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Introduction to the third issue

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The transformation of industrial capitalism into crisis-ridden financial capitalism (Long Term Capital Management 1998, Lehman 2007/8, Repo Market 2019) and the transition to a (temporarily) unipolar world after the end of the Cold War on the basis of the so-called rules-based international order ("liberal international economic order"; "Pax Americana") have led to profound upheavals in Western societies. In the process, fundamental traditional categories for drawing boundaries between political camps and culturally defined social groups have become unstable. With increasing dynamism, the ideas of what it means to be "left-wing" or which values can be considered typically "right-wing" are changing in social subgroups.

The shift in the formerly politically left-wing spectrum away from a class-based representation of interests toward an identity-oriented focus and thus toward a new clientele politics has been the aspect most widely discussed critically so far. A central thesis here is that for the left-wing social spectrum, critical economic analysis has given way to hypermoralism, which simultaneously acquires hegemonic status and an identity-forming function in various thematic fields (for example, in the areas of energy and environmental policy, sexuality and language use, health policy, geostrategy, and military policy). But shifts are also occurring in the right-wing political spectrum regarding the tension between traditional authoritarianism and a newly awakening skepticism of the state, visible for example in forms of a selective but radical liberalism with reference to basic values such as freedom of the press, bodily self-determination, constitutionally guaranteed rights and criticism of capital concentration processes – values, in other words, that used to belong to the traditional core of left-wing criticism of the state and capital. However, it is precisely the debate about these values and their significance for the assessment of pandemic policy that has led to tectonic shifts in the political landscape. These can be seen, among other things, in splits such as those in the party-political left camp or the attempt to rescue the traditional left identity into the new era. At the same time, however, processes of rapprochement become discernible when, in the protests of 2020–2022, actors from traditionally hostile political camps repeatedly open up discursive spaces together and the position is voiced: "We are not right or left, we can no longer be separated with these categories."

The resulting conceptual confusion is also evident in the political struggles over global systemic reorganization, which has been promoted by the World Economic Forum, among others, for several years under changing program names (2016: "4th Industrial Revolution," since 2020: "The Great Reset") and which has gained new momentum with the Ukraine crisis, the advancing de-industrialization of Western societies, the merger of the BRICS+ states, and the emerging multipolar order. Particularly striking in this context is the assumption, often voiced in right-wing or libertarian contexts, that the megaprogramme of the "Great Reset" is a form of communism or socialism, alternatively a takeover of power by the Chinese

Communist Party. While administrative aspects such as the Chinese social credit system bear a close relationship to the aforementioned state-legitimized hypermoralism of Western societies, and the development of digital central bank currencies also points in the same direction, the description of the “Great Reset” as communism or even socialism is misleading. On the one hand, such attributions obscure the economic foundations and goals of the systemic transformation that is taking place, and on the other hand, they prevent collective work on solution-oriented approaches that involve actors who had previously identified with socialist or even anarchist traditions.

The planned issue aims to shed light on this conceptual darkness. To this end, system-relevant aspects of the existing order and its transformation are to be placed in relation to the historical development of the various political systems of order and organizational principles (socialism, communism, capitalism, neoliberalism, anarchism), and their interrelationships are to be clarified.