

# LYNNE SEGAL

## THE POLITICS OF CARE



# THE POLITICS OF CARE

## HOST

### Dr Nela Smolović Jones

- Lecturer in Organisation Studies at The Open University Business Schools Department for People and Organisations
- Founder and director of the Gendered Organisational Practice research cluster, which sits within the REEF academic centre of excellence
- The research cluster provides a space in which feminists of any gender can share insights and knowledge from academic study and practice
- Nela is particularly interested in exploring the gendered experiences of women in precarious employment, especially the enactments of reproductive labour within the workplace, relational ethics from positions of precarity and the ways women organise for gender equality
- Nela's research is informed by participative democracy, agonism and deliberation; feminist theory; performativity; embodiment; ethnography; multimodal and discourse analysis
- Teaching interests are centred on the research process, ethics, diversity, equality and leadership



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### SPEAKER

#### Lynne Segal

- Lynne is Emerita Anniversary Professor, Psychosocial Studies, at Birkbeck, University of London.
- Her many books include:
  - *Is the Future Female? Troubled Thoughts on Contemporary Feminism*
  - *Why Feminism: Gender, Psychology, Politics?*
  - *Making Trouble: Life and Politics*
  - *Out of Time: On The Pleasures and Perils of Ageing*
  - *Radical Happiness: Moments of Collective Joy*
- As a member of The Care Collective, she is one of the authors of *The Care Manifesto*, published by Verso last year



## THE POLITICS OF CARE

### THE CARE COLLECTIVE

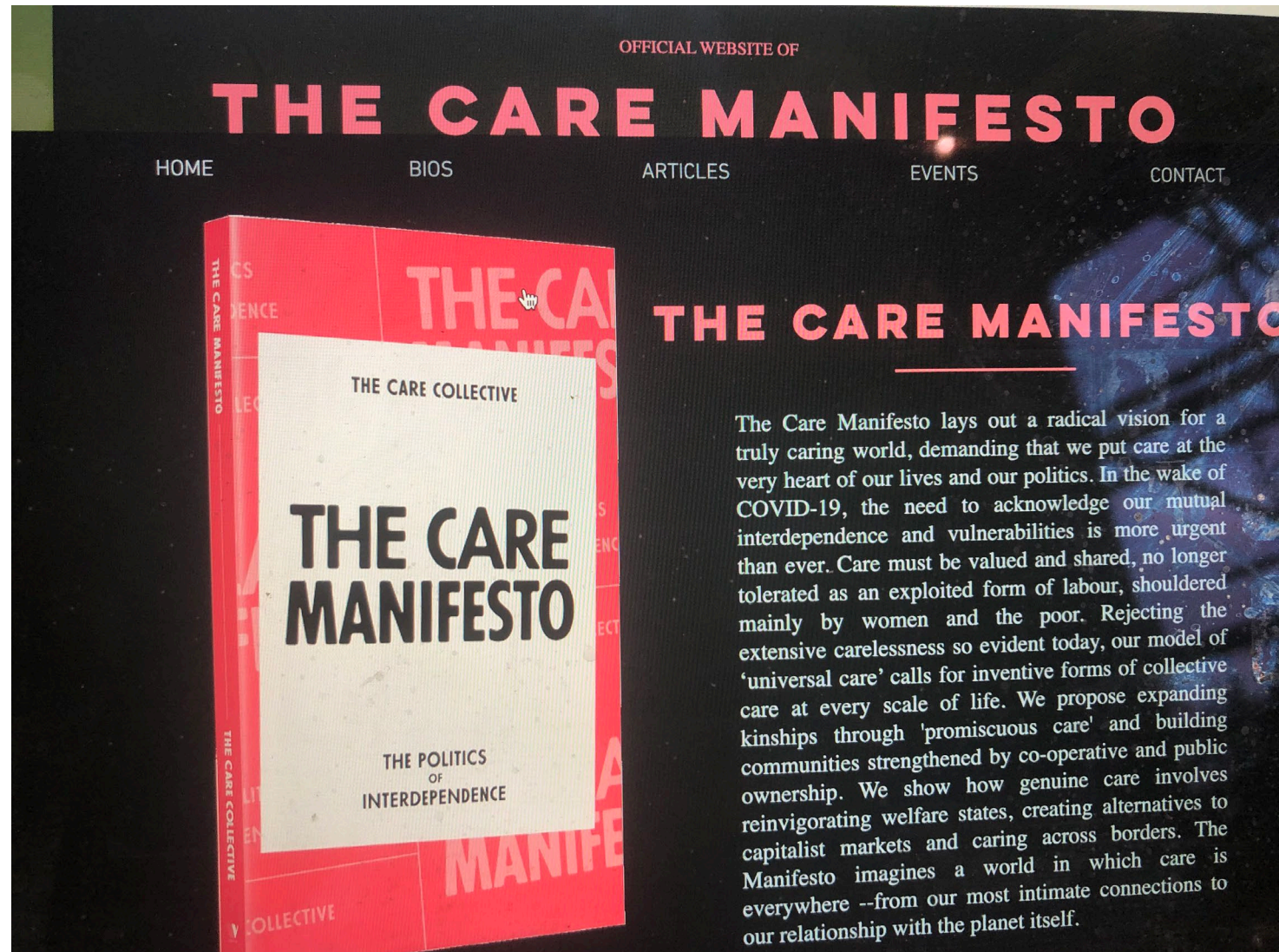


The Care Collective - Andreas Chatzidakis, Jamie Hakim, Jo Littler, Catherine Rottenberg, and Lynne Segal - was formed in 2017, originally as a London-based reading group aiming to understand and address the multiple crises of care engulfing the world. Each coming from a different discipline, we have been active both collectively and individually in diverse academic and political contexts.



