



## Eurozine Review

### Misunderstanding '68

*Esprit* focuses on "the other '68"; *Merkur* looks back at '68 in amusement; *New Humanist* outstares blind faith; *Blätter* warns of climate wars and market crashes; *The New Presence* takes a dim view of Czech neo-Nazism; *Ord&Bild* works through Nordic colonialism; *Mittelweg 36* debates the terminology of inequality; *dérive* can't see freedom without power; and *Wespennest* writes back from post-crisis Argentina.

### Esprit 5/2008



The obsession with the "franco-français" history of May '68 is unhealthy, says [Jacques Rupnik](#) in a panel discussion with [Aleksander Smolar](#) and [Jakub Patocka](#). "For those who in the East experienced the tragic aspects of '68, the self-celebration of a generation that now has the power over media and French elites is sometimes irritating. One forgets that 1968 was a grand year of shake-ups in Europe and deserves a trans-European interpretation."

Quoting Milan Kundera, Rupnik pins down "the misunderstanding of 1968": "May '68 in Paris was an explosion of revolutionary lyricism. The Prague Spring was the explosion of post-revolutionary scepticism." (More by Rupnik and "The year of two springs" in Eurozine's focal point "[1968: Beyond soixante-huit](#)".)

After '68, Giscard d'Estaing, and Mitterand: In search of the blind spots of recent French history, *Esprit* director [Olivier Mongin](#) asks what the political alternatives really were after '68 had shown that the French model of development, the "Gaullism-cum-Communism mix", had exhausted itself. France embarked on two very different paths: first Giscard d'Estaing's free-market transition and then Mitterand's socialism. Neither went far enough, writes Mongin. Today, France is still struggling to find a way to tap its collective energies while at the same time to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

**Also:** Serge Audier reviews anti-'68 literature; Daniel Lindenberg goes beyond the situationist buzzwords and finds the roots of the '68 movement in the legacy of la résistance; [Jean-Louis Schlegel](#) shows how '68 affected the Roman Catholic Church; and a panel including [Michal Fssel](#) and Jean-Claude Monod re-reads Levi-Strauss, Foucault, and Deleuze.

The full [table of contents](#) of *Esprit* 5/2008

### Merkur 5/2008



Karl Heinz Bohrer, editor-in-chief of *Merkur*, writes six autobiographical vignettes of '68. Bohrer, who as literary editor of the *FAZ* in 1968 was sympathetic to the student revolt, recalls the era with a mix of affection and mocking amusement:

The academic '68ers' taste for frugal interior design went hand in hand with a contempt for elaborate middle-class dinners — standing next to white bookshelves stacked with Suhrkamp titles, one consumed huge quantities of pretzels and red wine. For novices in political and social theory, these spartan dinner-parties were always educational, always informative. The discussion started out from political events or newspaper articles. In the process, a type of mental habit developed that might be called a lasting legacy of '68: outrage.

**The state of emergency:** From the Prussian "anti-siege laws" of 1850 to the notorious article 48 of the Weimar Constitution to the "emergency act" passed during the student revolt in 1968, the "state of emergency" has loomed large over modern German legal history. However "in the new era", as [Uwe Volkmann notes](#), the concept appears old-fashioned: "It is a situation that is increasingly unlikely to arise and thus is no longer of theoretical importance."

"In the discussion, clouded by apocalyptic scenarios, it has often been overlooked that in most developed countries a stability and resistance to crisis has been developed that can get by entirely without [the state of emergency]." Nevertheless, to ensure this stability, "A new, precautionary strategy has taken root that defuses risks in advance", one that "broadly defines the behaviour of the state, from the economy to social policy, from the healthcare system to environmental law."

For policing, this means a shift of emphasis towards pre-emptive crime fighting, which "above all requires collecting information". Such precautionary strategies, writes Volkmann, undermine the rule of law "subcutaneously and without a sound". Measures undertaken in the name of precaution avoid legal control "either because they are moved far in advance of tangible threats or because their effects cannot be completely anticipated."

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### New Humanist 3/2008



In *New Humanist*, [Peter C. Kjaergaard](#) looks at the spread of creationism from the US to Europe. In October 2007, the Council of Europe passed a resolution warning of the rise of creationism, which in some countries not only places Darwin's teachings in doubt but also attacks his personality. In Poland, the deputy minister of education stated that Darwin's theory of evolution was "the feeble idea of an aged non-believer" and the result of his being a vegetarian.

The report on which the resolution was based also focused on a new phenomenon — the rise of Muslim creationism. In a bid to challenge the

teachings of Darwin and evolution, the Turkish Muslim creationist Adnan Oktar has published the 800 page Atlas of Creation.

