

History and Obstinacy

By Alexander Kluge, Oskar Negt

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If Marx's opus *Capital* provided the foundational account of the forces of production in all of their objective, machine formats, what happens when the concepts of political economy are applied not to dead labor, but to its living counterpart, the human subject? The result is Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt's *History and Obstinacy*, a groundbreaking archaeology of the labor power that has been cultivated in the human body over the last two thousand years. Supplementing classical political economy with the insights of fields ranging from psychoanalysis and phenomenology to evolutionary anthropology and systems theory, *History and Obstinacy* reaches down into the deepest strata of unconscious thought, genetic memory, and cellular life to examine the complex ecology of expropriation and resistance.

First published in German 1981, and never before translated into English, this epochal collaboration between Kluge and Negt has now been edited, expanded, and updated by the authors in response to global developments of the last decade to create an entirely new analysis of "the capitalism within us."

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History and Obstinacy By Alexander Kluge, Oskar Negt Bibliography

- Rank: #628424 in Books
- Published on: 2014-09-26
- Original language: German
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.50" h x 6.50" w x 1.75" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 544 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

This book is an astounding manifestation of an improbable constellation of a great writer and filmmaker and an important social philosopher. They combine the production forces of two rare minds who mutually complement each another. Readers will enjoy the illuminating insights and surprising discoveries from the revealing assemblages of ideas, arguments, and imaginations.

(Jürgen Habermas)

By presenting theory as montage with photos, highlighted text, excursuses, diagrams, and box quotes, History and Obstinacy takes up the legacies of the historical avant-garde, but it does so in an anti-vanguardist mode. As it explores materialist anthropology, the archeology of labor power, histories and stories of defiance and tenacious resistance, it turns its political attention toward the extended past that grounds our evolving present. In its search for answers about the neglected organic and subjective dimension of capital's logic, this book speaks more directly to our current condition than its historical origin in a period of post-1960s disorientation might suggest. An indispensable message in a bottle from another time and a pleasure to read.

(Andreas, Huyssen)

About the Author

Alexander Kluge is an author and filmmaker, known for launching the New German Cinema in the early 1960s. Oskar Negt is Professor of Sociology at the Universität Hannover. Early in his career, he was a student of Theodor Adorno and assistant to Jürgen Habermas. Devin Fore is Associate Professor of German at Princeton University, author of *Realism after Modernism* (MIT Press), and an editor of the journal *October*.

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