



Slavoj Žižek and Radical Politics

Sean Homer

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In this book, Sean Homer addresses Slavoj Žižek's work in a specific political conjuncture, his political interventions in the Balkans. The charge of inconsistency and contradiction is frequently levelled at Žižek's politics, a charge he openly embraces in the name of "pragmatism." Homer argues that his interventions in the Balkans expose the dangers of this pragmatism for the renewal of the Leftist politics that he calls for. The book assesses Žižek's political interventions in so far as they advance his self-proclaimed "ruthlessly radical" aims about changing the world. Homer argues the Balkans can be seen as Žižek's symptom, that element which does not fit into the system, but speaks its truth and reveals what the system cannot acknowledge about itself.

In Part II Homer explores Žižek's radicalism through his critique of Alain Badiou, arguing that Badiou's "affirmationism" provides a firmer grounding for the renewal of the left than Žižek's negative gesture analyzed in Part I. What distinguishes Žižek from the majority of the contemporary Left today is his valorization of violence; Homer tackles this issue head-on in relation to political violence in Greece. Finally, Homer defends the utopian impulse on the radical left against its Lacanian critics.

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