

UNIVERSITY OF NOVA GORICA
GRADUATE SCHOOL

**CONCEPTUALISATION OF POLITICS AND REPRODUCTION
IN THE WORK OF LOUIS ALTHUSSER: *CASE OF SOCIALIST
YUGOSLAVIA***

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

The dissertation starts with the diagnosis of the post-Yugoslav context marked by the historical experience of the failure of Yugoslav self-management socialism with its transition to neoliberal capitalism and new nation states. The historical transformation was accompanied by the burial of Marxist theory and theoretical transition to various postmodernist theories and openly nationalist historiographies that legitimize the present state of affairs. *Chapter 1* considers thoroughly how to return to two, not only physically, but in the horizon of “post” also symbolically dead objects: *Louis Althusser* and *socialist Yugoslavia*. Some perceive these two referents as a historical curiosity, others as spectres that haunt the present. However, more than curious spectres, the author’s wager is to re-animate the scandal that they presented for thought and politics: Althusser’s touching of a traumatic point in the Marxist theory and Yugoslavia representing the first rupture in the international working class movement. How then to extract this core scandal in order to use it for continuous engagement in Marxian theory and to contribute to the necessary historicization of communist sequences and critique of the contradictory development of Yugoslav socialism. The dissertation consists of three equally important parts, which loosely correspond to major fields of Althusser’s work: philosophy and its role (part I); Althusserian theory of politics and reproduction (Part II); and historical study of revolutionary sequences and decline of Yugoslav socialist transition (Part III). The absence of a concrete study of class struggles, which can be perceived as a major limit in Althusser, is taken seriously and expanded in the case study of socialist Yugoslavia.

Part I begins with a discussion on the theoretical development of the concept of the break and its relationship with another, less familiar notion of solitude (chapter 2). In the second step I disclose a reading of two post-Althusserian thinkers that in a particular way diagnose a solitude of Althusser’s philosophy: Gregory Elliot, one of the biggest scholars in Althusserian studies and Jacques Rancière, a former student of Althusser, who later turned his pen fiercely against his teacher. While Elliot condemns Althusserianism as the in-between transitional form between Marxism and post-Marxism, Rancière wants to restore Althusser to solitude, where he would be separated from the always-presupposed union of (Marxist) theory and (communist) practice. This question is tackled and answered

in detail throughout *Chapter 3*, where I reconstruct the question of theoretical and political practice through reading of *Theses on Feuerbach*. This is the central point where Althusser's definition of the role of philosophy takes a radically different direction that opposed his earlier "theorist" external position of philosophy that divides between correct/false and his more "politician" stance of philosophy as revolutionary weapon. His renewed proposal of Marxist philosophy embraces a much more paradoxical position that I named "taking side at a distance", or "engaged distance". Criticizing the pragmatist and Stalinist temptation to register and translate theoretical slogans into politics, and thereby subordinates theory to politics, Althusser opens a more intriguing thesis on philosophy, which continues to take sides, but remains at work primarily on its own field, between "scientific" and "ideological" that is "at a distance" from political reality. Philosophical effects are most often "theoretical" and cannot be prescribed with political value and efficacy. In other words, philosophy will participate in the change of the world and not change it.

Part II proposes that the most vital contributions of Althusser need to be taken together and not isolated from one another. Against the binary opposition of conjuncture and structure, these two chapters take Althusser's return to Machiavelli and Marx as essential in understanding Althusser's intellectual enterprise. In *chapter 4* I show how Machiavelli traced a first modern conception of revolution, or what Althusser named as encounter of virtù and fortuna. In some respects, the detour to bourgeois revolution and birth of Modernity represented some crucial steps for Althusser's position to upgrade unsatisfactory theory of "weakest link" and understanding of socialist revolution. And secondly, in *chapter 5* I deal with the most under-researched topic in Althusser, that is, the theory of reproduction with a special emphasis on the Marxian theory of State and Law, which were perceived as major limitations in Marx. I attempted to reconstruct a more systematic theoretical frame for thinking reproduction especially via his posthumously published *Sur la Reproduction* and some of his late works.

In Part III I rely on few of the above mentioned conceptual innovations that work on the historical analysis of communist sequences and socialist transition in Yugoslavia. *Chapter 6* analyses three historical experiences that marked new Yugoslavia: (1) the *People's Liberation Struggle* that waged a fight against fascist occupation and became a

mass revolutionary movement resulting in a new political form: the federative and socialist state of Yugoslavia. Furthermore I problematize the political and theoretical consequences of Yugoslavian split with Stalin in 1948 that I explain in two moments: (2) the invention and experimentation of the workers' self-management model (1950-1961) and (3) the non-aligned movement that undermines the bipolarity of the Cold War era (1955-1963). This chapter rereads communist history by stressing the emancipatory dimension of ideas and struggles. However, the analysis does not want to fall into a romantic temptation of heroic past and simultaneously provides elements for a critique of the socialist transition.

Drawing from multiple theoretical sources and largely inspired from chapter 5, *chapter 7* deals with one special historical episode within the Yugoslav experiment, the so-called "market socialism" between 1965 and 1971. This sequence manifested the shift towards post-socialism that emerged due to the strengthening of a capitalist tendency, which consequently led to the internal failure and exhaustion of the Yugoslav model: the accumulation of economic contradictions (class stratification, the inherent tension between plan and market, underdevelopment and structural rootedness of core-periphery regions, rise of unemployment, and the entrance to the world market via financialisation and dependency on IMF) that coincided with an unprecedented articulation of nationalist and liberal ideology. My critique joins one of the major theoretical observations that Althusser's work never ceased to discuss: insisting on the critique of the (socialist and capitalist) State in the light of rigorous differentiation between socialism and communism within the horizon of capitalist world system.

Keywords

Louis Althusser, new materialism, Marxist theory, return to Marx, break, theoretical solitude, politics of rupture, Jacques Rancière, Machiavelli, reproduction, structural causality, ideological and repressive state apparatus, state as machine, socialist Yugoslavia, communist sequences, encounter, virtù and fortuna, partisan struggle, non-aligned movement, self-managed model, market reform 1965, socialist transition, capitalist tendency, role of law, structural coupling of state and capital, social ownership, class struggle, technocracy, bureaucracy, workers struggles, contradictions and antagonisms in socialism, post-socialism, post-Marxism.

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It has been 5 years, in November 2007, since I wrote my initial PhD proposal, 5 years of a great intellectual journey comprised of productive encounters and failed attempts, but all in all an experience worthy being called a part of *Bildung*. The economic conditions soon pushed me to search for different financial possibilities and from my hometown Ljubljana I moved to two other countries and worked in very different institutional settings, which in their particular way influenced me as a personality, but also left traces in my theoretical work. As different chapters grew in different periods, one can find many different echoes that I integrated through a whole series of different political and theoretical discussions, presentations and book projects, in which I have participated with many other researchers and activists. At this place I would like to express the gratitude to all those that have been accompanying me in one way or another.

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important thank goes to Rastko Močnik, who already at the undergraduate level in many ways encouraged my interest in Louis Althusser and other politically engaged topics. Frieder Otto Wolf is another person that I would like to express my deepest gratitude, who has in many ways supported my well being on the aleatory journey through Althusser and in Berlin. Some other important references and comments I received from Lev Centrih, Primož Kraševc, Katja Kolšek, Catherine Samary and Miklavž Komelj. The latter's fascinating work on partisan art was a true inspiration and light during some dark times.

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List of Abbreviations

SLR	Althusser, Louis 1995, <i>Sur la reproduction</i> . Paris: PUF.
MIHL	Althusser, Louis 2006, “Marx in his Limits”, in: <i>Philosophy of the Encounter. Later Writings, 1978–1987</i> , London: Verso.
UC	Althusser, Louis 2006, “The Underground Current of the Materialism of the Encounter”, in: <i>Philosophy of the Encounter. Later Writings, 1978–1987</i> , London: Verso.
ESC	Althusser, Louis 1976, <i>Elements of Self-Criticism</i> , London: NLB.
MU	Althusser, Louis 1999, <i>Machiavelli and Us</i> , London: Verso.
RC	Althusser, Louis and Balibar, Etienne 1970, <i>Reading Capital</i> , London: NLB.
ISA	Althusser, Louis 1971, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”, in: <i>Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays</i> . London: NLB.
NISA	Althusser, Louis 1995, “Note sur les AIE”, in: <i>Sur la reproduction</i> . Paris: PUF.
FM	Althusser, Louis 2005, <i>For Marx</i> , London: Verso.
RTJL	Althusser, Louis 1976, “Reply to John Lewis”, in: <i>Elements of Self-Criticism</i> , London: NLB.
KDS	Bavčar, Igor, Kim, Srečo and Korsika, Bojan 1985, <i>Kapital + Delo v SFRJ</i> , Ljubljana: KRT.
MECW	Marx, Karl, and Engels Friedrich 1975-2005, <i>Marx and Engels Collected Works</i> , New York: International Publishers.

A note on text

This thesis is the author's own work, part of chapters have been published in different places. A revised version of Chapter 3 will appear in the book *Encountering Althusser* published by Continuum (edited by Katja Diefenbach, Sara Farris, Peter Thomas and Gal Kirn); first part of Chapter 4 was published in Slovenian "Machiavellijev rez: misliti vojno ali razredno politiko?" (Machiavelli's rupture: to think war or class politics?) in: (2007) ČKZ, 34 (225), Ljubljana: Študentska založba. And the part of Chapter 7 entitled "From partisan primacy of politics to postfordist tendency in Yugoslav self-management" in: (2010) *Postfordism and its discontents*. (Ed.) Gal Kirn. Maastricht/Ljubljana: Jan van Eyck Academie and Peace Institute.

Chapter 1: Louis Althusser and socialist Yugoslavia in *post-Marxist-socialist-Yugoslav* context?

1.1. Before the beginning: how to re-animate dead objects?

The fact is that there was a *beginning*, and that to work out the history of Marx's particular thoughts their movement must be grasped at the precise instant when that concrete individual the Young Marx emerged into the *thought world* of his own time, to *think in it* in his turn, and to enter into the exchange and debate with the thoughts of his time which was to be his whole life as an ideologue.

Louis Althusser, *For Marx*

I think a good many people have a similar desire to be freed from the obligation to begin, a similar desire to be on the other side of discourse from the outset, without having to consider from the outside what might be strange, frightening, and perhaps maleficent about it. To this very common wish, the institution's reply is ironic, since it solemnises beginnings, surrounds them with a circle of attention and silence, and imposes ritualised forms on them, as if to make them more easily recognisable from a distance ... 'I should only have to let myself be carried, within it and by it, like a happy wreck'. The institution replies: 'You should not be afraid of beginnings; we are all here in order to show you that discourse belongs to the order of laws...'

Michel Foucault, *The Order of Discourse*

Through this progress, then, the beginning loses the one sidedness which attaches to it as something simply immediate and abstract; it becomes something mediated, and hence the line of the scientific advance becomes a *circle*. It also follows that because that which forms the beginning is still undeveloped, devoid of content, it is not truly known in the beginning; it is the science of logic in its whole compass which first constitutes the completed knowledge of it with its developed content and first truly grounds that knowledge.

Georg Friedrich Hegel, *Science of Logic*

Every beginning¹ is difficult, but in our case the hesitance to begin has to do with the very nature of the research objects and the decision on an appropriate methodology that would combine politico-philosophical research with a historical materialist approach. The

¹ Introductory chapter has to do with certain anxiety of the beginning, namely where and how to start?

following is a study of the work of Louis Althusser that will reread some of his central concepts combined with research on socialist Yugoslavia, specific historical sequences that point to the rise and demise of the latter political project. The quandary surrounding such research objects is even more striking in light of the current politico-theoretical context and also the phenomenal death of each: socialist Yugoslavia is as dead and buried as my key theoretical reference, Louis Althusser. This would certainly not present us with so many initial difficulties, if the research wished to remain in the field of history; for a historian to work with the past, with the dead—of periods, entities and people—is essentially the most obvious form of research activity. But this dissertation thesis wishes to re-animate certain past moments of revolutionary history not only for the sake of production of a partisan “counter-archive”, but also to extract some notes for the future of emancipatory thought and struggle. Research on the past, then, wants to tell us something about the present, but if possible, and precisely through un-anticipated mediations, also something about the future.

The theoretical quandary is more painful still once one looks closer at the broken or utterly weak relationship between revolutionary theory and practice existing today, what was for many regarded as the privileged link between Marxist theory and the communist politics of the international working class movement in 20th century. Many contemporary radical theorists seem to suggest that this old model of revolution is no longer operational.² After the end of real existing socialisms the crisis and disappearance of revolutionary referents has become very clear. But it is not so much their physical or real death that is disturbing, much more relevant is a direct, even fatalistic acknowledgement of their theoretical and symbolic death that participated in the erasure of any political imaginary that may go beyond the “end of history” or the pragmatism of everyday governmental policies. There is no way back after the 20th century, thus, the evidently intriguing question is then can one tell more than a mere history of political and theoretical curiosity about the past? Does the resurrection of past militant traditions and subjectivities still have an important role, or is it merely to be relegated to the archaeological function which merely resurrects the dead for the documentation purposes of a museum? Pierre Macherey describes a similar hesitance or rather a theoretical impasse in the *Preface* to his book *Histoires de dinosaur*, where he registers his own theoretical solitude and his writings as a

² Badiou (1998), Lazarus (1996), Negri (2000), Rancière (1998).

survivor of the disappeared world: “An object from some sort of museum, in which space is given for preserving old things that one can with obligatory consent, and without excessive indulgence, attentively commemorate and look back on with retrospective attention.”³ In this respect research on a “failed” theoretician, Louis Althusser and a “failed state”, socialist Yugoslavia, at first glance do not seem to be a winning combination, but rather a history of failure, and of failure from which one cannot learn, since it is better to remain buried. However, even in the presence of many diagnoses of lethal diseases and the proclaimed deaths of socialist Yugoslavia and Marxist theory, revolutionary positions and corpses have not found their final rest, but linger and insist with us even after their deaths.

The recent history of “democratic transition” in the post-socialist and post-Yugoslavian context has been heavily over-burdened with the ideological formation of new community identities, new independent nations, now 7 of what used to be the one common state of Yugoslavia. Reinventing traditions and imagining the long forgotten and fantasmatic moments of national unity and the glorious times of Middle Aged Kingdoms became an obsession of certain historiographies that provided ideological fuel for the historical revisionism and nation-building processes. However, dealing with the more recent past is still of key theoretical and ideological importance for the present.⁴ The lurking and living dead socialist Yugoslavia, a zombie entity that amplifies fears and stands as a fantastic screen into which all negative, but also nostalgic images can be projected. Most frequently such negativity is complementary to the apologetic attitude of the present state of affairs. The teleological reasoning of the free market, the necessity of neoliberal reforms and the final horizon of the European Union are a prerequisite for the standards of civilization, and also the condition for the liberation from the recent past, namely, that Balkan darkness of failed and totalitarian communism.⁵ The transitologists⁶ and official ideologues are interested in measuring the distance with the recent shared Yugoslav past: the more distance there is to it, the more democracy there is. Ideologues of

³ Macherey (1999: 1) (Translation revised).

⁴ See especially the text of Boris Buden (2009) and Ozren Pupovac (2008), who brought a very engaged interventionist reading of the recent Yugoslav past as key to un-block emancipatory politics in post-Yugoslav theoretical context.

⁵ Many of Rastko Močnik’s texts deal with the critique of orientalisation of the Balkans and anti-communist ideological presupposition of enlightened advocates of Europe (1999; 2003).

⁶ Transition studies developed mostly among political scientist and sociologists; for example in Slovenia volumes of books on Democratic transition have been written (ed.Fink-Hafner 2000; 2001), Balažic (2004). For a good departing critique of transitional studies see Buden (2007).

totalitarianism condemn both Marxism and Socialism in Yugoslavia to their final symbolic death. They want to end with this period of in-betweenness, finish their transitional project and suffocate the spectres. The theoretical and ideological conjuncture presents a real stumbling block⁷ to the beginnings of research, if it does not fit in with the dominant openly anti-totalitarian narrative of the recent past, one runs the risk of being considered Yugo-nostalgic, or at worse a supporter of totalitarian crimes. How, if at all, should one then analyse the objects that have been literally buried in front of our eyes? How is one to begin in the midst of an ideological blockade that is inscribed in the post-Yugoslavian nation-building processes? The safest way would be to abandon the sinking ship and condemn it to the dustbin of history, but then again, this abandonment would simply leave the ideological and theoretical terrain to the enemy.

The theoretico-historical journey of my research thesis takes us into an open confrontation with the ideological and historical context of this “blockade”, where Althusser’s conceptual apparatus and the study of socialist Yugoslavia can shed new critical light on the existing state of affairs. Parallel to taking a critical distance to the ideological *dispositif* of democratic transition, one cannot but begin from these very ideological clichés. Althusser’s theory teaches us that ideology functions at its best when everything is self-evident and almost “natural”, and it is at this point that one needs to become extremely cautious. In a similar vein Walter Benjamin stakes out, what can be the only materialist departure point: “Sundering truth from falsehood is the goal of the materialist method, not its point of departure. In other words, its point of departure is the object riddled with error, with *doxa*.”⁸ The objects that demand further research are not those riddled with enigmas, but those layered in ideology. And what else could be more confounding than the terrain of the recent socialist Yugoslavia encrusted with anti-totalitarian reason and Yugo-nostalgia? Taking this in combination with Marxian theory—and especially with the figure of Louis Althusser that was condemned to oblivion as a remnant of Stalinism and only recently recuperated to the museum cannon of French philosophy—there seems to be nothing but *doxa* surrounding such objects.

⁷ See Pupovac (2008).

⁸ Benjamin (2003: 63).

However, even if the assessment that both research objects are riddled with *doxa* is correct, this does not immediately justify the choice for their combination, or the reason of some “inherent” relationship between them. In other words, what can Louis Althusser tell us about socialist Yugoslavia that we have not yet known before? This research will present and reconstruct a certain theoretical lineage that has been either downplayed or overshadowed by the recent “aleatory” readings of Althusser. Obviously, this reconstruction of a theoretical apparatus risks bringing Althusser simply on a short vacation to Yugoslavia, one that would only illustrate his theoretical points with a historical example. Even if one is never completely immune from this danger, starting from another angle might be more fruitful: what can the concrete analysis of concrete periods of Yugoslav communist politics and socialist reproduction tell us about Althusser and his theoretical apparatus? My gesture of return to Althusser strives to continue his project on the point of his major theoretical weakness. Gregory Elliot, one of the major contemporary Althusserian scholars, diagnoses the crucial problem of Althusser's theory as to have been written almost independently of reality.⁹ In terms of Rancière, the incompleteness of his thought is to be located precisely at this point.¹⁰

It is true that there is a tremendous absence of concrete historical analysis in Althusser, because he admittedly embraced a “philosophical” position within Marxist theory maintaining strict differentiation between the logical order in the progression of thought (concepts) and the order of history (reality). Althusser’s early “discovery” positioned him closely to the “structuralist” current that drew from French materialist epistemology (Bachelard, Koyré, Canguilhem) and discussed the epistemological shifts and inventions of the new sciences that would tell him something new about Marx. It is not at all that early Althusser is completely out-dated, his warning against empiricism (historicism being a form of empiricism) would call for strict elaboration of theoretical lenses (concepts) that can approach historical reality. The Althusserian wager goes against a direct recuperation of the facts of historical data, which unquestionably should not be read as an alibi for the absence of a refined theoretical work on historical reality. Besides from very general references to the French political conjuncture and the Russian

⁹ Elliot (1987: 111).

¹⁰ Rancière (2004). I will return to this in detail in next chapter.

revolution, he did not intensively follow any precise historical period or phenomenon. Notwithstanding this incomplete character of Althusser's own work, he never opposed concrete analysis, but on the contrary, actually promoted work on the concrete and actual historical determinations.¹¹ The incomplete character of Althusser's thought is where I wish to creatively return and hopefully contribute to the future research both of Althusserian Marxism and historical study of socialist Yugoslavia.

The whole development of the theoretical framework of the Althusserian theory of politics as rupture (Machiavelli) and the Althusserian theory of reproduction is then necessarily interwoven with the specific historical material of socialist Yugoslavia here. Attempting to avoid the Yugoslav example becoming a mere illustration of a theoretical argument,¹² it should be on the contrary seen as a crucial complement and necessary part of my return to Althusser; this will tell us both something new about certain sequences of socialist Yugoslavia that have been more or less marginalised or riddled with *doxa*, but also in turn, enrich the Althusserian conceptual apparatus. It is surprising to observe, how many lucid theoretical intuitions of Althusser's cut into major controversies within Yugoslav self-management's road to socialism. Moreover, I hope to show that this encounter of Yugoslavia and Althusser can tell us something in the contemporary (not only fashionable) discussions on the historico-theoretical differentiation between socialism and communism. The fundamental position of this research could be read in the following slogan: *not only the idea of communism, but also the critique and affirmation of socialism.*

The return to Althusser is also a possible return to Marx and in this respect I emphasize their materialist gesture, or the creative repetition of it that also resulted in a certain contribution to the developments and reformulations of Marxian theory: a shift from production to reproduction, from the primacy of theory to the primacy of practice – this aspect seems to be internal to any call for a “new materialism” that I will describe in detail in Chapter 3. The latter revisits closely the tenth and eleventh *Thesis on Feuerbach* that points to the new Althusserian materialist encounter that consists of two equally important sides that should be re-connected again: the materialist dialectic and historical

¹¹ If not he, some of his disciples or theoretical partners developed some of his theses or tested them against the concrete political and ideological situation.

¹² See also the introduction of Žižek (2001), where he speaks about the relationship between philosophy and film.

materialism. Firstly, the politico-philosophical, embodies the continuation of theoretical work, which draws on the Marxist but also other critical traditions to assess and open the horizons for an emancipatory future. Secondly, this is a continuation of rigorous research on concrete historical determinations (it is historico-analytical). Chapter 3 can be regarded as a methodological contribution to some emphases that Althusser made when reading the *Theses*, especially in his insistence on specificity of philosophy's position. Also, his call to "new materialism" could be read as a special "parallax"¹³ relationship between three fields: historical analysis (past), philosophy (thinking the position of the future: "human society") and politics. This corresponds to what Kyle McGee correctly located as Althusser's "three distinct modes of reality: ideology (which encompasses philosophy, though uneasily and not without remainder), science ('natural', and 'nonhuman', and 'human'), and politics (always derived from class struggle)."¹⁴

The dissertation consist of three parts: in the part I, apart from the methodological proposal that is presented in Chapter 3, Chapter 2 will present a few critical notes on the current re-appropriation and critique of Althusser's philosophy and his return to Marx (Gregory Elliot and Jacques Rancière) in order to evaluate the task he assigned to philosophy. His concept of theoretical solitude will be of utmost importance. The methodological proposal is inscribed into the further structural division of part II and part III in the dissertation thesis: the philosophico-theoretical part II and historical analysis of Yugoslavia part III. Part II will focus on two important contributions of Louis Althusser that need to be taken together: first his conception on the politics of rupture/encounter that was elaborated with a return to Machiavelli, the first thinker of Modernity and politics

¹³ This term is connected to the methodological approach made by Slavoj Žižek (2006) who followed Kojin Karatani's book *Transcritique* (2005), elaborating a research method that works on specificity of Marx's trajectory, which cannot be credited with defining the field of economy or politics, and a devised research object. Marx started his research from the critique of the liberal riddle of the division of spheres that were analysed by bourgeois economists. According to Karatani Marx's conceptual discoveries can be understood only in a parallax view, travelling between antinomical spheres of production and circulation. Researcher cannot see both spheres at the same time, they are mutually exclusive, but necessary for Marx to grasp the object. The side of production should be complemented with the perspective of the circulation while according to Marx value needs to be also realized on the market. It is not about the layering of different perspectives, but rather to assert the inventiveness of Marx's methodological enterprise operating between philosophy, politics and the science of history, which enabled him to think about the heterogeneous temporalities of the "object" he was insistently pursuing. The divisive moment with displacement of disciplines and their standpoints, is internal to Marx's theoretical discovery, to his theory of exploitation and class struggle. This traverses production and circulation and cannot be isolated as a mere abstract concept or ideological slogan.

¹⁴ McGee (2012: 145).

(chapter 4) and secondly I will deal with the most under-researched topic in Althusser, that is, the theory of reproduction with a special emphasis to the Marxian theory of State and Law that are perceived as the major limitations of Marx (chapter 5). Through philosophical and critical investigation of some of the major conceptual innovations of Althusser I will approach part III, that is, the historical analysis of important sequences in socialist Yugoslavia. Chapter 6 draws from the conceptual apparatus of Chapter 4 and analyses three historical experiences that marked the rise of new Yugoslavia: (1) the People's Liberation Struggle, the partisan struggle against fascist occupation, which had consequences in a new political form: the federative and socialist state of Yugoslavia. Furthermore, I problematize the consequences of Tito's split with Stalin in 1948, which resulted in two important moments: (2) the self-management model and (3) the non-aligned movement. This chapter rereads history with stressing the emancipatory dimension of certain ideas that were rooted in political practice of different historical sequences. Chapter 7 draws from multiple theoretical sources, but is largely inspired from Chapter 5 when dealing with one historical episode within the Yugoslav experiment: "market socialism" 1965-1971.¹⁵ This sequence shows the shift towards post-socialism, the strengthening of the capitalist tendency and consequently the internal failure and exhaustion of the Yugoslav model: the accumulation of economic contradictions (class stratification, the inherent tension between plan and market, unemployment, and the entrance to the world market) that was joined with the unprecedented rise of nationalist and liberal ideology. The critique joins the major theoretical observation and target that Althusser's thought did never ceased to thematize: the critique of the (socialist and capitalist) State in the light of the differentiation between socialism and communism and its consequent (temporary?) defeat. It also continues, where critiques of Althusser said that he stopped: performing a historical study of particular period.

1.2. After the death of revolutionary referents

¹⁵ I have place a warning here that the historical research will be limited: I do not pretend to be able to cover the whole complex history of that period, but to illuminate some points that have been largely ignored and can shed new light on the theory of "transition" and the "socialist social formations". A fuller and long-term analysis is a task for a collective and long-term enterprise.

There is nothing too specific to the post-Yugoslav context in terms of the riddle of post-socialism and post-Marxism that has become a quasi-universal condition in the last two decades. This “post” signals the advent of a different period of history, namely, a period yet without name. But shouldn’t even this new name deserve its own beginning, its own name? Many leftist theoreticians speak about our era as a mere re-appropriation of old forms: *cooptation*, *bricolage* and *recyclage* of elements and processes. Some postmodernist theoreticians offer provisional concepts, which reveal the quandary of naming, whereby old concepts only gain the newest dress, the latest fashion of the prefix “post”¹⁶, which is some kind of “revival” of former “essentializing” concepts. They claim that we witness the utmost novelty in this new post-world: *post-modernism*¹⁷, *post-industrialism*¹⁸, *post-Fordism*¹⁹, *post-socialism*,²⁰ *post-Marxism*²¹, *post-colonialism*²², *post-totalitarian*, *post-conflictual*, *post-9-11*. It seems that this “post” can simply be posted in front of any meaningful signifier of the 20th century and half of the theoretical labour is already done for us. One is only waiting for someone to add the “post” to the “post”: when will the *post-postism* finally arrive, perhaps in the age of historical crisis, when “post” starts losing its explanatory power? It seems that the reign of “post-ism” is being thoroughly undermined in the light of the most recent economic crisis. Are we already approaching the end of the tunnel or what Slavoj Žižek would coin as the period of “the end times”?²³

That said it is also not enough to simply repeat all that has been said before, one cannot simply go back to the words of Karl Marx and find all the responses to the questions of the restructuration of capitalist mode of production and post-socialism. In other words, it would be wrong to apply old formulas blindly to all contexts before analysis

¹⁶ Brown (2010).

¹⁷ For important criticism see Žižek (2007), Harvey (2001), Jameson (1991).

¹⁸ Bell (1973). There are also other attempts which try to offer a completely new frame: network society, cybernetic era, mostly rooted in the rise of media and its importance for shaping our lives and society (Castells 1996).

¹⁹ Studies of Italian (post)-operaismo were very influential in the conceptualising the post-Fordist turn, see also the collected volume I edited, as a critical evaluation (2010), for a historical account see Wright (2002).

²⁰ Some of the most interesting works were written by Boris Buden (2009) Ozren Pupovac (2008), Boris Groys (2010),

²¹ This was discussed and practiced in Laclau and Mouffe (1985); and from a different post-Maoist perspective in Badiou (1985).

²² Said (1979), Césaire (2000), Fannon (1952).

²³ Žižek (2011).

has even begun. It is also not enough to argue against postmodernism in a cynical way. A cynic remarks that postmodernists only repeat the obvious diagnosis: there is a crisis²⁴, but then this speaks also about the very crisis of these theories, which are part of the problem. The cynical remark does point rightly to a general deadlock in contemporary emancipatory or critical theory, which so frequently lacks theoretical ambition and the political courage that reflects the general state of affairs of fatalism and conformism with the existing state of affairs. Even if our cynic is right, the cynical attitude will not provide any cure for the “post”-diseases.

Unquestionably the postmodernist expresses the obvious assessment of the contemporary disjunction between contemporary emancipatory thought and political practice, the un-binding of revolutionary theory and political practice.²⁵ The revolutionary model of the union of Marxist theory and revolutionary politics between Marx and Lenin that dominated major revolutionary movements in different contexts has been progressively undermined in the revolutionary upheavals of May 1968²⁶ and even more with the crisis of Marxism and the end of socialisms in the 1970s and 1980s. According to Alain Badiou the model of Party-State was exhausted with the end of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, but most definitely in the obscure disaster of the 1980s.²⁷

The privileged example of testing this thesis of the crisis of the revolutionary model, its success and failure will be the case of socialist Yugoslavia, which after the initial revolutionary phase during WWII and immediately after moved through different stages witnessing some impressive achievements, but also defeat and evisceration. Self-management as a specific “withering away of the state” ran into a very contradictory process that, contrary to the anti-totalitarian and liberal interpretation, does not only have to do with economic necessity. The end of socialist Yugoslavia did not happen due to its artificiality, or certain objective laws that proved the economic inefficiency of the Yugoslav economy. Also, it is not due to the lack of democratic culture and values that this

²⁴ Harvey (2001).

²⁵ J.C.Milner (1992).

²⁶ Holmes (2002).

²⁷ Badiou (1998). There are many different reasons for the historical demise of the old Marxist model, especially of the union of theory and practice; one would need another dissertation to write about that.

political model was defeated.²⁸ It also does not have to do only with the rise of the neoliberal paradigm and the external destruction wrought via the structural policies of the IMF and the rise of the European Community in changed geopolitical circumstances. The crisis of the self-management model has to do also with its internal exhaustion, its inability to continue “new” revolutionary encounters between theoretical and political practice, between political organisation and masses.

The challenge in front of us is to critically examine the success and failure of the Yugoslav model from the perspective of a specific Marxian-Althusserian tradition. And if anyone it was Louis Althusser who launched one of the few serious and left-wing attempts to criticize the specific humanist and Stalinist tendencies in the theoretical and political conjuncture of the international working-class movement. The serious challenge that May '68 brought to the model of the old Left and that continuation of revolutionary politics remained at the heart of Althusser's enterprise. The theoretical choice is thus not arbitrary but fits into the general agenda—and certainly beyond the confines of Yugoslavia. The political results of the crisis and disputes of the Old and New Left are felt with full force today and have long pointed to the inability of the contemporary Left. At the core of this lies a theoretical and political impasse: how to deal with the effects of the 20th century and how to continue (in a new way) with the revolutionary model? In the light of the faded link between theoretical and political practice, J.C.Milner diagnosed two rather inappropriate answers to solve this dilemma: “voluntarism”, activism without theory; or “theoreticism” without political action.²⁹

1.2.1 Post-Marxism and Louis Althusser

Communists who have no illusions, who do not give way to despondency, and who preserve their strength and flexibility 'to begin from the beginning' over and over again in approaching an extremely difficult task, are not doomed (and in all probability will not perish).

Ivan Ilych Lenin, *How to begin*

²⁸ See Buden (2008) on the internal power of political movements that countered the socialist power and were later subjugated to the position of child that still has to learn everything in transition stripping them of their own democratic experience.

²⁹ Milner (1992).

Very recently, in one of first serious theoretical and politically engaged attempts to confront the post-Marxist legacy in the post-Yugoslavian context, Ozren Pupovac analysed the theoretical poverty of post-Marxist theory. The latter is nothing else but a theoretical symptom of the contemporary post-socialist condition:

Post-Marxism is a theoretical symptom of post-socialism (if not *the* theoretical symptom of post-socialism) inasmuch as it is a theoretical reflection of a historical and political *status quo*, a reflection of a thoroughly blocked historical situation. If Marxism was *the* theoretical orientation which entertained and sustained the question of radical political change, which had an organic relationship to the problem of the revolution, and if, at the same time, Marx's theoretical endeavour provided the exemplar of an uncompromising notion of *critique*, then the post-Marxist participation in the 'death of Marxism' represents a proper debacle or a defeat of thought: it represents that precise point at which thought is effectively being reduced to a compromise with the 'existing state of affairs'.³⁰

My departure point is in full agreement with Pupovac's immediate condemnation of post-Marxist effectivity, specifically with the way that it reflects the specific turn to the depoliticized understanding of politics in the 1980s.³¹ Obviously, this does not mean that a depoliticized understanding of politics did not have any political effects. On the contrary, under the banner of the liberal vocabulary of tolerance and respect for the rule of law, the ultimate hope of democratic transition and the ideals of civil society, general elections and human rights had a major influence on the moulding of the ideological and political post-socialist world and vision. In the process of the transition the post-Marxist turn assisted and provided an ideological backbone to the formation of new class divisions and ethnic segregations; together with nationalistic ideologies it prepared the grounds for a liberal state and capitalist economy. One should then add to Pupovac's assessment that in the times of general political and economic crisis in socialist Yugoslavia, post-Marxism was

³⁰ Pupovac (2008: 25).

³¹ If his theoretical targets are mostly located in the 1980s and 1990s, my theoretical wager wants to place the history of this theoretico-ideological transition even earlier, in the times of the late 1960s. Nowadays these times are dominantly seen as the years of "democratisation" and "birth of liberalism" (Repe 1992), but also there are some moments crucial to be affirmed as mass student protests (Kanzleiter 2008); it is an extremely rich period and its political and theoretical effects are not frozen in this period, but had important echoes in the 1980s.

not only a theoretical symptom, but more importantly, one of the building blocks of the rising liberal ideology without which the final demise of socialist Yugoslavia and the real transition to capitalist democracy cannot be considered, as I will show in detail in Chapter 7. In this situation post-Marxist liberal and nationalistic ideas became an active historical force that embraced masses. Also, my research differs from Pupovac in terms of extending the criticism from the contours of the theoretical poverty of post-Marxism to the general social processes, economic and political transformations within the model of self-management that signalled the post-socialist turn.

I am interested in post-Marxism only from the very narrow angle that measures the political effectivity of ideas, that is, how and where the borders between theory, ideology and politics became permeable.³² Partly one can ascribe the poverty of Marxist theory in times of socialist Yugoslavia to the effects of the dominant socialist ideology that vulgarised Marx and imposed narrow readings of the fathers of socialism. Partly also post-Marxism appeared thanks to the theoretical work of a nationalist and liberal perspective that said “farewell to the working class”³³ and praised the birth of civil society in the 1980s. It was not that difficult to attack the official slogans of political apparatchiks that merely used the name of Marx in order to legitimize any economic and political policy. However, some of the dissident theorists wanted to get rid of Marx’s thought and communist politics all together. Forgetting Marx or only taking him as an academic curiosity could be named as the central symptom of post-socialist condition. If we go a step further we can argue that the attack on Marx and communist politics functioned as a mechanism of ideological repression of any emancipatory/revolutionary dimension of the (recent) past. Retrospectively, this ideological repression can be perceived as crucial for the transition process and constitutive of the transitional ideology itself, that is, the ruling ideology in the late socialist and post-socialist context.³⁴

As a kind of theoretical loosening of this ideological repression, the reason to return to the figure of Karl Marx is clear. Exploited by both the political professionals -vulgar

³² The transition to post-Marxism did not start only in the mid 1980s as many suggest, but has had its beginnings in the late 1960s, within the humanist Marxism of the Praxis school in Yugoslavia. Praxis was some kind of avant-garde of the humanist and anti-totalitarian critique of socialist power. See also Kirn (2012).

³³ André Gorz wrote in 1982 the book with the same name, which was soon after translated into Slovenian and Serbo-Croatian language (1982).

³⁴ For example of textbook transition studies in Slovenian context see Fink-Hafner (2000).

Marxists- of Yugoslav socialist times and the champions of democratic transition –the anti-totalitarians-, stuck that is between the socialist and capitalist transition, the key to return to Marx was most dramatically conceived by Louis Althusser. Althusser became extremely relevant in the theoretical context in Yugoslavia, where some of his theses echoed strongly during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. He was, however, rejected by the humanist Marxists (Praxis), Heideggerian philosophers and the official communist line. Already this exclusion and rejection speaks for itself.³⁵ However, Althusser became an obligatory reading and reference for Ljubljana's theoretical circle during the 1980s³⁶; they also published some inspiring theoretical works on the status of class struggle and the critique of "ideology". Althusser was immensely important for the differentiation of the ruling ideology and the ideology of the ruling class in the Yugoslavian context.

This brings me to another central reason, beside his famous "return to Marx" (chapter 2), for a further defence of Althusser today. Mladen Dolar argued in the beginning of 1990s that the uneasiness is felt immediately once Althusser's name is on the table. Althusser has always had either fervent supporters or arduous enemies and his whole legacy has been encompassed by heated discussions. In Dolar's words "Althusser touched a traumatic point that everyone felt threatened by, in the field of the unspoken common consensus of different theoretical orientations."³⁷ It is also perhaps because of this that Althusser was condemned to theoretical solitude.³⁸ For some theoreticians coming from a post-Marxist, but also western humanist Marxism, tradition he remained too dogmatic or even Stalinist, whereas for others he was too critical, Maoist, or too revolutionary for the Party. Dolar advocates that this unclassifiable character of his thought has to do with the impossible position of enunciation or traumatic kernel that was unacceptable by the theoretical ideological consensus of the times. One could add that this thesis is even truer today than it was 20 years ago. But is that really everything that remains of Althusser, this traumatic kernel? At some point also Balibar seems to suggest "there is nothing in fact like a systematic work of Althusser, with a beginning, an end, a structural unity. Almost everything is programmatic. 'Premises without conclusions' and 'conclusions without

³⁵ Dolar (1991: 178).

³⁶ Let me mention a few: Rastko Močnik, Rado Riha, Mladen Dolar, Slavoj Žižek, Marko Kerševan, Jelica Šumič-Riha, and many others.

³⁷ Dolar (1991: 178).

³⁸ Elliot (1993).

premises'.”³⁹ My dissertation does not want to conserve only the traumatic point of enunciation nor the systematicity of Althusser’s interventions, but to further explore some of the conceptual and positive notes that he sketched.

In recent years after a series of publications on Althusser and translation of posthumous works, and also collected volumes, started to appear and already trigger lively debates. It seems that today Althusser’s moment is back: Althusser has returned on the theoretical agenda of many emancipatory thinkers and there is a lively discussion on the Althusserian legacy among a wide range of scholars.⁴⁰ The resurgence of Althusser is predominantly focused on the late phase of his work, which is in my view affected by the *actuality of post-Marxism*.⁴¹ Many theoreticians and most of the academic interest for Louis Althusser have been associated with two theoretical moments: his theory of ideology and his late work on aleatory materialism. This dissertation answers to some of these mainstream readings by way of a detour, by illuminating the moments that have been largely ignored, that is, his theory of reproduction linked to the question of State and Law. In this way I attempt to activate a different line of interpretation and show why Althusser remains politically explosive and theoretically productive today. Althusser’s central wager within his specific historical reality was analogical to the wager of Yugoslav socialism at the end of 1960s. On the one hand Althusser wanted to rethink Marxism after Stalinism (and humanism) and reanimate Marxist philosophy in the times of its alleged crisis. His return to Marx countered all strands of then existing Marxism. It was in 1977 when Althusser finally exclaims that the finally the crisis of Marxism arrived. However, the crisis of Marxism in 1960s and 1970s was not something evident or a point of desired discussion in communist circles. Post-Marxism was not yet born or at least had not become a mainstream banner of the times. This deservedly puts Althusser in an extraordinary position in the history of Marxism.⁴² On the other hand, similarly the Yugoslav self-management model entered into its first great structural crisis and witnessed the rise of popular revolts in late 1960s. For some authors these events simply confirmed the socialist

³⁹ Balibar (1993: 3).

⁴⁰ The recent discussion in philosophy on the concept of “ideological interpellation” between Dolar (1993), Žižek (2000), Butler (1997); also his importance for the Marxist and post-Marxist tradition (Laclau/Mouffe, 1985), his echoes in the cultural studies.

⁴¹ I will elaborate on this thesis in chapter 2, but especially in the starting section of chapter 3.

⁴² See Tosel (forthcoming).

regression into (state) capitalism,⁴³ for others, the same period demonstrated the historical possibility for the democratisation of the socialist system and the re-birth of liberalism.⁴⁴ No matter which line one assumes, the contradictory movement of socialist transition pointed unexpectedly to a vision of post-socialism. Post-socialism that was like its post-Marxist partner missing from the historical horizon of that time. Post-Marxism and post-socialism in late 1960s: isn't this a paradoxical constellation? It is precisely this theoretical and politically paradoxical conclusion that makes Althusser highly appropriate and the closest theoretician that can be used in the understanding of socialist Yugoslavia.

This said I would not like to leave the impression that Althusser was a predecessor, a post-Marxist *avant la lettre*⁴⁵, rather for him the diagnosis of the crisis of Marxism, but also the crisis of real existing socialism, was the departure point for the critique and further insistence on the pursuit of communism. Also, he remained loyal to Marxist theory through internal criticism and the isolation of its limits, especially regarding the theory of reproduction (superstructure). Thus, Althusser is much more than a thinker of the superstructure, since he from the very beginning he combined the topic of reproduction and revolutionary politics. His task in the under-researched and un-finished project *Sur la Reproduction* is to think reproduction (different instances of "superstructure") from a revolutionary perspective.⁴⁶ For some authors, as begun by Etienne Balibar, this is a sign of the theoretical schizophrenia of two irreconcilable tendencies in Althusser's work. Althusser is either a theorist of *structure*, or a theorist of *conjuncture*.⁴⁷ Opposite to this, one of the central thrusts of my dissertation embraces the thesis that one needs to deal together with both tendencies at the same time. It is precisely on this point of inherent tension but productive relation that the explosiveness and theoretical productivity of Althusser's thought stands. If one wants to speak about a major kernel of his thought, then, the research of the link between structure and conjuncture is at the stake.

⁴³ Bockman (2011) makes an interesting argument on the left-wing origins of neoliberalism, where one of the privileged examples is Yugoslav self-management.

⁴⁴ Repe (1992).

⁴⁵ Vargas (2008), Vatter (2005).

⁴⁶ For Althusser the political overthrow of state authority of the nationalisation of the means of production is necessary but not sufficient condition of socialist transition. I will elaborate on this perspective in chapter 4 and chapter 5.

⁴⁷ Balibar (1991;1993: 94). In a more recent preface to the new French version Balibar rectifies his early position of the irreconcilable character of the two Althusser (2010).

The productive return to Althusser might supply us with an important theoretical frame that revisits the fashionable “idea of communism” after the end of real existing socialisms.⁴⁸ Rethinking both Marxist theory and communist politics after the end of their crisis, *after their death*, remains our horizon that brings us back to the *beginning*. Nowadays, after such numerous deaths we can again without the burden of theoretical and political referents, without an imaginary debt of communist intellectuals⁴⁹ pursue a new communist hypothesis, a new encounter between communism and Marxism, and the invention of the organization of new bodies and militant subjectivities.⁵⁰

1.2.2. Post-socialism in (post-)Yugoslav context: against anti-totalitarian reason and Yugonostalgic/liberal memory

Ozren Pupovac lucidly evokes the enigma of the name of “post-socialism”:

How does post-socialism begin? The troubles of the post-socialist beginning begin already at the level of nomination. For as we can see already from its proper name, the post-socialist situation bears an immense mark of the past. It bears the mark of an end. The very beginning of post-socialism, its historical inception, immediately appears as a sign of an end, a beginning in and through an end: the end of socialism, the end of communism. But is this end, this negativity all there is here? Is the substance of the historical state which we call post-socialism to be found only in the past, in the past in the negative sense, that is? Is post-socialism simply an announcement of something that has ended, something that has passed? Because, one might as well also ask, what is it that begins properly speaking, after the end? Is there something that post-socialism, from the very moment of its commencement, can claim as its own, outside of the simple fact of the negation of its anteriority, outside of the sign of the end? But, then again, we should perhaps first of all ask does something begin at all here?⁵¹

Why should we not than simply speak the neoliberal phase of capitalist development, and in the case of the post-Yugoslavian context with its local bloody nationalistic formation of

⁴⁸ There are some notable historical exceptions that have recently triggered political and theoretical discussion on the Left that go far beyond academic circles. From the political experiences in the South America, Venezuelan socialism (cf Webber 2011), the case of Equador and Bolivia, to the uprising in the Arabic world, the revolts of *indignados* in Spain, the occupy movement across the globe, and the Greek social movement and uprising. It seems that Marx and revolution are back on agenda.

⁴⁹ Preface to RC (1970).

⁵⁰ We must admit, even if we return to the beginning, the history of political practice teaches us other lessons. Not only that within the politics itself thought is produced, as Badiou (2005) would suggest, or how ideas have certain materiality, but also that politics is a matter of organization, of long and laborious efforts, something that operates on a very different level than philosophical practice.

⁵¹ Pupovac (2010: 107).

states? Why then should one still bother with the signifier post-socialist, especially after I pointed out that this essentially post-socialist ideology received its first shapes in Yugoslavia at the end of 1960s? There is a strong ideological consensus in political theory, but also in the everyday imaginary and memory of the new Europe that 1989 meant the emancipation and the advent of democracy for all Eastern European countries. Communism became equated with totalitarianism and one part of history could be forgotten. This thesis is undermined by Alain Badiou in his *D'un Desastre Obscure* (1998), where he claims that 1989 did not bring anything new, strictly speaking there was no political “event” but only an imposed and already established model of the discourse of human rights, institutions of liberal democracy and support for the brutal advent of capitalism. Thus, in 1989 nothing really changed. No matter how sympathetic I am to such critical judgments on politics, I would nevertheless argue that something did change after 1989, or to be precise, in Yugoslavia that something took place in 1990 and 1991. If I followed the above argument from Badiou too strictly in stating that nothing really happened in the “democratic revolutions” of 1989 and the 1990s, then I would also concede to the liberal argumentation that erases the previous historical achievements of Yugoslav (and other) socialism(s). As if socialist governmentality was replaced by capitalist governmentality, where the former limited political freedoms and the latter limited economic and social rights. All in all, this would mean that there was no big difference between the socialist and capitalist State. In chapter 6 I will show concretely how the Yugoslav revolution during and after WWII yielded productive consequences that deserve the name of the “unfinished project of the Yugoslav revolution”. If the experiment of Yugoslav self-management brought a material improvement in everyday life with socialist industrialization, education, social housing and different types of ownership (chapter 7), then what one witnessed in the period of 1990s was the emergence of bloody civil wars, the privatisation of social and state ownership, the fall in living standards, higher unemployment and the beginning of the disassembling of the welfare state.⁵² This was forced into the new ideological operations that preached the necessity of transition⁵³

⁵² For the study of class stratification and rise of poverty see Močnik (2003).

⁵³ The transition process had a strict “theoretical” school in the 1990s: “transition studies”. The latter were designed to confirm or reject the implementation of policies that were set as new “standards of civilization” in an environment that lacked democratic culture. Beside the apparent racist underpinnings of the transition

and of a “reformed” state apparatus that would execute these drastic reforms. “Democratic” transition was never a democratically controlled process, or a process that would redistribute the social wealth more equally. Transition was much closer to what Marx coined as “primary capitalist accumulation”,⁵⁴ which reorganized and disciplined labour power in the new context, dissolved the institutions of the welfare state, and legitimized class stratification in Law. The transition was premised on counter-*revolutionary* politics that abolished the achievements of the workers’ struggles, also the one that ironically deposed socialist leaderships in the 1980s.⁵⁵ The transition process over-determined the post-socialist condition from the very beginning, which is well described by Boris Buden:

According to this narrative, after having overthrown totalitarian rule the societies of former Eastern Europe don’t enter directly into the world of developed capitalism and Western democracy, but rather must undergo first the process of transition to this final condition, which poses as normality, that is as the universal norm of historical development in general. The process of transition is accordingly understood as the process of normalization. So everything that happens during this process automatically gains the teleological meaning intrinsically tied to the transitional narrative. This also includes the logic that before things get better – normal, capitalist, democratic, etc – they must first get worse in comparison to the former situation, concretely to the state of actual socialism. But the problem is that the transition process can turn into a real disaster. This is precisely what happened in former Yugoslavia: the collapse of the state, civil wars with horrible destruction, ethnic cleansing, atrocities, human losses, economic breakdown, political chaos.⁵⁶

The “democratic transition” took a nasty turn in Yugoslavia, the collateral damage of transition took its deadly toll.⁵⁷ In this respect, to return to Badiou’s sharp criticism of 1989, if one affirms that nothing really happened in the 1990s –even if in a strict political sense–, then one participates in the erasure of the differences with before and after, namely between the socialist social formation and the capitalist social formation. For my purposes

discourse, the teleological movement was very clear: the only alternative is liberal democracy and the capitalist economy. The use and service of theory for the pragmatic goals of dominant policies was very transparent and useful to discipline the critics of the transition processes.

⁵⁴ I will work on this concept extensively in the beginning of chapter 5.

⁵⁵ See Buden (2009).

⁵⁶ Buden (2007).

⁵⁷ One did not wait long for “orientalist” explanations, why Yugoslavian transition ended in wars. The majority of arguments that circulated in the journalistic discourses of the Western media, but also some academic books claimed that Yugoslavia was an artificial entity that was held together only by a strong dictator Tito, where ethnical animosities have quasi-eternal essence, thus, these Balkan people are not able to live in peaceful co-existence (see also Woodward 1995b: 18).

this important differentiation will serve to extend the signifier post-socialism that mystifies or erases the specificity of the transition processes, which underwent a series of structural changes that were imposed from within, but also imported from outside, even before the sacred year of 1989. This differentiation also speaks about the revolutionary legacy of Yugoslav socialism that at least to certain degree drew some consequences from the socialist revolution (chapter 6).

Unquestionably, the post-Yugoslavian, but also other post-socialist contexts were not dominated only by the transitional ideology that accompanied the democratic process towards Euro-Atlantic integrations, but also by nationalistic ideology based on the model of “one nation in one state”. Historical revisionism became the core of the nation(alist) building process that promoted the realization of the romantic dream of the Nation. The revival of nationalistic discourse, the reinvention of traditions, but also the rising ethnic strife and serious breaching of the right of national minorities and marginalised groups, this all became a part of the transition process.⁵⁸ The ideological investment and importance for the distinction from the past became a real obsession for the two narratives: either the (dominant) totalitarian regime was demonized or there was a (marginal) glorification of the good old times. Even if at first glance these narratives seem to oppose each other, they have some common denominators and are better understood in terms of the same dominant “archaeology”, as a part of the same archive: Yugoslavia. *Yugoslavia* in the post-Yugoslav context became a solidified discursive formation that disciplined and monitored the discursive rules of what can be said and uncovered and what must remain unsaid, silenced.⁵⁹ I will make a few points in order to place my critical intervention on the recent Yugoslav past that is presented in the last two chapters of the dissertation.

Both narratives, the anti-totalitarian dissident view⁶⁰ and the Yugo-nostalgic,⁶¹ simplify the recent past. I argue that more than providing with theoretical frame to analyse the recent past, they provide an ideological imaginary that tell us something about the post-

⁵⁸ This happened in the field of the culture, music, films, literature; for excellent theorisation of this see Levi (2007).

⁵⁹ For a definition of the archaeology see Foucault (1977).

⁶⁰ The first narrative can be found in different nationalistic historiographies, but also in everyday journalistic ideology.

⁶¹ Yugonostalgia has different social existence, but already for some time it is a part of subculture, everyday life, commodification processes; for a detailed account see Velikonja (2009). Recently, a few films such as *Cinema Kommunisto* (2010) or *Hej Sloveni!* (2010) depict the nostalgic view of the passed times.

Yugoslavian present. Firstly, the dominant archive on socialist Yugoslavia portrays the Yugoslav world as a big binary of oppositions: anti-totalitarians portray the dichotomy between the evil State party apparatus and the dictator Tito, while the other side is played by the heroes of independence, cultural and other reasonable intellectuals—the true dissidents representing the good forces. What we see is on the one hand, a corrupted communist elite and, on the other, genius artists that were beacons in the midst of the grey totalitarian past. Socialist Yugoslavia is seen as a gloomy repressive past with the conspiracy of a corrupt communist elite. Apart from assigning a superhuman power to Tito, this view promoted the ‘orientalist’ view of the Balkans as a land of eternal ethnic animosities and religious strife⁶². The anti-totalitarian narrative rests on the anticommunist ideology of ethnocentrism/nationalism.⁶³ In this regard, they differ from the Yugo-nostalgic narrative, which is not strictly speaking anticommunist, and even less based on nationalism. Notwithstanding this difference, the nostalgic affective attitude most often worships the great leader Tito, his iron fist that struggled against a nationalist and primitive people. If the first view sees Tito is as a demonized figure, as the bloody dictator, then the second view glorifies him. Both viewpoints participate in what is usually referred to as the “cult of personality” explanation, which as Althusser already rightly warned psychologizes history and does not use any materialist theoretical apparatus to discern more complex processes.⁶⁴ In other words, these viewpoints treat history as a development of personal psychology of one hero. Also, both views ignore the periods of popular revolts in socialist Yugoslavia, where the masses were constitutive not only to the antifascist struggle, but also to the very emergence of new socialist Yugoslavia. Masses are simply seen as stupid and in need of firm hand or of (re)education to enter the next stage of civilization. This could be well explained by Balibar’s diagnosis of the “fear of masses” that is core to the liberal pragmatist understanding of politics.⁶⁵

In terms of temporality the anti-totalitarian and Yugo-nostalgic views become much more closely inter-related. They are both teleological; either we deal with the pre-

⁶² Besides its transhistorical assertion, this narrative was actively participating in the nationalistic break-up of Yugoslavia. For a general theory of orientalism see Said (1978), for a critique of re-appropriation of orientalism in post-Yugoslav films see also Žižek (1997) and Pavle Levi (2007).

⁶³ For a good critique of recent nationalist historiographies see Arsenijević/Jovanović (2007), Buden (2009).

⁶⁴ Althusser, FM (1969).

⁶⁵ Balibar (2008).

destined and eternal memory that is based on the Nation, which becomes the first and last reference of any meaningful memorial action and reflection, or we have a closed circle of Yugo-nostalgia yearning for a specific historical period that is redeemed by the “Saviour” of people (Tito). Both memorial accounts treat history as having a certain origin, goal and subject. Concretely, they both have a well-defined origin (Nation, the making of Yugoslavia), goal (Nation, Yugoslavia), subject (Nation; Tito). If the anti-totalitarians fully embrace the eternal teleology of liberal progress, then nostalgics are oriented towards the “home” that has never existed.⁶⁶ Nostalgia is thus the eternal return to the lost object that has not existed and differs from anti-totalitarian discourse in terms of the “goal”, which is critical towards the nationalistic ideology. Not like anti-totalitarians, who want to erase that part of the history, liberal nostalgics are more decent in their sentimental farewell to the recent past. The socialist past is then displayed in galleries or museums as a commodified socialist art or canonized as relevant art purified from ideology.⁶⁷ The Yugoslav context substitutes ‘*Goodbye Lenin*’ with *Goodbye Tito*. The more the cultural discourses idealize the good old times, the more they confirm *Goodbye Tito*, which drives the last nail into the coffin of communism.

Despite certain differences that were pointed out Yugo-nostalgia and anti-totalitarian discourse result in similar political effects in the post-Yugoslavian context; by idealizing the past they also depoliticize it, and by demonizing it they block any meaningful discussion on the recent past. In other words, they participate in the neutralization of the revolutionary kernel of Yugoslavia. In opposition to this, my intervention to revisit Yugoslavia today does not mean to bring back memories of the *good old times*. Rethinking the specific conjuncture always mobilizes specific historical resources. As Walter Benjamin elaborated in his *Theses on History*,⁶⁸ apart from a more concise and complex understanding of the past, emancipatory thought always opens to the future, which goes beyond the nationalistic mythologizations and blunt affirmation of the existing state of affairs. The choice implies a theoretical and political decision, which affirms a certain Yugoslav past for the post-Yugoslav context, namely *novelty of the*

⁶⁶ For a more general context and the “no-time” as emancipatory potential of nostalgia see Svetlana Boym (2002). See also Velikonja (2009) and Kirn (forthcoming).

⁶⁷ For details on re-appropriation of socialist modernism in modernist canon see my article (2010).

⁶⁸ Benjamin (1974).

Yugoslav revolution and the antifascist struggle, which in the post-Yugoslav context is not equivalent to Yugo-nostalgia or blindly repeating what is evidently not here any more (a Yugoslavia and its heroic past). On the contrary, to affirm the Yugoslavian revolution means to repeat the communist gesture, to continue the communist politics that was at work in precise historical periods, and again to strive for the new encounter of emancipatory thought and political practice.⁶⁹ To rethink what was new in Yugoslavian socialism and to understand its contradictory developments implies thinking about Yugoslavia from its interiority, which does not only mythologize the glorious revolutionary past, but is necessarily linked to uncompromising criticism of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary socialist transition.⁷⁰

This is precisely the point of Althusser's insistence, the continuation of communism via the critique of socialist politics and will be taken as a guiding thread of our journey through socialist Yugoslavia. In other words, our research will on the one hand revisit moments that affirm revolutionary politics, and on the other hand develop a critique on the deadlocks of the Yugoslavian model of socialism, to its regressive demise and the exhaustion of the event. This seemingly paradoxical stance assuming the standpoint of reproduction, but at the same time adopting a revolutionary perspective will be the central wager that is revisited through different material, both theoretical and historical.

⁶⁹ In this respect I share the theoretical engagement of Miklavž Komelj (2009), his endeavours to rethink partisan art and Ozren Pupovac's political rethinking of partisan politics as revolutionary event of Yugoslavia (2007). This will be the main thesis of chapter 6 that I shall extend to some other ideas and political forms in the after-war period.

⁷⁰ In details explained in chapter 7.

Part I: Althusser and Philosophy

Chapter 2: On Althusser's break and solitude: post-Althusserian readings of Gregory Elliott and Jacques Rancière

That is why Montesquieu reveals something of the profound joy of a man who discovers. He knows it. He knows he is bringing new ideas, that he is offering a work without precedent, and if his last words are a salute to the land finally conquered, his first is to warn that he set out alone and had no teachers; nor did his thought have a mother. He notes that he really must use a new language because he is speaking new truths. Even his turns of phrase betray the pride of an author who illuminates the ordinary words he has inherited with the new meanings he has discovered. In that moment when he is almost surprised to see its birth and is seized by it, and in the thirty years of labour which constituted his career, he is well aware that his thought opens up a new world. We have got used to this discovery. And when we celebrate its greatness, we cannot but let Montesquieu be already fixed in the necessity of our culture, as a star is in the sky, perceiving only with difficulty the audacity and enthusiasm he must have had to open to us this sky in which we have inscribed him.

Louis Althusser, *Politics and history*

There is no royal road to science, and only those who do not dread the fatiguing climb of its steep paths have a chance of gaining its luminous summits.

Karl Marx, *Capital*

2.1 Althusser's early conception of break: novelty (in science)

Louis Althusser is one the most important Marxian theorists of superstructure⁷¹ and his contribution to the theory of ideology is of particular inspiration to researches that go well

⁷¹ Antonio Gramsci was first to formulate an exciting work on the superstructure, on political and ideological fields. In a recent and excellent study Peter Thomas shows that Althusser continually engaged with Gramsci's work. At some points he admits his indebtedness, even though he launches quite severe, according to Thomas, but also not completely fair criticisms at Gramsci's "historicism". (2009).

beyond the Marxian and post-Marxian horizon. In some of his theses from the famous ISA essay he went as far to assert the omnipresence of ideology, which is without history. Ideology is the central feature of the human condition and social reproduction; he warned that even in the classless society, ideology would not disappear.⁷² Opposite to the “eternity” of ideology, there is another underground current in Althusser, which redefines his trajectory from his recurring question: *how does the new come into being? What are the conditions of sustaining novelty and is novelty irreversible? Can one with and against repetition, conceptualize something like a real new theoretical beginning and if so, how does one qualify the break from old ideological conceptions? Is novelty immanent to existing conditions, or should we see it as some kind of transcendence?* These questions interested his philosophical contemporaries and one can argue they mark his intellectual enterprise from a philosophical, political and scientific perspective.

It is noteworthy that when Althusser addresses the question of novelty, a set of other concepts, metaphorical expressions and synonyms appear: rupture, *break*, new beginning, new discovery, journey into the unknown and last but not least the *solitude*. But before I address the metaphor/concept of solitude that has been left out by most commentators,⁷³ I will sum up a few notes on the concept of the “break”, which has been so much at the centre of Althusser’s and post-Althusserian investigations, perhaps the most recognizable concept, Althusser’s sort of *mot d’ordre*. Because the concept of the break relates closely to both novelty and solitude, I would like to show a genealogy of the concept that goes through at least one important theoretical change that will be vital for his justification of a “return to Marx” and also my subsequent understanding of politics and reproduction (continuing the break).

Althusser in his early works *For Marx* and *Lire le Capital* conceptualizes the break in epistemological terms drawing from Gaston Bachelard’s concept of *coupure epistemologique*, which explains the transformation of the “old” into “new”. The break has a temporal dimension dividing before and after and likewise takes into account a spatial dimension, a transformation and the making of a new topology. Althusser is particularly interested in the scientific process and discovery, but has a very special take, which will

⁷² Althusser ISA (1995), RPJL (1976).

⁷³ With the important exception of Elliot’s article (1993). I will read it closely in the following section.

then guide him close to Marx's discovery.⁷⁴ What happens after the great Galilean revolution? Early Althusser adopted the position that the theoretical discovery is irreversible and that the epistemological cut with the past theory (ideology) is a precise and definite break: things will never be the same again. There is a certain quandary once Althusser affirms the irreversible status of this discovery, since it usually has to do with the starting of a series of extra-theoretical consequences: not only new theoretical production, but also institutional and social changes, disturbances in political and ideological power relations. And for some sciences this link between theoretical and political practice is much clearer, or more easily "measured" than others.

Althusser is clearly flirting all the time with the idea of translating the status of scientific discovery to Marx's discovery. Together with Balibar they consistently warn about the special status of the object of Marx and Marxian theory. It is wrong to assert that Marx made a science of politics or science of economy, on the contrary he performed a "critique of political economy" that invented new ways of seeing two "impossible" objects: "ideology" and "class struggle",⁷⁵ which were of utmost importance for later developments in Marxist theory and according to Althusser and Balibar, should not be restricted to a single discipline. The great discovery of Marx, the theory of exploitation, but also communist revolution, thus cannot be associated with one uniformed methodology. Marx was at the same time a political economist, a philosopher, a political organizer, and a critic of ideologies. Taking him merely as one in the line of these affiliations would reduce the complexity of his project. All this makes it difficult to embrace Althusser's thesis on the identity of theoretical production in different "sciences", on the universal status of the "epistemological break". Unquestionably, these topics troubled not only Althusser, but are

⁷⁴ In this respect early Althusser is clearly a "structuralist", because he does not want to introduce too grave a difference between natural sciences and social sciences. For him historical materialism and psychoanalysis are also sciences, but very peculiar sciences due to their specific object.

⁷⁵ See Balibar (1974).

inherent to Marxist theory⁷⁶ and to the philosophy of science and emancipatory thought in general.⁷⁷

Etienne Balibar provided the most eloquent and precise analysis of the theoretical development of the *break*⁷⁸ that will anchor my central points. As mentioned Althusser made a theoretical leap between Galileo and Marx, and once he comes on the field of Marx he seems to perform a violent break, drill a hole in Marx's sacred oeuvre. Althusser's hypothesis is that in order to grasp the radical novelty of Marx one needs to draw demarcation of Marx before 1845 and Marx after 1845. The partisanship is inherent to (Marxist) philosophy, but then again, it seems to be a central operation at work in Althusser's demarcation between bourgeois ideological Marx and what was after German Ideology scientific Marx. Althusser makes quite heretic claims that Marx after 1845 refrains to use Hegel and bourgeois philosophies: The theoretical event of Marx is irreversible⁷⁹ and the new science and new continent is born. New theoretical terrain does not have anything to do with the old ideological constellation, but implies the development of new theoretical concepts.

Althusser premises the definiteness of break along the lines of theory of "knowledge", which is arguably based on the model of production. Oliver Feltham recently suggested that Althusser's production model draws from the Aristotle,⁸⁰ especially on his notion of *poiesis* from *Metaphysics*. According to Oliver Feltham Aristotle deals with four *causes* of production: (1) agent of change, (2) the material cause that undergoes change, (3) the formal cause or pre-existing design, (4) and the final cause, the goal of the process,

⁷⁶ A larger discussion within Marxism is apparently at the stake: advocates of the theory of transition against advocates of the analysis of social forms. Despite early Althusser's qualification as the advocate of transition theory (anchored in property relations, mode of production), later on he became much more attentive, susceptible to the theory of social forms (reproduction). See Callinicos (2004), for a good summary of the discussion see Viveer (2011)

⁷⁷ Many of his contemporaries dealt with the same topic, but with different focuses. From Michel Foucault's rethinking of discursive formations and shifts between different ages (1978; 1995), to Gilles Deleuze's concept of becoming, or another line, where he advocated the view that it is only through repetition that the new takes place (2001).

⁷⁸ See especially Balibar's chapter on break from his *Ecrits pour Althusser* (1991; cf. Balibar 1993).

⁷⁹ ESC (1976).

⁸⁰ See the section in Feltham (2008: 10-12).

product. In short, Aristotle speaks of raw material and its transformation into a final product, which is a part of a purposeful activity.⁸¹

Althusser's model of theoretical production unquestionably referred to the Aristotelian model, which can be already detected in Marx's own theorization of "production process". Most notably it would be in Althusser's text *Materialist Dialectic*,⁸² where the attempt to transform the Hegelian dialectic into a materialist dialectic is most ambitious and where we can see certain theoretical move that surpasses Aristotelian horizon. For Althusser, it is essential to develop the study of the theoretical process that produces new concepts, the break with the old. According to Althusser the theoretical process consists of three Generalities: Generality I (G I), G II and G III, which are necessary stages in development of new theoretical content. As McGee argues for Althusser "the materialist dialectic 'begins' from the most abstract level of the social formation: the level of givenness, of categories in circuit, of hearsay, utterances and gestures being tossed about, 'the real abstract'."⁸³ This is where what one names "ideology critique" begins, and in a bit schematic way, this is the level that Althusser defines as G I "theoretical raw material", that is, "old concepts", ideology, technical and empirical matter. This is when theoretical process engages with an old ideological frame. In the case of Marx's project that meant close reading of political economists and their central concept of capital and wealth (Adam Smith, David Ricardo and others). The close reading and critique of this ideological horizon shows that "there is nothing necessary or natural about this facticity, except that it is, in fact, *accomplished*".⁸⁴ In order to move the theoretical process from G I to the level of G II, where the "journey into the unknown" begins, is when the manner of posing problems is changed. G II is defined as a "theoretical means of production", which again in case of Marx in and after *The German Ideology* resulted in a

⁸¹ As Balibar has correctly shown, Marx already radically subverted the autonomous fields of *praxis*, *poiesis* and *theoria*. One of his major contributions was to bring the field of *poiesis* in close relation with *praxis*, thus, making interdependences between the level of the political and economic apparent, which related to his critique of the bourgeois conception of society that he started in his early works. But the model of the change cannot be simply understood as a part of purposeful activity, and is rather open to contingency. There are many examples in the theoretical field that amount to unconscious production, when theorists were not aware of what they produced (see Žižek 1982, Močnik 1985), or in the political field to experimentation and the development of new political forms that cannot be reduced to already conceived past models.

⁸² FM (1969).

⁸³ McGee (2012: 151).

