

Socialist Studies 2019 Open Sessions

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Abstracts

1) ALL-COMERS SESSION

Organizer: Elaine Coburn, Chair of the Organizing Committee

Contact: ecoburn@glendon.yorku.ca

Please look **first** at our thematic open sessions, below, to see if your paper proposal fits an existing session. In the event that there is no match, please submit your paper proposal here. We invite all papers, theoretical, empirical and/or praxis-oriented, that critically analyze the world-as-it-is and engage with struggles that prefigure a more just, equitable and sustainable world-that-may-be.

You can review the Call for Submissions at <http://socialiststudies.ca>. We especially welcome papers on socialisms in articulation with anti-racisms, feminisms, ecology, Indigenous liberation, and peace.

2) QueerniFesto: transnational queer/trans anti-capitalism

Organizer: Ian Liujia Tian

Contact: liujia.tian@mail.utoronto.ca

Regular Session

Given the existence of queer anti-capitalism globally, perhaps instead of asking questions about the ways in which we can theorize, it might be more productive to historicize what we have always been doing and what we could do together. We thus propose a special joint session that documents, analyzes, narrates and reflects on queer anti-capitalism in North America and beyond. We titled this internationalism 'QueerniFesto' to queer the MANifesto. As well; the word 'Festo' aims to grasp the fact that queer protests are always fiestas of music, food and celebrations. We also intend to queer Marx and envision a queer/trans/feminist internationalism that is founded not on white gay consuming culture but on an anti-capitalist imaginary. We would especially welcome papers that confront with and historicize class, the praxis of global capitalism, borders, prison abolitionism and militarized imperialism.

We encourage contributions in, but not limited to, these streams:

A) Queer anti-capitalism/Queer Radicalism; B) Dispossession, indigeneity, gender and sexuality: how do accumulation by dispossession of land, futurity and subjectivity channel through contemporary white gay consuming cultural and global homo-capitalism? C) Queer Marxism, right there, right now: What are/were some actually existing queer anti-capitalist politics? D) Cultural Production, Value and Queer Subjectivity: E)QueerniFesto, or the potentials/limitations of an anti-capitalist position.

3) Socialist Feminisms: Theories, Struggles and Prefigurative Praxis

Organizer: Elaine Coburn

Contact: ecoburn@glendon.yorku.ca

Regular Session

This session invites contributions on the histories, struggles and prefigurative praxis of socialist feminisms, both in their diversity and with respect to other progressive feminist struggles.

Contributions may:

- critically engage with the work of particular socialist feminist thinkers, both historical and contemporary;
- consider the sometimes-fraught relationships between socialist feminist struggles and theorizing;
- and/or consider how socialist feminists have sought to prefigure more just, equitable and ecologically sustainable relationships.
- We welcome contributions that grapple with the difficult questions. What are the contradictions, tensions and possibilities, between socialist feminisms and anti-racisms, queer theories, crip and disability, Indigenous feminisms and other progressive movements? How may socialist feminisms, as theory and praxis, usefully mobilize in the current context of populist hate, misogyny and radical class inequalities? What is of value in socialist feminisms and in what directions ought socialist feminisms to move, theoretically, through struggles and as prefigurative praxis?

4) Genocide Art: A Retrospective of Theory and Practice

Organizer: Sima Aprahamian

Contact: sima.aprahamian@concordia.ca

Regular Session

Despite contestations art has a place in atrocity and suffering. This session calls for papers that look at different aspects of art forms pertaining to the subject of genocidal murder from a feminist/socialist perspective. Such art can originate from survivors or their children, witnesses, members of a perpetrator nation, or individuals who wish to engage in the artistic representation of historical or systemic violence. Its function can be trauma release, commemoration, protest, resistance, interpretation or therapy and resilience.

5) Is There Still Hope for Public-Serving Universities in Canada?

