Destruction as the Determination of the Scholar in Miserable Times

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The determination of scholarly work as destruction originated with Johann Gottlieb Fichte; Hölderlin drew attention to the misery of the period. Fichte’s determination was based on the belief in the emergence of a new era; Hölderlin, in contrast, found the period to be one of such misery that he asked himself what role, if any, was left for a poet.

In our time, misery remains strangely hidden and appears alien. Everywhere conformist constructions prevail. We witness the reconstruction of values, the dignity of nature is unearthed together with its flora and fauna. Although there are many ruptures, these are seen to be confined to other regions of the world. This then leads to the self-satisfied and contented view about our never ending wave of progress. To put it differently: an historical end is still proclaimed and this proclamation comes from the United States. In contrast to Marx’s dream of the beginning of human history, it announces the final victory of the Western order. It celebrates the blessings of accumulation and praises the achievements of the liberal-democratic Rechtstaat (state of law-and-order) as history’s finest and final accomplishment. The scholarly world, that is those sciences that do not deal with pure chemicals or with physical quantities but, rather, with human affairs, conditions, and troubles, does not remain on the sidelines. On the contrary, it contributes forcefully to the stabilization of the institutional structures, the system of liberal normative values, and the communicative systems of interaction; and it is powerfully engaged in the creation of news forms of citizenship, of life-styles and life-worlds, and the establishment of new forms of functionality. Certainly, as never before, the true mission of the scholar is seen to consist in constructive work. Reason is set to work, in part to simplify the world of things through systemic reductions (the so-called
="reduction of complexity"), in part to advance placid forms of communication (the philosophical endeavour to mimic the data-processing of informatic studies), and in part, in a complete reversal of reason, to attack reason. Because of an affectionate feeling of discontent, the attack on reason goes hand-in-hand with cheerful leaps into the spiritual, the mush of the soul. The latter is not worth discussing. It is however disturbing that the new proponents of the enlightenment deny reason its historic role of, at any given time, provoking insubordination and destroying horrors, whether it be from church, state, despotism — or any other form of rule, as Voltaire liked to say.

It is not the case that the scholarly world accepts the seeming lack of ruptures uncritically. Nolte has criticised historiography and its failure to interpret German fascism in asiatic terms; Habermas criticised Nolte and his discarding of reason; Tugendhat criticised — in constructive terms according to the Frankfurter Rundschau — Habermas' friendly critique of Nolte. Nevertheless, a constructive mood dominates and trust in the established order is widespread. Those who do mistrust especially the existing relations of constituted power and engage reason's historic role to lead humanity to emancipation, and who do not make positive proposals and shun a constructive engagement with politics, find themselves, quite unintentionally, in conflict with the stipulated norms of the Constitution according to which scholarly work has to project constitutional values (see below).

The misery of our time that the successfully stabilized structures of power crystallize at all levels — even those engaged in alternative social projects have become becalmed from self-content — this misery demands destruction. The "system of order" has to be dismantled, trust has to be undone; and, instead, the explosive power of doubt has once again to be restored to its rightful place so that at last the soothing image of a faultless world changes, and that, in the face of current dramatic developments, the symbols of the positive, the good and the pretty vanish. Meanwhile, Germany (fortunately recently only West-Germany) seems to remain a country where critique blossoms always in constructive terms. Is this the German culture? Is this a continuous, uninterrupted German intellectual tradition?

THE CLASSICS

The greatest of the German proponents of the Enlightenment teaches us something different. Kant, it is true, regarded according to tradition and his own statements, duty as a noble endeavour, the moral code in our hearts as a useful institution, and he admired the star-studded sky. Anything else, however, that came to his mind he demolished: the metaphysical unity of the world, the objec-
tivity of space and time, the immortality of the soul, the indisputable existence of God. Admittedly, he let God, or what Goethe referred to as the “old man,” return through the backdoor that he conveniently constructed. This he did, however, only to install a sort of moral authority to ensure good behaviour in our daily life — better: as a “postulate” so that we all live decent lives and regard humanity as a purpose, not as resource as in, for example, the realization of profits or the achievement of parliamentary majorities.

Heinrich Heine, whom Goebbels declared a Destruktiven; a “force of decomposition,” held Kant as a more resolute and decisive revolutionary than the French Jacobins. And Giosuè Carducci (Nobel Prize 1906) took up Heine’s contention: “Decapitaron Emanuele Kant Ìddio, Massimiliano Robespierre il Re” — which is to say: Kant decapitated God, Robespierre decapitated the king. Whereby Kant holds first place among the destructive figures of history.