One of the most astonishing claims in the book is that Charles Darwin [...] was responsible for the worst evils of the twentieth century: racism, communism, fascism, Nazism, terrorism, and, ultimately, 9/11. In a piece of overt symbolic theatre, the book's creators marked the anniversary of 9/11 last year by sending the Atlas to a large number of Protestant priests across Europe. The message was clear: in the fight against the theory of evolution, Christians and Muslims stand united.

**Sixty years of Israel:** "Israel is 'Jewish' in a sense that no existing state is Christian, Muslim, Hindu, or Buddhist", writes Mike Marqusee on the sixtieth anniversary of Israel. "The paradox of Zionism was always that it was a secular ideology whose foundation lay in a religious discourse. At its heart is an obscuranist claim to historic territory."

**Also to look out for:** Daniel Miller on Henri Lefebvre, mentor of '68 and theoretician of the everyday; Doug Ireland on the "forked tongue" of Tariq Ramadan; and Sally Feldman on the stiletto heel.

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### Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik 5/2008



The psychological tendency to block threats blinds us to the implications of climate change, namely global conflict, argues Harald Welzer in *Blätter*. This is compounded by our inability to estimate the dimensions of processes as they occur in "real time"; as well as the fact that we do not perceive changes to our social and physical environment in absolute terms but in relation to our generational perspective (the phenomenon of

"shifting baselines").

However people do perceive problems, and when they interpret these as jeopardizing their own existence, they tend towards radical solutions, *those which previously they never would have thought of*. One has to say that the western countries have not learned the lessons of the twentieth century, but pride themselves on humanity, reason, and justice, even though historically these have succumbed to every attack, as long as it is severe enough.

**Tomorrow's big crash?** "A financial bubble is a market aberration manufactured by government, finance, and industry, a shared speculative hallucination and then a crash, followed by a depression", writes former venture capitalist [Eric Janszen](#) in an article originally published in *Harper's Magazine*. First the New Economy, then the subprime crisis... what will be tomorrow's big crash?

"There is one industry that fits the bill: alternative energy." Janszen estimates that 20 trillion US dollars in speculative wealth will be created in the alternative energy industry, "money that inevitably will be employed to increase share prices rather than to deliver 'energy security'. When the bubble

finally bursts, we will be left to mop up after yet another devastated industry. [...] Given the current state of our economy, the only thing worse than a new bubble would be its absence."

**Also to look out for:** Kerstin Petretto on the "Renaissance of piracy" and its relation to failed states; and Albert Scharenberg on the East–West split within Germany's "Left Party".

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### The New Presence 2/2008



"I have been told that [this issue] lacks detachment, and I plead guilty as charged," writes writes Eva Munkova in her editorial to an issue of Czech magazine *The New Presence*, featuring a section on neo–Nazism. "Neo–Nazis make my skin crawl. They scare me and [...] I think they should scare you too."

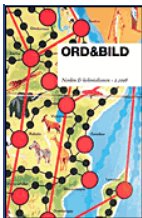
"The new eastern–European neo–Nazi is young, single, and vicious. [...] Along with the predictable bashing of minorities and anarchists, the neo–Nazis of today have a perhaps surprising penchant for the Internet and brand–name clothing", continues Munkova in an article offering a closer look at the composition of the movement, its supporters, and their ability to manipulate both the media and the law.

"Prejudice against minority and immigrant communities is common in the Czech Republic and seems to be systemic", write Aisha Gawad, Karen Yi, and Eva Munkova. Targeting the Roma population in particular, neo–Nazis are able to turn both the general dislike of the minority to their advantage. The law that states that a demonstration can only be banned within three days of its announcement allows neo–Nazis to appear to be law–abiding citizens who receive police protection when demonstrating.

**Also to look out for:** David Svoboda interviews Boar Milan Hulik about a Czech prison system in decline and Ivan Stern sees prisons as little more than schools for criminals.

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### Ord&Bild 2/2008



At the end of the seventeenth century, while Sweden was still a major European power, attempts were made to establish it as a major player in the transatlantic slave trade. However, Sweden's career as a slave trader was short. The opportunity existed, writes historian Dick Harrison in an issue on Nordic colonialism, but "the will was lacking".

The fact that the Nordic countries cannot compete with France, The Netherlands, or Great Britain when it comes to classical colonialism is no reason not to discuss their colonial and postcolonial past and present. In a

journey into the Nordic heart of darkness, Stefan Jonsson shows how "the colonial core in the Nordic narrative" is an "internal colonization that erases some people from history", people that have not been regarded as human beings but rather part of nature; people such as the Sami — the "Lapps" — in Sweden, Norway, and Finland. Instead of extermination, an internal repression of the other.