Organizer: Claire Polster

Contact: claire.polster@uregina.ca

Regular Session

Since the 1980s, researchers and others have been documenting, warning us about, and urging us to oppose the progressive corporatization of Canada's universities and its many harmful implications for the public's - and the planet's - interests. Despite the thousands of books and articles written, the numerous conferences held, and the countless small and large-scale acts of resistance, the corporatization process proceeds apace, and opposition to it remains fragmented, sporadic, and largely ineffective. This session aims to open space for frank and serious discussion about whether broad-based, sustained, and effective opposition to the corporatization of Canada's public universities can still be mounted or if the battle to reclaim our universities as public-serving institutions is all but lost. If it IS still possible to oppose corporatization, how can this be achieved concretely? If this is not possible, what alternatives to the corporate university exist or can be built? Papers may be historical, analytical, or theoretical in nature. Papers that draw on the experience of universities in other countries are also welcome. Note that this is not an invitation to papers that simply critique corporatization, but rather contain ideas or descriptions of projects that seek to move forward from corporatization by transforming the social relations that make it possible.

6) Decolonizing Canada: Critically Considering Settler Solidarity During Indigenous Led Efforts

Organizer: Binish Ahmed

Contact: binish.ahmed@ryerson.ca

Regular Session

How have settlers practised their relational responsibilities to decolonize Canada? What are the expressions of those practices? As Indigenous peoples determine their futures by leading the way to refuse as well as undo colonial systems and policies, expressions of settlers acting in solidarity have looked different across space and time in Canada.

This session calls for papers which focus on moments of settlers organizing and acting in solidarity with Indigenous peoples, supporting efforts to build anti-colonial, anti-imperial movements and coalitions, and contributing to practices which center Indigenous pathways to self-government, self-determination and decolonization. This session is additionally seeking papers which explore the complexities that arise when settlers practice a politics of solidarity with Indigenous peoples and engage social movement work inspired by an anti-imperial and a decolonial praxis. Your paper may highlighting what solidarity work has been done, who is doing the work, who is not, and why not. Additionally, you can address what the different ways of doing the former work have been, as well as what can be learned from it. Your paper may address one or more of the former questions. Please ensure that you have described your research methodology in the abstract. This is a jointly sponsored session between Canadian Sociology Association, Canadian Political Science Association, and Society for Socialist Studies.

7) Marxism and the State

Organizer: Herb Gamberg

Contact: gamberg@dal.ca

Regular Session

In the modern era, as opposed to all pre-modern forms, the separation of the economy from the polity is a common political

element. In what ways is this arrangement connected to the structure and development of capitalism? We shall also discuss variations from this common phenomenon such as the rise of fascism on the one hand, and on another, the unique integration of the economy and the state in revolutionary experiments like the Soviet Union and China. Given that Marx did not live long enough to develop a theory of the state, we would hope that our discussion would add important dimensions to this topic. We have three presenters and would welcome others.

8) Toward Economic Democracy?: The Strengths and Limitations of Social Reform, Existing Worker-Owned Enterprises and Proposals for Emancipatory Alternatives to Capitalism

Organizer: Jonah Durrant Olsen

Contact: olsenj34@myumanitoba.ca

Regular Session

Various means to directly or indirectly foster emancipatory change and advance social empowerment through 'housing first', unconditional basic income, generous universal and comprehensive welfare states, worker-owned enterprises, networks of cooperatives, wage-earner funds and other measures have been suggested. Is it possible to create 'another world' through these measures, alone or in combination, and is their implementation possible in an era of globalization? What are the prospects for what Sociologist Erik Olin Wright refers to as 'Real Utopias'?

9) The Politics of Art and Social Change

Organizer: Jonah Durrant Olsen

Contact: olsenj34@myumanitoba.ca

Regular Session

What role can art (e.g., music, the visual arts, literature, poetry) play in bringing about meaningful social change? Art has a longstanding connection with politics. It has shaped the views of its consumers and artists have often engaged with political and grassroots movements. Art can provide relief and reaffirmation - and promote resistance. Politically engaged activist and guerilla

art can challenge the status quo. However, art can also be commercialized, commodified and used to co-opt and contain political struggle. Can art play a significant role in resisting domination, promoting solidarity and fostering system-transformative social change?

