

THE TELOS PAUL PICCONE INSTITUTE

THE TELOS-PAUL PICCONE INSTITUTE, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE JOHN D. CALANDRA ITALIAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE, QUEENS COLLEGE/CUNY, PRESENTS

MARKING *TELOS* 200: THE NEW POLITICS OF CLASS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, TO SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2022

NEW YORK CITY

WHILE THE NOTION OF CLASS WAS ONCE A LEFT-WING CATEGORY CHAMPIONED BY SOCIALISTS, MARXISTS, AND ANARCHISTS, THE CRITIQUE OF CLASS DIVISION HAS MORE RECENTLY SHIFTED TO RIGHT-WING DENUNCIATIONS OF THE MANAGERIAL CLASS. HOW IS THE UNDERLYING NOTION OF CLASS BEING DEFINED BY THE DIFFERENT PARTIES TO THIS DEBATE? WHAT ARE THE POLITICAL POSSIBILITIES, ON BOTH THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT, THAT CAN EMERGE FROM THIS CONFLICT? DO THESE ANTAGONISMS PRESAGE A NEW KIND OF CIVIL WAR, OR CAN WE ENVISION MORE HOPEFUL SOLUTIONS?

SPEAKERS

Keynote Speakers: JOEL KOTKIN and MICHAEL LIND

JOSEPH W. BENDERSKY • RUSSELL A. BERMAN • MARK G. E. KELLY

TIMOTHY W. LUKE • ADRIAN PABST • MARCIA PALLY

DAVID PAN • EUGENE RIVERS • MARK WEINER

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Marking *Telos* 200: The New Politics of Class

October 14–15, 2022

The John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queens College/CUNY
New York, NY

Event Description

In the last fifteen years, the discussion of class has shifted with the rise of the Tea Party and then Trumpism in the United States. Whereas the notion of class used to be a left-wing category championed by socialists, Marxists, and anarchists, the critique of class division has now shifted to right-wing denunciations of the managerial class. This shift toward a populist politics targeting the new class has long been a topic of discussion in *Telos*, starting with the classic 1975 essay by Alvin Gouldner “Prologue to a Theory of Revolutionary Intellectuals” (in *Telos* 26) and continuing through Paul Piccone’s work in the early 1990s in essays such as “The Crisis of Liberalism and the Emergence of Federal Populism” (in *Telos* 89) and “Postmodern Populism” (in *Telos* 103). A search of the *Telos* archive will uncover literally hundreds of essays that address various aspects of this issue. The recent popularizing of the critique of the new class has led to a conflict between the liberal pursuit of redistributive policies and the expansion of the welfare state, on the one hand, and the populist attempt to disempower governmental managerial elites and dismantle the welfare state, on the other hand. How is the underlying notion of class being defined by the different parties to this debate? What are the political possibilities, both on the left and on the right, that can emerge from the conflict? Is this conflict leading to a new kind of civil war, or can we envision new solutions?

In addition to engaging with these questions, our event will feature *Telos* editors, who will discuss the past and current trajectories of *Telos* as well as *Telos* 200, devoted to the place of truth at the university.

Telos has always had a conflicted relationship with universities. On the one hand, university academics have constituted the primary audience and contributors to *Telos*. On the other hand, *Telos* has always maintained a distance from university structures, precisely because of the tie between universities and the managerial class, and previous special issues in *Telos* 81 and *Telos* 111 have attempted to address this problem.

Today, the situation of universities has become more dire than ever. Trapped between the pressure to provide job training on the one hand and political advocacy on the other hand, the idea of a search for truth sounds hopelessly naive as a description of the task of colleges and universities today. Matching the shift of our society toward technocratic and managerial solutions to problems, the natural and social sciences have become recognized authorities based on their claim to being scientific. Yet the authority of “science” is misleading in the sense that science never has straightforward answers but relies on a method of constant questioning. Science itself cannot be counted on to make policy decisions but can only provide relevant information for decision makers. Recent pieces in *TelosScope* by Russell Berman and Mathieu Slama address this issue by looking at the way pandemic policies were dominated by an ideology of “following the science” that amounted to an abdication of democratic decision-making.

Meanwhile, university discussion and debate about decision-making, traditionally the place of the humanities and social sciences, have been suppressed in favor of a focus on political engagement. The range of perspectives available for discussion has been reduced, to the exclusion of those views that might challenge the technocratic bias and the reduction of politics to identity politics that have become dominant at universities.

This narrowing of perspectives has also undermined the research project of the university. The exclusion of relevant perspectives in university debates has degraded the peer review process in the social sciences and the humanities, maintaining an orthodoxy that favors the reinforcement of previously held views rather than the challenging of such views. Such research can then be cited as the “scientific” basis for a set of policy prescriptions that have been agreed upon in advance. Where Max Weber once lamented the transformation of the lecture hall into a pulpit, it is difficult today for academics to avoid the pressure to either conform to a particular political perspective or, in rejecting such politicization, to be forced into an “obstructionist” camp.

In the midst of these developments, what is the status of the idea of truth? Will truth necessarily remain subordinate to politics? How might the search for truth remain a focus of colleges and universities? In addressing these questions, the 200th issue of *Telos* features contributions by Joseph W. Bendersky, Russell Berman, Valerie J. D’Erman, J. E. Elliott, Wayne Hudson, Michael Hüther, Mark G. E. Kelly, Tim Luke, Richard T. Marcy, Greg Melleuish, David Pan, Susanna Rizzo, and David Westbrook.

Conference Location

The conference will be held at the **John D. Calandra Italian American Institute at 25 West 43rd St., 17th Floor, New York, NY 10036**. The Calandra Institute is located in midtown Manhattan and is close to major subways stops. It is three blocks from Grand Central Station, two blocks from the Bryant Park subway stop, and three blocks from the Seventh Avenue/42nd Street subway stops. For more information about the Calandra Institute, visit their website at <https://calandrainstitute.org>.

EVENT SCHEDULE

Friday, October 14, 2022

Introduction

3:00 PM to 3:10 PM

Anthony Tamburri (Calandra Institute) and Adrian Pabst (University of Kent)

Telos Perspectives on the Problems of the University System

3:10 PM to 5:00 PM

Moderator: David Pan, University of California, Irvine

Panelists: Joseph Bendersky (Virginia Commonwealth University), Tim Luke (Virginia Tech), Mark G. E. Kelly (Western Sydney University), Marcia Pally (New York University)

Saturday, October 15, 2022

The New Class Divides and Their Implications for the Future

10:00 AM to 11:30 AM

Moderator: Adrian Pabst, University of Kent

Keynote Speaker: Joel Kotkin, Chapman University

Respondent: Russell Berman, Stanford University

Lunch

11:30 AM to 1:00 PM

The New Politics of Class

1:00 PM to 2:30 PM

Moderator: Marcia Pally, New York University

Keynote Speaker: Michael Lind, University of Texas, Austin (*virtual presentation via Zoom*)

Respondent: Adrian Pabst, University of Kent

Coffee

2:30 PM to 3:00 PM

Telos Past and Future

3:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Moderator: Mark Weiner, Hidden Cabinet Films

Panelists: Eugene Rivers (Seymour Institute), Russell Berman (Stanford University), David Pan (University of California, Irvine)