Kant, however, was not satisfied with doing away with God. He did worse: he decapitated the impartial head of science and replaced it by reason and that is, the principle of partiality, of social obligation. According to Kant, only that science is true which helps the common individual to dignity (Hartenstein, Nachlaß, p. 625). He added an even more destructive element. In 1794, on the 12th of October, he received a “special order” from his Majesty the King to cease his philosophic “distortion and degradation of Christianity.” (Note that if one replaces Christianity by the liberal-democratic ground order of the German constitution, the King’s order amounted to the first conception of an anti-radical law). Under this type of pressure, Kant began to understand the character of the constituted political order and started a dispute with the constitutional scholars. In his Conflicts of the Faculties, he developed the principle of partiality in its entirety. The constitutional scholars, he argued, might allow themselves to work positively within the existing constituted political system and affirm existing conditions. However, philosophy has a more important role: it is the role of philosophy to enlighten the population about the “true character” of the constitution in spite of orders to conceal it. What did Kant understand by the “true character?” Kant in no way meant the well-known gap between constitutional norms and constitutional reality whereby it would be the obligation on the part of politicians and scholars to restore the damage. Kant did not differentiate between “good constitutional norms” and “bad constitutional reality.” Kant’s emphasis on the true character of the constitution focused negatively on the rottenness of the norms themselves. He vindicated the right of philosophy to destroy all constitutional illusions and expose the fiction of a representative body as, in fact, a reality of domination [Herrschaft]. He called all affirmations of the constitution by one name: “Deceitful publicity” (Conflicts of the Faculties, Königsberg, 1798).
Kant's conception of the determination of the scholar did not remain without consequences. The destructive element found its way into Hegel's conception of negation as the dynamic force of the consciousness of freedom — even though the ageing Hegel (in contrast to Kant, who became wiser with age) subsumed negation under a general reconciliation with the state. Hegel was a poor master who, however, had a much better student. The good student followed Kant's "critical project" and pushed aside Hegel's reconciliation. Marx wanted neither to construct or affirm. He wanted primarily to negate. Like Heine, he was tradition-bound to the historic duty of decomposition. He went, however, several steps further: into the depth and into the basis of society. Marx was not satisfied with merely exposing the true character of the constitution. Beyond the recognition of the constituted deceitfulness of the constitutional state and after exposing its true character, the reality of its essence, and that is its function, had to be revealed. He destroyed the illusion of the pretty form of the state, a form that hides and yet organizes an ugly content. In this way, the absurdity of a mode of production on which bourgeois purposive-rationality, profitability, and respectability feed, was exposed. It stood naked. All who live from their labour and the sale of their labour power "find themselves directly opposed to the form in which, hitherto, the individuals, of which society consists, have given themselves as individuals, they must overthrow the state." Bakunin on Asia? No: Marx and Germany (German Ideology, MEW 3, p. 77).

Negation and destruction are therefore not missing from the German scholarly tradition. On the contrary, it has its classics. Their destructive reason has representatives even where common wisdom and the educated middle classes would least expect. Only a few in this country know, for example, who this Benimm-Knigge really was: "free Mister" Knigge was a radical Jacobin who understood the terreur and who, thinking about "Ça ira," criticised the German condition, lamenting that in Germany, "the nice lampposts are standing all so unused."9

**Some Edifying Notes**

Is this tradition really that of the "other Germany" which has historically been pushed aside by mainstream, constructive Germany?

In reassurance: Knigge's lampposts — whether pretty or not — are still quite properly providing light only for the streets. For the scholar, on the other hand, there still remains the Kantian duty and the Marxian project and that is, to continue the philosophical-political destruction of this powerfully protected misery that is blessed by consensus. By continuing this project, however, the scholars are likely to be forced to live in the shadows. General goodwill is
removed from them and they make themselves suspect. But they must accept
that danger if they are to take their determination and themselves seriously.
This then means that against all official orders (Basic Law, Art. 5, 3),
10 scholars are left with no alternative but to reveal the fiction of freedom that the "Palace"
as the ancient Egyptians referred to the structure of power) posits and to
disclose the fragility of its existence. When scholars orientate themselves on Kant,
then they appropriate Kant’s wisdom (see his answer to the special order of the
King) and deal with the constituted liberal-democratic order and the structures
of power in a two-fold and rightly famous manner. They will attempt to conceal
the true character of the constitution and thereby bring their work into line
with the Zeitgeist.11

The Zeitgeist creeps in fact away from the correct determination of scholarly
work, and chooses instead to participate in the building of consensus: if one
affirms existing conditions and norms, then the deplorable state of affairs loses
its reality and transforms into correctable accidents. The responsibility for
overcoming these rests with the so-called self-regulating capacity of the market,
of power, and of parliament.

