

Social mobilizations today often use the strategies of the weak rather than the strong. The slogan ‘we are the 99%’ signals a belonging to the actually or potentially dispossessed, a group recognizing its situation as one of vulnerability and precarity. Refusal and subversion replace aggressive critique; political claims offer various versions of what could be called ‘weak resistance’. The weak messianism announced by Walter Benjamin in his ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’ emerges in the movements of the supposedly speechless, subaltern, and the rebellious ‘other’ of the Western hegemonic subject both at the core and on the periphery of globalized capitalism.

The conference understands ‘weak resistance’ as a decisive feature of contemporary political agency. The precarious of today articulate their claims and subvert the existing power structures using unspectacular forms of resistance, often involving everyday practices and claims. Isabell Lorey will examine the political practice of today’s resistance of the precarious under the state of insecurity and will speak about her theory of presentist democracy. Other contributions discuss the non-heroic resistance of queer Israeli activists refusing to answer Zionism in the currency of heroism and active resistance, as well as that of the ‘Solidarnosc’ movement in 1980 and in the recent feminist mobilizations against anti-abortion laws in Poland.

The theme of weakness has been explored in connection with political resistance (James C. Scott), utopia (Michael Gardiner), artistic production (Gerald Raunig), and the analysis of the social (Michael Levine, Howard Caygill). It reevaluates what previously has been thought of as failure, passivity, and conformity. Departing from three different contexts – of precarisation, ‘Solidarnosc’, and of queer strategies – the conference will consider weak resistance and its possible implications for political activism.

This event loosely follows the major themes of the Weak Resistance conference held at the ICI Berlin in May 2015.

Organized by:
Ewa Majewska

With:
Isabell Lorey,
Hila Amit Abas, and
Ewa Majewska

Moderated by
Rosa Barotsi

Isabell Lorey is a political theorist at the European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (eipcp) and professor for Transnational Gender Politics at the Institute for Political Science, University of Kassel, after having taught at Basel, Berlin, and Vienna. She is the author of *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious* (London, 2015), *Figuren des Immunen. Elemente einer politischen Theorie*, (Zürich, 2011), *Immer Ärger mit dem Subjekt* (Tübingen, 1996).

Hila Amit Abas earned her Ph.D. from the SOAS at the University of London with a thesis entitled ‘A Queer Way Out – Israeli emigration and unheroic resistance to Zionism’. Her work is situated at the intersection of Queer Theory, Migration and Diaspora Studies, Postcolonial Thought, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Her research focuses on political activism, queer kinship, national belonging, and diasporic communities. She is an affiliated fellow at the ICI Berlin.

Ewa Majewska is a feminist philosopher and activist working on semi-peripheral counter-publics. She has published two monographs about feminism as social critique and contemporary forms of censorship, co-edited and co-authored two volumes of critiques of neoliberalism (of which *Industriestadt futurismus* [Frankfurt, 2007] is available in German). She is a fellow at the ICI Berlin.

Weak Resistance 2: Precarity, Diasporas, Movements

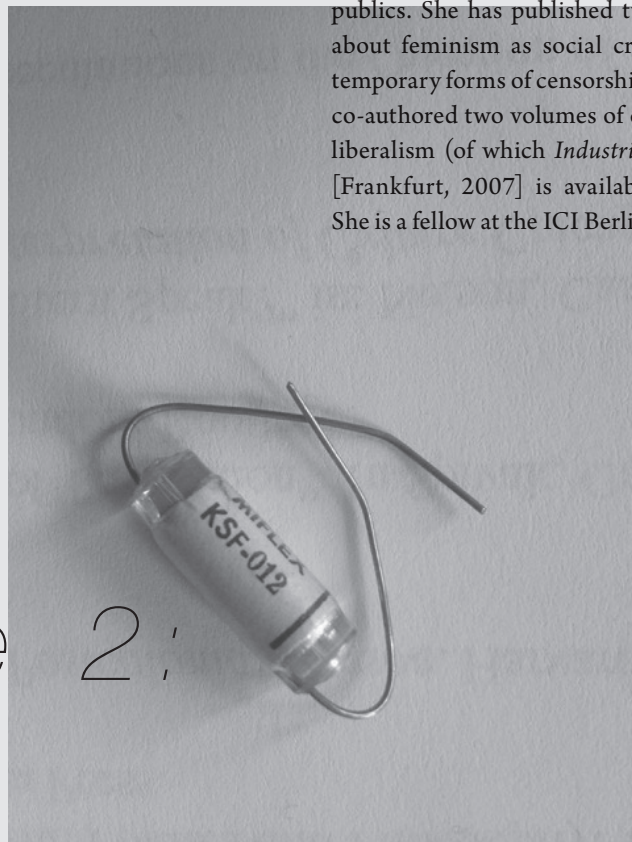


IMAGE © EWA MAJEWSKA