

Bulletin No. 3

Foreword

For many of us, the left's reaction to corona has marked a decisive break that has only deepened until this day. The dismay at this reaction, in which the left threw itself into the arms of the state without any shame trembling for every ounce of this shitty little life in the sadness of the capitalist normal state and put politics aside, precisely at the point at which the state recommended this to its good citizens, had for us something revelatory. It revealed the nihilism of those people who call themselves leftists, but whose highest moral point of reference remains to insist on their bare survival and who therefore have nothing to oppose to the biopolitical attack on our lives. This insight has led to a point where little can surprise us, even if much makes us angry: the silence of the left on militarism and war propaganda, as expressed in the unreserved support for the war in Ukraine, the solidarity with the Israeli state, which forgets the suffering of the people in Gaza and the West Bank, the lack of solidarity when the state declares Daniela Klette as public enemy No. 1 using the same evil methods as always, slandered, hunted and finally harassed in prison.

All this makes it necessary for us to meet, to talk, to question certainties and to gain clarity. We are therefore delighted that the time to see us in June at the Non Congress is now steadily approaching. We are particularly pleased about the announced international participation because we believe that we will not be able to clarify our questions within German horizons. Therefore, we also ask you to invite all your international friends, comrades, to join us in Berlin for a discussion. We will make every effort to find a sensible way of dealing with our multilingualism: We therefore ask you all to write in your registration form which languages you speak and into which you might be able to translate.

At the Non Congress, we can only offer you a few answers and no practical suggestions on what to do in this situation. But we want open space, to think and argue about it. On Sunday afternoon, when our planned panels are over, everyone is invited to stay, organize spontaneously, to network, to continue talking, to make plans. We look forward to the reactions to our bulletin and to the Non Congress together with all of you!

What social ruptures and changes has Corona brought to light, deepened, made visible?

The break that the position to the corona pandemic government's measures within society and the extra-parliamentary left has produced, was a starting point that led us to this congress. Now that we

are living in a situation in which corona is a cold like many others for most people and is part of the prevailing normality, we still want to take a look back. Even if many people no longer (want to) talk about it, we think it is important to look back and ask ourselves what we have learned about our reality, but also how we deal with that, what the pandemic has brought to light. We want to do this with the following areas in mind:

Digitization

Perhaps the most obvious feature of a development catalyzed by corona was certainly the increasing importance of digitization for all areas of private and professional life. This development boost was quite different globally, depending on the extent and level of digitization. What could be observed globally, however, was a situation in which social life shifted almost completely into a digital, two-dimensional sphere, while "real life" was left alone, in the smallest environment of sexual relationships, in the family, in one's own apartment, in a shared flat. At least that was the norm imposed on the members of society, which was adopted by large sections of the middle class. The accompanying digitization had significance for different spheres of life: gatherings with friends and families, game evenings, even parties or demonstrations could now take place digitally, with the screen offering individuals sitting alone in their homes the possibility of social interaction. From a feminist perspective, we want to ask what this means for the objectified and devalued physicality, for the materiality of relationships. Especially in times in which feminism made it into the Foreign Ministry and into war policy.

A second aspect was the facilitation of the home office and the final abolition of the separation once constitutive of bourgeois society between the space where gainful employment takes place, which is subject to the norms of capitalist efficiency and profit orientation and the home, which is structured according to completely different principles of selfless care: the home of the citizen. Even if in many cases this abolition was only temporary, we want to ask about its meaning for the relationship between these two spheres. Does this abolition simply mean an additional burden on the women typically responsible for care? Does it mean even more control by men over the feminine or increasing demands on women to balance their dual socialization? Or all the same time? Does it mean a privatization of the public sphere or a publication of the private sphere – even if it is just a background image in a Zoom-meeting? What does this mean for the access of the state to the private sphere? And does it not also mean a restructuring of work – symbol of a possible shift in the creation of value as a result of digitization? It is certain that isolation in the domestic sphere has led to an increase in domestic violence by men against their wives, partners and children. Whether this is a temporary phenomenon or whether it must be seen in the context of a greater „feralization of patriarchy" (Scholz) remains to be seen.

The third aspect concerns the question of how the connection between the normalization of digitization and the simultaneous criticism of digitization, which does not play a major role in public discourse, but is repeatedly voiced in exchanges with individuals. After all, there are voices that warn of an increase in digitization, for example in the education system. The experience of the shortcomings of purely digital interaction "after Corona" has also led to a general appreciation of "real" meetings and "real" and encounters. A first glance and for many people, although by no means for everyone, the world has returned to the old normal in terms of direct experience. Such an apparent re-normalization, which however, the fundamental changes and shifts in a not obvious, not visible first glance, is historically common after crises and upheavals as a restoration of what in reality has become the past.

However, we assume that the handling of digitization in times of the pandemic has encouraged a development in which not only the digital transformation of capitalism could gain further social plausibility, but our relationship to the body, the virtuality and materiality is undergoing a fundamental change.

Science, critique of science and science as religion

Corona has led many on the left to take for granted the reference to evidence-based natural and social sciences, which has made it clear that there is no critical approach to what science is, what function it plays in a capitalist society and which assumptions and limitations to their findings are subject to. The cry for "science", which already permeated the climate movement, also played a decisive role in a left-wing reference to corona. Of all the sciences, it was medicine, in its modern understanding not as an art of healing, but as a technique with the help of which survival is to be ensured and as far as possible, was accorded a particularly high status.