The first manifestation of the Zeitgeist undoubtedly understands itself as
critical, but does not recognise its negative determination which is above all
and principally “de omnibus dubitandum” (doubt everything). The critical
dimension of the Zeitgeist is characterized by the painstaking quest for the
good; that is, justice, equality and freedom. The good is supposed to be con-
stitutionally guaranteed, despite various weaknesses. But the comforting convic-
tion that the liberal-democratic ground order is basically sound despite the
occasional infiltration of bad political practices which can be coped with
whenever necessary, renders philosophy a pure work of edification, of state
building. In spite of all enlightened proclamations, and in opposition to a pro-
gramme that is admirably devoted to rationality, these new ideas of state build-
ing discover the universal element through which all political interactions first
realize their human character: LOVE. But even love can have, within itself, the
rationality of destruction (see Goethe’s Marienbader Elegie). Rescued from such
danger, caught on the edge of the abyss, and drawn into the positive, love
becomes transcendental if, through edification, it is offered an object of desire
that lies beyond all critique. Such transcendental love remains shielded from
all adverse experiences and can therefore be loved for its own sake and that is,
because of and for itself.

The initial enlightenment can not be denied. Love is given a rationally
defined object that prevents any stumbles into the emotional-barbaric, and
guarantees instead something of good quality. Besides, love of the fatherland —
patriotism, the original sense of the word, has run its course — brings to the
fore unpleasant things: heavy indigestible stuff that is well past its sell-by date. On this point, philosophy remains philosophical and that is, it maintains its destructiveness. But as love enters the phase of edification and reaches its object, it becomes harmless, observable, and worthy of affirmation: edification brushes away the love of the fatherland and proclaims, instead, its love of the constitution.\textsuperscript{12} In this respect Friedrich Engels' observation is confirmed: in the rest of the world, political power explicitly insists on the rule of law and on the compliance with the constitutional order. In Germany, however, obedience to law, order and constitution is not sufficient — one is also required to love them.

For fear of undermining the political culture and of raising new uncertainties about proven institutions, reason, once free and probing, becomes pure affection and dissolves in a two-fold manner: first in general and second in love. In the late middle ages, philosophy had freed itself from servitude — due in part to the destructive force of nominalism. Philosophy did no longer want to remain in the role of an \textit{ancilla theologiae} and regained its autonomy. Now, its constructive manifestations drag philosophy back into the role of a social servant: \textit{ancilla constitutionis}. By refusing the possibility of a destructive autonomy within society that searches for emancipation, and by refusing to observe the institutional norms — these are norms of power and domination — with suspicion, philosophy affirms existing conditions and its defence of the constitutional order provides the office for the protection of the constitution, that is the security service, with the much desired ideological legitimation. This development is in stark contrast to a not-so-distant past when there was intellectual scolding of this office. However, when dealing with supposed or real enemies of the constitution, the security service's institutional love inspires quite different activities compared with the activities of those whose love of the state holds honest constructive intentions. The revolutionary tragedy of the Jacobin terror has long since been transformed into a constitutional comedy — to use a famous phrase (cf. Robespierre's speech on the 12th of December 1793, with German \textit{Basic Law}, Article 18).\textsuperscript{13} In the meantime, love has become a satyr's game: the new Chauvin\textsuperscript{14} stands grinning at the Celler hole.\textsuperscript{15}

In this manner, Kant has been stood on his head: the true character of the constitution lies in the fact that the constitution is true. Consequently, any further thoughts about it, any critical pronouncements, any destruction of the structure of power become superfluous. For constitutional patriotism, the destructive scholar is a scandal.
Constructive endeavours are widely accepted and edification approves itself. The other positive manifestation of the Zeitgeist has some misgivings about this. Does a dynamic state form not need the conflict of opinions and interests between groups and social partners? Does it not require the pluralist competition between interests? Cianetti who was Italy's Minister of Corporations in 1943, already saw the necessity of the social conflict. But he also declared that conflicts must be contained within the limits of the system; in general: they must be regulated through law, not provoked. This clever notion achieved constructive endorsement in system theory which emphasises the constructive nature of conflicts and the consolidating quality of strikes. Besides, the German constitution provides guarantees for clashes of interest and seeks to support them as long as they are confined within the boundaries of the constitution.