10) Imaginaries of the Future

Organizer: Alex Levant

Contact: alevant@wlu.ca

Regular Session

This panel examines how the near-future is imagined in popular culture. Fredric Jameson said, “it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism” (Seeds of Time, 1994). Indeed, the horizon of our imagined futures appears particularly low at the moment, and our gaze increasingly turns toward the past. This is evident in various aspects of life – from retro fashion to Hollywood reboots and remakes to paleo diets to political campaigns that cultivate a past mythical greatness. Similarly, social-democratic Left alternatives tend to look back to a time prior to neoliberalism, and the liberal ‘left’ tends to look back to neoliberalism as a better alternative to the period we now appear to be entering. Radical Left alternatives struggle to find their footing, while some call for an acceleration of automation and universal basic income as a way to extend the horizon of possible futures.

We invite scholarly papers that analyze how our future imaginary is shaped by current phenomena, including but not limited to: the impact of automation, the challenge of climate change and the Anthropocene/capitalocene, the effect of artificial intelligence, the influence of social media, big data, algorithmic production of knowledge, as well as the recomposition of the far-right.

11) Hitting the Reset Button on Queer Socialism

Organizer: Cameron McKenzie

Contact: cam.s.mckenzie@gmail.com

Regular Session

In 2016, I wrote about the impact of the AIDS epidemic on the early gay liberation movement. I was struck with how different gay/queer politics of that period were compared with my experience today. It was clear to me that the earlier movement was very much part of a broader left-wing social movement, with all the debate that this entails. It seems to me that the movement has lost its radicalism and structural analysis and appears to be focused on a human rights approach. In the process of examining these issues, Queer Liberation Theory has emerged as a possible theory for returning to a structural analysis of queer experience and oppression. Queer Liberation Theory shares Queer Theory's insights regarding the fluidity of sexuality, but moves the focus beyond identities, accepting even essentialist identities, including gay, trans, lesbian, and straight. Indeed, the use of the word "queer" in addition to terms like "gay" or "LGBTQ+" is a deliberate move to expand notions and experience of gender and sexuality. In the terminology of Queer Liberation Theory, simply put, the use of the word queer signals a progressive, critical, sex-positive, anti-assimilationist, liberationist perspective. The term LGBTQ+ is used to describe an assimilationist perspective that strives for respectability and acceptance. There are three aspects of Queer Liberation Theory, all at various stages of development: anti-assimilationism, notions of solidarity across social movements, and the political economy of queerness.

12) The Waffle Manifesto 50 years later: Left-nationalism and political strategy

Organizer: Robert Hackett

Contact: hackett@sfu.ca

Roundtable Session

This panel reflects on the legacy of the Waffle, a left-nationalist formation within the Canadian New Democratic Party. The year 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the Waffle Manifesto, which argued for the inextricability of socialism and Canadian independence vis-a-vis the American empire; participatory and industrial democracy; public ownership of the commanding heights of the economy; formal recognition of Quebec's right to national self-determination; and a strategy of movement-building beyond electoral politics. While notably missing from the Manifesto itself,

the Waffle took on the emergent issue of women's equality in its policies and structures.

Much has changed since 1969 -- neoliberal hegemony, Indigenous resurgence, environmental crisis, intensified extractivism as an economic strategy, movements for gender equality, the rise of ethno-nationalism and authoritarian regimes, including in the US, and much else. The Waffle itself faded as a political force after its expulsion from the Ontario NDP in 1972.

This panel asks: What were the Waffle's blind spots as well as its new contributions to Canadian political discourse? What aspects of its project should be priorities today? Is left-nationalism still relevant? Does today's Canadian Left still have a space for 'Canada' as a concept – is it willing and/or able to speak a national narrative? And what might constitute that narrative, and associated political strategies?