⁸⁴ Ibid.

whole array of new concepts: means of production, production relations, ideology, exploitation, surplus value. Some of these new concepts still “performed” in the old horizon, but were already breaking up with it. The result of the theoretical process is the product: G III. It is the point of removal and connection to the G I to starting point of dialectic. G III is the theoretical object and not the real object;⁸⁵ Althusser makes a strict separation between the order of theoretical logic and order of history. Needless to say, this reading is highly contested and very polemical, what is the final guarantee that this theoretical logic does not relapse back into ideology, but also what are the points where the theoretical and historical orders intersect? Also, what was this special and final object that resulted from Marx’s theoretical work: ideology, class struggle, capitalist mode of production, or all of them? These are a series of open questions that Althusser did not answer in satisfactory way.⁸⁶ At this point I would rather return to the initial mechanical schema of production in Aristotle and argue that it was at least to a degree synthesized and rectified by Spinoza’s “orders of knowledge”, where G III is the last and highest order of knowledge.⁸⁷

The inherent trouble of Althusser’s model is not so much its presupposed Aristotelian core with a purposeful activity and stages, but a speculative rationalist presupposition about the irreversibility and definiteness of the break. The break itself already becomes a guarantee of change. Even if one tries to save Althusser from the “evolutionist” Aristotelian model of generalities by infusing a Spinozist twist that rests on the leap into another order and is thus non-linear, the speculative turn is rooted in the external guarantee. As Rado Riha rightly showed in the critique of the distinction between the real and theoretical object, the model of Science (G III) is skilfully conceived as the

⁸⁵ Marko Kržan developed a fascinating Althusserian perspective on the Marx’s „transformation problem“ (2009). He shows how the *Verwandelte Forme*, transformed forms can be identically applied on Althusser’s theory of knowledge. As Marx jumps from Capital I to Capital III, one can think of the theoretical procedure that transforms price, wage, profit to commodity and surplus value; this theoretical problem, the transformation from (ideological) appearances to concepts, which again can come only from appearances intrigued Althusser for a long time. This discussion would take me too far from the topic at hand.

⁸⁶ Some of these are addressed in the mentioned chapter/article from Balibar (1991).

⁸⁷ For a Spinozist influence of Althusser’s theory of ideology see Moder (2007), or Montag (2002; 2010). Importantly at this point Althusser introduces the logic of “absent” cause, of structural causality, which can help in understanding first the difference from Hegelian dialectic, and also a contribution of Althusser to understand the concept of “effectivity of structure on its elements” (2009: 30). See Read (2003: 26-36). I will return to this in detail in chapter 5.

external guarantee of the whole of theoretical production,⁸⁸ which serves as a demarcation from Ideology. A few years after the publication of *For Marx* and *Reading Capital* Althusser admitted in a moment of self-criticism that he committed “theoreticist” crime by contrasting *truth* (science) and the present to *error* (ideology) and the past.⁸⁹

In these years many Marxist authors⁹⁰ attacked Althusser’s position, among them, also his former student Jacques Rancière. In his violent attack Rancière claims that Althusser’s theory does not provide us with a solid ground for the distinction between “before” and “after”. Where and how then does Althusser ground the science and the criterion for Truth? According to Rancière, for Althusser science itself already has a revolutionary character and by doing so, he presupposes the revolutionary character of science.⁹¹ Rancière agrees that this hypothesis maybe valid for the theoretical discovery of Marx’s writings, but it does not, by analogy, validate and authorize the revolutionary character of every other science.⁹² Moreover, Marxism, like any other theoretical discipline, is prone to transformation and can become a mere academic discipline and flip into the opposite of its revolutionary beginnings. This is where Rancière quite rightly accuses Althusser’s theory of knowledge of failing to posit the question of the emergence of novelty in terms of its historical conditions, or more concretely, in terms of class struggle. This critique of Rancière is identical to Althusser’s self-criticism, where he admits that the concept of break needs to take into account “social, political, ideological and philosophical conditions of this irruption.”⁹³

2.2. Althusser’s internal rupture: from definite break to the continuation of the break

The encounter with theoretical critiques of his early conception of “break” represented a major internal rupture in Althusser’s trajectory. Gregory Elliot one of the major scholars of

⁸⁸ Riha (1985).

⁸⁹ ESC: 106.

⁹⁰ Many Western Marxists, most notably E.P.Thompson (1978), violently attacked positions of Althusser.

⁹¹ There is also Brecht’s interpretation of Galileo: apart from the eternal character of the scientific discovery, Galileo is faced with the power relations: between Church authorities and capitalist exploitation; from ethical attitude to pragmatic adjustment all this runs through life of Galileo, which shows on necessity of theorisation of historical conditions (1966).

⁹² (1973: 5).

⁹³ ESC: 118.

Althusser evaluated this move as a step into “politicist” phase,⁹⁴ which meant a less productive continuation of his trajectory. Althusser completely substitutes epistemological concerns with the politics: class struggle, state and ideology become of primary concerns.⁹⁵ For Alain Badiou this is the point, where Althusser’s philosophy that was formerly “sutured by science” is now “sutured by politics”.⁹⁶ Despite some important concepts from the early stage – I will return to the concept of “structural causality”⁹⁷ in chapters 3 and 5 – I argue that the “politicist” period and its internal criticism represents the most fruitful period of Althusser’s oeuvre, where he contributes a series of concepts that mark two seemingly exclusive positions: reproduction and revolutionary politics. Thus, he becomes interested in revolutionary politics not only with immediate reference of Marxist tradition (Marx, Lenin), but in Machiavelli, who is the first thinker to consider “novelty” in terms of politics, and also, paradoxically, the first thinker to sketch the theory of the “continuation of novelty”, *mantenere lo stato*, of this tensed moment and challenge of any revolutionary practice: how to continue the break, how to produce a lasting encounter? It is Machiavelli and the theory of reproduction that are Althusser’s most profound underground currents, which had immense consequences for his revised conception of break.

Althusser did not abandon the concept of break, but rather insisted upon the relevance of break with one crucial difference. The break is not conceived as “definite”, “eternal” or “irreversible”, but on the contrary, the break needs to be continued and the consequences need to be drawn from it.⁹⁸ Also, the shift from an epistemological to a political perspective is very present in a series of his interventions and texts in the beginning of 1970s. He moves to the core of current politics in order to respond to the question, not any more what is the communist future after Stalinism, but why May ’68

⁹⁴ Elliot (1999).

⁹⁵ In early Althusser one can trace different and even contradictory definitions of ideology oscillating between ideology as “error”, ideology as ignorance or “mystified representation”, or even “false consciousness”. It was in his middle phase from late 1960s onwards that Althusser, especially in his essay ISA and non-published manuscript SLR (1995) that he developed the conception of ideology. Ideology is not only a simple emanation of the mode of production, “commodity fetishism”, but should be conceived as the fundamental condition of any social structure, bearing material existence

⁹⁶ Badiou (2009).

⁹⁷ The most important contribution was the development of non-Hegelian and non-linear causality, which he called structural (or immanent) causality from an essay on materialist dialectics in FM (1969; 2005).

⁹⁸ One could trace this legacy of Althusser in the work of Badiou in the different generic procedures of truth and in the continuation of Truth in „subjectivity“; Badiou develops much more concise and refined views on the „subject“ of Truth that has its specificities in different fields: art, politics, science and love (2005a; cf. 2006).

failed to yield political results even if it was historically extremely important? Althusser diagnoses the failure of the Left in the absence of conceptual apparatuses (but one could also argue of political alternatives) for the analysis of the State (ISA, MIHL), class struggle (RTJL), revolutionary politics (texts on Machiavelli and Lenin), ideology (SLR) and Law (SLR). I will pursue these questions in detail in the chapter 4 and chapter 5.

The revision of the concept of break brought him even closer to a return to Marx, who aside from theoretical innovation, became a progressively political thinker, whose theses needed further elaboration. Marx is a revolutionary thinker, when Althusser says in ESC that Marx's discovery was a "theoretical and political event".⁹⁹ And if this novelty is to "survive", we have to take seriously what Lenin did after Marx: "A science that (Lenin repeats again and again when he talks about historical materialism) never comes to an end."¹⁰⁰ I would go further and argue that for science to persist as such, it needs to endlessly continue affirming the break. In other words, the break always needs a "secondary elaboration", which requires us to act upon it in an endless process of affirmation,¹⁰¹ as a constant redrawing of the line between science and ideology on the one hand, and politics and ideology on the other. Science emerges in "two senses" and it is:

not born out of nothing, but out of a process of labour ... (also it) is born out of the unpredictable, incredibly complex and paradoxical – but in its contingency, necessary – *conjunction* of the ideological, political, scientific (related to other sciences), philosophical and other 'elements', which at some moment '*discover*', *but after the event, that they needed each other.*¹⁰²

This is the key theoretical point that testifies to Althusser's rectification of his earlier theoreticist claim on the epistemological break that scientific discovery itself cannot guarantee that future research will not relapse into ideology; also, it is not a simple purposeful activity that would follow a simple linear cause and effect relationship. From this moment on Althusser works seriously upon the "materiality" of the break: his early "theoreticist" standpoint rested on the arbitrariness or decisionism of the break and is now replaced by a more complex view on the endless process of cutting.

⁹⁹ ESC: 151.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.: 112. See also Gillot for further elaboration on the antinomy of ideology (forthcoming).

¹⁰¹ See Balibar (2010).

¹⁰² ESC: 112.

To conclude, one can see the advantage and superiority of the more complex understanding of a break that is no longer tied to the external guarantee of science, however one can also observe the paradoxical standpoint that splits the break, its new beginning into the theoretical and political act. If the latter is always connected to the “collectivity”, there has to be someone in the community that continues and affirms the break, but also, the very act of discovery, its theoretical side seems to promote certain “solitude”. This signals a hesitance, or rather oscillation in Althusser between the science and the politics that is particularly present in his metaphor of solitude. On the one hand one has to deal with the discovery as an effect of the conjunction of various elements, which are affirmed only in retrospect, and on the other hand Althusser goes so far to assert that there is no novelty without solitude.¹⁰³ This move seems to bring more questions than answers for understanding the relationship between politics and science, which remained one of the major topics of Marxist theory.¹⁰⁴

2.3. From break to theoretical solitude: refutation of Gregory Elliot’s defence of *Althusserianism as transitional form*

Most scholars of Althusser have not worked on the term solitude. Perhaps this absence is due to the fact that it is easily declared as a metaphorical or existentialist notion, but its occurrence in specific places, where Althusser describes novelty, both political and scientific, is symptomatic. Moreover, solitude is a condition for the discovery of the new, as he would say for Machiavelli “he had to turn out to be, as it were, cut off from the self-evident truths dominant in the old world, detached from its ideology, in order to have the freedom to found a new theory and to venture, like the navigators he mentions, into unknown waters”.¹⁰⁵ And also, Machiavelli rightly showed us that “one must be alone to

¹⁰³ Althusser describes the first thinker of politics Machiavelli through the concept of solitude, is paradoxical, which is slightly paradoxical. On the one hand the theoretical journey, which never just happens *ex nihilo*, but where the “discoverer” always refers and travels with and among old concepts and methodologies, old metaphors and strategies. On the other hand it seems that Althusser advocates this as a strict condition: starting from solitude, from *tabula rasa*, in a way that the “discoverer” needs to ignore the world and detach from it?

¹⁰⁴ But also a general question for any emancipatory theory, namely: how to use and deploy theoretical analysis in political practice? As I will show in next chapter Althusser provides a very un-orthodox answer of the role of (Marxist) philosophy at a distance, but engaged distance.

¹⁰⁵ Althusser (1999: 122).

found a new state”. But the question of beginning is also inherently connected with the question of return, as I will show later.

Gregory Elliot, published an already now classical monograph *Althusser: Detour of Theory*¹⁰⁶ and has been one of the only theorist to seriously tackle the problem of Althusser’s solitude, which runs from Althusser’s earliest works (Montesquieu) to his last (Machiavelli). In one of Elliot’s articles entitled “Althusser’s Solitude” he tests the hypothesis of solitude on Althusser himself: can Althusser be qualified as a “solitary” thinker?¹⁰⁷

Lets start with a simple question: what does Althusser mean by solitude? First he did not have in mind an existential condition of human solitude, being withdrawn from the world is not a condition to achieve an outstanding intellectual work. Elliot rightfully adds that Althusser never spoke about “individual genius”¹⁰⁸, or what Nietzsche would term as “intellectual progress” among philosophical giants, where giant would call to each other in desolate intervals of time.¹⁰⁹ In contrast to individual solitude, Althusser has in mind “theoretical solitude”¹¹⁰ or “theoretical fatherlessness” and let me add “motherlessness”, which needs certain isolation from the existing theoretical ideologies. This isolation, as Elliot comments, is “indispensable to any ‘revolutionary discovery’”,¹¹¹ or in Althusser’s own words, solitude is “the fate of all inventors”.¹¹² The fate of any new theory convicts this particular subject to (also personal) solitude. Again, this brings us to the privileged example of theoretical solitude, the work of Niccolo Machiavelli. It seems paradoxical that a person whose slogans and analysis are writ large in textbooks and has also entered popular consciousness could be marked as solitary. However, for Althusser this has more to do with dominant readings that condemned Machiavelli on long lasting solitude, from which, evidently, Althusser attempts to rescue him:

¹⁰⁶ Elliot (1987).

¹⁰⁷ Elliot (1993). It is important to add that Althusser mostly used solitude, when referring to political thinkers, Montesquieu and Machiavelli, who are usually not the key references in the Marxian arsenal of political thought. Althusser extends the list of solitary thinkers to Freud and Comte as founders of psychoanalysis and sociology, but perhaps oddly, he never speaks about solitude of Galileo’s physics, or Darwin’s biology.

¹⁰⁸ Elliot (1993: 17).

¹⁰⁹ Nietzsche (1996).

¹¹⁰ Althusser (1971: 182).

¹¹¹ Elliot (1993: 18).

¹¹² Althusser (1970: 120).

The fact that he was alone in stating a new truth is not enough to leave him in his solitude. All the great inventors have become famous for us, and their reasons are now clear to us. But such is not the case with him. Machiavelli is alone because he has *remained isolated*; he has remained isolated because, although there has been ceaseless fighting over his thought, *no one has thought in his thought*.¹¹³

And now to return to the central question of Elliot's article: does Althusser's theoretical project qualify for this type of theoretical solitude? In the very beginning, Elliot gives a negative answer. Althusser was not alone in his ambition "to renovate Marxism" and he was not "isolated in essaying a left-wing critique of Stalinism".¹¹⁴ His affiliation to the Marxist tradition and to militant communism is perhaps rare, but not unique, Elliot rightly notes. However, Althusser's contribution, how to return to Marx, his gesture of return is today still valuable to retain and repeat. Althusser would claim that similarly like Machiavelli, Marx was for a long time misinterpreted and hence, remained in a theoretical solitude: "Now, however, it is the partisan repeating the experience of the artisan, who is condemned, 'for many years', to an 'isolated... theoretical effort'."¹¹⁵ The task of Althusser is very clear, namely, he wants to rediscover what Marx discovered long ago: "in the name of restoring Marxism to its original purity, and then developing it, Althusser's return issued in substantial revision, even a radical recasting, of it."¹¹⁶

But the theoretical return was only part of the story, it was a return that directly opposed some of the general lines of the politics of the PCF and made Althusser influential in the French context. Although by the end of his life he still remained a member of the PCF, this remained a very tense and ambivalent relationship. Perhaps in playing with the position of the "organic intellectual", Althusser "aimed at a renovation of the political practice of the PCF by a restoration/renewal of Marxist theory – an undertaking whose voluntarist wager was that working-class politics, and hence history, could be put back on the right track by a reversion to theoretical rectitude."¹¹⁷ At this point one should nevertheless mention a whole series of Marxist thinker and communist militants that could

¹¹³ Althusser (1999: 122).

¹¹⁴ Elliot (1993: 19).

¹¹⁵ Althusser (1970: 16).

¹¹⁶ Elliot (1993: 20).

¹¹⁷ Elliot (1993: 22).

easily fall into the “theoretical solitude”: Rosa Luxemburg, Antonio Gramsci, Georg Lukacs, Karl Korsch, Alexandra Kollontaj, Boris Kidrič to name but a few.

One could perhaps say that he was the first that most consciously evaluated the question of a return to Marx and pointed towards an influential path, how to read and use this author today and tomorrow. There is something extremely productive and heretical about Althusser’s “symptomatic” reading of Marx. Althusser cut through Marx’s work with a great degree of violence splitting him into two parts: the pre-Marxist bourgeois Marx before 1845 and the real Marx of theoretical discovery after 1845. This theorization is perhaps one of the privileged theoretical *topos* that produced numerous attacks and spilled a lot of ink. This was and remains a scandal in Marxist theory, especially if one knows that this type of scission cannot be registered in the work of Marx. Surely, many would agree that Marx had very different focuses in his trajectory and that late Marx was predominantly working on the critique of political economy, however, his past sources, especially Hegelianism had not completely disappeared.

I will only briefly touch on a few central features of his “return to Marx”. Firstly, Althusser cut Marx from his sources and would reject Lenin’s tripartite reference allegedly constitutive for Marx’s work: English Political Economy, French Socialism and German Philosophy.¹¹⁸ It is only through the cut from these sources that one can open up a different reading of Marx, which would defend him against various revisions and vulgarisations. This is also the point, where the question about the possibility of so many interpretations of Marx can be posed: why and how come there are so many different interpretations and how come the major lessons of Marx have been forgotten? Already before Althusser’s return to Marx, Western humanist Marxism returned to the Young Marx, which had become a new fashion.¹¹⁹ Many Western Marxist theorists were attacking “economism” and other vulgarisations of Marx and attempted to search in the philosophy of Marx the subjective forces, human agency and other more philosophical topics. And in this respect, they did not err, because young Marx dealt a lot with politico-philosophical questions, with criticism of Hegel and Feuerbach and concepts such as human essence, generic humanity,

¹¹⁸ Lenin (1977).

¹¹⁹ Due to the publication and popularisation of some early works of Marx, many Marxist and critical theorists started with a different textual focuses of early Marx.

the famous topic of alienation/disalienation, freedom of press, relationship between bourgeois and citizen, the conditions of human emancipation...¹²⁰

Althusser attacked not so much the young Marx, but the fashionable return that provided a much less militant Marx easily digestible for academic teaching. One of Althusser's tasks was to provide Marxism with philosophy (Marxist philosophy), which came at the same time as when he cut the young "philosophical" Marx from his field of interest, relegating him to a bourgeois pre-Marxist Marx. One could ironically note that Althusser himself artificially designed this cut in order to start working on Marxist philosophy. Some authors would call this return a mad gesture¹²¹ that imposed just another religious reading of Marx. No matter how bizarre and difficult the conditions of the project¹²², the return to mature Marx without his youthful philosophical sources was a project worthy of theoretical respect and yielded some theoretical results. Althusser's reading goes against fetishization of the author, that is, he returns to Marx also in order to show his inconsistencies. In other words, his partisanship *for Marx*, his return to the original *artisan* is full of distortions and reversals of the artisan, but at the same time directed towards locating the solitary kernel of every theoretical rupture, which has not ceased to create effects. This is one of the key lessons in reading Althusser today.¹²³

What was this specific novelty that Marx brought to us? According to Althusser, Marx opened up a new continent, a "science of history". Not that history before did not exist, but it was not grounded in a materialistic methodology. In this sense, Marx had only some intellectual sources that shaped his trajectory on *a lonely endless journey of theoretical solitude*. For Althusser, Marx's major rupture in 1845 and after was materialized in the development of a theoretical system that launched a series of new

¹²⁰ For Althusser this is of course the period before *German Ideology*, that is, before 1845.

¹²¹ His constant hospitalizations, which culminated in the strangling of his wife might put off certain readers. For many years this psychologistic aspect has become visible and most famous also thanks to his autobiography (1992). Very recently (2011) his private correspondence with his wife was published, with a long preface written by Henry-Lévy, who mentions how Althusser's thought becomes a source of intellectual spectacle and is a warning to anyone who wishes to follow him.

¹²² Cutting through Marx's oeuvre did not take place only due to the artificiality of the cut, but because of political and theoretical exigencies of Althusser's time: the problems of the international workers movement, the sino-soviet split, soviet imperialism, the gulags, the abandonment of revolutionary politics, the insufficient organization of labour power, the poor theorization of the state and ideology... All these events and new conditions demanded both political and theoretical responses.

¹²³ He was well aware of the *effect* of words and the importance of a reading strategy: "This is not a debate about philology! To hang on to or to reject these *words*, to defend them or to destroy them – something real is at stake in these struggles, whose ideological and political character is obvious." (1976: 115).

concepts: “surplus value” and “surplus labour”, “production relations”, “forces of production”, “ideology”, “exploitation”. Each of these concepts only makes sense within a new theoretical system. It is rightful to ask, how come Althusser who attempted so much to cut Hegel from Althusser, succumbs to a very Hegelian gesture by imposing the logic of concepts over the logic of history? No matter how Althusser tried to rescue Marx (and himself) from Hegel, many of his own formulations are deeply Hegelian.

But this gesture of return to Marx is at the end of the day only one in a series of return, only one of many interpretations, as Foucault would remark.¹²⁴ But much more than a mere return to Marx, it would firstly show on the way to “recover” a certain core in Marx that has been lost, and secondly vis-à-vis other interpretation Althusser already pointed to the traumatic “class” point of all hitherto returns. If Marxian approaches attempted with all possible means to become representatives of “true” Marx, that point “correctly” to the specific contradiction in society, while other competitive theories are only revisionists, Althusser pinpointed the traumatic point of their “external” position. This is the point from which the truth is told, which can be either presented as “scientific” validity of a theoretical process, or political position of proletariat, which confirms our theoretical results. Althusser suffered very similar theoretical disease, and it would be through his self-criticism and this ambivalent cut in Marx that he began to re-pose relationship between Communist and Marxist practice. This is also the point, where Althusser assigns a new role to Marxist philosophy, which does not serve the politics in a quasi-Stalinist way, and also does not provide recommendations for politics, or even breeding illusion of transforming

¹²⁴ This is also Foucault’s criticism of Lacan and Althusser, who by pretending to make Marx and Freud scientists actually forget that they only started a new discursivity and not science (1984: 114-116). If science’s specificity is that further interpretations do not change the existence of laws (e.g. mechanics), then the existence of different interpretations and schools of thought stemming from Freud and Marx confirm them as father of “discursivity”. However, in analogy with Foucault’s argument on Galileo’s mechanics (which in itself ignores the developments of quantum mechanics), one can also assert that the plurality of interpretations did not in any way change the peculiar existence of the unconscious (Freud), or the existence of ideology and class struggle in history (Marx). People had an unconscious before Freud and the laws of gravity worked in an identical way before Galileo discovered them. In this respect, fundamental discoveries are irreversible in a theoretical sense; Freud and Marx pointed to something “eternal” and to deny this theoretical discovery or relegate it to a discursivity means to condemn psychoanalysis and Marxism to hermeneutics: everything is then only a matter of interpretation and the diverse methodologies one employs in the textual analysis. This reading fails to recognize the fundamental novelty of Marx for history (class struggle; mode of production) and novelty of Freud for understanding the unconscious (sexual difference). See also Montag for a very good critique of hermeneutics with Althusser and Spinoza (1993).

the world. His position on this central question of theory and practice will be subject of research in next section and more closely in the whole chapter 3.

It seems that Gregory Elliot, even if rightly located Althusser's solitude in this famous "return" in the conclusion of the article Elliot fell few steps behind his initial departure and fails to define Althusser's novelty. Elliot opens his argument with the thesis that Marx's theory cut him loose from his theoretical predecessors: Smith, Riccardo, Proudhon, Hegel and Feuerbach. However, in next paragraphs a reader is surprised to find quite a different evolutionary method with Elliot's return to Althusser. His summary of Althusser's path is linear and provides us with a list of different theoretical sources: Bachelard (rational materialism), Spinoza (philosophy), Saussure (structuralism) and Freud (psychoanalysis). Not that Elliot's interpretation is wrong at the factual level, one could even make the list of references longer: Machiavelli, Hegel, contemporary philosophies, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Lenin, Pascal and other "aleatory materialists". Thus, I do not wish to refute Elliot's argument on the level of historical facts, but on the level of rupture that shaped Althusser's thought and also with a rupture that his contributions performed within Marxist theory. Instead of repeating the same gesture and separating Althusser from his sources, Elliot supplies us with an evolutionary narrative, which shows how the theoretician (good) Althusser continued into the politician (bad) Althusser.¹²⁵

Elliot fails to provide enough evidence to qualify Althusser as a thinker of solitude, as a thinker to whom we can return today beyond a mere academic curiosity. He concludes his text by stating that Althusser

occupied a unique and precarious place in modern intellectual history between a tradition of Marxism, which he radically criticized and sought to reconstruct, and a 'post-Marxism', which has submerged its predecessor, and in which the class of '68 has found its self-image.¹²⁶

In a similar vein as Machiavelli, Althusser finds himself at the interstices, in this space of in-between, unclassifiable and between two traditions. Cutting from past traditions means stepping into theoretical solitude; unfortunately Elliot does not build up on this apparent

¹²⁵ Moreover, in his major work on Althusser Elliot insists on only sticking to the "theoretician" Althusser (1987); I would join Mikko Lahtinen's criticism "one must not, as Elliot does, reduce self-criticism to an expression of the political conjunctures of its time" (2009 :82).

¹²⁶ Elliot (1993: 33-34).

path, but instead condemns Althusser to an eternal solitude. He defines Althusserian Marxism as “a transitional formation, the product of a very specific theoretical and political conjuncture whose mutation helps to explain its fate.”¹²⁷ Althusser remains to *us* as a mere ‘transition’, which signals both the future of post-Marxism and ruins of Marxism. Hence, Althusser reflects a *Zeitgeist*, a lucid mark of his times, which was easily sublated by the next historical stage, post-modernism and post-Marxism. This type of conclusion waves goodbye to long gone transitional form and thus states the obvious: there is no need to return to any of these transitional forms.

My thesis defends both Althusser’s return to Marx and a return to Althusser that goes beyond a simple declaration of these theoretical operations, but wants to measure their theoretical effects that go beyond their intentions and marks of a long gone *Zeitgeist*.¹²⁸ A return to Althusser should then repeat Althusser’s gesture, that is, to show and locate his own breaks, creative inventions and relevant contributions to Marxist theory and communist political practice.

2.4. Rancière’s challenge: Althusser, from “purveyor of truth” to the circle Marxism-communism?

Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement. We said it till we were sick of it, hoping in this way to set our minds at ease. It is time now we learnt the lesson that the cultural revolution and the ideological revolt of the students has taught us: divorced from revolutionary practice, all revolutionary theory is transformed into its opposite.

Jacques Rancière, *On the theory of ideology*

We are not inventors of anything. We are just readers of Marx, and political revolutionary agitators in our time.

Toni Negri, *From Trani Prison*

¹²⁷ Ibid.: 34.

¹²⁸ In this respect Miklavž Komelj makes a very Badiouian inspired point that I would like to quote in its entirety: “if idealists only emphasize intentions without paying attention to the effects, then mechanistic materialists only emphasize effects at the expense of intentions; on the contrary, dialectical materialists should advocate the standpoint of the unity of intentions and effects: only through effects can we judge the subjective intentions” (2009: 236).

Jacques Rancière, one of the most prominent contemporary thinkers, started his theoretical path in the small circle of students of Louis Althusser at *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, where he participated in the seminar *Lire le Capital*.¹²⁹ Their paths were separated dramatically after the events of May '68; Rancière turned entirely against his teacher and wrote a personal and violent tractate *La Leçon d'Althusser*, where some insights into theoretical and political wagers of that particular conjuncture are well described.

Even if one has reservations about the validity of early Rancière's criticisms,¹³⁰ there are nevertheless a few important political criticisms that he directed towards Althusser. Rancière criticized the privileging of "scientism" and the power of the academic institution, which naturalizes the technical division of labour at the university.¹³¹ Moreover, Althusserianism reproduced an authoritarian relation between teachers and students and it was also because of this non-reflected instance that it failed to recognize the revolutionary character of masses in 1968. Althusserianism provides intellectual means for the central committee of PCF that proves to be an extremely conservative and counterrevolutionary political agent. Even if the political critique is short-handed and at times very personal, his criticisms in the text productively anticipate his own future theoretical trajectory. One can read a very large part of Rancière's best works as the question of reposing and politicising the question of education, bringing into the light a very subtle reading of the Third Thesis on Feuerbach. The question of education of the masses, workers, pupils and teachers becomes a guiding thread of at least two books *La nuit de Prolétaires* and *Le Maître Ignorant*.¹³²

¹²⁹ The work in the seminar resulted in the famous book RC. Apart from Althusser and Rancière, Etienne Balibar, Roger Establet and Pierre Macherey were also contributors to the volume.

¹³⁰ Some criticisms are done *ad hominem*, are of personal nature, other criticisms are on the level of ideological struggle. This critique can be done – that Althusser in his own personal political practice was not up to the ideals that he was preaching – but this sort of critique is personalist-ic, even idealistic as it does not amount to judge, evaluate his 'theoretical' side, to test his concepts.

¹³¹ At that time for Rancière, the University as the "system knowledge is, like state power, the stake in a class struggle, and like state power, must be destroyed" (1969: 6).

¹³² *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (2004) addresses the axiom of the equality of human intelligence and formulates key theses on the intellectual emancipation of humankind, whereas the *La Nuit de Prolétaires* (1981) concentrates on the workers' intellectual emancipation and is a result of a long-term laborious archival research that was influenced by political experiences in 1968. The archival research on workers' experiences from the 19th century brought into light some important and illuminative points that touched the history of workers' emancipation from the workers' perspective. Rancière researched and verified the autonomous character of worker's organization and their intellectual work. Instead of sleeping, they read and

If the first political dispute with his teacher was over the organisation of education and the capitalist framing of the university-academic system, then the second dispute run around the question of the role of masses in 1968: who will lead the revolutionary process and what will be the role of the Communist Party in this process? In this concrete political situation Rancière sided with the spontaneity of the masses, in other words “the line of the masses”.¹³³ If Althusser supported this view in *Theory* (RTJL), it was much more complicated once it comes to his own political engagement in PCF. He remained within PCF and retrospectively expressed that the “fact of being in the Party has given my philosophical writings a political significance. If I left it, that would be *finished*.”¹³⁴ It was at this point that many students abandoned Althusser, while he was left – voluntarily – within the Party. This was also the point of the definite rupture between Althusser and Rancière.

2.4.1. Rancière’s Late Critique: *Goal and Destination of Theory, or against the conjunction Communist-Marxist*

From the earliest critique of Rancière I would like to move to his last text, a literary theoretical obituary that he wrote after the death of Althusser for a symposium organized by Sylvain Lazarus in 1992. The title itself “La scène du texte”¹³⁵ is suggestive of a possible Derridian reference, which is confirmed in the article, where Rancière without doing so explicitly repeats central arguments from the theoretical discussion that took place decades ago between Lacan¹³⁶ and Derrida¹³⁷ on the topic of Edgar Allan Poe’s *Purloined Letter*. Rancière restages this discussion, but replaces Lacan with Althusser who is set on

discussed poetry and literature. The fundamental thesis of the book shows the possible materialization of struggles against the presupposed technical division between mental and manual labour, the division of labour at the university and the rest of society, and the division between a Marxist academic and an ignorant worker. Writing from the perspective of the workers meant giving voice to workers themselves and attempted to open and recount different paths of communist education. In Rancière’s view, the work of workers went beyond and outside the Party and should not be *a priori* relegated to a hierarchical instance.

¹³³ Later on, another disciple of Althusser, Alain Badiou argued for the encounter or rather synthesis of these two positions, for a certain mass line that would neutralize the rigid political forms on the one hand and infantile leftism on the other hand (see also Feltham 2009: 74-76).

¹³⁴ Quoted in Elliot (1987: 313).

¹³⁵ It was later translated and modified for the English edition *The Flesh of Words* and entitled “Althusser, Don Quixote, and the Stage of the Text” (2004).

¹³⁶ *Seminar on Purloined Letter* (1966).

¹³⁷ *Purveyor of Truth* (1975).

the literary stage of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. Obviously, Rancière sides with Derrida in this polemical discussion.¹³⁸ I will focus on some passages, where Rancière interestingly criticized Althusser's fear in front of falling into "solitude". Rancière without departing from theoretical sources defines theoretical solitude in terms of the possibility that a letter reaches anyone or no one in particular. He frames the academic *dispositif* of Marxist-Althusserian discourse and criticizes the role "symptomatic reading" played in it. What are the conditions that make invisible things in the text visible, and how can they remain shrouded in silence? His concluding remark restores Althusser's solitude, which differs from the Elliot's conception and conclusion.

Parallel to this focus on solitude I will extract a couple of central points from the discussion between Derrida and Lacan centred on Poe's story.¹³⁹ *The Purloined letter* is a detective story, which describes different strategies and contexts of the stolen, or rather missing letter. The letter was of extreme importance to the Queen, because its destiny was linked to the very order of the state. The position of the sovereign power was endangered and her Majesty blackmailed. Worst of all no police investigator could find the letter. The reason for the police's failure was not due to the secret, hidden location of the letter. Rather, the letter was put on the most obvious place, visible to all, but at the same time invisible and impossible to grasp hold of. According to Lacan we can read the whole story with the dynamic of the letter as an example of the "logic of signifier". Lacan synthesized one of the central lessons of the story in the aphorism: the letter always reaches its destination, that is, its destiny. What is at the stake in Lacan's formula is the specific status of the speech that is played out in the relationship between the sender and the receiver. According to Lacan, the situation of the sender: "receives from the receiver his own message in reverse form. Thus it is that what the 'purloined letter', nay, the 'letter in

¹³⁸ Apart from a small echo of desert in one passage Althusser has never dealt with the topic of Don Quixote (RTJL: 39). Perhaps one should ask ourselves why the post-structuralists like Derrida and Rancière criticized a structuralist tendency in Lacan and Althusser in such a strong manner? It seems that this critique makes them yet another purveyors of postmodernist truth, the loss of grand narratives. It is known that the Archangel Raphael, purveyor of truth also meant "speaker of nonsense". Isn't it also quite telling that discussion worked on literary examples that could be classified as the first and late Modern writer, Cervantes and Poe, who each in their own way signal the coming of different age?

¹³⁹ We will presume the reader's knowledge of the story. For a detailed theoretical overview see especially Barbara Johnson's essay (1977).

sufferance' means is that it, a letter always arrives at its destination."¹⁴⁰ In short, the signifier even if in distorted form will always arrive at its destination.

Rancière translated the same theoretical dispositif into Althusser's trajectory. Yet did Althusser's (theoretical) letter arrive to its destination? And who were his special addressees? Obviously, Althusser in general terms addressed the international workers' movement, the Communist Party and the working class and also an academic (not strictly Marxist) community. Althusser's addressees seem very clear in terms of his return to Marx that was firmly positioned in the line of the Marxist tradition and Communist politics. But as I showed in the previous section, this positioning was very odd: constant criticising the Communist Party from within, reading Marx without Hegel, cutting Marx from Marx.... One can agree with Rancière that most frequently Althusser referred to the same receiver – Marxists and communists, which are dedicated to the same destination – communist revolution. Within the old model of revolution these references can be seen as traditional, today some would perceive them as dogmatic or Left melancholic.¹⁴¹ At this point one could criticize Althusser for too a schematic address, which may fail to find and respond to the concrete analysis of concrete situation. If one always has already prepared a political formula and subject in advance this sustains an a-historical "holder of the place" for the agent of change. Rancière locates the most direct evocation of the destination and addressee in Althusser's famous text *Reply to John Lewis*: "Communists, when they are Marxists, and Marxists, when they are Communists, never cry in the wilderness. Even when they are practically alone."¹⁴² If this sentence is taken literary, Althusser's project could be read as yet another religious evangelism, where there is no ambiguity for those who know the Truth. Those who believe and follow this Truth can always find the correct orientation without any hesitation, even when they are "practically alone". Rancière picks up this point and attacks the presupposed receiver of this theoretical discourse. In a similar vein, like Derrida against Lacan, Rancière advocates in favour of the "logic of dissemination" over the "logic of signifier".

¹⁴⁰ Lacan (1972: 72).

¹⁴¹ Wendy Brown speaks about certain melancholia among (post)Marxist Left today, which has to do with coping with the loss of these referents (2003).

¹⁴² ESC: 39.

Let me briefly refer to the important observation Barbara Johnson made regarding the logic of dissemination and Derrida's attack on Lacan. Johnson convincingly shows that Lacan's core arguments were not disturbing for Derrida, he was much more troubled by the way Lacan was read and accepted and also, by the way Lacan "hijacked" literary theory and set it to functional use for psychoanalysis. According to Johnson, Derrida criticizes Lacan's position of master ("sujet supposé à savoir"), the position of the purveyor of a single truth for and of psychoanalysis. Rancière applies an identical formula to Althusser, who like Lacan, remains blind of the disseminating power of the signifier and I would add for possibility of plural addressees and destinations. To paraphrase Rancière: Althusser came to speak the Truth for and of Marx.

There are many issues that are discussed in the text, but for my purposes I shall mention only two. Firstly, what is at the core of the controversy are the competing views on the question of the Order (One) and the status of the whole. What are the conditions and ways in which the unconscious and the social totality are formed? Secondly, it is noteworthy that for both authors, Jacques Lacan and Louis Althusser performed famous returns to the theoretical discoveries of Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx by developing a specific reading strategy each involving a precise theoretical and political wager. These returns were criticized by many authors, among them Rancière, Derrida and Foucault. These authors rightly launched a criticism on the single possible return to the founding fathers on the point of the recovery of religious kernel of founding fathers. For Derrida, Lacan performs certain violence over the interpretation of literature¹⁴³ in order to expose something crucial for psychoanalytical discourse. The same can be said for Althusser's symptomatic strategy: it is filling the spots that were supposed to be blank in Marx's oeuvre, establishing the true Marx for the purposes of disqualifying humanist readings. Derrida and Rancière warn us that even if one acknowledges the theoretical discovery of Marx and Freud, one should also acknowledge a plurality of interpretations that revolve around this core discovery. Furthermore, this allows showing both the incompleteness of the theoretical works and the disseminating nature of the (theoretical) signifier.

¹⁴³ (1975). We cannot avoid the violence in language, as already Jakobson lucidly showed, what is literature, if not the "organized violence on language" (quoted in Eagleton 2008: 2). When criticising Lacan's theoretical violence, Derrida performs yet another act of violence: deconstruction.

The reading strategy, the “symptomatic reading”¹⁴⁴ embraced by Althusser and Lacan launched only one possible interpretative path among many. Rancière was extremely critical of *symptomatic reading* and its method of *denouement*, which does not allow for any remains or absences. Rancière expounds a paradox in the Althusserian project: “he wants to think in terms of a gap [coupure], a break. But the symptomal reading thinks necessarily in terms of continuity”,¹⁴⁵ or a little bit later:

He wants to prevent any exit from the stage before the denouement, and also to keep people from coming on stage at the wrong time, people we're supposed to meet only at the denouement. Cordoning off the (wrong) exits is the condition for theatre to use the logic that can open the right one. That is the second consequence: symptomal reading becomes a movement that closes the ways out to liberate at last the only way out, the encounter with reality.¹⁴⁶

In terms of *Purloined Letter* this very same objection was done by Derrida's criticism of Lacan. Following Derrida, Lacan's interpretation invites readers to identify the hero of the novel, Dupin, as a psychoanalyst; the interpretation does not allow for the plurality of meanings of the story, but is actually interested to expose the truth of psychoanalysis, or the Oedipal myth that is limited to psychoanalysis itself. According to Derrida's criticism, Dupin and the analyst show the absences, what was not seen by other and is only seen by the analyst. In the last step the analyst (Lacan, Dupin...) points out the gaps that need to be filled. The “symptomal reading” is basically correcting and improving the story, *Purloined Letter*, and in the final instance showing the only possible interpretation. But Barbara Johnson lucidly showed that Lacan's writings testify the opposite.¹⁴⁷ What is at the stake in the analytical practice is not merely an interpretation, but a psychoanalytical act. Even if taking into account narrow frame of denouement, the latter does not consist of a mere interpretation that illuminates what was not seen before.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ For more detailed account on “symptomal reading“ see Vincent (1993).

¹⁴⁵ Rancière (1994b: 135).

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.: 143.

¹⁴⁷ Johnson (1977: 466).

¹⁴⁸ The act of “denouement” consists much more in repeating the “primal scene”, which the analyst is not able to know and then determine the only meaning of the unconscious. The knowledge is out there in the unconscious subject itself, but it is only the analytical situation that has the analyst to assume the position of supposed knowledge (*sujet supposé à savoir*). Paraphrasing the 11th Thesis on Feuerbach, the analyst itself does not interpret, but act. Thus, instead of assigning one interpretation, one deals with the analytical act, which on the contrary repeats the very act of denouement. The act in a way repeats the primal scene, it intervenes in the situation, showing the knowledge of the unconscious; on which in different ways the analyzand takes action, integrates, enjoys or overcomes the symptom (Žižek 1990). The analytical act differs

Likewise for both Derrida and Rancière, the *theoretical letter* of analytical interpretation or the Marxist word does not necessarily reach the *addressee*. It can miss its destination, or as Derrida claims, a radical loss of the message can occur.¹⁴⁹ Thus, the letter is not always able to fulfil the intended desire and reach its original destination/addressee. Undoubtedly, Althusser can be found guilty of this charge: his addressee is already presupposed. It is a different question if this addressee is also reached, because for any Marxist thinker (not only Althusser), an alliance or rather bond between Marxist theory and communist politics needs to be (yet) established. One could argue that for Althusser this presupposition of union between revolutionary theory and practice was frequently presupposed,¹⁵⁰ however from his criticisms of Stalinism and the importance of the relative autonomy of Theory it is clear that Althusser did not follow a simplistic schema. Even if I will show later that this ambivalence produced an exciting discussion on the space of Marxist philosophy, it also needs to be acknowledged that in Althusser's time to support the view on the unity of revolutionary practice and theory was a distinct trait of those times, where Marxism had strong material effects, in other words Marxism also functioned as a strong ideology.¹⁵¹

The never-ending alliance between theoretical letter and its addressee is structured like an original debt, in Althusser's words, after WWII it was an "imaginary debt" for many communist intellectuals, who were not born proletarians.¹⁵² Debt presupposes always an intersubjective relation between at least two agents and also a general frame, a social bond, which is regulated by certain rules and norms. Hence, the debt always testifies to the existence of a social bond, to social relations, and in the specific case, initiated by Marx, a

from the hermeneutical or conscious "demystifying" interpretation, which supposedly illuminates and solves all the problems. In other words, Freud's psychoanalysis was already a theorization of analytical practice; it invented ways to trace the theoretical object of the unconscious, which has a specific status, because of the analytical situation. The position of the analyst is always already included in the situation, in this object via transference. (Johnson 1977: 499-504; Žižek 1990: 160). These are very complex questions that are a largely contested field in psychoanalytical theory. A similar reasoning underlined Althusser claim of a return to Marx. He attempted to show that Marx's theoretical discovery is not a mere interpretation or hermeneutical reading and creative combination of past texts. On the contrary the discovery means a break, a new science that was also engaged with a proletarian standpoint and impossible object (Althusser 1996). The conflictual core of psychoanalysis and Marxist theory, sexual difference and class struggle was explored by Alenka Zupančič (2008: 71-73).

¹⁴⁹ See Johnson (1977: 499-503).

¹⁵⁰ See for example Habermas introduction (1973).

¹⁵¹ Toscano (2010) rightly argues that if the theoretical validity of Marxism is today not questionable, the conditions of its ideological strength that would mobilize is a more troublesome matter.

¹⁵² Althusser (2005: 27).

bond between Marxist intellectuals and (communist) workers. Rancière criticized this bond in terms of circularity of this image, which Althusser continued in the circle of theoretical and political practice. But Rancière (unconsciously?) suggests that things are more complicated in Althusser's case, since this circle is inherently contradictory. There is a radical disjunction that is present in the heart of Althusser's syntagm "Communist Marxist", which confirms the fundamental quandary of the relation between the messenger and his addressee:

In the heart of this disjunction, there is not just the occasional risk that Communists might not be Marxists or Marxists Communists. There is a question of birth, which is also a question of debt: that 'imaginary debt' of which the preface of *For Marx* speaks, the debt of those who were not born proletarians. How can this political debt avoid becoming a literary debt, an infinite debt: the madness of speaking in the wilderness, of the letter without addressee written by Marxist intellectuals to Communist proletarians who do not know they are its addressees? To avoid this solitude or this 'literary' madness one must protect the communal cloth, of the thick cloth of knowledge made of questions and answers that insures that in the final analysis, the questions asked by the 'Marxists' are the right questions to which the 'Communists' put up with being the orphan answers, one must protect the cloth against any tear, any dropped stitch. The question of science is first of all that of community.¹⁵³

According to Rancière, Althusser cloaked his discourse in a scientific coat: the scientific community prevented him to fall into a madness of solitude. Althusser's theoretical letter stands in the full circle, namely, the circle of plenitude and correspondence between sender and receiver.

At this point Rancière skilfully brings onto the textual stage another circle taken from the literary topos, one could perhaps name it the dystopian twin of "Marxist-Communist". This twin marks the ultimate failure in the delivering of the message, which never arrived at its destination. Who is the ultimate figure of the failure of this relation? It is nobody else but Cervantes' Don Quixote, a tragic hero that lives in past glory, in the tradition and rituals of chivalry, clothed in the ideological manners of honour. Rancière brilliantly discusses one passage in the novel that shows the failure of the sent message to arrive and what I would name "literary solitude". At a certain point Don Quixote decides to send the love letter to "his" Dulcinea, but his loyal servant Sancho Pansa expresses doubts about how Dulcinea will be able to recognize Don Quixote's signature. Since they do not

¹⁵³ (2004b: 137-138).

have pen, Sancho will need to get it in next village and forge the signature. Thus, Dulcinea will very likely recognize that the letter is forged. But Don Quixote reassures him through a series of irrefutable arguments that Rancière sums up nicely:

firstly, Dulcinea does not know Don Quixote's signature; secondly, Dulcinea does not know how to read; thirdly, Dulcinea does not know who Don Quixote is; fourthly, Dulcinea, or rather the peasant Aldonza Lorence, does not herself know that she is Dulcinea. Sancho can thus depart fully reassured.¹⁵⁴

But even if Don Quixote forgot to send her the letter, Sancho later brings her answer to his master, a letter that Sancho wrote himself. The receiver, Dulcinea never actually read the letter, which only existed in Don Quixote's head. But there are a few points that are crucial in this example: firstly, the fiction (fantasies), here an imaginary letter, can have real material effects, which confirms both Lacan's and Althusser's general point for the theory of ideology ("material existence" of ideas); secondly, even in the solipsism of a madman, even when the "normal" communicative situation is radically undermined and fails to produce a recognition between the sender and addressee, even when the desired addressee will not receive the letter, one can irrefutably claim that this letter nevertheless still arrived at its place. Lacan's formula fits perfectly in this case: even if the letter arrived at the wrong place, not at the exactly desired place, it will nevertheless reach its goal, or as he puts it, it will be returned to the sender in a "reversed form", a distorted form. Hence, at the end of the day Don Quixote receives his own letter, what he wanted to hear. This has to do with another important theoretical point that both Lacan and Althusser never ceased to emphasize: "retroactive" causality, where the intentions, or rather the subject is only constituted after the effects.¹⁵⁵

The case of Althusser's theoretical letter and Don Quixote's love letter are at the first glance completely different. Why does Rancière bring them together? It seems that Rancière suggests that Don Quixote stands on the other side of the circle of Truth, on the side of solipsistic circle of a madman, or in psychoanalytical terms, of a psychotic. But in this world he is not alone, and there his knightly rituals are not irrational but make perfect sense. His world is perfectly rational and his struggles with 'windmills' are an important

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.: 136.

¹⁵⁵ It does not so much matter if Althusser was a madman who spoke to imaginary political referents, what counted was that his letters left certain material effects.

initiation in the life of the real knight. Even if the status of “literary” solitude is different for Althusser and Don Quixote, the comparison is not very flattering. Should one assume that Rancière actually hints to the following question: if Althusser did not refer to the community of scientists (academia), or to the workers (politics), then his whole enterprise could be read as a discourse of a madman? In order to protect his own letter from falling into solitude, he constantly evokes the communist tradition and to academic community. According to Rancière Althusser’s enterprise is marked:

by the dread of the Marxist intellectual, the dread of the intellectual fallen prey to politics: not to make 'literature', not to address letters without addressee; not to be Don Quixote, the fine soul who fights against windmills; not to be alone, not to be the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, an activity by which one loses one's head, literally as well as figuratively.¹⁵⁶

Despite the fact that Althusser does not have any intentions to make ‘literature’, Rancière calls Althusser’s theoretical strategy “theatrical”, staging concepts that always win the battle with windmills. He goes so far as to identify the internal structure of Althusser’s enterprise, which is fuelled by the mechanism of debt: “the movement of someone who ‘leaves’- who pays the debt of not having been born a proletariat - with the gift made to someone who was born proletarian and, by that very fact, lacks its theory--lacks the question to which he is the answer.”¹⁵⁷ One can draw a full circle: a Marxist needs to become Communist and also the opposite, a Communist has to become Marxist. According to this circle of the communist intellectual, Althusser’s theory is privileged and its task is to supply the answer to “poor” proletarians. Also, the “symptomatic reading” will always supply the reader and the worker with right answers and solve the mystery of the presupposed staging of theoretical windmills.

I see nothing problematic in agreeing with Rancière, when arguing that Althusser rectified Marx in order to provide new answers to theoretical quandaries (deadlocks) of then existing Marxist theory. His theoretical trajectory was invested in both theoretical and extra-theoretical projects. However, Rancière found himself in a similar trap, when he criticized Althusser; he continued revising and improving Althusser’s text, reading too

¹⁵⁶ 2004b: 137.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.: 140.

much into it, erasing even the gaps that were always left open in Althusser's texts.¹⁵⁸ If Althusser's "symptomatic reading" of Marx deserves to be tested and criticized upon its effects, elaborating yet another "symptomatic reading" of Althusser only repeats the deadlock of Don Quixote's fighting with the windmills. Rancière ends up suffering from the same disease that he wants to cure his former teacher. Anyone who struggled with reading through Althusser's texts could agree that he never claimed for the finished character of his return to Marx, or even Marx himself, and that he argued about the completeness of his own position. On the contrary, he openly declared the provisional nature of his theses and their incompleteness¹⁵⁹

Importantly, in his *Preface to For Marx* Althusser actually criticized the existing imaginary debt of Marxists and Communists in the post-war French political context and did not only continue repeating it. Reflecting on the experience of communist political militants that were submitted to the political practice without any theoretical reflection, Althusser strove for the negation of this initial debt and the new conceptualisation of the "dispositive" of sender, messenger and receiver. One could perhaps agree with Rancière that this rectification meant another (un)conscious forging of a new imaginary debt, which pushed towards the new union of revolutionary theory and practice, and possibly towards the union between Communists and Marxists.¹⁶⁰ No matter how much he referred to the guarantee of scientific community or called for unity between theory and practice, this alone did not prevent Althusser's thought from falling into a theoretical solitude, that is, being misunderstood both by the comrades in the Communist Party and by different Marxist theoreticians, even his own disciples. His positioning within the Marxist tradition is unique and could be compared only to figures like Lukacs, Luxemburg and Gramsci. He was a Marxist and a communist, who throughout his work remained loyal to the development of a new Marxist topography and theory of reproduction. The latter was in solitude before Althusser re-discovered it.

¹⁵⁸ My criticism goes along the same lines that Barbara Johnson employed on Derrida's reading of Lacan (1977: 499-501).

¹⁵⁹ See especially his article MIHL (2006), where he acknowledges Marx's and his own limits.

¹⁶⁰ It would be far more productive to think in terms of the encounter and not union, but unfortunately Althusser at this stage did not properly articulate the encounter between Marxist theory and communist practice. I will come to this question in next chapter.

Let me turn back to Rancière's argument about the contradictory nature of the "Marxist Communist", what Rancière calls "disjunction". It would be different if Althusser wanted to perform "ideological interpellation", a synthesis of Marxist-Communist, but he sustains this difference, as Rancière suggests. Also, isn't this disjunction between Marxist and Communist very close to the logic of "de-identification" that Rancière develops in politics as *disagreement*? Doesn't this disjunction at the centre of Althusser's politicist phase prevent the external guarantee of Science (theory) and of Party (politics)? Perhaps it is ambivalent, but at the same time a productive formulation that prevents a vulgar synthesis of politics and theory. The becoming of the "Communist Marxist" is a contradictory entity and movement of theoretical and political practice that is not something that is already decided, but comes close to "parallax" procedure in Althusser constantly changing the terrain of politics and theory. This disjunction works as an (ambivalent) internal theoretical guarantee, which does not ascribe to an external guarantee beforehand, but is authorized in itself. Much more important are drawing the consequences of this "act". This ambiguity or rather disjunction is at the centre of Rancière's own understanding of politics and in this respect Rancière and Althusser are much closer than the former would like to admit.

Rancière attempts to boil Althusser's philosophy down to its scientific external guarantee, which is as reductive as positing Althusser as a "politicist" thinker, where philosophy is determined by the class struggle in last instance.¹⁶¹ The supposedly contradictory and synthetic option, which embraces "Communism-Marxism" and entails reconciliation between Marxist and Communist, is a wrong choice. Neither of these positions were embraced by Althusser, not that of the "scientist" Marxist nor that of the "politicist" Communist. The radical disjunction of the syntagm rather than determining the addressee and message of the theoretical letter, signals the impossible and tense position of enunciation of any emancipatory theory. The displacement of political questions to the level of theory, and vice versa, the displacements of theoretical questions into the realm of politics, was from the very beginning one of the central features of Althusser's return to Marx, and Marx's own project. Return to Marx implies a partisan call for anyone to be theoretically and politically engaged in dismantling dominant ideological formation,

¹⁶¹ Elliot (2006: 365-366), Badiou (2009: 159-162).

exploitation and domination in the concrete situation. It is a call for the encounter of revolutionary theory and revolutionary politics without performing a magic or religious synthesis, which would carry a perfect message and deliver a perfect correspondence between the sender and receiver. The messenger himself can be disappointed by his theory not yielding effects, or not sufficiently (practically) organizing what is supposed to become “proletariat”. But certain questions are only to be answered in the political practice, and cannot be responded beforehand either by a Party or by a Party intellectual. Moreover, according to Althusser theory cannot formulate a recipe for politics, and politics should not put theory in service of its causes. His whole critique of Stalinism is articulated around this question. Once this is taken into account a naïve synthesis, a simple ideological interpellation of the Communist-Marxist is certainly not the task of Marxist intellectual.

Even if this disjunction seems contradictory it is a departure point for rethinking the encounter between revolutionary theory and practice. Althusser addressed this particular issue once he commented on the non-finished and non-commensurable character of this relationship in *the Tenth and Eleventh Thesis of Feuerbach*, which I will closely discuss in chapter 3. Let me only remark that the unfinished character of this relationship is being constantly re-posed on both sides: by communist militants and Marxist theorists without a clear univocal answer and without an already presupposed division of labour.¹⁶² Althusser thus never sealed the “imaginary debt” by dividing special tasks between manual and intellectual workers. And for Marxist theory to move forward, it had to settle the accounts with the Stalinist debt, the actual legacy that cut the link, the biblical cord between Party and masses. Even if Althusser as a theorist targeted the presupposed political division of labour, one can also agree with Rancière’s personal criticism, which rightly questions Althusser as a political figure in the ruined Communist Party.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Against “theoristic” primacy, which argues that only theory can formulate demands for practice, and against the “politicist” emphasis, which works under the maxim that only those who make politics can speak about it.

¹⁶³ In light of general conversion of ex-Maoists in France (or the ex-socialist bloc) into “nouveaux philosophes” and other liberal converts, there is something that is also worthy of respect of Althusser’s posture, which can be read as a sign of political principle and not political opportunism. Nonetheless, one can still be reserved about this continuation long after the PCF lost any revolutionary trace. Althusser also did not produce any concrete analysis of Stalinism, and was not radical enough in political practice. It is justified to be critical towards his political position, but my focus lies on his theoretical practice.

For Rancière, the central difficulty in Althusser's thought is not the artificial distinction between the science and ideology, but the already mentioned madness and solitude that Althusser feared:

In order not to be mad, in order not to be alone, he must establish himself in solidarity with all works, in the community of science and the worker's movement. He must refuse to produce, by the hastes or delays of the law of the heart, the least void or the least tear. Althusser has thus chosen a certain struggle against madness, the struggle against a certain idea of madness. He has chosen solidarity with all "opaque" works, a solidarity without quotation marks, as the condition of their legibility and their redemption. He has identified absolute evil as the solitude of the absence of the work.¹⁶⁴

Couldn't one ask the same question to any thought and any thinker: how to save any thought from nonsense and the madness of the night? Even if Althusser always returned to the imaginary community, he did not presuppose a harmonious entity that redeems all conflicts. Moreover, like with the disjunction Communist Marxist, Rancière notes that Althusser did not fully resolve the ambivalence of the proletariat, since the concept of *Lumpenproletariat*¹⁶⁵ remained haunting it. Even if Rancière asserts this ambivalence, he again claims that Althusser always has the answer and presupposes the exit: "the exit door to daylight produced by the dramaturgy of relation and non-relation, by the staging of interlocution, isolated in its corner of the stage and dismissing in the correct manner the dialectician of conscience or the moralist of praxis."¹⁶⁶ What Rancière analyses here is nothing else but a gesture proper to any philosophical thought, that is, the gesture of drawing "lines of demarcation", which in Althusser's case is a demarcation from the humanist readings of Marx ("dialectician of conscience" and "moralist of praxis"). Undoubtedly, Rancière rightly criticizes this gesture, which is motivated by a threat of any—and not only Althusser's thought—lapse into the theoretical solitude. If he feared the solitude¹⁶⁷ isn't that important, more important is what his demarcation contributed. It is all too easy to reduce his conscious intentions of the "purification" of the humanist Marx to his "politician" dreams in the light of his return to Marx that produced a series of effects within and beyond the Marxist tradition.

¹⁶⁴ Rancière (2004b: 146).

¹⁶⁵ For an impressive account on the status of rabble in Hegel and Marx see Ruda (2011).

¹⁶⁶ Rancière (2004b: 142).

¹⁶⁷ In his autobiography Althusser recounts on numerous examples of his own solitude, whenever he was hospitalized remaining with his own thought, before coming back to normalcy (1992).

At the end of his text Rancière finally comes to imagine Althusser's theoretical solitude:

Maybe it really is better to write without addressee. And maybe, rather than still seeking to make the legacy productive, the concepts that Althusser has left to us to work on, maybe it is better to restore to his text the solitude-and I don't mean oblivion-to which it has a right, to restore the status that he vainly sought to win from the letter without addressee.¹⁶⁸

I agree with Rancière, against Elliot, that one should assert the theoretical solitude that cuts Althusser off from his sources. In this way perhaps one can connect Althusser to Hegel and not what is nowadays the accepted path with Spinoza.¹⁶⁹ Also, should Rancière's assertion of solitude, as "the letter without addressee", mean to extend the effectivity of thought to anyone and not only to the desired addressee: the Marxist Communist? Perhaps this might be more promising than sticking with Althusser's disjunction, although it seems today more than before that our destination still remains the same, its path full of long and painful theoretical and political labours. Returning to Althusser today is an extremely difficult task, but one thing is certain: he remained till his very end an engaged communist thinker, a thinker that believed, thought and fought on path of a communist revolution. Opposite to Rancière, I would argue that it is better to restore Althusser to solitude with occupying the theoretical space that he left behind,¹⁷⁰ opening a new way to discern relationship of theory and practice, one of the questions of new materialism.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Rancière (2004b: 146).

¹⁶⁹ See Dhruv (forthcoming), where he presents a complex influence and relationship of Althusser with Hegel.

¹⁷⁰ "To occupy the place is at the same time evoke and exhume the past and its dead, because the place has been always occupied: to occupy, one has to first clear a space and for its clearing, one has to take the positions with the occupiers" (Ichida 1997). Translation mine.

¹⁷¹ From a very different conceptual context Barad is making a suggestion that one's ontological claims should not prevent to build an ethical-political perspective (2007).

Chapter 3: Between the tenth and eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach: Althusser's return to new materialism

3.1. Introductory critical notes on 'aleatory materialism'

...materialism includes partisanship... and enjoins the direct and open adoption of the standpoint of a definite social group in any assessment of events.

Lenin, *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*

The man's age doesn't matter. He can be very old or very young. The important thing is that he doesn't know where he is, and wants to go somewhere. That's why he always catches a moving train, the way they do in American Westerns. Without knowing where he comes from (origin) or where he's going (goal). And he gets off somewhere along the way, in a four-horse town with a ridiculous railway station in the middle of it.

Louis Althusser, *On Materialist*

This chapter deals in detail with Althusser's return to "new materialism", how he tackled with 10th and 11th Thesis on Feuerbach. Apart from re-evaluation of central tasks of Althusserian philosophy this chapter points to the specific defense of philosophy in the old model of unity between revolutionary theory and practice. The chapter can be seen as a methodological justification and guide for last 4 chapters that deal with theoretical elaboration of Althusserian trajectory (politics and reproduction) that is complemented by historical and political analysis of socialist Yugoslavia. This split on theory and history is, as we will see, inherent to Althusser's call to new materialism.

Reading recent researches on Althusser most theorists focus and popularize the late phase of Althusser, or what was called a phase of 'aleatory materialism' by Gregory Elliot. There are many heterogeneous approaches and interpretations struggling to determine the status of the 'aleatory', however, here I will point to a few homogenizing political and theoretical consequences of the famous *aleatory move*.¹⁷² Many of post-Althusserians that

¹⁷² These polemical and recurrent discussions took place in critical journals such as *Historical Materialism*, *Borderline*, *Multitude*, *Theory and Event*, *Radical Philosophy* and others. The Journal of Althusserian studies *Decalages* appeared in 2010.

insist on this stage as most productive in Althusser, consciously or not, execute a certain cut, which totalizes all the pre-aleatory Althusser. Late Althusser becomes an autonomous figure and enters the theoretical stage not without some salt of historical irony. As I showed in the previous chapter Althusser famously performed the violent cut on Marx dividing him on pre-Marx and Marx.¹⁷³ But at the end of his trajectory and nowadays in his theoretical afterlife, same fate met him. The ghost of the break seems to have embraced fully also post-Althusserians. It was perhaps in the text of his former close disciple and comrade Etienne Balibar that the aleatory move was first diagnosed in the irreconcilable tendency and theoretical schizophrenia between Althusser of structure and Althusser of conjuncture.¹⁷⁴ This alternative rests on the dualism and is without any critical reservation taken up by many postmodernist, post-Althusserian theorists.¹⁷⁵ The latter seem to crucify young Althusser as structuralist, functionalist, Marxist and dogmatic. This choice can be ascribed to the *Zeitgeist* of theoretical opportunism and its seemingly ruptural reading a simple following, evolutionary horizon of post-Marxism.

Undoubtedly, there are some points of agreement with a certain commitment of recent interpretations that shed a light into the last phase of Althusser, that is, that they show, how Althusser thought is still very contemporary and it underwent different ruptures. However, what is impossible to agree is to take these ruptures in an isolated way, or worse, to merely affirm the last stage without finding a more theoretically rigorous way of theorizing together internal ruptures. It seems that the advocacy of last phase can redeem Althusser from his previous Stalinist sins. To be sure, Althusser himself facilitated the aleatory move. His use of metaphorical and ideologically un-burdened vocabulary of his last phase helps to efface and forget the traces of previous dogmatic and Marxist concepts. It is then pertinent to ask if this was a sign of his final delirium, or a real theoretical transformation that needs to be taken seriously?¹⁷⁶ Can then his last phase be

¹⁷³ This gesture of return is true for all his close analyses. His return to Machiavelli cuts the latter from mainstream republican and monarchist-realist within international relations theory, as I will show in chapter 4. In a similar vein, but with less zeal, he attacks interpretations of Rousseau (1972) and Montesquieu (1959) only to arrive to brand new Rousseau and Montesquieu.

¹⁷⁴ Balibar (1993: 94).

¹⁷⁵ I have in mind contributions in the journal *Multitude* and their little book *Lire Althusser aujourd'hui* (1997). One of the most revisionist deviations can be found in the article of M. Vatter (2005), which was up to the point critiqued by Warren Montag in the same number of the journal (2005).

¹⁷⁶ For example, Goshgarian tries to explain the whole work of Althusser in the light of encounter, aleatory materialism was present already from his early stage (forthcoming).

read as a testament to the crisis of Marxism and recognition of the final defeat of socialism?¹⁷⁷ It is on this place, where the monstrous term of *dialectical materialism* disappears and is exiled in the Marxist desert, while a brand new *aleatory materialism* spreads wings that are fuelled by the post-Marxist turn, which starts taking shape during the 1980s and continues today. This confirms Gregory Elliot's observation on Marxist Althusserianism as a mere "transitional form" and a certain apologetic stance to the post-condition that I discerned in the introductory chapter.

Before answering these questions, a more fundamental question needs to be answered: what does Althusser's call for *aleatory materialism* stand for? First of all, it implies a deconstruction of the whole history of philosophy through the concept of aleatory and contingency. If Althusser is opposed to the mainstream textbooks of history of philosophy, he finds himself writing an alternative textbook of aleatory materialism, a new 'underground current', which was overlooked by all previous philosophers. To begin at the beginning does not mean to search for origin. Against attributing credit of philosophical beginning to Socrates, Plato or Aristotle, Althusser somehow surprisingly turns to Epicurus.¹⁷⁸ The latter is the only one, who pointed on the contingent start of the world. He succeeded to detect that it is due to the small deviation within the eternal 'rain of atoms' that an irreversible change unfolds: the world is created. What counts is the encounter of the atoms, which cannot be ascribed to a simple origin, but is attained only retroactively. This indifference for origin, even if paradoxical, demands an act on the side on aleatory materialist: against the (materialist) analysis that only follows the already established world, aleatory materialist recognized the outcomes as a series of contingent encounters and interventions, or in words of Althusser:

The world may be called *the accomplished fact /fait accompli/* in which, once the fact has been accomplished, is established the reign of Reason, Meaning, Necessity and End /Fin/. But *the accomplishment of the fact* is just a pure effect of contingency, since it depends on the aleatory encounter of the atoms due to the swerve of the clinamen.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ It seems that the end of his interesting analysis Vargas comes to conclusion that Althusser abandoned communism and Marxism (2008: 190-192).

¹⁷⁸ For excellent analysis of clinamen from Epicurus to Hegel, Marx and Lacan that works on the importance of cut in philosophy see Dolar (2012).

¹⁷⁹ Althusser (2006: 169).

Further on, Althusser maps new philosophical alliances, which are premised upon a common denominator contingency and aleatory constitution of world. He brings together works of such diverse authors as Epicurus, Spinoza, Hobbes, Machiavelli, Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida and Deleuze. Even if they felt uncomfortable in this unlikely aleatory comradeship, they all prioritized the contingent encounter and fought against the “essence”, “origin” and the famous *fait accompli*. Thinking change in progress is one of the central marks of their dedicated materialism.¹⁸⁰ There are many points in his text, where central premises on their linkage remain consciously weak and underdeveloped,¹⁸¹ but finally he ends up describing this group of philosophers as a new tradition. In his words:

Whence this tradition's radical rejection of all philosophies of essence (*Ousia, Essentia, Wesen*), that is, of Reason (*Logos, Ratio, Vernunft*) and therefore of Origin and End – the origin being nothing more, here, than the anticipation of the End in Reason or primordial order (that is, the anticipation of Order, whether it be rational, moral, religious, or aesthetic) – in the interest of a philosophy which, rejecting the Whole and every Order, rejects the Whole and order *in favour of* dispersion (Derrida would say, in his terminology 'dissemination') and *disorder*.¹⁸²

The reference to Derrida is not accidental and it seems that particularly in this text, Althusser took seriously post-structuralist objections to his previous positions and perhaps to a degree reconciled them in his new aleatory move.¹⁸³ Despite some important theoretical contributions in his late phase,¹⁸⁴ most of his work remains cursory and in theoretical sense is the weakest of all phases. Some post-Althusserians correctly develop

¹⁸⁰ See especially Althusser's text *Underground current of materialism* (2003). There are some extremely productive intuitions in the text, although most of the theses are un-explored and deserve a thorough re-examination and elaboration. See also Vittorio Morfino's article that develops certain theses on Machiavelli and Darwin (forthcoming).

¹⁸¹ Let me take Althusser's Hobbes as one problematic example. Althusser argues that Hobbes rethought atomized individuals according to their mechanical laws and conditions of competition vis-à-vis absolute power of Leviathan. His reading of Leviathan works only with a metaphor of mythical power, which functions as a warning and not as real power. This is not a very precise formulation. If we read Hobbes closely, we can easily detect that the power of Leviathan is absolute and not only 'mythical' or symbolic. Power has been unconditionally transferred to the sovereign by a social contract. If Althusser's thesis on aleatory Hobbes is to be confirmed, one should seek it elsewhere. In order to revoke the sovereign power of Leviathan, there is only one possible path. It is only on condition that Leviathan cannot guarantee the protection of human life that we can arrive to democratic potential in Hobbes. But this again could lead to the reduction of (democratic) politics on the question of security (life and death).

¹⁸² Althusser (2006: 188).

¹⁸³ For refutation of the deconstructive readings see my chapter 2.

¹⁸⁴ I have in mind his theoretical elaboration of political encounter through Machiavelli (2000) and his work on theory of State (2006). Another important theoretical contribution was made around the question of the void, which was demonstrated by Kolšek 2007 and Montag 2010.

his theses, however, by doing it, they simply affirm, what Derrida, Deleuze or poststructuralism already told us before Althusser. More disconcerting effect of the aleatory move is ‘purification’ that boils down to the phrase that *late Althusser is the only good Althusser*.¹⁸⁵ This unconsciously or consciously participates in the general trend of normalization of Althusser’s work. One can be surprised that aleatory readings have not yet come up with an ironical conclusion that logically follows from their position: hasn’t Althusser encountered Truth at the end of his path, isn’t his late phase a specific revenge of what he repressed in his early thought, a certain “return of the repressed”? If he has so dramatically insisted on the demarcation of Marxist legacy from early Marx,¹⁸⁶ hasn’t he finally paid the price for this primary repression? Late Althusser supplies us with a more reconciliatory statement. Structuralism is substituted by contingency and now the future can last forever.

