

Connections, Capitalism, Control  
**Society for Socialist Studies**  
Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences  
Concordia University, Montréal  
31 May - 03 June 2010

## **Call for Papers**

*updated 15 January 2010*

The theme of the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Montréal in 2010 is “Connected Understandings,” offering an opportunity for the Society for Socialist Studies to consider what “connected understandings” might mean for the left today.

We are pulled into a celebration of digital media and its implications for education, community involvement, and social change. Issues of concern to those on the left remain: issues of access, ownership, and control.

We face dis-connections, as a combination of academics and activists, meeting at a university as part of a congress of scholarly associations.

What are the implications of being part of the largest gathering of anglophone academics, meeting in the largest city in a francophone province? We are meeting twenty years on and forty kilometres away from the confrontation between the Canadian military and the Mohawks of Kanésatake. Connections and understandings seem particularly tested in these contexts.

What do these possibilities of connections and disconnections mean in terms of projects on the left, within Canada and around the world? The Society for Socialist Studies invites proposals papers, open sessions, and roundtables addressing any aspect of the theme of “Connections, Capitalism, Control.”

All sessions listed here are open for proposals until **31 January 2009**. Please send paper abstracts of a maximum of 100 words directly to the session organisers, including author name, affiliation, and contact information. Authors will be notified of decisions by **15 February 2009**.

You can also see more information on Congress and the sessions at the Open Conference System site <<http://ocs.sfu.ca/fedcan/index.php/sss2010/>>. A complete list of papers and roundtables will be available in mid-February.

Please contact Chad D. Thompson, Programme Committee Chair  
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**Sessions open for proposals**

## **New Scholars Forum**

*NJ Baker University College of the North*  
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As part of its mandate to facilitate and encourage research and analysis in Canada with an emphasis on socialist, feminist, ecological and anti racist points of view, the Society for Socialist Studies is pleased to offer a venue to new scholars working in these areas who have not yet completed a Masters degree. Paper proposals could be in any of these areas, as well as on topics relating to the Society's theme, "Connections, Capitalism, Control" or the 2009 Congress theme, "Connected Understandings."

## **Twenty Years After Oka: Reflections, Responses, Analyses**

*Chad D Thompson, University College of the North*  
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In the summer of 1990, a dispute between the Mohawk of Kanehsata:ke and the town of Oka, Québec came to a head over the town's decision to expand a golf course further into 'The Pines'. That decision resulted in the erection of barricades by the people of Kanehsata:ke, an assault on the barricades by provincial police, and a 78-day stand-off between the Canadian military and the people of Kanehsata:ke. This confrontation was broadcast around the world, generating debate about the relationship between First Nations and the Canadian state, issues of colonialism and gender, and national identity in Canadian, Québécois, and Aboriginal contexts. Two decades later, what is the meaning of Oka?

## **Feminist Materialities and Knowledge Economies**

*Beverly Bain, Laurentian University at Georgian College & Jamie Magnusson, OISE*  
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This session examines how the terrain of politically engaged teaching and scholarship is quickly changing. As neoliberal policies are being implemented, higher education systems within Canada are moving away from a social welfare state model, adopting features of a system characterized by heightened orientation to market dynamics. Certain themes have emerged that cut across many of the higher education systems. The question raised in this session concerns how these changes have impacted the work of those of us committed to politically engaged teaching and scholarship, and in particular from feminist materialist perspectives that interrupt colonizing, racist, sexist and heteronormative culture. The intent is to name, explore, and create feminist responses from diverse locations within the so-termed knowledge economy.

## **Neoliberalism and Everyday Life**

*Susan Braedley, York University*  
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What is the relationship between politics and people's everyday lives? In this session, we will trace the epistemological foundations for the most influential politics of the past thirty years in relation to its critiques, and describe the ways in which everyday life in Canada is penetrated by these politics and yet counters them at the same time.