13) Environmental Politics in the Anthropocene

Organizer: Harry Diaz

Contact: harry.diaz@uregina.ca

Regular Session

Global environmental change (GEC) it is a central feature of the modern world that shapes our future paths of development. It involves a myriad of interrelated and interdependent changes that include, among others, transformations of biodiversity, climatological trends, and hydrological conditions. All these changes are the results of significant alterations to natural conditions produced by the social and economic systems of modernity. Human activity is reshaping the earth on unprecedented scales, even leaving its imprint in geological record. Present-day governments walk a thin line between acknowledging anthropogenic threats and risks, while also actively encouraging further environmental destruction. This session seeks to explore some of the challenges facing eco-socialist organizing in the face of unprecedented social, ecological, and political crises. The panel invites papers that could contribute to our understanding of the impacts that GEC may have for our goals to

improve social conditions, better democracy and development of a sustainable and fair economy.

14) Challenging Rentier Capitalism I: Housing

Organizer: Chris Hurl

Contact: chris.hurl@concordia.ca

Regular Session

Beyond extracting surplus value through the exploitation of labour, recent studies have highlighted a shift in accumulation strategies under neoliberalism to the appropriation of value through 'non-productive' forms of dispossession and rent extraction. This panel investigates the dynamics of struggle under rentier capitalism with a focus on housing. The inflation of housing prices has provided a central strategy through which economic elites have been able to appropriate value in recent years, while also generating record levels of debt for working- and middle-class households. However, until recently, very little research has been done from a socialist perspective on the dynamics of value appropriation in the housing sector. This panel critically examines the current 'housing crisis,' investigating the role of economic elites in deepening rent extraction and their impacts on working class and marginalized communities. Moreover, it explores potential strategies through which these processes can be resisted.

15) Challenging Rentier Capitalism II: Infrastructure

Organizer: Chris Hurl

Contact: chris.hurl@concordia.ca

Regular Session

Beyond extracting surplus value through the exploitation of labour, recent studies have highlighted a shift in accumulation strategies under neoliberalism to the appropriation of value through 'non-productive' forms of dispossession and rent extraction. This panel investigates the dynamics of struggle under rentier capitalism with a focus on infrastructure. In the wake of successive economic crises, large pension funds and private equity firms have heavily invested in new forms of infrastructure financing – including public private partnerships and 'alternative' financing initiatives -- with the hopes of generating stable revenue streams over the long term.

This panel critically examines the emergence of new forms of value appropriation through infrastructure, investigating the actors involved, the strategies deployed, and the impacts on working class and marginalized communities. Moreover, it investigates potential strategies through which these processes can be resisted.

16) Canadian Political Economy

Organizer: Heather Whiteside

Contact: h2whiteside@uwaterloo.ca

Roundtable Session

This roundtable will discuss the current problems and projects, and distinct evolution, of the interdisciplinary field of Canadian Political Economy (CPE). The panel will be oriented around critical analyses of the empirical political economy of Canada and Canada's contribution to heterodox theory and debate in the field of political economy. The panel participants ask: how and in what ways does Canada have its own story to tell in the world of political economy? Is its evolution in subject matter and focus part of a larger political economy trajectory both theoretically and empirically? Panel participants are involved in two new (in press and in progress) books that seek to advance and re-invigorate the field of CPE.

17) Towards an Ecosocialist Cultural Front

Organizer: Rick Hesch

Contact: randc1970@sasktel.net

Regular Session

In his review of and theorization about left-wing work in the aesthetic field principally in pre-WWII America, Michael Denning utilizes the metaphor "cultural front" in two ways: first, as a site of struggle; second, as a group coalescing around a common purpose. As with Denning's review, this session invites papers intended to identify the ways in which work in painting, literature, music, theatre, film or other cultural domains is currently contributing to material socialist or eco-socialist transformation in the capitalist world. Paper proposals of relevance to the Canadian terrain will receive priority, but flexibility in this regard will be

maintained.

18) The New Finance Capital

Organizer: Scott Aquanno

Contact: Scott.aquanno@uoit.ca

Regular Session

This panel explores the applicability of Hilferding's analysis of finance capital to the present moment of neoliberal financialization. While Hilferding's work has been criticized for its close association to the German and Austrian cases and for identifying the structural power of money capital through a narrow theoretical and empirical assessment of industrial accumulation and expansion, his work has remained important for its focus on the centralizing tendencies of mature capitalism and its emphasis on promoters profit. However, this reading of the value of Hilferding's contribution may be too narrow, given the specific patterns of institutional power now characteristic of neoliberal control and domination. Comparing Hilferding's treatment of the state as well as his understanding of the relationship between money and productive capital to the post-WWII development of global capitalism, including the contradictory evolution of neoliberalism following the 2008 financial crisis, this panel explores the case that the present moment of financialization actually represents a new type of finance capitalism.