However, there is an important path, or red thread, that leads from this aleatory move to earlier ruptures in Althusser’s thought. I would like to suggest that instead of suturing Althusser to this aleatory phase alone, we should instead read different ruptures in his thought together. Without the inherent tension and “parallax view”¹⁸⁷ of different phases of Althusser’s thought it remains difficult to comprehend his incessant call for “new materialism”.

The textual context of the red thread of these ruptures-in-thought is constituted by Marx’s *Theses on Feuerbach*. It is also by reference to this text that I want to defend the most valuable contribution of Althusser’s late phase, namely, his emphasis on theorising a perspective that is able to grasp novelty. Not merely in the sense of a symptomatic strategy that would make certain elements and blind spots visible, Althusser tried to rethink the question from the perspective of the *fait à accomplir* [the fact to be accomplished]. This points to the temporal paradox of every novelty (politics), but also to a theoretical paradox of the object of every new science: something that is not yet there, but can be only asserted retroactively. This paradoxical alignment seems to be internal already to Marx’s *Theses on Feuerbach*, the text that changes the course of Marx’s trajectory. In his recent lecture on

¹⁸⁵ Ichida 1997, Elden and Holden 2005, Vatter 2005.

¹⁸⁶ Althusser’s concept of epistemological break, which targets humanism, but also serves him to read *Capital* against Hegel. See Althusser 1970 and Althusser 2005.

¹⁸⁷ For a Žižekian reading of specific ruptures in Althusser, see Katja Kolšek (forthcoming).

Kingston Balibar argued that Marx's *Theses* have to be read as a set of contradictory but complimentary utterances on materialism and the temporality of revolution. To return to Althusser today cannot be understood without his return to Marx and their shared advocacy of "new materialism". In Balibar's words, if we are to still work with Marx today, then we need to "identify with Marx at the distance".¹⁸⁸ This identification does not allow for embracing either side of the initial alternative of simple fixation on contingency (aleatory materialism) or else a return to some vulgar sort of dialectical materialism.¹⁸⁹ The combative spirit, the rupture and the return to dialectics with and against Hegel is the only path that insists on and continues the call for a new materialism, which Althusser already forty years ago termed the materialist dialectic.¹⁹⁰

3.2. ... the Theses on Feuerbach: "announcement of rupture"

The *Theses on Feuerbach* is perhaps the most visionary text that Marx ever wrote. Admittedly, they pose more problems than they manage to solve, but we should not forget that Marx never intended to publish them. Though they were written at the same time as the similarly unpublished *German Ideology* of 1845, they only served as a sketch for further research. Their eventual publication constituted a genuine theoretical event, with the Eleventh Thesis becoming one of the most quoted and discussed theoretical sentences of all time. The sentence that was supposed to finish with all interpretation, with all previous philosophies, ironically triggered a flood of new interpretations, because it opened the strategic question for any emancipatory thought or materialism: how to think and invent the new link between theory and practice?

Althusser was no alien to the history of interpretations and interventions on the *Theses*. For him, they signal the break, or more precisely, they lay at the "anterior edge of the rupture" that is fully developed in Marx's *German Ideology*.¹⁹¹ We could paraphrase him

¹⁸⁸ His lecture is accessible on: <http://backdoorbroadcasting.net/2011/04/etienne-balibar-eleven-theses-on-marx-and-marxism/>.

¹⁸⁹ The call is similar to Alain Badiou's way of posing the problem of materialism. In the introduction to his *Logic of Worlds* (Badiou 2009) he argues that in the situation of reigning materialisms, it is necessary to draw the demarcation line between *materialist dialectic* and *democratic materialism*.

¹⁹⁰ Althusser 2005.

¹⁹¹ See Balibar 2007. Althusser most directly refers to *Theses* in his 'Note sur les *Thèses*' (Althusser 1994).

by saying that the *Theses* “interpellate” us, because they function with a performative call to a new materialism that does not yet exist. In the following section I will explore Althusser’s diagonal reading of the Tenth and Eleventh theses, to which Ernst Bloch ascribed central importance for understanding the place and task of dialectical materialism. The theoretical triangle philosophy-politics-science specific to Althusser’s own project is condensed and located precisely between these two theses that are inscribed as methodological guide of this dissertation thesis.

3.3. The Tenth Thesis: the struggle of materialisms, or One divides into two standpoints

The standpoint of the old materialism is ‘civil’ society; the standpoint of the new is human society, or associated humanity.¹⁹²

Let us begin with the most obvious question: what, according to Marx, should be the kernel of a new materialism that breaks with both German idealism and Feuerbach’s materialism? Marx’s answers lie in a displacement of perspectives, overcoming the contradictions between *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* and *menschliche Gesellschaft*. Hegelian interpretations of this passage usually stress the temporal dimension, which is crucial for the formation of a new materialism. As Ernst Bloch says, “*only the horizon of the future, which Marxism occupies, with that of the past as the ante-room, gives reality its real dimension*”.¹⁹³ In a similar vein, the noted Slovenian Marxologist Božidar Debenjak reads this thesis as arguing that “the standpoint of isolated individuals and bourgeois society should be overcome with new materialism”.¹⁹⁴ Undoubtedly the temporality of what some authors have named the *futur antérieur*, of ‘not-yet-existing’ materialism, is deservedly emphasised when reading this thesis. There is a certain contradictory coexistence, or rather productive tension, between temporalities that informs and marks any new materialist analysis. However, there is another possible path, which emphasises another, more Althusserian dimension and focuses on the term *Standpunkt*. As the term implies, it has to do with a spatial dimension, or more precisely with the search for a new theoretical

¹⁹² Marx and Engels 1975-2005 (Vol. 5: 8).

¹⁹³ Bloch (1996: 285).

¹⁹⁴ Debenjak (2008: 156).

topography, which later became a very heated discussion among Marxists.¹⁹⁵ The question of the theoretical space, of which discipline and the perspective from which we can see the “object” is linked back to the question of temporality. The new materialist analysis addresses both: the temporality of the future, the theoretical and political space in the making, but also of material analysis of the past and present that needs to be grasped in a new way. Pierre Macherey argues that new materialism has to include both standpoints; not only is there a need for a historical analysis that enriches our understanding of the world, but also the horizon of the future already entailed in the transformation of the present: ‘new materialism will have to include the standpoint of historical and social *praxis* and also be capable of rethinking the process of *Selbstveränderung* which relates to the real future of things and men’.¹⁹⁶ This is Marx’s real contribution; naming and understanding what Althusser would call the “fait à accomplir”, or change in progress.

First, Marx evokes the standpoint of *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* in order to conduct a specific historical analysis of bourgeois society and its ideology (free individual, autonomy of social spheres, production, bourgeois law), and then focuses upon the standpoint of human society. Marx makes a contradictory move that destabilises the very point of departure of historical analysis. The standpoint of ‘human society’ is speaking from the point of view of the future, from the ‘not yet existing’ community, or what will later be called communism. If one can easily dismiss this Marx as an evolutionary, linear thinker, even a romantic, the more important point is to retrieve the productive tension that is inscribed in the new materialism.

The standpoint of *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* was already at the time of the *Theses* a matter of the future, since Marx and his theoretical position had hitherto remained within the horizons of Feuerbachian philosophy. The *Theses* announced the break and detected the kernel of Feuerbach’s idealism in *abstract Man*. The latter possesses a generic essence, which according to Marx should not be posed as isolated, in itself, but as the “ensemble of social relations”.¹⁹⁷ Even if this move is clear and ‘irreversible’, Marx himself is not completely immune to the same criticism that he launched against Feuerbach. Can it be

¹⁹⁵ Many mainstream Marxist approaches would use the causality linked to the spatial (linear) metaphor of base and superstructure that Marx developed in his Introduction to the *Critique of Political Economy*.

¹⁹⁶ Macherey (2008: 212).

¹⁹⁷ The Sixth Thesis famously proclaims that the human essence is only ‘ensemble of social relations’.

objected that he only substituted Feuerbach's humanism of Man with the humanism of society, with the abstract ideal of humanity, or in contemporary jargon, the *coming community*? Does Marx not fall behind his own critique and departure point? There have been different attempts to read in Marx merely an eschatologisation of humanity. As Macherey lucidly asks, "is humanity proper not always-already existing no matter what the conditions?"¹⁹⁸ In opposition to the liberal theoreticians of the social contract who projected their own ideal onto the past, in the "state of nature", Marx projected the "ideal of society" forwards to the future of communism. Nevertheless, there is one major difference. The theorists of the social contract referred to the "state of nature" and to the contract as theoretical fictions, which remained necessary structural fictions that establish and support the existing state of affairs, the state founded upon bourgeois law. In Althusser's words, they theorised the political from the perspective of the "accomplished fact" [*fait accompli*], positing the results before their analysis. In opposition to this, Marx's vision of the future society demanded a radical negation of the existing state of affairs, including the state, which should eventually be dissolved. Marx spoke from the perspective of a fact yet to be accomplished, from a temporality of the "not-yet-existing". But is this type of gesture, this utopian construction, not simply a continuation of the long tradition in philosophy from Plato and Thomas More to Marx's contemporaries Owen and Saint-Simon, who famously paved the way for the future, not-yet-existing, communist society? Or worse, could we not say that today, this futurist projection, which some authors have called an "obsession with future",¹⁹⁹ has become the normalising discourse of the self-realisation of individual desires, of the post-Fordist reorganisation of capitalist relations?²⁰⁰ However, for Marx the communist future was never either a capitalist or socialist utopian dream. His direct attack on a merely utopian construction of an "ideal society" applied to the present comes to play an important role in the *Communist Manifesto*; but is already

¹⁹⁸ Macherey (2008: 213).

¹⁹⁹ See Bifo 2011.

²⁰⁰ The post-Fordist regime realises all human capacities and participates in the self-destruction of capitalism, where Feuerbach's essence of man is finally being realised. But should we not instead argue that this ideal of the self-realisation of humanity is nothing but the normalisation of man's needs and desires, a part of the ideology of 'flexible personality' (Holmes 2002) and remains very much linked to the general commodity-production and dominant individualist ideology?

explicit in the Third and Fourth *Theses on Feuerbach*.²⁰¹ Here, Marx argues that contradictions have to be destroyed theoretically and practically. This theoretical slogan is also a political maxim: communism is necessarily informed by the horizon of the future, but that implies real politics in the present, not endlessly waiting for a miraculous event.²⁰² The ideal of human society is not constructed on the abstract ideal of humanity, but on the destruction of the existing state of affairs. Against a ‘politics of philosophers’ and utopian thinkers that posit and prescribe philosophical or moral norms to be applied in politics, he opens a path for an encounter between revolutionary theory and practice.

3.3.1 From a temporal standpoint to a theoretical standpoint

Perhaps even more than the other theses, the Tenth Thesis explores precisely this revolutionary encounter in terms of rethinking a relationship between philosophy and the science of history. In this respect, we can partially agree with Macherey’s conclusion that “it is necessary to elaborate a concept which allows thinking together the determined (historical-social) and universal (the global, which prioritises the whole over parts).”²⁰³ According to Macherey, we can find the key for new materialism in a concept that speaks from the position of universal (communist society) *and* includes historical analysis. This thesis should be understood against the contemporary disjuncture between these two fields and perspectives, where historical analysis is excluded from political philosophy,²⁰⁴ or alternatively, where historical analysis simply speaks from the perspective of “the accomplished fact”, from the management of the possible state of affairs (affirming the dominant ideology). No matter how much I support this theoretical proposal of achieving a new materialism, it is difficult to imagine how this extremely complicated operation could

²⁰¹ Marx had addressed this issue in other places before like in his 1843 *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, or later in 1848’s *Communist Manifesto*.

²⁰² The young Marx equated communist politics with the abolition of private property, but in the *German Ideology* he defined communism as “the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things” (Marx and Engels 1975-2005, Vol. 5: 49).

²⁰³ Macherey (2008: 215).

²⁰⁴ Slavoj Žižek’s critical remark on the troubles of French radical political philosophy (2006: 55).

be undertaken by one concept alone.²⁰⁵ Even if the concept of *Standpunkt* pushes in the right direction, it does not yet allow Marx to step out of the theoretical deadlock that he detected and to a degree maintained. It pertains to the tension and difference between science and philosophy. The whole history of Marxism could be read through focus on this question: from more traditional Marxist responses that argued for objectivism and the eternal contradiction of the productive forces and relations of production (for example, Kautsky, economistic readings, Lukács) to a more subjectivist-messianic hope for the coming society (such as in Benjamin and Bloch). It is clear that Althusser himself did not supply a satisfactory answer, as many of his unpublished manuscripts on the topic of theory and practice testify. What is clearer is that Althusser's solution does not stake its fortunes on any single concept providing a universal solution, a formula that could be applied to all historical situations. *New materialism*, then, will contain both the reflection of the future society, the horizon of the universal, but also the historical analysis of the past and present situation. His thought constantly moves between the standpoints of philosophy and historical analysis, which includes a certain risk, or rather a constant re-throwing of a dice for any new materialist enterprise. As against *a priori* knowledge or the external guarantee of teleology or the empiricism of facts, new materialism demands a theoretical apparatus that does not already know the results in advance.

Marx deployed the concept of *Standpunkt* to criticise the then-existing materialism, which, at its best, interpreted circumstances from a fixed standpoint of bourgeois society operating within the existing ideological horizons. Feuerbach's materialism conveys a critique of religion, which politically resulted in a separation of church from state and in the struggle for recognition of the political rights of man. In opposition to the old materialism, Marx assumes a different position that does not fall into the false dilemma of choosing *between theory and practice, thought and reality, object and subject*. The new perspective enables him to think together two different standpoints: the standpoint of the present analysis, what he will develop as the critique of political economy (the capitalist mode of production) and the standpoint of the future society, of the communist horizon. This is the point where my thesis runs close to the argument advanced by Lukács, who

²⁰⁵ Contingency is clearly of crucial importance for any consideration of the origin of and transition between modes of production, but it does not suffice for more in-depth analysis of social circumstances. I will present this thesis in the chapter 7.

correctly observes that the capital is not a simple object. If capital were a simple object, then it would not be Marx's discovery, but could be simply ascribed to Adam Smith or David Ricardo. If one embraces the militant Marx, then one needs to see how the universal dimension is inscribed in the very understanding of capitalist production. For Lukács, this is condensed in the point of negation of civil society, that is, in the proletariat as the real discovery of Marx.²⁰⁶ It is the figure of the proletariat that provides an adequate response to Macherey's demand for a standpoint with a precise universalist concept. This is the place where old materialism splits into two and where, perhaps, the infamous history of historical and dialectical materialism begins. Althusser understands this theoretical shift as crucial for his return to Marx and for establishing the break in which the *Theses* play an *avant-garde* role.²⁰⁷ At the same time, he points to another place and role for Marxist philosophy.

3.3.2. Althusser's conceptualisation of the break in the Theses

If we follow Althusser's reading closely, Marx's science of history does not yet exist in the *Theses*, because he only raises the topic of social relations and mode of production in the *German Ideology*.²⁰⁸ The *Theses* are the point where Marx breaks with his own humanism; from this point on, there is no way back to his old materialist positions. The second rupture, the anticipation of a new philosophical practice, remained less important for the mature Marx, though still extremely relevant. The new philosophical practice was not only present in the standpoint of communism and the proletariat; it was also – and here, I argue against Althusser – constitutive for the analysis of the commodity and the value-form.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ See for example Lukács (1971: 22–23).

²⁰⁷ While there are many differences between Lukács and Althusser, at least on this point their different approaches to Marx converge on the question of understanding totality from the partisan position of the proletariat.

²⁰⁸ It is true that Marx in the *Theses on Feuerbach* did not yet speak about production, but about practice, as against the intuition or sensuousness of Feuerbach. Marx's concept of practice is an 'ensemble of social relations', which only opens a path towards production. See Balibar 2007 and Debenjak (2008: 155–62), who argue correctly that the Marx of the *Theses on Feuerbach* still stood on the standpoint of practice. It is nevertheless true that his conception of praxis in this period differed from Feuerbach's notion of practice and the materialism of intuition and sensuousness. Marx's concept of praxis does not hide behind an idea of a human essence, but points to the ensemble of social relations, which was later framed in terms of production.

²⁰⁹ Marx succeeded in elaborating new concepts like mode of production, tendency and class struggle, which meant that he broke with an ideological or purely philosophical horizon. He began to practice a different

The necessity of a new philosophical practice was taken seriously by some Marxists, perhaps most notably (and often on opposing sides) by Georg Lukács and Louis Althusser.²¹⁰

Althusser's intervention, however schematic, has to be understood as a criticism of humanist Marxism and its appropriation of the young Marx.²¹¹ To return to Marx's new materialism in the era of actually-existing materialisms, when materialism had become the dominant philosophical orientation, brought new challenges. In *For Marx*, Althusser detects two key ideological enemies, which he problematically labelled as "Stalinism": the economistic deviation and the philosophical deviation "humanism".²¹² The first deviation could be ascribed to vulgar Marxism (or liberal economics), which begins and ends its theoretical journey in terms of the primacy of the productive forces. The hidden kernel of 'economism' is embodied in a teleology of progress; its practical-political effects were crystallised in the rise of technocracy and the insistence on development of the industrial model and technology. The second deviation – Althusser's philosophical arch-enemy – is humanism, which functions along the dual lines of a 'dissident' critique of Stalinism, on the one hand, and a critique of consumerist capitalism, on the other. An unlikely alliance of ethical philosophers, humanists and phenomenologists tried to realise the essence of man in socialism or capitalism with a human face.²¹³ Instead of the primacy of the productive forces, we find the creativity of generic man and the alienation of modern society, which Althusser directly attacks in *Reply to John Lewis*. Finally, Althusser would argue that these deviations do not oppose each other, but constitute a scientific-philosophical duality that forms the One, which we could name the One of the actually-existing materialism.

Again, despite the schematic criticism expounded by Althusser, the call for a renewal of materialism is clear: to be a Marxist does not mean scholastically repeating Marx's

theory, which can no longer be equated with philosophy, though at the same time Hegel remained an important reference.

²¹⁰ See Balibar 2007. Even if Althusser steps in a different direction, their return to militant Marx, or their Leninism, is a shared point of trajectory.

²¹¹ See Althusser 2005, especially the chapter "Marxism and Humanism".

²¹² Although Althusser 2003 always stressed the critique of Stalinism as crucial for the future of Marxist theory, one has to admit that his critique of economism and humanism is rather weak.

²¹³ For criticism of Heideggerian Marxists see Žižek (2000: 13). Undoubtedly, also Derrida's deconstruction, and some left-Heideggerians like Nancy and Blanchot attacked Marx's humanism in the time when Althusser wrote.

quotes, but entails locating the limitations inherent to Marx himself.²¹⁴ Due to the underdevelopment of Marxist theory of the State and Ideology, and in light of the crisis of the communist project and theoretical tendencies, Althusser waged a battle for a new return, seeking to assume a new standpoint: the standpoint of new materialism becomes that of *reproduction*.²¹⁵ This conceptual shift, which assigns primacy to reproduction, implies that production is already split within itself. It also points to his reading of *Capital*, which shows that the capitalist mode of production is impossible to understand without both the “primary accumulation” of capital, and also the element of the political (state and law as the machinery and mechanism for social reproduction).²¹⁶ More specifically, Althusser is interested in the functioning of ideology and ideological state-apparatuses. This involves a move away from the theory of commodity-fetishism as the sole ideological formation inherent to capitalist production,²¹⁷ and towards an understanding of ideological formation as a general reproduction of social forms, which goes against the theory of reflection.²¹⁸

Last but not least, the struggle for *new materialism* occurs on two levels: first, it is conceived as a critique of the dominant ideology and philosophical humanism; and second, as a critique of scientific revisionisms. In Althusser’s conjuncture, the actually-existing materialism was based upon the standpoint of productive forces supplemented by the horizon of humanism, while Althusser’s new Tenth Thesis is to be read as an encounter between reproduction (a new historical analysis) and the horizon of communism. This implies that a strategic link and tension between scientific and philosophical deviations is never without political effects. It also heralds the entry into the new field of politics, the move from the “level of interpretation” It is here that we find the strategic difference between the Tenth and Eleventh Theses.

²¹⁴ Althusser (2006) discusses these limitations, especially in MIHL.

²¹⁵ Most notably, Althusser developed this in his ISA and in his posthumously published book SLR. Before Althusser, the theoretical implication for this move can be ascribed at least two important references: Lenin and Gramsci.

²¹⁶ For further exploration of this thesis see second part of chapter 5.

²¹⁷ Moshe Postone undertook an extremely important project in this respect, with his analyses of the importance of the form of production-relations (commodity-production) that determine ideology (Postone 1996: 272–7).

²¹⁸ See Wolf (forthcoming).

3.4. The Eleventh Thesis: to transform philosophy... and the world

The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to *change* it.²¹⁹

Already the first reading brings to light an explicit inconsistency between the Tenth and Eleventh Theses, but also a dramatic and, perhaps, even irreconcilable tension within the Eleventh Thesis itself. The Eleventh Thesis is a radical rupture: it performs the jump from the level of interpretation to the level of transformation and transformative politics.²²⁰ Are these levels mutually-exclusive, in a specific relation of ‘critical complementarity’, or should one of the levels be simply abandoned, overcome at the expense of the other? Is Althusser’s reaction to the Eleventh Thesis not a clear rejection, once we try to evaluate it in terms of his concept of ‘theoretical practice’? Althusser wants to achieve the abolition of a schematic separation between (political) practice and theory, and ultimately bring theory under the primacy of practice. But already for Marx, the separation of theory and practice was not pertinent; he actually dissolved the old Aristotelian universe and distinctions of *praxis*, *poiesis* and *theoria*.²²¹

The rupture evoked in the Eleventh Thesis is not a simple logical consequence of the preceding theses, but rather an “aspect change”, which is irreversible and retains a specific relationship with both aspects.²²² Another important observation is condensed in the famous “subject of change”. The Eleventh Thesis does not have the same subject as the Tenth Thesis, which referred to philosophy generally; rather, the Eleventh Thesis refers specifically to the community of philosophers and scientists. The subject of the Eleventh Thesis is the (in)famous *es* that remains hidden at first glance.²²³ Philosophy will perform a different role than that explained in the previous *Theses*.²²⁴ The Eleventh Thesis does not stop at a final opposition of two fields: philosophy (interpretation of the world) and politics

²¹⁹ Marx and Engels 1975-2005 (Vol.5: 8).

²²⁰ See Macherey 2008.

²²¹ See Balibar (2007: 40–41). It is not surprising that Marx presented a certain quandary for Hannah Arendt. The limitations of her reading of Marx are most visible especially in her third chapter of *Vita Activa* (Arendt 1958), which deals with the relation of work/*poiesis*. Habermas correctly notes that the theoretical revolution of supposedly distinguished activities had already begun with More and Machiavelli (Habermas 1973).

²²² For a more detailed and evolutionary interpretation of *Theses*, see Debenjak (2008: 158).

²²³ »Die Philosophen haben die Welt nur verschieden *interpretiert*; es kömmt drauf an, sie zu *verändern*« (Marx 1969: 5).

²²⁴ See Labica 1987.

(transformation of the world). While some theorists and political activists saw in this thesis a call for the abolition of philosophy and the beginning of revolutionary practice, I will argue that this interpretation is incompatible with Marx's and Althusser's proposal for a new materialism.

The Eleventh Thesis has been subjected to many interpretations in the history of philosophy, but today it is perhaps most productive to intervene in the context of recent debates about the 'Communist Hypothesis'. Frank Ruda succinctly synthesises different readings of this short and enigmatic phrase. He categorises these readings into three distinct interpretative strands: transformative, reversing and exaggerate.²²⁵ The first *transformative interpretation* advocates a new philosophy of practice, which has to replace the existing interpretation of the world; philosophy needs to think practice and not just remain stuck in salon-discussions, which merely circulate different ideas.²²⁶ A typical representative of this interpretation was Ernst Bloch, who reads the Eleventh Thesis through the early Marx, relying upon a specific relation between the proletariat and philosophy: "Philosophy cannot be realised without the abolition of the proletariat, the proletariat cannot be abolished without the realization of philosophy."²²⁷ The second *reversing interpretation* argues that to change the world means to interpret it differently; the world is constantly changing, so a different interpretation of this same change is needed. Adorno is the most visible supporter of this thesis, insisting upon the specificity of philosophical interpretation. Ruda ascribes the final, *exaggerated interpretation* to Žižek, who advocates the view that only through excessive, exaggerated reading are we able to intervene in the world; that is, we have to frame the meaning of the past (and the present) insofar as we want to influence the historical unfolding of events.

All readings agree that the point is to change the world, but each of them interprets this change in its own way.²²⁸ One of the ways to explain their difference is to bring forwards their assessment of the relation between masses and ideas. How much distance or

²²⁵ See Ruda 2009.

²²⁶ This interpretation privileges Engels's editing that inserted the famous "aber" between sentences, as disjunction. See Labica's excellent book (1987).

²²⁷ Marx and Engels 1975-2005 (Vol. 3: 87); translation modified.

²²⁸ Balibar correctly notes that, for Marx, the world will not be transformed by education alone (Balibar 2007: 17-27). It was precisely the concept of revolution that enabled him to break with the idealistic horizon of his position in the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, where the level of interpretation was still linked to representation, and the subject of change (an idealist notion) was linked to the proletariat.

engagement should philosophy adopt in this respect? *Transformative interpretation* can be read as a leftist deviation that sutures philosophy to politics; it is revolution that in “the last instance” determines and also abolishes philosophy. This interpretation places its hopes in and devotes its organisational efforts to the coming proletarian revolution. It consciously acknowledges the primacy of practice and the organisation of social forces. The *reversing interpretation* is positioned at the political centre. It advocates the defence of the autonomy of thought, which gives correct directions for political practice, which in turn executes changes. The relation between political and theoretical practice is, therefore, mediated; a certain translation takes place between the fields. Finally, the *exaggerated interpretation* is closest to the “rightist” deviation and advocates an enlightened role of philosophy that sutures politics to philosophy. In other words, the role of philosophy is not only that of giving directions, but actively intervening in the world; this position, in the last instance, gives primacy to theory over practice. It can be argued that the first and third interpretations do not acknowledge the distance between philosophy (as interpretation of the world) and politics (as changing the world). The *transformative interpretation* submits a philosophy of practice to a revolutionary goal, which will realise communism and philosophy, while the *exaggerated interpretation* subjugates politics to philosophy; philosophy is then without any distance to the world, which would leave us with a definition of philosophy-as-party. The *reversing interpretation* is the only one that maintains a distance; philosophy is assigned a relative autonomy and specific distance towards political practice. I will argue that in order to renovate the idea of communism, it is necessary to relate it internally to communist politics. This is possible only if we assess the movement from the Tenth to Eleventh Thesis, reading them together. It is this that constitutes the strategic theoretical nexus advanced by Althusser: the triangle between philosophy, politics and science.

3. 5. *Philosophy-politics-science* and the oscillating definition of philosophy

Pierre Macherey argues that the Eleventh Thesis necessitates a completely new way of doing philosophy. Philosophy has to remodel the stakes, draw new demarcation-lines and

find “new means to transform itself, to enter in the play of *Selbstveränderung*”.²²⁹ The standpoint of the new philosophy is, then, not *at a distance* from historical reality, but involves transformation, which entails an engaged position. Macherey’s interpretation comes close to one of Althusser’s pivotal definitions of philosophy, heavily influenced by his reading of Lenin. The task of any materialist philosophy is to declare war on all official ideologies and philosophies. Despite the similarities of both positions, however, there are slight differences between Macherey and Althusser, which are of crucial importance.

Althusser wrote most directly on the Eleventh Thesis in his “Note sur les *Thèses*”, in the early 1980s.²³⁰ The Eleventh Thesis needs to be observed from the perspective of the subject of the transformation, which is empty. It is not philosophers, or the philosophy of a “new race” that will change the world. From this there follows a rather ambiguous conclusion: philosophy has to return to itself, it has to transform itself; only in that way will it be able to help to transform the world; in short, it is *at a distance*. Althusser’s claim regarding distance seems paradoxical; perhaps one could even equate it with the Adornian *reversing interpretation* and its defence of the autonomy of philosophy. Althusser wrote his text in 1982: a historicist might remark that this is a clear sign of the time, a symptom of a larger crisis of Marxism, of sobering up after the political reality of the gulag and the beginning of the end of actually-existing socialism. Or could this be read as yet another self-criticism? Perhaps in this last phase Althusser became disillusioned with the role of philosophy and abandoned his former project of *philosophy as revolutionary weapon*?²³¹ There is only a small step to associating this *distance* with the idealist or armchair philosophy of which Lenin was so critical.

However, one should not forget that Althusser never abandoned his initial claims about the primacy of practice (politics) over theory and the primacy of change over interpretation. This remains the case in his reading in “Note sur les *Thèses*”, which can for now be paradoxically named a *taking up of position at a distance*. The ambivalent position enables Althusser to define philosophy as a specific practice; it declares that the space of this specific practice has yet to be formed and its specific autonomy is only established

²²⁹ Macherey (2008: 227).

²³⁰ Althusser 1994.

²³¹ Althusser 1971. As the interview’s title suggests, Althusser is interested in the role of philosophy in the class struggle.

through struggle. One cannot presuppose the autonomy of philosophy as if it were disconnected from the world. But in the same vein, philosophical practice cannot be reduced to either science or to politics. How, then, are we to understand Althusser's insistence on the primacy of practice through philosophy? He conceives philosophy as a specific practice, which should affirm the primacy of practice. This is paradoxical, because philosophy can only affirm the primacy of practice over theory on condition that it refers to itself. Philosophy affirms theoretically the primacy of practice, as Althusser puts it:

this indicates the place that philosophy occupies relating to its *stakes* and in relation to its possible effects, but *at the distance*, not in relation to objects that philosophy thinks (philosophy has no object) but of theses that it formulates, that is to say on the condition that it takes into account its mode of existence in the forms of *dispositif* of the *topique*.²³²

Philosophy thinks in relation to itself, its specific past, but at the same time it thinks its relation, its 'conditionality' with society; it thinks about its stakes, but also its political effects within the existing social relations, measuring them up against the future horizon of communism. In his late phase, Althusser produced a dialectical jewel that again confirms his constant and critical return to Hegel.

Philosophy, according to Althusser, does not exist somewhere *outside* the world or *above* the world, in an ivory tower, from whence it travels forth into the heavenly kingdom of ideas. Philosophy affirms the existence of a series of practices – economic, political, scientific, artistic – external to philosophy. It is not that philosophy cannot act or reflect upon them, but that it does *not produce* them.²³³ Philosophy fights its own struggles and it does not intervene directly in other, non-philosophical practices. Most frequently, the philosophical effects are delayed, following up on major ruptures, or perhaps even being displaced. This makes it even more difficult to judge the direct effects of thought. According to Althusser, to establish an opposition between 'taking up a position' as materialist and "taking distance" as idealist is too simplistic. Since many idealist philosophies and vulgar materialism assume a very strong and critical position *vis-à-vis* other orientations, this cannot be a sufficient criterion of demarcation. This is why Althusser insists on defining philosophical practice in this ambiguous and open manner.

²³² Althusser (1994: 42).

²³³ This can be taken as a minimal definition for materialism; there is something that exists outside thought. See also Žerjav (2006) who brings Althusser's theory close to some central thesis of psychoanalysis.

Althusser, like Marx before him and any materialist thinker are aware of the material force of ideas. There are historical periods where philosophy can have direct political effects, but this is not a reason to ascribe to philosophy a role of making revolution. It is not philosophy that transforms the world, but the masses and revolutionary movements. Depending on different conjunctures and the emergence of new political forms, the movement of the masses produces different political forms and alliances.²³⁴ However, these masses are not isolated from ideas; furthermore, in the revolutionary conditions, they also invent new ideas, propelling the new encounter of thought and politics. This encounter clarifies what Althusser means when he calls for philosophy to stay at a distance, preventing it from becoming a self-sufficient and self-legitimising discourse of a philosopher-king.

This is a theoretical point that brings Althusser in proximity to Badiou: philosophy becomes philosophy only at a distance from the (capitalist or socialist) state. Or as Rancière argued and history confirmed, Marxism itself was not immune to becoming an academic and state-philosophy.²³⁵ Dogmatic Marxism was at the centre of all actually-existing state-socialisms, which instead of rethinking ways of dissolving the state-apparatus and experimenting with new economic forms, instead swiftly entered into the service of reproducing the socialist state. Dogmatic Marxism became a state-philosophy imprisoned within existing ideological coordinates, in forms of humanistic palaver, or the expert language of technocrats. Althusser's insistence on the distance of philosophy from the state means that he is diametrically opposed to suturing philosophy directly with the political. He had attempted to develop a conception of politics that would differ from the state, but which at the same time would not relegate the question of the state to a secondary phenomenon.²³⁶ At the same time, it is clear that Althusser does not take the autonomy of philosophy for granted, but throws it into the arena of political and theoretical struggles. Although finding an adequate thematisation of the relation between politics and philosophy in Althusser is a difficult task, we can nevertheless pinpoint at least two moments that are still pertinent today. First, he posits the *overdetermining* character of

²³⁴ See Althusser 1966 and 1973.

²³⁵ Rancière 2011.

²³⁶ Althusser is also against the suturing of science with politics. The consequences of this suture might well lead into Lysenkoism. See also the work of Althusser's colleague Dominique Lecourt on Lysenko (Lecourt 1976).

politics; and second, he locates the specific *space of philosophical intervention*.²³⁷ Philosophy intervenes in theoretical ideologies, the field between the ‘scientific’ and the ‘ideological’. Thus, philosophy can be located at the burning, or symptomatic, points of both fields, where there appear ruptures, regressions, contradictions and deviations of spontaneous and other ideologies that permeate the scientific field.

In this respect, Pupovac’s thesis that the triangle *philosophy-politics-science* remained crucial throughout Althusser’s enterprise is an important reminder.²³⁸ To simplify the argument, we could say that understanding this triangle enables us to tease out the manner in which combative philosophical practice intervenes in the scientific and ideological field, by demonstrating forcefully the primacy of rupture, which indirectly brings it into relationship with revolutionary political practice. On various occasions Althusser highlighted the specificity of these fields, dealing with different ‘matters’ and with their special ‘objects’ and special “laws”. He also attempts to posit and take into the account their inter-relationship, though without providing a single or satisfactory explanation of these inter-relationships. Rather, he oscillates between different approaches, which are developed by the different readings of Althusser today. I would like to extract three fundamental readings of the triangle: historicist; conjunctural; and philosopher.

As its name already implies, the *historicist reading* provides a temporal classification of Althusser’s thought. An emblematic analysis of Althusser can be found in Gregory Elliott’s major work *Althusser: Detour of Theory*²³⁹, where he classifies Althusser’s thought into three periods: first comes the stage of *theoreticism*, where Althusser asserts the primacy of science and refers to philosophy as “theory of theoretical practice”, as a general mediator among fields; a second stage of *politicism*, with the primacy of politics (‘philosophy as revolutionary weapon’); and the last stage of *aleatorism*, where he assigns primacy to philosophy. This answer undoubtedly provides us with a general overview of Althusser’s thought, but it does not help us to reconstruct the triangle of the new materialism. It seems that this interpretation simply ends up privileging one pole or another of the triangle in each of its respective phases: science, politics and philosophy.

²³⁷ As Macherey 2009 lucidly argues, this conception of philosophy is at work from an early stage.

²³⁸ See chapter 3 in Pupovac 2008.

²³⁹ Elliott 2006.

The second reading is *conjunctural*, and has recently been developed by Goshgarian and, earlier, by Balibar. Goshgarian is particularly interested in specific continuities and discontinuities in the relationship between politics and philosophy. In his introductions to recent English translations of Althusser, Goshgarian observes that the role of philosophy oscillates in Althusser. He begins by assigning philosophy a role of mediator between politics and science; in Althusser's words, "*philosophy represents class struggle in theory.*"²⁴⁰ On the one hand, Marxist philosophy should be in the service of the people, mobilising and receiving correct ideas from the masses, and then in turn representing the proletarian struggle in theory. On the other hand, the scientific is also represented in politics by philosophy; by detecting crucial points and understanding the conjuncture, it helps to formulate the correct lines for guiding political action. From this, it follows that the role of philosophy is to mediate class interests between scientific discoveries and political transformations.

The last reading can be called *philosophist*. This can be undertaken either via the early Althusser, conceiving philosophy as a "theory of theoretical practices", which in fact grants philosophy an overall perspective from which to judge other practices,²⁴¹ or else via the "aleatory" reading of the late Althusser, purifying Althusser's thought of its relation to Marx.

Of these three readings, the conjunctural one is most closely related to the attempt to read the *Theses* in a way that responds to the call for a new materialism despite one troublesome detail. Pierre Macherey quite justly remarks that the definition of philosophy as a mere mediator inherently linked to the model of representation.²⁴² The critical reservation of Macherey is understandable not only because of the Spinozist orientation, but also in that it rightfully warns of the danger of falling back into a "reflection-theory". However, I would argue that the conjunctural reading has the benefit of highlighting two general directions that can be taken in defining Althusser's philosophy and new materialism: either we define "philosophy as party",²⁴³ which gives directives to science

²⁴⁰ Althusser 1984: 67.

²⁴¹ Althusser 1976.

²⁴² Macherey 2009.

²⁴³ See Pupovac for a further discussion of this definition of philosophy (forthcoming).

and politics, or we understand ‘philosophy as a machine for class translation’ of discourses and practices.²⁴⁴

Althusser’s oscillation between these various definitions of philosophy can be read as a failure to provide a more refined and complex position. In a more positive sense, the place of philosophy in the aforementioned triangle is crucial in order to understand the internal fractures of Althusser’s work, and moreover to follow displacements and aspect-shifts within the triangle. Badiou has argued that Althusser remained a philosopher all through his work;²⁴⁵ but is it possible – despite the oscillations – to discern some fundamental feature of the philosophical orientation of his enterprise? The “undercurrent current” from his work is not only its ‘interventionist’ and partisan nature. This dimension of the “Note sur les *Thèses*” should be taken seriously: philosophy needs to remain at a distance from both fields, politics and science, but it should continue to intervene in them indirectly and produce varied effects, including non-philosophical ones. This claim is again very close to that of the mediating role of philosophy. If philosophy is conditioned by the conjuncture, then it can be argued that it normally intervenes in the existing theoretical ideologies. It is only when the social circumstances become revolutionary, however, philosophy might produce more than merely intra-philosophical effects, bringing it into close relation with the masses.

Two further courses could allow for a more adequate conceptualisation of philosophy within Althusser’s triangle in order to avoid the criticism of representation advanced by Macherey. The first course would tie philosophy closely to the concept of “overdetermination” and examine the relation between politics and philosophy (Eleventh Thesis), while the second would posit philosophy in terms of Marx’s concept of *verwandelte Formen*;²⁴⁶ that is, it would see philosophical forms as ‘transformed’ ideological forms, thus supplementing the triangle with the additional field of ideology, which examines the relation between science and politics. Philosophy would then be an activity articulating two fields (science and politics) in a process of working through

²⁴⁴ This type of answer opens the challenge of pragmatism, or of how to find ideal communicative situations translating correct ideas from science to political practice.

²⁴⁵ Badiou 2008.

²⁴⁶ Rastko Močnik (2006) recently brought into discussion the concept that Marx used in Volume Three of *Capital*, when he attempted to articulate the field of circulation and production, which in a general way connects the first and third volumes of *Capital*. This point was previously highlighted by Merab Mamardashvili (1970).

ideology, constantly transforming ideological forms within and between the fields of the scientific and the political. Moreover, remembering that one field overdetermines the other helps to clarify the instable conjuncture of Marxist philosophy that relates to and evaluates the temporary effects of events and discoveries within these fields. The concept of “overdetermined causality” is Althusser’s most important theoretical contribution, by means of which he reworks the Marxist topography.²⁴⁷ The complex causality and “double determination” of social instances (not only politics by economy, and *vice versa*, but a certain conception of the “decentred centre” that is at work in both) can provide a provisional tool for rethinking the relationship between philosophy, politics and science. Much more than suturing philosophy with politics, what is peculiar to Althusser’s project is, rather, a continuing persistence of the specific place of philosophy and its engaged nature. Althusser does indeed subscribe to the view that politics determines Marxist philosophy, but he continues to maintain that it is the role of philosophy to detect displaced contradictions and articulate crucial points between science and politics. Philosophy also brings the future dimension into and through politics, meditating the unanticipated. This is the place where politics and philosophy start entering a productive partnership. When philosophy speaks from the horizon of the future society, communism, it becomes an equal partner, a friend in the mission of changing the world. In close “cooperation” with historical analysis, philosophy thinks the change-in-process and acts on it. If Althusser can correctly be criticised for reproducing the division of academic labour,²⁴⁸ he nevertheless also responds to this aristocratic challenge with his text “Philosophy as revolutionary weapon”.²⁴⁹ Philosophy must not remain indifferent (like science), but has to learn with

²⁴⁷ See Althusser 2005. The question of causality is crucial for any theory of history. Althusser criticised the Hegelian model of „expressive totality“, but most directly the model of economic base (economy), which determines superstructure (politics and ideology). Against this, Althusser develops a different causality of the ‘decentred centre’. In this new horizon, the economic determination of base-superstructure is replaced by a ‘double determination’, which entails additional conditioning of instances in the social structure. Overdetermined causality works in heterogeneous ways forming a complex inter-relation of instances of the social structure: politics, economy, culture, law, ideology, and so forth. The inter-relation is by definition only graspable through its effects, that is, retroactively. If Althusser still retains the thesis that capitalist society is ‘in the last instance’ determined by the economic instance, then he also expands this with another determination: this structural relation is ‘overdetermined’ by another instance. For further elaboration see chapter 5.

²⁴⁸ Rancière 2011.

²⁴⁹ Althusser 1971.

and from the masses.²⁵⁰ The thesis that rests on the Spinozian and Kantian maxim that ‘anyone can think’ actually shows what an important role Althusser attributed to philosophy in the transformation of the world, which in turn crucially marks his peculiar reading of and return to the Eleventh Thesis. Thus, the real change will occur only, when it is accompanied with a change in thinking about the world; in other words the new practice of philosophy things the change in the world, and in this way acts on it, executing that change practically and theoretically.

Althusser’s second answer regarding the conception of philosophy, but also more generally to rethink in another way relation between theory and practice, stems directly from his “Note sur les *Thèses*” and offers another intriguing conceptualisation via “transformed forms” that relate the field of science to ideology. Following the early Althusser and Macherey, philosophical interventions are inscribed in the field of theoretical ideologies, that is, the field between the “ideological” and the “scientific”.²⁵¹ Philosophy’s task is to rethink the relationship between science, politics and ideology, which is constantly undermined, restructured and overdetermined. In his “Note sur les *Thèses*”, the first step demonstrates the ideological conditionality of all fields (science, philosophy, but also politics); while the second step sketches possible ways of breaking with ideology, or of how these fields can be (self-)constituted. Scientific discoveries (science), demarcation-lines (philosophy) and revolution (politics) all imply processes of rupture within those fields. In this text, Althusser does not explain precisely how philosophy and ideology work between those fields, but only gives a hint with the concept of *verwandelte Formen* – transformed forms, which demonstrate a specific relation of ideology to other fields.²⁵² His suggestion is to define philosophy as a transformed form of ideology; philosophy thus works on the ideological forms as structurally necessary parts of reality. Is philosophy, then, as well as mediating between different fields, also naming ruptures in those same fields, and then being conditioned by them?²⁵³ In this sense,

²⁵⁰ Echoes of both the Third Thesis on Feuerbach and an allusion to the Chinese Cultural Revolution can be found in Althusser’s mode of argumentation. For different definitions of “philosophy as revolt” see also Klepec 2004.

²⁵¹ See Macherey 2009.

²⁵² Althusser 1994.

²⁵³ Badiou’s conception is different from Althusser’s, but there are some points of convergence. According to Badiou 2009, one of the tasks of philosophy is to maintain the place to think the “compossibility” of different

philosophy can be seen as gaining relative autonomy in the general picture of ideology-science-politics. However, here Althusser oscillates, he briefly suggested a direction that could overcome the conception of philosophy as (self-)mediation. The more political suggestion lies in his insistence on ideas becoming material forces in society – but then why would simply thinking politics, separated from philosophy, not be valid for future critical explorations on the role of philosophy?²⁵⁴

3.6. Note for next chapters

These two different ways of defining conjunctural philosophy suggest the need to displace any fixation on the Eleventh Thesis of Feuerbach, and instead concentrate on rethinking the encounter of the Tenth and Eleventh Theses. This contradictory encounter should not be understood as a simple merging of revolutionary theory and practice. Rather, Althusser's encounter should be seen as the mutual crosscutting of historical analysis and the philosophical horizon of the future that points to the partisan position within theory, which cannot be directly identified with existing force. Revolutionary theory is accompanied by another necessary encounter between the revolutionary politics of the masses and thought as a conjunctural analysis of the present situation. Philosophy helps to create the site of the encounter between revolutionary practice and theory.

An Althusserian-inspired orientation could then contribute to answering the question of contemporary controversy of “idea of communism”. It could do so in a two-fold way: first, it would strive to examine critically what went wrong with actually-existing socialism and to affirm past revolutionary moments in order to mobilise historical resources. This would mean also to participate in rethinking and inventing new forms of political organisation, which demands of philosophy a form of political engagement. If philosophy remains unaware of its “overdetermined” character, it can, even when attempting to grasp such a radical notion such as the idea of communism, end up in abstract opinion. This is the point where politicist Althusser comes close to Lukács: “Every ‘theoretical’ tendency or clash of views must immediately develop an organisational arm if it is to rise above the

truth-procedures. Philosophy is conditioned by four different truth-procedures. Althusser sketches out some of the conditions of philosophy in the text “What is philosophy” (1995).

²⁵⁴ Sylvain Lazarus seems to push most fervently in this direction (1996).

level of pure theory or abstract opinion, that is to say, if it really intends to point the way to its own fulfilment in practice”.²⁵⁵ The question of organisation is not simply a matter of vulgar political practice, experimenting and pragmatically calculating choices, but becomes the most abstract and simultaneously concrete point of any materialist orientation. It becomes a strategic link between revolutionary theory and practice, which guides the search for a new materialism today. Secondly, and this is only sketched by Althusser and more famously continued in the work of Alain Badiou, the role of philosophy remains in special distance from other fields – politics and science. By criticising Stalinism and pragmatism of Theory, but also by writing recipes for politics, philosophy should struggle for a relative autonomy of (critical) philosophy. This activity might perhaps not yield any extra-philosophical effects, but point out certain inconsistencies and only intervene in this specific space between ideological, political and scientific.

This chapter concluded the first more philosophical Part I and laid methodological guide that announced next two parts of the dissertation thesis. In the part II I work on Althusser’s notion of politics (via Machiavelli) and reproduction (mostly from his posthumously published work *Sur la Reproduction*), while in the part III I work on what was missing in Althusser’s enterprise: the concrete analysis of concrete situation. Socialist Yugoslavia will be the critical historical analysis that will employ some of the theoretical conceptual apparatus of part II: firstly, the constitution of communist politics (three moments: 1941-1945; 1948-1952; 1955-1957) and the last critique of transition to post-socialism within the times of market socialism (1965-1971).

²⁵⁵ Lukács (1971: 299).

Part II: Althusserian Theory of Politics and Reproduction

Chapter 4: Althusserian theory of politics: return to Machiavelli

Il est vrai qu'il partait pour l'inconnu. Mais pour ce navigateur aussi, l'inconnu n'était que terres nouvelles

Louis Althusser, *Montesquieu, la politique et l'histoire*

The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise and has got caught in his wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him is thrown toward the sky. What we call progress is *this* storm.

Walter Benjamin, *Theses on History*

4.1. Return to politics: From Lenin to Machiavelli

Althusser is often described as a politically engaged thinker, but that does not yet make him a theorist of politics. He called for the primacy of politics and the importance of class struggle for any Marxian enterprise, but one could justifiably ask if he ever worked systematically on a theory of revolutionary politics, or if he rather simply took over the old model of revolution, out of necessity from the Communist Party, as that which will simply lead into communism? If he elaborated on the theory of reproduction, the way in which the State and its operative apparatus function, this does not make him a thinker of revolution. But then again the whole theory of reproduction was from the very beginning thought from the perspective of revolutionary change. Perhaps surprisingly for Marxian cannon, but instead of return to Lenin, Althusser opted for return to Machiavelli. And the central goal of this chapter will be to reconstruct Althusser's theory of politics through Machiavelli.

Why could be the choice of Machiavelli before Lenin a surprise? Althusser wrote and published a major work *Lenin and Philosophy*,²⁵⁶ where he claimed that Lenin was a central political figure for international workers' class movement. One of Althusser's political projects was to rehabilitate Lenin after the horrors of the Stalinist period started to become public. For Althusser, the importance of Lenin should be evaluated both in a theoretical and political sense: Lenin continued and to a degree practically "realized" some of Marx's theoretical concepts: communist revolution, material efficacy of ideas, dictatorship of proletariat... Already in Althusser's essay *Contradiction and Overdetermination*, Lenin's theory of "weakest link" is expanded and used as the continuation of a scandal that refutes the teleological determinism of Marxists and Communists of *The Second International*. The Russian Revolution happened in the backward conditions of Russia and not in the most developed industrial countries that had a much larger working class. In this sense the conditions for revolution were much more "ripe" in the West than in Russia.²⁵⁷ Althusser ascribes to Lenin, and before to Machiavelli, the thought of the conjuncture (that is, "the concrete analysis of concrete situation"), which needs to think politics outside or beside the economic (objective) necessity and to rethink the situation from the politically overdetermined side: the status of imperialism, war, the development of political organisation, the link between masses and progressive ideas etc.

This chapter does not pretend that Althusser's Machiavelli can be read isolated from Althusser's Lenin, however, it seems that Althusser's return to Machiavelli opened an even a more radical path in considering revolutionary politics. It was Machiavelli, who for the first time in history radically posed the problem of the "beginning" in politics: the question of novelty. In this sense, in his theorization of novelty it is the theory of the "weakest link" that is missing and its coupling to the necessary link: politics as rupture. This does not mean that Althusser wanted to isolate politics from the objective laws of capital (the side of reproduction), but simply point to a moment of beginning that – at least temporarily – suspends this objective logic, and also, produces something that is immanent

²⁵⁶ Althusser (1969).

²⁵⁷ See FM (2005) and also RTJL(1976), where he embraces Leninism as a left critique of Stalinism.

to it: the thinking of novelty and the invention of new political form/organisation.²⁵⁸ In this respect, Althusser's contribution to political thought owes more to Machiavelli than to Lenin. Balibar is right to say that Machiavelli functioned as a symptomatic point that helped Althusser observe the limits of Marx and the Marxian theory of politics,²⁵⁹ and search further for thinking the politics as rupture.

Why this fascination with Machiavelli? Althusser's fascination has to do firstly and mainly with Machiavelli's invention that addresses the rupture in politics, which I would add makes him a first theorist of the modern concept of "revolution".²⁶⁰ But apart from this rupture Althusser read Machiavelli, paradoxically, also as a defendant of the old idea of revolution (*revolvere*), which makes him also a thinker of reproduction that is synthesized in his short formula: *mantenere lo stato, or how the state should be maintained?*²⁶¹ The double aspect of politics (chapter 4) and reproduction (chapter 5) is inherent to Althusser's general trajectory, which is a guiding thread of my return to Althusser.²⁶²

Althusser's fascination with Machiavelli is not so evident, considering that in his lifetime he published one single text that appeared in 1977: *Machiavelli's Solitude*.²⁶³ However, Emanuel Terray, one of Althusser's close students following his ENS seminars in the early 1970s testifies to this link that was hidden for a long time, even if Althusser started to read Machiavelli from 1962 onwards.²⁶⁴ A majority of texts like *Machiavelli and Us, The Underground Current of the Materialism of the Encounter* and Althusser's lectures on ENS were published posthumously. One of the major reasons not to publish these texts was most likely the ambivalent allegiance that coloured his relationship with the PFC and some of the fundamental theses in the works on Machiavelli could have been read

²⁵⁸ See also Lazarus (1996) for a very stimulating discussion, partly inspired by Althusser, partly by Badiou – and especially from the political practice itself, which makes a strong thesis on the interiority of politics, something that cannot be prescribed by any philosophy or external condition.

²⁵⁹ Balibar (2009: 15).

²⁶⁰ In this sense I will try to refute Balakrishnan's critique of Althusser that attempts to present Machiavelli more as a theorist of cyclical history than as a thinker of revolution (2000: 158-164).

²⁶¹ See also Tomšič on double aspect of revolution (2010).

²⁶² The question of the continuation of revolution interested all major political and theoretical figures of Marxism. Nevertheless there is something striking in the figure of Machiavelli that articulated this question with such lucidity in the era that was so different from ours.

²⁶³ The same year he presented the article *Crisis of Marxism*.

²⁶⁴ On the encounter between Machiavelli and Althusser see excellent essay from Terray (1996) and texts from Elliot (1997), Negri (1996) and Lahtinen (2009).

with distaste and put him in a further isolated position in PCF.²⁶⁵ Elliot rightly concludes that the events in the late 1960s and later were tense and resulted in “withdrawal to theory and political *attentisme*.”²⁶⁶

This withdrawal, this political solitude yielded some productive consequences in Althusser’s detour to Machiavelli. It meant that he did not remain completely silent about the French political context and the tendencies of “international communism”. Althusser was a tragic hero: one of the PCF intellectuals that remained silent on many political issues of his times, but then at the same time produced some of the theoretically most fascinating passages in Marxist theory that would remain unpublished in his lifetime. Althusser’s strategy of reading Machiavelli echoes some of the writings of medieval thinkers and theologians who invented metaphors and often misquoted their sources²⁶⁷ in order to communicate critical and even heretic readings of the holy scriptures or classical texts. And didn’t Machiavelli also use a similar strategy by imitating the style of a tract on the “advice to prince”, but as always in fear of political exile he did so to skilfully hide his assumed perspective: either people or Prince? There is an intricate dialogue between the theoretical and political life of tragic heroes and it cannot come as a surprise that Althusser felt a strong resonance with Machiavelli.

4.2. Returning Machiavelli to the Marxian tradition?

He who dares to undertake the establishment of a people should feel that he is, so to speak, in a position to change human nature.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book II

Niccollo Machiavelli is one of the classic authors, whose influence on political theory and practice has been sedimented over the centuries of struggles in the interpretation of his work. Today more often than not the signifier ‘Machiavellian’ is taken as a prevalent

²⁶⁵ For example, he also published a pro-Maoist text on the Cultural Revolution, even if anonymously (1966).

²⁶⁶ Elliot (1987: 266). The PCF became fully integrated into the democratic game in the 1970s; it became a part of political apparatus, or what in SLR Althusser would call “class collaboration” with the bourgeoisie (1995: 127). For a more detailed analysis of political conjuncture see Goshgarian (2003; 2006) and Elliot (1987).

²⁶⁷ See Lefort’s preface to De La Boetie (2002).

cliché with a strong pejorative connotation.²⁶⁸ The rich history of political and theoretical commentary testifies to a great challenge Machiavelli has posed up until today. Namely the internal contradictoriness or brilliance of Machiavelli's project, the republicanism or monarchism of his political orientation, at the end of the day there are few political theorists or philosophers who remain indifferent to his works.²⁶⁹

Althusser has no intention of reading Machiavelli in a philological way, but on the contrary cuts violently into the vast theoretical tradition that circles around one central problem:²⁷⁰ *was Machiavelli a republican or a monarchist?*²⁷¹ This question marks two fundamental ways of reading Machiavelli that cope with his political standpoint that side either with people or prince.²⁷² According to Althusser this eternal dilemma continues to isolate Machiavelli, to force him into solitude,²⁷³ and reproduces the slew of clichés from meditations on the immorality of 'Realpolitik' to the full embrace of the republican values of the city-state: that is, either praising the monarchist *Il Principe* or the republican *Discorsi*. Such a false dilemma avoids pursuing Machiavelli's major innovations: a politics of rupture, of novelty, and even the violent beginning of a new political form (the state).

But then again one should rightly expose Althusser's over-dramatized tone in his return to Machiavelli. Even before Althusser there was a series of thinkers who took Machiavelli's contribution to novelty in politics seriously : from the French Enlightenment tradition²⁷⁴ to German Romanticism.²⁷⁵ Even in Marxist theory some important texts have

²⁶⁸ According to the *Merriam Webster Dictionary* "Machiavellian" has the following meaning: "1: of or relating to Machiavelli or Machiavellianism 2: suggesting the principles of conduct laid down by Machiavelli; specifically marked by cunning, duplicity, or bad faith". In a Slovenian dictionary, Machiavellianism is a political principle "that advocates the use of cunning, immoral means to reach a goal", it runs along the lines of the moral maxim "the end justifies means".

²⁶⁹ Althusser argued that there is something indecipherable in Machiavelli, which will be never completely settled (1999: 117).

²⁷⁰ The list of contemporary authors that have studied Machiavelli closely is a long one, let me only mention a few that I will employ in following sections: Lefort (1972), Skinner (1981), Rubinstein (1994), Bartelson (1996). I will refer to Arendt's reading and place myself with and against (post-)Althusserian readings of Machiavelli: Vatter (2003), Negri (1996), Elliot (1999), Lahtinen (2009), Morfino (forthcoming).

²⁷¹ Many readers of Althusser that deal with his late, aleatory work like Negri (1996) or Vatter (2004) claim that Machiavelli won the struggle between theology and humanism, however they posit him as an advocate of radical republicanism, belonging to the critical humanist tradition. I would like to defend Althusser's thesis that pushes Machiavelli beyond the humanist tradition.

²⁷² F.Matheron would argue that precisely this internal tension has to do with one of the first conceptualisation of the void ("vide") in politics (cf. Kolšek forthcoming).

²⁷³ "Machiavelli is alone because he has remained isolated; he has remained isolated because, although there has been ceaseless fighting over his thought, no one has thought in his thought" (Althusser 2000: 123).

²⁷⁴ Rousseau read Machiavelli very closely and affirmed a great importance of Florentine philosopher for political thought.

been written on Machiavelli;²⁷⁶ most notably by Antonio Gramsci, but also Trotsky and Kamenev, who explicitly used a reading of Machiavelli in order to comment and criticize Stalinist politics and the end of the revolutionary times in the Soviet Union. Trotsky stressed the regressions of Stalin's pragmatic use of state machinery that resulted in severing ties, or the "Leninist cord" between the masses and the Party, and the end of the encounter between progressive ideas and the masses.²⁷⁷

Althusser ignores quite an important part of the theoretical readings that dealt with Machiavelli beyond the republican/monarchist viewpoint, the only author that he pays respect to is Gramsci's "Modern Prince", for whom he admits that Machiavelli was saved from his solitude.²⁷⁸ Althusser repeats the assertion that Marxian theory does not have a proper consideration of politics and Gramsci's theory is one of the few exceptional theoretical moments to draw inspiration.²⁷⁹ Notwithstanding their differences, Althusser followed Gramsci not only in his attempt to supply Marx with a political theory, but also in Gramsci's recognition of Machiavelli's discovery of the relation of forces that registered politics as a "different and independent activity with its own principles".²⁸⁰ Also,

²⁷⁵ One should think on Hegel's book *German Constitution* (1802), where he praises Machiavelli for imagining prince that is only by extreme ability even violence that one can save the decayed community. Fichte in many works referred to Machiavelli, see especially his *Über Machiavelli* (1807). This resonance can be located also in terms of the call of new German nation. At that time Germany was as split as Italy in times of Machiavelli. Needless to say, Machiavelli has been re-appropriated for very different political projects.

²⁷⁶ For an extensive study on reception of Machiavelli in pre-revolutionary and Soviet Russia see Rees (2004).

²⁷⁷ Trotsky defined Machiavelli's task, which "consisted in determining the most practicable policy to be followed in regard to a given situation and in explaining how to carry that policy through in a nakedly ruthless manner, on the basis of experiences tested in the political crucibles of two continents. This approach is explained not only by the task itself but also by the character of the epoch during which this task was posed. It proceeded essentially from the state of development of feudalism and in accordance with the crucial struggle for power between the masters of two epochs—dying feudalism and the bourgeois society which was being born." Later in the text Trotsky plays Stalin against Lenin and shows that the "virtù" of Stalin was to take over the machinery that was left over to him, and at the same time severing it from the most vital link – masses and ideas. "Lenin created the machine through constant association with the masses, if not by oral word, then by printed word, if not directly, then through the medium of his disciples. Stalin did not create the machine but took possession of it. For this, exceptional and special qualities were necessary. But they were not the qualities of the historic initiator, thinker, writer, or orator. The machine had grown out of ideas. Stalin's first qualification was a contemptuous attitude toward ideas." (1940). This peculiar relationship between prince-people-ideas is crucial already for Machiavelli. Another important reference is Kamenev's preface to Machiavelli, upon which he was also charged in the Stalinist processes in late 1930s (1962). I would like to thank Harrison Fluss for these references.

²⁷⁸ Althusser (1999: 130). See Gramsci (1957). For the best review of a tensed and productive dialogue between Gramsci and Althusser see Thomas (2009; forthcoming).

²⁷⁹ See Balibar's foreword to *Machiavelli et nous* (2009: 16).

²⁸⁰ (1957: 140).

Althusser is sympathetic to Gramsci's reading that advances the thesis of the *Modern Prince* as a/the (Communist) *Party*²⁸¹ avoiding the mainstream portrayal of the Prince as a concrete individual.

The major point of disagreement remains in the curving of this political space, and the rupture in a politics cleft to its extremes. Althusser was very reserved about one aspect of Gramsci's interpretation that assigned the central task of the Prince in the following way:

These two fundamental points – the formation of a national-popular collective will of which the modern Prince is at the same time the organizer and active working expression, and a moral and intellectual reform – should constitute the structure of the work.²⁸²

Althusser would be highly critical of the Enlightenment debt that marked this passage in Gramsci: on the one hand, a “national-popular collective will” (Rousseau) is recognized and, on the other, a “moral reform” (Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot). Althusser remained highly critical of any claim that would attempt to bring Machiavelli into the horizon of the “social contract”, which would mystify the transition from the state of nature into society.²⁸³ Althusser attempts to recover the violent moment of state formation and evaluate the status of rupture that is absent in Gramsci.

Althusser insists that there is an essential “remainder” in Machiavelli that makes him unclassifiable. Instead of being a thinker of harmony, the common Good, or God's Providence, Althusser embraces Machiavelli's clear (op)position, the one of struggle, violence and dissensus.²⁸⁴ In this respect, Machiavelli's place can be located in the caesura of Modernity, a vital contribution to the beginning of Modernity, more precisely to the beginnings of modern political thought as such.²⁸⁵ Althusser attempt has a specific aim: to glean from Machiavelli something that could be practical for Marxian theory, perhaps even

²⁸¹ See Gramsci (1957). The only major monograph on the relation between Althusser and Machiavelli is Lahtinen's study (2009). The latter oscillates to ascribe “subjectivity” to an individual (the heroic figure of leader), to which I would be reserved, but in many respects I share major wagers of Lahtinen's reading.

²⁸² (1957: 140).

²⁸³ Althusser wrote extensively on Rousseau, a bit less on Hobbes, although he was well acquainted with the whole social contract tradition. See his *Politics and History* (1972) and lectures (2006).

²⁸⁴ A similar point was made by Fabio Frosini (2004) and Claude Lefort (2012).

²⁸⁵ This is not to say that Machiavelli initiated a science of politics, because politics is not about the production of objective knowledge. This field, in Althusser's universe, is still reserved for history (and other natural sciences).

seeing Machiavelli as the veritable predecessor of a “new materialism” found in his inaugural and revolutionary gesture that grounded two new fields: history and politics.

4.3. The theoretico-historical circumstances of Machiavelli: Against Christian theology, humanism and “the accomplished fact”

Even if Althusser’s reading intends to refrain from a “historicist” detour it is useful to sketch a few notes that contextualize Machiavelli’s break in his own theoretico-historical conjuncture,²⁸⁶ if simply in order to strengthen the validity of the demarcation that is put forward by Althusser. As explained already in the chapter 2, theoretical solitude stands for the opening of a new perspective, even a new theoretical field that went un-thought before. Machiavelli performed a rupture in the existing theoretical world and opened a path towards a new political imaginary.

Machiavelli’s intervention took place in the midst of medieval struggles and controversies between humanists and theologians, and it can be fair said that the theological (religious) side up until then had the upper hand in those discussions.²⁸⁷ For Althusser theologians and humanists responded to the medieval situation from the “accomplished fact”²⁸⁸, that is, from the existing coordinates that prescribed morality (the “Good”) and religion (God’s Providence) with a division of the world into “temporal “and “spiritual” powers.

On the one hand the humanist most often participated in the dominant moral genre of those times, the so-called “mirror-for-princes”²⁸⁹ that was a typical form of humanist writing that consisted of recommendations for the making of a good prince. Humanists most often returned to the horizon of Roman Republic (Antiquity) that would set a good example and set “more” moral standards for the civic duties of a prince, moral virtues that could guide a prince through their current state of affairs. This would mean that from a humanist viewpoint the whole political field existed only once it was grounded in a

²⁸⁶ For Althusser Machiavelli began to “think in the conjuncture” (2000: 18).

²⁸⁷ It is also true that Machiavelli never explicitly evokes any author from his period (except ones from Antiquity) and his criticism is done in in-direct way.

²⁸⁸ (2000: 124).

²⁸⁹ Skinner (1990: 128).

morality under the cloak of the “Good”, which becomes the external point from which to judge and prescribe recommendations.²⁹⁰

On the other hand the theologians of Machiavelli’s time remained preoccupied with the question of the “God’s Providence”, the division between the “temporal” and the “spiritual”, which Kantorowicz excellently theorized in his book on *Two King’s Bodies*.²⁹¹ The theological view was the grounding of the political within the religious field, the foundation that would at times also tackle the humanist challenge to morality and the temporal world.

The republican theorist Rubinstein correctly asserts that the above-mentioned conceptual context so present in Machiavelli’s time is completely absent from his theoretical work. Machiavelli ignores all the fundamental topological questions of classical-scholastic philosophy concerning the role of justice in the state, the nature of the law, the limits of political obligation, or the relationship between the spiritual and temporal.²⁹² The striking absence of Aristotle and other scholastic references does not speak to Machiavelli’s lack of knowledge, but announces Machiavelli’s solitude, his refusal to subordinate his reflections to the theoretically *accomplished fact*. For Althusser, he starts thinking from the perspective of the “not-yet-existing”, or what he would coin the *fact yet to be accomplished* dismantling the moral-religious kernel of politics that was central to the late Middle Ages.²⁹³

This theoretical *fact to be accomplished* could be evaluated in more political terms: how these theologico-humanist positions reflected and justified the real historical struggles of the Italian late Middle Ages. Once juxtaposed with Machiavelli’s search for a “New Principality” other theoretical accounts affirmed the existing order and did not surpass the given political coordinates. Put in simplified terms, the humanist call legitimized either a monarchist defence of the Holy Roman Emperor (e.g. Dante),²⁹⁴ or a more radical

²⁹⁰ That would be a current of political philosophy that Badiou would discern as state philosophy (2005), or something that Rancière would attack as metapolitics (1999).

²⁹¹ Kantorowicz (1997) and see also the book from Tomaž Mastnak (2001), which is very important historico-theoretical analysis of the fight between Papacy and Empire that was taking place both through these theoretical discussions and in the real world.

²⁹² N. Rubinstein (1994: 47).

²⁹³ For Althusser, Machiavelli “cannot be put in one camp alongside other thinkers, in one tradition, as other authors can be put in Aristotelian tradition, or the tradition of natural law” (1999: 116).

²⁹⁴ For details on Dante’s political position see Mastnak (2001).

advocacy of the ‘sovereignty’ of the city-state (e.g. Marsilius di Padua)²⁹⁵, while the theological account would be clearly associated with Papal power.²⁹⁶ The existing political situation, or the politically “accomplished fact” already legitimized constituted entities: the city-states in Italy, and more predominantly, the primacy of the Papal authority and the Holy Roman Empire. Machiavelli’s times are still saturated in the predominant account of feudalistic organicist and corporativist metaphors immersed in the world of moral obligations, religion and chivalry that played a dominant role in social cohesion. Religion was the central ideological cement and its institutional framework dominated all spheres of social life, whereas theology dominated the theoretical field.²⁹⁷ This lead Balibar to diagnose a coincidence of religion and theology as a sort hegemonic bloc in the Middle Ages.²⁹⁸

Following Althusser’s reconstruction, Machiavelli’s theoretical intervention targeted both the political and theoretical *fait accompli*. If one remained only on the textual level, Machiavelli would be found to “idealize” the kingdom of France or some examples from city-states,²⁹⁹ or in a theoretical humanist vein, Machiavelli used historical references from Antiquity, from Lycurgus of Sparta to the Roman Republic. Unquestionably Machiavelli looked at the very same political matter, the specific conjuncture of Italian city-states, but he used the example of Ancient Rome from an entirely different perspective that did not serve him as a mere generic comparison with the present that would “pacify” the present,

²⁹⁵ I should add that at least to a certain degree his political affiliation can be associated with the radical republican reading of Marsilius di Padua. Marsilius already in 1324 wrote a revolutionary treatise *Defensor Pacis* and would be the first to theorize the elements of popular sovereignty. In his book he assigned a crucial role to the people and the “lawful sovereign”, the human legislator. He argued against oligarchy and in favour of “people or their better part (*valentior pars*) that need to be installed in the laws” (I.xii). There are three important theoretical steps in Marsilius’ theory, which remains within the “religious” horizon even though it already signals the break with the scholastic tradition: 1. Only the community provides adequate safeguards for decision-making against the usurpation by a particular part. 2. The axiom in practice of the primitive church: church government should be communal - *universitas fidelium* (II.XIX.2). 3. He draws a parallel between *universitas civium* (body of citizens) and *universitas fidelium* (faithful), which makes a connection between the community and the leader, a lawful sovereign (Watt, 1991: 421). Despite Marsilius’ defence of the “human” legislator that is the real forefront of later theories of sovereignty, he remains largely in the horizon of Aristotelian theory of “justice”, “good” and “nature of laws”.