*Sessions open for proposals*

## **Counter-hegemony in the crisis: opening exit routes?**

*Bill Carroll, University of Victoria*

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This session invites papers that address prospects for, or instances of, counter-hegemonic politics in the current ecological/economic crisis. Counter-hegemony is intended to signify a multiplicity of strategies, practices and organizational forms (including South-North and other movement convergences, prefiguration, Bolivarian and similar processes, new parties and new media, and formation of post-capitalist subjects) that may open exit routes from capitalism. Theoretical or empirical analyses are welcome. The goal of the session is to connect the dots between diverse aspects of contemporary radical politics. Considerable time will be allotted to discussion.

## **Socialism and the Cities**

*Frank Cunningham, University of Toronto*

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Coincidental with the demographic shift in Canada as elsewhere so that a majority now live in a few large cities, there has been a lot of urban research and practice. Some work on urban problems (gentrification, sprawl, financing, pollution, and so on) is undertaken by socialists from a variety of disciplines, but in Canada there is little interdisciplinary scholarship on cities from an explicitly socialist perspective. The aim of this session is to engage such issues in this way.

## **Socialism is Dead? Long Live Socialism!**

*Slobodan Drakulic, Ryerson University*

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Two decades ago socialism was declared dead, and epochal reign of liberal democracy and globalized capitalism proclaimed. However, socialism has historically emerged in diverse forms – anarchist, authoritarian, communist, communitarian, religious, secular, social-democratic, statist, utopian, and others. What had expired two decades ago, was authoritarian statism – hardly the fairest of them all. What lives on, is capitalism – which cannot but breed socialism, and can devour all such offspring only at the cost of delivering humankind to a form of totalitarianism, or barbarism. Organizers of this session invite contributions discussing crises and renewals of socialism in all its forms.

## **Which Cause Should Speak?**

*Matthew Flisfeder, Ryerson & York Universities*

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While the Left is losing the battle for the support of the masses in the ‘hegemony-game’, the Right is doing a much better job of speaking in terms recognizable to the masses. How can the Left work towards reclaiming the support of the exploited mass? Which causes are powerful enough to lead the masses in a revolt against global capitalism and the existing relations of domination, exploitation and oppression? Workers’ struggle? Anti-racism? Feminism? Ecology? LGBT rights? As Alain Badiou asks, “what kind of politics is *really* heterogeneous to what capital demands?” This panel seeks contributions from scholars, activists, and others, with proposals for a cause-based politics for the Left. These need not be grand Universal causes, but also local and community-based causes.

*Sessions open for proposals*

## **Militarism and Society**

*Trevor Wesley Harrison*  
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Organizers of this session invite presentations discussing relationships between militarism and society – both those unearthing the social grounding and geneses of militarism, and those analysing the impact of militarism on society. Theoretical, comparative, historical, demographic, qualitative, quantitative and any other contributions are all welcome.

## **Capacity building and virtual (online) community**

*June Madeley, University of New Brunswick, Saint John*  
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Many virtual (online) communities form around media output such as a TV show, movie, author, book, video game or other enthusiasm -- gardening or car repair. However, these communities do sometimes exhibit the capacity building that has long been a focus of socialist, feminist and other progressive movements. Through various conceptual tools, we can analyze these online formations and consider their utility and relevance to social movement building and practice. This session seeks papers that address the problems, possibilities and practices involved in building capacities through virtual (online) community and similar study of offline community.

## **Critically Evaluating the Linkages between Food, Capital and Community Within and Beyond Borders**

*Darrell McLaughlin, St. Thomas More College*  
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The current food system is being impacted by capital and people's actions far beyond the time and place of production. The costs and benefits of modern agri-food systems are not evenly distributed. Contained within the rubric of the global food chain are a number of tensions and contradictions centring on health, economic, social, political, environmental, and sovereignty concerns. Meanwhile, food system structure and processes are shifting political, social, cultural, and biological boundaries. This session welcomes theoretical and empirical papers contributing to a critical assessment of the contemporary food system at the local, regional, and/or global levels as well as responses from a socialist, feminist, and/or environmentalist perspectives.