19) Art, Culture and Capitalism

Organizer: Scott Forsyth

Contact: sforsyth@yorku.ca

Regular Session

Open session for presentations on art and culture in relation to both the domination of capital as well as the possibilities of the cultural politics of resistance, opposition and socialism. Open to discussion and interpretation of artistic and cultural production in any art form or media industry. Focus on historical developments, political economy, contemporary manifestations or future radical imagining. Theoretical debates in Marxist and broadly radical aesthetics welcome. New developments in culture and resistance from feminisms, indigenous activism, international solidarity, new

left organizations and diverse communities and minorities specially desired.

20) Reflections on the Struggle against the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), 30 years later

Organizer: Benjamin Christensen

Email: bchristensen282@gmail.com

Roundtable Session

The implementation of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in January 1989 marked a decisive moment in the rise of neoliberalism as a political project in Canada. While the left, and Marxist and socialist political economists in particular, played a central role in galvanizing the majority of the population to oppose the agreement and contributed in no small part to the demise of the Mulroney government in 1993, the free trade agenda continued to move forward through the 1990s. This Roundtable Session revisits the history of struggles against free trade in Canada with two aims in mind: first to remember the coalitions through which opposition was organized, the mobilization of socialist critiques by activists and intellectuals, and the key events leading up to the adoption of the agreement. Second, drawing from this history to make sense of how things have changed over the past 30 years, as right-wing nationalists have increasingly taken the lead in opposing free trade, while neoliberals have sought to rebrand their project as 'progressive'. How can socialists effectively confront the project of free trade today while at the same time challenging both far-right nationalism and neoliberal globalism?

21) Disrupting Infrastructure

Organizer: Tia Dafnos

Contact: dafnos@unb.ca

Regular Session

This session seeks to bring together critical insights interrogating the politics of infrastructure. As a counter to the proliferation of policy-driven research that treats 'infrastructure' as an essential social-economic good, contributions to this session aim to make visible and confront the 'infrastructural power' (Mann 1984, 2008),

'warfare' (Graham 2002), and 'extrastatecraft' (Eastering 2016) of infrastructural projects. We invite presentations from scholars and activists on both completed projects and works-in-progress from a range of perspectives. Topics of interest include: the bio- and necro-political dimensions of infrastructural projects; temporality and spatiality; mobilities and circulation; extractivism; supply chains and logistics; counter-logistics, circulatory struggles, disruption and blockades; enacting anti-capitalist, anti-colonial circulations and infrastructures; national security and critical infrastructure protection/resilience; financialization and capital investments; speculative, anticipatory geographies of infrastructural projects; territorialization, colonialization and nation-state formation.

22) Ecosocialism and Social Ecology

Organizer: Peter Prontzos

Contact: pprontzos@langara.bc.ca

Regular Session

The presenters will discuss some of the fundamental issues raised by the late American political philosopher, Murray Bookchin. Beginning in the 1960s, Bookchin was a pioneer in linking the growing threats to nature with the demands of the capitalist system. He showed how the nature of capitalism, like patriarchy, racism, and other evils, are all forms of unjustified domination. Bookchin went much further, proposing solutions based on local democracy, respect for nature, the end of alienated labour, and the potential for a "post-scarcity" society.

23) Intersectional Social Inequities and the Role of the University: Challenges, Confrontations, Conversations

Organizer: Elena Chou

Contact: echou@yorku.ca

Regular Session

Universities are often touted as the foundation for improving the lives of its surrounding communities: as an avenue for social mobility; as an economic engine; as a base for knowledge production and mobilization; and as a community and cultural hub. At the same time, however, universities as neoliberal capitalist

institutions remain elitist and exclusionary, responsible for a variety of social ills. In light of the increasing neoliberalization of the university, what role can universities and academics play in fostering constructive conversations and accountable actions with the broader non-academic communities and audiences within which they are situated? What are the possibilities for the university in working to improve the lives of not only its students as graduates, but also surrounding community members whether local, provincial, national and/or global?