Here it is not love which is seen as the most secure foundation of the political form. Rather it is CONFLICT. Conflict is accepted as a stabilizing force of the system, providing it with structures and securing its success. However, wherever conflict manifests itself in constructive or functional forms, the critical element does not remain absent. Conflicts without critical ideas amount to mere shadow-boxing and so lose their functionality. Critique seems, then, to be a systemic condition of political stability. But this presupposes a particular, much praised and emphasised quality of critique — critique has to abandon its negativity: it must refrain from destruction and operate constructively. Constructive critique — yet another tautology of the Zeitgeist — constantly makes positive proposals and seeks to improve and consolidate existing conditions. In so far as constructive critique opposes any attempt at demolishing existing conditions which is the aim of destructive critique, constructive critique is also a critique of destructive critique. Destructive critique — looked at from the lenses of systemic thought — lacks the functionality of the positive.

System theory focuses with great care on the positive elements of conflict, for the positive is the yardstick against which anything new is measured. A theory which is devoted to the state and sees the state as "Being" or "Subject," must analyse new forces that enter the political arena not only with love but also with severity. This is because, as we know, within the system all fields, processes, movements, facts and persons not only interact with one another, they also, and importantly, constitute a finely meshed network that is susceptible to disturbances and ruptures. Should one mesh fail, and thereby allowing a dysfunctional conflict, an unknown intention, or an autonomous social power to slip into the network, then the complex relations between function and system can destabilize and destruction may assert itself.
System theory has much more reliable means of protecting the state against such destructive possibilities than any chatter that sees itself to operate in spaces where power does not exist.\textsuperscript{19} This means is the norm that facilitates integration. It was first conceived by Max Weber. It is not called love. It is called responsibility. New social forces are subsumed under the obligation of responsibility. Only when new social forces enter the structures of power on the basis of responsibility and not merely on the basis of conviction, do they show their “political capacity” [Fähigkeit zur Politik]. If they act responsibly, they leave behind all its subversive, insurrectionary potential and contribute instead to the consolidation and extension of political power, rendering it fully accepted as a legitimate group. First it gains the capacity to act as opposition [oppositionsfähig], then it gains the capacity to enter into coalitions [koalitionsfähig], and lastly it gains the capacity to govern [regierungsfähig]. Absorbed by the norms, rules and limitations of liberal-democratic parliamentary democracy, its previously unruly character dissolves and it becomes a firm constituent element of constituted power. In other words, the representatives of the new social forces transform into functionaries of representation and thereby perform the systemic function of stabilization. In the end, neither the nice A. Vollmer nor the destructive J. Ditfurth can withdraw from this mechanism of integration that is so much stronger than the power of constitutional love.\textsuperscript{20}

Who would deny that system theory deals with its object (the constitutional state) in as critical a manner as the heirs of critical theory — that is: critical but constructive.\textsuperscript{21} Occasionally, it even displays mistrust but it does so only for the sake of form. For its declared intention is precisely the opposite. Its aim is not to generate mistrust but to create new relations of trust and loyalty. In this endeavour, it is very much served by a logic of argumentation that is as complex as it is rich with associations. It detests destructive critique and is suspicious of any mistrust since it, like a mole digging underfoot, undermines the belief in the correctness of conditions. In essence, system theory without knowing or intending it, finds its political consummation in the German constitutional guarantee of the continuity of power: in the “constructive vote of no-confidence.”\textsuperscript{22}