²⁹⁶ The collection of studies in History of Political Thought (1991, eds. Burns and Goldie) provide a very precise account on theoretical and historical changes of that period; I have focused mostly on the concept of political authority and rise of sovereignty (Kirm 2005).

²⁹⁷ Balibar (2003; 2004).

²⁹⁸ Even the discourse on political-social-economic was thought through religion, the organic whole (see Agamben 2011).

²⁹⁹ Balakrishnan is quite right to support philological evidence for Machiavelli’s preferences (2000).

but point to the conflict in the past and the present. Machiavelli speaks the language of violence and struggle, which strips politics from morality and religion. In Althusser's words:

Instead of saying that the state is born of law and nature, he tells us how a state has to be born if it is to last and to be strong enough to become a state of a nation. He does not speak the language of law, he speaks the language of the armed force indispensable to the constitution of any state he speaks the language of the necessary cruelty of the beginning of the state...he speaks the language of the struggle between classes...³⁰⁰

As Hannah Arendt also claimed Machiavelli and Hobbes are the only thinkers of politics that had elevated violence from shame and moral disqualification;³⁰¹ Machiavelli raised the struggle to the level of the concept. In other words, he was first to launch the concrete analysis of the relations of forces in a concrete situation.³⁰² The political situation was then paradoxically seen as the precise analysis of relations of power, but from a radically new perspective, for Althusser's Machiavelli "poses the problem of Italian national unity".³⁰³ In the times of Middle Ages, Italy was divided by established political coordinates, Machiavelli would address, as the title of the key chapter of *Il Principe* signifies the *New Prince in the new Principality*. The most difficult and most obvious facts of politics: to locate the beginning and the rupture as it was torn away from myth, and in case of Machiavelli how he deals with this "impossible" Italian nation state. For Machiavelli, the major task of the new prince will be to establish a new principality that touches very different fields in different works: from the thinking of a political program and Italian national unity (*Il Principe*), to the reorganisation of a city-state (*Discorsi*) and army (*Treatise on War*) to political techniques and the invention of a new political form (*Il Principe*). There are different ways in which Althusser's Machiavelli expanded on this new

³⁰⁰ 2000: 125.

³⁰¹ Although as Althusser would rightly add, from a very different political angle. If Hobbes posited absolute sovereign power that would prevent violence of all against, then Machiavelli posited something new; here the use of violence is constructive for a political project, which is not already founded in sovereignty or contract (2006: 249-250).

³⁰² Michel Foucault gives Machiavelli credit for a concise analysis of power-relations, but at the same time he argued that Machiavelli was not yet able to develop a systematic study of political techniques. For Foucault, Machiavelli's political techniques were still to be linked to the figure of the sovereign (2004: 248) and it was only with Boulainvilliers that political techniques in the relation of forces became a real object of science.

³⁰³ Althusser (1999: 18). One should again have in mind that Machiavelli was aware of pronouncing something new in the field of political research, especially in 15. chapter of *Il Principe*, he would refer to *verita effettuale della cosa*.

rupture, from negation to self-foundation, from the theoretical to a more political perspective. This will be topic of next sections.

4.3.1. Machiavelli's Theses on the philosophy of history

Althusser did not want to evaluate how precise Machiavelli's history of the Italian peninsula was, but he read his project in terms of an innovative methodological intervention that resulted in the rupture with the humanist tradition. In the very beginning of the text *Machiaveli and Us*, Althusser suggested that he started using a new "experimental method"³⁰⁴, which enabled him to compare ancient and modern events. This new method was still dominated by old categories of the existing humanist horizon, and at the end of the day, Machiavelli struggled with a very contradictory philosophy of history.

Reading awry between *Discorsi* and *Il Principe* Althusser locates a contradictory movement between four major theses on history that brings Machiavelli to the new field of politics.³⁰⁵ In the first thesis on history, Machiavelli argues that "the course of natural and human things is immutable",³⁰⁶ thus the world never changes and that is the reason why we can compare different moments in time and "isolate the constants"³⁰⁷ in the ancient and modern conjuncture. Then, he seems to run into a contradiction, because the second thesis and pleads for an infinite variability and corruptibility of the same forms of government, where history's "law is change".³⁰⁸ Therefore, we have a thesis (1) on comparative variations and general immutability on the one hand and (2) the necessity of change on the other. Machiavelli tries to solve this contradiction in the third thesis, which functions as a double negation of the previous two. His third thesis synthesizes the "immutable order of things with their continual change... into a cyclical theory of history", which was heavily influenced by the Roman historian Polybius.³⁰⁹ These theses on history do not theorize about a typology of governments, but rather offer a theory of cycles that include variable forms and their repetitions in an historical continuum. These three theses can be classified

³⁰⁴ (1999: 33).

³⁰⁵ (Althusser 1999), see also Kolšek (forthcoming).

³⁰⁶ Althusser (1999: 34).

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Althusser (1999: 35).

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

as predominant markers in the future history of philosophy, or what Benjamin calls “historicism” and would as such remain insufficient for Machiavelli’s politics of rupture.

These theses on history enabled Machiavelli to use an experimental method and navigate between the past and the present. Machiavelli’s goal was to acquire objective knowledge and to trace the laws of history that would supply him with a more precise formulation of humanist “advice”. But these three theses are not everything that Machiavelli has to tell us, a fourth thesis (4) is crucial in terms of the shift from a cyclical theory of history to a theory of the politics of rupture. And this is the point around which Althusser’s return was mainly revolving.³¹⁰

4.3.2 Machiavelli’s Fourth Thesis: On Novelty

Althusser introduces the (4) fourth thesis, which I will call a *double cut* that produces a short circuit moving from *Discorsi* to the centre of *Il Principe*. The thesis on politics as rupture comprises of moment, when Machiavelli “takes the position”, which marks the leap into a *theoretical void*, which anticipates novelty.³¹¹ For Althusser, Machiavelli becomes the first figure in the history of philosophy that considered not only “conjuncture”, but “novelty”, or what he coined as the “theoretical and philosophical void”:

a 'materialism of encounter' thought by way of politics, and which, as such, does not take anything for granted. It is in the political void that the encounter must come about, and that national unity must 'take hold'. But this political void is first a philosophical void'.³¹²

³¹⁰ It is remarkable to observe that Althusser did not use Walter Benjamin’s famous essay, *Theses of History* (1940) that attacked precisely “historicism” and its incapacity to think rupture in history. Benjamin could assist Althusser productively in his struggle against “historicism”, precisely on the point that theorized the opening towards the future, but also affirmed the revolutionary moments of the existing constellation. Benjamin never ceased thinking about the ways of how to stop “historical” time.

³¹¹ Althusser (1999: 42).

³¹² (2006: 173). Althusser defines the void in a twofold way that marks the “minimal difference” between theoretical and political practice. Katja Kolšek elaborates this in detail from a Spinozist perspective: “The first kind of void enables the horizon of undecidability or aleatoriness of the question, for whom Machiavelli’s texts are written, or who is the subject of the text, the people or the prince. This void enables the play of overlapping between Machiavelli’s theory and his political practice and vice versa. The second figure of the void is the void of Machiavelli’s fourth theoretical thesis on the essence of a government, the void of the class struggle, which opens the horizon of the aleatory outcome of the science of history in its strict immanence and undermines the logic of the Hegelian dialectic. The figure of this void in *Machiavelli*

One is tempted to ask, if this theoretical void that Machiavelli thinks through philosophy is not simply “utopia”, which reverts the temporality from Antiquity into a futuristic temporality of the “not-yet-existing”? In such a case Habermas would be right to claim that Machiavelli is a theoretical twin of Thomas More, who together opened a path to two very different utopias.³¹³ At first it seems that Althusser tends towards this interpretation justifying Machiavelli’s use of the Ancient Roman republic as an affirmative case, since “every utopia scans the past for the guarantee and shape of the future”.³¹⁴ However, he rejects this interpretation that fails to recognize novelty in terms of the new theoretical “space of politics”.

There are a few important differences in More’s utopia and Machiavelli’s theoretical void, thinking the unthinkable in the concrete situation of a divided Italy. Their major pieces were written in a similar time; Machiavelli published *Il Principe* in 1513, while Thomas More published *Utopia* in 1516. Habermas split these two thinkers into two radically different paradigms: Machiavelli considered politics (technique of governing) and More considered an island on the grounds of the economic standards of common property.³¹⁵ Habermas inscribes the liberal split of Modernity that presupposes the autonomy of spheres: of politics and economy, as the More-Machiavelli twin beginning implies. However, this schematic view fails to address the novelty of Machiavelli compared to More. The latter can be easily aligned to the tradition from Plato’s republic onwards, which is inspired by geometric-economic standardization. Also, More posited the happy community on the island by prescribing the inhabitants a set of moral-legal standards³¹⁶, and who remained isolated from the world in eternal peace outside of any relation of forces. This view can be without reservations categorized as “utopian”; rather than

and Us anticipates future aleatory materialism ... from the point of view of the void as the vacuum, which pulls together the aleatory elements of the historical conjunction. Only from the point of view of the paradox of thinking the unthinkable in the core of the theory can, according to Althusser, Machiavelli’s true political practice arise.” (Kolšek, forthcoming).

³¹³ Habermas 1973.

³¹⁴ (1999: 49).

³¹⁵ See Habermas (1973: 41-81).

³¹⁶ Badiou (2005) and Rancière (1999) are both opposed to political philosophy as something prescribing moral (external) criteria to the situation.

changing the world, the utopian island wants to separate and leave the world.³¹⁷ Contrary to this, Machiavelli does not leave Italy to consider novelty, but curves the new space of politics within the situation itself. The Italian national state did not exist, not even on paper. Machiavelli stayed firmly on the ground, by rethinking the conjuncture of the Italian divisions, he set a new way of seeing politics that is in the very moment of rupture voided of morality. Even if new Italian state was to emerge, Machiavelli would never think of it in terms of peaceful island devoid of any struggles.

But there was something tragic in Machiavelli's new horizon of Italian national unity, as Althusser argued: "he knew that if his thought contributed at all to the making of history, he would no longer be there."³¹⁸ And once the nation state was historically realized it became a part of the European agenda of the nation-building process and later participated in the imperialist demands of new nation-states, which would set the bloody stage of 20th century.

4.4. Althusser's Machiavelli: politics of the encounter

But Machiavelli is not merely a scientist; he is a partisan, with mighty passions, an active politician, who wants to create new relations of forces and because of this cannot help concerning himself with 'what should be', though certainly not in the moralistic sense ... to see whether 'what should be' is an arbitrary or necessary act, concrete will or a hopeless wish, a desire, a yearning for the stars. The active politician is a creator, turbid void of his own desires and dreams. He bases himself on effective reality ... To apply the will to the creation of a new balance of the really existing and operating forces, basing oneself on that particular force, which one considers progressive, giving it the means to triumph, is still to move within the sphere of effective reality, but in order to dominate and overcome it (or contribute to this).

Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince*

I have decided to enter upon a new way, as yet untrodden by anyone else.

Niccolo Machiavelli, *Il Principe*

³¹⁷ This type of criticism is launched by Peter Hallward towards Deleuze, or rather some mainstream readings of Deleuze (2006).

³¹⁸ Althusser (1999: 129).

We have spoken continuously of systematic, planned preparation, yet it is by no means our intention to imply that the autocracy can be overthrown only by a regular siege or by organized assault. Such a view would be absurd and doctrinaire. On the contrary, it is quite possible, and historically much more probable, that the autocracy will collapse under the impact of one of the spontaneous outbursts or unforeseen political complications, which constantly threaten it from all sides. But no political party that wishes to avoid adventurous gambles can base its activities on the anticipation of such outbursts and complications. We must go our own way, and we must steadfastly carry on our regular work, and the less our reliance on the unexpected, the less the chance of our being caught unawares by any “historic turns”.

Ivan Ilyich Lenin, *Where to begin?*

4.4.1. On two types of knowledge: verita effettuale della cosa

Althusser’s Machiavelli makes a central wager located in this fourth thesis on history,³¹⁹ or rather the thesis on politics that was discerned as a theoretical void that resulted in another argument, why Machiavelli’s thought was unclassifiable. Thinking the encounter does not have anything to do with “objective knowledge”, or a neutral truth of Machiavelli as a researcher. Negri says this lucidly, “The truth is always and only effectual. The solidity of this truth comes from its being cut out of the totality of being. Each affirmation is negation. But strength consists exactly in going beyond the limit, the closure, the cutting out”.³²⁰ Thus, Machiavelli’s theory of politics produces a special type of knowledge that is inwardly split as such: firstly, it is one that is connected with the “truth” as something that surpasses the situation, but cuts it from within, and secondly, it is a knowledge that enables Machiavelli to systematize the political field with its relation of forces. The first has to do with a philosophical void, thinking about the impossibility within the constellation of the relations of forces, while the other side deals with a new analysis, thinking in the conjuncture that emancipates politics from its moral-religious cloak. The theoretical void transcends the horizon of the science of history and belongs to the field of politics, namely politics considered in its interiority, from the “impossible object” called “revolution”³²¹ or for Althusser the “encounter”.

³¹⁹ Althusser (1999: 42).

³²⁰ Negri (1999: 56).

³²¹ Moulier Boutang correctly points out that Althusser is interested in revolutionary politics: “more precisely, it is about explaining the emergence of a revolution. What is aleatory, uncertain in the sense of economists, inexplicable and uncontrollable in terms of the calculus of risk, is an organization of the event of the revolution.” (Moulier Boutang 1997).

The key feature of the encounter is contingency, something that is irreducible and unpredictable in the situation, or in other words, the encounter is groundless, since for Machiavelli, one cannot deduce it either from presupposed moral norms or by relying on God's Providence. Althusser puts this nicely: "Every encounter is aleatory in its effects, in that nothing in the elements of the encounter is prefigured, before that actual encounter, and the contours and determinations of the being that will emerge from it."³²² Thus, the "fact to be accomplished" is more precisely defined by Althusser as the contingent encounter of any new beginning stripped from any objective determination.

4.4.2. On the encounter of fortuna and virtù

How is the encounter between *fortuna* and *virtù* to be accomplished? Starting from more mathematical terms, Althusser would search the encounter taking place between the "objective conditions of conjuncture X in a certain place", and *virtù*, the "subjective conditions of the undefined individual Y".³²³ A successful encounter necessitates a meeting of X and Y, which must produce a "lasting effect".³²⁴ One needs to be forewarned that Machiavelli subverts the classical notions of *virtù*³²⁵ and *fortuna*³²⁶ that had a long history that stretches from Antiquity to the Middle Ages.

Firstly, *Fortuna*, or rather the "wheel of fortuna" recurred in the literary topos of the tradition of humanist moral advice that Machiavelli criticized so fiercely. The wheel of fortuna was used as a rhetorical device to teach any given prince a (moral) lesson about the negative sides of *fortuna*. Most frequently *fortuna* was framed in a narrative of

³²² Althusser (2006: 193).

³²³ Althusser (1999: 74).

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ *Virtù* has an equally long, but even more invested history in morality and it is connected to all major religions. *Virtù* is derived from the Latin "*virtus*" which means excellence, worth, goodness and/or virtue. It is usually translated as a virtue and moral excellence, the antonym of vice. Moral philosophy would refer to cardinal virtues: temperance, prudence, courage and justice. There is a list of virtues and their important role already in Aristotle's *Nichomean Ethics*.

³²⁶ In Greek mythology, *Tyche*, was the "tutelary diety" that governed the fortune of the polis, which in Roman times was translated as *Fortuna*. The latter etymologically derives the name from *Vortumna*, which is the "revolving of the year." The initial meaning of revolution comes from the Latin word *revolvere*, which means to turn around the axis, to make a full circle. Polybius, who is Machiavelli's major reference in *Discorsi*, believed that when no cause can be discovered to events such as floods, drought or frosts, then the cause of events should be attributed to *Tyche*. Polybius (1979: 29).

subservience to God³²⁷, as a destiny or objective force that cannot be directed or controlled.³²⁸ Contrary to this, Machiavelli has a certain new understanding of the term, since the whims and caprices of *fortuna* can be tamed: “*fortuna* is a judge of half of our acts, but the other half (or something like that) is left to our own decisions.”³²⁹ Machiavelli changes the common representation of destiny as a woman-puppeteer into a young capricious woman, who needs to be subjugated by a young, bold man, rather than a timid old man.³³⁰ Despite the utterly misogynistic metaphor, Machiavelli decisively shifts the attention and possibility to act on fortuna. He introduces *virtù* which can dismantle the capricious wheel of Fortune, as Matteo Mandarini puts it “*virtù* marks the specificity of the political: it is with *virtù* that one confronts *fortuna* and bends it to one’s will.”³³¹ This gives us a good idea of how Machiavelli’s attack on God’s Providence (and fate) was made.

Secondly, the concept of *virtù* was seen as the most important attribute for the good governance of a prince and good community in the literature of the “mirror to princes”. Again, opposed to humanist moral philosophy and the Christian religion, Machiavelli intervenes radically into this horizon freeing *virtù* from any non-political quality. Quentin Skinner rightly suggests that the conception of *virtù* becomes primarily linked to a military and political dimension, while the moral dimension becomes secondary.³³²

Althusser does not provide us with any clear definition of the investigated terms; it seems that Althusser is content to conclude that Machiavelli stripped *virtù* and *fortuna* of their moral-religious colouring and placed them beyond “good and evil”.³³³ Moreover *virtù* does not pertain to the mere education, in Althusser’s Machiavelli *virtù* is not equated with the “know-how” (techné) of a statesman or knowledge of a policy-analyst. On the contrary, the question of *virtù* brings in the discussion political practice that has to do with the

³²⁷ In the medieval context, even humanist thinkers like Dante would in his *Inferno* via Virgil explain the nature of Fortune, as a devil and a ministering angel that is subservient to God.

³²⁸ Nowadays *fortuna* could fit well into the “end of history” and the sacred forces of the market that cannot be steered. In this respect a current of Enlightenment that believes it is possible to steer the wheel could be linked to the socialist tradition of a planned economy (see Toscano, 2011, aesthetics of economy).

³²⁹ (2002: <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/machiavelli/niccolo/m149p/chapter25.html#fn46>).

³³⁰ For a more detailed account of Machiavelli’s metaphor of *fortuna* as a young woman see Lahtinen (2009: 253-256).

³³¹ (2008: 178).

³³² Skinner 2003.

³³³ Bartleson’s reading of Machiavelli’s politics directs us on understanding the proper laws of politics that reach beyond good and evil (1996: 114)

“agency” of new prince. Althusser refrained from conceptualising a political subject,³³⁴ but repeatedly evoked the moment of “assuming the position”, which implies a link to political power, to the “subjective”. His reluctance to bring the political subject into discussion should be read in terms of his general critique of humanist Marxism that all too easily ascribed politics to the emancipation of Man, where the political subject was equated with the conscious Man as a bearer of human rights and human emancipation.³³⁵ Althusser was very cautious in regards to this “Feuerbachian”³³⁶ kernel of politics that lapses into a bourgeois model of politics. Even if Althusser does not pursue in an elaborate fashion Marx’s key concept of “Gattungswesen”, a generic “species-being” that lies behind the discussion, in the beginning of 1970s he would clearly state that Man does not make history, but masses.³³⁷ The moment of the “generic” can be sustained only once: it is located in the movement of masses.³³⁸ Even if Althusser remains reserved in pursuing this aspect, his affirmation of “virtù” calls for further research.³³⁹ I suggest a short and provisional definition of virtù as political and organizational ability (of the new prince).

However the organizational power and political potentiality, no matter how conscious, of the new Prince does not yet guarantee a rupture, the taking hold of encounter. Negri’s interpretation of virtù as creative potentiality, or rather where the political and military *virtù* of the multitude form an essential part of an ontology of “constitutive power”

³³⁴ Althusser uses the concept of subject (as effect) in the realm of ideology (SLR 1995).

³³⁵ See also Badiou’s criticism of understanding politics in terms of merely ethical decision of conscious human being in the preface to his *Metapolitics* (2005).

³³⁶ Even if I agree with Nina Power’s defence of Feuerbach, whom Marx unjustly reduced (2009), Feuerbach’s politics still leads only to the thinking of Man (not the individual, but the infinite) that cannot be easily reconciled in Marx’s thinking of politics that brings into the question the partisan position of the proletarian class. This discussion will be further explored on some other occasion.

³³⁷ See famous passages from RTJL: “Against John Lewis’s Thesis -- it is man who makes history -- Marxism-Leninism has always opposed the Thesis: it is the masses which make history. The masses can be defined. In capitalism, *the masses* does not mean “*the mass*” of aristocrats of the “intelligentsia”, or of the ideologists of fascism; it means the set of exploited *classes*, strata and categories grouped around *the class* which is exploited *in large-scale production*, the only class which is capable of uniting them and directing their action against the bourgeois state: the proletariat.” (1976: 47).

³³⁸ Marx does not go as far as to ascribe this generic moment to masses, but it needs to be noted that already in 1844, Marx posited “Gattungswesen” as an obsolete concept. Marx moves away from Man as the major agent of history: The real, active orientation of man to himself as a species-being, or his manifestation as a real species-being (i.e., as a human being), is only possible if he really brings out all his species-powers — something which in turn is only possible through the co-operative action of all of mankind, only as the result of history — and treats these powers as objects: and this, to begin with, is again only possible in the form of estrangement. Marx and Engels 1975-2005 (Vol. 3: 333). Man is then an effect of the activity of mankind and the forces of history, the effect and not its origin!

³³⁹ In this respect, both former disciples, Badiou and Rancière updated some of the unspoken aspects of the theory of the encounter, which led them to a theory of the political subject.

is particularly problematic.³⁴⁰ It is not enough only to see the domination in order to break with it. No matter how radical an ontology of the political subject is, it does not yet guarantee the drawing of consequences from the encounter of *virtù* and *fortuna*. The subjective side, or the presupposed ontological power of *virtù* can be subsumed or integrated into very different political “causes”: it can become a part of a facilitative role for a management of politics (creative abilities) or even turn into fascism.³⁴¹ One can then agree to a definition of *virtù* as political ability (that is open to everyone) only when the condition of affirming the rupture with the existing state is affirmed and draws consequences from this very rupture. In this sense, one avoids positing *virtù* as a capacity integrated into the constituted power of existing political machinery.

At this point Althusser speaks a similar language as Hannah Arendt, when she asserts that *virtù* is a political answer to *fortuna*, it is ““the excellence with which man answers the opportunities the world opens up before him in the guise of fortuna””.³⁴² This political answer is never only the “reproduction” of what has been, that is, simply a repetition of already existing morality, its political institutions and knowledge, but something that has to do with the new way of making community; that is, according to Arendt this is a contingent moment of “coming together”. As aforesaid, contingency and unpredictability are the most fundamental characteristics of Althusser’s theory of the encounter, of politics as rupture. The conflictual moment with Arendt lies in a different moment, in the moment of what comes after the contingent encounter: how is one to think and practice the continuation of the encounter? One of my first provisional theses argues that there is a minimal self-referentiality that pertains to the *politics of encounter*. *The encounter begins with the encounter itself (politics = politics)*.³⁴³ This tautological formula forces us to return to thinking politics in itself, not from a certain presupposed morality or historical objective formula, but in its interiority that emerges in contingent and

³⁴⁰ For detailed account see Negri (1999: 81-98).

³⁴¹ The book from Paolo Virno *Grammar of Multitude* brings some essential correctives to one-sided view of multitude (2004).

³⁴² Arendt (1977: 153).

³⁴³ This self-referentiality of politics is at first glance very close to Hannah Arendt and her conceptualisation of politics as thinking (1978). I do not have time to tackle with Arendt’s major wager here, but would just outline some fundamental differences with the Althusserian project generally: in contrast to Arendt, Althusser does not acknowledge any presupposed politicality, a binary between public and private, or a privileged locus of politics. Althusserian position also insists on the Marxian claim that politicizes all spheres in society; what was seen low in the social hierarchy for Ancient, work, becomes important field of politics.

unpredictable fashion.³⁴⁴ Thus, the (self)foundational moment is not only a rupture with the existing order; but if it wants to produce yielding effects, then it needs to draw consequences in order to sustain this moment of cogency, of rupture within new constellation (of fortuna).

4.4.3. Politics of rupture: the political process of desubstantialization³⁴⁵ with the prince and fortuna

The question of the encounter, of *virtù* and *fortuna* exists in a crucial tradition of revolutionary action, especially the question of the driving forces of history that was so intriguing to Karl Marx. In a passage from *The XVIII Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* Marx famously remarks:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.³⁴⁶

Althusser's theory of the "contingent encounter" can be read as radicalising this dialectical relationship between men and circumstances, which at least during the encounter, rupture with all tradition and awake from the nightmare, perhaps even forgetting the latter. The encounter of *virtù* and *fortuna* entails an opening up towards the future, which has to do more with forgetting than remembering. It is the concept of desubstantialization that will assist us in tracing the details of the political process of encounter, the "making of history". For Althusser's encounter is not only contingent and unpredictable, but in order to "take

³⁴⁴ See Badiou (2005).

³⁴⁵ This is not Althusser's term, but upgrades some of his notes on politics of encounter. I will locate it close to Rancière's theory of politics, especially to the concept of "de-identification" (1999). One can furthermore compare this with Deleuze's concept of "deactualisation" (1977).

³⁴⁶ Marx and Engels 1975-2005 (Vol. 11: 103). Benjamin's paraphrase of these sentences from his *Theses on History* (1940) is refocalised in the moment of danger, crisis, and potentially revolution, when the tradition of the oppressed are in constant danger of being forgotten. But can't we also read the whole burden of the past in another direction: perhaps the nightmare of the dead is forgotten precisely in the moment of rupture, when the real transformation of men and circumstances takes place and the oppressed rise and carry the consequences of this rupture: the moment when the oppressed become victors?

hold” it demands a consistent political labour that I name “desubstantialization”: transformation on the side of the prince (*virtù*) and on the side of principality (*fortuna*).

Already before Althusser Antonio Gramsci vigorously argued for a transformation of the prince that needs to be untied from the political philosophy of Man, the “concrete individual”:

The modern prince, the myth-prince, cannot be a real person, a concrete individual; it can only be an organism; a complex element of society in which the cementing of a collective will, recognized and partially asserted in action, has already begun.³⁴⁷

In this sense, Gramsci illuminates the importance of “organisational” form that needs to accompany the production of the new, which is much less a matter of Man than a collective matter. Gramsci rightly shows that this has to do with assuming the position of the people and his response is unambiguous: it is the Communist Party that should take the position of the *Modern Prince*. At this point Gramsci’s argument runs close to Emmanuel Terray’s thesis “The motor of history is not inside Man ... but it is the antagonisms that are located in the heart of the people”.³⁴⁸ These claims separate Machiavelli from a more humanist stance; assuming the position of the “people”, masses and organisational form becomes the centre of the Gramscian-Althusserian reading.

The move to de-individualize the prince and rethink the organizational form of the new prince is radicalised by Althusser himself.³⁴⁹ His fundamental thrust suspends any presupposed referent: individual, king, parliament, party: anything that is connected with the existing political system. Althusser launches a subversive thesis: “*the New Prince can start from anywhere, and be anyone: he can ultimately start from nothing, and be nothing to start with*. Once again, nothingness – or, rather, the aleatory void.”³⁵⁰ Althusser’s Machiavelli thus opens the position of the prince to anyone, which means that the becoming of the new prince has nothing to do with a hereditary status or high social position. It is not circumstances that will in advance determine the making of the new prince. This “anyone” can be any social group, social movement, working class, Party,

³⁴⁷ (1957: 137).

³⁴⁸ (1996: 155).

³⁴⁹ The price that Althusser pays for this move is to – at least temporarily – bracket out the organisational form (Party) and arrive at a more “formalist” definition of the politics of encounter. However, this is then re-addressed in the question of the continuation to which I will arrive later.

³⁵⁰ Althusser (1999: 79).

class coalition, etc., and Althusser refrains from specifying it in a concrete form. In this regard, one might ask, doesn't Althusser's thesis lapse behind the Gramscian insistence on "organisational" form? But at this point Althusser is more interested in the political process of rupture, how this new prince undergoes the process of political transformation. It is not enough to say that it is open to anyone, but it also needs to address everyone.

Desubstantialization is a transformative political process, where the presupposed substance of the prince, what was before the "natural" and dominant form of morality and political rule, are being stripped of its inner core. In this sense, it would not be exaggerated to claim that the moment of rupture is blind to the ideological "predicates" of the existing order. This view of "desubstantialization" is inspired by Rancière's theory of politics;³⁵¹ more notably I am indebted to his theorisation of the mechanism of "de-identification". The Rancièrian touch to the new prince would claim that the former identity that rested on a specific substance (class, gender, race, nation) is desubstantialized in the course of rupture. Rancière returns this mechanism to the emergence of the "political subject": after the event, those that were unheard and invisible are heard and dismantle the ordering of places in the former Order. Even if the logic of counting and the Rancièrian insistence on a political subject would be foreign to Althusser, he shares the thesis on the stripping of concrete determinations of (old) prince; popular ability, *virtù*, is appropriated for the political cause and, to say it poetically, nothing remains the same.

Althusser's stubborn insistence on the primacy of the encounter over "prince" or "political form" brings two important consequences: firstly, Althusser attacks the "cult of personality" that is the other side of the humanist thesis that "Man makes history" as the ultimate subject and holder of utopian hope. Secondly, the new Prince does not hold a specific "substance" of blood and soil, which is so striking in populist and fascist discourses on novelty in politics: the Slovenian nation, *Deutsche Volk*, European Judaeo-Christian civilisation similarly perhaps share the radicality of an attack on the existing order, however they always refer to a certain eternal substance that is affirmed in the

³⁵¹ Politics is a moment of rupture with the order of police. The political process in Rancière's view demands that the emerging political subject -the unheard, silenced, excluded, exploited, all those "uncounted" by the dominant logic of the police- transforms the distribution of sensible, and begins with the new logic of counting; where the unheard and invisible become heard and visible to all; even more, their egalitarian maxim addresses anyone. This is the universal kernel of Rancière's politics (1999).

process. The Machiavellian prince's substance is emptied out in the political process. The new prince uses *virtù* in the light of a new emancipatory perspective.³⁵²

The Althusserian theory of encounter would remain very “formalistic”,³⁵³ if one insisted on a complete break with historical circumstances, as if the process of de-substantialization does not target very concrete modes of domination and exploitation. As if for the encounter to be successful, the new prince does not formulate the political maxim of equality and justice that would address everyone. The core of desubstantialization is very concrete in terms of its efficacy: the prince, multitude, or political subject, is not the same as it used to be, but on the contrary, “new” prince is an effect of a ruptural politics.³⁵⁴ The closest Althusser comes to naming the new Prince is when referring to people or masses.³⁵⁵

However, the prince does not forever remain de-substantialized, but is re-substantialized, or in Rancièrian terms, goes through a process of re-identification. What counts in this re-grounding of politics is first if popular forms of power, political organizations and other agencies are able to continue the rupture, in a more formal way, if they are able to conserve this contingent character of rupture within the very Order. This is not to say that the new constellation, the new fortuna is simply devoid of conflicts, an island utopian dream, but in what way the strategic cord between the new prince, political organisation, masses and political principles are sustained and developed. New political

³⁵² I will come to the specific example of national liberation (even anti-colonial) struggles in chapter 6, where I will evaluate some political sequences that rather than speaking about the nation speak about the constitution of a revolutionary “people” and the internationalist dimension of the anti-imperialist struggle.

³⁵³ This path of stripping substance from political order and political agents is followed by some radical postmodern theories, such as Claude Lefort's; he claims that the central feature of democratic authority in contradistinction to totalitarian regime is the conservation of the formal and “empty space of power” (1988: 225-226). Also it is important to note that Althusser referred to the preface and study of Lefort on Machiavelli (1999: 3).

³⁵⁴ In this respect Badiou (2009), Rancière (2002) and Žižek (2001) are right to criticize Negri's conception of the multitude that all too easily resorts to an eternal ontology of potentiality, which does not tell us anything about the moment of rupture: when multitude “in itself” becomes multitude “for itself” to use old Marxian framework.

³⁵⁵ Althusser assumed the position of masses on many occasions. Apart from the reference already mentioned in the RTJL, he most directly advocated for it in his political text *22ème congress*, where he called for a return to mass politics: “Something can rise and develop in the union of the people of France, something that has been destroyed by Stalinist practices but which is at the heart of the Marxist and Leninist tradition: something that concerns the relation between the Party and the masses. *Return the word to the masses* that make history, be at the service not only of the masses (a slogan that could also sound reactionary), but *listen to their voices*, to study and comprehend their aspirations and contradictions, their aspirations in their contradictions, be able to pay attention to the imagination and creativity of the masses” (1977: 35–7). “Imagination and creativity of the masses” runs very close to his conception of the *virtù* of people.

organization does not only point to the empty and contingent place of power, much more importantly, its task is to constantly reinvent the encounter between the universal political principle (equality, justice³⁵⁶; the call and realization of the future society, communism) and the masses. It organizes and nurtures the strategic link that takes hold in the transformative process. In this sense one is able to integrate a few historical examples from the 20th century: from the Soviets before and during the Russian revolution, committees for national liberation during the times of WWII, self-managed and occupied factories, and from feminist and queer struggles to anticolonial, student and social justice movements... Their common denominator links together three elements: masses, ideas and political organisation.³⁵⁷ In this respect, one has to infuse Althusser's argument with a Gramscian thesis on the necessity of political organisation vis-à-vis the new Prince; without it the encounter between fortuna and virtù cannot be sustained.

The political process does not progress only on the side of the new Prince (desubstantialization), but also on the side of *fortuna*, or what Althusser calls "*the political conjuncture X*". Not only does this desubstantialization of fortuna deal with a new perspective, imagining the impossible and new world, but also stays very much involved in this particular conjuncture in terms of "de-localisation":³⁵⁸ in Althusser's words "*the New Prince can start from anywhere*".³⁵⁹ Not only that every politics of the encounter deals with this space, but it is from the very beginning involved in direct confrontation over the (re)appropriation and re-use of space.³⁶⁰ The thesis on "de-localisation" subverts the cliché that politics only happens in established political institutions (governmental bodies, parliament...) with prescribed procedural rules. By way of contrast, a new political form can emerge in spaces that are not designed as public or political. Not that the new prince is forbidden to use, or ignore the existing state machinery. At specific historical moments the

³⁵⁶ Both Rancière (1999) and Badiou (2005) offer an intriguing attempt to politicize the "legal" principle of equality and justice for the communist idea and the kernel of any emancipatory politics.

³⁵⁷ See Trotsky 1940.

³⁵⁸ This term was elaborated by Rancière (1999); one can further compare it with Deleuze's concept of de-territorialisation (1977).

³⁵⁹ Althusser (1999: 79).

³⁶⁰ The scope of this thesis exceeds the delimitation of my trajectory, therefore let me only refer to some excellent studies that think the *space* as a strategic investment of political power and its coupling with economical power (see Foucault 2004), or works from David Harvey (1991), Hardt and Negri (2009), Henri Lefebvre (1970) to name a few.

only way to proceed with the encounter is to take state power,³⁶¹ occupy the positions without constantly striving to transform the very distribution of elements and power relations within the existing apparatus. It is not surprising that 20th century revolutionary experiences point to certain subtraction from the public, allegedly political spaces of power: the massive politics of encounters politicized spaces that were utterly non-political or private³⁶²: the sphere of work (factories; workers' self-organisation, trade unions, workers' Party), military (mutinies and councils), private sphere (so-called reproduction; feminist struggles, subcultural movements), universities (students), colonies (urban and forest guerrilla struggles, anticolonial movements) and other marginal spaces (prison, total institutions...). These spaces became sites of contested ideological struggles and also sites of massive mobilisations, where in their own specific ways they contributed to de-localisation and re-localisation of politics, disrupting the dominant structures of authority. This points to the fact that the "de-localisation" of politics does not want to simply proclaim a movement in exodus that would be placed outside the old Principality, but is rather re-located and politicized within this very Order where the new emerges.

The politics of encounter is then successful, when "desubstantialization" and "delocalisation" take place on both sides, transforming the prince (activation of popular virtù) and fortuna (new space). But for the lasting encounter to "take hold", the politics of destruction of the old is not sufficient. Also, this radical immanence of the rupture that is grounded in rupture itself is not enough. In the Machiavellian universe the striving for Italian national unity, in the Althusserian universe the striving for communist revolution brings the question of consequences of encounter to the fore of research. The successful encounter does not result in utopia, or a certain synthesis and harmony between the human being (virtù) and the world, as is suggested by Arendt; it is not morality or simple competence, it points more to political principle (freedom)³⁶³ For Althusser encounter does not redeem humanity and absolve/resolve all conflicts, but points directly to the position of fundamental asymmetry, the split between the human being and the world, and also the split within the world, between human beings themselves. The contingent encounter

³⁶¹ For a theorization of strategies that go strictly against any take over of power (or state), see Holloway (2002), and from a different post-Maoist perspective see Badiou (2005; 2009).

³⁶² See Rancière (1999).

³⁶³ (1977: 155-156).

radically changes the world, but should not be conceived either as a mythical beginning, or as a future utopia without division. It is only after the encounter that the real political work begins, that the real beginning begins. And it is here that the new organisational form constantly needs to (re)enter and (re)create the relationship between emancipatory ideas and masses. It is also here that the revolutionary experiences, victories and failures, show that some theoretical questions can be only answered by political practice itself.

4.5. The case of Cesare Borgia: political void?

Machiavelli frequently referred to historical examples from Roman and Greek Antiquity, to real and mythical persona, through which he developed his philosophy of history and confirmed a law of constant cyclical change. Perhaps the most fascinating part of Machiavelli's political intervention emerged in the moment when he grasped his own time and place. Machiavelli's move to theoretical void was largely inspired by a real historical figure, Cesare Borgia, whose failure left open a political void.³⁶⁴ What is to be done in the situation of such a divided country? After a time of the balance of powers guaranteed by the "Italian League", a loose coalition of city-states, the Italian peninsula was shaken by the invasion of French king Charles VIII. Cesare Borgia was a son of the Pope Alexander VI and was granted a small province the Romagna, but through a series of courageous battles and diplomatic political ability Cesare was able to unite a large part of Italian city-states. It is correct to say that on the level of historical fact, he was a tyrannical prince, but the horizon that he opened was completely new. One would find the wheel of fortune surprised in the light of his most successful campaign that unfolded between 1498 and 1503. Nobody at that time expected that he would have intervened in such a big way in the Italian context, and for a short window of time, it seemed that the new horizon of Italian unity was possible.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ Althusser's theory of encounter argues that anyone can become a new Prince. It is a bit ironic to claim that on the example of Cesare, who was a son of the Pope Alexander VI.

³⁶⁵ Machiavelli warned him in 1502 that one of his major failures was his inability to secure the support of the next Pope; therefore his power remained dependent on his father. With the new Pope being a rival to the Borgia family, Cesare was arrested and all his previous achievements and territories were annexed to the Papacy. He died young in Viana on the battlefield far away from Italy (1507). For a detailed historical overview placing emphasis on Florence as the centre of republican thought and influence on Machiavelli see N.Rubinstein (1994: 30-68).

Even though the “encounter” between Cesare’s *virtù* and Italian *fortuna* did not last long, Machiavelli was very impressed with the political sequence that was opened, or rather that he located within the conjuncture. Instead of God’s providence, the fortuna and morality of the prince, the short historical sequence according to Machiavelli meant an encounter between Cesare’s impressive political skill and his military talent, his *virtù*, and favourable historical circumstances (fortuna) that he used to the best of his ability. The perspective of the “Italian national state” that was opened went well beyond the temporary peace that served as a momentary balance of power in the hegemonic colonial struggle between the Papacy, the Roman German Emperor and the French king.

Not to overemphasize the personal story of Cesare, but it has to be said that he decided against his initial destiny: Cesare was the first in history to renounce the title of cardinal (1498) and, contrary to the path set by his hereditary destiny, being a son of the Pope, decided for a political and military career.³⁶⁶ This was a jump into emptiness, a “leap of faith”, since he risked to lose everything, but at the same time life started anew, a political process that stripped him of his previous “identifications”. In a way, his throw of the dice could be compared with Hegel’s meditation on Julius Cesar and his famous crossing of the Rubicon:

Such individuals had no consciousness of the general Idea they were unfolding, while prosecuting those aims of theirs; on the contrary, they were practical, political men. But at the same time they were thinking men, who had an insight into the requirements of the time — *what was ripe for development*. This was the very Truth for their age, for their world; the species next in order, so to speak, and which was already formed in the womb of time.³⁶⁷

On the one hand one can agree with Hegel, since one of the major characteristics of the politics of rupture is that the “prince”, the heroic Cesare Borgia, did not really “know” about the “general Idea”, of Italian national unity. On the other hand, Hegel’s interpretation is not completely satisfactory; he describes Caesar’s jump over the Rubicon and his political decision as being the “Truth” of that age already “formed in the womb of time”. The dice fell not because all bets were in his favour or the time was ripe for such a throw, quite on the contrary, it was against all bets that Cesare Borgia committed himself to

³⁶⁶ It is right to add that at that time it was not so unusual that the Popes would not hold the sword.

³⁶⁷ (1956: 30-31).

Fortuna, against the “ripeness” in the Italian situation. Cesar’s crossing the Rubicon was a big step that should not be underestimated: it changed dramatically the course of Roman, even world history, but under the close scrutiny of historical circumstances, this step is not on the same level as Cesare’s. The corruption, internal divisions in the senate, times after the agrarian reform with growing class stratification were all pointing towards an imperial direction. It can be said that this is our retrospective illusion, but the “imperial” tendency was nevertheless in the air before Julius Cesar. Hegel was right to affirm the “ripeness” of the moment.

Compared to the fierceness of social divisions and political tensions in the times of Cesare Borgia the situation was similar, but Machiavelli’s Cesare, would not only favour the Roman Republic over reactionary Empire. The idea of the political sequence and encounter is diametrically opposed to the idea of “ripeness” or that the Idea is formed in the “womb of time”.³⁶⁸ The contingent and unpredictable character of Cesare’s encounter came as a surprise for anyone and the great ability of Cesare’s new citizens and army was impressive. The historical failure of Cesare proves that the time was, however, not ripe. One could ironically add that Hegel was right: Italy needed to wait for Garibaldi, till the time was ripe.³⁶⁹ However, this would fail to recognize the radicality of Cesare – success is not the only criterion of politics – his contribution to a new perspective. Once the historical circumstances were ripe more than three centuries later, the nation-building process was already a part of the “accomplished” European political agenda that restructured new balances of power in the light of fading powers of Ottoman Empire and emerging nations without states.³⁷⁰ The nation-building process soon turned in many negative directions, in the case of Italy expressing clear colonial and irredentist claims that along with Germany catapulted Italy into hegemonic power struggles in and outside Europe. Contrary to the ripeness of the national project in late 19th century, Machiavelli’s perspective from 16th century, anticolonial and popular simultaneously, remained isolated and to paraphrase Hegel, his voice had died away without effect.³⁷¹

³⁶⁸ For a convincing argument on Althusserian heterogeneous temporality see Ichida (1997).

³⁶⁹ Perhaps the logic of encounter is better to describe failure than the epic victory of historical ripeness and the rider on the horse and the crossing of Rubicon.

³⁷⁰ See also Hobsbawm(1992), Gellner (2006).

³⁷¹ Hegel 1802.

At the very end one could draw some further notes on the theory of politics as rupture. The theoretical void that Machiavelli opened is not to be taken in a purely formalist way, but needs to be subjugated to an additional set of “conditions”. In order for the successful encounter of X *virtù* of the new prince with Y conjuncture, one should verify the following steps: firstly, if the new perspective on the world is opened by encounter that implies a set of emancipatory demands that go beyond identity demands; secondly, this is related to a process of desubstantialization and delocalisation on the part of new prince and *fortuna*; and thirdly, if the existing modes of domination are dismantled,³⁷² then this encounter needs to constantly draw consequences that are activated in all the future struggles against oppression and exploitation in society.³⁷³

4.6. Machiavelli’s notes on theory of revolution

...the memory of their freedom gives them no rest, no peace...
Niccolò Machiavelli

Vittorio Morfino lucidly commented that the Machiavellian politics of encounter should be read as

the permanent revocation of the accomplished fact, it is *fortuna* which is never present itself in person and as simple instance, but as ‘occasion’, as a complex web of encounters which are situated on different levels. The taking hold or not taking hold of each of them modifies the quality of the web as a whole.³⁷⁴

Could we say that Morfino’s reading of an encounter as a “permanent revocation of the accomplished fact” is yet another way of re-instating Trotsky’s maxim of “permanent revolution”? Should then one posit a revolutionary memory as a revocation of the present, something that even though looking to the past already catapults to the future? In the concluding section I trace a few passages that further reconstruct a modern theory of revolution in Machiavelli, which oddly enough, was not made by Althusser. Fabio Frosini prefers a notion of “mutation” to revolution, but pushes his reading of Machiavelli in the

³⁷² See also Tomba (2009)

³⁷³ In this respect, one can trace the importance of Althusser’s theory for subsequent developments in contemporary French political theory from Rancière, Lazarus, Badiou to Balibar.

³⁷⁴ Morfino (forthcoming).

same direction. From Machiavelli onwards “mutation” will be precisely the place, where order is produced, because order does not coincide any longer with the perpetuation of the State machinery, but with the construction of a new State.³⁷⁵ This said, I would stress two moments for Machiavelli’s theory of revolution: an antilegal heteronomous moment and revolutionary terror.³⁷⁶

Machiavelli’s frequent critique of morality is accompanied with a criticism of following the laws set by the new prince. In respect to law Machiavelli’s prince should not show much respect, since for the revolutionary encounter of virtù and fortuna to last the prince “must often, in order to maintain his power, act against faith, against charity, against humanity, against religion”³⁷⁷, while feigning to have all these qualities. Machiavelli showed a great reluctance to posit the laws as a condition and as the ultimate horizon of the new state, which made his position exceptional in the light of legal humanism. Also importantly, this strong anti-legal current went head to head against the persistent cliché in political theory: where violence ends, law starts. This strict separation is based on the liberal argument and a central image of the social contract theory that framed the discussion around the transition from the state of nature to society/state. The central sovereign power (state) to which rights of people are transferred becomes the guardian of

³⁷⁵ Frosini (2004).

³⁷⁶ One should refrain from reading Althusser’s Machiavelli through Schmittian lenses, as was done by Yoshiko Ichida, when reading Althusser’s formula the “void is nothing”. According to Ichida the theoretical void can be affirmed only by a political decision, which names the void and announces the “state of exception”. The void is further identified with the Schmittian subject, whose decision gives place to the form. According to Ichida the popular will finds its synthesis in the act of the sovereign decision (Ichida 2005). This void of content is based on nothing, which is related to the temporality of the eternal repetition of nothing. Again, it is not only that the prince cannot be simply equated with the sovereign, also I fully agree with Morfino’s critique of Ichida’s move that “is fundamentally juridical” (forthcoming). Ichida subscribes Machiavelli and Althusser to the juridical model that they persistently wanted to break with. The antilegal and revolutionary kernel of Machiavelli does not allow for such an easy recuperation into sovereignty, even less in the transhistorical model that reduces the whole politics to the decision of the exception. The similarity with Althusser’s Machiavelli is thus only in the moment of encounter, which is so to speak blind to any “attributes”, empirical facts of fortuna and virtù: encounter can happen to *anyone and anywhere*, but what counts is the process of desubstantialization that transforms the existing state of affairs and not – via formal sovereign act – confirms it, or even makes it stronger. The task of the new prince in the Althusserian-Rancierian frame is not to arbitrarily execute decisions, but is linked to political *virtu*, the ability to draw consequences from the encounter, that is, in constantly re-inventing political principles of justice and equality that are “verified” in political practices and new mass organisational forms..

³⁷⁷ (2002: <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/machiavelli/niccolo/m149p/chapter17.html>).

political freedoms (life and property) and is heavily supported by the specific legal apparatus.³⁷⁸

Contrary to this Machiavelli pointed to a rather strong relationship between (civil) war and politics, violence and law, which was unquestionably picked up by some theorists, such as Hobbes, but in order to strengthen the hysterical monopoly of power in the hands of sovereign public power, that is in order to further separate violence from the public life in state. A more partisan and engaged relationship is uncovered only with Clausewitz.³⁷⁹

This brings me to the second moment: the organisation of political violence in terms of the defense of the new state. Machiavelli is very clear about the major task of the new Prince in a new Principality throughout the Chapter XVII of *Il Principe*. The task to sustain novelty is extremely difficult:

It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in those who would profit by the new order, this lukewarmness arising partly from fear of their adversaries, who have laws in their favor; and partly from the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have had actual experience of it.³⁸⁰

This statement seems to assume a monarchical, or even dictatorial viewpoint. In order to execute changes one has to acquire a strong political power and also political discipline. Many realists and pragmatists in political theory would subscribe to this view, admittedly there is a thin line between assuming the position of the people, or only pretending to speak in the name of people to execute a political project.³⁸¹ Machiavelli was an apologetic to a certain type violence that preserved the encounter and could be named revolutionary

³⁷⁸ Althusser closely follows Marx on the topic of law and highlights the strategic importance of legal ideology as the ultimate horizon of the bourgeois society. In his work SLR (see also Wolf /forthcoming/, Balibar 2010), his intervention criticizes the liberal theory of state, his meditation on law shows on the existence of violence within the law itself. I will return to this question in the next chapter.

³⁷⁹ The latter reflected on war and politics in a manner that reanimated the repressed kernel of Machiavelli. For Clausewitz, there is no simple separation between war and politics, but contrarily, for him “war is continuation of politics by other means” and the opposite is equally true (1984: 87). The connection and separation of discourse and violence was interestingly presented in Mirt Komel’s dissertation (2011).

³⁸⁰ (2002: <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/machiavelli/niccolo/m149p/chapter17.html>).

³⁸¹ At this place the political distinction between populist, revolutionary and fascist violence must be discussed further. [The politicisation of military matters does not give emancipatory results in itself, I will return to this question in next chapter.

violence.³⁸² His position and relationship between politics, violence and military matters is directly addressed in his treatise *The Art of War*,³⁸³ which supports the theoretical push made in *Il Principe*. Notoriously, Machiavelli advocated for a structural change in military strategies and organisational form that attacked the current model of his time which was dominated by the use mercenary armies and privileged the cavalry's role in battle. On the contrary, Machiavelli introduced the concept of a people's army,³⁸⁴ which should be formed for defensive reasons in the context of a divided Italy and the colonial aspirations of invading powers, war in such a context became anti-colonial. As he says in *Il principe*: "so that Italy, left as without life, waits for him who shall yet heal her wounds and put an end to the ravaging and plundering of Lombardy, to the swindling and taxing of the kingdom and of Tuscany, and cleanse those sores that for long have festered."³⁸⁵ This political prescription of defense war is derived from his conjutural analysis of political injustices making Italy a space for the extraction of wealth and constant wars. Italians need to wage the fight with their "own forces".³⁸⁶ Machiavelli was aware of the need to promote a trans-class solidarity that arises out of the experience of comradeship in the popular army, where the infantry would play the key role. Soldiers coming from urban and rural areas should mix. It is evident that the concept of the people's army in itself does not yield immediately a figure of an emancipated people.³⁸⁷ However it shows that military matters can be politicized from "below", from the perspective of the "people" and not only princes

³⁸² See Žižek's book on violence (2008), where he analyses the objective violence (tacit) coming from the system.

³⁸³ See Althusser (2006: 217-219). Contrary to Hobbes, Machiavelli does not found the politics in fear (due to violence), but speaks of constructive use of violence (2006: 249). For a detailed account on the aspect of war in Machiavelli see excellent article from Frosini (2004: 10-23).

³⁸⁴ He speaks about it in *Il Principe* (2002) but also in *Art of War* (2007).

³⁸⁵ (2002: <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/machiavelli/niccolo/m149p/chapter26.html>)

³⁸⁶ »It is necessary before all things, as a true foundation for every enterprise, to be provided with your own forces, because there can be no more faithful, truer, or better soldiers. And although singly they are good, altogether they will be much better when they find themselves commanded by their prince, honoured by him, and maintained at his expense. Therefore it is necessary to be prepared with such arms, so that you can be defended against foreigners by Italian valour.«

(2002: <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/machiavelli/niccolo/m149p/chapter26.html>).

³⁸⁷ Any emancipatory project demands a high degree of training, persistence, *tout court*, discipline. In one of his interviews Alain Badiou argues that there is a need to reinvent militant discipline, but outside of the Party model, which was the major political invention of 20th century communist movement. New political forms that were influenced by the idea communism ranged from the soviets and liberation councils of workers to guerrilla fighters and partisans. This political sequence produced different political figures that one could name "militant": (urban) guerrilla fighters, worker-soldiers, worker-direct-participants and other figures of political militants.

that would fight in the name of one kingdom or one heaven. He is a sort predecessor of partisan organisation of the army.³⁸⁸

The other side of this organized and defensive violence is complemented by an elementary theory of revolutionary terror in terms of “class” analysis of then existing feudal order. The use of violence is not blind, but becomes a revolutionary violence that is directed toward the old ruling class. His concrete analysis of Italian situation locates political domination in feudal lords and uneven economic distribution. Machiavelli argues for class revolutionary violence relating to economic domination, which is the main corruptive danger for a republic.³⁸⁹ “Otium”, or idleness of the leisure classes is the structural condition of the feudal ruling class, and the major enemy of the new principality:

those are called Gentlemen who live idly on the provisions of their abundant possessions, without having any care either to cultivate or to do any other work in order to live. Such as these are pernicious to every Republic and to every Province: but more pernicious are those who, in addition to the above mentioned fortune, also command castles, and have subjects who obey them.³⁹⁰

The remarks are not directed against immorality of the noblemen, but their structural position in the economic system. It is striking to observe that Althusser never picked up on either of these observations. Also, a few additional remarks from Chapter LV of *Discorsi* can be seen as a major contribution to the modern conception of revolution. Machiavelli suspends the cyclical history and justifies violence for specific political popular cause. He assumes the standpoint of the people when explicitly locating the major enemy in the

³⁸⁸ It is not difficult to see his influence in Jacobin political theory and practice, in their “national guard”, but also in the conception of “armed people” and the partisan army in the thought and practice of Tito, Mao Zedong and Che Guevara to name few examples from 20th century. The type of argument that advocates for the resurrection of militant figures has echoes in contemporary emancipatory political thought. Although it has to be rightly said that the “pacifist” objection would target the hidden, or underlying presupposition of the militant political tradition starting in Machiavelli that grounds politics in a war paradigm. But then again, in extreme circumstances, for example under imperialism, colonialism or during fascist occupation, where people were exposed to brutal violence and extermination, the defence and partisan war is the only historical and political choice and sustaining the pacifist illusion can find itself supporting the position of the stronger party, the established order. In this respect Balibar splits the emancipatory camp into two political figures: Lenin and Gandhi (2005).

³⁸⁹ »The other cause, is that that Republic, whose political existence is maintained uncorrupted, does not permit that any of its Citizens to be or live in the manner of a Gentleman, instead maintain among themselves a perfect equality, and are the greatest enemies of those Lords and Gentlemen who are in that province: and if, by chance, any should come into their hands, they kill them as being Princes of corruption and the cause of every trouble.« (2009:

<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/machiavelli/niccolo/m149d/book1.html#book1.55>).

³⁹⁰(2009: <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/machiavelli/niccolo/m149d/book1.html#book1.55>).

nobility, and openly arguing “that he who would want to establish a Republic where there are many Gentlemen, cannot do so unless first he extinguishes them all.”³⁹¹ Against the corruption of republic and for sustaining egalitarian form of life Machiavelli defends new Republic by imposing a certain form of revolutionary terror,³⁹² which would target nobility and also Pope and Church. Machiavelli did not spare light comments on institution that is blamed for decadence and the loss of faith in religion in Italy. Furthermore, the Church as an ecclesiastic and political power has been active in reproducing the status quo and strengthening detrimental divisions in Italy: “This is that the Church has kept and still keeps this province [country] of ours divided”³⁹³ and left Italy to be prey to the pragmatic coalitions. It was not Machiavelli, but the Church that was pragmatist and realist in geostrategic doctrine. These arguments from Machiavelli made Althusser state that Machiavelli does not speak the language of law, but:

the language of the armed force indispensable to the constitution of any state, he speaks the language of necessary cruelty of the beginnings of the state, he speaks the language of a politics without religion that has to make use of religion at all costs, of politics that has to be moral but has to be able not to be moral, of a politics that has to reject hatred but inspire fear, he speaks the language of the struggle between classes, and as for rights, laws and morality, he puts them in their proper, subordinate place.³⁹⁴

Machiavelli’s theory of revolution opens a crucial question that deals with the effects of a post-encounter, namely what happens after the beginning? A conservation of novelty? How can an encounter of *virtù* and *fortuna* take hold and preserve/continue the rupture in new political forms? This leads to a series of questions connected to re-substantialization and re-territorialisation of the new prince in the new principality. Isn’t any maintaining of the state, any continuation of the rupture, any transition from its very start condemned to systemic integration? This paradoxical move from the dismantling of the existing state, from the politics of rupture to state politics/reproduction can be named as one of the central paradoxes of revolutionary politics, which is hidden in Machiavelli’s enigmatic (secret) formula *mantenere lo stato*. This move, or rather aspect, shifts from rupture to the state,

³⁹¹ (2009: <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/machiavelli/niccolo/m149d/book1.html#book1.55>).

³⁹² Arendt detected the direct link between Machiavelli and Robespierre in terms of protecting republic against corruption (1977).

³⁹³ (2009: <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/machiavelli/niccolo/m149d/book1.html#book1.12>).

³⁹⁴ Althusser (1999: 125).

from thinking revolution to continuing revolution and reproduction –transition– will be the central concern of the next chapter, where I rehabilitate the Althusserian theory of reproduction.

Chapter 5: Althusserian Theory of Reproduction: State, Ideology and Law

5.1. Machiavelli's concept of *lo stato*: state without sovereignty?

Modernity saw emergence of the state, which has remained the most important theoretical unit of political theory up until today despite being increasingly contested.³⁹⁵ If there are deep disagreements on how to read Machiavelli, most theorists would agree that conceptual innovation can be ascribed to Machiavelli, when he translated the Latin word “status” to *lo stato*. The Latin term *status* shared major theoretical underpinnings within the horizon of the Middle Age and had a triple meaning: (1) relative permanence of state, (2) immobility of estate and (3) a position of the ruler. It fits well in the feudalistic circumstances where *status* remained fixed to “hereditary” position; this is why it was immobile and relatively permanent in a systematic chain of obligation. Machiavelli's intervention obviously stopped using the Latin word and translated it with a vernacular Italian word “lo stato”, which acquires a very different meaning in the Machiavellian universe. He introduced “lo stato” in a historically and theoretically divided context, where neither State nor Italy as such existed; it addressed a new horizon.

Bartelson provides a convincing argument that conceptualises the way in which Machiavelli's *lo stato* differed from *status*. To Machiavelli the state was an independent category with a relative autonomy to the prince and other social entities. The state has its own dynamic, but at the same time it remains in a special relation to the prince.³⁹⁶ This comes close to the Althusserian claim that after the encounter of *virtù* and *fortuna*, a new transformative political form (state) emerges and acquires an independent logic, which cannot be attributed to a univocal source or agency. The prince cannot invent a way to manage the whole of society, but rather one deals with the special functioning of the state that has relative autonomy. Machiavelli seemed to have resolved the theoretical problem between the state and the prince and the “durability” of the new state in a rather short formula: *mantenere lo stato*.

³⁹⁵ For a critical assessment of changing role of the state in increasingly globalized world see Hirst and Thompson (1996), Giddens (1991), Harvey (1991), Negri and Hardt (1999), Sassen (1996).

³⁹⁶ Bartelson (1996: 112).

Before I offer a few interpretations of this formula, I need to address an important reservation against ascribing the conceptual innovation of the state to Machiavelli. Some political theorists would claim that one vital concept was absent from his theory, namely the concept of sovereignty. Even if there is a theoretical consensus about Machiavelli's contribution in mapping out the contours of central political authority and perhaps the formula "mantenere lo stato" points to the sovereign dimension of power, he nevertheless did not operate with this concept. Sovereignty became fashionable³⁹⁷ and influential concept half a century after, when Jean Bodin published his book on the "marks" of sovereignty.³⁹⁸ Bodin intervened and ascribed primacy to a special aspect of authority that was in his times still very polyvalent and co-existing with other types of domination. Charles Loyseau in 1609 distinguished 4 types of superiority linked to the position of authority: "ownership" (sieurerie; *potestas in re*), "seignory" (potestas of the private person), which both belong to the private types of authority (having to do with *status*), while "suzerainty" and "sovereignty" are two types of public authority. *Suzerainty is executed by seignors, feudal lords, while sovereignty is typically connected to the independent authority, the state and sovereignty. Public and independent sovereignty is the summit of authority, which was "created", but also has to be "maintained".*³⁹⁹ maintaining sovereignty becomes the central mark of state sovereignty.

State sovereignty could be seen as a central point of theoretical and historical coincidence marking the transition to Modernity in the 17th century that is articulated with

³⁹⁷ This theoretical fashion is connected to real historical processes and needs to be read in the context of the rise of the bourgeoisie and capitalist mode of production, and also as an emancipation of public authority and king from the church and the taming of religious wars (see Balibar 2004: 133-155). In international relations theory they would call this moment also the creation of the Westphalian order (1648), which Wendy Brown (2010) sums up as introducing the distinction between inside (supremacy of state authority within borders) and outside (autonomy between states; non-intervention). This process should be seen as a balance of powers in Europe, but outside the European border this process would be linked to the project of colonialism, which does not really reflect "autonomy" and is utterly lacking in many liberal accounts of sovereignty. Also, the balance of power can be seen also as a new balance of class power, class coalition within new states, where the royal rule was combined with aspiring bourgeois class (de Jouvenel 1998: 216-220).

³⁹⁸ Bodin 1992.

³⁹⁹ "Sovereignty is the seignory of the state. For all public seignory should remain with the state, notwithstanding that individual seignors have usurped suzerainty. But sovereignty is entirely inseparable from the state. Were the state deprived of it, it would no longer be a state and whoever had it would have the state inasmuch as he would have the sovereign seignory. For instance, when King Francis abandoned the sovereignty of Flanders, Flanders was in consequence torn away from the state of France and became a separate state. For sovereignty is the form which causes the state to exist; indeed the state and sovereignty in the concrete are synonymous. Sovereignty is the summit of authority, by means of which the state is created and maintained" (quoted in: de Jouvenel 1998: 215).

the rise of the bourgeois ideology of the free disposal of property and its security. State sovereignty and “commercial society” are internally linked.⁴⁰⁰ The primacy of the political was a necessary step for the birth of Modernity and Balibar sums these historical moments in following way:

the primacy of the political over the theological (thus of states over churches and their preferred ‘objects’: births and deaths, matrimony, education, and the like) and *the primacy of the political over the economic* (or, in a later terminology, the ‘socioeconomic’). The conquest of the domain of conscience, its control and transformation ... then became the fields of realization of an autonomy of the political that cannot exist as a simple separation, but only as the politicization of extrapolitical domains by the state.⁴⁰¹

Taking Balibar's assertion as the starting point, my thesis will trace importance of Machiavelli for understanding the rise of Modernity and what Machiavelli can tell us about the capitalist mode of production despite acknowledgement that Machiavelli never made a strong connection between *lo stato* and *political sovereignty*. Much more than the model of sovereignty he is interested in maintaining politics in a way to avoid corruption of new state, that is, to repeat the rupture. This is another core argument for Machiavelli's solitude. He was reluctant to define the Prince's power as absolute and supreme, as sovereign, and that is why he remained outside of the definition of politics as an autonomous political sphere. One can locate Althusser's Machiavelli in-between the approach to the “autonomy of political”⁴⁰² and the “primacy of politics”.⁴⁰³ The formula of *mantenere lo stato* can be used to outline a few paths that relate primacy and autonomy.

5.1.1. Machiavelli's *mantenere lo stato*: from revolution to reproduction?

One can be rightly puzzled with this oscillation in Machiavelli, who seems to embrace a contradictory theoretical position: a theorist of revolution (encounter), and also a theorist

⁴⁰⁰ De Jouvenel (1998), Defoe (2008).

⁴⁰¹ (2004: 147). I could add that the political dominated over the religious in the sphere of society, whereas there was additional theoretical dominance of humanist-legal scholars over theologians, which was epitomized in the rise of theory of sovereignty and social contract (Kirn 2005).

⁴⁰² It is noteworthy that the relationship between primacy and autonomy of politics (political) has returned into discussion in last decades, but was exhibited also in Althusser's time. For an interesting reading of comparison between Althusser and Tronti see Farris (forthcoming).

⁴⁰³ See for example how Žižek explains the basic principles of the primacy of politics in his text on Mao (2007).

of the state, which guarantees social reproduction? Is Machiavelli arguing, in the second step, for a transition from the primacy of politics to the relative autonomy of politics? Isn't the politics of encounter diametrically opposed and irreconcilable with the state apparatus, thus why dismantle the *ancien régime* in the first place, if it ends up with new form of domination? This is a legitimate critical remark, although it should be noted that Machiavelli's analysis never simply embraced a central authority, but pushed towards opening the new in an extremely difficult and divided situation. Lahtinen lucidly comments, "the starting point for his thinking was the historical situation where the actions of the domestic and foreign 'few' and their mercenaries cause continuous unrest and disrobed and threatened the course of the everyday life of 'the many'".⁴⁰⁴ Machiavelli is thinking the kind of "collective will",⁴⁰⁵ which requires mass movement and an organisational base, which is implied in his call to a new principality and *mantenere lo stato*.

The enigmatic formula is found in the III. and VI. Chapter of *Il Principe*, especially wherever Machiavelli speaks about the defence of the newly acquired state.⁴⁰⁶ I already referred to Machiavelli's warning that in order for a new Prince to conserve novelty, he needs to use all possible means in the hostile environment.⁴⁰⁷ Many interpreters would find here a call for a study of the most effective and pragmatic instruments, political techniques that help to set up the new state power. To sustain the state the political agents should establish new relations via diplomacy and military defence against an internal and external enemy. It seems that this is an Archimedean point of Machiavelli's thought on politics, where the minimal difference between theoretical and political practice coincide, or rather where theoretical results become applicable and invested in a political constellation.

There are different ways to defend the enigmatic formula of *mantenere lo stato*, most frequently Machiavelli's formula was read through republican lenses and the military

⁴⁰⁴ Lahtinen (2009: 314).

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.: 315.

⁴⁰⁶ The translation of "mantenere lo stato" usually with "retaining the state" for example "those things which ought to be done to retain a state composed of divers elements", see 2002: <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/machiavelli/niccolo/m149p/chapter6.html>).

⁴⁰⁷ See especially chapters XVI. and XVII.

(2002: <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/machiavelli/niccolo/m149p/chapter17.html>).

metaphor: a *defence of the fortress*.⁴⁰⁸ Bartelson is a good example of this reading and according to him Machiavelli's invention spatially divides state on inside and outside, where "inside" consists of the supremacy of central authority within borders of the state and "outside" is represented in autonomy between states and the shared rules of non-intervention in their internal affairs.⁴⁰⁹ According to Bartelson's thesis the field of politics and good laws belongs to the inside, and the field of war (army) to the outside. This is why citizens of the new state have to cultivate civil and military virtues.⁴¹⁰ According to Bartelson internal freedom relates to civil freedom, while the military virtue is necessary for external freedom. The general frame of the Westphalian order that built the groundwork for the modern state system and warfare is necessarily complemented with an "internal" ideological investment that was most adequately synthesized in the figure of the "armed citizen".⁴¹¹ The new state has to sustain loyalty to the republic.⁴¹² This reading apart from the ideal prince posits his mirror image in the ideal citizen within the frame of good laws and morality. The republican reading fails to address what in the previous chapter has been discussed as the politicization of the "demos" in terms of encounter and which should draw consequences from the encounter and not the *accomplished fact* – the static conception of state.⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁸ This type of reasoning is deeply Clausewitzian, or rather reversing his classical formula – now we are dealing with politics as continuation of war (Caygill 2012). Does this move subjugate political community to war? Althusser's stress is rather different, and shows on subversion of opposite "people" and "fortress", perhaps inventing something like "popular fortress", see especially (<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/machiavelli/niccolo/m149p/chapter20.html>). I will come to this in next sections.