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## THE CARE MANIFESTO

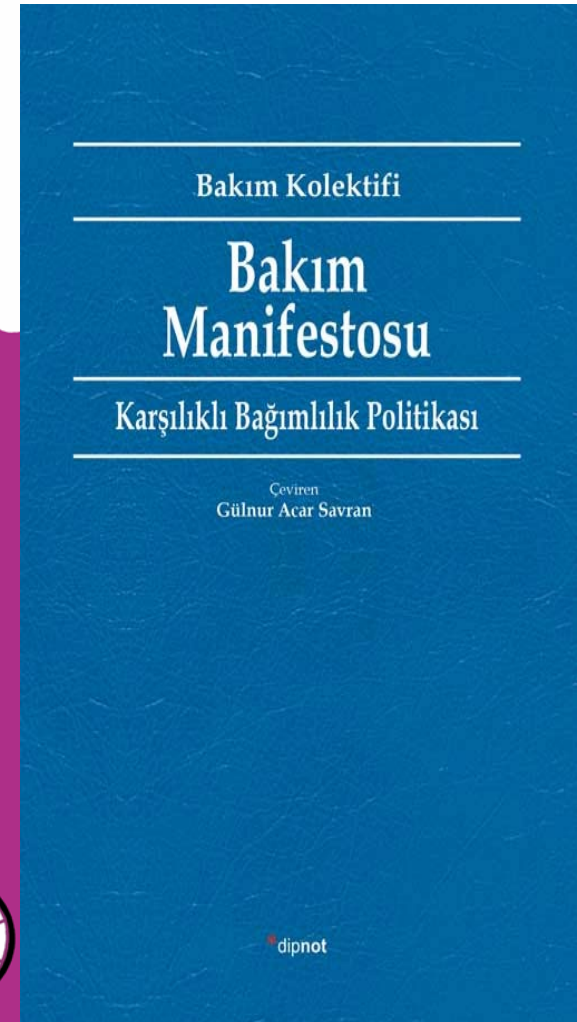


## THE POLITICS OF CARE

### CLAP FOR CARERS AND KEY WORKERS



## THE POLITICS OF CARE TRANSLATIONS





## THE POLITICS OF CARE

### NEGLECT BY DESIGN: FAILURES OF SOCIAL CARE

- The delivery of social care is now in complete disarray, with unchecked outsourcing to – often corporate – private companies over the last 30 yrs. Today around **90%** is in private hands. As late as 1993, **95%** of domiciliary care was provided directly by local authorities; by 2012 it was just **11%**. The resulting care provided is typically quite as difficult for overstretched carers employed, with their minimal training, zero hours contracts, as it is inadequate for those receiving such homecare. Monitored in so many recent books: Madeleine Bunting, *Labours of Love*; Emma Dowling *The Care Crisis*
- It is also overwhelmingly women – ethnic minority & immigrant women in particular – who are doing most of this care work – which helps explain its appalling conditions, many carers themselves living with in-work poverty.
- In reality, good caring practices, or any genuine care ethics remain incompatible with market ethics, when care work requires flexibility, imagination & above all time. It is hardly a secret that the impact of competitive pressures on the quality of social care provision has been disastrous, when even Norman Lamb, whilst Care Minister in the Tory-led Cabinet in June 2013 acknowledged that the current social care system “incentivises poor care, low wages & neglect, often acting with little regard for the people it is supposed to be looking after”



- Care has traditionally been undervalued as ‘women’s’ work, falsely viewed as unproductive, although an essential part of the economy.
- Care has been devalued, even repudiated, because of widespread contempt for so-called ‘dependency’ – symbolic manhood as the very antithesis of dependency. This anachronism has been strengthened by four decades of exaltation of individual resilience, autonomy & productivity, deepening the disavowal of actual human fragility & dependence.
- A new language of care thus begins from recognition of our life-long dependence on others, our shared vulnerabilities & interdependence at every level of life.
- ‘Care’ overflows with paradoxes and ambivalence, occasionally even abuses, often bringing us into contact with our own & others mortal, embodied selves. These mixed emotions require solid social infrastructures and creative cultural practices to facilitate mutually fulfilling & imaginative practices of care, at every level.

1. Transforming *both* the worlds of paid & unpaid work, by genuine sharing in AND beyond the domestic sphere, with entitlements to paid caring leave for all & shorter hours in paid work.
2. Providing universal basic care, tied in with the NHS, but locally run, with a well-trained, well-paid workforce; but also “universal care”, in the sense of prioritising care for one another and the environment with all the necessary investments that this entails in our social and physical infrastructures.
3. Support already existing and create new eco-socialist alternatives to current systems of production, consumption and exchange, encouraging mutual aid and the opening up spaces for alternative markets and caring commons.
4. Refocussing economic policy to avoid austerity and income inequality, and focus on environmental sustainability.

We urgently need an expanded politics & language of care, if we are to have any liveable future at all.

This means: **no longer** seeing care as isolated, private activity, **no longer** as primarily the prerogative of women as caretakers, **but rather** as a multitude of interpersonal and institutional practices, with the potential to change all our interactions &, hopefully, ultimately transform the world itself. ***“If you have the words, there’s always a chance that you’ll find the way”***, Seamus Heaney reflects.

We are never outside the social, any more than we are ever those autonomous individuals some fantasise themselves to be.

There is only interdependence in human existence, as we lean towards & upon each other, as well as on all that sustains the world we inhabit. Lean on me!



# Questions & Answers

We will now take your questions!

# Join us for our next event...

## Sarah Jaffe: Work Won't Love You Back

Monday 12 April

18:30 – 19:30



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# THANK YOU