This panel invites papers which explore existing and emerging research projects, studies, and conversations on the ways in which the university re/produces existing intersectional social inequities rooted in the exploitative relationship between the university and the broader communities that the university purportedly serves , but also ways in which these communities can challenge and confront this problematic relationship. Works which examine, but are not limited to, ethnic/racial justice; Indigenous solidarity and reconciliation; settler colonialism/neocolonialism; labour relations and practices; environmental justice and sustainability; im/migration and/or citizenship practices; curricula and pedagogy; health and well-being; rural and/or urban geographies; and social movements with regards to the role of and relationship with the university are all welcome.

24) Rosa Luxemburg's theoretical and political legacy one-hundred years after her assassination

Organizer: Ingo Schmidt

Contact: ischmidt@shaw.ca

Regular Session

Politically, Luxemburg defended what she saw as the revolutionary tradition of Marx and Engels against social democratic revisionism and Bolshevism vanguardism. Consequently, her political thinking focused on workers' self-emancipation and culminated in suggesting mass strikes as key for to the building of collective capacities. Luxemburg's economic theory opened global perspectives beyond the European horizons of the First and Second Internationals. Her assassination marks the tragic failure to pursue revolutionary working-class politics in a largely pre-

capitalist and pre-industrial world. After the collapse of Soviet Communism and the long decline of social democracy, one might wonder whether capitalist globalization has created conditions to link Luxemburg's revolutionary politics and with her global analytical outlook.

We invite papers that assess Luxemburg's theoretical and political legacy and explore possibilities for socialist politics today.

25) Venezuela: A Case-study in Faulty Canadian Foreign Policy

Organizer: Alan Freeman

Contact: alan.freeman@umanitoba.ca

Roundtable Session

In September 2017 the Canadian government, invoking treaties with the USA and the Magnitsky Act, imposed two sets of sanctions on Venezuela, one targeting the economy and the second targeting 40 individuals for unspecified crimes. The decision was taken in secret, by the governor-general in council, was not put before parliament and the evidence for the charges remains secret despite repeated FOI requests. The government also, in August 2018, refused a visa to Carlos Ron, vice-minister for Foreign Affairs in Caracas, to meet with Canadians and initiate dialogue between the two countries.

This session will allow Canadian scholars to scrutinise the actual situation in Venezuela, and the political and legal basis for the government's actions.

26) Corporate Power, Climate Justice, and A Decolonial Future

Organizer: Angele Alook

Contact: a.alook@aupe.org

Regular Session

This session invites papers examining the political economy of resource extraction, and the ways in which capitalism and colonialism dispossess Indigenous peoples of their rights to the land. As well, scholars examining the ways Indigenous peoples are the most impacted by the effects of climate change and environmental damage caused by oil and gas industries are

invited. We invite dialogues and discourses using Indigenous epistemologies and research methods to explore a decolonial future and just transition for Indigenous peoples. Is a just transition a decolonial future? Can we only be decolonial once we get rid of the Indian Act? Where do treaties fit in a decolonial future? If governments commit to UNDRIP will we have a just transition? Should we be exploring an anti-capitalist decolonial future based on Indigenous ways of knowing? Papers on the subjects of Indigenous peoples and mining, oil and gas, resource extraction; Indigenous climate justice; Indigenous just transition; self-determination and renewable energy and energy futures; and theorizing from critical theory and/or an anti-capitalist and/or socialist and/or decolonial and/or post-colonial and/or feminist perspectives are invited.