⁴⁰⁹ The liberal conception of state is nicely summed up by Wendy Brown in the first two chapters (2010).

⁴¹⁰ Machiavelli's *Art of War* embraces this argument (2008).

⁴¹¹ Bartelson (1996: 119).

⁴¹² Bartelson (ibid.). One could read Bartelson in a more sympathetic way and supply him with a further consideration of conditions for the endurance of a new system of social relations found in three elements: army, consensual apparatus (religion-ideas) and politico-juridical apparatus/system of laws (2000: 82). Also Althusser's reading of Machiavelli confirms that the durability of the state cannot be attained only with military organization and military *virtù*. A strong army is only one of the constitutive parts of the new state, which should be guided by a political emancipatory project. Here, the primacy of reproduction plays a strategic role and the ideological and repressive state apparatuses are established through long hegemonic struggles with the Church and other remnants of the old Order. The most important moment in the constitution of the state's materiality is the imposition of a direct relation between the sovereign power and its subjects (citizens). See Balibar (2004: 144). The intermediate corporatist organisations typical of feudal societies lost their primacy in terms of ideological overdetermination and political mediations.

⁴¹³ The move towards the individual figure of politics is quite symptomatic in the "republican" interpretation. Undoubtedly, the conception of the *armed citizen* is present in Machiavelli's universe and one could even argue that the argument is not without an "expansionist" logic: first defence and then expansion of borders and of the influence of the new Republic. But then again this expansionism subverts the distinction between

Thus, the biggest challenge of Machiavelli is how to continue the new state and yet remain loyal to Machiavelli's theory of revolution? Reproduction should in this case not be seen as a dumb repetitive process of reproducing the existing order, but more as a process that considered in Fabio Frosini's words: in "the very basis of politics as *conservation* itself there is politics as *revolution*."⁴¹⁴ This is precisely the point that Althusser reads into Machiavelli.

5.1.2. Mantenero lo stato as an Inscription of contingency in the new state?

Althusser investigated ideological and military dimensions of the new state. Reading it between the historical rise of the capitalist state and the socialist state, Althusser would bring three important questions into light for a new revolutionary political state: how to defend the new state against the counterrevolution in the form of foreign intervention or against the internal forces of the old order (civil war)?⁴¹⁵ An equally important question is how to defend the revolution against itself, that is, how to deal with revolutionary excesses?⁴¹⁶ Once these immediate political challenges are answered then the question of how to continue the new political form without becoming the pure reproduction of its achievement, measured by the bureaucratic apparatus and statistics, must be posed?⁴¹⁷

Hannah Arendt had a subtle argument that measures the durability and strength of the new political form by depending on the political actions of people themselves. Also, the political means that were used and invented during the political foundation of a new

inside and outside and brings to the discussion the question of colonialism, which was absent from the theories of the autonomy of political. Where is the end of the republican order? Balibar showed how the border remains one of the central questions of politics, especially in the context of European citizenship and immigrants tracing specific "identities" (2004: 101-114). See also Lahtinen for a critique of static conception of the new state (2009: 209-210).

⁴¹⁴ Frosini (2004: 20).

⁴¹⁵ Most likely civil war and imperialist war unite and combine their efforts to thwart revolutionary upheavals. The history of revolution in the 20th century shows clearly some examples: from Russia, Yugoslavia and China to Cuba and Vietnam. A more historical overview on this military aspect of the Yugoslavian revolution will follow in next chapter.

⁴¹⁶ Once revolution starts eating its own children, then a direct concern of political thought and practice should be high on priority list.

⁴¹⁷ Badiou on different places made a forceful critique of public opinion polls, statistics and other measurement of the state, which actually block any transformative politics (2005).

state are an indispensable part of their political durability, the “quality” of these institutions. In her words:

Political institutions, no matter how well or badly designed, depend for continued existence upon acting men; their conservation is achieved by the same means that brought them into being. Independent existence marks the work of art as a product of making; utter dependence upon further acts to keep it in existence marks the state as a product of action.⁴¹⁸

If Althusser agreed with Arendt on the question and tackling of the durability of politics, Arendt would remain loyal to a certain foundational myth (Ancient Rome), which in turn run into contradiction with her initial observation at the beginning with the contingent moment of political constitution. To radicalize her view one should posit that only a constant reinvention of contingent moments of constitution allows for the continuation of rupture/politics. This means that at a certain historical point even the foundational myth loses its power, falls into corruption, which forces thought to remain open to political experimentation, which includes the possibility of its own failure and internal exhaustion.

Thinking from the perspective of the (Italian) state does not mean that Machiavelli’s mode of thinking politics would end with the state (as eternal form), once it was executed in historical reality. Moreover, Machiavelli sets in motion a poison that internally subverts the order he is dreaming about. The revolutionary encounter does not stop with the new political form (at that time the absolutist state; later capitalist state). That would simply mean to master and strengthen the reproductive mechanism of new state. Machiavelli is well aware that there is no Outside, no thinkable exodus from the reproductive logic, but that does not mean that real change cannot take place within the new order, within the very logic of reproduction. There is no other way but within reproduction itself that the new political encounter, the new political organisation can dismantle it. Althusser drew this lesson from Machiavelli and found it of the highest exigency to study and confront “reproduction.” The counter-hegemonic struggles are fought both within the existing institutional framework and at the same time invent new revolutionary forms that connect ideas and masses.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁸ Arendt (1977: 153).

⁴¹⁹ This means that the political imaginary of future emancipatory projects should not remain fixed on the “state form” as the only possible form or model of organising society (Badiou 1998, Holloway 2002).

The Althusserian approach returns to Machiavelli in order to continue the contingent character of the encounter, the new beginning. *Mantenere lo stato* succeeds only when the contingent encounter overdetermines the logic of reproduction. How is the contingency inscribed into the continuation within the state? Rupture demands new tasks of the new prince and the new principality that have to persist in the rupture and draw consequences from it.⁴²⁰ For the transition to be successful, for the encounter to last, the prince and people have carry on a continuous transformation of social relations. To repeat Morfino: a *permanent revocation of accomplished fact*. This more than just maintaining the state is better defined as a process of constant self-dissolution,⁴²¹ whose ultimate goal is the complete dismantling of all forms of domination and exploitation. I would suggest renaming *mantenere lo stato* into *mantenere la rottura*, to maintain the rupture as the major split that was uncovered by Machiavelli. If there is a promise that emancipatory politics holds and draws consequences from it is the moment of beginning, and how to make this founding moment visible and palpable. The power of disruption and contingency should be inscribed in the logic of the conservation of the new state; the new principality maintains the trace of contingency and the desubstantialization of the encounter between *fortuna* and *virtù* in its very core, which prevents the new principality from becoming eternal and completely “totalising”. The republican reading as demonstrated resolves the dilemma in democratic state institutions, which would guarantee good laws and good morality. Moreover, the republican argument totalizes the sovereign State as the ultimate political reference, which mediates and neutralizes all social conflicts and antagonisms. At this point the state starts speaking the language of law and peace. The state then becomes the accomplished fact normalizing the encounter or simply covering over the contingency. This is the point where the republican reading turns the new principality into a “semblant” of politics, or like Mikko Lahtinen said, into a “static organization” that is in the function of the reproduction of social relations.⁴²²

The fundamental discovery of the conflict does not suffice, neither in political theory nor in practice, as Massimiliano Tomba correctly puts forward: “The true politician

⁴²⁰ In this respect Badiou’s theory of event can be seen as an important continuation of politics of encounter (2006).

⁴²¹ This effort of dismantling the state can be read along the lines of Lenin in the 5 chapter of his famous *State and Revolution*: “withering away of state” (1918).

⁴²² Lahtinen (2009: 205-213).

is not the person who reactivates the conflict in a situation – conflict always remains the basis of politics – but is, instead, the person who shows the exit route from the situation as a possible one.”⁴²³ Tomba used this description for Lenin’s partisanship, but it is equally valid for Machiavelli, for whom the “exit route from the situation” is his fundamental topic. Machiavelli succeeded in formulating a path for radically undermining the natural hierarchies in the world of feudal dependencies, asserting the primacy of politics that was dissociated from morality and religion, but also not forgetting that the encounter is then related to and organizes other non-political fields.⁴²⁴ Not only did Machiavelli sketch the beginning of politics, but also a first theory of reproduction dominated by the state.

5.2. Althusserian notes on the theory of transition to capitalism

Althusser’s fascination with Machiavelli runs alongside his major occupation in wanting to provide Marxist theory with both a theory of the state and a theoretically elaborate model for understanding “transition”. When Althusser speaks about transition he never goes into a detailed analysis of the historical conditions of the capitalist mode of production. He was very much interested bringing Machiavelli close to Marx; especially in his return to the last chapters of Capital Vol.I. There is a striking similarity in the force that both Machiavelli and Marx point to, when they are discussing allegedly mythological beginnings. For Marx it was crucial to dismantle the bourgeois myths of capitalist origin: accumulation of private property in the adventures of Robinson Crusoe was coloured by a moral ideology. For Machiavelli the beginning of the state can have nothing to do with the morally good actions of the prince, subjectivism of will is criticized not in order to prioritize the objective forces of fortuna, but to point to the contingent and violent encounter of the new state. It is the same for Marx; his rigorous methodological approach demonstrates that the capitalist mode of production emerged not as a simple transition from feudalism, but as a contingent encounter between different elements. In the words of late Althusser, there was never an organized plan that succeeded in assembling the elements of the capitalist mode

⁴²³ Tomba (2009: 142).

⁴²⁴ Balibar calls this inter-relatedness between politics and other conditions, the politics of heteronomy, (2002: 9-21).

of production, where historical agents – evil capitalists⁴²⁵ wheeled the society from feudalism to capitalism.

Althusser's work *The Underground Current of the Materialism of the Encounter* imports the reflections of Machiavelli's contingent encounter onto the Marxian field of the historical transition towards capitalism. Althusser's theory hinges on a critique of any model of origin and also of any teleological schema, which would claim the necessary progression from one mode of production to another. The genetic theory would search for capitalist seeds already present in feudalism, where the feudal nobility simply made way for the rising bourgeoisie.⁴²⁶ Althusser was critical of Marx, who forgot to differentiate between the emergence of the capitalist mode of production and the bourgeoisie as the class that preceded the capitalist mode of production.⁴²⁷ Althusser problematizes the evolutionary schema and replaces it with the contingent encounter, which now has different structural agencies: the encounter between a different *virtù* (labour power) and *fortuna* (fortune of capitalists). The making of the capitalist mode of production that “rose from the ‘*encounter*’ between the ‘owners of money’ and the proletariat stripped of (sic!) everything but his labour power.”⁴²⁸ Evidently, Althusser would not argue against analyzing the “tendential laws” that took shape after the capitalist mode of production became a historical reality dominating over other modes of production, which it did not simply extinguish:

⁴²⁵ Marx would mock the figure of Robinson, idyllic retrospective illusions of bourgeois ideology that would by way of “protestant spirit” invest into material conditions and demonstrate the moral justification of (individual) capitalists (see the last two chapters of Volume I of *Capital* on “primary accumulation of capital”). But individual activity does not interest Marx, but actually the opposite, how the emerging structural relations influence individuals. As Althusser would argue “the fact that the structure of the relations of production determines the *places* and *functions* occupied and adopted by the agents of production, who are never anything more than the occupants of these places, insofar as they are the ‘supports’ (*Träger*) of these functions.” (RC: 180).

⁴²⁶ Althusser already in 1966 condemned the myth of genesis by claiming that “the feudal mode of production is not the ‘father’ of the capitalist mode of production in the sense that the latter would be contained ‘as a seed’ in the first.”

(2012: <http://scholar.oxy.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1033&context=decalages>).

⁴²⁷ At this point one can see Althusser's stress on and sensitivity for the dislocation of an economic foundation and the co-existence of different temporalities and dominations, these show the complexity of taking hold of different class coalitions, which are never decided beforehand, or posited eternally.

⁴²⁸ Althusser (2006: 197).

What matters about this conception is less the elaboration of laws, hence of an essence, than *the aleatory character of the 'taking-hold' of this encounter, which gives rise to an accomplished fact whose laws it is possible to state.*⁴²⁹

The greatness of Marx is thus his capacity to grasp the capitalist mode of production⁴³⁰ in its movement, in an (ever) floating state, which does not pertain to a transitional phase only. Capital's logic is always *in transition* and Marx succeeded to grasp precisely this ever-changing nature of capital, the logic of capital, which on the one hand demonstrates in its fullest the (self)contradictory movement through a range of crises, brutal and violent processes of dispossession, dissolution, recuperation and social transformation, while on the other hand, it is precisely this ever-changing nature that revitalizes thy systemic functioning and has up until today remained capital's biggest strength.⁴³¹

Beyond the search for (sacred) origin, one can retrospectively assign the conditions for the emergence of the capitalist mode of production, but again the method reverses temporality. The theory of transition needs to take effects into account: what is "after" becomes more important than "before", and thus makes causes secondary to effects. Moreover, the move to reconceptualise the mode of production outside a linear model of transition brought Althusser's early structuralist enterprise into a productive engagement with the aleatory conception,⁴³² which at the early stage Althusser had not made clear enough." Even if the orientation of both Althusser and Balibar was correct, they both failed to develop a satisfactory model of transition. Balibar self-critically admitted that in *Lire le Capital* they still did not think transition with "overdetermination" and "structural

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ For Althusser and Balibar the discovery of the concept of the mode of production can be compared with other scientific discoveries. In their early work RC they defined the mode of production as the "combination of elements" (RC: Althusser 175-177; Balibar 215-217), which late Althusser would retain but would read combination in terms of encounter of elements: "accumulation of money (by the 'owners of money'), an accumulation of the technical means of production (tools, machines, an experience of production on the part of the workers), an accumulation of the raw materials of production (nature) and an accumulation of producers (proletarians divested of all means of production)." (2006: 198).

⁴³¹ See also Harvey (2006). Perhaps the argument of Alfred Sohn-Rethel goes furthest in its striking embrace of parallelism or rather determination of our mode of thinking by capital's logic, where the standpoint of exchange and not production is of primary relevance (1977).

⁴³² See for example Goshgarian (forthcoming) who reads Althusser's enterprise through the aleatory lens, rereading encounter to his early stages. No matter which position we privilege when reading Althusser, he spontaneously practices and engages in both major strands in the Marxist "theory of history". On the one hand Althusser works with the "theory of social forms", the analysis of ideology and state (ISA; SLR; MIHL) and on the other hand, he discerns the "theory of transition" from his earliest work onwards till his aleatory phase, where transition is reconceptualised via encounter (RC; late work *Underground Current*). See Chibber for the summary of Marxist theory of history and division in two major strands (2011).

causality”, but rather their research of ‘passages’ from one structure to another was rather inscribed into the classical model of periodization. Balibar argues that at that time they “understood hardly anything” about what it means to abandon the antagonism of structure and conjuncture.⁴³³ It was only late Althusser that embraced the contingent conception, which meant that there was no easy reconciliation with the initial thesis on transition from *Lire le Capital*. Jason Read aptly observes:

In this case the cause is not some stable or timeless structure, an idea that burdened Althusser’s early writings on the concept, but is nothing other than the encounter. This undoes the opposition between the two terms that defined Althusser’s early career, conjuncture and structure: ‘because the reality of the structure is nothing but the unpredictable succession of conjunctures’ and ‘the conjuncture is nothing but a disposition of the structure.’⁴³⁴

Thus, the encounter with Marx and Machiavelli enabled Althusser to develop a more refined theory on the making of the capitalist mode of production beyond linear causality. This pushed Althusser to see in Machiavelli not only a theory of revolutionary encounter, but also as supplying important theses for theory of transition (reproduction). From revolution and primacy of politics Althusser’s Machiavelli grasps the interrelation of politics and other fields. The question is not only how to understand the revolutionary change, but also how this revolutionary change is then inscribed into more general or tendential laws. It seems that this process can be called the necessary becoming of contingency.⁴³⁵

Even if Althusser never elaborated a more historical study of transition,⁴³⁶ he nevertheless through Machiavelli was interested in the question why the capitalist mode of production did not take hold in Italy?⁴³⁷ Chris Harman has showed how this was one of the questions that perplexed many historians and especially Marxist historians:

It was one of the problems the bourgeois sociologist Max Weber tried to deal with in his extensive, and often tortuous, writings. It runs through the great three-volume study *Capitalism and Civilisation* by the French economic historian Fernand Braudel. It has also been at the centre of two big debates among Western Marxists--that among those close to the

⁴³³ Balibar (1996: 115) (text modified).

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ For a greater detail of Althusser’s critique of the Hegelian inspired theory of transition see Lahtinen’s study, especially part of chapter 2 (2009: 19-59).

⁴³⁶ One of major criticisms would target the absence of any concrete historical examples and their close evaluation.

⁴³⁷ Althusser read capitalist transition in the light of communist transition of socialist countries. This will be of my focus in last two chapters.

Communist parties in the 1940s and early 1950s, published in the volume *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*, and that among 'New Left' historians in the 1970s, published in the volume *The Brenner Debate*.⁴³⁸

Althusser's most clear intervention – without specific reference – can be found in his thesis that the encounter “*occurred several times in history before taking hold in the West*, but, for lack of an element or suitable arrangement of the elements, failed to ‘take’.”⁴³⁹ At this place I am not interested in precise historical circumstances of the Italian conjuncture,⁴⁴⁰ which seemed ripe to develop a new capitalist system, but will only recount reasons for the failure of such a development, or why the encounter did not take place in Italy. According to Althusser, the first reason is the absence of a “domestic market”,⁴⁴¹ which would organize capitalist accumulation within the domestic market and, with the state apparatus, guarantee new markets via colonialist expansion. Consequently, there was neither a united currency nor an internal market; the investment of excess-profits from long distance trade was channelled into the financing of wars (bankruptcy of banks after lending money to kings) and luxurious villas, architectural wonders and also the commissioning of Renaissance art (culture). Instead of investment into manufacture and capital-intensive production, renaissance art flourished.⁴⁴² Even if in the Italian context a highly complex Genovese and Florentine banking system had developed where a first accumulation of financial capital (crediting) and a sufficient number of “owners of money” had raw material at their disposal, another important missing element was the “accumulation of producers”. Instead of the development of an economic material basis for capitalist manufacturers, one needs to note that in the 16th century large parts of continental Europe

⁴³⁸ Harman (2004: <http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj102/harman.htm>).

⁴³⁹ Althusser (UC: 198).

⁴⁴⁰ Following the excellent analyses of “world-system studies” (Wallerstein 1974), one needs to be aware that parts of Italy, Genoa and Venice, became extremely rich and formed a core, or new hegemonic centre in Europe that shaped the emergent world-system. The large sums of money and surplus that was gained in trade on long distance (and colonial acquisitions) were integrated into a system of advanced financial instruments; the 15th century saw the birth of large banking systems in Florence, Genoa and Venice. The latter started to bring together merchant capital from all over Europe (Goldthwaite 1995). See also another fascinating account on the Genovese hegemony in the world-system that was provided by G. Arrighi and B. Silver (1999). For a critique of the Eurocentric model of history that does not take into account the Asian economy, especially China and India, see Gunder Frank (2002), Abu Lughood (1989).

⁴⁴¹ Althusser (UC: 198).

⁴⁴² Maja Breznik made an impressive study on the Renaissance in the perspective of capitalist expansion (2009).

saw a process of “re-feudalisation”.⁴⁴³ These floating and independent elements that will later take hold in the capitalist mode of production, did not emerge in this historical conjuncture.⁴⁴⁴

The major failure of the transition to capitalism could be attributed to one element: the absence of a central political apparatus. Althusser argues that the creation of nation and state, or what could be called the nexus nation-state, is necessary for any theory of transition and the formation of the capitalist mode of production:

Above all, the need for the creation of material – and thus social – market zones where the industrial and commercial activity of the nascent bourgeoisie can be conducted and developed in a process of expanded reproduction (sic!). The constitution of these nations is, of course, effected in and through determinate forms of class struggle (Machiavelli knows it), pitting the elements of the new, growing mode of production against the dominant forms of the feudal mode of production. Class struggle is at the heart of the constitution of nations: the nation represents the form of existence indispensable to the implantation of the capitalist mode of production, in its struggle against the forms of the feudal mode of production.⁴⁴⁵

Althusser’s stress on the “nation” as a specific form of “state” is exaggerated, especially when one takes into account the scholarly work done on “nationalism” and “imagined communities”.⁴⁴⁶ The nation-state historically came much later than the state, and perhaps Althusser’s over-emphasis on the national state can be understood as a silent polemic against a more Weberian approach, which brings religion (*Protestantism*) to the core of capitalist formation. Rather than religion/nation, I would emphasize the aggravating role of a central political apparatus, of bourgeois law and state ideology that would in a determinate way accompany and shape the transitional process.⁴⁴⁷ A historical stage opened for the strong central power with exclusive right over physical force that would impose an effective taxation system, monetary policy and could afford a “permanent” army.⁴⁴⁸ The transition to the capitalist mode of production is the age when the sovereign territorial state power began to coexist with disciplinary power.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴³ Harman (2004).

⁴⁴⁴ A Weberian inspired analysis presupposes that attention be paid to an ideological element, the “protestant spirit” that is evidently missing from this conjuncture.

⁴⁴⁵ MU: 11.

⁴⁴⁶ Hobsbawm (1992), Gellner (2006). Anderson (2010), which clearly shows that imagined communities became crucial for politics only in late 18th and throughout the 19th century.

⁴⁴⁷ De Jouvenel, (1998) Balibar (2004), Kim (2005).

⁴⁴⁸ Defoe (2008) Mastnak (2012).

⁴⁴⁹ Foucault (2004).

Althusser's Machiavelli would show two possibilities that would cope with the new situation, new state, and can account – anachronistically – for the link between class and politics: first, class politics as “primitive political accumulation” and second, the politics of “class compromise” that shapes the new ruling class (constitutional monarchy).

5.2.1. Machiavelli meets Marx: “primitive political accumulation”

As noted above for Althusser the key chapters of Marx's *Capital* deal with the process of “primitive accumulation”, which explains the emergence of the capitalist mode of production beyond mythological origins. Marx speaks about the “secret” of primitive accumulation (as title of the chapter suggests). In the first chapters of *Capital* Marx develops his theory of value form and discerns the first secret of the production of wealth that is hidden behind the secret of the commodity. Marx insists that the commodity needs to be analysed rigorously if we want to grasp the production of value, and from that the complexity of capitalist relations in the sphere of production and exchange.⁴⁵⁰ In contradistinction to the first chapter, Marx's historical analysis at the end of *Capital* builds on the importance of extra-economic elements for the rise of the world of commodities and capitalist social relations. Marx explains forcefully that the existence of the state apparatus, legislation and violence were essential parts of the transition towards capitalism. Instead of positing extra-economical elements in terms of instrumental relations, as if there was a strategic plan to make capitalism work, Althusser's Marx rather argued on the contingent character of these changes.⁴⁵¹ As I showed above this is not simply a historicist argument, but a methodological departure point.

The discovery that Marx made, or rather the processes that he made visible, can be paralleled to Machiavelli's discovery in politics; moreover, Machiavelli essentially provides Marx with a strategic complement: “primitive political accumulation”.⁴⁵² The “primary” scene of politics is full of unpredictable turns and violent moments. This risky

⁴⁵⁰ See Močnik (2010).

⁴⁵¹ Against Althusser's avoidance of reading the first chapters of Marx's *Capital*, I go along the lines of those that prefer to read them together with last chapters, in order to sharpen “critique of political economy”. The latter is a contribution to both theoretical and historical understanding of capitalist mode of production and its circumstances.

⁴⁵² MU: 125.

beginning of any state and any political form that transforms the existing order is unthinkable and unattainable without violence.⁴⁵³ According to Machiavelli one should avoid the moralization or mythologization of the categories of *fortuna* and *virtù*, but on the contrary think politics from its interiority. Politics starts from social antagonism, by making it visible and organises conflict in a different manner by violent or non-violent means. Nevertheless, violence cannot be ignored, while even on the level of the symbolic renaming of words, struggle imposes a different reading, which is not without effects for the world we live in.⁴⁵⁴ The violence and the rethinking of the beginning is the point where Marx and Machiavelli become friendly interlocutors.

Let us look a little closer to how Marx moves against *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, and demonstrates how the concatenation of historical processes was accompanied by rather un-idyllic and violent moments. The latter were excellently described in the very beginning of the chapter 26:

But as soon as the question of property crops up, it becomes a sacred duty to proclaim the intellectual food of the infant as the one thing fit for all ages and for all stages of development. In actual history it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly, force, play the great part. In the tender annals of political economy, the idyllic reigns from time immemorial. Right and “labour” were from all time the sole means of enrichment, the present year of course always excepted. As a matter of fact, the methods of primitive accumulation are anything but idyllic.⁴⁵⁵

Marx emphasizes the transformative force of violence, which according to Georges Labica can be detected all throughout chapter 24 and also 25.⁴⁵⁶ The class violence was at the heart of the “reproductive” nexus of legislation and political power that took hold in the formation of capitalist production in England. Marx’s vivid explications of the brutal

⁴⁵³ I will not enter into the history of colonialism, but can only remark that the state can be seen both either as a product of anticolonial struggle, but also as a strategic support of colonial expansion, as was the case, “primarily”, in the Westphalian order in the mid 17th century that balanced European powers within in order to colonize the outside. The history of colonisation (and racism) is nevertheless much older than history of capitalism.

⁴⁵⁴ Even non-violent means and politics, which could be detected in terms of radical disinvestment from governmental institutions presents a very strong political gesture that is very often seen and defined as violent by the State. The term and practice of civil disobedience, even if non-violent in its actions has also very violent core in its disagreement with the existing order (Gandhi 1994 Thoreau 1849). Agamben perhaps evaluates very subtly the subjective figure of dis-investment into sovereign power; see his analysis of Kafka (1998) or Bartleby (1999), which employ a mechanism of desubjectivation and often encounter violent responses from the environment and power.

⁴⁵⁵ Marx and Engels 1975-2005 (Vol.35: 705).

⁴⁵⁶ Labica identifies these chapters as Marx’s treatise on violence, while primitive accumulation should be more properly named expropriation (2001: 7), see also Negri (1999: 251-254).

effects of laws that were imposed on already dispossessed peasants in 16th century are particularly telling. After the peasants were expropriated of their land by force and were stripped of their old rights to the commons and their means/tools to produce and cultivate land, this part of the peasant population was driven to theft and vagabondage in order to survive. The other part of the peasantry started working in manufactures as free individuals.⁴⁵⁷ The rise of capitalist mode of production became an internally oriented war, a civil war against the poor. The masses of free labourers were granted “freedom of movement” that in reality meant legal enforcement to work in the manufactures for their bare survival, which often ended in their total exhaustion. When manufactures started growing, begging and vagabondage was legally prosecuted and included capital punishment.⁴⁵⁸ The dispossession of common property and working instruments meant the accumulation and standardization of private property on the side of capitalists.⁴⁵⁹ I could add to this manual of violent capitalist “origins”, another term proposed by Carl Schmitt: *Landnahmen*. It means how occupation of land, founding of cities and colonies was made legal⁴⁶⁰ and illuminates European domination on the world map with all its colonial intentions.⁴⁶¹ This process attests to “primary juridical acts”, which in Marxist language can be called *primitive legal accumulation*. The expropriation of land and colonisation happened in accordance to *Jus Publicum Europeaum* and the Westphalian order that meant the temporary balance of powers and the containment of religion on the European continent, while elsewhere the same process brought bloody wars, the enslavement and exploitation of masses in non-European contexts—everything in the name of

⁴⁵⁷ “Free peasant proprietors“ who used their land and held some other common property were forcibly stripped of their commons in order to get it turned onto private property in following centuries. In Marx’s words “The old nobility had been devoured by the great feudal wars. The new nobility was the child of its time, for which money was the power of all powers.” (Marx and Engels 1975-2005, Vol.35: 709). Cf. Read (2003: 19-26; Read forthcoming).

⁴⁵⁸ State needed to make conditions for the selling of one’s labour and prevent begging and theft as strictly as possible: “In England this legislation began under Henry VIII Beggars old and unable to work receive a beggar’s licence. On the other hand, whipping and imprisonment for sturdy vagabonds. They are to be tied to the cart-tail and whipped until the blood streams from their bodies, then to swear an oath to go back to their birthplace or to where they have lived the last three years and to ‘put themselves to labour’”. (Marx and Engels 1975-2005, vol. 35: 724).

⁴⁵⁹ In the post-Yugoslav, post-socialist context the so-called privatization processes meant precisely this shift to private property and dispossession of all social property (Kirn 2011).

⁴⁶⁰ See especially his *The Nomos of the Earth* (2003).

⁴⁶¹ See Labica (2001: 12-14).

civilisation.⁴⁶² This process can be read as dialectic of Modernity, later on evoked forcefully by Adorno and Horkheimer.⁴⁶³ In moments of capitalist transition (and crisis), the role of state and law becomes much more instrumental, and those seemingly neutral instances are integrated into the formation of class domination. In this respect, it is extremely fascinating that Marx already detected the contract between the national bank and state, which made money out of nothing: “public credit”, which laid structural foundation, but one could even say the structural indebtedness of people to banks and State.⁴⁶⁴ Reproductive indebtedness without time limit in future.

The enigma of the origin of capitalism was purified of its idyllic content and its place was taken by a series of polyvalent⁴⁶⁵ and inter-related processes, which have an aleatory nature. The capitalist mode of production was the collateral damage of intense historical processes and extra-economical moments. However, in the period of political and economic struggles, the capitalist mode of production began to dominate over all other modes of production, and one can extract certain tendential laws. After the capitalist mode of production became the “accomplished fact”, it still had to constantly re-invent itself, even if it looks that everything is ordered by natural orders of economy. Jason Read rightly speaks about silent compulsion of “economic relations that “set the seal” on the domination of the capitalist over the worker utilizing direct extra-economic force only in

⁴⁶² See Cesaire Aime (1950).

⁴⁶³ This is the guiding thread of their *Dialectics of Enlightenment* (1997).

⁴⁶⁴ Marx rightfully warns that state started the economical cycle by introducing mass amount of money to economy by public debt: “Hence the accumulation of the national debt has no more infallible measure than the successive rise in the stock of these banks, whose full development dates from the founding of the Bank of England in 1694. The Bank of England began with lending its money to the Government at 8%; at the same time it was empowered by Parliament to coin money out of the same capital, by lending it again to the public in the form of banknotes. It was allowed to use these notes for discounting bills, making advances on commodities, and for buying the precious metals. It was not long ere this credit money, made by the bank itself, became the coin in which the Bank of England made its loans to the State, and paid, on account of the State, the interest on the public debt. It was not enough that the bank gave with one hand and took back more with the other; it remained, even whilst receiving, the eternal creditor of the nation down to the last shilling advanced. Gradually it became inevitably the receptacle of the metallic hoard of the country, and the centre of gravity of all commercial credit.” Marx and Engels 1975-2005 (Vol. 35: 743).

⁴⁶⁵ Again, I would add that the primitive or rather “primary accumulation” is not located only in the first appearance of the capitalist mode of production, but is a general concept that allows us to understand for example how different post-socialist transitions took place, or how the ruling class is attempting to resolve the contemporary crisis. In order for the capitalist cycle to restart and strengthen financial capital, austerity policies are imposed; Naomi Klein called it “shock therapy” (2008), which announces the civil war on poor and where the level of exploitation rises. This constant return happens at the expense of the working people and the peripheral states.

exceptional cases.⁴⁶⁶ I agree with Jason Read's point that this is where the contingent and the structural come together, when the contingent becomes the necessary. The emerging economic sovereignty (the ownership of capital and the means of production) went hand in hand with the rise of public sovereignty (state) that performed a structural coupling, the amalgamation of state and capital. For the first time in history the link between capitalist exploitation and state domination became operative: this is the specific beginning of capitalist reproduction. This general observation holds only in so far as the processes Marx described are then inscribed and tested within the specificity of historical modalities, where very different relationships between forms of exploitation and domination (including class, gender, race, nation⁴⁶⁷) have to be discerned in each social formation.⁴⁶⁸

It can be seen as anachronistic to link Machiavelli so closely to Marx's theory of the state and of primary accumulation, but in the following section I will provide more textual evidence from Machiavelli that makes a clear link to the question of politics and class, which openly connects politics to the question of class conflict itself.

5.2.2. Machiavelli's Theorem:⁴⁶⁹ Class Compromise in the Ideological and Political State Apparatus?

Etienne Balibar was the first to clearly define "Machiavelli's theorem", which formulates a link between class struggle and state:

Machiavelli's basic idea is that the strength of the Roman Republic came from the fact-half calculated, half unintended-that the antagonism between two great classes (the 'patrician' and the 'plebeians') found an institutional solution with the creation, after violent revolts and repressions, of the 'Tribunate of the Plebs'.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁶ Read (forthcoming).

⁴⁶⁷ This intersectional analysis has recently made some important links to bring gender-race-class in a more tightly connected perspective (see Collins 1992 and Crenshaw 1991). Also Balibar and Wallerstein addressed these issues with great force (1991).

⁴⁶⁸ In the Marxist theory of history this part of Althusser's Machiavelli that stresses the centrality of the state and violence for understanding transition could be seen in opposition to the determinist model supported by Cohen (see Chibber for good summary of Brenner's debate, 2011). The Althusserian contribution to the Marxist discussion on transition, even if he never participated directly in it, is much closer to position of Brenner, who, if I simplify the argument, posits the core of formation of the capitalist mode of production in the contingent struggles between lord and bondsman, which are inscribed in new property forms.

⁴⁶⁹ Balibar (2004: 278).

⁴⁷⁰ Quoted in Balibar (2004: 278-279). Class struggle existed before the capitalist mode of production; here Machiavelli can be seen to support Marx's famous thesis from *Communist Manifesto* that "the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a

I would like to make two observations in light of this definition. Firstly, Balibar registers the centrality of struggle between classes in the heart of Machiavelli's historical and political reflections, which deal with causes and solutions for the divisions between classes and their political formalization. Another political theorist Rubinstein correctly argues that mainstream political thought condemned civil disorder (civil war) and divisions, without thinking them internally, while Machiavelli sees them more productively, "class conflicts are the main source of evolution".⁴⁷¹ This is the point, where Machiavelli pushes ahead of his previous "abstract" notion of politics (metapolitics).

Secondly, the political solution of class division in the theorem that Balibar reads into Machiavelli embodies a paradoxical position, which is built on a tenuous link between corporativism and democracy. The thesis on the invention of new state institutions that neutralize class conflicts, despite not being a necessary historical development, as Balibar says, are "half-calculated half un-intended"; they seem to enter into a tense relationship with Machiavelli's initial thesis on the primacy of politics that refuses mediation between different social classes. Some scholars could describe this tension by pointing to the radical difference of the Machiavelli of *Il Principe* (primacy of politics) and the Machiavelli of *Discorsi* (class compromise). If class compromise is re-integrated into the narrative of social harmony, and institutionalized compromise, one is not surprised that the theorem can be easily re-appropriated into a more republican reading of Machiavelli.⁴⁷² Can one defend Machiavelli's theorem and bring it back to the primacy of struggle, or should one simply term it as a "class compromise"?

One important trace stems from Balibar's thesis that a new institution appeared "half-unintended", I would add also that it is indeed a *temporary* result of class struggle. Class compromise is not the final goal, but a temporary phenomenon that is open to change in

history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes." (Marx and Engels 1975-2005, Vol. 26: 517).

⁴⁷¹ Rubinstein (1994: 48).

⁴⁷² A recent theorisation of Althusser's understanding of Machiavelli, which provided by Miguel Vatter, lies in the attempt to separate Althusser from Marxist theory and erase a few key contributions of Machiavelli. The latter would anchor the concept of *mantenere lo stato* simply as the establishment of the legal and ideological apparatus, with a special emphasis on "respecting the rule of law (2005: 118.) Also, Warren Montag correctly shows in his reply to Vatter certain weaknesses in the latter's argumentation, the separation of Althusser from Marx happens at the expense of a fear of the masses. Vatter also ignores the continuity within Althusser's return to Marx (see Montag 2005).

the future.⁴⁷³ According to Machiavelli the power of compromise should thus be seen as a dynamic process, which traverses different ideological institutions. In one of the most fascinating passages from *Discorsi*, Machiavelli discusses the importance of setting the example in order to maintain the state deeply related to the struggles (“tumults”):

Nor is it possible therefore to judge these tumults harmful, nor divisive to a Republic, which in so great a time sent into exile no more than eight or ten of its citizens because of its differences, and put to death only a few, and condemned in money [fined] not very many: nor can a Republic in any way with reason be called disordered where there are so many examples of virtue, for good examples result from good education, good education from good laws, and good laws from those tumults which many inconsiderately condemn.⁴⁷⁴

The primary site of politics is located in the example of (class) struggles in society, and only secondarily can one focus on education and law. Without permanent struggles the regeneration of society against corruption would become impossible.

There are a few other passages that refer to the primacy of struggle in class compromise, especially in IV Chapter of *Discorsi*, where Machiavelli develops a theory of history that would find a significant echo in Marx’s work. According to Machiavelli the struggle between classes is an internal element of every community:”And as other Republics have all their divisions [of classes] under various names, so Venice is divided into Gentlemen and Popolari, and wants that the former can have all the honors, from which all others are entirely excluded.”⁴⁷⁵ If a community wants to last, it has to recognize this struggle and invent institutions, which further deal and mediate the struggle between classes. It is neither the new beginning nor the simple reproduction of the state, but the struggle between classes that is given a key role and a crucial terrain that couples the politics of the encounter and its continuation together. The famous example from Antiquity is embodied in the Roman republic, where relative stability was not derived from a mythological foundation but rather from a political invention, in a “mixed government”. It was thanks to the sharing of power between plebs (*tribunat*) and patricians (*senate*) that the Roman republic was prosperous, where politics was not a simple reproduction, but attempted to retain fidelity to the class compromise that would reproduce institutional invention and not simply reproduce power relations. Class compromise should be seen as

⁴⁷³ Read with Marx the goal is a classless society, communism, not socialism.

⁴⁷⁴ (2009: <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/machiavelli/niccolo/m149d/book1.html#book1.4>).

⁴⁷⁵ (2009: <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/machiavelli/niccolo/m149d/book1.html#book1.55>).

the result of a long series of tumultuous struggles, and it was in these moments again, when the contingent moment of politics was inscribed in a political formation.

Obviously, even when we attempt to bring Machiavelli close to Marx, this theorem does not completely follow Marxian lines, since it does not yet know of the figure of the „proletariat“ this „non-class“ that wants to abolish the class society and all classes, including itself, thus one cannot be completely satisfied with this model of politics. Machiavelli would certainly have welcomed and enhanced a politics of class compromise in the Florentine context, but even when Machiavelli embraced the balance of class powers, he spoke from the perspective of the people, thus he was taking a side in this struggle. If a state wants to last, it has to win over the people⁴⁷⁶ and where these new political institutions should be a result only of the struggles for a new Italian state beyond the narrow Florentine context and final compromise.⁴⁷⁷ This move rectifies theorem’s strict institutionalist current.

Althusser’s Machiavelli gave only a small answer to the question of transition and reproduction, most notably in terms of emergence of state power and apparatus in the capitalist mode of production. The next sections will integrate this into a much broader project that was started in his less famous book *Sur la Reproduction* (SLR). The theoretical arsenal of SLR was assigned the task of dismantling and conceiving actual transition in Althusser’s and in our times: the transition from capitalism to communism in light of critique of real existing socialisms and the international communist movement.

5.3. Theory of reproduction: short genealogy from Quesnay to Marx

The concept of reproduction has a long history that I will severely limit to my purposes of recuperating the Althusserian theory of reproduction that wanted to supply Marxist theory

⁴⁷⁶ MU: 62. This is still a vague point that can generally lead to a support of “populist” politics. Especially in the light of recent political discussion, this move towards “people” needs to be further explained by thinking the distinction between different politics: fascism and communism. How can one argue that fascism (Nazism) did not win over the people and constitute the People on the pedestal of the political? To be sure at the expense of a substantialist exclusion of the *Other* and with the positing of a national substance. These are issues that Althusser’s Machiavelli does not work on.

⁴⁷⁷ Lahtinen rightly stresses the difference between aleatory and republican interpretation, if the latter gives “emphasis on issues sustaining peace and harmony, the aleatory interpretation discusses the elements of chance that lie behind peace and harmony as well as the struggles and conflicts that characterise it, which Althusser refers to with the expression ‘l’accumulation primitive politique’.” (2009: 209f).

with a necessary conceptual apparatus. Althusser's return to Marx resulted not only in the rehabilitation of the concept of the "mode of production" that animated "theoretical antihumanism", but he traced a concept that he never really named: the (capitalist) *mode of reproduction*. Perhaps the most clear definition of the Marxian conception of reproduction was given by Jacques Bidet, who argues it is the "permanent reconstitution of conditions and relations of production, that effectuates every social process of production and that develops from this mode of production a durable structure".⁴⁷⁸

The idea of reproduction was prominent in early economic theory, Marx picked it up and critically took some of the theses from Quesnay's *Tableau Economique*,⁴⁷⁹ where reproduction received such a powerful image. Quesnay's society is represented as organism premised on the circulatory flows of blood and idea that there is an inherent ability of the recycling powers of the blood, which accounts for its cyclical movement.⁴⁸⁰ Quesnay's discovery substituted the old model of blood-letting as a method of medical treatment and yielded impressive results once it entered the realm of society by rethinking the circulation of economic flows ending in the comparison of the annual results of gross domestic product. Quesnay was a father of physiocratism, thus, he ascribed the core of economic and circulatory activity to agriculture, which was also the only productive class and sector in society. Material units that are produced in agriculture would be then exchanged between different social classes and fit into a general perspective of social reproduction. Society is reproduced as a large organism, which assigns a cyclical nature to the reproduction, and where the dominant role is assigned to agriculture (economy) that remains based in nature. Therefore, as Agamben mentions, economy organizes the society⁴⁸¹ and this is also why Marx named Quesnay the first theorist that made a science of political economy.⁴⁸² Quesnay's ideas were later evoked in different strands of economic theory.⁴⁸³ Perhaps most troublesome is the presupposition that pertains to the

⁴⁷⁸ Bidet in: Labica/Bensussan (1999: 997).

⁴⁷⁹ Quesnay (1972).

⁴⁸⁰ Taken up from William Harvey (1628).

⁴⁸¹ Compare Agamben (2011: 280-281). I owe this reference to Ben Dawson.

⁴⁸² In the letter to Maxim Kovalesky he said that "Quesnay was the first to put political economy on its real, i.e., capitalist, basis, and the curious thing is that he did so apparently as a landowner's tenant." (Marx and Engels 1975-2005, Vol. 45: 452).

⁴⁸³ Marx assesses that Quesnay's *Tableau* "intended to bring out clearly the physiocrats' conception of the production and circulation of a country's total wealth, [but had] remained obscure enough for the succeeding generations of economists." (Marx and Engels 1975-2005, vol. 25: 229). From now on MECW.

thesis that the natural cycle rests on a harmonious picture of equivalence between production and consumption, and the more or less invisible hands that (self-) regulate social circulation, which eventually “naturalizes” the social hierarchies, which seem to be (self)reproducing.

Contrary and against these ideas Marx would very critically address the issue of reproduction especially in *XIX Chapter* of *Vol. II* of *Capital*, where he also develops a first attempt of seeing reproduction from the perspective of capitalist circulation.⁴⁸⁴ Obviously, Marx was critical about Quesnay’s prioritizing of agricultural production, however he admitted that Quesnay already spoke of agriculture from the perspective of a capitalist:

Agriculture is carried on capitalistically, that is to say, it is the enterprise of a capitalist farmer on a large scale; the direct cultivator of the soil is the wage-labourer. Production creates not only articles of use but also their value; its compelling motive is the procurement of surplus-value, whose birth-place is the sphere of production, not of circulation. Among the three classes which figure as the vehicles of the social process of reproduction brought about by circulation, the immediate exploiter "productive" labour, the producer of surplus-value, the capitalist farmer, is distinguished from those who merely appropriate the surplus-value.⁴⁸⁵

Another important aspect of overdetermined reproduction could be found in Marx’s famous 1859 *Introduction* to the *Critique of Political Economy*. For the sake of brevity, I would only recall Marx’s thesis on the rather asymmetrical process of economic reproduction. The economic “cycle” consists of 4 vital moments: production, distribution, exchange, and consumption⁴⁸⁶, but Marx dismantles an organic view of simple reproduction that would bring us “naturally” from one moment of the cycle to another, from one cycle to another. The harmonious/teleological principle of economic self-regulation is replaced by the principle of uneven capitalist development with a wide range of structural inconsistencies and contradictions. Different moments in the economic cycle are not in a simple circular relationship. On the contrary, Marx would speak about the dominance of production, which determines other moments in the economic cycle, for

⁴⁸⁴ This is a part of the “parallax” move that Marx makes from the standpoint of production (mostly in Vol.I) to the standpoint of circulation (vol.III). Karatani claims it is impossible to understand Marx without taking both antinomial standpoints into account; in fact they are part of Marx’s methodological approach (2008).

⁴⁸⁵ MECW (vol. 36: 358).

⁴⁸⁶ “Production, distribution, exchange and consumption thus form a proper syllogism; production represents the general, distribution and exchange the particular, and consumption the individual case which sums up the whole. This is indeed a connection, but a superficial one.” (MECW, vol. 28: 27)

example how and what we consume is already included in the very production process.⁴⁸⁷ The concept of *Gliederung* for Marx meant “articulated hierarchy”, which assigned an organizational principle for society and specific role of production in capitalist economy. Althusser built here on his famous “efficacy of structure on elements” (structural overdetermination) and more concisely defined *Gliederung* in relation to the “structure of the whole”, which:

is articulated as the structure of an *organic hierarchized whole*. The co-existence of limbs and their relations in the whole is governed by the order of a dominant structure which introduces a specific order into the articulation (*Gliederung*) of the limbs and their relations.⁴⁸⁸

Althusser’s further theoretical elaboration demonstrated how different concepts, most notably *Gliederung* and *Verbindung-en* impose structural logic that organizes and assigns the structural place and specific relationships between economy and society.⁴⁸⁹ This is also the point when perpetuation, or rather reproduction of the relations of productions would come into the focus of Marx and Althusser.

Marx developed the concept of reproduction throughout *Capital*: in Vol. I he spoke first about reproduction in terms of the “accumulation of capital”, especially in the section II, where he addressed the question of the cycle of capital, which to simplify it, is systematized in a short formula *money-commodity-money*’ (m-c-m’). What matters is the surplus value produced at the end of this cycle, which is based on the maximization of profit. The cycle of capital has from the very start inscribed a tension/conflict, which expands in the question for capitalist: how much to invest into new machinery (“constant capital”), and how much to give into reproduction of labour power (“variable capital”). The asymmetrical role between capital and labour, from this general perspective is very clear: it is the capital that guarantees the conditions for the perpetuation of the working

⁴⁸⁷ According to Marx production determines other moments in the economic cycle: "In every form of society there is a particular [branch of] production which determines the position and importance of all the others, and the relations obtaining in this branch accordingly determine those in all other branches. It is the general light tingeing all other colours and modifying them in their specific quality; it is a special ether determining the specific gravity of everything found in it." (MECW vol. 28: 43). Also, the needs (satisfied with consumption) are very much determined by the way of production.

⁴⁸⁸ RC: 98.

⁴⁸⁹ On the concept of *Verbindung* (combination) see RC: 174-176. Marx integrated economic processes into a larger social structure, which is not based on the natural order, and also he shed new light on the “non-natural” class character of the objective economical laws.

class. The conflict is manifested at the point for struggle for the minimal level of subsistence (wage), which guarantees the “reproduction of labour power”. According to Marx this is an eminently political question, which is not conditioned by market forces, but rather shows on the class nature of the production process.⁴⁹⁰ This was one of the central points, where Marx detected the structural separation crucial for capitalist reproduction: separation of the worker from the means of production. Or, in his words:

Thus primitive accumulation, as I have already shown means nothing but the separation of labour and the worker from the conditions of labour, which confront him as independent forces. The course of history shows that this separation is a factor in social development. Once capital exists, the capitalist mode of production itself evolves in such a way that it maintains and reproduces this separation on a constantly increasing scale until the historical reversal takes place.⁴⁹¹

Workers can only sell their labour power that the capitalist buys and integrates into the production process; “labour as capital”.⁴⁹² This structural feature is for Marx located in the heart of capital and needs to be reproduced for the “normal” functioning of capitalist mode of production.⁴⁹³ As already shown in previous sections this separation and its reproduction do not have to do only with the economic, but also with the extra-economic constraints (Law and State).

5.4. Althusserian theory of reproduction: mode of reproduction

Althusser was certainly not the only one to shift theoretical attention to the question of reproduction, but should rather be seen in company with various orientations and different emphases: ranging from the critique of everyday life (Henri Lefebvre) and the critique of

⁴⁹⁰ It depends on the level of the degree of exploitation recognized as tolerable by society, or rather by the legal apparatus of the state that results from concrete class struggles. If workers are organized and fight for higher wages that will perhaps grant them a temporary welfare condition. But these achievements of the past are not eternal, but exposed to all sorts of political forces from the side of the State and capital, but also due to their internal weaknesses.

⁴⁹¹ MECW (1975-2005, vol. 32: 405).

⁴⁹² „The separation was made complete between the means of production concentrated in the hands of the capitalists, on the one side, and the producers, possessing nothing but their labour-power, on the other. The contradiction between socialised production and capitalistic appropriation manifested itself as the antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie” (MECW 1975-2005, vol. 25: 258-259).

⁴⁹³ For a detailed analysis of (re)production see RC: 170-181.

ideology to state analysis and Marxist feminism.⁴⁹⁴ This theoretical shift can be located in historical conjuncture of late 1960s and 1970s. However, at this point I am interested in the specificity of the Althusserian move that inaugurated reproduction in a more general sense, as the fundamental concept of Marxist theory. As Balibar has noted: “on the plane instituted by the analysis of reproduction, production is not the production of things, it is the production and conservation of social relations.”⁴⁹⁵ For Balibar, taking into account the production of social relations is of radically different order:

As opposed to the production of things, the production of social relations is not subject to the determinations of the preceding and the succeeding, of the 'first' and the 'second'. Marx writes that 'every process of social production is at the same time a process of reproduction. The conditions of production are also those of reproduction'; and at the same time they are the conditions which reproduction reproduces: in this sense the 'first' process of production (in a determinate form) is always-already a process of reproduction.⁴⁹⁶

Balibar affirms the primacy of reproduction and he also dissociates reproduction from a purely “economist” definition, which relied on a narrow reading of Marx that isolated the “accumulation of capital” from more political perspective. The narrow Marxist conception falls behind Marx’s exposition as Balibar argues it the idea of reproduction (as accumulation) is based on the old idea of “philosophical representation”: “It is the idea of self-identity, the permanence (here under the form of permanence of *relations* that are implied in the cyclical process) which does not need to be explained because it is self-explanatory, and does not need to have a cause...”⁴⁹⁷ Furthermore, Balibar identifies this idea with “substance” built on an ontological argument and principle of inertia, whose “eternal” character, I could add, makes it impossible to be overcome or abolished. In the economic theory this idea has been coupled to a view of natural objective laws that are self-regulating, which often bring us to an “apologetic” view of the existing relations of (re)production. In order to arrive at a more complex concept Balibar suggests that

⁴⁹⁴ Feminist Marxists showed in important way how the sphere of reproduction (“household”) is first not a sphere of unproductive work, but crucial in understanding the reproduction of labour power; also through the struggles of women the sphere of reproduction became the politicized site of an emerging subjectivity (women struggles) that played a key role in the social movements of 1960s and 1970s. At this point I cannot go into a detailed view of this fascinating intellectual and political trajectory, let me only refer to some authors: Fortunati (1995), Dalla Costa and Dalla Costa (1999); Federici apart from her book on housework (2012), she wrote an excellent book on the question of witches and primary accumulation (2004).

⁴⁹⁵ RC: 269.

⁴⁹⁶ RC: 271.

⁴⁹⁷ Balibar (1974: 236). Translation mine.

reproduction should be always related both to the idea of the “reproduction of labour power” and to the functioning of the superstructure, which is not merely an expression/reflex of the economic base.⁴⁹⁸

Althusser set himself the theoretical task to work through the concept of superstructure, which has grounded his major contribution to Marxism. Moreover, I argue that he traced the concept of the *mode of reproduction*. It was after 1969, in the light of the historical defeat of the Left in May '68, the failures of the international working class movement in the light of capital's restructuring (post-Fordism, de-regulation...) that Althusser's famous essay Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) appeared. The essay starts the investigation on the point of the “reproduction of labour power”, which he inserts to a much broader framework of “social reproduction”. For Althusser reproduction is the “last condition” of production and in order that social reproduction functions:

the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e. a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class ‘in words’.⁴⁹⁹

The thesis extends the “reproduction of labour power” and the immediate production process to the general process of “real subsumption”, or rather to general social relations. Contrary to expectations Althusser would trace Marx's major breakthrough for the conception of reproduction in the last chapters of Vol. III of *Capital*, where Marx used it more or less unconsciously. Althusser comments on these passages asserting that, “reproduction is thus the condition for all ‘continuing’ production.”⁵⁰⁰ Frieder Wolf follows along these lines and argues that Marx spoke about twofold aspect of reproduction

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.: 237.

⁴⁹⁹ ISA: 132-133.

⁵⁰⁰ MIHL: 96. Althusser highlights a few sections from chapter 47 from Vol.III, most notably regarding the “permanence” of reproduction in different modes of production: “That the product of the serf must here suffice to reproduce his conditions of labour, in addition to his subsistence, is a circumstance which remains the same under all modes of production. For it is not the result of their specific form, but a natural requisite of all continuous and reproductive labour in general, of any continuing production, which is always simultaneously reproduction, i.e., including reproduction of its own operating conditions. It is furthermore evident that in all forms in which the direct labourer remains the “possessor” of the means of production and labour conditions necessary for the production of his own means of subsistence, the property relationship must simultaneously appear as a direct relation of lordship and servitude, so that the direct producer is not free” (MECW, vol.37: 776-777). Marx refers to the serf, but in terms of the reproduction of labour power, this has to do also with the wage-worker.

“first, in his remarks on the fetish character of the commodity (and later also on money, capital and land), and second, in his concept of the despotism of capital within the production process, once the latter has been organised by capital, or once it has become subject to ‘real subsumption’.”⁵⁰¹ Althusser (and Balibar) spoke mostly about this second aspect, where they assigned primacy to the relations of production instead of sustaining the eternal mechanism of productive forces and productive relations.

However, apart from the highlighted passages from *Capital* Vol.III, I should add another passage from early Marx that fits much better to Althusser’s thesis on the standpoint and primacy of reproduction. It was in *The German Ideology* –the text that was so crucial for Althusser’s thesis of the “epistemological break”– particularly in section 3,⁵⁰² where Marx developed a forceful critique of idealistic conception of history. It is strange to observe Althusser’s silence on these passages, since Marx directly discusses basic aspects of social activity, a theory of social reproduction, which would ground the future materialist enterprise:

Since we are dealing with the Germans, who are devoid of premises, we must begin by stating the first premise of all human existence and, therefore, of all history, the premise, namely, that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to “make history”. But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, housing, clothing and various other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself.⁵⁰³

In these passages of the *German Ideology* Marx sketches a study of a field that is located outside the immediate production process, the reproduction of material life, but instead of

⁵⁰¹ Wolf argues that it is unfortunate “that the Marx of the second volume of *Capital* concerns himself exclusively with the reproduction of the means of production, leaving the reproduction of labour-power for later. Not only does this lead to an elision of the relationship between reproduction through the purchase of commodities and reproduction through non-commodified domestic and self-directed labour; it also places the family, *qua* institution in which the historically constituted gender and generational relations are enshrined, outside the field of inquiry” (forthcoming).

⁵⁰² [3. PRIMARY HISTORICAL RELATIONS, OR THE BASIC ASPECTS OF SOCIAL ACTIVITY: PRODUCTION OF THE MEANS OF SUBSISTENCE, PRODUCTION OF NEW NEEDS, REPRODUCTION OF MEN (THE FAMILY), SOCIAL INTERCOURSE, CONSCIOUSNESS]. Even if Althusser is silent on these passages, in his late work *MILH* he literarily repeats some of Marx’s argument from my highlighted passages: “the process of production must in turn (lest one remain abstract) be conceived as a decisive moment in the process of reproduction: the reproduction of the means of production, but also the reproduction of labor power (family, housing, children, child-rearing, schooling, health, problems faced by the couple, by young people, etc.) – to say nothing of the other moment of the process of reproduction of labor-power, which brings the state and its apparatuses (repressive, ideological, etc.) into play.” (*MIHL*: 43-44).

⁵⁰³ *MECW* (vol.5: 41-42).

“clothing” and a kind of anthropology or history of material things, a kind of Braudelian material civilisation Marx (unexpectedly) turns to “idealist” categories: “family” (in an Althusserian vein, family as ISA), “consciousness” (as ideology) and “social intercourse” (communication, media, legal and economic exchange). There is something special in Marx’s materialist twist that would not remain without echo in Althusser’s gesture of material efficacy of ideas.

This theoretical shift re-orienting analytical primacy to reproduction starts in already in *Lire le capital*, but also in a determinant way marks his project SLR. Althusser never ceased to call for the “standpoint of reproduction”,⁵⁰⁴ which was embedded in his general call for a “new materialism” resulting in the primacy of reproduction.

But apart from dramatic declaration, how does he explain this call? What are the complex mechanisms that guarantee social reproduction and assign primacy to the relations of production? Reproduction is not simply made by men or classes, but by the form of these processes, or as Althusser puts it “every 'society' has to reproduce the conditions of its own production, and every class society has to perpetuate the relation of exploitation and of production that sustains it.”⁵⁰⁵ His major thrust could be read in the axis between the search for specific forms of political domination (e.g. gender domination) and ideological processes (e.g. racism) that take place outside the immediate production process and at times precede it and continue to coexist in the capitalist mode of production.⁵⁰⁶ Althusser’s analysis focuses on moments and mechanisms that perpetuate relations of exploitation and domination.

⁵⁰⁴ In the whole essay ISA, or rather in the whole enterprise of SLR and in MIHL.

⁵⁰⁵ Althusser (2006: 123). Balibar argued in different places for an analysis of subjugation in everyday ideological practices (2010) connecting Althusser to the Foucauldian understanding of disciplinary power.

⁵⁰⁶ Even if we accept the thesis that the production process does not simply end when working time is over, Althusserian analysis strives to work on the ideological and political moments that are relative; for example the gender domination that precedes class divisions in capitalist society; the same can be said for complex relations of race and colonialist politics that existed long before the capitalist mode of production. The domination on the basis of gender, race, or nation cannot be simply taken as a function of capitalist expansion, but rather as intersecting with different dominations, integrating them in “creative” coexistence. They have a certain, if you wish, non-economic dynamic that follows. This is what some Marxist feminists (Furtunati 1995, Federici 2012), or postcolonial theoreticians (Fannon 1952) have correctly addressed, when criticizing vulgar economist Marxism.

This was one of the major quests in SLR, which was unfortunately never published in his life.⁵⁰⁷ Critics of Althusser often claim that his theory of reproduction is stuck in a “structuralist” position and has extremely limited use for understanding the existing social relations that are in effect more dynamic than suggested in the frame of repressive and ideological state apparatuses. However, already within the ISA essay, and most notably in other parts of SLR, it is clear that Althusser’s thrust simultaneously grasps both the stability and transformation of social relations: on the one hand Marxian theory researches the relative permanence and stability of capitalist social relations that appear as something natural, evident and even eternal to ideological subjects, and on the other hand, the consistency and coherency of these seemingly eternal social relations is reached only in perpetual change via constant re-shaping of the political and ideological processes. There can be no “golden middle” and consensual harmony for Althusser, even when the class compromise or social consensus is reached, it is only a temporary result of class struggles; consensus rather is the result of the successful work of (capitalist) reproduction, gluing together the fragments of uneven social processes, integrating even encounters.⁵⁰⁸

If the critique of Althusser’s structuralism falls short, perhaps a more substantial critique was made in terms of his incapacity to provide a theory of transformation that would break with the reproductive conditions. I have showed that Althusser’s Machiavelli was largely occupied with this question, but even in this more “structuralist” text SLR, his political wager remains very precise:

The *total process* of the realization of the reproduction of the relations of production is therefore still abstract, insofar as it has not adopted the point of view of this class struggle. To adopt the point of view of reproduction is therefore, in the last instance, to adopt the point of view of the class struggle.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁷ Only the ISA essay was published; in English SLR has not yet been published, there is a German translation (Wolf 2012) and French original manuscript (1995), parts of SLR are translated into other languages. All translation from SLR are mine.

⁵⁰⁸ According to Wolf Althusser navigates between “reproduction of the relations of production” and “social reproduction in general”, which also do not exclude exceptional moments, events, even encounters: “society’s vital process does not consist exclusively of processes of reproduction – in modern societies, it probably does not even consist mainly of such processes. New beginnings, one-time productions and simple persistence are probably equally widespread. Once it has been imposed, domination cannot simply endure, but nor can it constantly re-invent itself: as domination, it needs to *reproduce* itself in the specific sense of the term, even if it needs to repeatedly undergo thorough transformations in order to achieve this. For this reason, examination of the reproduction of capitalist domination is indeed the pivotal theme of Marxist theory.” (forthcoming).

⁵⁰⁹ SLR: 171.

What does Althusser mean with adopting the standpoint of class struggle in reproduction? Doesn't this simply double his point of departure insofar as he already assumes the "standpoint of reproduction"? It seems that Althusser is trying to articulate something that is at first glance irreconcilable, on the one hand the ultimate horizon of capitalist social relations (the logic of reproduction), and on the other hand class struggle, which points to the destruction and/or overcoming of the ultimate horizon of capitalist logic. Balibar concludes as well that Althusser simultaneously inscribes "the possibility, even necessity of the *rupture* with the dominant capitalist system from the point of the constitutional 'fragility' of this very system".⁵¹⁰ This seems to be the major challenge, where Althusser's trajectory brings together revolutionary politics and reproduction, but also a question to which he gave different answers.

5.4.1. Topography revisited: oscillating definitions of reproduction?

Althusser relentlessly criticized the sacred core of Marxian topography that was organized around linear causality: economic base (primary) determines the superstructure (secondary). This model was infused by a linear and homogenous temporality against which Althusser and his disciples organized their attack already in *Reading Capital* and *For Marx* but Althusser continued in a slightly revised way in SLR. Althusser would oscillate between developing a brand new model to base and superstructure, or infuse the old model with a more structural and complicated dynamic. It seems that he gradually decided for the first option, as he constantly condemned the unity of base-superstructure as "descriptive" and "deceiving".⁵¹¹ However, contrary to post-Marxist interpretations, he insisted on the determining role of "economic class struggle", which should be re-posed in a non-linear heterogeneous and complex temporality.

⁵¹⁰ Balibar (2011: 15). (Translation mine). Also, in his earlier work from 1974, Balibar exposed Marx's discovery in terms of "two indissociable realities: the process of capitalist *exploitation* and process of *proletarian revolution* and the class struggle that prepares it and accomplishes it" (1974: 11).

⁵¹¹ The topography of superstructure does not suffice and is extremely deceiving. Althusser would repeat his criticism in various places in SLR (1995: 10, 84, 275-276; see also Althusser 2006: 54-58).

Even though Althusser did not work intensively on the concept of “structural causality” after *For Marx*, I argue that considering the logic of reproduction attempted to answer the very same quandary in Marxian theory: the weakness of the model of base – superstructure. Let me only sum a few points that Althusser introduced early on with his conception of “structural causality”.⁵¹² Nenad Miscevic would define this principle of causality in terms of double determination: “Determination by the economic element consists in the fact that the *economic element determines the overdeterminant element of society*, thus there is a double determination that Althusser names over-determination.”⁵¹³ I already mentioned the efficacy of structure on its elements that is fundamentally delayed and displaced, and that always has to take into account a plurality of determinants. Avoiding a simple mediation that was grasped in the concept of reflection, but also going against the “expressive totality”,⁵¹⁴ where economy would be mediated in all spheres, Althusser struggled to decentre economy and show its specific dynamic that would not be so transparent and determined in advance. Even a more Gramscian inspired model of reciprocal causality remained within the model of base-superstructure.⁵¹⁵ Althusser’s model posited a “decentred centre”, without one clear centre, but rather would always be grasped only in its effects, which could be displaced and condensed, since also other instances and their specific dynamic influences and orientations mutually condition each other. In order to provide some additional clues on the structural dynamic Althusser employed a few concepts from Freud’s work *Traumdeutung*: the mechanisms of condensation, displacement, secondary elaboration and overdetermination.⁵¹⁶ This brings a very different model of base and superstructure, where mutual conditioning of different elements is set in motion by very specific principles.

⁵¹² See Badiou’s article (1967), which is the most systematized account of Althusser’s concept of structural causality.

⁵¹³ FM: 87-128.

⁵¹⁴ FM: 106.

⁵¹⁵ He targeted two major tendencies in Marxist theory that were linked to political practice: the first attack was launched on economics that relied on the primacy of the objective laws of history and productive forces (this led to the mechanistic governmentality in socialist countries); the second attack was directed against the *telos* of subjective forces, the isolation of the individual from the superstructure, a specific reversal of the model of base –superstructure, which had little to do with Marx, because according to Althusser Man does not make History (cf. RTJL).

⁵¹⁶ Freud (1953-1974).

Even when we follow Marx's discovery of the concept of the (capitalist) mode of production, this does not mean that he provided a general theory of production, rather the dominant mode is itself is a patchwork and exists only through an encounter and combination with other modes of production. In this respect the projective call to research each particular "social formation" is of utmost relevance, because any social formation is a specific articulation of elements. Althusser's project should not be understood along the lines of causal relativism, or multivalent causality that would constantly shift between centres. Even if he stated that the lonely hour of "the last instance" never arrives,⁵¹⁷ his theoretical standpoint remains rooted in the primacy of economic struggle, which should be researched from the perspective of reproduction, and most notably from the State. His major theoretical wager in SLR is based on a rupture within Marx's topography and the doubling, or rather the splitting in two of the "mode of production": production and reproduction. Althusser considered what I call the "mode of reproduction" as essential for understanding the changing nature of capitalist societies. This was what Althusser termed the "absolute limit" in Marx, the weak and inconsistent theory of the superstructure.⁵¹⁸

5.4.2. Logic of reproduction: from "structural causality" ("absent cause") to "absent" object of class struggle?

The existence of different elements articulated in a structured whole is reposed with the problematic of reproduction that unfolded in SLR, where Althusser brings the logic of reproduction into the fore, extending the focus from the reproduction of "labour power" and ideology as "commodity fetishism" to the more general "social reproduction".⁵¹⁹ Even when Althusser assigns reproduction methodological primacy he claims that it is internally split; reproduction is shaped on one hand by different instances: economy, politics, ideology, law, culture, and on the other hand different forms of class struggle: ideological, economic and political. This said we get again the doubling of instance and struggle; reproduction is not some kind of eternal substance, but already from the very beginning split and traversed.

⁵¹⁷ FM: 113.

⁵¹⁸ MIHL: 54.

⁵¹⁹ See SLR, Balibar (1974), Močnik (1994), Wolf (2012).

Admittedly, Althusser's arguments in SLR are cursory, as the title of the posthumous publication uncovers in the title "On Reproduction".⁵²⁰ I will limit Althusser's definition of reproduction to two entry points: the first approach defines reproduction as a specific *logic of society*, the way in which the social whole is being structured and is linked to the adoption of class struggle. This approach belongs to the materialist dialectic and will be sketched out in this section. The second approach belongs to historical materialism and sketches the contours of concrete analysis of the fields of law, state, ideology and their specific functioning. I will work on this approach in the subsequent sections of the chapter. Even if Althusser failed to produce a coherent research program, I argue that his attempt to combine both approaches to reproduction can be defended. Rather than the opposition of approaches or simple "duality", his approach to reproduction should be viewed as a "parallax" movement: a change in aspect between a general logic and a concrete analysis of historical processes and struggles.⁵²¹

How is the principle of reproduction connected to the dynamics of class struggle? Althusser's reference to class struggle as the motor of history is a commonplace, however he brings it closer to a general principle of the constitution the society. His definition of class struggle is extremely foreign to objective classification, which puts forward the criteria for the identification of individuals who are then categorized in different social classes according to the type of work, distribution of income, or consumption habits they have.⁵²² In his less known text "Note on ISA"⁵²³ Althusser adopts the perspective of class struggle in order to grasp the problem of reproduction. This move is performed in order to evaluate the failure of May '68 and also in order to win the struggle one needs to analyse and wage class struggle in ideological state apparatuses:

we need to assume the '*standpoint of reproduction*', which is the standpoint of class struggle as the *whole process* and not as a sum of punctual confrontations that are limited to this or that

⁵²⁰ Frieder Wolf rightly disputes the title given by Bidet, since Althusser originally entitled it "Reproduction of relations of production".

⁵²¹ New materialism for Althusser meant to bridge these two levels beyond empiricism, twisting the concrete and abstract (see MECW, vol. 28: 38) and by adopting the standpoint of class struggle that would guarantee that reproduction does not remain on the level of abstract opinion. Zdravko Kobe criticizes Althusser's concept of "class struggle", because he conceives it more as a kind of eternal principle, empty signifier (1987). These sections will show on very different usages of class struggle in Althusser.