I do not know whether the founders of the German constitution were aware of the etymological humour of this monstrous idiom. Nevertheless, system theory finds in it its belated justification. The vote to remove an existing Chancellor by a new one during a parliamentary term results from a conflict situation and, in this way, symbolizes precisely the type of conflict that serves stability. Constructively handled distrust — such as the constructive vote of no-confidence — grows out of a trust in the continuity of power. The work of the scholar, in contrast, should be concerned with the demise of power.
But since love is the basis of trust, edifying and systemic work find themselves together again in the end, and both contribute to the creation of a new theodicy of the state. Love of the constitution is not misled by the evil of the political world; and system theory supplies the means for the functional integration of love. The systemically achieved edification is realized in a constitutionally protected high level of tolerance: the neo-Leibnizian proof of a secularised theodicy. But this theodicy does not lack its malicious element — just as in the original. For in his time, God certainly loved the best of all possible world — but he also watched very carefully the haphazard evil of man-kind in order to make corrections and mete out final punishment. A love that protects the constitution cannot do without control. It is for this simple reason that all those who are lovingly tolerated are also systematically kept under surveillance.

SOMETHING SUBVERSIVE

In the end, there should be some constructiveness after all. "Where is the positive?" In the misery of our time, we find it only in negation, in the nowhere — the so-called Utopia. In fact, the utopia that emerges from the destruction of all structures of inequality, subordination and power — this utopia is today the only possible way out from the impending obliteration that looms on the horizon. For the scholar, this means that social conflict must be freed from its systemic, stabilizing function, and it must be released from all constitutional love. Its historic dignity as a force of destabilization has to be restored. The defense of destabilization is identical with the defense and realization of freedom. "Who claims earnestly to want freedom but simultaneously battles all destabilizing activities, contradicts himself" (Geymonat).

POSTSCRIPT

Doubt comes to the fore: I have written this for German readers and German readers are earnest people whom one must take seriously. Hence the concluding problem: how can we achieve enlightenment with respect of destruction as the determination of the scholar without the furor teutonicus [teutonicus furor] playing the accompaniment? The melody that will entice the ossified relations to dance, needs the basso continuo of irony — that is the most secure defense against the tortuous and misguided path of constructive thought.

TRANSLATED BY WERNER BONEFELD
These notes have been compiled by the editor. They are meant to guide the reader through Agnoli’s argument and to suggest further reading.


2 Agnoli refers here to the regressive transformation of consciousness into forms of technological and that is functional rationality.

3 Agnoli refers here to the growth of occultism, spiritualism and esoterism during the 1980s.

4 Agnoli refers here to the Historians Dispute of the 1980s. The Frankfurter Rundschau is a national liberal-left newspaper. See also Agnoli’s Faschismus ohne Revision, Ça ira, Freiburg, 1997, for an analysis of fascism and critique of attempts, including Nolte’s, at normalising fascism and of according blame for fascism to the working class. An introduction of his book to an English readership can be found in Bonefeld “On Fascism,” Common Sense no. 24. See also Bologna’s “Nazism and the Working Class,” published in Common Sense, no. 16.

5 See Kant’s definition of the Enlightenment as humanity’s exodus from self-imposed immaturity.

6 Note that the article was first published in February 1990 when the upheaval in East Germany was at its peak.


8 Agnoli refers here to the Radikalenerlaß of 1972. This Erlaß barred people with supposedly anti-constitutional opinions from employment in the civil service, including teachers and postmen. See also footnote 10.

9 Adolf Freiherr von Knigge, 1752 to 1796, was the author of a book on how to behave. “Benimm-Knigge” translates as “Behave-Knigge.”

10 Art and science, research and teaching, shall be free. Freedom of scholarly work shall not absolve from loyalty to the constitution” (Basic Law, Art. 5, 3). By the late 1970s, at the height of the new social movements, University Professors were, under pressure of dismissal, forced to sign statements declaring their loyalty to the state. Unless scholarly work accepts the constitutional order, it would otherwise place itself in legal jeopardy and be subjected to police surveillance and persecution. The following quote from a Constitutional Court judgement of the early 1970s might clarify this: “The normative right to free speech and free expression of opinion is restricted if
the expression of opinion is in opposition to the liberal democratic ground order. The legally protected right to express the opinion that there is no freedom of opinion in the Federal Republic of Germany casts doubt on the validity of the constitutional value of the liberal democratic ground order. Because of this, the opinion that there is no freedom of opinion in Germany is not protected by the basic right of free opinion” (quoted in Preuß, *Legalität und Pluralismus*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1973, p. 24). On Agnoli’s conceptualisation of the *Rechtsstaat* and liberal-democracy, see his *Die Transformation der Demokratie und andere Schriften zur Kritik der Politik*, Ça ira, Freiburg, 1990. For an introduction of this book to an English readership see, Bonefeld “Constitutional Norm versus Constitutional Reality in Germany,” *Capital & Class* no. 46, 1992.