27) From corporate power to climate justice: Towards an agenda for transformation

Organizer: Shannon Daub

Contact: shannon@policyalternatives.ca

Regular Session

This session explores the question of what it do be done about the fossil fuel industry as a source of obstruction to urgent and interrelated efforts to address climate change, realize of Indigenous Rights and Title, and democratize energy systems. It is hosted by the Corporate Mapping Project, a partnership investigating the role and power of the fossil fuel industry. As the partnership approaches its midpoint, we are turning our attention increasingly to solutions. The session considers various avenues for challenging corporate power, including institutional and political reforms; Indigenous resurgence and land-based rights; citizen- and social movement-led resistance; efforts based in law; and/or the development of alternative visions that challenge carboniferous capitalism itself.

28) Corporate power, fossil capital, climate crisis

Organizer: Bill Carroll

Contact: wcarroll@uvic.ca

Regular Session

This session explores the intersections between (a) networks, structures and practices of capitalist class power (and resistance to it), as centred in large corporations; (b) the political economy of fossil capital as a way of life that has reached global scale; and (c) the accelerating climate crisis, whose urgency seems to be matched by its intractability at least within the strictures of capitalism itself. Papers should address all three of these concerns, but can focus on any of a range of power modalities, including the following: corporate networks and elites, corporate ownership and control, the financing of fossil capital, corporate social responsibility discourses, think tanks and corporate advocacy, business activism and lobbying, soft denialism and green capitalism, or carbon energy commodity chains.

29) The Post-Socialist Central and South-eastern Europe as a Geopolitical-Geo-economic Bloc in the EU: Trends and Perspectives

Organizer: Petar Kurecic

Contact: pkurecic@unin.hr

Regular Session

The panel aims to address the challenges to the EU integration regarding the formation of a geopolitical-geo-economic bloc in Central Europe, made up of the “enlarged” Visegrad Group. The focus would also be on the struggle for influence between the two geopolitical blocs in the EU, the bloc of states of the European Core (led by Germany, with France as a politically “equal” but economically junior partner, and also comprising Belgium and Luxembourg) and the bloc of post-communist EU/NATO members, with Poland as forerunner, and the Three Seas Initiative as the actual regional initiative. The issues of migration, the difference in interpretation of the EU's Acquis Communautaire and consequently different interpretations of the rule of law, the relations towards Russia, the stances towards the situation in Ukraine, energy supply problematic, as well as military issues i.e. the prospects of the development of an EU Army which would either be complimentary or competitively positioned towards NATO, will be addressed. How this situation will affect the future unity of the EU, which is under duress due to the migration and security crisis,

fueling the rise of populism and Euroscepticism, expressed in Brexit, among other developments, remains to be seen. The fractures in the Post-socialist EU might not be as important as the ones in the EU Core. However, largely similar developments in almost a dozen of EU member states should not be ignored.

30) Democracy in Crisis? If Democracy is to Survive, What Must it Become?

Organizer: Igor Shoikhedbrod

Contact: ishoikhed@gmail.com

Roundtable Session

In this joint roundtable with the Canadian Political Science Association, democratic theorists of diverse traditions will critically interrogate whether democracy is in a state of crisis, and if it is, what it should/must become.

31) Socialist feminism in praxis: Potentials and dilemmas of collective organizations

Organizer: Alicia Massie

Contact: amassie@sfu.ca

Roundtable Session

Discussions of power, control, and structure have always been at the centre of academic debates. Lines of critique in feminist, anarchist, Marxist, and other radical scholarships have long questioned the nature of hierarchy and its relationship to patriarchal capitalism. Feminist scholars have often considered non-hierarchical organizations as a crucial step forward in our pursuit of fundamental social change.

In the wake of the resurgence of racist, misogynist, authoritarian, and nativist political ideologies there is a need to continue to actively question how researcher-activists can build sustainable, powerful, and grounded practices of social change. Collective organizations can be complex, challenging, and unfamiliar social structures; but they also present a fundamentally liberating ways of organizing ourselves. In abandoning typical structures of hierarchy and competition, we can question the nature of our society's materiality, and we make time to consider the day-to-day of our collective liberation.