⁵²² See for example Bourdieu (1984).

⁵²³ The text has not been yet published in English, but is accessible in French (1995), German (2012), and for example in Slovenian (2000).

'sphere' (economy, politics, ideology); as *historical process* and not as the episodes of *immediate* repressions or revolts.⁵²⁴

Starting from the historical failure of the revolutionary movement in May '68, his discussion introduces the most "abstract" notion of class, that is, to see the "whole historical process", however, it will be demonstrated how this process is linked to the "concrete" conjuncture. During the late 1960s and 1970s Althusser importantly complemented his earlier classical conception of class, where he used to define working class and capitalist class in terms of their structural position within production, that is, their difference within the capitalist mode of production. This formulation is undoubtedly present in Althusser's later texts; however, his major innovation can be found in the shift from the primacy of the structural position of class to the primacy of the (political) class struggle. This enabled Althusser to infuse a political twist to reading both the reproduction of labour power and the recomposition of capital beyond a more economist interpretation:

In order for there to be classes in a 'society', the society has to be *divided* into classes: this division does not come *later in the story*; it is the exploitation of one class by another, it is therefore the class struggle, which constitutes the division into classes. For exploitation is already class struggle.⁵²⁵

Class struggle is thus inherently asymmetrical and an unequal social relation,⁵²⁶ but not only between the antagonist classes, but also within one class itself. In other words, no side is "immune" to the class struggle even if the class struggle is different on other side of the "barricade". Worker class and capitalist class are both marked by internal divisions, or what according to the individual is seen as competition on the market of labour power,⁵²⁷ or market concurrence on the side of enterprises between independent capitals. It is then methodologically inadequate to take class "solidarity" or class unity for granted, or as

⁵²⁴ SLR: 256 (translation mine).

⁵²⁵ See Balibar's precise formulation from that targets the definition of class as classification: "social classes do not precede their relation, but on the contrary result from it" (1974: 152). Class struggle shows the system of differences and division, which are not posited once and for all (ibid.). "Exploitation does not take place in the realm of 'intersubjective relations' or ethereal 'social relations'. It takes place *in material conditions* that are by no means arbitrary, but are, rather, the material conditions required and produced by the existing mode of production." The critique of class in terms of identity was also excellently articulated by Althusser's close disciple Nicos Poulantzas, see especially the first chapter (1975).

⁵²⁶ See Althusser (1995: 266-267) where he claims that the bourgeois class struggle is first, primary; as the history of primary accumulation clearly shows.

⁵²⁷ Ideological ramification can displace class conflict into the aversion for the unemployed, illegal immigrants stealing "our" jobs, conspiracy of bankers...

something spontaneous, because objective economic conditions in themselves do not already prescribe the way to act in accordance with the “general interest” of the capitalist class. The same goes for the individual worker; who, even if feeling exploited everyday, does not necessarily take up arms and achieve “working class consciousness”. In the light of the unsatisfactory model that premised class-consciousness upon objective economic class-ification,⁵²⁸ Althusser ascribed primacy to struggle; what some theorists would term the “political recomposition”⁵²⁹ of the working class, how it is organized, its level of solidarity, can differ from the “technical composition” that is imposed by the specific division of labour and technological improvements within the production process, which are organized by capital.

From this analysis it follows that firstly, Althusser reads class outside “objective” or sociological classification: classes are not identity groups, but entities that change their forms of appearance.⁵³⁰ Secondly, he does away with a voluntarist trajectory that posits an *a priori* historical subject⁵³¹ that will overcome the capitalist mode of production with all its exploitation and domination.⁵³² What counts for Althusserian analysis is the complex overdetermined reality of political, ideological and economic class struggles, where new and old political forms emerge with mediations that organize, but also displace, destroy or silence revolutionary politics; making the class or class struggle more invisible is one of the fundamental mechanisms of the State apparatus and the dominant ideology.⁵³³

At the opposite end of this “concrete abstract” reading that progresses on the side of the struggles between (the aspects of) labour and capital, a second approach could be coined an “abstract concrete” perspective that develops from the side of the “whole”, or

⁵²⁸ This model was criticized thoroughly by the Frankfurt school in the historical experience of fascism that destroyed all working class organisation, trade unionism; but at the same time they argued that it cannot be regarded as a merely economic phenomenon, as saving capitalism from the crisis; also more psychoanalytical and political categories need to be employed to disentangle Nazi politics. They also wanted to answer the question of how fascism embraced large parts of the working class.

⁵²⁹ See Močnik (2011).

⁵³⁰ See again the first chapter of Poulantzas (1975).

⁵³¹ Rancière would name this an “onto-teleological trick”, since it counts on the self-dissolution of the capitalist system (2010).

⁵³² I have to thank Ben Dawson’s study that researches this oscillation in political theory between volition and automaton (2011).

⁵³³ See also more recent article from Balibar “From Class struggle to classless struggle” (1991).

“split society”.⁵³⁴ Mladen Dolar puts it aptly that “class struggle is not something directly existing or ontologically given, but is in its very existence marked by the interior negativity, which Althusser, following Marx, attempts to think as class struggle.”⁵³⁵ In a way this “negativity of existence” “exists positively” through the result of certain struggles, the “result of an antagonism that is not given, but is inscribed in a split; this existence is always already mediated and is sustained only over the abyss of negativity”.⁵³⁶ Thus, class struggle is something “invisible” and simultaneously internal to capitalist mode of reproduction. This makes class struggle the ultimate support and horizon of capitalist reproduction, in words of Mladen Dolar class struggle is:

the border of every ideology, also of the ideology of class struggle ... which enables Althusser not to insist on drawing the demarcation line (split) between ‘us’, ‘Marxists’, who are possessors of the real truth and those others; much more importantly, when the class struggle is seriously taken into account, then one introduces the split in truth itself.⁵³⁷

This abstract theoretical dimension of Marx’s discovery is very much aligned with Althusser, when identifying the similarity of Marx and Freud: class struggle always traverses the truth, as does sexual difference in psychoanalysis where “the perspective of the progression of truth and the guaranteed progress of history vanishes”.⁵³⁸ In the line of all other provocative theses formulated by Althusser, this is one of the central scandals of Marxist theory.⁵³⁹

The “abstract concreteness” of the class struggle has to do with the central characteristics of the return to Marx, which is both political (internal divisions of classes; after struggle come classes) and theoretical (the perspective on truth as internally split, the structural principle of society, which shows the class character of the logic of

⁵³⁴ Society is not destroyed by class struggle, but according to Althusser “exploitation is *not abolished, but, rather, persevered, maintained, and reinforced*, for the benefit, naturally, of the dominant class.” (MIHL: 125).

⁵³⁵ Dolar (1991: 183).

⁵³⁶ Ibid.: 187.

⁵³⁷ Ibid.: 183. This is also the point that I already mentioned that brings together this conflictuality in the core of Marx, but also in Freud’s discoveries (Althusser 1996).

⁵³⁸ Dolar (1991: 185).

⁵³⁹ Dolar calls it “a” in psychoanalysis, that “unheimliche” dimension of the position of enunciation that disturbs all the sacred cows of Marxist theory (1991). This politico-theoretical remainder of Althusser made his thought uneasy, and non-classifiable to more “economist” approaches that followed the primacy of productive forces and the iron laws of history; he also stood apart from the “humanist” Marxist orientation of the romanticisation and voluntarism of Man.

reproduction⁵⁴⁰). The unfinished character of the relationship between class and class struggle has to do with the specificity of the object that Marx considered. Class struggle is the central concept that differentiates Marx from bourgeois economists or classical sociologists, however the concept has remained to a large degree contested and needs to be reactualised in every specific conjunctural analysis and intervention.

In some early texts of Marx and Engels one can admittedly find more precise definitions of the working class and the bourgeoisie, that can be identified with sociological terms,⁵⁴¹ but they also launched an epistemological thesis on the very notion of history: history as a history of class struggle and not a history of Man, ideas, providence, which all belong to the idealist understanding of history predominant in their time.⁵⁴² It should be nevertheless asked why, if the concept of the class struggle is at the very core of Marx's work, is it so difficult to find a more precise definition in Marx later works, where it is simply scattered throughout the masterwork *Capital*? In Vol. I, Marx gives us a few important theoretical passages that deal with the question of class: the section on surplus value - theory of exploitation;⁵⁴³ a more technical economic view on the struggle for the length of the "working day", which shows the ultimate horizon of trade union struggle (reform);⁵⁴⁴ and the class nature of the constitution of the mode of production.

⁵⁴⁰ This aspect is emphasized in a series of works from Slavoj Žižek (1989; 2000). In his early study on ideology (1989: 11-30) Žižek attempts to discern Lacan's thesis from XVII.seminar that Marx invented symptom.

⁵⁴¹ For example Engels in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* anthropologically, but also geographically, structured and described the experiences and conditions of the life of the working class- Then in their *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels argued in much more political terms. Stathis Kouvelakis reconstructs nicely how Marx framed the position of proletariat as a "non-class": the proletariat that abolishes not only class society but also itself as class (Kouvelakis 2003: 167-231).

⁵⁴² Already in *The German Ideology*, but especially in *Communist Manifesto* class struggle receives economical, but predominantly political interpretation.

⁵⁴³ Althusser in MIHL correctly argues that the theory of exploitation (and class struggle) cannot be reduced to the simple "extraction of surplus value" (2006: 43), but needs to be seen in the whole set "of its concrete forms and conditions", like the "socio-technical division and organisation of labour; the length of the working-day..." (ibid.)

⁵⁴⁴ Marx convincingly shows that the level of wage and material subsistence of the worker is not simply conditioned by supply and demand, determined by the arbitrariness of market forces, but has to do with the political and cultural results of the workers' struggles that in the final instance define what is the level of material subsistence for the reproduction of labour power. See especially chapter 10 of Vol.I *Capital* (MECW).

However, it remains enigmatic that only at the end of Vol. III of *Capital*⁵⁴⁵ does Marx promise to start the research that we have been all waiting for: the section on *Classes*.⁵⁴⁶ Let me quote the last words of Marx at the very end of trilogy:

The first question to be answered is this: What constitutes a class? -- and the reply to this follows naturally from the reply to another question, namely: What makes wage-labourers, capitalists and landlords constitute the three great social classes?

At first glance -- the identity of revenues and sources of revenue. There are three great social groups whose members, the individuals forming them, live on wages, profit and ground-rent respectively, on the realisation of their labour-power, their capital, and their landed property.

However, from this standpoint, physicians and officials, e.g., would also constitute two classes, for they belong to two distinct social groups, the members of each of these groups receiving their revenue from one and the same source. The same would also be true of the infinite fragmentation of interest and rank into which the division of social labour splits labourers as well as capitalists and landlords-the latter, e.g., into owners of vineyards, farm owners, owners of forests, mine owners and owners of fisheries. [Here the manuscript breaks off.]⁵⁴⁷

The manuscript breaks off, where it should have started: Marx prepared the battleground against considerations of class in terms of the sources of revenue, but does not give any further comments. The very first question becomes actually the very last question for Marx, Marx's theoretical letter and testament that was to be answered by all future Marxian, Marxist theorists and communist activists. This question has never been fully answered and systematized, since in the moment it would become systematized it would lose its radical core. This letter is an unfinished task inscribed in the very core of Marx's work and his progeny presents its greatest power and call for constant interrogation, for constant theoretical and political work that strives to overcome this paradox at the beginning and ending his discovery.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁵ This Volume was edited and published after Marx's death by Engels.

⁵⁴⁶ Mladen Dolar argues that at this point Marx came to the "thing itself", to the "real object of the new science", where many Marxist orientations up till today remain in deep disagreement: "Class struggle was always already stuck behind the appearance, behind the commodity masks without being staged on its own as a real persona that would be separated by the masks or behind the masking. But here lies the key to understanding the class struggle: it is the object of *Capital*, that is, the object that cannot be embraced as it stands, because it is present only in its deformed representation, in the appearance that holds together the commodity world." (2006: 85). Translation mine. Against the hermeneutic interpretation of class struggle as essence or substance of Marx, Dolar correctly argues about the negative character and already deformed character in the commodity world.

⁵⁴⁷ MECV (vol.37: 871).

⁵⁴⁸ This still is the subject of many radical disagreements at the heart of Marxian theories that disagree about the theoretical definitions and political deployments that grounded and oriented the international and more regional, local working class movements.

Marx's last words that evoke this unfinished task are repeated in the work of Louis Althusser. This might seem as a paradoxical assertion because one can rightfully ask who if not Althusser gave so much attention to this concept and to a certain degree applied and related it to all major fields in his work?⁵⁴⁹ Shouldn't we then claim the opposite, that class struggle traverses the entirety of Althusser's enterprise? Even if the concept is scattered through different works, one should not ignore one enigmatic detail: when Althusser wrote SLR, he announced to write a second part, which will produce a systematic study of class struggle. The first part of the study is entitled "The reproduction of the relations of capitalist reproduction (exploitation, repression, ideology)"⁵⁵⁰ and was in 1995 published as SLR, while the Part II was entitled "Class struggle in the social formations of capitalism" but remained unwritten. In the preface to SLR Althusser admits that both parts are internally connected and are interwoven with each other, this is why he does not want to assign primacy to any of the parts: neither state nor class struggle.⁵⁵¹ Althusser ends the preface by stating that class struggle will intervene constantly in his analysis of reproduction in SLR; he also formulates a key methodological warning:

...this part treats firstly the mode of the functioning of the Superstructure (State, State apparatuses) as Reproduction of Relations of production. But it is impossible to speak about State, Law, or Ideology without the intervention of class struggle ... it would seem that the inverse exposition would be better, thus beginning with Class Struggle before speaking about State, Law and Ideology. However ... it is impossible to speak about classes and Class Struggle without also speaking about State, Law and Ideology ... one needs to *speak about all at the same time*.⁵⁵²

5.5. Three Fields of Reproduction: State, Law (and Ideology)

For Marx and *Reading Capital* made Althusser's name popular in Marxist theory, but it was his essay on ISA in the beginning of 1970s that catapulted the French thinker onto the international academic stage that was not limited to Marxist theories, but echoed in many

⁵⁴⁹ Class struggle accompanies Althusser at every step: it precedes classes (the field of politics) and exists as philosophy conceived as class struggle in theory (philosophy); likewise, it emerges in the division between bourgeois and proletarian ideology (not only in the reversal, but in the complete differentiation between these ideologies); it persists in the very specificity of Marx's scientific discovery (the conflictuality at the core of his theoretical exposition, which has effects for the special relation between political practice and science), etc.

⁵⁵⁰ "La reproduction des rapports de production capitalistes (exploitation, repression, ideologie)" (SLR: 20).

⁵⁵¹ SLR: 27.

⁵⁵² Ibid.

different theoretical disciplines and orientations. Althusser's theory of ideology received an impressive after-life that has, for better or worse, been freed of his initial concerns and intentions.⁵⁵³ A large bulk of the work on Althusser, even in (post)Althusserian scholarship remained concentrated on notions of ideology, ideological interpellation, ideological subject and mechanism of subjection,⁵⁵⁴ with especially productive accounts provided by the so-called *Ljubljana school*, to which my thesis in many ways belongs.⁵⁵⁵ Despite my agreements with the ideology critique approach, the latter has most often left out very important questions that I would like to address here: the question of State⁵⁵⁶ and Law.⁵⁵⁷ As Ozren Pupovac rightly warned this was the major preoccupation of Louis Althusser in the ISA essay, but this thesis is especially valid in the context of Althusser's project in SLR.⁵⁵⁸ The absence of more rigorous research on these two fields of state and law is also due to the difficult accessibility of the sections that mostly deal with them in Althusser's closer analysis. His theory of the state is only now receiving proper attention,⁵⁵⁹ while research on his concept of Law is only now under way.

This part of my study will chiefly address precisely these two fields, while ideology will be discussed in relation to both fields, since it is the ether that permeates all social relations and is constitutive of the reproductive fields. SLR has a clearly defined research program of reproduction that is a study of "superstructure" with three constitutive fields:

⁵⁵³ From the usage in cultural studies to sociology, from radical political theory to philosophy. For an exhaustive list of references see also Gillot (forthcoming).

⁵⁵⁴ For the concept of "ideological interpellation" see Žižek (2000), Dolar (1993), Butler (1997), Močnik (1999). The ideology critique was popularized and exported to different fields, most notably to the field of culture, the analysis of racism and nationalism, democratic liberalism by Slavoj Žižek.

⁵⁵⁵ The Ljubljana school developed in the 1980s, where especially Rastko Močnik, Slavoj Žižek, Mladen Dolar and others, performed a prolific encounter between Althusserian Marxism and Lacanian psychoanalysis. Ideological interpellation has been read through both theoretical standpoints and opened a rich field of ideology critique that will receive international acclaim in decades to come.

⁵⁵⁶ The first important Althusserian contribution to the perspective of the state was made by Nicos Poulantzas (1978).

⁵⁵⁷ The most important contribution of Althusserian theory of law was done by Edelman (1979) I have to thank to David McInerney here (2011). A first collection of essays on Althusser and law is going to appear late in 2012, edited by Laurent Desutter.

⁵⁵⁸ Pupovac aptly asserts that "Althusser's theses on ideology, as does the entire dictum of the manuscript of *On Reproduction*, follow very closely the Marxian critique of liberalism, and thus also, the critique of the Law and of the legal subject. In fact, it is impossible to understand the critical force of the argument on reproduction in the ISA essay without evoking the crucial relationship between Law and capitalist exploitation which Marx explained with remarkable theoretical vigour throughout his works." (2008: 161). Another important conceptual difference lies between dominant ideology; ideology of dominant class (Močnik 1985); but also how working class is dominated by all sorts of ideologies and is not a matter of only spontaneous awareness of its conditions.

⁵⁵⁹ Pupovac (2008) Farris (forthcoming).

Law, State and Ideology. If Marx speaks about the legal-political superstructure, Althusser at least analytically, distinguishes State and Law, while the third element Ideology runs across both the state and legal apparatuses, moreover it is omnipresent. This is why it is more appropriate to speak about the ideological-political and the ideological-judicial superstructure.⁵⁶⁰ The determinant element in this tripartite scheme is the State, which is closely related to the “realization” and “materialization” of ideology; functioning ideology receives its most perfect embodiment through practices in the state apparatuses. The second element, Law, is a strange hybrid of the juridico-political apparatus fuelled by juridical and moral ideology and legal procedures with a crucial material support seemingly external to the law: repression that is guaranteed by the state apparatus (courts, police, army and all institutions). This inter-dependency of the superstructure shows its special inscription into the history of class social formation, where reproduction is articulated with production. At the end of analysis Althusser demonstrates that the relations of production are perpetuated and maintained only when there is an enduring State (apparatus). Without the reproductive apparatuses, the mode of production will not exist for long.⁵⁶¹

5.6. On State: apparatus or machinery?

Althusser’s major critique of Marx and Marxist theory is its failure to address and develop satisfactory concepts for the analysis of the State.⁵⁶² This path began in 1969 with SLR and the later published ISA essay, where he dissected both socialist and bourgeois state apparatuses. A decade later, a more concise proposal for State theory was developed, which also addressed the historical crisis of the Western Welfare State and the move of Communist Parties towards *Eurocommunism*.⁵⁶³ It was during the short period of 1977-1978 that Althusser wrote 4 texts that dealt with the state, as Sara Farris correctly

⁵⁶⁰ I will thus limit myself to a few crucial theses and travel between SLR (1995) and another key text of late Althusser MIHL.

⁵⁶¹ MIHL: 77.

⁵⁶² Althusser refers to some passages from Marx (18th Brumaire, Communist Manifesto, Class Struggles in France) and Lenin (State and Revolution), and attempts to renew some conceptions and reject others.

⁵⁶³ See Goshgarian (2006).

identified: 22ème congrès⁵⁶⁴ *Marx dans ses limites*,⁵⁶⁵ *The Crisis of Marxism* and *Marxism as a 'finite' theory*⁵⁶⁶. My account of State theory will develop around a few key theses from MIHL (1978) and SLR (1969) that sheds some light on different conceptions of the State, and also the importance of the State for future emancipatory politics.

The departure point in SLR begins to criticize the vulgar Marxist thesis that identifies the state as an “instrument in the hands of ruling class”.⁵⁶⁷ This interpretation poses an overly direct and transparent link between the “ruling class” and its “instrument”. Most likely, this “demystifying” approach also equates the state with government⁵⁶⁸ and tends to assert a “pragmatic” and possibly conspiratorial orientation. Althusser criticizes the pragmatic definition for its rendering of the State “in the service of the goals, that is of the *conscious will*, of the *ruling class*”.⁵⁶⁹ This idealist conception of social classes as subjects remains on a “descriptive level”, while for Althusser, it is more important to dissect the role of the State and structural coupling of the State and Capital. In a fascinating passage from MIHL, Althusser puts forward the “special function” of the State:

we invoked 'the ensemble of the forms of class domination, in production, politics and ideology'. But the existence of the ensemble of these forms presupposes the existence of the state, right, the political and other laws, and ideological norms. Thus there is no breaking out of *the circle of the state, which has nothing of a vicious circle about it, because it simply reflects the fact that the reproduction of the material and social conditions* encompasses, and implies the reproduction of the state and its forms *as well*, while the state and its forms contribute, but in a 'special' way, to ensuring the reproduction of class society. The 'special' function of the reproduction of the state is the reproduction of the 'special' forms (those of the state) required to control the class conflict, that are, at the limit, capable of undoing⁵⁷⁰ the existing regime of exploitation.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁴ See Althusser 1977.

⁵⁶⁵ MIHL.

⁵⁶⁶ Some of these texts have been only recently translated into English, some of them remain in French or Italian.

⁵⁶⁷ SLR: 167.

⁵⁶⁸ Once applied to political reality this will have disappointing results as the history of many socialist countries have shown. Informed by this thesis the revolutionary and enlightened avant-garde takes over the state and governs the country: arresting the revolutionary movement and failing to transform the state apparatus will be most likely be the endpoint of this thesis.

⁵⁶⁹ SLR: 104. (text modified).

⁵⁷⁰ The “capability of undoing“ points to emancipatory intervention, which I shall discuss at the very end of this chapter.

⁵⁷¹ MIHL: 125.

The “special function” of the state is thus to reproduce the relations of class production,⁵⁷² but what are the “special forms” of the state and its special functioning? Althusser defines the State along the Machiavellian lines of “lo stato”, which differs from Aristotle’s “polity” and Locke’s “government”.⁵⁷³

Once released from the instrumentalist temptation, one can succumb to a liberal position that posits the state an autonomous sphere, which would then according to Althusser fall into a “descriptive conception of the state that is content to affirm that the state is ‘separate’ and ‘above classes’”?⁵⁷⁴ Althusser was right to criticize both approaches with special focus on the liberal approach that perceives the State as a neutral agent mediation between social conflicts stabilizing public order in search for the “public good”. The liberal legacy combines the moral ideology of “what is good” with a juridical ideology that relies on the respect of the rule of law in the polity. His critical encounter with this tradition can be followed throughout his ENS seminars.⁵⁷⁵

His more nuanced conception of the State⁵⁷⁶ can be reconstructed from different texts and I will sum up the general lines in three theses. Thesis I from the beginning of SLR makes a historico-structural observation that posits the existence of the state form in necessary relation with the existence of social classes.⁵⁷⁷ Thesis I invokes an internal and necessary relation between state and class: *No classes, no state*. Thesis II speaks about the specificity of state institutions. According to Althusser the state is made of a “different material” than other institutions and bodies in society.⁵⁷⁸ Although State does not produces anything, it levies taxes, with which “it pays soldiers, policemen and civil servants, and

⁵⁷² State “also includes the reproduction of *material conditions* of the relations of production and exploitation” (MIHL: 121).

⁵⁷³ What “we are dealing with”, in Wolf’s words, “is a form of political state power that has taken on a life of its own, acting as a superior power potential *vis-à-vis* modern civil society, and therefore also as a totalising capacity both for sovereign surveillance of each and every area of society and for intervention in those areas.” (forthcoming).

⁵⁷⁴ MIHL: 120. He claims that neither Marx nor Lenin talked “about the autonomy of the state”. (ibid.: 83). The separation of the state from class struggle does not have anything to do with autonomy.

⁵⁷⁵ His attention would be given to social contract theories from Locke, Hobbes to Rousseau, but also to Montesquieu and Hegel, who appropriates the “spirit of law’s” in a different way (2006).

⁵⁷⁶ I am partly indebted to Ozren Pupovac for a section from his dissertation, where he analyses the relation between state and class struggle in Althusser (2008: 146-156).

⁵⁷⁷ SLR: 34.

⁵⁷⁸ MIHL: 100. Althusser assigns the specificity of the State in order to critique the “corporativist” approach that would see the state and the state sovereign as the head of the whole society; this metaphor has a very strong legacy in modern political theory and would return to the “mediating” role between different organic parts with the head as the ultimate “executive” position. Even if Althusser does not deny the importance of the “executive” role of state, he sustains the link to class struggle that complicates things further.

covers its 'public' expenditures...”⁵⁷⁹ Thesis II describes the institutional role of the state and its institutional grounding and non-productive nature. I would critically add that the state is nevertheless “productive”, not that it directly produces “surplus value”, but indirectly through various institutions the State can reach an important level of economic agency on the market. Moreover, the state is productive in terms of political domination and power, in so far as it crucially participates in the formation of ideological subjects and the docile bodies of citizens. Ideological subjects become integrated in the subtle techniques of government or the various policies of state apparatuses that traverse the whole of society. This brings us to Thesis III that asserts the primary role of the state in reproduction: *guaranteeing the conditions of social and material life in a particular society*.

These three Theses demonstrate the complexity of the field of politics and State, but also how Althusser’s work oscillated between different definitions of the State that I will work out in following sections: the state as instrument, the state as machine, the state as apparatus and the state as power.⁵⁸⁰ These conceptions of the state are not mutually exclusive, but rather show the complicated role and functions that the state acquires within the capitalist mode of production and also during socialist transition.⁵⁸¹ The Althusserian theory of the State through different definitions comes closer to tackling the connections and changes in the modalities of “exploitation” and “repression” that can be useful for the analysis of both the capitalist and socialist state.

5.6.1. State as machine

Let me start with a conception of the “state as machine” that Althusser took from Lenin’s writings, which became a dominant conception in his late texts:

The state is a machine in the full, precise sense of that term, as established in the nineteenth century after the discovery of the steam engine, the electro-magnetic machine, and so on: that is to say, in the sense of a man-made device [dispositif] comprising a motor driven by an energy 1,

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.: 100. (text modified).

⁵⁸⁰ Althusser admits that his dwelling upon the apparatus or machine is also due to Marx and Engels undefined terminology (MIHL: 82)

⁵⁸¹ In this particular respect one needs to share Agamben’s call for a concise analysis of the State, which was often seen as a failure of many anarchist and Marxist attempts to deal with it (1998).

plus a *transmission* system, the purpose of the whole being to transform a specific kind of energy (A) into another specific kind of energy (B).⁵⁸²

At the first glance the “state as machine” shares an instrumentalist metaphor, since every machine implies a particular agent, a human being, to wheel and direct it. Remaining with this conception of the machine seems, however, unsatisfactory for Althusser traces the specific “functioning” of the state, that is, how the state works. Thus, what should one take as important once the machine and the state are compared? Sara Farris correctly asks, “what is the energy it transforms, and what is the final result, namely the type of energy that it produces at the end of the process?”⁵⁸³ Althusser substituted the energy (from physics) with the violence of class struggle (politics), the State’s role is to transform class excess into a juridical normativity:

Class struggle, where one class is powerful and violent only because it is the dominant class, in other words, exercises its force and violence upon another class (which is also a force) that it must, in a never-ending struggle, hold in check if it is to maintain the upper hand over it. The relatively stable resultant (reproduced in its stability by the state) of this *confrontation* of forces (*balance* of forces is an accountant’s notion, because it is static) is that *what counts is the dynamic excess of force* maintained by the dominant class in the class struggle. It is *this excess of conflictual force, real or potential, which constitutes energy A*, which is subsequently transformed into power by the state-machine: *transformed into right, laws and norms*.⁵⁸⁴

The transformation of class excess understands the State as Regulatory machine, which handles the “excess” and the further institutionalization of class conflict. Class antagonisms are always asymmetrical, excessive, at times even destructive, and the State needs to balance and appease different divisions and fractures within society. This is where the agency of the state cannot be understood without ideology and law. At this point, Althusser turns to the “productive” dimension of state:

The State is a *machine for producing power*. In principle, it produces *legal power* – not for reasons involving the moral privilege of legality, but because, even when the state is despotic, and 'dictatorial' to boot, it always has an interest, practically speaking, in basing itself on laws;

⁵⁸² MIHL: 104.

⁵⁸³ Farris, forthcoming. In her excellent article Farris compares Althusser’s conception of the state with Mario Tronti’s attempts at considering the autonomy of the political. These are two simultaneous enterprises within the Marxist theory of the state, which had very politically different consequences.

⁵⁸⁴ MIHL: 109. It is striking to observe that Badiou’s theory of state starts from the opposite pole: the state is something that always produces new situations, is excessive, and then it is only ruptured, with what he calls the “event” that will “fix” this excess (2005).

if necessary, laws of exception, even, if necessary, in order then to violate or 'arbitrarily' suspend them.⁵⁸⁵

Every state is based on laws, even the dictatorial one. It is surprising that Althusser has refrained from developing further his reference to martial law and legal exception. There is an extensive amount of literature in political theory on the subject of the suspension of law, especially when we take into account Walter Benjamin and Carl Schmitt.⁵⁸⁶ Althusser's silence on the point of state sovereignty is striking, since his earliest work on Montesquieu outlined an initial understanding of the contours of liberal sovereign power.⁵⁸⁷ Against interpretations that speak of theological or political excess, Althusser remains deeply Marxian at this point, where the excess is posited as class violence. Unfortunately he ignores the equal importance of drawing State borders that constitute the *Other* and form a kernel of racist politics. This has its special dynamic, and even if we intersect it with other exclusions and exploitations, it would deserve much broader elaboration. The blind spot in Althusser's underdeveloped theory of state sovereignty comes due to the acknowledgement of the primacy of class excess. The structural coupling of the state and capital shifts in favour of the class struggle, and in this way, Althusser integrates a theory of political sovereignty into a general framework of the historical class transformation of society.

The special functioning highlights the "neutralization" of class excess, which does not define the state as a neutral agent. On the contrary representation of neutrality of State is one of the central ideological investments and effects of the State.⁵⁸⁸ Class struggle is present in the State through its absence and this formal exclusion results in a series of different separations: between the state and civil society, political ideology and civil servants, and the public and private spheres. These separations are constitutive of the

⁵⁸⁵ MIHL: 106.

⁵⁸⁶ See Agamben (1998).

⁵⁸⁷ MIHL:118-119. Agamben's project shows with all of its force how the state of exception becomes the norm in every sovereign power, which in the moment of exception excludes all other social determinations (class, race, gender...). This perspective is of particular interest for the analysis of moments like the "primary accumulation of capital". But even when one acknowledges the importance of the Agamben's theory of sovereignty, there nonetheless remains a most troublesome kernel to this project, namely the "transhistorical" project of sovereignty that is merely an eternal repetition of certain theological questions and a recuperation of the etymological roots of old Roman Law. For a good critique see Chiesa (2009).

⁵⁸⁸ Farris rightly states that "Although force and violence, namely the clash between classes, constitute the essential energy upon which the state is based and that it transforms, the ideological apparatuses of the state operate through the denial of class struggle.... ('neutrality') is the main ideological device produced by its apparatuses" (forthcoming).

formal horizon of bourgeois society. Althusser's emphasis on the separation of the state from class struggle can be traced back to Marx's early critique of juridical ideology. Marx thought the social and political together, and exerted a critique of the bourgeois horizon that was predicated on the sacredness of the free and equal individual reflected in the image of the *citoyen*.⁵⁸⁹ When Marx criticized the individual as the primary ideological subject of bourgeois Law, this illuminated the material conditions of the State that is based on structural inequalities of civil society. Obviously becoming aware of the false separation does not lead to the abolishment of the structural features of the State. In this respect Balibar did well to connect both levels in Marx's analysis:

The legal distinction 'public'/'private' is the *means* by which the State is able to subordinate every individual to the interests of the class which it represents, while leaving him -- in the bourgeois epoch -- the full 'private' liberty to trade and to undertake 'business' . . . or to sell his labour power on the market. This distinction is however not the historical cause of the existence of the State.⁵⁹⁰

Balibar suggests that the bourgeois distinction between private and public has very specific objectives in class domination, which it supports. In order for the state to guarantee properly the reproduction of productive relations and the separation between private and public, the state's central role is to become "an apparatus capable of taking measures against the will of a part or even a majority of the bourgeoisie in order to defend the bourgeoisie's 'general interests' as the dominant class. And that is why the state must be separate."⁵⁹¹ The state apparatus very often intervenes in the struggle between independent capital; it needs to mediate between the particular interests of capital in order to affirm the general interest of capital. The class unity of the capitalist class, the ruling class coalition, is attained not merely in economic terms that follow profit within market competition (mergers, monopolies, cartels, dumping...), but also importantly through political struggles, where the "capitalist state" plays a pivotal role.⁵⁹² The State is separated from

⁵⁸⁹ This is one of the key topics in Marx's *Contribution To Jewish Question*, but one can also find it later in some passages from vol.I of *Capital*.

⁵⁹⁰ Balibar (1977: 68).

⁵⁹¹ MIHL: 77.

⁵⁹² Cf. Klaus Offe (1974), who despite a different orientation arrives at an identical observation on the role of the capitalist state. See also Poulantzas (1975).

the class struggle so it can intervene in it in a more effective way.⁵⁹³ According to Althusser we deal with the twofold aspect of the state: firstly, the state is separated from the class struggle and secondly the state is from the very beginning embedded into the processes of class domination. If one already posits the State as instrument this has to be done in a structural way: the State is not in the hands of anyone, neither a dictator (sovereign) nor the ruling class. The ruling class itself is largely constituted through the intervention of the State, which links it to the level of global geopolitical, imperial and financial interests. The conspiratory temptation is then often entrapped in this instrumentalised relationship, which is a retrospective illusion of class ideological hegemony. Thus, one can say that there is a special relationship between the state and class domination, the state creates the conditions for class unity and its perpetuation, but the relationship is rather structural than instrumental.

5.6.2. *State as Apparatus*

Althusser presented the State as a machine that at the more “abstract” level of the articulation between (state) domination and (capitalistic) exploitation presupposed a “homogenous” perspective of the State as a unified instance. Another more “sociological” or subtler definition of the State is conceptualised with the *apparatus*. Firstly, the apparatus implies “the system of institutions, organisations and parties”,⁵⁹⁴ which are thought in the plural and in their heterogeneity. Secondly, in SLR Althusser introduced the core separation between the ideological state and the repressive state apparatuses,⁵⁹⁵ which in his late texts expand into three core apparatuses: 1. The apparatus of public force (state, army, police, disciplinary institutions, psychiatry) 2. The political apparatus (head of state,

⁵⁹³ The state needs to be separate from class struggle in order to be able to intervene in the class struggle ‘on all fronts’ – not just to intervene in the struggle of the working class in order to maintain the system of exploitation and the general oppression of the exploited classes by the bourgeois class, but also to intervene, should the need arise, in the class struggle within the dominant class, with a view to overcoming its divisions, which can seriously jeopardize this class if the struggle of the working class and the masses is powerful (MIHL: 71).

⁵⁹⁴ SLR: 109.

⁵⁹⁵ SLR 1995. Farris notes that in the “earlier text the RSA had a ‘public status’ while the ISAs had a private status, this perspective seems to be abandoned in the texts of the 1970s” (forthcoming). However, even if this small difference occurred, repression and ideology remain in the core of Althusser’s dealing with the State Apparatuses.

governmental corps, the civil service and the administration) and 3. The ideological state apparatuses.⁵⁹⁶ Thirdly, this is the point where ideology and State merge into an ideological state apparatus, where the latter is seen as “material existence” of ideology.⁵⁹⁷ Instead of speaking of ideology as a mere belief or consciousness, Althusser opens a whole new path of research towards ideology as practice that is located in series of material institutions that make the individual work, behave and believe in a particular ideological way.⁵⁹⁸ ISA becomes a privileged site, where “class struggle takes place” constantly⁵⁹⁹ and where the dominant ideology is re-negotiated. Even if his earlier texts extensively use the concept of apparatus, it is only in his late text that Althusser provides us with the dictionary definition of apparatus:

‘Apparatus’ /appareil/, which gestures in the direction of ‘pomp’ /apparat/ (the outward display of a thing, with all its trappings), means, according to the dictionary, ‘an ensemble of elements which work together to the same end, forming a whole’. The state apparatus may well display a diversity of apparatuses (repressive, political and ideological); what defines them as state apparatuses is the fact that they all work together to ‘the same end’.⁶⁰⁰

Again, we run close to identifying apparatus with instrument, because it executes one and “the same end”: “maintaining the power of the dominant class.”⁶⁰¹ The apparatus seems to differ from a machine, because it works with only one kind of energy, while a machine deals with two kinds of energy (transforming A to B). Another difference is that apparatus operates with heterogeneous and asymmetrical moments that are constantly at work in these apparatuses. Althusser’s description gives two predominant organizational principles that underlie state politics: repressive apparatuses (public force) that operate predominantly with repression, while ideological apparatuses work with ideology.⁶⁰² Althusser returns repression to the centre of the apparatuses supporting – as an invisible threat – the ideological state apparatuses.

Althusser never provided a subtler definition of an “apparatus”, but his famous contemporary Michel Foucault did it in 1977, when Althusser’s theory of State as

⁵⁹⁶ MIHL: 101.

⁵⁹⁷ ISA: 168-169.

⁵⁹⁸ For a further elaboration of the theory of ideology as a theory of institutions see Močnik (1999).

⁵⁹⁹ Althusser (1995: 188, 191).

⁶⁰⁰ MIHL: 82.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

⁶⁰² For a more detailed distinction see SLR (211-215).

apparatus received its theoretical upgrade. An apparatus was translated from the French word “*dispositif*”, for which Foucault grasps

A heterogeneous set consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the network that can be established between these elements ... by the term “apparatus” I mean a kind of a formation, so to speak, that at a given historical moment has as its major function the response to an urgency. The apparatus therefore has a dominant strategic function.⁶⁰³

Precisely this over-arching and “dominant strategic function” is what in Althusser’s theory remains firmly embodied in RSA and ISA, where the latter produce “ideological subjects” and former guarantee “physical monopoly over violence”.

ISA’s central role is to execute ideological mobilization and “interpellation”. ISA are different apparatuses (media, school, church...), where different ideologies overlap and materialize, at times co-exist and support, at other times compete and silence each other. Working on both levels of a microphysics of power at the level of individual, they produce the macro-ideological effects and result in the constant re/production of different ideological forms: nation-form,⁶⁰⁴ subject-citizen,⁶⁰⁵ member of Church and trade union, school-children⁶⁰⁶, the adolescent-subject, etc.... This said Althusser never spoke about a pure type of ideal citizen, where one apparatus produces an ideological subject (that would indeed make him a functionalist), but rather shows a dynamic transversal and effectivity of ideology that courses through all apparatuses, and also, most notably, takes hold of subjects in everyday life and in their innocent everyday concerns. It is in this light that one must understand the mechanism of ideological interpellation, which takes on a much more general form of social reproduction than that reduced to the ideology of commodity fetishism.⁶⁰⁷ It is in ISA where the class struggle is most openly challenged and dominant

⁶⁰³ Foucault (1980: 194-196). Foucault and Althusser stand closer than they would admit at many points, but a thorough comparison will be left for another place. See Montag (2005), or on their relation towards Machiavelli (forthcoming).

⁶⁰⁴ Balibar very nicely elaborated the theory of ideology in terms of the formation of nation-states and nationalism (2004); the theory of ideology and institutions is extremely useful for an analysis of racist politics and their institutional confluences in the “postcolonial” context.

⁶⁰⁵ See Močnik (1999), Balibar (2004).

⁶⁰⁶ Bourdieu (1990).

⁶⁰⁷ The logic of overdetermined causality works also within ISA, in specific way that different apparatuses intervene and dominate one another. If Althusser believed that the ISA School replaced ISA Church, today this diagnosis seems out-dated and the role of Media ISA should be much more explored.

ideologies have to be constantly re-produced. This section reconstructed the Althusserian theory of the State on a complementary axis, the relation between State as a machine and State as an apparatus, to this I shall add another field that comes between State and Ideology: Law.

5.7. Law: a reflex of economic base or the instance of capitalist reproduction?

The absence of an Althusserian theory of Law is extremely disturbing once we take into account the series of his encounters with legal thought. Already in his first major publication – relatively unknown to the wider academic audience – he dealt with a close reading of Montesquieu and *Spirit of Laws*.⁶⁰⁸ Following Montesquieu, Althusser defines law as a relation between a “norm” and an “environment”, which distinguishes Montesquieu and Althusser from the general legal tradition, where Law was taken as a technique or eternal principle.⁶⁰⁹ He initiated an external-philosophical critique of legal thought especially in his encounter with social contract theorists.⁶¹⁰ It was only in SLR that Law received more systematic attention, which would contribute to the Marxist theory of Law. Kyle Mcgee claims that we should take Althusser as a thinker of “jurisprudence”, because his attempt in SLR was rather an “insufficient and ambiguous concoction of science, ideology, and politics”,⁶¹¹ which did not offer anything new for Marxist theory. This section will offer a more sympathetic view that goes along the lines of David McInerney who, along the lines I suggested above, posits both the interdependency of Law-State-Ideology, where Law is a vital “stake in the class struggle”.⁶¹²

Another theorist of Althusser’s legal thinking, Francine Demichel, argues that his most important contribution to the question of Law is developed in the ISA essay without knowledge of SLR that was published a few years after her article appeared. Demichel posits that Law was conceived as a “strong link”⁶¹³ necessary to be taken into account in

⁶⁰⁸ Published in 1959, long forgotten, but reprinted in 2003 (PUF).

⁶⁰⁹ Althusser (2003: 61).

⁶¹⁰ His work on Rousseau (1972).

⁶¹¹ Mcgee (2012: 146).

⁶¹² I would like to thank him for sending his as yet unpublished lecture (2011: 3). McInerney stresses the importance of Edelman as a theorist who most seriously developed Althusser’s legal thought (1979: 134).

⁶¹³ Demichel (1993: 124).

the analysis of the reproduction of capitalist relations. Althusser undertook a new approach that moved against those theorists that saw Law as a mere reflection of economy.⁶¹⁴ The groundwork of his legal theory locates Law between the State and its apparatuses, and introduces two aspects of law: technique and ideology. Contrary to the “positivist” or more classical approach that interprets law in terms of “either a *principle* or an *exception*”, Althusser grasps not only both sides, but extends the topic to the level of State apparatuses. I argue that this move targets the presupposed autonomy of the “judicial”, and continues to undermine the famous mythological “separation” of powers as a fundamental principle of the democratic state.⁶¹⁵

Another important emphasis that Demichel ascribes to Althusser’s approach is the strong relation between ideology and law, what I called the “juridico-ideological”. Althusser’s critique of the “legal subject” strengthened his more general critique of Man (philosophy, but also the politics of Man), where the central reference was a subject of human rights emanating from early bourgeois revolutions. The humanist philosophy that opened the horizon of the bourgeois revolution took the legal subject from Roman law, which helped to elevate personhood into an “eternal category”.⁶¹⁶ This is one of the central points of reproduction: the legal subject became a key ideological investment of both Law and State.⁶¹⁷ As Demichel correctly diagnosed: for Althusser “Law is not some marginal element, but a determinant aspect of State functioning”.⁶¹⁸

I will complement Demichel’s valuable analysis with some central highlights especially from two chapters in SLR.⁶¹⁹ One could agree with Mcgee’s point that Althusser

⁶¹⁴Ibid.: 119. Althusser also intervened against the dominant “positivist”-liberal tradition in legal theory.

⁶¹⁵ In the liberal democratic state the independent “judiciary branch” and the “rule of law” are posited as if they are value free and neutral mediators, autonomous from the realm of social struggles and obviously relying on their own legal procedures and techniques. See the profound criticism of Richard Seymour on E.P. Thompson’s claim for the usefulness of the rule of law in the transition to socialism. (<http://www.leninology.com/2012/03/marxism-and-rule-of-law.html>).

⁶¹⁶ McNerney (2011: 7).

⁶¹⁷ In this regard both Bidet (1995) and Pupovac (2008) illuminate the importance of the legal subject, the equal and free individual for Althusser’s theory of ideology. This interpretation is marginalized vis-a-vis other psychoanalytical interpretations that show how the ideological subject resonates with certain important aspects of psychoanalysis (the unconscious subject, ideological mechanisms, interpellation, etc.).

⁶¹⁸ 1994: 120.

⁶¹⁹ The two most important chapters from SLR are chapter 5 “Law” (87-101) and chapter 11 “Once again on the ‘Law’ and its Reality: the ideological apparatus of the legal State“ (197-205). Translations of quotations are mine.

does not provide us with a unified conception of Law, but calls for a legal analysis because otherwise we will not understand fully in what ways Law became:

direct guarantee for reproduction of production relations ... juridical-moral ideology plays *decisive* role in capitalist social formations and finds its realisation in the ideological apparatus of the legal bureaucratic State, which is a *specific apparatus that articulates the superstructure within the infrastructure*.⁶²⁰

Law becomes the ultimate resort and the dominant referential frame of reproduction.⁶²¹ Admittedly, Althusser oscillates between two different entry points, or definitions of Law: external-instrumentalist and internal-ideological. Firstly, Law is presented as the ultimate horizon of bourgeois society with its own important dynamic that is strategic for both state functioning and supporting the capitalist exploitation: the structural coupling of State-Law-Capital. This approach to some degree shares the old idea of reflex and majority in Marxian theory by assigning a more “instrumental”-structural role to Law.⁶²² Secondly, Althusser introduced an innovative view that complements the general assessment of the structural role of Law with a concrete analysis of its functioning and shows that legal procedures do not directly follow economic logic, which hint at the specific relation between morality and the repressivity internal to Law, which I will tackle in next section.

Let me start with the first; Althusser made some general observations about the core characteristics of law: abstractness, systematicity and formalism. He mostly emphasized the existence of legal formalism that excludes a special “content” from the legal corpus. The excluded content of the Law is the relations of production:

- 1.Law exists only in the function of the existing relations of production.
- 2.Law doesn't assume the form of Law, that is, the formally systematic, if it doesn't fulfil one condition, that is that the relations of production are completely absent from the Law itself... law 'expresses' the relations of production in so far as it does not mention them within its system of rules, but in eliminating them.⁶²³

⁶²⁰ SLR: 202.

⁶²¹ SLR: 167.

⁶²² Althusser follows the famous lines from Marx's Capital: “This juridical relation, which thus expresses itself in a contract, whether such a contract be part of a developed legal system or not, is a relation between two wills, and is but the reflex of the real economic relation between the two. It is this economic relation that determines the subject-matter comprised in each such juridical act” (MECW, vol.35: 95). Despite Althusser's occasional reference to Jevgeny Pashukanis, he does not follow completely his mediation between “commodity form” and “legal form”, but rather brings legal form to the realm of reproductive logic, which is broader than the world of commodities.

⁶²³ SLR: 90.

I would disagree that Law simply excluded the relations of production (*content*⁶²⁴) out of Law, and would rather suggest grasping the specific legal operation that erases the class *form* from the Law. In a similar vein like the State, the Law erases the “absent cause” of class struggle and relates to relations of production through non-relation. Being perceived as a neutral agent is already an effect of a long ideological investment of State apparatuses. This move traces an identical exclusionary logic at work in both bourgeois Law and State as machine, which through the formal separation from class struggle reproduce the very same class relations in society. Less fortunate, however, is that Althusser failed to provide any concrete historical study that would analyse how this structural nexus between Law and State came into existence, or was transformed, he merely repeats some of Marx’s theses.⁶²⁵

However, contrary to the view that the Law is a mere reflex of economic logic, the Althusserian view would suggest discerning Law in “the fullness of its materiality – including the materiality of law as text – which cannot be reduced to its immediate social function.”⁶²⁶ On a more general level of materiality, Law was a dominant language of state bureaucracy and a central pillar of the rising State-form that regulates society. Moreover, Law has become the ideological essence of the State machine, the technique and practice that not only reproduces, but also guarantees the deregulation of old and regulation of new economic conditions. Instead of positing a direct determination of economic on legal instances, one should perhaps see the historical transitional process in an oppositional and more contradictory fashion: the teleology of the commodity form cannot be simply

⁶²⁴ In SLR, there is only a brief mention of the development of concrete labour legislation that expanded in the period after WWII in Western Europe (and in the socialist East). Formal recognition of trade union and workers struggles, the development of labour typologies and formal inclusion of the regular work contract and augmented social privileges that involved social protection for workers, these moments were all constitutive to the rise of the Welfare State that run in the direction of “neutralisation” of class struggle. Contrary to Althusser’s initial thesis on exclusion of the *content* of production relations, the development of the labour legislation has not ceased to stop formalising the complex world of legal relations of production; this was even more evident and regulated in the socialist legal systems. As I will show in the last chapter, production relations were essentially inscribed to the very core of socialist Law, which did not mean that *real* exploitation was simply abolished.

⁶²⁵ The only reference on transition to capitalism is in the book on Montesquieu and I will return to this in the next section. At this point one can mention that legal theory played a massive role in the legitimacy of aspiring royal power in the central bureaucratic apparatus that emerged with Modernity. The formal separation between church and state (religious wars, Augsburg peace of 1555 instituting “*cuius region, eius religio*”), and the separation of state power from different independent branches, shortly before the rise of the modern “legal state” is directly related to the struggles for theoretical domination between legal theorists and theologians at the end of Middle Ages. See Mastnak for historical evaluation of this transition (2001).

⁶²⁶ McInerney (2011: 10).

inscribed onto the legal form, but rather posits that it was the emerging “legal state” that enabled the successful transition to the capitalist mode of production. The Althusserian theory of reproduction points to the major novelty in Modernity that took the form of a structural coupling of Law and State (legal state) on the one hand and capital (capitalist mode of production) on the other.⁶²⁷

Edelman, a student of Althusser would add that Law “excludes” not only the central structural separation of workers from the means of production, but also the separation of producers from product,⁶²⁸ which makes the Law a neutral mediator between things and persons. The macro-level of the materiality of Law becomes immediately connected to the micro-level, since it was through the emergency of State that the individual is constituted. It was through the institutionalising of the direct relation between new sovereign state power and the individual that would according to Balibar “neutralize the intermediate ‘bodies’, the ‘belongings’ that confer particular identity to the individual.”⁶²⁹ The privileged form of this relationship functioned with legal contracts that were signed by equal and free individuals without any mediation in front of the Law. Bourgeois Law speaks the language of freedoms and rights referring to the shared abstract and formal universality. Importantly, this external voice of Law needs to become internalised in the subject, as is suggested by Jacques Bidet in his introduction to SLR:

It is not an interior voice, some kind of voice of conscience that interpellates me, but a public voice that declares me as a free subject. This discourse is likewise the discourse of the modern constitution and its necessary preamble: the declaration of the rights of Man that posits everyone as a ‘free-equal’ sovereign declaring subject and a subject of sovereignty, that is, myself being subjected to myself as sovereign.⁶³⁰

If bourgeois Law performed a “revolutionary” cut into the medieval landscape of the intermediary and feudalistic corporation that targeted the “natural” order of hierarchies,

⁶²⁷ Against the “instrumentalist” approach that puts the state in the hands of the ruling class, one should rather speak of certain structural “instrumentalism” that appears in times of transition. Unquestionably in times of crisis, or “primary accumulation” the class character is more directly manifested, one can speak also of the formation of “class unity”, however this link is rarely so transparent and direct.

⁶²⁸ McInerney (2011: 2).

⁶²⁹ Balibar (2004: 144).

⁶³⁰ Bidet (1995: 13).

this did not make structural inequalities disappear that emerged in the sphere of bourgeois society.⁶³¹

5.7.1. Critique of “division of powers”: rise of legal State

The major thrust of Althusser’s re-appraisal of Montesquieu can be extracted from his critique of liberal foundational myth of “division of powers”, which should be rather seen as a formalization and condensation of class antagonisms. In Althusser’s word separation was rather “combination, fusion and alliance of powers”,⁶³² in reality the “sharing” of political authority (*pouvoir*) among different powers (*puissances*).⁶³³ These shifts are located in the history of emerging capitalist state in 17th and 18th centuries, when monarchies were shaken by bourgeois revolutions and popular upheavals from the old dominated class of peasants and the newly exploited class of proletarians. The legal solution of separation of independent branches was actually a temporary result of a class compromise that usually saw the king as “arbiter” between the two classes, the feudal nobility and the rising (capitalist) bourgeoisie that fought for domination. The formal division of powers consisted of the legislative, which opened up to the third estate (bourgeois power) combined with remnants of the nobility; the executive branch usually remaining in the hands of the royal power; and the juridical branch with privileged nobility. Althusser claims that this class compromise systematized in the new state authority took shape at the expense of the fourth figure of power: the power of the popular masses.⁶³⁴ The newly formed political apparatus of the State perpetuated and maintained the exploitation that was proper to the former feudal domination with coexisting bourgeois power. Althusser draws the following conclusion:

⁶³¹The specific materiality and functioning of bourgeois Law registers also the difference between “legal” and “economic” property, which both relate to the same - means and things – however, this very same content is “inscribed in two *different* and relatively autonomous instances” (Lipietz 1993: 108).

⁶³² Althusser (2003: 102). Althusser mostly relies on a study from Eisenmann (1933: 190).

⁶³³ Althusser 2003: 103-104). See also Komel (2011). Even if the thematisation of “*puissance*” is not sufficiently elaborated, Althusser nevertheless shows the troublesome aspects of the element that was not included in the political frame of the state (constitutional monarchy).

⁶³⁴ “La ‘puissance’ de la masse du peuple” (2003: 118).

fundamental antagonism does not oppose absolute monarchy to feudalism, neither does it oppose the nobility to the bourgeoisie, which in its mass form integrates itself into the regime of feudal exploitation and profits from it. On the contrary, fundamental antagonism opposes the whole feudal regime to the masses subjugated to its exploitation.⁶³⁵

It is rather exaggerated for Althusser to argue that there was no real economic struggle between the nobility, the bourgeoisie, and the monarch, apart from their more evident conflicts in an ideological and political field that at some historical points also ended in war.⁶³⁶ Even if the bourgeoisie was integrated into the feudal regime, the capitalist mode of production began to co-exist with the old economic organisation; furthermore, it forced class re-organisation on the side of nobility.⁶³⁷ I would nonetheless agree with Althusser's thesis that a blind spot assigned to the fourth power, which in many ways – through constant revolts – enabled the rise of the bourgeoisie. This mass of exploited “peasants subjugated to feudal rights, small artisans, shopkeepers, and the small businessmen of the cities on the one hand, and the feudal order with its political power on the other, existed in a constellation where there was no theoretical debate, only silence or violence.”⁶³⁸ The history of peasants' revolts is full of brutal violence; it is caused by famine and ended the old feudal rights to the commons, embarking on the long path of the dispossession of land and rights. This process went hand in hand with the already discussed primary accumulation of capital that saw the rise of a new mass of workers (without a means of production).

Unquestionably this type of reasoning brings Althusser to a more instrumentalist and structural conception of Law: the core of the newly constituted state apparatus directly “served” the class interest of the emerging ruling class,⁶³⁹ while the oppressed and exploited classes were censored, ignored or violently suppressed, in short, the fourth power was absent from the new social contract.⁶⁴⁰ Althusser's political point here would not be that one needs to recognize these excluded subjects within the democratic order, which should then broaden political freedoms for different social groups, but rather the opposite,

⁶³⁵ Ibid.

⁶³⁶ Ibid.: 119.

⁶³⁷ The phenomenon of impoverished nobility became a commonplace in realist literature.

⁶³⁸ Althusser (2003: 119).

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ *ibid.*: 120. Bourgeois legal theory is a precious corpus of changing compromises within the ruling class and also a major confluence of ruling class interests, while the dispossessed side's struggles remain in the main undocumented.

this recuperative action would make the apparatus stronger, the point (task) of revolutionary politics is to dismantle the whole reproductive apparatus with its logic of exclusion and repression.⁶⁴¹

One can agree with the thesis that the moments of crisis and transition show the direct class character of “bourgeois” Law and State, however one should not forget that Althusser’s approach did not forget the more subtle functioning of Law that gradually developed and pointed to the historical specificity of different relatively autonomous inter-dependent instances. Law became embedded between the ideological and state repressive apparatus, as a strange hybrid, but a “*real system ... of Laws + juridical-moral ideology + police + courts and their magistrates + prisons.*”⁶⁴²

5.7.2. Law: between repression and moral ideology

Althusser inserts law and legal procedures into the State institutional framework, which would not be particularly new (sociology of law *dixit*), if he did not make a few additional comments on the specific space of the ‘in-betweeness’ of Law. Legal procedures need to be conceived in special relationship with juridical and moral *ideology*⁶⁴³ on the one hand, and further how they are supported by *repression* on the other. Legal functioning does not operate in direct and open confrontation by repressive measures, ideally, “law ‘functions’ predominantly with moral–juridical ideology supported by repressive intermittent interventions.”⁶⁴⁴ Repression is perhaps absent from successful legal functioning, but it becomes very present and material, once the law is breached: the wide range of state institutions prisons, detention centres, courts, police, secret police and even the army

⁶⁴¹ For him, this reproductive core of the capitalist state assures the reproduction and formation of the ruling class; as such it should be put on the theoretical and political agenda of all revolutionary movements. Even the dominant ruling class and the seeming solidity of the system can fall into historical crisis: this is when the strongest link becomes the weakest and state power becomes open for take over or dismantling. This is also the backdrop of how Althusser could reconsider the socialist revolution of the 20th century, as a sort of return of the fourth power, the dispossessed as the new class coalition of workers and peasants.

⁶⁴² SLR: 202.

⁶⁴³ Also for Balibar “Legal ideology is related to the law; but although it is indispensable to the functioning of the law, it is not the same thing. The law is only a system of rules, i.e. of material constraints, to which individuals are subjected. Legal ideology interprets and legitimates this constraint, presenting it as a natural necessity inscribed in human nature and in the needs of society in general.” (1977: 67).

⁶⁴⁴ SLR: 202.

intervenes depending on the gravity of the breach in legal codes.⁶⁴⁵ The role of Law is to transform and internalize state repression and class violence by putting them into a more abstract and formal legal code. In other words, the task of legal reproduction would be ideally to answer the question “how to make things and persons run on their own?”⁶⁴⁶ without repressive interventions.

Also, how can one explain why the majority of contracts are respected and how in a relative stable social situation law seem to be obeyed by majority of legal subjects? The smooth functioning of the law cannot be ascribed to efficient judges or the good practice of juridical techniques, but rather, continues well beyond these institutions in our everyday lives. Althusser speaks about the necessary supplement to juridical techniques and institutions found in “moral ideology” that operates in the form of “duties” and “obligations”. The legal subject follows the categorical imperative and respect for the “rule of law”. The rules set by magistrates, no matter what their content, should be respected since their form is always just and has to be respected.⁶⁴⁷ Therefore it is not the open violence of the State that is the key question that unsettled Althusser’s trajectory, but the disentangling of the core of the legal subject that is entrapped in a series of politico-ideological processes.⁶⁴⁸ Althusser would ask himself, how is it possible that in the midst of blatant injustices and exploitation, the system of capitalist reproduction still succeeds in implementing its techniques and sustaining itself without much organized resistance? Moreover, how come subjects execute orders independently and without being coerced by direct violence? In this light Althusser’s conception of moral-juridical ideology is sharpened beyond the “false consciousness”/reflection of the economy, and is conceived as “ether”,⁶⁴⁹ an air that we breathe and that even the most “neutral” and “independent” branch – the juridical - cannot escape from.

⁶⁴⁵ The most blatant and open regression of legal code has recently happened due to the anti-terrorist patriot acts and severe attacks on civil rights. This shows how far the law itself is related to imperial politics. Also, the proliferation of a security paradigm, the system of prisons, detention centres and social control speaks of the shifts internal to the sovereign power.

⁶⁴⁶ SLR: 124.

⁶⁴⁷ This type of argumentation is old and can be located in Socrates defence of laws in Athens, especially in *Crito* and *Apology*.

⁶⁴⁸ See Pupovac (2008).

⁶⁴⁹ Marx in his *Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy* used an impressive metaphor of ether that he used to distinguish the relationship between different modes of production. Here the same metaphor could be used in terms of relation between ideologies, where the juridical dominates over others, is their “eternal” ether. Let me quote this passage: “In every form of society there is a particular [branch of] production which

Juridico-moral ideology colours all other ideologies, determines them in specific way, which brings Althusser to question the role and position of moral ideology in Law. Moral ideology, in a Derridaian fashion, is a “necessary supplement” to every law; I would add it is a moral remainder, which infects the whole legal corpus.⁶⁵⁰ Althusser is more occupied with locating the structural place proper to moral ideology in Law. He conceives moral ideology as a “tenant-lieu”⁶⁵¹, the place-holder of repression within the law: “Legal-moral ideology stands in the place of the policeman, but in the measure, insofar as it stands in his place, *it is not a policeman.*”⁶⁵² But instead of perceiving law as a stand-in for the policeman, one could suggest that the legal machine in a special way transforms “repression”: firstly, as I showed above through the structural displacement of the relations of production, secondly as an “invisible threat” that is transformed into a moral prescription for each individual.⁶⁵³

The moral prescription in most cases suffices to reproduce juridico-political authority, and only in the moment, when the subject transgresses the law, the whole state and repressive apparatus engages in “disciplining” the subject. The free and equal citizen becomes the criminal subject that is subjugated to the set of extralegal instruments and institutions.⁶⁵⁴ The exclusion of force disappears and State violence re-appears. It is then more adequate to argue that repression was never completely excluded, but follows an alternate logic of threat and repressive policies, a kind of “inclusive exclusion”.⁶⁵⁵ One could then argue that repression more than just a threat (and an absent force) is present internally to Law? Let me take an example of “rehabilitation” or “re-education” of the criminal subject. The enlightened idea to re-educate the criminal works with a certain

determines the position and importance of all the others, and the relations obtaining in this branch accordingly determine those in all other branches. It is the general light tingeing all other colours and modifying them in their specific quality; it is a special ether determining the specific gravity of everything found in it.” (MECW, vol.28: 43).

⁶⁵⁰ See also a chapter on supplement in Derrida’s *On Grammatology* (1997).

⁶⁵¹ In psychoanalytical terms, moral ideology can be then equated with *Vorstellungs-Repräsentanz*, (see Tort 1966).

⁶⁵² Also, Althusser says that “there is no Civil Law without Penal Law.” (95).

⁶⁵³ Althusser’s conception of the “state as machine” repeats itself in the field of Law “law as machine”. Let us not forget that the transformation of class violence that the state executed is then formalized in legal forms and norms.

⁶⁵⁴ Michel Foucault worked extensively on the question of imprisonment and the importance of the prison as a significant shift of paradigm in the Modern Age (1995).

⁶⁵⁵ Something that Agamben developed in his book on sovereignty and “homo sacer”. The latter is an excluded element, but at the same time most inherent to the sovereign Law (Agamben 1998).

imposition of moral liberal norms onto criminals, which involves a clear sign of transformed repression. Isn't the belief in rehabilitation, that is, in the possibility of transformation and education of "human nature" of the criminal not accompanied by certain violent imposition of moral coordinates in the whole range of institutions, practices and programs that wish to (re)integrate these individuals on the normal ways of Society? Instead of targeting the structural inequalities of society, this rather focuses on a subtle and enlightened technique of government over the (criminal) self; this brings Althusser not only close to Foucault, but also points to a possibility where repression and ideology can be regarded as inherently linked and not (schematically) separated.⁶⁵⁶

This chapter was devoted to Althusserian theory of the mode of reproduction, which might have a too "structuralist" pedigree, but I would like to conclude with few very little known passages that show Althusser's political wager, why he started the project of SLR. The move to reproduction should not be seen without the perspective of revolutionary politics that addresses the relation between the working class, masses, trade unions, (revolutionary) Party and State.

5.8. The withering away of the State, Law and Ideology?

A necessary supplement to Althusser's theory of state as machine/apparatus should be seen in the concept of state as power. According to Althusser revolutionary political organisations should aim to take over state power and not the state apparatus.⁶⁵⁷ The beautiful construction of ISA and RSA is in the end accompanied by Althusser call for the "destruction and replacement of the Ideological State Apparatus".⁶⁵⁸ Against the iconoclast destructive force of revolution, he would warn that new political reality is full of experimentation, embedded in a extremely "long and problematic struggle"⁶⁵⁹ that should continue revolution. By no means can a revolutionary Party or any other political organisation satisfy itself by taking over the bureaucratic apparatus that would regulate the society from above and destroy popular institutions. If the revolutionary task of destruction

⁶⁵⁶ Also, Jacques Lacan's text *Kant with Sade* (1966) gives some important insights on research of extremely violent, even terroristic aspects of law and morality.

⁶⁵⁷ SLR: 104. This is the conceptual differentiation that is later taken up and elaborated by post-Althusserians, such as Jacques Rancière (police and politics) and Alain Badiou (event and state).

⁶⁵⁸ SLR: 121.

⁶⁵⁹ SLR: 122.

is not executed properly than there is a great “danger of falling into class collaboration”.⁶⁶⁰ Althusser calls for withering away of both: State and Law.⁶⁶¹ Montesquieu’s critique on the division of powers did not only speak about the exhaustion of the revolutionary power of the bourgeoisie, which was fused and integrated into the state apparatus. In his turn, Althusser was troubled in his own political context with the regression of the Communist party and a wide range of trade unions that simply took the reformist road. The risk of trade unions (and of the revolutionary Party) to be submerged in a new sharing of state powers, might appear as a temporary victory, but in long run it blocks the revolutionary impetus by neutralising class antagonism.⁶⁶² This argument revokes the immunity to any working class organisation, which can fall into capitalist reproduction and be integrated to the State in the performing of a *New Deal*.

In this respect Althusser remained a dedicated communist, an internal critic of the Party, who embraced the masses as the only agent of history. Nevertheless, one finds it surprising that he avoids discussing the “soviets” or other historical forms of “workers’ councils” that come closest to a form of mass democratic workers’ organisation. In many ways Althusser remained a prisoner of the state model of politics and did not develop a concise revolutionary strategy. The only passage, where he was more politically explicit is when he addresses working class unity. This involves three different political moments, implying different modalities of thought and practice: Firstly, a necessary formation of class unity in the workers’ Parties; secondly, the unity of trade unions is required; and lastly, once the unity between first two moments is attained then the class domination of the bourgeoisie becomes apparent and can be undermined, and perhaps even abolished.⁶⁶³ Althusser speaks about the necessary placement of political struggle into economic class struggle and evokes the long tradition of the revolutionary movement of classes.⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.: 127.

⁶⁶¹ SLR: 93. Althusser correlates three withering away-s: withering away of the state, law and commodity exchange. They all have to be replaced by something else, which can be experimented in political practice and by now, also compared and discussed from the rich history of emancipatory struggles.

⁶⁶² Ibid.:134.

⁶⁶³ Ibid.: 151.

⁶⁶⁴ SLR: 139. Big revolutionary words become “empty words” if they are not accompanied by a long struggle that “dismantles” the repressive and ideological state apparatuses. This can be related to Wolf’s thesis, who rightly argues that in his NISA that Althusser’s stresses how “proletarian ideology anticipates” not just “elements of what the ideological state apparatuses of socialist transition will be”, but also elements “of the abolition of the state and of ideological state apparatuses under communism”. In making this point, he

Also, the potential withering away of ideological interpellation was premised by Balibar's argument that even in the field of ideology one meets counter-interpellation: "ideological class struggle does not depend on the efficacy of political struggle alone, because ideological class struggle prepares the conditions and mobilizes the messengers of the revolutionary class".⁶⁶⁵ Balibar imagines the exteriority of the revolutionary Party inside the bourgeois superstructure⁶⁶⁶ simultaneously referring to the possible "counter-interpellation" of the subject, and to organisation without organisation, namely linked to the Leninist idea of the "non-State" inside or rather in relation to the established capitalist State (apparatus).⁶⁶⁷

These are some notes on revolutionary strategy attacking the core of the reproductive logic with its apparatuses, but they do not give an over-arching and definite political strategy, which depends both on the innovation of each revolutionary political practice and a precise analysis of the concrete situation. Althusser provides us with a series of analytical tools that are still useful today in order to consider the special functioning and changes within capitalist reproduction, but also the possibility of locating different points for organising political struggle in a way that would prevent falling back into the state apparatus.

explicates once again the extent to which 'the working class' great strategic demand for *autonomy* is directed against "the rule of the bourgeois state" (forthcoming).

⁶⁶⁵ Balibar (2011: 15).

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.: 17.

Part III: Political ruptures and critique of reproduction on the case of socialist Yugoslavia

Chapter 6: Three revolutionary historical sequences: partisan politics, self-management and the non-aligned movement

Every real revolution is actually the most direct form of self-management. Also our revolution was like that.

Edvard Kardelj, *Spomini*

There is no justification at all for the view that small nations must jump into the mouth of this or that shark. If that were a social law, there would not today be any small states.

Josip Broz Tito

A spectre is haunting Europe — the spectre of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.

Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*

6.1. Politics of rupture: from partisan politics to socialist transition

Many contemporary emancipatory theorists stress the need for political strategies and movements to exit and make a rupture with global capitalism, which do not have to relate to socialism or past historical forms.⁶⁶⁸ Instead, one can forget about the past, since being unburdened by the past can actually free us in the journey for the future, in our search for new continents.⁶⁶⁹ If one follows strictly this line of argument, it would be difficult to justify the return to the Yugoslav socialist past. Moreover, a central argument against the

⁶⁶⁸ Negri's *Goodbye Mr. socialism* (2008).

⁶⁶⁹ Although there is also fatigue with the future present in some post-emancipatory thinkers; see for example Bifo (2011).

past is also directed against the obsession over the “culture of memory” —the nostalgic yearning for past failed projects with which I would generally agree. However, in the times of the historical crisis of global capitalism it is even more important to rethink past historical circumstances, similar tendencies of struggle and the precious historical experiences of local and global struggles. If recently we have witnessed a popularization of Marx, this does not have to do only with the analytical and theoretical comprehension of the past for a better understanding of the present moment. Also, this return to past communist ghosts has received visible political forms in South America (Venezuela, Ecuador) and revolutionary echoes (the Occupy Movement; the Arab Spring). Marx spoke about the spectre of communism in order to perform a temporal twist and to strengthen at that time the actual communist organizations striving for the conquest of the future.⁶⁷⁰ This spectre should be seen then both as a political and theoretical remainder that cannot be completely erased and in times of crisis seems to persist and infect the whole of our present. *Le mort saisit le vif*⁶⁷¹ Marx said, but now Marx’s ghost itself refuses to let the living continue capitalist business as usual.

The historical end of socialism coincided not only with politico-economic transformations into the brutal forms of neoliberal capitalism, but also with the theoretical transition from history to memory studies that advocated a plurality of fragmented and at times depoliticized narratives of the past. One of the pioneers of memory studies, Pierre Nora, hoped in 1989 that *places of memory* (“lieux de mémoire”) and *literature* would become crucial places and practices, which would decide the outcome of the battle between memory and history. His wish has since been heard. Theoretical discussion has

⁶⁷⁰But doesn’t Derrida’s final twist displace something internal to the face of the spectre, something involuntary that escapes the “messianic” and his intentions? Instead of communism, Derrida deals with Marx, or at least very narrow definition of Marxism, that extracts the “messianic”. For Derrida, we can abandon Marxism as a scientific theory of history and rather concentrate on the “messianic” kernel that unfolds in the emancipatory promise threatening to procure the new end of history. One should pose the question back to Derrida if his messianic figure of Marx/ism fits into a very symptomatic turn dominant in the last two decades? For a problematization of Derrida’s position see Jameson (1994) and Toscano (2010).

⁶⁷¹“Alongside the modern evils, a whole series of inherited evils oppress us, arising from the passive survival of antiquated modes of production, with their inevitable train of social and political anachronisms. We suffer not only from the living, but from the dead. *Le mort saisit le vif*” (MECW vol. 27: 437). The last phrase is an expression from the French common law and means that the inheritance knows no gaps, that the title of private property (and debt!) is continuous. Shouldn’t an evocation of Marx, the communist negation, argue for the workers’ right to demand the revocation of private property, and the imposition of a different “law of the commons”? For politicisation of commons see Negri and Hardt (2009).

witnessed an unprecedented boom of culture of memory-studies⁶⁷² accompanied by a proliferation of new memorialization projects, art and political exhibitions that shaped a new politico-cultural reality. After all, with the end of “grand narratives”, the turn to the obsession with memory seemed to be the only exit from a world so devoid of meaning. The academic policeman calls after us: *forget the history, but remember the memory!*⁶⁷³ Certainly that does not mean that the phenomenon of memory is without “political” wager, and it is not a coincidence that memory has become crucial in the new context of the post-Maastricht European enlargement, that has promoted a very specific idea of European community based on the principle of antitotalitarian democratic memory.⁶⁷⁴

In the light of “the end of history” and big projects in post-totalitarian society, it seems that even some theorists on the Left prefer to forget socialist catastrophe and the history of real existing socialisms. Even those who return and actualize the “idea of communism” seem to be haunted by one spectre, the spectre of socialism. My return to the partisan event and socialist Yugoslavia should be seen not only as a confrontation with historical revisionism or historical recovery,⁶⁷⁵ but more as mobilizing theoretical and political resources that might be potentially useful for reimagining post-Yugoslav communities of identity. At the same time the historical analysis of the Yugoslav past should not romanticize the heroic and mythical beginning of partisan struggle, but also shed a critical light on the specific internal failure of socialist self-management and the exhaustion of communist politics.

⁶⁷² For an opposite view that speaks about the hypertrophy and obsession with memory see Huysen (2003), about the death of history see Chakrabarty (1992), whereas for a general theoretical recuperation of the debate see Ricoeur (2004).

⁶⁷³ Buden diagnoses the evacuation of any meaningful criteria or stories during the transition processes, which resulted in an unprecedented obsession with memory (2009).

⁶⁷⁴ In the East European context, especially in ex-Soviet areas, one witnessed an immense memorial production: from museums and giant memory parks to the journeys and personal testimonies, the recent past has been under very intense exploration and more often easily discarded from the political perspective. In the context of the European-building process one should pay more attention to the very first official memorial day of the European Union. The 23rd August does not celebrate the victory over fascism, but much more importantly, it signifies the day for the memory of totalitarian crimes, where fascism is equated with communism. See EU Parliament’s resolution on European conscience and totalitarianism (2009).

⁶⁷⁵ By retracing the moments of danger and political sequences of the past, a past haunting the future, our contemporaries will be released from their “memorial” solitude. As memory studies very often operate on the subtle twist of Benjamin’s formula that the history, or rather “tradition of the oppressed” becomes the memory of ‘victims’, this section should be read as a shift back to politicizing the history of the oppressed. Why does the major trend in culture of memory studies revolve around trauma and subjects as victims? It would be interesting to see how the twist from the oppressed/exploited develops, but also why there is not much victorious subjectivity around, to see how the affirmation of memory forms a part in certain struggles?

In this chapter I will be interested in the revolutionary encounter and its lasting effects: the partisan struggle during WWII⁶⁷⁶ that fought against the fascist occupation and at the same time cut into the old Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In other words, national liberation entailed revolutionary struggle for a new federative and socialist Yugoslavia that cannot be seen simply as a translation of the Communist Party blueprint set into practice, but has to be thought in its interiority.⁶⁷⁷ However, instead of focusing and recovering only the “partisan moment” as only a kind of angelic or as the most revolutionary of historical sequences, I will also investigate the consequences of partisan politics.⁶⁷⁸ The politics of rupture that was internal to the new Yugoslavia consisted of three sequences of event Yugoslavia⁶⁷⁹ that had vital consequences both for the Yugoslavian context and in a more global political arena. Thus, in order to understand the radicality of the partisan struggle and communist experiences in Yugoslavia, one needs to take into account three sequences: (1) The People’s Liberation Struggle (PLS, 1941-1945); due to the continuation of the independent path to socialism this caused a split with Stalin (1948) and resulted in: (2) Socialist self-management (SSM) as a critique of state socialism and an independent road to socialism and externally, (3) the geopolitical abandonment of the Balkan Socialist Federation (BSF) carried Yugoslavia to a more global pursuit and development of the non-aligned movement (NAM) that was directed against Cold war divisions.

6.2. WWII and the People’s Liberation Struggle (PLS)

⁶⁷⁶ I should express my indebtedness and inspiration to a small group of critical theorists and artists in the post-Yugoslav theoretical space around the theoretical-political journals *Prelom*, *Agregat*, *Plamen*, *Novosti*, and *Workers’-Punks’ University*. This is not an exhaustive list, but includes some of the most important contributions in the lively discussion on the status of Yugoslavia and most notably Yugoslav partisans from an emancipatory and/or communist perspective: Buden (2001) Karamanić (2006), Pupovac (2007), Komelj (2009a), Močnik (2008) Stojanović (2003), Centrih (2011), Krašovec (2010), Riha (1993), Momčilović (2012) and others.

⁶⁷⁷ Historical revisionism offers highly ideological versions of criminal and dictatorial tendencies within partisan struggle that resulted in the “artificial entity” of Yugoslavia. For a critique of these views see (Arsenijević/Jovanović (2007)). At the same time, I will not take a standpoint of official socialist ideology, which regarded self-management as a “natural” evolution of the pre-war communist movement, and a germ that was already at work during WWII. See Kardelj (1980).

⁶⁷⁸ A recent study of Lev Centrih (2011) is a very important historical contribution in the evaluation of the “Marxist formation” before and during WWII that shows how certain ideas and tendencies within the Communist Party evolved and intervened into the political practice and formation of Yugoslavia.

⁶⁷⁹ Rado Riha warned on this dimension (1993).

6.2.1. *The figure of the partisan as a militant political subjectivity in WWII*

Before I enter into the political analysis of the Yugoslav partisan experience, I need to make a few conceptual notes on the figure of the partisan.⁶⁸⁰ The partisan is a neglected figure in current political research and has mostly been associated with the work of Carl Schmitt.⁶⁸¹ It is ironic and indeed a theoretical quandary that much of the conceptual reflection on the partisan and its legacy is connected to the work of a counter-revolutionary theorist, who only briefly discussed the case of (Yugoslav) partisans from WWII.⁶⁸² This absence and a deeper treatment of anticolonial struggles makes for a good critique of Schmitt as he failed to consider the link “between colonialism and Nazism”; a blind spot that is indeed not accidental.⁶⁸³ Schmitt’s ambivalent position is most clear in his treatise on the partisan that runs against his major contribution of rethinking sovereignty in terms of exception. The figure of the partisan suspends the logic of sovereignty and in this respect, it might prove fruitful to further the call of “*resurrecting* some of militant bodies”⁶⁸⁴ for politics today, but also to continue the Machiavellian moment that considers politics beyond the model of sovereignty.

For Schmitt the most productive moment in the figure of partisan was the critique of democracy and the way in which it undermined the very core of the Westphalian interstate system. The partisan questions one of the structural marks of state sovereignty, that is,

⁶⁸⁰ *Oxford American Dictionary* defines partisan as “a member of an armed group formed to fight secretly against an occupying force, in particular one operating in enemy-occupied Yugoslavia, Italy, and parts of eastern Europe in World War II”. *Merriam Webster Dictionary* defines a partisan as “a firm adherent to a party, faction, cause or person, *especially* one exhibiting blind, prejudiced and unreasoning allegiance”. The second part of the sentence works as an ideological supplement that assigns a partisan a very concrete feature: the absence of any regulative idea, faculty of reasoning: the partisan exhibits blind and unreasoning allegiance. This sombre representation de-legitimizes the figure of the partisan from the outset and brings it into the horizon of fanaticism, eternally resigning the partisan to a realm of irrational politics. Etymologically coming from the Latin word *pars* (part), the first use of the word partisan dates in 1555 (French). Partisans in the modern sense of the word were for the first time in action during Napoleon’s invasion of Spain, when local guerrillas fought against occupation. 20th century saw a proliferation of guerrilla struggles, connected to the fight against local/regional dictatorships, or fight against imperialism and colonialism.

⁶⁸¹ Che Guevara defines the partisan army is an “armed avant-garde of people” (2002).

⁶⁸² (2004: 38). Schmitt goes as far as to claim that Tito’s partisans fought against monarchist partisans, which is oxymoronic, since monarchist soldiers - Chetniks were not only supported by government in exile and Allies, but also represented old Yugoslavia. If their way of fighting in terms of irregular forces and mobility did not differ from Tito’s partisans, then the telluric and political moment are very different. This already shows on certain quandary in Schmitt’s theory that I shall refute in few moments.

⁶⁸³ Toscano (2008: 428).

⁶⁸⁴ Toscano (2008: 418). Drawing critically on Agamben Lorenzo Chiesa made an important contribution on this topic (2011).

the state's monopoly over the use of physical force. The partisan's military formation, which is neither recognized by occupying forces and/or by the collaborationist state disturbs the basis of international law (state) and a classical concept of inter-state warfare, but also opens the question of the division between war and peace, articulating the position of civil war. The clearly defined and *a priori* agents of inter-state wars are made obsolete and this was one of the central points that assisted Schmitt in exerting a critique of the liberal model.⁶⁸⁵

Also Schmitt defined, and not without ambivalence⁶⁸⁶, four central features of the partisan: (1) political commitment to the struggle; (2) mobility (3) irregularity of forces and (4) telluric character of the fight, which opens the question of relationship to the soil.⁶⁸⁷ Schmitt correctly extracted the novelty of the partisan for political thought and practice and how it challenges the conventional articulation of politics and war.

It might be surprising to note that Schmitt embraced the importance of “political commitment”, but I should immediately add that this commitment can be either revolutionary, or *counter*-revolutionary. Even when Schmitt embraces revolutionary Mao and targets the bipolar constitution of the Cold War, his political agenda is extremely problematic, and as Toscano convincingly states Schmitt deploys a fantasy of a depoliticized order, which will create three *Grossraume*.⁶⁸⁸ Instead of bipolarity one gets multipolarity and Mao's China would play a major role.⁶⁸⁹ It would seem that political

⁶⁸⁵ Schmitt's theory is still valid for the critique of legal theory: partisans were not “officially” recognized enemies and did not belong to the category of war prisoners, who came under the protection of military law. In Yugoslavia they were called “Banditen”: once captured they were most often immediately shot and less often they were deported to concentration camps. Nazi occupation had a very pragmatic relation towards the law, but once the resistance was labelled banditry, it became a legitimate and legal act to shoot bandits and their supposed or real civilian supporters, once they were captured/arrested.

⁶⁸⁶ While it suspends the antagonism in order to make the conflict eternal (depoliticising it) in categories of enemy and friend (see Žižek 1999: 28).

⁶⁸⁷ (Schmitt 2004: 14). In this respect it is important to observe that Agamben's theory of sovereign power (1998) as a state of exception influenced by Schmitt's work would never discuss the figure of the partisan. The partisan cannot be mixed with Agamben's figure of “homo sacer” that is the most internal point of sovereign power. Opposite to the logic of inclusive exclusion, the figure of the partisan does not wait for the order to deploy it for thanatopolitical intentions. The sovereign order also cannot simply ignore the figure of the partisan: surely, like “homo sacer”, the partisan can be killed, or sacrificed, and even more importantly, it *has* to be killed, erased and eradicated from the soil of the new race. The figure of the partisan works not only as a minor disturbance, but as a major threat to state sovereignty, to the logic of property and propriety. See also Hallward's critique of Agamben's definition of the sovereign and the grounding of the nomos as the ultimate horizon (2005).

⁶⁸⁸ Toscano (2008: 430).

⁶⁸⁹ It is essential to observe how “opportunistic” Schmitt's support for Mao is, since he never followed on to investigate the link between Mao and anticolonial struggles, or even the non-aligned movement. For Schmitt,

commitment repeated the formal sovereign gesture that distinguishes friend from enemy on the geopolitical map. The dimension of political commitment is, as I will show, subjugated to the “telluric” moment, the struggle for the soil that exposes the quasi-natural bond of the partisan to his native land.

The next two moments of Schmitt’s definition of the partisan forces are less disputable: (2) the mobility of the struggle and (3) the irregularity of the forces. From the more technical perspective of the struggle the irregularity of the partisan army is due to the lack of material means and the fluctuation of the partisans’ forces that stretch deep into the interior, forests, or spread illegally in the urban space. Their numbers vary relating to popular support and even to season. Another characteristic of partisan struggle is its mobility, because it has to escape the occupied force’s control and lead a solid resistance to greater forces of the enemy. A large part of the partisan’s activities are concentrated around diversion and sabotage, producing disruption and chaos set in deeply behind enemy lines, where it is least expected. This needs to be combined with skilful command and struggle within its own liberated zones. The partisan struggle must always be ready to move and just leave the seeds of resistance behind its back. Mobility and irregularity have to do with the logic internal to the partisan struggle, which means that new political forms cannot be easily “territorialized”.

Schmitt hits a theoretical dead end, once he introduces the (4) feature of the “telluric” dimension of partisan, which overdetermines the first three elements (commitment, irregularity and mobility). This moment brings into the discussion a the partisan’s necessary belonging to the “soil”. It is at this point that Toscano rightly criticizes the conservative character of Schmitt’s interpretation, which ends in the position of the “*counter-revolutionary*”.⁶⁹⁰ His theory of the partisan privileges the telluric, which ends up mystifying and displacing the revolutionary logic of the national and popular liberation struggles that were in the 20th century dedicated to the radical transformation of the very notion of “land”, which I would rather frame as country. The telluric dimension in the

the anticolonial movement, which in my view represents the partisan movements of the second part of the 20th century, are mostly met with just as much cynicism as the zones of neutrality promoting “planetary liberalism” (2008: 426).

⁶⁹⁰ Toscano (2008: 425).

Schmittian universe remains a (hidden) “substance” that can be easily integrated into the nationalistic imaginary of a struggle for the “native soil” of the “new race”.

What is particularly striking is his choice of the privileged examples of partisan struggles (Spanish guerrillas against Napoleon, Mao’s global struggle for *Grossraume*), which seem to downplay the revolutionary aspect at the expense of the telluric. This ambivalence can actually help us differentiate the figure of partisan: either we speak of “national” partisan struggle⁶⁹¹ or revolutionary partisan struggle; this differentiation needs to be verified in the political practice of guerrilla movements. One can affirm telluric commitment, once a guerrilla group sets the political goal of national liberation and the struggle against occupation. Notwithstanding the importance of this political goal, it did not stem from the antagonism that was “internal” to the society, to social antagonism, but was external, imposed in the form of French domination (Spanish guerrillas) and the disturbance of the European balance of powers. In other words, the partisan struggle that emphasizes the purely “telluric” or “national” dimension runs into a danger of reproducing phobic nationalism⁶⁹² or religious fundamentalism that are based on the principle of exclusion and the substantialization of the (eternal) enemy.⁶⁹³

However, when Schmitt considered the challenge of guerrillas committed to a global revolutionary agenda, as in the case of Lenin in Russia, Noys correctly notes that “the telluric elements of Fichte’s formulations are displaced by a proletarian internationalism that has no respect for the ‘*nomos* of the earth’.”⁶⁹⁴ To conclude with Schmitt’s final perspective, he promoted the defensive struggle of the telluric partisan, and warned not to become a “manipulated cog in the wheel of world-revolutionary

⁶⁹¹ It is noteworthy that another interesting historical example that Schmitt would be very likely fond of are the Lithuanian partisans. They, from the end of the WWII up till 1956, fought against the Soviet red army troops and asserted the national telluric moment. This is not to say that there is a need to ‘idealize’ the Soviet liberation from the Nazism in Lithuania, but today very little is said about the Lithuanians’ less heroic collaboration with Nazi powers during WWII and their involvement in the extermination of Jews. The Lithuanian ‘partisans’ fought perhaps against Soviet imperialism, but that does not absolve them of their collaboration during the war. Moreover, in no respect whatsoever were they committed to the revolutionary transformation of society.

⁶⁹² For a discussion on “subjective violence” see Balibar (2002) and Žižek (2008).

⁶⁹³ One of the major thrusts of Alberto Toscano’s book is posited against a superficial everyday critique of the fanaticism in politics (and the history of its use), but also at showing what the point of the distinction between emancipatory and revolutionary politics is today (2010).

⁶⁹⁴ Benjamin Noys (2010). Schmitt’s reference on the partisan is related to Fichte’s reading Machiavelli; importing Machiavelli to German context shows on the birth of nationalism – the need to have German Machiavelli (Schmitt 2004: 74).

aggression”.⁶⁹⁵ Thus, it can be seen that the telluric moment comes into a direct collision with the international revolutionary agenda of the communist and antifascist partisan. Contrary to Schmitt, antifascist partisan experiences tell of the opposite dynamic: telluric belonging is overdetermined by the specific global revolutionary commitments throughout the 20th century, either of communist or anticolonial provenience that targeted the colonial and post-colonial divisions of pre- and Cold War era. Even if the partisan struggle usually dealt with quite a clear division between friend and enemy, this distinction emerged from the struggle itself and was linked to the general aspiration of transformation of society, which pointed out social antagonisms internal to that very society.

This political differentiation is thus only verified in particular situations, since the partisan struggle – even if revolutionary – will always produce and deal with a mix of very different political affiliations and belongings of its activists and supporters. Also, the question of how this partisan struggle is able to promote a revolutionary strategy demands that emancipatory theory understand the “practices of antagonism that do not substantialize friendship and enmity”,⁶⁹⁶ which should be seen as a need “to revisit the idea of solidarity, which combines the reference to an abstract principle, collective action and a widening circle of allegiances.”⁶⁹⁷ These critical remarks guide the central perspective of my research on Yugoslav partisan struggle, which will be brought closer with some Althusserian theses from chapter 4 and the politics of the encounter.

6.2.2. Short prehistory and beginnings of Yugoslav partisan struggle

The kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes emerged after the end of WWI with the dissolution of Austro-Hungarian monarchy and under the tutelage of the Serbian aristocracy that was a part of the “small entente” during the war. From the very beginning the Kingdom was split by political and economic tensions; its first constitution in 1921 inscribed the central and unitarist⁶⁹⁸ conception of Yugoslavia, which won out over the

⁶⁹⁵ 2004: 52.

⁶⁹⁶ Toscano (2008: 250).

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid.: 251.

⁶⁹⁸ The unitarist conception of the Yugoslav nation was based on the thesis that these small Slavic tribes will eventually merge into one Yugoslav.

“autonomist”⁶⁹⁹ and “clerical” version supported mostly by Croatian Peasant Party. After the imposition of royal dictatorship in 1929 the Kingdom received a new name: Kingdom of Yugoslavia, now all the political life was limited to superficial struggles between the two biggest officially permitted parties.⁷⁰⁰ The new Kingdom was not only existed at the “periphery of the capitalist world system”,⁷⁰¹ but according to Lev Centrih’s study at the “periphery of the European semi-periphery that was dominated by fascist regimes.”⁷⁰² In the mid 1930s the ruling class in Yugoslavia increasingly relied on the Italian and German economy and also drew of its political ideas from their theories of “fascist corporativism”.⁷⁰³ Without too many reservations one could define old Yugoslavia as a semi-fascist dictatorship, with the brutal exploitation of peoples and domination/repression of small nations and nationalities.⁷⁰⁴ From 1935 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia had already developed a set of concentration camps for political opponents, most notably for communists and fervent nationalists.⁷⁰⁵ Since the level of economic exploitation was particularly severe, these were the years of strikes and illegal protests; silent and open opposition was met with police brutality, capital punishment and the forced migration of organizers of protests.

In these circumstances the support for socialist and communist forces started to rise again. 1937 was very important year for the Communist Party of Yugoslavia that from the 1921 worked illegally⁷⁰⁶ and the leadership of the Party was operating from exile. The political decision in 1937 to return to Yugoslavia was accepted and in the light of political experiences in the Spanish Civil War, the militant activists began with a slow mobilisation. The Communist Party also revised and self-critically reached the decision against the

⁶⁹⁹ The extreme nationalist divisions exacerbated the severe socio-economic situation, where the bourgeois Parties and monarchists tightened a unitaristic conception, which was countered by the autonomist current. The Croatian Party of peasants and to some extent also Slovenian clerical Party were against the monarchist dynasty of Karadjordjević and against unitarism. For development of autonomist ideas see Banac (1984: 226-248).

⁷⁰⁰ See Centrih’s excellent summary of factional struggles (2011: 112-133).

⁷⁰¹ Novak 1996.

⁷⁰² Centrih 2011: 112.

⁷⁰³ Ibid.: 113.

⁷⁰⁴ See Magaš (1993: 23-27).

⁷⁰⁵ See Agamben who describes the existence of concentration camps for communists in Weimar Germany (1998: 90-97). For Yugoslav concentration camps in 1930s see *Opća enciklopedija JLZ* (1978: V, 500-504).

⁷⁰⁶ On the first general elections in Kingdom in 1920 the Communist Party became the third biggest party. Due to the revolutionary unrest in post-war Europe the party and struggle for power the ruling class banned the party.

former policy of centralisation (unitarism⁷⁰⁷) and embraced the importance of the federalist idea. Tito became the leader of the CPY and in the same year the autonomous Communist Party of Slovenia, Croatia, Vojvodina and Monte Negro was formed.⁷⁰⁸ On the eve of WWII the membership in CPY counted only 3,000 members. Due to the strong illegal organizational network, the military guerrilla experiences from the Spanish Civil War⁷⁰⁹ and a strong belief in change, communists were to become the central political force that began organizing the antifascist struggle all across Yugoslavia.

The invasion on Yugoslavia started on 6th April 1941 with the heavy bombardments of Belgrade due to the Yugoslavian government's unwillingness to subjugate completely to the Axis powers. The occupation was completed on 17th April, when the Yugoslav Royal Army declared an unconditional surrender without much resistance and even voluntary disarmament of its forces. The kingdom of Yugoslavia, the royal dictatorship, was substituted by a fascist dictatorship imposed from foreign forces that divided the country in many different parts. At this point a part of the old political elite, with the royal family, migrated to London, where it remained as the recognized Yugoslav government-in-exile gradually stripped of popular support, whereas the other part of old political elite openly collaborated with the Nazis and other occupation forces (Italian, Bulgarian and Hungarian). From the very start of the war the civilian population was exposed to brutal terror: forced labour and migration, torture and extermination became a normalcy of new occupation regimes and their racist policies. The large network of concentration camps testifies to the horrific sites of mass killings, where tens of thousands of Roma, homosexuals, political opponents, antifascists, partisans, Jews, and other nationalities and minorities were killed.⁷¹⁰ Apart from the division of Yugoslavia into different zones of occupation, the central part, Croatia, and most of current Bosnia was given to the political administration of *Ustashes* forming a fascist puppet state called the

⁷⁰⁷ The historian Ivo Banac rightly analyses the ambivalent position linking on one hand vision of *narodno jedinstvo* (national unity) and Marxist internationalism (1984: 328-339). In the beginning of 1920s "communist leaders were overconfident of their ability to ride the continental red wave" (1984: 330) and that is why they did not capitalize on the national question.

⁷⁰⁸ Magaš (1993: 27-28).

⁷⁰⁹ There were more than 1.500 Yugoslav volunteers, mostly communists, who joined the International Brigades. Tito was a commander of the Dimitrov battalion that consisted of the Balkan communists.

⁷¹⁰ To name only few concentration camps Rab, the largest concentration camp on island in Europe; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rab_concentration_camp, the infamous camp Jasenovac where around 300.000 people were killed <http://www.jasenovac.org/> and Gonars in Italy <http://www.gonarsmemorial.eu/>.

Independent State of Croatia (1941-1945) It was especially on the territory of this fascist state that the level of inter-ethnic strife and ethnical cleansing escalated and the biggest antifascist fights took place. The situations of extreme terror in the occupied zones gradually lead a massive number of people into the partisan antifascist struggle.

But it has to be said that in the very beginning it was not all clear who was fighting against the occupation, since many different self-proclaimed “patriotic” groups, who were not partisan, formed military units and militias that mobilized volunteers or forced peasants to join their units in order to guard the homeland. Firstly, there were nationalistic Serbian units called *Chetniks* of Draža Mihailović, who also became the recognized representative of the royal power of the Yugoslav government in exile. At the very start of the war Chetniks retained a degree of autonomy and fought on some occasions against the foreign occupiers. They received great amounts of material assistance from the British forces, but very soon they started collaborating with Nazi forces, which is well documented in transcriptions (archives) and in their direct military engagement on the terrain. Apart from their policies of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia (against Muslims, Croats), they fought together with the Nazis in the major offensives against partisan forces in 1942 and 1943.⁷¹¹

All across Yugoslavia many fascist local collaborators started organizing against the partisans. In Slovenia, the local anti-communist militia mobilized cleric-fascist youth and part of the peasantry to join the *White Guard* collaborating with Italian fascists. After the capitulation of Italy in 1943 and the heavy defeats that partisans inflicted, local collaborationists regrouped and were renamed into the *Home Guards*. The latter came directly under Nazi command and made an oath to Hitler.⁷¹² In Kosovo and Macedonia, SS-Albanian units Skender-beg operated, whereas the bourgeois nationalist Albanian units of *Balli Kombëtar* remained in a more ambivalent position, but finally collaborated with Nazis and Chetniks in order for Kosovo to remain without partisan resistance.⁷¹³ In Bosnia a Muslim *Handžar* SS-division was integrated in military actions. Very often local fascist

⁷¹¹ Especially in 1943, the IV.offensive in Sutjeska and V.offensive called *Battle on Neretva* were the turning points for partisans. They showed resilience and determinate antifascist fight that was reported by a British diplomatic mission; the other British diplomatic mission grew impatient and started mistrusting Mihailović's Chetniks due to their delay of any military actions against the Nazis. They were mostly attacking partisans (see Petranović 1988: 241-243) and were militarily defeated after the Battle on Neretva.

⁷¹² There is film footage of the anticommunist gatherings of local collaborationists. For example in Ljubljana in 1944 the gathering was filmed by an infiltrated partisan activist Rudi Omota (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3p-NoQqPBg0>).

⁷¹³ See Magaš (1993: 32-34).

collaborators were either extreme nationalists or were identified with the old ruling class; the pre-war political antagonisms and ethnical hatred due to the suppressed national question was crystallized and played out in the most brutal civil war, where people fought against people from the same regions, villages, sometimes even families.⁷¹⁴ The fascist terror resulted in large amounts of civilian deaths and military casualties in Yugoslavia.

6.2.3. ...and People's Liberation Struggle as politics of encounter

The extreme circumstances of occupation, local collaborationism and civil war discouraged many in the beginning from joining the partisan resistance. The antifascist activity was a risky matter and to even think about fighting against a better organized military, with more numerous and technically advanced weapons and forces,⁷¹⁵ was a step into something entirely different and unknown. Local collaborators took the path of moral corruption and radicalised their pre-war positions, while others, at the start a passive majority, remained neutral and pragmatic, simply waiting for external liberation. The time was not yet ripe for an antifascist resistance on the margins, even within the internal borders of the *Third Reich*.

However, there was no need to wait too long; the partisan struggle and its first organized form of antifascist resistance came into existence one week after the occupation of the Kingdom, that is, on 27th April of 1941 in Ljubljana, but also in other parts of the country antifascist organizations were formed quickly, mostly by communist forces, which from July onwards began their first military activities.⁷¹⁶ The partisan struggle was initiated against all odds and without any external help, but at the same time many of the first partisan activists and fighters recount a necessary decision. There was no other choice, but this impossible choice to start something new, and in these circumstances to face almost certain death. To join the partisans demanded a great degree of determination and thought on the one hand, passion and courage on the other. The partisan antifascist struggle

⁷¹⁴The civil war had a major impact on great internal divisions and the specific development of memory in all its contradictoriness in new Yugoslavia, which was re-iterated in the recent wars. I worked on the issues of memory and memorial sites in Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav context (2010; 2011).

⁷¹⁵ German forces had an aura of invincibility as they advanced on all sides with little problems.

⁷¹⁶ The prehistory of the antifascist struggle started in Mussolini's Italy where some Slovenian and Croatian groups formed small guerrilla units that performed some political and guerrilla actions.

was also from the very start premised on a non-nationalistic principle, as the sole political platform that was opposing all forms of fascisms including local exclusivist nationalisms. To become a partisan was open for anyone that fought against fascism. The partisan struggle should be then understood as a specific form of political resistance that opened up an impossible horizon: a historical possibility of a real transformation of society, of a completely new Yugoslavia. Apart from the anti-occupation fight, the partisan from the very early onwards pointed to the struggle for a different world.

I would like to use a few excellent theses from Ozren Pupovac, who recently revisited the partisan rupture in WWII Yugoslavia. Pupovac defines the partisan movement as a political process, where the *people of Yugoslavia* unite “their rebellion against the occupation by the Axis powers in 1941 and their fight against the capitulation and collaboration of the apparatuses of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.”⁷¹⁷ The partisan struggle was not only a struggle against the foreign domination and, as Pupovac suggests, this is also one of the reasons why the development of the partisan struggle cannot be reconciled with the principles “sovereignty of the people” or “national liberation”:

Both terms are constitutive for the modern State, and both terms correspond to the historical moments of the bourgeois revolutions. 1789 and 1848: the French Revolution, which decapitates the king, as well as the springtime of the nations, establish the categories of the “people” and of the “nation”, or rather the synthesis of the two, as the substance of the order of the modern bourgeois State.⁷¹⁸

If one simply applied the model of popular sovereignty to Yugoslav partisans we would lapse back into the mire of the Yugoslav state’s sovereignty or to the unitaristic concept of the “nation”. But the situation of WWII was much more complicated. Between 1941 and 1943 there was no state of Yugoslavia, and the old royal project capitulated and gradually failed to address any popular movement. In this utterly divided conjuncture one could at least speak of three different political entities and imaginaries: firstly, the official occupation that consisted of foreign fascist politics and local collaborationist regimes and groupuscules that did ethnic cleansing and destroyed antifascist forces. Such fascist politics was premised on the model of national exclusivism. Secondly, one had the existence of the Yugoslav government in exile, the old bourgeois forces, which remained nationally

⁷¹⁷Pupovac (2006: 11).

⁷¹⁸Ibid.: 12.

divided even in times of war, but were headed by the King Petar II; the government up till very late in the war supported Chetniks and their ambivalent relationship towards the fascist occupiers. This side was dominated by the idea of a Unitarian Yugoslavia under the dominance of Serbian royal family. Lastly, there was the partisan antifascist struggle which through its own popular antifascist institutions in 1943 proclaimed a Yugoslav provisional government revoking the Yugoslav government-in-exile and directly fighting with local collaborators. Pupovac claims that partisans were fighting “against the monarchical construction of Yugoslavia, against the dictatorship and the hegemony of the Serbian Crown, and against all forms of political, national and social inequality which were characteristic of this oppressive order.”⁷¹⁹ This politics was very much inspired by the model of popular liberation and socialist revolution.⁷²⁰

Unquestionably the research on partisan politics needs to take into account a special dynamic and resistance in thought, politics and culture that is internal to the partisan struggle, but one should nevertheless add two central theoretico-political references for the political organisation of the struggle: Lenin and Dimitrov. Apart from socialist revolution, Yugoslav communists took Lenin’s theoretical model of revolutionary war seriously,⁷²¹ which on the one hand waged an anti-imperialist (antifascist) struggle, but also went beyond the liberal state and popular sovereignty in terms of taking over the state power and radically overturning the existing state of affairs. The anti-imperialist struggle was coloured by revolutionary dimensions. The anti-imperialist aspect was openly stressed in the partisan literature and political proclamations, for example in Slovenia, one of the most important political theorists and leaders of the *General Command of the Liberation Front* (LF), Boris Kidrič formulated the fifth fundamental point of the LF program “the emancipation of Slovenian people is possible only on the ruins of imperialism”.⁷²² This slogan was inspired by Lenin’s essay , where he famously introduced the distinction

⁷¹⁹ 2006: 13.

⁷²⁰ More than bourgeois revolutions and master concepts of popular sovereignty, the situation was closer to the socialist revolution in Russia. Obviously it differed from the Yugoslav revolution, because after WWI and the revolution it continued into civil war, while the Yugoslavian socialist revolution took place within conditions of a war against fascism and civil war.

⁷²¹ Stojanović (2003). One could add Cuba, China, Vietnam, but also other anti-colonial struggles as re-invention and “adaptation” of this model.

⁷²² This was one of the seven political points published on 22 June 1941, see Kidrič (1987: 13).

between the “oppressed and oppressor nations”.⁷²³ Moreover, Lenin’s insistence on the “right to self-determination” within the general struggle of “national liberation” was integrated into the new politics of COY after 1937.⁷²⁴ This signalled the more federal path that was developed during WWII and re-politicised the national question against the old idea of unitarist Yugoslavia, “integrative Yugoslavism”.⁷²⁵

A second source and inspiration for the partisan organisational form can be traced to the strategy of the “united popular front” that was developed by Georgi Dimitrov. Drawing from the brutal experience of fascism in Germany, which represented a threat for both democratic countries and the Soviet Union (and communist forces internationally) Dimitrov⁷²⁶ proposed a new political line for the international workers’ movement that would unite the struggle of workers’ and bourgeois forces in their fight of the common enemy – fascism.⁷²⁷ The Comintern adopted this politics after the 7th Congress (1935) and, not without irony, would stress and target any sectarianism that was manifestly present on the Left.⁷²⁸ To fight and win against fascism a united front was the only possibility.

The idea of the “united front” fits well into the Balkan context, where already before WWI the national liberation struggle against the falling Ottoman Empire took place and was embedded in a two-phase revolutionary model. The “national liberation” movement would possibly be a trigger for the “popular liberation”, that is, the social revolution. The first phase consisted of the organized popular struggle that fought against national oppression (or in the context of WWII, against the occupation) and could be done on a united front with the bourgeoisie.

In the particular context of divided Yugoslavia, where membership in the CPY was relatively small (3000 members), the united front and national liberation horizon became

⁷²³ Lenin (1964: 240). This became a central political idea and organizing principle for many anti-colonial struggles that elaborated and developed it in their own popular struggles. It is not a far stretch to argue that without this reference, it is difficult to understand the transformative anti-imperialist movements all throughout 20th century.

⁷²⁴ In 1937 the Congress of CPY adopted this political principle.

⁷²⁵ For excellent study on the historical differentiation of “Yugoslavism” see Dragović-Sosso (2002: 29-30, 37-39).

⁷²⁶ He wrote a famous speech *United Front – Unity of Workers against Facism* in 1935, delivered at Comintern, stemming from the experience of Nazi Germany.

⁷²⁷ See Dimitrov (1975: 205-217).

⁷²⁸ Despite this promoted line the historical experiences of the united fronts in France and in the Spanish Civil War speak of a tragic failure. However, as the outcome of WWII in general, and as the Yugoslav partisan struggle specifically shows, there were also successful historical struggles of the united front.

the political platform for very different antifascist forces (called partisans) addressing also other formations of the bourgeois political spectre.⁷²⁹ Obviously, partisan struggle re-appropriated different political strategies and opened the national question in a particular way, being from the very beginning linked to the revolutionary transformation of society. In other words the new horizon did not count on different phases, but opened a simultaneous horizon of national and popular liberation and was present in all periods of WWII.⁷³⁰

Importantly this temporal-phase model was bracketed further by a linguistic specificity that Slovenian, Croatian and the Serbian languages possess. The confusion stemmed from the confluence of the two terms “nation” and “people” in one word: *narod*.⁷³¹ This complicates the adequate translation of the official term *narodnoosvobodilni boj* (slo.), *narodno-oslobodilacka borba* (sr-cro.), which can be translated as *People’s Liberation Struggle* (PLS) or *National Liberation Struggle* (NLS).⁷³² On a very general level I would side with the translation suggested by Slobodan Karamanić and Ozren Pupovac that emphasize the popular liberation as the dominant element of the struggle, which overdetermines the national liberation. Yugoslav partisans embraced a strategy of “popular liberation”, which as Pupovac lucidly remarks does not only concern “one people, one nation, but all the nations and peoples within the repressive monarchical order, all the people who bear the stamp of oppression, whether class, national, sexual, religious.”⁷³³ Following Lenin’s concept of the “oppressed nation” that struggles against imperial and

⁷²⁹ The first model of the “united front” was realized in Slovenia, where antifascist groups formed the *Liberation Front*, which consisted of four constitutive members: the Communist Party of Slovenia, the Christian Socialists, cultural workers/intelligentsia and Sokoli (liberal association for sports). This political form was undermined in 1943, when its strongest group communists took over avant-garde role resulting in Dolomiti’s Declaration in 1943 (see Prunk 1976).

⁷³⁰ For a close elaboration of the dialectical relationship between these two liberations and two aspects of the partisan struggle see Komelj (2009a); Kardelj (1989).

⁷³¹ Slovenian language allows for differentiation between people (*ljudstvo*) and nation (*narod*), although it was used interchangeably. For a specific development of the terms nation and nationality in the Yugoslav context see Banac (1984: 23- 27). Banac embraces the thesis that if it is true that nationalism is a modern phenomenon, it does not mean that certain national affiliations and consciousness did not pre-exist the late 19th century. However, this thesis over-emphasises nationalist ideology as a kind of eternal a-historical formation. Karl Deutch has a good definition of nationality: the people that are on their way to achieve political, economic and cultural autonomy (1996). During WWII different terms were used in the partisan struggle, with the exception of the French version of “nation” (*nacija*), which was left out due to the negative pejorative unitaristic connotation from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (“integrative Yugoslavism”).

⁷³² To precisely define when the authors and activists evoked and referred to nation or people, the research has to determine it from the context of discussions.

⁷³³ Pupovac (2006: 16).

fascist politics, the national liberation will be executed in the perspective of the leadership of the proletariat,⁷³⁴ based on international solidarity and revolution.⁷³⁵ This was also a central wager of the communist Edvard Kardelj, who in 1937 published a seminal text on the national question in Slovenia,⁷³⁶ where he emphasized that the articulation of anti-imperial politics in relation to the class question was necessary. It is also true that the aspect of “national liberation” remained important all throughout the struggle and also importantly influenced the federative organisation of the future state. This is another reason why national question cannot be simply relegated to a secondary phenomenon.⁷³⁷ But again as the name and figure “partisan” suggests, it in the first place was opened to all different nations and nationalities, the central criteria was not national belonging, but was based on a common denominator: it is open to all antifascist forces, no matter which political, religious or national belonging was involved. It was based on an emerging multinational solidarity and was the only military and political formation in Yugoslavia that directly targeted nationalistic divisions that remained crucial to all other armies and paramilitary formations that dominated and reflected the inter-ethnic relations of old Yugoslavia.

It was on this special articulation between revolutionary people-nations/nationalities-class that partisan politics contributed something new into the political imaginary and practice of struggles in WWII. Also, this was the line that brought a demarcation between people and “people’s traitors” that partisans used in the fight against local collaborationists.⁷³⁸ The latter presented themselves as the patriots defending the homeland; this was morally questionable and under the Nazi tutelage directed against the communist-partisan danger. Local collaborationists also employed the model identical

⁷³⁴ See also Stalin (1976: 67-80; 270).

⁷³⁵ “In the internationalist education of the workers of the emphasis of oppressor countries must necessarily be laid on their advocating freedom for the oppressed countries and their fighting for it. Without these there can be no internationalism.” (Lenin 1964: 346).

⁷³⁶ Kardelj (1939).

⁷³⁷ Ignoring of the national question and nationalist problems would later, in the times of socialist Yugoslavia, have dramatic and severe effects that would result in a tragic break-up, where the concurring models of WWII (local collaborationism) hegemonized the politico-ideological sphere. See Badiou’s critique of the class analysis of Resistance (2005: 1-10).

⁷³⁸ See Komelj (2009a: 30). Fascism was the central enemy of the partisans, however the revolutionary war is waged in the perspective of the “ultimate, last war“, which wants to end all imperialist wars. This struggle is not based on the logic of presupposed racial and national enemies, evoked by the fascist logic of war. The anti-imperialist and partisan war is waged against one central enemy, the fascist enemy (from abroad, or home) and is a defensive war, against the foreign occupation.

to their masters; they framed their struggle against the partisans in the name of a pure race and nation based on the model of pure ethnic communities cleansed from all other nations. Contrary to this ethnical model of politics, partisans opened a path to “revolutionary” peoples and addressed all nations and nationalities within the emerging new Yugoslavia.⁷³⁹ The partisan horizon, however, had a special twist: the anti-imperial struggle did not substantialize into one nation, but became open for all nations and working people, which participated in imagining a new internationalist horizon of Yugoslavia. In words of Miklavž Komelj:

Yugoslav partisans performed a first mass popular uprising in occupied Europe that was a part of a massive revolutionary movement in the 20th century (Yugoslav revolution was the biggest revolutionary outburst in Europe after the Spanish war) ... Political subjectivity that was formed in the popular liberation struggle, overcame strict national borders, since this struggle was founded in the planetary socially transformative perspective.⁷⁴⁰

Partisan theory and practice hegemonized the political and ideological terrain that was waged against the old ruling class and local collaborationists. Through partisan struggle a dialectical sharpening and encounter between the “oppressed nations” and “revolutionary people” emerged. This was the crucial political ground, where the masses were mobilized and the popular support for partisan struggle was won.

In order to strengthen this partisan “novelty” I would like to use a few notes from the Althusserian theory of encounter. It is not enough to state the rupture of newly emerging Yugoslavia with old unitaristic and semi-fascist Kingdom of Yugoslavia, but to read partisan struggle as a lasting encounter that produced effects materialized in new cultural and political forms of mass democracy. The encounter is conceived as twofold: an encounter of different political principles and an encounter of partisan virtù and war fortuna (desubstantialization, delocalisation), which is an encounter of the masses and revolutionary ideas.

Firstly, the People’s Liberation Struggle should be understood in terms of an encounter between a few key political principles that were inter-related during the struggle and that I already described above: the national liberation and popular liberation that

⁷³⁹ Partisan General Command and generally Councils of People’s Liberation Struggle were extremely attentive in strengthening and weakening Yugoslav agenda at specific times of the struggle (see Kidrič 1978, Komelj 2009a).

⁷⁴⁰ Komelj (2009a: 24).

unfolded in the formulation of an egalitarian socialist program, socialist revolution. The latter aspect should be traced in political decisions of partisan political organisations that ordered the confiscation of property from collaborators, while in the liberated areas partisans and workers took over factories that provided food, raw material and ammunition for the partisan forces. This was accompanied by demands for agrarian reform and the expropriation of large land-owners; there was a constitution of popular courts that began with expropriation. The majority of economic activities were improvised and organized voluntarily on the basis of engaged self-governance developing the first political forms of (socialist) self-management. The principle of national liberation opened and formulated an idea of a federative constitution of Yugoslavia (1943), which was based on multinational antifascist solidarity. The programmatic points for future political formation should be viewed within a more general process of cultural revolution in the PLS that cannot be regarded as directed from above.⁷⁴¹ The communist elite did not instrumentalize art for propagandistic purposes, but on the contrary, as Komelj's pioneering study lucidly shows, the PLS was the first episode in the Yugoslav history that masses of anonymous poets, music bands and choirs, theatre groups, sculptors, painters and cultural workers participated in partisan cultural activities, outside the established institutions that they decided to leave. Instead of warm homes and guaranteed cultural events within a fascist regime, they decided for the partisan path of "tears and blood". Komelj's analysis refers to the tremendous force and eruption of cultural works among masses:

It was not necessary that masses who spoke up for the first time formulated revolutionary slogans; they were included in the revolutionary process simply by the very gesture of speaking up. Liberation struggle brought also the freedom of expression, that is, to people whom this right was denied before; but they fought for it and started exerting it.⁷⁴²

⁷⁴¹ The times of great intensity, suffering, but also hopes for better future, fomented this process of massive cultural production. Miklavž Komelj wrote a 600-page study on partisan art, which performs a radical cut, political and aesthetical, in the established art genres and the role of art in the bourgeois society. Many arts flourished in times of war, when art was supposed to be silent (*inter armes musae silent*). According to Komelj it was poetry that became an integral part for symbolizing the resistance and mobilizing further masses. Poems became weapons of mass expression. Let me only refer to the case of Slovenia, where more than 12000 poems were written during the WWII (Paternu 1987, Komelj 2009a, Kirn 2012).

⁷⁴² Komelj (2009a: 104-105).

Put in poetical terms, these were times when words became weapons, but also when the words of masses became weapons of mass creation: symbolic struggles imagined and strengthened the military and political struggle for liberation.⁷⁴³

Secondly, the PLS as the encounter between partisan virtù and war fortuna was an extraordinary rupture in the Yugoslav context. Fortuna and its cruel logic of time was turning everything against struggle which would have such ambitious demands and political principles, bringing forward something unthinkable. One should not forget that in concrete historical terms, until 1943, the partisan forces received extremely small material support from the Allies, thus when they fought against the technically well-equipped occupation armies that on average outnumbered partisan forces by at least ten to one. They were not internationally recognized as an antifascist movement until the Teheran's conference in December 1943. Before that time, the Allied antifascist coalition favoured the royal forces and Chetniks, who would be more "adequate" partners in the case of an Allied invasion in the Balkans.⁷⁴⁴ Without external support in times of fascist terror and civil war the decision to join the partisans seemed crazy and irrational.⁷⁴⁵ For the majority of people, the decision to stay "pragmatic" and simply wait seemed a much more rational choice. But linear history, extreme circumstances and the psychologisation of decision cannot predict real rupture. Not only was the PLS equal to the task to struggle against the

⁷⁴³ The scope of cultural activities in the whole area of Yugoslavia remains to be fully reported/analysed. Komelj (2009a) focused generally on the partisan art in the Slovenian territory.

⁷⁴⁴ More surprisingly, Stalin on many occasions demanded that Tito's partisans collaborate with Chetniks and do not form any revolutionary struggle. After more than two and a half years of antifascist organization and struggle against the occupation partisans finally received international recognition. For the complicated and ambiguous relationship of the Allies towards partisans and the collaborators see Bilandžić (1980), Kardelj (1980) and Komelj (2009a). After Teheran's conference partisans were the solely recognized antifascist force in Yugoslavia, while Chetniks lost international support. A year later even the Yugoslav king and a part of the Yugoslav government-in-exile embraced the partisan struggle and called all people in Yugoslavia to join the struggle. Allied forces, Churchill in particular, asked the partisan leadership to form a broad government with the part of the émigré Yugoslav elite in London in order to make a government of unity. On 8th March 1945 the Tito-Šubašić agreement was signed in order to appease the British government and unite all Yugoslavs in struggle against fascism, in Yugoslavia and abroad. That was the compromise partisan leadership was willing to make in order for the British not to interfere in the post-war constitution. Anyhow, the late recognition of the partisans mirrored the imperialist stakes for the Balkans, where Yugoslavia was divided 50%-50% between the British and the Soviet side, Greece 90%-10%, and this happened without asking people and resistance movements about their own future. "Great Britain and Russia will divide Yugoslavia 50%-50% and Greece will be completely under the British influence" (Fejto 1952: 25). These drawings of maps had particularly tragic consequences after the war, most notably in Greece, where civil war divided the country and where the country was later ran by a fascist military junta by the beginning of the 1970s (Kouvelakis 2012).

⁷⁴⁵ A detailed overview of data relating to the partisan struggle in WWII collected on the page: <http://www.vojska.net/eng/world-war-2/yugoslavia/>

occupation, but it also opened a new historical horizon and practiced the political principles mentioned above. Against the pragmatic adjustment and realistic compromises,⁷⁴⁶ the PLS jumped into the void as a sort of collective “leap of faith” that changed the situation and risked the entire existence and survival of the resistance and its subjects/partisans.⁷⁴⁷ Not only the hard steel discipline of the communist militants of the Proletarian Brigade and General Command that experienced struggles in Spanish Civil War and years of imprisonments, but also the development and reliance on its own growing forces, the masses that acquired immense political, cultural and military virtue. The partisan struggle could have never resisted successfully without the less visible and less “epic” support of popular masses that helped partisans all along.⁷⁴⁸ The existence of the PLS and the new political horizon slowly took shape in the mass of cultural activities, new political institutions, military successes and defeats, which at times bordered on total annihilation.

What I referred to as mechanisms of “deubstantialization” and “delocalisation” in chapter 4, were key attributes of the PLS at work all throughout the struggle. Firstly, the question of “desubstantialization”: how can we in times of brutality and war, where the line between us and them is ideologically manipulated so easily, avoid schematic division? To become a partisan meant to fight against fascism, where the fascist as political enemy was not equated with an external foe with foreign nationality, to fight against the Italian, German, Hungarian or Bulgarian. It was also a fight against all members of Yugoslav communities that supported the fascist regime, this is why the central division was not done on purely essentialist ethnical attributes, but on political ground: as a fight against fascism. During the partisan struggle individuals-partisans were stripped of their former substance and simple affiliation to ethnical community. Partisans became a part of the struggling community based on international solidarity, fraternity and comradeship of different people coming from all classes, nationalities and political convictions.

The moment of “desubstantialization” is an essential part of the partisan struggle, which was accompanied by a political process of “delocalisation” taking place in the

⁷⁴⁶ Žižek (2002: 8).

⁷⁴⁷ See again Badiou (Metapolitics 2005: 1-10).

⁷⁴⁸ One of the best partisan films was done by Želimir Žilnik. *Ustanak u Jazku* (Uprising in Jazak) is a short documentary about a small village in Vojvodina shows popular resilience and support for the partisan struggle.

“imagination” to the reality of a moving struggle and liberated territories in Yugoslavia. Delocalisation was particularly strong in different poems and stories of partisan artists. I would like to evoke an important passage from the long lost *Partisan Anthem* that could well define the guiding principle of desubstantialization and delocalisation, a minimal slogan that was shared by partisans within the struggle: “we want to live, live freely in a *free* country.”⁷⁴⁹ The short sentence to live freely in a *free* country does not mean only to liberate the country from the fascist occupiers. It also does not speak about the land of Slovenia, but about a free country, which implies that a radical transformation is necessary. In order to become free, the partisans had to target all existing modes of domination, past and present, only then can one speak about “freedom”. The partisan “we” was invested with the project that will liberate and transform the country. This and other similar political prescriptions were born out of the partisan movement itself and were not injected into the movement as external ethical prescriptions that would fight against immoral, evil occupiers of naturally born fascists.

In terms of the real spaces of partisan struggle one should note that the privileged space of struggle was in the countryside. Peasant communities were politicized to a degree that at the end of the war some cities seemed much more backward than the countryside.⁷⁵⁰ The partisan movement brought to rural areas a sense of a new community that accompanied by popular education and cultural activities. Also, the political platforms of antifascist resistance were strong in the cities, which developed networks of illegal radio stations, printing houses, organized sabotages and collected information of the occupier’s moves and policies. This was a partisan force deep within the enemy’s territory without which the PLS cannot be imagined.⁷⁵¹ But the question of space does not want to register

⁷⁴⁹ These are the words from Franc Pintarič-Švaba (1924-1942), who was a fighter in the Veličkovič’s troop of Štajerska’s battalion. He was poisoned on 23rd August 1942 by a German denunciator, taken over to the German army and died on the way to hospital (Paternu 1987: 297). All his original poems were lost and for the sake of military reasons translated into German language, which was recovered only after the war. For details on the poem see Kirn (2012).

⁷⁵⁰ Komelj analyzes how the partisan struggle left major traces in the countryside (2009a: 58-59).

⁷⁵¹ After the war the status of the people’s hero was awarded to different cities Drvar, Prilep, Cetinje, Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Novi Sad and Pristina. Komelj’s short treatise on history of resistance in Ljubljana testifies that a majority of inhabitants became activists of the *Liberation Front*, or what they called *organisation*. The city was de facto run by a double power, where Italian occupational powers co-existed with the massive presence of illegal and semi-legal political and cultural infrastructure. For example, the Italian occupying authorities made an effort to organize cultural life in order to “civilize” non-educated Slavs, but these events were boycotted. The LF imposed cultural silence that forbid any engagement in activities

“real” places of resistances that will provide us with a memory map of the struggle that would be later inscribed into socialist teleological historiography and also romanticized in all cultural forms.⁷⁵² It is more importantly to stress that the PLS took place outside the bourgeois and state apparatus, which was formally part of the collaborationist or occupier’s forces, or the space of recognized Yugoslavian government-in-exile.

The proper “de-localisation” was found only in the partisan movement, which liberated territories and created councils of popular power during the whole war. Apart from the partisan confrontation with the existing state apparatus, one can also not equate the PLS with the Communist Party. The PLS produced new and very different political forms, most notably the collective popular agency embodied in the Antifascist Council(s) of the People’s Liberation Struggle. The ideas and dispersed organisational forms of the popular antifascist front that emerged from the partisan struggle received their first multinational material form on November 26, 1942 and was conferred the name, *Anti-Fascist Council of the People’s Liberation Struggle of Yugoslavia* (AVNOJ). AVNOJ became the first central organ of dispersed local and regional antifascist battalions and councils that consisted of different political affiliations. Unquestionably, the General Command of partisan forces and most of the leadership came from the CPY. AVNOJ was a new revolutionary political form that administered the liberated territories⁷⁵³ and through which “people’s power” performed all fundamental activities: from military matters, to political, cultural and economic activities.

The PLS was the encounter of communist organisation and popular masses,⁷⁵⁴ and the peak of the political activities was reached in the next year, on the liberated territories between November 21-29 (1943) after the *General Command* and partisans survived all

organized by occupying forces. In a matter of months Italian fascist authorities recognized the scope of the partisan resistance and made one of the biggest concentration camps out of the whole city. It was almost impossible to get in or out of Ljubljana without special permission and all around it was barb-wired and covered with bunkers. The isolation of citizens of Ljubljana only strengthened the dual political infrastructure, many would speak about a “state within the state“, while the illegal network expanded and infiltrated into the highest rank of occupier’s police apparatus (Komelj 2009b).

⁷⁵² I have analysed various memorial cultural activities in the times of socialist Yugoslavia elsewhere, see Kirn (2011).

⁷⁵³ The Republic of Užice in Serbia was the first liberated zone in the occupied Europe, its existence lasted almost two months (August-September 1941); later partisan struggle liberated large territories in Bosnia (1943), Croatian Dalmatia and in South of Slovenia (1944) and from late 1944 the counter-offensive and liberation of the whole country starts.

⁷⁵⁴ The PLS consisted of communists, youth, intellectuals, workers, peasants, thus a very broad movement that cut through different social groups.

the counter-offensives and Italy capitulated. AVNOJ's second meeting pronounced a temporary government, which became the sole and superior executive authority in Yugoslavia. Interregnum and representation from outside was suspended. AVNOJ adopted an important revolutionary resolution that was widely distributed and sketched the future political orientation of popular power and ideological struggles. It consisted of the following points:⁷⁵⁵ to create a federal Yugoslavia with the right of the self-determination of nations;⁷⁵⁶ antifascist councils became the sole legitimate organisations of popular governance and administration; an election of the *National Committee of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia*, which became a temporary government was announced; Tito became Marshal and last but not least, the revocation of Yugoslavian government-in-exile with the denial of the return of king Petar Karadjordjević until a popular referendum on the constitutional form of new Yugoslavia was to be held. The adoption of this resolution was an unthinkable leap, a courageous decision on the part of all the partisans that were present at the meeting and discussed vigorously the future to come. The Yugoslavian partisans did not wait for the international recognition of Allies a week later in Tehran, but performed a self-authoritative act stemming from their own struggle. With these revolutionary points and demands, everyone knew that the Allies would meet them with a negative reaction, but a few days later at the Teheran conference, international recognition and backing of the partisans was agreed upon.⁷⁵⁷ These political and military actions paved the way for the

⁷⁵⁵ The starting lines of declaration in the AVNOJ: "According to the right of each nation to self-determination, including the right to secession or the right to unification with other nations, and in accordance with the true will of all the nations of Yugoslavia, demonstrated during the course of the three-year long common peoples' liberation struggle that has forged the inseparable fraternity of the Yugoslav nations, the Antifascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia brings the following decision." (*Prvo in drugo zasedanje AVNOJ* 1973).

⁷⁵⁶ The black dot of the partisan movement and new Yugoslavia was the question of Albanians and Kosovo. Albanians preferred to be included in Albania, while the CPY wanted to leave the question open after the war. Kosovo saw the only case of armed resistance against the partisan power in February 1945 and the question of Kosovo remained a crucial topic between Communist Party of Yugoslavia and Albania (Magaš 1993: 33-34; Ramet 2006: 155-156). One possible idea to unite Albanians was represented by the Balkan Socialist Federation, but unfortunately the whole process came to a stalemate as I will show in next section. The question came with the very name Yugoslavia, which means South Slaves and at least linguistically excludes non-Slavic peoples.

⁷⁵⁷ Stalin was angry and demanded that Tito revoke the provisional revolutionary government. (see also Ramet 2006: 157-159). The partisan leadership never revoked the constitutive act. Furthermore, a year later, when partisan forces liberated Belgrade, the Red Army participated in military actions, while formally asking for permission to enter the Yugoslav area from the partisan leadership. Yugoslavia was the only country in Europe that was liberated from the Nazi occupation by its own forces.

political autonomy in the post-war era, which embraced and practiced the idea of “self-reliance” so central to the independent socialist vision.

Apart from AVNOJ, the partisan struggle created a web of antifascist political institutions with local councils of liberation struggles that represented the most valuable experiences of self-governance, but with a crucial contribution of two organisations that were mobilizing new partisans and organizing politically: the *Antifascist Front of Women*⁷⁵⁸ and the *United Alliance of the Antifascist Youth of Yugoslavia*.⁷⁵⁹ Pupovac correctly states that embodied in all these institutions was principle of the “direct democracy of the masses”.⁷⁶⁰ The partisan movement’s non-State emerges in 1943, in Pupovac’s terms, it “constitutes, in the first place, a contradictory unity of the state apparatus and those forms of politics which represent an anti-apparatus, forms of mass popular organisation and direct democracy.”⁷⁶¹ It was this anti-apparatus that started giving shapes to the transition to a new socialist Yugoslavia, this paradoxical non-State, without Yugoslav nation and Yugoslav language. Due to the immense network and activity of antifascist institutions within the occupied areas and on liberated territories revolutionary ideas sharpened and set guiding principles of self-governance. From mid 1943, the partisan resistance was joined by an ever-growing number of people that, by the end of the war, numbered more than 800.000 soldiers, which was the largest resistance army in WWII. This novelty and creativity of the mass movement resonates decades later in the words of the partisan Antonije Isaković:

In that chaos, when Yugoslavia was cut into pieces, ... our differences of religion and national tradition were being played up, and genocide was rampant in our regions, this is when our movement had the strength and the capability to create a Yugoslavism ... that was historically different.⁷⁶²

6.2.4. The end of the PLS: revolutionary terror and personal revenge?

Historically the PLS ends with the last battles waged against Nazi forces near the borders of Austria in Slovenia, near Slovenj Gradec, on 15th May 1945, a week after the German

⁷⁵⁸ The importance of women partisans (also as fighters) is a specific topic. See also the recently published book consisting of interviews (eds. Milinović and Petakov 2010).

⁷⁵⁹ On youth organisation and the liberation struggle in Darko Suvin’s memoirs (2011).

⁷⁶⁰ Pupovac (2006: 17).

⁷⁶¹ Ibid.: 20.

⁷⁶² Quoted in Dragović-Sosso (2002: 36).

capitulation. Afterwards the local collaborationists (Ustashi, Home Guards, Chetniks...) fled together with the Nazi army and reached Austrian territory, where they surrendered to British forces and expressed their readiness to be used as anti-communist forces. Some important leaders of the fascist collaboration (including the Ustasha leader Ante Pavelić) and smaller groups later escaped successfully to Argentina, but the majority of fascist collaborators were kept by the British forces in Bleiburg's camps. The local collaborationists hoped that they would be either permitted to emigrate or continue anti-communist struggle against the emerging Yugoslavia. As war criminals and fascist collaborators, they knew they would not really be greeted by people and partisans, which they systematically tortured and killed during the war. As representatives of the fascist order they would be at best tried in the newly established tribunals that would condemn them to death or long imprisonment. Once collaborators realized that they are being sent back to Yugoslavia, a major confusion and despair emerged.⁷⁶³ British forces launched *Operation Keelhaul*,⁷⁶⁴ which sent most of the local collaborators back to Yugoslavia, Eastern European countries and Soviet Union.

The first weeks after the liberation of Yugoslavia were marked by extreme violence that resulted in a series of extra-judicial killings of the fascist collaborators. The question of how to handle the fascist collaborators troubled the partisan army and produced strict divisions, which till today remain an area of politically motivated revisionism, which tries to portray partisans as brutal and as cruel as the fascist occupiers. What was to be done with collaborators/prisoners?⁷⁶⁵ If fascist collaborators simply returned to normal lives, it would be very likely that the civil war would continue. The official line of the General Command along with Tito demanded the transfer of all the suspects to the courts and

⁷⁶³ Hornberger (1995) recounts some stories of the Russian and other collaborationist that waited for extradition and knew about the certain death that awaited them, that is why some commanders committed suicide. But the Allies had already agreed about their fate at the Yalta conference.

⁷⁶⁴ See Epstein (1973).

⁷⁶⁵ It has to be stressed that the partisan handling with the post-war situation is particularly striking, because it stands in stark contrast to their interwar dealing with prisoners. During the war, partisans either exchanged prisoners, or gave them opportunity to join the partisan struggle, or finally released them. In this way they would gain sympathy, but also pragmatically the partisan army did not have resources (food) and prisons as it was mobile, and also it wanted to show its "humanity" in sparing lives and receiving new popular support. See a revisionist documentary "Jugoslavija u Ratu" (1991) where Velebit, the chief diplomat in the inner circle of Tito discusses the handling of war prisoners.

further judicial treatment in front of people's tribunals. He sent the telegram on 14th May to all partisan commands:

You are to undertake the most energetic measures to prevent at all costs any killing of prisoners of war and of those arrested by military units, state organs or individuals. If there are persons among the prisoners and arrestees who should answer for war crimes, they are to be handed over immediately to military courts pending due process.⁷⁶⁶

However, this order was to a large extent ignored and collaborationists were subjugated to acts of personal revenge and systematic killings.⁷⁶⁷ Some soldiers were sent to a prison camp near Maribor, others were later imprisoned.⁷⁶⁸ The number of victims of the post-war killings differs; some evaluate that around 30 000 soldiers and a very small number civilians were killed contrary to contemporary revisions.⁷⁶⁹ One can support the remark of the Croatian historian Jozo Tomasevich, who evaluates the partisan treatment of Ustase (and the same goes for Chetniks and Slovenian Home Guards) in the following way:

Considering the nature of the struggle among the various competing forces during the Second World War in Yugoslavia, the Ustaša atrocities against the Serbian population in the territory of the Independent State of Croatia and against all pro-Partisan Croats, the fact that the Ustaše adhered to the Nazis to the bitter end, and finally the fact that the Ustaša leadership wanted to put its troops at the disposal of the Western Allies for possible use against Yugoslav and other Communists, no mercy on the part of the Yugoslav Partisans toward these troops could have been expected.⁷⁷⁰

Post-war killings of war prisoners and collaborationists were one of the last events of the WWII that happened with no clear political control and overview and to this day persist as a dark remainder of the partisan revolution and ending of the civil war. Accounts exist of the perpetrators and witnesses that speak about the frenzy of revenge and the reprisals for the interwar atrocities. Many partisans had lost their whole families and closest friends during the war in concentration camps, in battles or as civilians. It is clear that if the collaborators had been dealt with through courts, these events would not have remained a taboo and trauma largely repressed during the times of socialist Yugoslavia. Even if one is

⁷⁶⁶ Quoted in Ramet and Matić (2007: 274). For details on numbers see Ramet (2006: 160-162).

⁷⁶⁷ Tomasevich (2001).

⁷⁶⁸ From Bleiburg to Kočevski Rog, the post-war killings took place in the forests on the territory of Slovenia. Draža Mihailović, the leader of the Chetnik forces was captured only on 13th March 1946 (Roberts 1973: 307).

⁷⁶⁹ See Job (2003).

⁷⁷⁰ Tomasevich (2001: 113-114).

affirmative of the politics of the PLS and recognizes the circumstances at the end of the war, it should be said that the post-war killings were not the way to deal with fascists.⁷⁷¹ However, the post-war killings did happen and in most brutal way represented the final break with the old Yugoslavia and collaborationist regimes, while the new country was only at its very beginning in front of internal but also major international challenges. The Cold-war order was drawing up the borders and the Balkans were the first “open” crisis zone, where the Great Powers – British/Americans and Soviets – played their first post-WWII imperialist game.

The immediate post-war situation in Yugoslavia was harsh to say the least: the whole country was in ruins while the pre-war infrastructure and industry were completely destroyed. Facing such a destroyed infrastructure and an extremely high death toll, where more than a million people were killed and more than half a million displaced or exiled, the age of reconstruction and revolution needed a resolute and determined start.⁷⁷² First of all, what was to be done regarding the possible return of King Petar II? Due to the victorious partisan struggle received a massive popular support,⁷⁷³ which was also confirmed in first elections in Yugoslavia on 11th November 1945, where a large majority voted for the *Popular Front* that was presided by Tito.. On 29th November 1945 the first constitutional change was officially adopted and proclaimed the birth of a new state: *Federal People’s Republic Yugoslavia*. The King was deposed, but there was another much more menacing King to be dealt with.

⁷⁷¹ These wounds of the civil war left major traces in local populations and these spectres came back to life in the 1980s. The topic of the post-war killings was (ab)used in the name of “nationalist reconciliation” that rehabilitated local fascisms. (Croatian genocide of Serbs in Jasenovac against Bleiburg’s massacre of Croatian fascists). Behind this process of forgiving past crimes a strong anti-communist discourse was propagated that went hand in hand with the extreme nationalism as will be demonstrated at the end of the 7. chapter. See Sosso-Dragović (2002: 100-114).

⁷⁷² Relatively, Yugoslavia had a third biggest death toll after Soviet Union (Baltic states in particular) and Poland, more than 7% of the population. Independent research confirms a 1.03 million loss of population and 670 thousand emigrated that was accompanied by a demographic loss of additional 326 thousands, all together loss of 2 million people. 446 thousand died in military battles and 581 thousands civilians died because of military terror (once compared to 416.800 thousand military and 1.700 civilian deaths of USA one can imagine the gravity of the situation). For detail numbers see also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_casualties.