## **Rosa Luxemburg's Political Economy: Contributions to Contemporary Political Theory and Practice**

*Ingo Schmidt, Athabasca University*  
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Rosa Luxemburg's work was largely ignored for a long time. Lately, David Harvey's theory of a "new imperialism" drew on Luxemburg's theory of capitalist expansion and imperialism. This is not the only issue, though, where a renewed engagement with her work is promising for analytical and strategic purposes. The same is true for the understanding of the current economic and ecological crises, strategies for labour renewal, the right to self-determination of nations, and gender issues. In the past, Luxemburg's contributions on these issues were very controversial. Against the background of more recent developments of world capitalism they might inform significant contributions on the left.

*Sessions open for proposals*

## **States of Science: knowledge, liberalism, and social engineering**

*Chad D Thompson, University College of the North*

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Since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, states have sought to mobilize the authority of science to justify sweeping attempts at remaking society, through public education, resource management, public health, and the science of statistics. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the impulse continued, but the projects of state-science were conflated with the logic of neo-liberalism, with the market as the ultimate form of scientific truth. This session invites historical and contemporary analyses of these states of science, considering the environmental, political, social, educational, or economic implications of such projects, as well as considerations of the state of free market truths in the wake of 2008.

## **National Reconciliation as Reciprocal “Connected Understandings”**

*Abraham Y. Weizfeld, Independent Scholar*

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The failure of the modern nation-state to integrate national formations other than the dominant class-power identity is key to the continuing series of occupations, revolts and repressions both internally to the State and in its mandated sphere of influence. Lacking an alternative to the nation-state itself, national liberation movements have tended to interpret the principle of self-determination as yet another bourgeois state formation. The lack of reciprocity in its implementation has led to unbalanced social formations such as the Canadian confederation and the occupation of Palestine by Israel. Presentations are invited which seek to examine alternatives to the nation-state as an absolute.

## **Post-Soviet ‘transitions’: Connections, disconnections and innovations**

*Debbie Dergousoff & Agnieszka Zajackowska, Simon Fraser University*

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This roundtable invites panelists who do theoretical or practical research in the area of post-Soviet economy and/or politics, to present, discuss and debate issues including the notion of ‘transition’ itself; the degree to which post-Soviet transitions can be understood as connections to or disconnections from capitalism; issues of access, ownership and control in post-Soviet economies; and connections between political/economic ‘transitions’ in post-communist countries and co-occurring social processes, such as changes to law. Works that address gender relations in transition in post-Soviet contexts are especially welcome.

## **Reframing the Ethical Debate about Immigration Controls**

*Alexander Sager, Portland State University*

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Most of the philosophical debate about immigration controls has invoked a language of liberal equality. This session proposes that the issues are better understood with an alternative vocabulary of dominance, subordination, and hierarchy emphasized in radical feminism and critical race studies. Citizenship not only provides members with opportunities and privileges. It also helps maintain a global hierarchy which preserves power structures through preventing most of the world’s population access to the developed world. The session explores the role of class, gender, and race in the global regulation of migration flows.

*Sessions open for proposals*

## **Transnational Social Movements and Global Civil Society**

*David Huxtable, University of Victoria*

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A great deal of literature has emerged over the last twenty years debating the emergence of a “global civil society,” a concept that has been taken up by international NGOs, as well as the quasi-governmental organizations of the United Nations who seek to integrate these organizations into the processes of global governance. However, the concept still suffers from under-theorization. What is global civil society? What can be considered a global civil society organization? If the term does not reflect reality, how can we make sense of the prevalence of non-governmental organizations at the inter/trans/national or global level?

## **Mechanisms of Control: Environmental Regulation under Capitalism**

*Mark Hudson, University of Manitoba*

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As ecological destruction mounts, and as some of its forms become problematic for capital, new forms of control are emerging to mediate human interactions with nature. Some of these are directed by the state, while others are generated by civil society or by corporations themselves. What do these new forms of control mean for workers, for nature, and for capital? Who bears the costs of reorienting modes of extraction and production under new systems, and what can we say about the hypothesized “greening” of states and production given the trends in environmental regulation?