This session will bring together discussions of activist and academic work questioning power, control, and organization. Exploring egalitarian, feminist, and non-hierarchical organizations, this session will begin with a discussion of the Teaching Support Staff Union, a feminist, directly-democratic, and non-hierarchical teaching union at Simon Fraser University. Participants will be asked to consider questions such as: What should collective organizations look like in the 21st century? How do power and control flow in collective organizations? How do we ensure collectives have learned from past lessons (theoretical and practical)? Are we working to create spaces of collective imagination and transformative practice?

32) Rethinking Class

Organizer: Paul Kellogg

Contact: pkellogg@athabascau.ca

Regular Session

This panel welcomes contributions from scholars who wish to critically re-examine the concept of “class”. Arguably, in the writings of the young Karl Marx, classes were not perceived as structures, but rather as collections of human beings, with hopes, dreams, ideas and passions. The young Marx expressed an interest not with an inert mass of workers created and recreated by capitalism, but with the dynamic and alive mass of workers who, in struggle – in political struggle – created themselves as a class. We have just passed the 50th anniversary of E.P. Thompson’s *Making of the English Working Class*. Thompson is in the company of C.L.R. James, and Rosa Luxemburg and others who reminded us, in their writings, of this human, class-for-itself dimension in serious historical materialist analysis. The emergence of this class “for itself” is not automatically determined. It is a product of struggle. Thompson’s great work used the verb “[m]aking because it is a study in an active process, which owes as much to agency as to conditioning. The working class did not rise like the sun at an appointed time. It was present at its own making ... I do not see class as a ‘structure’, nor even as a ‘category’, but as something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships.”

Potential topics include:

- Class and migrant labour;
- Class and the prison system;
- Class and the precariate;
- Class and the household;
- Class and revolution

33) Capitalism and Right-Wing Populism

Organizer: Thom Workman
 Contact: wworkman@unb.ca
 Regular Session

Explores the link between capitalism and right-wing/left wing populism from the standpoint of critical theory, especially its focus on mass society, mass culture, authoritarianism and the culture industry.

34) Alternative Media

Organizer: Mervyn Nichomson
 Contact: mnicholson@tru.ca
 Regular Session

Media that present news and analysis from a progressive point of view seem a lot more visible than in the past—think of Rabbletv, Democracy Now, The Real News Network, The Tye, Truthdig, Common Dreams, Democracy at Work, and even RT, but other sources come to mind, and have inherited the function sometimes played by radio, for example in Vancouver by Coop Radio with its long-running news analysis program the RedEye show. This panel invites discussion of popular media as a source of class analysis and information drawing on a different model from the mainstream media. Are these sources increasing in number? In popularity? What is their function? Is it successful? How to improve and expand the outreach offered by these media outlets? How do they differ from the msm perspective? What threats do these media face? Have you participated? What has been your experience? suggestions for improvement or growth?

35) 1919 – The Red Year

Organizer: Paul Kellogg
 Contact: pkellogg@athabascau.ca

This panel welcomes contributions that critically examine the impact of the great events of the year 1919. In particular, we are looking for contributions in three areas.

Workers and Revolution – In the wake of the terrible slaughter of the so-called “Great War”, revolutionary upheaval in the Russian empire was joined by mass movements in Egypt, Germany, Hungary, Iraq, Italy, Malta, Peru, Poland, the United States (the Seattle General Strike), and Canada (the Winnipeg General Strike), among other nations.

Social movements and political theory – This year was the epicentre of the “first wave” of feminism, as women everywhere reached for liberation. The assassination of Rosa Luxemburg shed a spotlight on her unique contributions to politics. Tensions in the Russian Revolution could be felt in the competing approaches of the Communist International and people such as Iuli Martov. John Maynard Keynes penned a trenchant critique of the Versailles Treaty.

Backlash and Reaction – Ominously, this was also a year where the storm clouds of reaction began to gather. In Germany as well as workers’ uprising, there was the spread of the ‘freikorps’ – predecessor to the Nazis. In the United States, as well as workers’ revolt in Seattle, there were multiple racist mobilizations, often extremely violent, attacking Black Americans. In India, British occupation resulted in the horrendous Amritsar massacre.

On this the centenary of “The Red Year”, papers covering any of these topics, or others not here listed but relevant to the overall theme, would be welcome.