11 Kant's reply is published in his *Conflicts of the Faculty*. In his reply to the King's order to abstain from denigrating Christianity, Kant argues that since he did not provide an appreciation of Christendom, he could therefore not be accused of degrading Christendom. His reply, in fact, emphasises the importance of Christendom because of its moral force to secure good and honest behaviour. In short, Kant's reply agrees with the King and it does so in such a way that makes the ossified relations dance. Kant replies with irony, determination and praises the existing powers in a careful way. Praise of existing powers is not a punishable offence. Yet, like never ending applause, it can work like a destructive force.

12 Agnoli is referring here to Habermas' notion of a constitutional patriotism that he offered as an alternative rational source of national identity and as a means of securing the liberal-democratic values of justice, equality and freedom.

13 Article 18 of the German Constitution declares that those who make an unconstitutional use of the basic liberal rights enshrined in the Constitution, lose their basic rights. See also footnote 10.

14 The term chauvinism derives from a French comedy in which the character of Nicolas Chauvin plays the role of an ardent veteran of Napoleon's. Chauvin's absurdly extravagant national pride and sense of national duty repeats itself as a comedy in the activities of the security service against supposed enemies within (see footnote 15).

15 Agnoli refers here to the activities of the security service in the federal state of Lower Saxony. It became known in 1986 that a bomb that had explosd outside the walls of a prison in the town of Celle, where persons convicted of terrorist offences were held, was not detonated by a terrorist group as it was alleged, but by the security service itself. The person responsible for the bombing was a convicted murder who had been
released from prison. The bomb attack was used as a means of intensifying the search for terrorists and of infiltrating the convict into the terrorist scene as a contact. The constitutional comedy, referred to by Agnoli, entails, then, the new Chauvin as an ardent follower of law and order of a constitutional status quo based on state terrorism.

This section analyses the contribution of system theory to the stabilisation of political power. The important proponents are Luhman and Parsons. Parsons' work plays a significant part in Habermas' reconstruction of critical theory. For a destructive critique of Habermas, see Reichelt, "Jürgen Habermas' Reconstruction of Historical Materialism," in Bonefeld, W. and K. Psychopedis (eds.) The Politics of Change, Palgrave, London, 2000.

On Italian fascism's acceptance of social conflict as a constructive force that supports the stability of political power, see chapter 8 of his Faschismus ohne Revision, op. cit.

In order to clarify this point, see for example the current debate on globalisation where well-meaning commentators argue that globalisation leads to new forms of barbarism if its logic cannot be arrested through the creation of new forms of liberal-democratic intervention at the national and transnational level. This argument charges that the Left has to abandon its negative critique of capital and its state because the misery created by globalisation requires urgent action and intervention of a radical reformist kind. Globalisation is said to have rendered obsolete the ability of anti-systemic opposition to effect change. In order to avoid the dreadful consequences of globalisation, the Left is called upon to make positive constructive proposals. In short, destructive critique of capital and its state is rejected as socially irresponsible. It provides no positive proposals for the avoidance of barbarism and for this reason, by implication, is seen to be complicit in capital's project of neo-liberal globalisation. For a detailed discussion, see Bonefeld "Globalisation and Democracy," in Common Sense, no. 22, 1997.

The idea of communicative action in spaces defined by the absence of power is Habermas'. For critique see, Reichelt (op. cit.).

Vollmer and Ditfurth were representatives of the German Green's realist (Vollmer) and fundamentalist (Ditfurth) factions. The realist faction called for a policy of ecological realism and favoured to join the Social Democratic Party in a coalition government. The fundamentalist faction represented a more comprehensive rejection of the established party system and were reluctant to enter into government with the Social Democratic Party. Note that Agnoli's essay was first published in 1990 Many member of the fundamentalist faction left the Green Party in 1991. The Greens are currently the
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junior partner of a coalition government led by the Social Democratic Party.

21 Agnoli refers here to Habermas and Offe, the two best known representatives of the second generation of critical theory.

22 "The federal parliament can only pass a vote of no-confidence in the Federal Chancellor by the election, with an absolute majority, of his successor" (Basic Law; Article 7, 1).

23 Agnoli quotes here from Geymonat's La Libertà. Geymonat is professor of philosophy at the University of Turin, Italy.