The emergence of modern medicine is deeply connected with the beginnings of capitalist modernity, its specific form of separation of body and mind and the objectification of the body, as Silvia Federici has also pointed out. It is bound to a form of an instrumental reason, in which, as Adorno and Horkheimer already made clear in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, reason emerges as the mastery of nature. The Critique of reason and science must therefore go deeper than merely a critique of the instrumentalization of science for certain capital interests, but rather already concerns the access to and the shaping of the world carried out by modern reason.

At this point, analogous to "Capitalism as Religion" (Walter Benjamin) you can call science a religion too, not polemically, in the sense that people are practicing an irrational cult here, but in a strictly critical of religion: that science, or more precisely the natural sciences oriented towards mathematical models and science, and above all medicine, is accorded the supreme authority that traditional religions once could claim for themselves and that the same ultimate fulfillment of

human needs and longings is therefore what was once expected of religions. Furthermore, this form of science, like the old religions claim to be the only valid interpretation of the world, a claim that, incidentally Corona has also shown that most religious communities have submitted too.

Biopolitics

The actions of most governments in times of the pandemic have clearly emerged in a form of governance in which, at the center of the sovereign's will is the administration and regulation of life processes at the level of the population. Such a form of power was characterized by Michel Foucault as. What is governed must also be constantly produced as a biopolitical body. Foucault sums this up as follows: "Modern man is an animal in whose politics his life as a living being is at stake". Nature and naturalness are both the limit and the basis of government action. This fundamentally changes the understanding of politics on the background of classical understanding of politics as it has been handed down to us from antiquity, where politics in the public space, i.e. beyond the organization of the necessities of life began. Now, however, politics is that which has direct access to the organization of (survival) life. The improvement and prolongation of life, which is in fact equated with survival, thus become the most important content of the political debate. Those experts who can make a contribution to this are therefore assigned a central socio-political position. The time of Covid politics was only one point in time at which this policy emerged, while biopower permanently and fundamentally structures and determines policy. We assume that we need to understand the mechanisms of biopolitical domination if we want effective resistance to it.

State of emergency

The Italian thinker Giorgio Agamben has made it clear that the position of the sovereign, who determines the state of emergency (Schmitt), can only be occupied today by bare life. The Covid pandemic has made this clear: It was possible to suspend the codified law, including civil rights as its foundations as soon as this was done in the name of protecting life. Survival, bare life, has the highest binding force and justified to suspend, relationships, social life, culture, even mourning for the dead. Whoever, for whatever reason, disagrees with this social consensus, which has been unquestioningly adopted and aggressively defended by the vast majority of the leftist, made themselves an enemy and placed themselves outside the framework of society. This friend-foe schema has not left us since Covid and subsequently also dominated the discourse on the war in Ukraine or Gaza. It is not for nothing that Covid has already been stylized as the moment when society is already ready for war against the virus. This also implied the symbolic appreciation of reproductive work, the clapping for care corresponded to the upgrading of the "home front" that occurs in every war.

With the friend-enemy mentality, the coronavirus pandemic also brought the typos of the denunciator to bloom. This Everyman is in the service of a fundamental binary opposition: there is an inside of society where responsible, renunciate, biopolitically optimized citizens live and an outside, a zone of chaos that threatens this inside. The individual is under a double pressure: to maintain his or her affiliation to the inner, good core of society through individual good behavior, as well as the concern to ensure that this inner core is not exploited by swearers, chaotic, inconsiderate and irresponsible individuals. Every good citizen is subject to the duty of caring for her survival, but also for her health in order to prevent him or herself from becoming a burden or even a threat to society.

Politics and morality

Closely linked to this subjectivication is a moralization of political but also social life. Every single person is constantly required to prove their morality, which is also reflected in their willingness to partial asceticism: wearing a mask on a stuffy bus against corona, giving up heating in the fight against Putin. Addressing a feeling of discomfort or questioning these behaviors is no longer seen as a possible position, but is only conceivable as an immoral and therefore wrong attitude. Even then, even if the supposedly morally correct action is carried out, speaking in the sense of a real conversation, about difficulties or problems is hardly possible. In any case, it is important for the individual to make a public statement through words and deeds, through correct behavior, to prove publicly that one is on the right side. The flip side of moralization is the compulsion to be hypocritical: Since hardly anyone is able or willing to live up to the moral demands in their individual lifestyle at the price of renouncing pleasure or to endure the conflicts associated with their implementation with others, he or she breaks through in private actions what he or she carries around in public. Moralization thus goes hand in hand with the implicit compulsion to confession: in advance as a prerequisite that one's own words can be recognized as those of a good because moral subject, and after publicly revealed misconduct as an admission of guilt. Moralization makes a political argumentation impossible that operates on different levels and inevitably brings contradictions to light. Ultimately, every argument is not valid in itself, but in the face of the moral criteria to which it is subjected.

NON-Congress

Further texts

There are three texts that are part of the german version of the third bulletin that, unfortunately, we can't provide in english. If you are interested in reading them, you might have a look at the german bulletin no. 3 and use some translating machine or ask a friend to do so for you...

Capulcu — The covid crisis. Getting used to being governed in a state of emergency

Franco ,Bifo' Berardi — “Reflecting on death and accepting it is the only way out of the murderous and suicidal hysteria of the West”

Junius Frey — War, confession and morality