**Greenland:** In 1953, after 253 years as a Danish colony, Greenland became an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark. Calls for greater sovereignty led to so-called home rule in 1979. Greenlandic social anthropologist Aviaja Egede Lyngé analyzes the (Danish) image of Greenland as "the world's best colony":

Most Danes do not regard themselves as masters with a colonial mentality. But for us, the Greenlanders, the remains of the colonial rhetoric are part of our daily lives. The problem is that the continuing Danish dominance is not spoken of. Implicit norms are to be found in the system of education as well as in the labour market. [...] Colonial amnesia is maintained by stereotypical conceptions such as 'those poor Greenlanders who need help from Denmark' and is reinforced by the fact that exactly this self-image, created by colonialization, has not been worked through completely."

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### Mittelweg 36 2/2008



A debate over the sociological approach to inequality is underway in *Mittelweg 36*. Should the central indicator when analyzing social inequality be people's perception of "exclusion", as [Heinz Bude](#) proposes, or rather, as [Berthold Vogel](#) argues, the experience of mass unemployment?

For Bude, exclusion as a concept is necessitated by three factors: the gender of inequality ("with women, a potential for inequality builds up that often reaches the limits of the bearable"); the ethnicity of inequality ("in dealing with ethnic segregation the classical parameters of inequality no longer work"); and the transformation of the welfare state ("the new emphasis on social participation forces a sociological conceptualization of the concept of exclusion").

Vogel, however, is cautious about the new terminology: "With the question of exclusion we divert attention from social-structural nuances, from the contradictions and ambiguities connected to the loss of employment. [...] My thesis is that unemployment is a biographical experience with major consequences, a central factor of social inequality, and a prime site for the political ordering of the social."

**Also to look out for:** [Jan Philipp Reemtsma](#) and Martin Bauer interview the philosopher Dieter Heinrich; Benjamin Ziemann surveys recent literature on torture; and [Wolfgang Kraushaar](#) recalls protests against the Chilean military junta during the 1974 World Cup.

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**dérive 31 (2008)**

The Austrian magazine for urban research, *dérive*, publishes articles on the Foucauldian concept of "governmentality". Susanne Krasmann comments on freedom and safety, inclusion and exclusion. External discipline and self-discipline, power and freedom, are subtly interlocked: "Power's cunning is expressed precisely where it tries to include and involve people."

Nevertheless, subjects are never only effects of power:

Subjects, by articulating themselves as such, take on the forms of power, and simultaneously use, transform, break, and vary them. The moment of freedom, as the precondition for exercising power, is at the same time the potential for resistance.

**"Incivility":** Boris Michel focuses on neoliberal strategies for turning social problems into spatial problems, thereby making them seem controllable. He sees one example for this in the "broken windows theory" (fixing problems when they are small prevents them from escalating), in which criminal behaviour is made equivalent to "incivility":

It is not the existence of homelessness that causes outrage, but the fact that homeless people use public space for private purposes. [...] In the neoliberal discourse on urban space and the control of it, security means being spared encountering marginalized people and of being reminded that integration via consumption is usually precarious.

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**Wespennest 151 (2008)**

In *Wespennest*, Maristella Svampa explains the reasons for the crisis in Argentina in 2001/2002 as well as the subsequent stabilization and reports on the current decline of social movements such as the piqueteros (unionized unemployed). The feature on Argentina also includes poetry and prose by César Aira, Sergio Bizzio, and Washington Cucurto that shows the productivity of the contemporary

literary scene.

Nevertheless, according to the poet Cecilia Pavón, "Literature no longer occupies a central place in middle-class life". The influence of publishing houses has declined and writers and editors increasingly focus on the Internet: "There's a feeling that it no longer makes sense to publish books. That there are other ways to produce poetry and that literature can find a place in the immateriality of the Internet."

**Soft activism:** Antonio Negri, in [discussion](#) with Constantin Petcou, Doina Petrescu, and Anne Querrien, evaluates "hard" and "soft" forms of urban opposition. The city space, argues Negri, "is a material base in which each

singularity is inserted while remaining open to the possibility of new being, new languages, new relations and forms of life, new value. [...] Something has shifted and organised itself in the city — this was evident in what happened in the Parisian banlieues — and this is something fundamental."

**Also to look out for:** For the first time in German translation, Eurozine's literary perspectives series, with [Carl Henrik Fredriksson's "The re-transnationalization of literary criticism"](#) and [Märt Väljataga's "Waiting for the great Estonian novel"](#).

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