influencing Cold War-era national development..."

Division D: Operation Rubicon and the CIA's Secret SIGINT Empire

Sarah Mainwaring | Intelligence and National Security

"The CIA is a popular topic of study for intelligence historians...scienti#c and technical intelligence emerged as a central theme, uncovering the work of the 'Wizards of Langley'...Exploring CIA's historic interest in communications intelligence...uncovers ways they controlled a significant proportion of the world's communications systems....[and] influenced important systems well into the twenty-first century."

The Neoliberal Houdini Who Escaped from (Poverty and) Prison: Chapo's Narcocorridos, Political Communication and Propaganda

Juan S. Larrosa-Fuentes | Media, War & Conflict

"...how did Guzmán become a public figure without having public exposure?...criminal organizations use narcocorridos, a popular music genre, as a medium for propaganda...[to] spread knowledge in the form of stories about Guzmán...[and] create a mythology about the kingpin and the narco-world...picturing Guzmán as a great man and...suppressing any reference to the drug wars."

Stalin's Well#Kept Garden: Horticulture, Aesthetics, and Soviet Statecraft

Robert Bird | The Russian Review

"In a widespread image of the late 1930s the Soviet state is represented as a garden tended by the wise and attentive Stalin...the image of the garden helps define Socialist Realism as a modeling aesthetic...directed at providing not only a mimetic microcosm, but also a means of governing the world...[as seen] in Aleksandr Dovzhenko's 1949 film Michurin...a science#fiction pastoral."

The Enthusiastic Objectifications of Skaz : Mikhail Zoshchenko and the "Simple#Souled" Soviet Reception of Jazz

Jason Cieply | The Russian Review

"Skaz, an experimental narrative form popular in the early Soviet years...claimed to speak on behalf of proletarian writers, who, according to revolutionary vanguardist theory, could not yet speak for themselves...skaz do not enable their object to speak, but they do facilitate a movement toward it...Zoshchenko's 1927 "Simplicity of Soul"...is revealed to be a nuanced critical response to...the Soviet response to jazz."

Playing the Bullshit Game: How Empty and Misleading Communication Takes over Organizations

André Spicer | Organization Theory

"Why is bullshit so common in some organizations?...bullshitting is a social practice that organizational members engage with to become part of a speech community, to get things done in that community, and to reinforce their identity. When the practice of bullshitting works, it can gradually expand from a small group to take over an entire organization and industry."

Books

The War on Disabled People: Capitalism, Welfare and the Making of a Human Catastrophe

Ellen Clifford | Zed Books

"This book reveals precisely how and why this state of affairs has come about. From spineless political opposition to self-interested disability charities, right-wing ideological myopia to the media demonization of benefits claimants, a shocking picture emerges of how the government of the fifth-richest country in the world has been able to marginalize disabled people with near-impunity."

Modernism for the Masses: Painters, Politics, and Public Murals in 1930s New York

Jody Patterson | Yale University Press

"This book examines the public murals (realized and unrealized) of abstract painters and the aesthetic controversy, political influence, and ideological warfare that surrounded them."

Cleft Capitalism: the Social Origins of Failed Market Making in Egypt

Amr Adly | Stanford University Press

"This book uncovers both an institutional explanation for Egypt's failed market making, and sheds light on the key factors of arrested economic development across the Global South."

Journalism & Essays

The Rich Need the City like an Astronaut Needs a Spacesuit': How the Super Wealthy Took over London

Rowland Atkinson | Independent

"On how the UK's largest city went from being the land of opportunity to a millionaire's playground."

Worker Surveillance Is on the Rise, and Has its Roots in Centuries of Racism

Esperanza Fonseca | Truthout

"Companies build off of internalized racial prejudices to prevent workers from taking collective action."

Smart Cities, Surveilled Citizens

Tom Westgarth | Tribune

"Smart cities' technologies have grown in popularity during the coronavirus crisis, and are now being touted as tools of economic recovery – but they will also deepen the power of surveillance over our lives."

Reports, Dissertations, & Miscellaneous

An Inconvenient Fact: Private Equity Returns & The Billionaire Factory

Ludovic Phalippou | University of Oxford

"The number of PE multibillionaires rose from 3 in 2005 to over 22 in 2020. Rebuttals from the big four and the main industry lobby body are provided and discussed."

The Rise of the Investor State: State Capital in the Chinese Economy

Hao Chen, Meg Rithmire | Harvard Business School

"...state capital can be deployed strategically, for example to respond to financial crisis or facilitate industrial upgrading, but also generates moral hazard, resulting in corruption and resource misallocation, and international alarm about the intentions of Chinese firms."

Are Algorithms a Threat to Democracy? The Rise of Intermediaries: a Challenge for Public Discourse

Birgit Stark | Algorithm Watch

"Fears that algorithmic personalization leads to filter bubbles and echo chambers are likely to be overstated, but the risk of societal fragmentation and polarization remains."

Videos

Constructing the World

Hans Teerds | AA School of Architecture

"For Arendt, the term 'world' has a very specific meaning: it encompasses the interventions in the earth, the globe, to make it habitable. Arendt's term thus stresses the way we build houses and cities, infrastructures, institutions, as well as how we furnish spaces with tables, chairs, paintings and photographs."

The Prison to School Pipeline of Edtech

Shea Swauger | eLearning Consortium of Colorado

"Education has an unfortunate history of implementing technology that originated in prisons and law enforcement and it's continuing that trend with technology and data-driven systems today."

The Lockdown in the Data Colony: Tracking the Long-Term Costs of Connection

Nick Couldry | Stanford University Press

"This book presentation discusses the dynamics of data colonialism as a force for reordering social and economic life and deepening inequality."

Podcasts

A History of Violent Protest

Kellie Carter-Jackson | What Next

"Why a nice, peaceful protest may not accomplish the structural change America needs?"

On Race and Technoculture

André Brock | Data & Society

"Where does Blackness manifest in the ideology of Western technoculture? This talk employs Black Twitter as an exemplar of Black cyberculture: digital practice and artifacts informed by a Black aesthetic."

Automation, Technological Unemployment and UBI

Aaron Benanav | Singularity FM