⁷⁷³ The support of the partisan forces was immense and the belief in the new Yugoslavia was accompanied by waves of enthusiasm. This also reflected in the rise of popularity of the Communist Party. In the beginning of war Communist Party had 3000 members and by 1947 there were already 400 000 people (Samary 1988).

6.3. The split with Stalin: *Many roads to socialism?*

Hello-Hello Bandung
The capital of Parahyangan
Hello-Hello Bandung
The city of remembrance.
For a long time,
I have not met you.
Now, you are a Sea of Fire.
Lets take over again, *Bung*. (comrade)

*Popular poem*⁷⁷⁴

What was the future geopolitical role of Yugoslavia in the post-Yalta and post-war Europe? This was the most important question for the partisan leadership right after the war, when the new war was knocking on the doors progressively. It seemed evident that Yugoslavia will lean towards Soviet zone of interest; Soviets helped Yugoslav partisans to liberate parts of the country and they had already agreed to accept Soviet aid and experts that assisted in the socialist transition. However, Yugoslav communists and Tito wanted to retain autonomous position towards Moscow, as was made very clear by Tito's speech in 1945: "We have no wish to be dependent on anyone. We do not want to be small change; we do not want to be involved in any policy of spheres of influence".⁷⁷⁵ Although the experiences of self-reliance and popular support were undoubtedly quite unique in Yugoslavia, this principled attitude could be costly in relation to Stalin. An unexpected rupture was to follow. It is true that the conflicts between the Yugoslav partisan leadership and Stalin had their own tense history, which continued in the times after WWII, but nobody in the new Yugoslav leadership even thought that a break with Stalin was an option.⁷⁷⁶

In the situation of tense border issues Yugoslavia could not afford to endanger their friendship with Soviet Union. One needs to know that the border with Italy, especially the question of Trieste and parts of Istria, was one of the major crisis points and territories that immediately came under combined authority of Yugoslav and Western Allied authority.

⁷⁷⁴ The song was written in 1946 after Bandung residents set the fire to the city and abandoned it, acting against the transition from Dutch to British colonial power. See Prashad (2007: 31).

⁷⁷⁵ Quoted in Prashad (2007: 97).

⁷⁷⁶ The negotiations with Stalin during and after the war are well described by Edvard Kardelj, the most important communist ideologue, close to Tito, and also a foreign minister of new Yugoslavia (1980).

There was a large presence of military forces and constant military rehearsals continued to exert pressure. Also importantly, the very south of the Yugoslavia border with Greece was strategic for communist forces that were involved in civil war with pro-democratic/bourgeois British backed forces. Yugoslav leadership openly supported the ELAS (communist affiliation), which according to the Yalta agreement⁷⁷⁷ and in accordance with the British domination of the Mediterranean, was a threat to British “national interests”. On this issue, Stalin constantly pressed the Yugoslav communists to stop arming and supplying the communist troops in Greece.⁷⁷⁸ The iron curtain started falling down on Yugoslavia and Greece.⁷⁷⁹

Another important issue that accentuated conflict between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia was a disagreement about the Balkan Socialist Federation, which Stalin saw as an immediate threat to the Soviet Union’s power and general imperialist stake in the Balkans. This idea was actually not that new,⁷⁸⁰ but continued the political movement of national liberation from the beginning of 20th century.⁷⁸¹ The idea of the Balkan Socialist Federation was picked up by the Yugoslav Communist Party that attempted to unite the Communist Parties of Albania, Greece, and Bulgaria and in 1943 the first serious attempt to materialize these efforts came with the meetings of different partisan resistances in the Balkans, which demanded a central military organ that would coordinate their struggles.⁷⁸²

⁷⁷⁷ The Balkans was divide 50%-50% between British and Soviets (Fejto 1952: 25).

⁷⁷⁸ There is some good literature on the splits within the Greek Resistance during the WWII, which already pointed to the direction of Civil War (Sarafis 1980). Greece remained under total British domination throughout the war, but also after, as Woodhouse correctly argues “Up to 1947 the British Government appointed and dismissed Greek Prime Ministers with the barest attention to constitutional formalities. British experts dictated economic and financial policy, defence and foreign policy, security and legal policy, trade union and employment policy.” (2002: 149).

⁷⁷⁹ After the split between Tito and Stalin, the official line of the Greek Communist Party followed the Soviet Union and purged Titoist elements. Stalin was not interested in supporting the Greek communists and they lost the Civil War. Many were imprisoned, exiled or executed. See also articles under the topic “Greek Civil War” in Marxist Internet Archive.

⁷⁸⁰ “The strivings of the Balkan peoples towards the national liberation from foreign domination with the class struggle against capitalist exploitation and economic colonisation. The central aim of such political orientation was establishment of a new political unity: a common federal republic that would unite the Balkan Peninsula on the basis of internationalism, political solidarity and economic equality” Karamanić (2009: 337). See also Magaš (2003: 29-30).

⁷⁸¹ For a more detailed account of the Balkan Socialist Federation see Petranović (1991).

⁷⁸² “In 1943, the Yugoslav Partisans’ leadership sent an emissary (Svetozar Vukomanović – Tempo) to the Bulgarian, Greek and Albanian parties to discuss the military and political coordination of the revolutionary struggle in the Balkans. As a form of concrete collaboration, Tempo proposed the establishment of a *Balkan General Staff* – a military organ that would coordinate the common army operations. This initiative, however,

The British authority thwarted the process. After the WWII, Bulgarian communist leader Dimitrov, who advocated for a big federation that would include Albania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and possibly other countries, initiated the idea. The Yugoslav Communist Party (CPY) officials met first with the Communist Party of Albania (Belgrade, Hoxha) and then with the Bulgarian Communist Party (Bled, Dimitrov). On these occasions they signed the treaties that intended to strengthen political and economic cooperation. The Yugoslav suggestion formulated an idea that would include six existing Yugoslav federal units, another federal unit that would unite Kosovo and Albania,⁷⁸³ and Bulgaria. By that time the evidence of the CPY's independent path to socialism "was increasingly worrying Stalin, particularly as it appeared that the germ of autonomy was spreading to Bulgaria and Romania; he was also greatly concerned by the British reaction to Balkan assistance for the Communist side in the Greek civil war."⁷⁸⁴ This was a decisive moment, when Stalin disciplined Eastern leaderships and interrupted the Balkan federative processes.⁷⁸⁵ It seemed that this was also the moment when the spectre of Tito began to haunt the international communist movement.⁷⁸⁶ Should Yugoslavia accept the withering of its "foreign policy in a bipolar world?"⁷⁸⁷ It seemed more likely that it was to end its meddling in the imperialist policies of the Great Powers in the Balkans, on the border between East and West, where capitalism and socialism intersected and the future was as yet undecided.

In the field of socio-economic friendship, Yugoslavia embraced the help of the Soviet Union and implemented a planned economy of the first country of socialism. The

was blocked because it received negative response from the London authorities." (Karamanić 2009: 338-339).

⁷⁸³ Lee (1983: 85). In the Yugoslav reality, the autonomous region of Kosovo and the question of the Albanian nation remained a very sensitive issue, very much repressed from the arrest of the Balkan federation.

⁷⁸⁴ Lee (1983: 79).

⁷⁸⁵ According to Kardelj, who actually met with Stalin in Moscow in 1948, he labelled these as the most terrible negotiations in his life (1980: 111-120).

⁷⁸⁶ Later the Soviet Union retained strict control over all different moments of revolutionary uprisings in Eastern Europe. East Germany (1953), Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968)... The signifier "Tito" has a specific history, an empty signifier meant to be revisionist, compromising with the West, self-isolating, betraying the socialist cause etc. It served as an instrument to discipline and purge "Titoist" elements that had become widespread (Garde 2000: 91-92).

⁷⁸⁷ A. Rubinstein (1970: 14). The Yugoslav liberation struggle had a strong legacy of self-reliance, which can be compared to the Chinese experience. Mao said in 1945: "We stand for self-reliance. We hope for foreign aid but cannot be dependent on it; we depend on our own efforts, on the creative power of the whole army and the entire people." (1965: 241).

first 5-year plan commenced in the period 1947-1951 and the Soviet Union sent its instructors to facilitate the transition process. The import of know-how was accompanied by the formation of “mixed companies”, which enabled a swift exchange of goods and joint ventures in transport and other important industrial branches. However, the “mixed companies” brought extremely unfavourable conditions for Yugoslavia, where contracts were beneficial to the Soviet side and also companies were exempted from taxes and from the Yugoslav jurisdiction.⁷⁸⁸ Yugoslavian economy would be then integrated according to specific needs of Soviet economy.⁷⁸⁹

This politic-economic conflict was the final drop for Yugoslav communist leadership to show direct defiance and deep disagreement with the Soviet Union. In the angry exchange of letters between Stalin (CPSU) and Tito (CPY), the Yugoslav response on April 13th of 1948 sent a clear “no” to Stalin instead of possible self-criticism and subjugation to the correct line. The Yugoslav leadership found itself in front of an abyss and decided to jump into the void. The major rupture formally took place on June 28th, when Yugoslavia was expelled from the Cominform.⁷⁹⁰ The Yugoslavian leadership was attacked for revisionism from all sides, once for being “too ambitious” in constructing socialism, then also for “collusion with capitalism”, and for “not being ambitious enough”.⁷⁹¹ To paraphrase Koča Popović, the Yugoslavs were guilty of having liberated themselves on their own and promoted their own way to socialism, which did not fit into History.⁷⁹²

The split was geopolitically a big blow to Yugoslavia, because in a matter of weeks it became politically isolated, belonging neither to the West nor to the East. The economical situation was not rosy either, because in 1947 Yugoslavia rejected the Marshall Plan and after the split with Stalin the first Soviet credits of 135 million dollars for the industry were cancelled.⁷⁹³ There was an economic embargo from the East. On the top of that the Soviet military forces began military rehearsals on the border in all the bordering

⁷⁸⁸ See Samary (1988: 75-76) and Kardelj (1980: 101-105).

⁷⁸⁹ At the same time Yugoslavia applied a similar procedure to Albania, which was at that time highly influenced by Yugoslav politics (see also Lee 1983, 84-86; Prifti 1978).

⁷⁹⁰ Recently a famous film-director Željimir Žilnik made a film on the woman who was a courier of this letter (*One woman, one century* 2011).

⁷⁹¹ Samary (1988: 77).

⁷⁹² Dedijer 1953.

⁷⁹³ See Samary 1988.

Eastern countries. The mounting pressure was directed to delegitimize the new Yugoslavian state and force the leadership to revise its course. However, Soviet isolation actually played the other way around, as Rubinstein correctly concluded, “it consolidated Party and popular support behind Tito”.⁷⁹⁴ One should refrain from romanticizing this time of unity within Yugoslavia, because this consolidation came at the expense of political repression that took place within the most loyal communist cadres. The camp Goli Otok was assigned the role of “re-educat[ing]” the Stalinist deviation”. History was again ironic; this time getting rid of Stalinism by Stalinist means!⁷⁹⁵

The split with Stalin also opened a series of productive discussions about the future of Yugoslavia. Titoists did not sleep and already in late 1948 Kardelj embraced the doctrine of “many roads to socialism”, which advocated the thesis that each socialist country decides on the best road in the concrete situation. In words of Kardelj “the building of socialism is no longer a matter only for one country, but when socialism encompasses new countries, new peoples, numerous millions of working masses, who have been brought up in different conditions”.⁷⁹⁶ Yugoslavian communists also discovered the political platform of the United Nations, which served as a possible deterrent to the future war that seemed imminent. At the end of the day this traumatic split had also productive effects: firstly, the Yugoslavian foreign policy underwent a geopolitical shift from the regional Balkan level to the global arena of the non-aligned movement,⁷⁹⁷ and secondly, internally, the construction of self-management model of socialism opened a path of experimentation in socialist political economy. These two moments, each in its own way continued the (partisan) break with the existing state of affairs, inventing a new socialist road and even assisting in the disruption of the Cold-war map.

6.4. Alignment to the non-aligned movement (NAM)

Most accounts of the period between 1945 and 1989 follow the established cliché: a historical narrative of the bipolar world, or what was termed the Cold War. Any account

⁷⁹⁴ 1970: 11.

⁷⁹⁵ Samary (1988: 81-82).

⁷⁹⁶ In *Borba* (1948: 1).

⁷⁹⁷ As Rubinstein puts it “beyond the confines of the Balkans, a prelude to the ambitious internationalism of Tito” (1970: 39).

that speaks only of the bipolar Cold-war order fails to address the importance of anticolonial struggles. The latter did not only sharpen the divide between two new Great Powers, but brought something new into the world. This section joins the criticism of Alberto Toscano that most of the theories on emancipation overlook the geopolitical perspective,⁷⁹⁸ as if it consists only of *Real-politik*. Real-Politik follows the iron laws of imperialism and the power of brutal force.⁷⁹⁹ This cynical view is often complemented by the view of the angelic position of the beautiful soul that prefers to stick to micropolitics. However, this section will argue that it is far more productive to map and re-appropriate past historical experiences that opened new horizons and nurtured revolutionary political subjectivity on the global scale.

The second half of the 20th century was not only a struggle between Soviet and US imperialism as it also saw the emergence of anticolonial movements, which disturbed the colonial and imperial global maps. The “dark nations”, to use Prashad’s term, made themselves heard and very often the new and old imperialist states had to start listening to their demands. Imperialist states were still stuck firmly with the politics that was supposed to be thrown into the dustbin of history at the end of WWII and condemned in the Nürnberg trials. It was precisely on the territories of these “dark nations” that the most brutal and violent episodes of the second part of 20th century were played out. The Cold war became a real war between oppressor nations and oppressed nations, that is a war outsourced to the latter. No matter how real the Cold-war’s face became in this context, the anticolonial struggles produced dialectical effects: on the one hand they opened spaces of hope, the empowerment of the oppressed and beginning of new communities that had to deal with the remnants of Western colonisation, while on the other hand newly emerging states soon became integrated in mechanisms of oppression and economic exploitation by the former colonies. Many moralists may point to the corruption of aspiring elites, brutal dictatorships, religious fundamentalism and tribal hatred; in a word, all this reflects on the

⁷⁹⁸ Toscano in his article investigates “what relationship, if any, can be articulated between the forbidding scale of the geopolitical and the seemingly incommensurable dimensions of political subjectivity. This is motivated by a conviction that, for the most part, the recent resurgence of interest in radical theories of political subjectivity and militancy either evades or gives short shrift to the problems generated by situating transformative, revolutionary or emancipatory political action within the ‘practico-inert’ constraints of the geopolitical and everything that it may entail” (2008: 417).

⁷⁹⁹ For a definition of cynical attitude in politics see Žižek (1996: 203-208).

historical backwardness of non-Western civilizations,⁸⁰⁰ which would perhaps need a certain level of control that a strong imperialist hand can provide. However, this very same Eurocentric vision⁸⁰¹ fails to register the plurality and richness of the emancipatory anticolonial struggles that went beyond the bipolar construction of the world and moved beyond the racist and technologicistic categorization of states in the world-system.⁸⁰²

This emancipatory anticolonial horizon serves to enter the discussion of what kind of invention for global politics the non-aligned movement represented. The thesis is that NAM disturbed Zhdanov's doctrine of two-camps⁸⁰³ and was a special continuation of "partisan politics" by other means and on the geopolitical level. To become non-aligned did not mean to promote neutral and non-partisan politics, but rather the opposite, it meant to go against the existing bipolar alignment that was deeply embedded in the (neo)imperialist logic of the global order.⁸⁰⁴ In 1955 Tito made a historic visit to India, where he argued that non-alignment is not neutrality but "an active, positive and constructive policy seeking to lead to a collective peace on which alone collective security can really rest."⁸⁰⁵ Perhaps not as militant as Chinese politics, the Yugoslav contribution to the invention of the NAM was an unprecedented historical event and can be approached on the one hand through development of the global alternative struggles of theory, ideology, politics, and on the other hand through the formation of initiatives and oppositions to the bipolar world, where the United Nations played an important role.

The first step to the formation of the non-aligned movement was taken in Bandung (1955), where only Asian countries met to discuss possible paths in future geopolitics that authorized the project of the Third World. The meeting was to some extent foreshadowed

⁸⁰⁰ One of the most impressive texts that soon after WWII in the French context addressed the hypocrisy of the West and colonial politics was written by Césaire Aimé (1950). For important thematization of the anticolonial subjectivity see Fannon (1952).

⁸⁰¹ For an inspiring analysis of orientalist discourse see Said (1979).

⁸⁰² For the world-system perspective and the politico-economic relation between the centre and periphery see Wallerstein (1979) and for re-orienting this view Frank (2002).

⁸⁰³ The two-camp model was a dominant geopolitical framework for thinking and acting in the international arena. USSR's imperialist politics were on equal footing with US, and at times pursued even anti-communist policies. Prashad evaluates that "USSR'S commissars made arrangements with the bourgeois forces within the postcolonial states at the expense of the local Communists" (2007: 97). Toscano notes that Mao's China had an important role "in the subjective perception and the objective unfolding of the Cold War, which hugely complicates this question. Through the vicissitudes of the Non-aligned Movement, the Sino-Soviet split and later rapprochement with the US, it disturbed the tidy teleology of a convergence between two camps (2008: 418).

⁸⁰⁴ Rubinstein 1970, Prashad 2007.

⁸⁰⁵ Tito (1955: 32).

by the events a year earlier, when a number of Asian countries joined pro-Western military alliances.⁸⁰⁶ This reflected internal splits between the Asian countries in Bandung and manifested the different attitudes of national leadership towards the anti-colonial struggles and their liberation movements.⁸⁰⁷ Despite the deep disagreements the conference made an important step forward in strengthening the ties among the (new) Asian states.

The *Great powers* had Yalta, the *Third World* had Brijoni.⁸⁰⁸ The preparation meeting for the non-aligned movement (NAM) took place in 1956 on Brijoni, where political leaders of three founding countries of NAM, the *troika* of NAM, came together: Tito (Yugoslavia), Nehru (India) and Nasser (Egypt).⁸⁰⁹ The meeting sketched the main topics and invitations that included 22 countries from three different continents, the “dark nations” from Asia, Africa and South America, with Yugoslavia being the only European member. NAM consisted of politically very different, and even ideologically exclusive states, some monarchies, others republics, some leaning towards socialism, others embracing a capitalist economy.

In 1961 the first meeting of NAM took place in Belgrade and Tito became its first secretary general. NAM did not have a permanent seat, but implemented a principle of rotation every three years between the member states with respective changes of the Secretary General. Apart from that, the member states regularly met on the assemblies of the United Nations where they amassed ever-larger support for particular issues. The member states subscribed to the following principles: mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression and non-interference in domestic affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and lastly peaceful co-existence that would promote global (nuclear) disarmament. Even if today some might cynically smile about these demands, at that time they made an important public criticism and an impact that was later echoed also in social movements. Despite political differences between political leaders, NAM became an important agent in the global order, a political movement that

⁸⁰⁶ SEATO was an initiative of former/existing colonial powers France, and Great Britain that was joined by Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, New Zealand and Australia, while the Baghdad treaty saw the formation of the Central Treaty Organization where Great Britain and the US were joined by Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Turkey.

⁸⁰⁷ For details on Bandung conference see Prashad (2007: 31-51) and Rubinstein (1970: 62-75).

⁸⁰⁸ Prashad (2007: 95).

⁸⁰⁹ The historical importance was strengthened by the fact that earlier that year Soviet Union’s Nikita Khrushchev visited Yugoslavia asking for reconciliation with Yugoslavia after the split with Stalin in 1948. This signalled a rising importance of Yugoslavia’s role of the bridge between East and West.

started to maintain ever-stronger economic ties and was very critical towards two moments: block politics and uneven economic developments that accompanied the imperialism of the Great Powers. As such NAM represented the first major disruption in the Cold World map.

However, a critical question could be posed to NAM: is it possible to put into motion these political principles and really disrupt the Cold-war division without any military backing? As Prashad argues, NAM “would remain a political platform, a sub-United Nations, but it would only be able to act in concert on two broad issues: to champion global nuclear disarmament, and to democratize the United Nations.”⁸¹⁰ Drafting resolutions and asserting an alternative media agenda reinforced democratic ideals in the world of Real-politik, where morality had long lost its place, but doesn’t this only return to an impossible position: how to act against the brutal force and strive for mutual co-existence and peace? At first glance peaceful co-existence did not seem very partisan, but in the light of the nuclear arms race, it received political credit. NAM was successful in bringing the agenda to the international forum. NAM demands echoed in the antiwar and student movements of ’68, but nevertheless NAM remained less successful in terms of the implementation of real policies. Prashad claims that NAM made “more room for darker nations – but not necessarily for the reconstruction of the world in their image.”⁸¹¹

Another level of appreciating the legacy of NAM is to observe their contribution to the political thought that evoked the concept of peace. In other words, NAM directed its efforts into thinking and practicing peace not in terms of the balance of imperialist powers, or containing the nuclear catastrophe until the next war emerges (as if the balance between great powers did not come at the expense of brutal wars in the Third World). In this respect NAM was particularly dedicated to the politics that embraces peace as a political concept and principle.⁸¹² A more traditional international relations approach and omni-present categories of politics rely on the paradigm of war and conflict, which NAM challenged. The historical experiences of non-violent politics in India were particularly instructive and

⁸¹⁰ 2007: 101.

⁸¹¹ Ibid.: 96. Jože Smolej argued that “coexistence should replace the blocs, for the division of the world into blocs is contrary to the idea of coexistence” (1961: 315).

⁸¹² One should ask if this moral approach to international relations does not simply reproduce the opposition between cynics (use of brutal force), realists in the international relations, and idealists that strive to supplement the order with morality (humanism)?

pointed out that the seemingly “passive” resistance embodied in the civil disobedience movement demands as active an engagement as the people’s armed struggle. In a specific situation, the non-violent pursuit of peace and justice can be even more pertinent and successful than armed struggle. The politics of peace was conceived as a pro-active and engaging project that goes against all existing military alliances and against the paradigm of war. To advocate for peace constituted the core principle of NAM. In this sense Rubinstein correctly detected the specificity of the Yugoslavian aversion to the “membership in military blocs”, which became a cardinal principle in Yugoslav foreign policy and a cornerstone of the non-aligned movement.⁸¹³

This said, the Yugoslav striving for peace, with its important share in the development of the peace-keeping actions in the UN, did not run into the fetishization of non-violent politics. This was true even in the starting period of NAM in the 1950s and 1960s, when Yugoslavia actively supported the national liberation struggle in Burma and the FLN in Algeria. The latter was supplied secretly via Egypt by the Yugoslav army. On the level of NAM, the beginning of the 1960s saw the support of member states for national liberation struggles of PAIGC in Guinea, MPLA in Angola and FRELIMO in Mozambique.⁸¹⁴ It is in this respect that Kardelj would make a clear distinction between the wars of the powerful and the wars of the weak, while the latter are legitimate armed struggle when overthrowing colonialism.⁸¹⁵

In the extremely isolated and hostile situation of 1948 and the years afterward, Yugoslavia was excluded from the West (NATO) and the East (Cominform, later the Warsaw pact). The split with Stalin resulted in a risk and also a strategic re-orientation of Yugoslavia politically, which was accompanied by a desired expansion of economic activities, finding new markets and opportunities for Yugoslav trade and production. Even if the importance of NAM states was not very big (in the 60s around 15% of all trade), one

⁸¹³ Rubinstein (1970: 23). Perhaps one of the most provoking thoughts articulated during the Korean war, was presented by Edvard Kardelj, a foreign minister of Yugoslavia: “Peace cannot be preserved by means of a crusade against socialism or against the strivings of peoples towards freedom and independence. On the contrary, peace can be preserved only by combating domination and aggression wherever they appear, regardless of the chief political and ideological slogan behind which they conceal themselves.”(1950: 72).

⁸¹⁴ See Prashad (2007: 103-104).

⁸¹⁵ Kardelj (1960). This thesis runs very close to Che Guevara’s claim for peaceful coexistence, which does not include coexistence between exploiter and exploited, between oppressors and oppressed (Prashad, 2007: 104). The discussion of peace was linked to the question of justice for the left-leaning NAM states from the very beginning.

should register the importance of the specific type of exchange that was taking place between Yugoslavia and these other countries. Since it was denied access to the Eastern European markets, it had to “integrate” into the world market. Yugoslavia attempted to strengthen its economy, but at the same time invest in the public infrastructure of the developing countries, send its experts and sign loans on favourable commercial terms (3% loan), which – if not reimbursed – would be repaid through the barter economy. Yugoslavia thus assisted the developing countries and by the mid 1960s invested large amounts of money. As Rubinstein analyses:

These credits involved deliveries of Yugoslav industrial foods and the construction by Yugoslav firms of more than 120 different projects: hydro-electric power stations in India, Cambodia, Guinea, Togo, Ethiopia, and Syria; cement works in the Sudan and Ethiopia; textile mills in Algeria; tractor plants in Ghana and the U.A.R. ports in Syria, Tunisia and Ghana; slaughterhouses in Mali, Tunisia and Liberia; a leatherwear factory and food processing plant in Algeria.⁸¹⁶

There were also other strategic companies that would introduce mixed partnership in developing countries, from *Naftaplin*⁸¹⁷ (oil drilling), *Ingra* (building transmission lines) and *Prvomajska* (installation of machinery) to other big construction companies that carried out large architectural projects.⁸¹⁸ The economic model that Yugoslavia developed vis-à-vis NAM was one of the alternative attempts to found a global economy on criteria that were not simply profit-oriented. International exchange should be based rather on mutual aid and construction of public infrastructure (loosely connected to socialist ideas, but without a direct political control). The strategic investment and assistance to the developing countries came to a halt after 1965, when market reform reduced the government’s ability for further subsidies and fewer credits for undeveloped regions/countries, while the concentration of autonomous capital within Yugoslavia was given priority.

This was the most exciting time in Yugoslav foreign policy that went beyond purely calculative national interests and against the world dominance of the two superpowers. But perhaps equally exciting and new was the internal answer to Stalinist

⁸¹⁶ Rubinstein (1970: 211).

⁸¹⁷ Ibid.: 214.

⁸¹⁸ For a more detailed view on construction projects in non-aligned countries see Sekulić 2012.

state socialism. Yugoslav leadership found its own way, or what was framed as an “independent road” to self-management socialism.

6.5. Yugoslav socialist self-management/auto-gestion/self-governing⁸¹⁹

It begins at the very moment of the seizure of power by the socialist party. It is the same thing as the dictatorship of the proletariat. Yes, dictatorship! But this dictatorship consists in the *manner of applying democracy*, not in its *elimination*, but in energetic, resolute attacks upon the well-entrenched rights and economic relationships of bourgeois society, without which a socialist transformation cannot be accomplished. But this dictatorship must be the work of the *class* and not of a little leading minority in the name of the class – that is, it must proceed step by step out of the active participation of the masses; it must be under their direct influence, subjected to the control of complete public activity; it must arise out of the growing political training of the mass of the people.

Rosa Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution*

Apart from immediate political repression and purges in the Party, the split with Stalin in 1948 had also positive effects for the subsequent development of Yugoslav socialism.⁸²⁰ A new road of Yugoslav self-management represented the first major rupture in the international workers’ movement led by the Soviet Union, the first country of socialism. To be precise in legal institutional terms first self-management policy was announced with

⁸¹⁹ Self-management seems as not sufficiently appropriate term, although it has been for long established in the literature on socialist Yugoslavia. I will retain self-management for its “official” name, but acknowledge that there are other perhaps more appropriate terms when discussing struggles from below, such as self-government or self-organisation. The etymological roots of the word *autogestión* has a Greek and Latin etymology. The word *auto* comes from the Greek *autós* (self, same). *Gestión* comes from the Latin *gestio* (managing), which in turn comes from *gerere* (to bear, carry, manage). Marcelo Vieta draws on Farmer’s argument: “one can conceptualize it as ‘self-gestation’—to self-create, self-control, self-provision, and, ultimately, self-produce; in other words, to practice *autogestión* means to be self-reliant. Tellingly, the English words ‘gestate’ and ‘gestation’ evolved from the word *gestion*. Taken together, *autogestión* alludes to an organic, biological, and processual movement of creation and conception, having social political relevance in its implicit notion of immanence, becoming, and potentiality. Together, the words *auto* and *gestión* yield the perhaps inadequate English term ‘self-management’” (2008). Self-management/self-government is connected to the workers’ bottom-up organisation, desire to self-organise and self-create, but one should add that it can be embedded in the capitalist organisation or imposed from above. The Yugoslav historical experience attests to the politics of self-management from above, when it comes to dominant ideology, policy, a model of social development. I will turn to the close analysis in the last chapter.

⁸²⁰ Samary (1988: 117). And the question immediately emerges who will then question and judge the Yugoslav independent road to socialism? Kardelj somewhere gave a partially Stalinist answer, only history will judge, and experiences.

the law on the management of state enterprises and other workers' collectives, adopted on 27th June 1950.⁸²¹ The law and strategic orientation of Yugoslav socialism was a result of a series of productive discussions within the Party and intellectual circles that launched the first systemic critique of Soviet socialism and the model of planned economy. According to Yugoslav communists state planning deviated from the teachings of Marx/Engels and also from the early stages of Soviet revolution (Lenin).

It is not without historical irony that set against Stalin's model of constructing "socialism within one state", Yugoslavia promoted its own road to construct "socialism within one state". The repetition was neither a farce nor a tragedy, one could claim that the Yugoslav experiment was one of the rare successful examples of socialism that along the historical course developed different political and economic forms of workers' participation and social regulation. Yugoslavia paved a different road to socialism, but one that was closely connected to the revolutionary teachings of Marx⁸²² and the politics of Lenin.⁸²³ In 1949 Edvard Kardelj, apart from being a foreign minister, became the chief ideologue of the Yugoslav socialist state for the next decades, wrote that self-management was deeply rooted in popular struggles in Yugoslavia, and will become a realization of Marx and Engels' "principle of direct association of producers in order to direct the economy"⁸²⁴ and Lenin's "withering away of the state". Edvard Kardelj remarked that apart of the speciality of Yugoslav socialism, one should rather conceive it as a part of long history of workers' struggles: "self-management is not an invention of the Yugoslav theory and practice.... but is as old as the idea of humanism and the international workers' movement, the history of its class struggle and the history of socialist practice."⁸²⁵

⁸²¹ The whole text of this law in Horvat (1975: 256-258).

⁸²² Yugoslav communists turned to Marx and Lenin, especially to political texts, *The Gotha Program*, *The Communist Manifesto*, and *The Paris Commune*, and to Lenin's *State and Revolution*, which sought to tackle the major obstacles for any emerging revolutionary power. For philosophical influences see also Marković (1975 vol.I: 327-350), for political influences see the first two parts of volume I *Self-governing Socialism* (1975).

⁸²³ The history of international workers movement is a history of theoretical and political splits, where the infinite discussions on deviations and faithful continuations of the words of Marx and the political actions of Lenin structured the Marxist-communist field, from which followed sometimes also very tragic political and existential consequences.

⁸²⁴ (1956: 456). Kardelj stressed the novelty of the politics of self-management in the light of the partisan experiences in WWII, especially of antifascist councils that organized the social life of the liberated territories (Kardelj 1980: 232-234).

⁸²⁵ Kardelj (1977: 9).

The question of socialist transition in Yugoslavia did not target only the economic problems, much more importantly it raised the question of the (socialist) state. Yugoslavian theorists departed from the critique of the (socialist) state in the USSR and Samary rightly summarized that the “non-withering of the state was analysed in contradiction with the construction of socialism or at least as a threat to the socialist future”.⁸²⁶ The rupture with Stalin demands a thorough re-examination of the (socialist) state and its role in the transition to communist society. The critique of the state should result in its own abolishment. Yugoslav Leninist minister of the economy Boris Kidrič advocated this in 1950:

State socialism (socialism of state) represents only the first and smallest step in the socialist revolution ... to continue state socialism (bureaucratic) would (necessarily lead to the growing and strengthening of a privileged bureaucracy as a social parasite that would suppress ... socialist democracy and end in the degeneration of the system in state capitalism ... The construction of socialism requires a categorical development of socialist democracy and a vigorous transformation of state socialism into a free association of direct producers.⁸²⁷

This statement forecasts the central political lines of the Yugoslav self-management that were confirmed in 1958 in the 7th Congress of *the League of Communists of Yugoslavia* (LCY):⁸²⁸ self-management should on the one hand attack “bureaucratism” and on the other create the “material conditions that are politically and judicially necessary to really empower the workers” and help the “citizens of socialist Yugoslavia in becoming active and direct (self)managers of social affairs.”⁸²⁹

This heroic announcement of a fight against bureaucratism and the split with Stalin had a much more gradual and contradictory course in the historical processes. This course unquestionably performed a break and revision of Yugoslav state socialism; the self-managed utopia was never realized, but was constantly revised in the historical course from 1945 to 1985. As Samary lucidly argues, Yugoslavia in these four decades knew “four major systems of production and exchange, four different modalities of articulation

⁸²⁶ 1988: 117.

⁸²⁷ Quoted in Horvat (1976: 10).

⁸²⁸ The Communist Party of Yugoslavia was renamed in 1952 (LCY) in order to introduce a further distinction in its socialist tendency.

⁸²⁹ Bakarić in Samary (1988: 118). For an interesting note on the 7th Congress of League of Communists of Yugoslavia see Centrih’s elaboration of the Yugoslav example as a special contribution to “socialism as world system” (2011: 55-62). Centrih shows that even if Yugoslav communists supported the development of “productive forces” before productive relations, they launched an attack on (Soviet) socialist state and saw the abolition of state as an important part of the socialist future.

of plan and market, that from the 1950s onwards formed self-management that became combined with different relations to the global market.”⁸³⁰ Self-management was thus not a homogenous model of social regulation, but should be seen more as a constant modification of economic governance between plan and market, a more responsive economic politics (politics of economy) that would (self)regulate the economic activities in socialist transition and disperse political decision-making from state to the society.⁸³¹

The new model of self-management continued to pursue the same line of “socialist modernization”, that is, the continuation of constructing a massive industrial complex; the elimination of illiteracy that in the pre-war Yugoslavia ranged from 40% (on average) to 75% in the undeveloped regions; and the massive move from rural areas (more than 70% agrarian population) to the cities. Thus when the new decentralization policies began in the 1950s massive modifications were not implemented all at once. Even if the politics of self-management was designed to integrate all the working people, it was installed from the above under the tutelage of the leadership of the LCY (6th Congress of LCY). The immediate changes modified the centrality of the plan guided by administrative orders (bureaucracy’s leading role) and the decision-making process was gradually “decentralized” and substituted with economic instruments.⁸³² Instead of the disappearance of the central socialist state, Yugoslavian self-management developed a much more complex system of social mediations and regulation that materialized in a widespread network between different political and economic instances that discussed and negotiated past and future plans. Also, importantly, the self-managed transformation entailed a change of the property form, that is, the transfer of property from the state to society, called “social property” and managed by self-managed interest communities and enterprises.

6.6. Summary

⁸³⁰ (1988: 21). This lucid remark could be upgraded by the later transition to welfare capitalism that was substituted (in some places slowly, in others much quicker) with the neoliberal regime of capitalism in the last 20 years. Apart from major ruptures on the level of state and constitution from the Habsburg Empire to the Kingdom and old Yugoslavia to the new Yugoslavia and contemporary nation-states, the transformation on the level of economy remains under-researched and limited.

⁸³¹ That was a general line suggested by Edvard Kardelj directed towards the development of self-management interests in the future society, while the invention of balancing between plan and market was what Branko Horvat emphasized as major Yugoslav invention (1976). I will return to this in detail in the last chapter 7.

⁸³² 1988: 115.

So far my analysis remained more on the level of a “politician” analysis, of affirming emancipatory ideas of Yugoslav revolutionary politics, the Yugoslav rupture with the existing state of affairs. Three political sequences, political ideas and practices that are nowadays being ignored or under revisionist attack demand to be taken into account together: partisan politics, self-management and the non-aligned movement. The radicality of the partisan project was found not only in its dimension of national liberation, but also in the extended political kernel that was from the very beginning aimed at the revolutionary transformation of society. The experience of self-reliance and autonomy of the Yugoslav antifascist resistance had important unanticipated effects in the period after WWII. I argued that one could read some of the “partisan” consequences through the split with Stalin in 1948, which resulted in the first major split of the international workers’ movement. This anti-Stalinist critique was materialized in a twofold way: externally, as the emergence of the non-aligned movement (NAM) that disturbed the imperial Cold War maps and internally, as the Yugoslav socialist experiment of self-management. These both began to be given shape and produced lasting consequences that did not touch only the history of the Yugoslav people. The Yugoslav experiment, more than being a simple political episode in a specific locality, tended to inspire and influence the geopolitical scope of emancipatory thought and practice.

However, apart from the affirmation of these “partisan ruptures”, my analysis will end with a criticism of the socialist failure to “maintain” these ruptures. I will look closer at the dominant class antagonisms that traversed the Yugoslav road to socialism. In the next chapter I will point to the specificity of the socialist transition and the special social formation that developed in the period of mature self-management, so-called market socialism (1965-1971), where the contradictory movements and tensions manifested themselves in the clear light of day. Some of the theoretical results function as notes for comprehending the bloody break-up of socialist Yugoslavia at the end of the 1980s, other notes can be seen as a general contribution to the Althusserian analysis of socialist reproduction.

Chapter 7: A Critique of socialist reproduction in the times of market reform 1965-1971: *the crisis of Yugoslav socialist development*

7.1. Introductory remarks on studies of Yugoslav socialist experience

In next sections I will employ aspects of Althusser's concept of reproduction that I discussed in chapter 5, they will be introduced in the evaluation of a short period of mature Yugoslav self-management called "market socialism" (1965-1971). In the introductory chapter I diagnosed the current post-Yugoslav theoretical conjuncture as marked by a particularly obscurantist antitotalitarian critique and Yugonostalgic memory combined with a more "liberal" narrative of speaking about democratisation and the reformation of the *League of Communists*⁸³³ or stressing the role of the cultural intelligentsia⁸³⁴ that began the democratic changes in the 1980s.⁸³⁵ One should add that even the contemporary return to the "idea of communism" seems to condemn socialism with a spectral dimension, or does not provide a closer analysis of the socialist experiences.⁸³⁶

At the background of this, one also needs to look closely if there are some important theoretical-historical analyses of Yugoslav socialism that contributed to the "critique of socialist political economy". Evidently there exist a vast amount of archival material of the official apologetic accounts of socialist ideologues and numerous meetings of the *League of Communists* and other organisations. This material needs to be analysed at a critical distance, as a dominant ideology of that time, which at certain points surprisingly pointed to a plurality of ideological and political orientations (from liberalism, neoliberalism, Marxism, Keynesianism to nationalism). Especially in the last section of the chapter I shall work on a close ideology critique on this and a more dissident theoretical

⁸³³ Two typical representatives of more liberal narrative are Božo Repe (1992) and Milan Balažic (1994). Some of the accounts of Slovenian historiography are critically evaluated by Rastko Močnik, Jernej Kosi and Lev Centrih in a special number of *Borec* (2008).

⁸³⁴ Vodopivec (2006), for critique of this approach see Močnik (2008).

⁸³⁵ As I will show at the end of the chapter the major re-birth of liberalism and dissidence can be traced in late 1960s and not only in the 1980s.

⁸³⁶ It seems that today even those interested in communism declare an explicitly negative judgment on socialism. Already mentioned Negri (2008), but also in Badiou, who represent very different paths of communism, they nevertheless share the common point of harsh critique of socialism. Bruno Bosteels makes a good internal critique of anti-historical and purified approaches of Left today (2010) and points to shared kernel of Badiou/Negri (2010: 51).

account called the Praxis school that participated in a general current of Western humanist Marxism. Their critique of Yugoslav socialism remained at an abstract level targeting the distance between socialist reality and the proclaimed ideals enunciated by the LCY.⁸³⁷

Even if the study of Yugoslav socialist self-management from a more critical-Marxist perspective is theoretically lacking, Catherine Samary concisely argued that there are three key orientations to the study socialist social formations: the first approach launched a critique from within the Communist Party and received its name after the famous book of Milovan Djilas: “new class”,⁸³⁸ which criticized the new class, or rather elite that is embodied in the socialist bureaucracy.⁸³⁹ The second approach analyses socialist Yugoslavia as a variation of “state capitalism”,⁸⁴⁰ and has produced a vast array of solid theoretical literature to discern certain tendencies in socialist economic management and the relationship between labour and capital. However, this approach has trouble in observing the “specificity” of the socialist experience that pertains to the political questions of the relation between working people and workers’ power and also the fight against the ‘dominant role of the market’. I will include a part of this assessment in my own study. The third approach is more “synthetic”⁸⁴¹ and deals with concrete hybrid categories of reality “combined with the notion and concept of a ‘transitional society’: no more capitalist

⁸³⁷ For an exemplary study of self-management contradictions and unrealized politics see Mihailo Marković (1975 vol.I: 327-330). According to M.Marković against the monopoly of political or economic power, real self-management should rest on accessible knowledge of the situation (freedom), there should exist powerful democratic public opinion (ibid.: 331) and finally the development of consciousness about the real general needs of the people, the “true self of the community” (ibid.). This is where the kernel of humanistic/romantic reading of Praxis lies.

⁸³⁸ Djilas (1982).

⁸³⁹ Despite this being a valid contribution to the illumination of the paradox of Yugoslav self-management guided “from above”, I agree with Samary who criticizes this approach as particularly weak in terms of socioeconomic and ideological analysis of the “new class”. This analysis fails to grasp more general historical processes and I would add remains embedded in a history of the “elite”, which does not differ from the official narrative of History that believes in its avant-garde role of guiding society and following economic objective laws. Samary would for example refer to the fact that there “were only tendencies and attempts to win autonomy and privileges in certain periods - and orientations between the dominant classes according to the benefits they could win from ruling on behalf of the workers” (Samary 1988, Kirn and Samary 2012).

⁸⁴⁰ In the socialist context for example Bogomir Kovač (1982; 1986) and many economists would come close to this perspective. In the West, a critique of real-socialism from a socialist perspective appeared already in the 1950s, in France with the group *Socialisme ou barbarie*, or in the US with James et al. (1958). For a panoramic view of critical debates internal to Marxism’s critique of real socialisms see Katja Diefenbach (2010: 66-68). Today Johanna Bockman works on some aspects that link neoliberalism and socialism in Yugoslavia, or rather she argues for the left-wing origins of socialism (2011).

⁸⁴¹ Also some non-Marxist research projects prove to be much more exact in showing the articulation of different historical processes, which characterize socialism (Sabel and Stark 1982; Sampson 1987).

and claiming socialist goals.” This is the standpoint Ernst Mandel adopted in Samary’s study on Yugoslavia; it seeks “to understand ‘impure’, evolutive periods and forces - certainly being closer to socialist goals, others more repressive of those goals in order to protect the privileges of those in power”.⁸⁴² My study will navigate especially between second and third approach and depart from a few important publications⁸⁴³ that I attempt – through Althusserian lenses – to re-align in a critical dialogue.⁸⁴⁴

Thus, in a similar vein like Samary, the departure point draws from Althusser’s condensed formula that criticizes the thesis on existence of specific socialist mode of production. For Althusser *socialism = capitalism + communism*,⁸⁴⁵ or what Balibar re-proposed as “an unstable combination of state capitalism and proletarian tendencies towards communism”.⁸⁴⁶ This is particularly valid for Yugoslav socialist self-management, which combined in very contradictory fashion elements of communism (the introduction of new types of socialist social relations and different forms of property ownership, from nationalisation of industries to socialisation of means of production and property, the abolition of private ownership, the domination of labour over capital, workers participation in the revolutionary process; the establishment of basic health, social, and educational infrastructure and increased access for all, the just distributive function of state) and capitalism (the introduction of market elements, managerial domination over workers, underdevelopment, integration in foreign markets of capital and labour). This thesis runs against official socialist ideology that was premised on the harmonious socialist progress of productive forces.⁸⁴⁷ Srečo Kirn utilizes politico-dialectical lenses to sum up the central socialist dilemma in the tension between:

⁸⁴² Kirn and Samary 2012.

⁸⁴³ My study is mostly indebted to the historical study of economic transformation from Catherine Samary (1988), and from the standpoint of class struggle to the book *Capital and Labour in SFRY* (KDS; Bavčar, Kirn and Korsika, 1985). Susan Woodward’s studies (1995b) on unemployment and late socialist developments shed some important light on the economic transformation that I tackle.

⁸⁴⁴ No comprehensive “Althusserian” analysis has been developed for this period. There are few exceptions, for example, a recent interview and text from Rastko Močnik explore the dynamic and complexity of the 1965 reform (2010a; 2010b) there are also a few critiques of self-management ideology and functioning of socialist state (Žižek 1982, Močnik 1985).

⁸⁴⁵ See MIHL that I discussed in detail at the end of 5. chapter.

⁸⁴⁶ Balibar (1991: 3).

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid.

reproduction of the relation between capital and labour on the one hand, and organized activity, conscious tendency towards its abolishment on the other ... any time that the historical abolishment of the relation (labour-capital) is posed in its locality and periphery, there is a possibility of its future extension and reproduction.⁸⁴⁸

The capitalist mode of production did not disappear after the storming of the winter palace and the victorious last battles of partisan struggle. Moreover even in socialist transition that attempted to develop political and economic forms that opened a possibility for something like the “socialist world system”,⁸⁴⁹ one should not overlook the strong capitalist tendency. The latter will be my interest in the period of 1965-1971, which is one of the richest periods that saw a condensation of different social and class antagonisms.⁸⁵⁰ My limitation to this historical episode does not express only the internal spatial and methodological limits of this dissertation’s thesis,⁸⁵¹ but can be justified due to period’s most experimental, contradictory and tensed nature up until the break up of socialist Yugoslavia.⁸⁵² I will analyse some of the fiercest economic contradictions: the growing gap between rich republics (North) and poorer republics and regions (South),⁸⁵³ unemployment became structural, while growing debt to the IMF and WB later resulted in a strategic dependency on foreign loans⁸⁵⁴; technocratic domination over workers’ control in the enterprises (the question of exploitation)⁸⁵⁵; the legal handling of the question of economic relations by LCY and last but not least the question of market orientation.⁸⁵⁶ The articulation of these socioeconomic contradictions exposed the fragility of the development model of the Yugoslav socialist transition. The latter was the end of the “ineffable” nature of the communist leadership and its systematic answer - market reform in 1965 - proved to be

⁸⁴⁸ Kirn (1982: 55-56).

⁸⁴⁹ See Centrih’s discussion on the program of Yugoslav Communists from 1958 (2011: 55-57).

⁸⁵⁰ For good historical research of different phases see also Brborić-Likić (2003) and also see the appendix 1, where I condensed the most important political agents and topics in all historical periods of socialist Yugoslavia.

⁸⁵¹ A more general and detailed historical study is needed to assess and compare other periods that show the development of specific tendencies, capitalist and anti-capitalist, that show a historical formation of new regimes of socialist “accumulation“ (see Kirn and Samary 2012).

⁸⁵² In this respect I share Lev Centrih’s observation in his excellent study of Marxist formation in Slovenia in 1941-1945, which reads this specific period as one of important historical rupture not as an isolated episode but epistemological case that maps some continuities and discontinuities in a larger temporal period (2011: 7).

⁸⁵³ See Kirn (1982), Bavčar (1982), Samary (1988), Woodward (1995a; 1995b).

⁸⁵⁴ Woodward (1995a), Magaš (1993).

⁸⁵⁵ KDS (1985).

⁸⁵⁶ Bajt (1975; 1988), Rus (1988), Horvat (1976).

catastrophic.⁸⁵⁷ Some of the political moments that were at work in this period could be seen as setting the stage for the break up of Yugoslavia, also they might give us some interesting answers to the question: what went wrong? Contrary to actual historical and political researches on the break-up of Yugoslavia that start their discussions in the late 1980s or 1990s,⁸⁵⁸ this chapter re-orientates attention to the earlier period that evoked not only post-capitalist, but also post-communist ideology and socioeconomic reproduction. Transition⁸⁵⁹ is here not conceived as a necessary development of Yugoslavian society either to capitalism or socialism, but rather the opposite, it unfolded by way of detour, displacement and condensation the contradictory movements that Marx called “tendency”.⁸⁶⁰

7.2. Introductory remarks on Yugoslav self-management system before market reform

The period of mid 1960s was a period of first historical crisis of socialist transition and comes as a striking contrast when juxtaposed to the preceding period between 1951-1964 that saw a series of successful political experiments.⁸⁶¹ The post-war period was marked by a general popular enthusiasm for the reconstruction of the ruined regions and the beginning of new country. Branko Horvat resumed post-war stages of state socialist planning in

⁸⁵⁷ After the introduction of market reform results were extremely negative: only a bit more than 2% growth within some industrial branches for the first time after WWII the economy stagnated (Samary 1988: 168-171).

⁸⁵⁸ The contemporary post-Yugoslav model of transition situates the rupture of the old totalitarian regime in the year 1991 and frames it as the event that triggered the transition. This model presupposes a certain progression within a linear time frame, which always already contains a result (market and democracy) without considering the continuities and discontinuities of (market) socialism that preceded the ‘democratic era’. Especially in sociology and political science departments this approach was massively popularized in the 1990s. See for example collective volumes *Democratic transition I, II* (eds. Hafner-Fink 2000; 2001) that I critically analysed elsewhere (Kirn 2011).

⁸⁵⁹ Bettelheim’s study of the Soviet Union offers a much more rigorous conceptualisation of changing modes of socialist social formation, bringing economic analysis close to politico-ideological shifts (1975).

⁸⁶⁰ According to Marx the fundamental characteristic of capitalism is precisely the point of unity of two contradictory tendencies, *combination* of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall and a tendency of the rate of surplus-value to rise. For further analysis of this tendency see Balibar (1970) and Lipietz (1993). In the socialist context these tendencies have to be reconsidered. I attempted to compare Yugoslavian mature self-management in the 1970s to a similar development of the mature capitalist core, referred to as the post-Fordist tendency (Kirn 2010).

⁸⁶¹ For much more detailed analysis of this period see Horvat (1976), Samary (1988), Bičanić (2010), Županov (1969), and a more recent study done by Unkovski-Korica (2011).

following way: in 1946 with the major nationalisation of land and private capital took place in industry, mining, and transport and the wholesale trade establishment, followed by the retail trade and catering in 1948 and in 1958 large residential buildings were joined in the state planned and managed economy.⁸⁶² What used to be a strict model of planned economy was after 1950 abandoned and replaced with the introduction of a more decentralized planning system, where a federative political structure with LCY closely cooperated with republican and municipal governance that received increased authority. Also, socialist enterprises began to enjoy more freedoms.

Catherine Samary argues that this period did not completely dismantle the planned economy, but implemented a differentiated level of moments, where part of administrative orders were decentralized and economic instruments were introduced.⁸⁶³ Due to a high level of protectionism and extreme economic growth, there was an extremely low level of public debt. Susan Woodward claims that the plans of the period became a set of policy goals for production and investment, which defined credit, price, and foreign-trade policies and forecast the growth path based on information from plans of firms and localities. Also, the absence of legally binding commands allowed the central government to resort to *ad hoc* quantity controls.⁸⁶⁴ The experimentation with the economic model, inclusive political institutions for employees (workers' councils politics flourished in the mid 1950s) and enthusiasm yielded impressive results in terms of key economic indexes: an average economic growth between 1951-1964 was of 12% compared to 5% in Western Europe and 9% in Eastern Europe.⁸⁶⁵ The economic development and political stabilization made Yugoslavia come out of its marginal peripheral position into a semi-peripheral country, successfully navigating between East and West.

Socialist industrialization was premised on a narrative of general modernization of socialist society that actually brought an improvement of the standard of living for large masses of people: large-scale building of residential housing and infrastructural projects

⁸⁶² Horvat (1976: 6-9).

⁸⁶³ Samary (1988: 115, 127).

⁸⁶⁴ Woodward (1995a: 169-171).

⁸⁶⁵ See Horvat (1976: 4). Rate of growth of industrial production 1969/1953: 10.5% (officially fifth highest in the world) GNP due to industry vs. agriculture: 1947, 18 vs. 42.6%; 1972, 38.1 vs. 18.8%; growth of pro capita GNP 1969/1953: 259%; yearly average 6.1%; GNP pro capita: 1953, ca. 300 US\$; 1971, ca. 800 US\$. (Bilandžić 1978: 386-94).

represented the back bone of progressive urbanisation,⁸⁶⁶ which was accompanied by educational reforms with striking results. This had important social consequences both for the recomposition of the working class and generally for the transformation of Yugoslav society. In this respect, Darko Suvin interestingly portrays how economic changes actually made the working class after WWII; in 1945 “the peasants (together with the artisans, who were then around half a million) constituted over 70% of the Yugoslav population, around 10.5 millions”.⁸⁶⁷ By the 1970s the agricultural population counted less than 8 million that was at the time around 40% of the total population.

The Yugoslavian state underwent radical transformation, from initial nationalization and collectivisation to another shift towards the self-managed community, where new types of work and organisations proliferated; “state” property was transformed into “social property”. The official view of the socialist leadership emphasized the positive side of the progress to communism, where all the necessary obstacles will be abolished along the way, while it was becoming much clearer that these obstacles, or rather social contradictions and antagonisms were inherent to the very idea of socialist development. This became crystal clear in the 1960s.

The initial heroic period of self-management had two special goals: decentralization and the empowering of the elementary units (socialist enterprises and lower governance agencies), which would take place through the newly emerging self-managed institutional forms. Assisted by US financial aid in the 1950s and a slow opening to East and West, Yugoslavian self-management became a “hybrid mixed economy” in Susan Woodward’s words:

The result is a hybrid system that combines market and socialist elements emphasizing increasing autonomy for firms and territorial decentralization. In place of planned quotas, economic regulation is conducted through the financial instruments of monetary, credit and fiscal policy (according to the closed accounting system of monetary planning), and producers are expected to respond to consumer demands (both domestic and foreign).⁸⁶⁸

⁸⁶⁶ See also Horvat (1976: 5-12), Samary (1988), Močnik (2010a). From the perspective of growth in the aspect of urbanisation all its complexity needs to be taken into account. This type of analysis was for part of West-European and American capitalism after WWII undertaken by Harvey (2001), Mrduljaš (2012).

⁸⁶⁷ Suvin (2012).

⁸⁶⁸ Woodward (1995a: 28).

The hybrid system consisted of new and old institutions of the emerging socialist system. The process of hybridization was embedded in uneven development within the federation, which underwent major changes after the reform. Močnik aptly stresses the aspect of hybrid economic policy that unfolded in Yugoslavia:

In the national economy social ownership introduced a hybrid regime of regulation that oscillated between extensive accumulation (underdeveloped components of the Federation) and intensive accumulation (developed components). Figuring amongst the other characteristics of this regime were the sizeable redistribution of the national product, high indirect salaries (public services – free education for all, accessible and high quality public healthcare, reasonable retirement pensions), with, however, the preferential tendency to the growth in direct salaries (under the pressure of the “technocratic” tendencies at the heart of political power) and the politically controlled allocation of capital (directed above all to under-developed regions – Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro).⁸⁶⁹

In order to unpack these dense arguments and since I will refer to some political instances I will shortly present a general framework of the self-management system that interlocked on four vital levels: on the federal and republican, and at the level of self-managed communities and enterprise.⁸⁷⁰

Enterprise: economic production unit

Self-management was launched “from above” as the new socialist model discussed in the internal circles of LCY, but in reality self-management was first implemented and tested on the micro-level, more concretely in economic units, where the direct participation of all the employed was practiced in the socialist enterprise. Every enterprise institution in the social sector introduced an organisation of the workers’ collective, which then elected representatives in the workers’ council. The council was the major referential frame for workers’ politics; here workers had a legal guarantee of more than two thirds of the votes. Major strategic decisions on budget and planning were made in these councils. The workers’ councils and socialist enterprises became a cornerstone of the self-managed micro-political system, where communication and agreement on the exchange and distribution of products and services with other enterprises took place. This implied a

⁸⁶⁹ Močnik 2010b.

⁸⁷⁰ Horvat (1975 vol.II: 310). For a more comprehensive understanding of these inter-related levels see appendix 2, where all these self-managed levels are condensed together with central agents of self-management in a delegation system that was designed to mediate the plurality of interests.

horizontal and participatory process that would foster a strengthening of self-managed interests and solidarity.⁸⁷¹

This systemic vision was from early on embedded in a central paradox revolving around the core principle of the enterprise: should the latter be devoted primarily to the workers' control over the production process or should it apply maximal efficiency that relied on market rationality? Branko Horvat, a distinguished economist of Keynesian persuasion advocated for the principle of efficiency, which would implement 'correct' decisions and introduce personal responsibility over these decisions potentially met with sanctions.⁸⁷² Particularly interesting is Horvat's insistence that the execution of these decisions is not a matter of democracy, but of expertise that will be separated from ideology.⁸⁷³ The argument of expert knowledge versus workers' democracy was constantly reiterated in the coming struggles, thus exposing the political character of the production process and ideologies that circulate, dominate, or spontaneously emerge within it.

Community

The level of enterprises was closely related to the community, its closest intermediary consisted of local municipality authorities and a whole range of institutions. In the 1970s the plurality of self-managed interests materialized between these two levels, but most notably, it took its ideal form in *Self-managed Interest Communities* (SIC). Rastko Močnik defines SIC as communities maintaining the

public services (health, retirement, social security, education, culture). These intermediate bodies managed their domains in a more or less technocratic manner, whilst the properly political problematic of their mutual relations and of their insertion into vaster social systems (including the problematics of the special taxes that they collected, of the prices and the benefits that they supplied), was reduced to a sort of pre-established immanence that the alliance of communists took care of directly, or, most frequently, indirectly, through its extension, the Socialist Alliance.⁸⁷⁴

These communities further integrated and organized cultural activities, residential/urban affairs, citizens' and consumers' associations and many other aspects of social life. Each social activity would be ideally organized in its own SIC, which then disposed with public

⁸⁷¹ This would become a strategic orientation in the 1970s in the phase called "agreement socialism".

⁸⁷² 1975 (Vol.II: 323).

⁸⁷³ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁴ Močnik 2010b.

funding and mediated between the larger interest groups, enterprises and local municipalities, which would in the gradually emerging system of rules discuss the plans for further investment, the budget and improvement of the social infrastructure and its activities. An impressive web of associations was established, which to some degree corresponded to what political theory refers to as “corporativism”⁸⁷⁵, but in the newer socialist tradition, it mostly relates to council democracy and its elaborated institutional forms. Associations acquired their own dynamic that could not be any more reduced to simple mediation of Party interests and their members. Quite on the contrary, it brought a set of unanticipated effects and tendencies that also opposed the central authority and LCY.

Republics

One level higher in the vertical structure stood the republic⁸⁷⁶ with its own set of institutions. Each republic had different ministries, the parliament of the social-political community and Council of SIC. There were general elections, where most often the candidates came from the local League of Communists, or were delegated from interest groups and enterprises. Republics functioned *de facto* like semi-autonomous states,⁸⁷⁷ because they were responsible for major social, economical and political affairs “manufacturing, agriculture, transport, and communications, and labour within a given territory; and the autonomy over education and science.”⁸⁷⁸ Trade unions mostly worked on this level and were closely connected to the republican centres of power; their role was not well defined, but mostly they worked to harmonize the collective bargaining process between the state, enterprises (industrial branches) and lower municipalities. Republican institutions also summoned through their internal elections representatives for the federal instance, which meant there was no central federal bureaucracy, but it consisted of republican leaderships and other communist cadres, e.g. from national *Youth Socialist Alliance* or *Antifascist Women Organisation*.⁸⁷⁹ The principle of decentralization was most directly realized through the republics and their institutional framework, which pointed to a

⁸⁷⁵ The tradition of social and more conservative corporativism was extremely strong in Slovenia before the WWII, especially in Catholic intellectual circles (Prunk 2004; Lukšič 1994).

⁸⁷⁶ There were six republics and two autonomous regions in the Federative Yugoslavia.

⁸⁷⁷ See Močnik (2010a; 2010b).

⁸⁷⁸ Woodward (1995a: 39).

⁸⁷⁹ See Močnik (2010b), for a fascinating account of development of women antifascist movement and organisation in Yugoslavia (and Italy) see Chiara Bonfiglioli (2012).

special division of powers between republic (domestic affairs) and the federation (foreign relations and military security) that in times of crisis took on a centrifugal and intense character.

Federation

The highest authority in Yugoslavia was the federal government, which in the first two decades after WWII undertook the most crucial political and economic decision-making; its initial cadre came from the Central Committee of the LCY and partisans struggle. The federal government was responsible for the common market with the monetary and trade policy, common defence and foreign affairs. The special role was ascribed to Yugoslav's People Army that was all along also an important political agent.⁸⁸⁰ The central task of the federal government and its institutions was to equalize conditions for economic activity that would achieve equilibrium between economically and socially differentiated areas. The federal government was organized in a set of different ministries that coordinated economic and other activities through the web of Funds and other institutions. Beside the constitutional court the most important federal institution that became influential and semi-independent was the *National Bank of Yugoslavia*. The National Bank regulated activities and monetary flows for commercial banks, setting the interest rates and adjusting international flows of credits into the country.⁸⁸¹ A special feature of Yugoslavian federal development was inscribed in various Funds that were continually reformed: *Interventionary Funds* of agricultural raw materials and of industrial raw materials that monitored the fluctuation and supply of products and the disposal with reserves; *Fund for Export*; *Institution of Arbitration*, *Board for incomes and prices*, the *Price Bureau*⁸⁸² and, very importantly, the *Investment Fund* that would eliminate the disproportions among the various republics and plan the general lines of even and just development.⁸⁸³ The whole

⁸⁸⁰ The Yugoslav People's Army was an institution unto itself; accountable only to itself and the highest representatives of the socialist leadership, it was present also in certain political bodies. Some would argue that it acquired a status of the seventh republic; Woodward correctly showed that the army directly employed a large amount of the population, and indirectly many industrial factories were linked to arming them (Woodward 1995a). In the 1980s a strong pacifist movement was mobilized around the issue of the militarisation of Yugoslav society (Jalušić 2011).

⁸⁸¹ Horvat 1975 (vol.II: 311-313).

⁸⁸² Branko Horvat analysed that different measures and agencies held visible protectionism, both with regard to high taxes on imports and subsidies for exports, coming to around 25% on average (1976: 196).

⁸⁸³ Horvat (1975 vol.II: 317).

political apparatus (governmental and bureaucratic institutions) was permeated with cadres coming from *League of Communists*. In other words, without being a member of LCY one could not aspire for political activity in official institutions. However this blurring between different intermediary levels and instances does not allow for a reduction of all politics, or state politics to Party model.⁸⁸⁴ Self-management was already an attempt to re-organize the centrality of Party within the political apparatus and disperse political power throughout society; the republics predominantly took on more authoritative functions while federal institutions lost them.

7.2. Antinomy of self-management model

These are the contours of the Yugoslavian politico-economic system that embodied a plurality of political instances that were involved in constant ideological mobilization initiated by the LCY within the republics and on an inter-state level. On the one hand this involved the extensive and complicated layering of institutions and production of new legal documents that brought an increasing politicization of society, which involved prescription addressing all workers to stay engaged in self-managed activity. This side testified a general sense of the “over-politicization”, which was on the other hand accompanied by a de-politicisation of society.⁸⁸⁵ One should not read this simply in psychological terms that working people became fed up with constant meetings, discussions and social activities, but also on a more systemic level the politics came into hands of professionals, as I will show in following sections.

Self-management reforms were accomplished in the name of a decentralization and “withering away of state”,⁸⁸⁶ which concretely resulted in new centres of economic and political power. Catherine Samary correctly asserts that the rupture from state socialism

⁸⁸⁴ Alain Badiou developed an interesting argument on the dominant model of revolutionary politics in the 20th century, where state and party are internally linked (1998). Badiou argues for a necessity to reinvent politics beyond Party discipline and State.

⁸⁸⁵ The over-politicisation of all aspects of life also averted many working people from participation. These types of question were further explored in sociological studies, for example Županov and his team of researchers made fieldwork surveys on similar questions measuring the efficiency and level of happiness in the enterprises and beyond (1967).

⁸⁸⁶ A devoted Yugoslav Leninist Boris Kidrič in 1950 argued that “state socialism is only the first and smallest step in the socialist revolution...to extend it would mean to cement bureaucracy and could lead toward degeneration of the system into the capitalist state.” (quoted in: Horvat 1976: 10).

was the *condition sine qua non* of the emerging Yugoslav state: “Its non-withering away can be contradictorily analysed with the construction of socialism and the endangering [or possible destruction of] the socialist future”.⁸⁸⁷ The immediate political goal of Yugoslav socialism was then inherently paradoxical, perhaps it could be called the antinomy of self-management: it involved the strengthening of state politics in order to bring about less state involvement in, and give more power to, society.

Despite the massive investment in the process and idea of self-management, it did not mean that the State simply disappeared. The central political apparatus consisted of federal and republican instances, which were complemented by many intermediary and direct participatory and corporatist levels in a system of checks and balances. The liberal separation of the private and public, of the domain of work and politics was suspended in favour of an overtly political picture of social life. New political instances on different levels were in constant communication, producing knowledge and the discussion of new laws, and resolutions, constitutions and budgetary plans for self-managed activities. Self-management ideology encouraged discussions and the involvement of all working people (not the unemployed!) in all reproductive instances (not just productive!). Rather than a top-down approach that was simply guided by an established chain of command and the visible hand of the Central Committee of the LCY, one entered into the self-managed world of micro-power, negotiations and the forming of coalitions. Unquestionably, the narrow circle within the LCY delivered major decisions and orientations, however the contours of “sovereign” power were very different to what is usually portrayed in the “totalitarian” state paradigm.⁸⁸⁸

The “Party-form” did not disappear as it still held the avant-garde role in the political system, however its role was redefined and reshaped by the idea of the “withering away of the state”. On the one hand there was the massive stockpiling of legal documents, and the numerous discussions and meetings within emerging institutions, while on the other hand on a more critical note, their effects were only limited; they failed to trigger massive participation and the mobilization of the working class, which would re-actualize

⁸⁸⁷ Samary (1988: 117).

⁸⁸⁸ A Foucauldian perspective on socialist governmentality would be particularly fruitful in order to provide subtler understanding of disciplinary and participatory powers in self-managed community. For Yugoslav socialism it remains to be done in hopefully near future.

the link between working people and the “disappearing” Party. Quite the contrary, as this analysis will show as major weakness, management and execution of decisions were left to the experts and local authorities, which did not mobilize working people.

To sum up, the self-management antinomy was inscribed in the political practices from the very start: guided from above, self-management policies were on the one hand monitored and guided by central instances of the socialist apparatus, but on the other hand they unfolded in unanticipated ways and uncontrollably in the network of micro-relations between enterprises, interest groups and other emerging forms of popular and technocratic power that countered the central apparatus and any forces of centralisation. To a certain extent self-management was mostly closely expressed in the practices of the workers’ collectives and in the transferring of power to regional authorities and during the 1960s this experiment was expanded to encompass the whole of society. The main socialist ideologue, Edvard Kardelj proclaimed in 1965 that the central aim of “self-management is to develop into the whole field of social reproduction (sic!): to work and the exchange of products, and to all movement of social capital... that is, the socialist system is an as yet unfinished process.”⁸⁸⁹ However, in the light of the first serious economic crisis this self-managementalisation of society took a very different, perhaps even unexpected turn.

7.3. Market Reform in 1965: socialist reproduction shifts from decentralized planning towards the market

In 1965 after two decades of relatively successful state planning changed into self-managed planning that yielded impressive economic results with the advancement of material standards of life Yugoslav socialist politics introduced market reform. It should be immediately noted that this did not come as a kind of “deus ex machina” or as a sharp rupture that was imported from external agencies such as the IMF. Catherine Samary rightly showed that Tito and his closest entourage favoured the reform, which in many ways radicalised the course of a small interventionary law in 1961. The latter already committed the Yugoslavian economy to flexibility with regard to price variation and the

⁸⁸⁹ Kardelj (1976: 21-22). This is what I would call “self-managementalisation of society”.

first introduction of a market mechanism.⁸⁹⁰ The market reforms should not be seen only as expression of “external” constraint of global market, but also not as a kind of spontaneous development of “internal” self-management model. My explanation embraces a more dialectical approach that strives for articulating the “external” world-system approach with “internal” fractures of self-management and the decentralisation processes, which triggered unanticipated effects, such as rise of new centres of political power.

The contours of new power were marked by a rise in technocracy, which “objectively” emerged from the social strata of newly educated professionals. In political terms, as I will show later, this emerging fraction of the ruling class won its power through struggles within the sphere of production and in the newly arising intermediary political institutions that started to shape the general policy of the LCY. This technocratic fraction advocated for a pro-Western and pro-market orientation to the Yugoslavian economy,⁸⁹¹ which would result in a full integration of Yugoslavia into the world market by consequent application of measures of economic efficiency to all economic subjects. Its seemingly “non-political” call was to free economic management from any ideology and values that oversaw its regulation. This points to a very precise rupture within existing socialist development, or one could say the market reformers drew the consequences of the fragmentation of self-management to its extreme.

The market reform was a synthesis of demands for economic freedoms and a strong reaction to “over-politicisation” of previous phases of development. This is well expressed in its core call for the 4-Ds: *de-politicisation, decentralisation, de-etatisation and democratisation*.⁸⁹² The call for the 4-Ds seemed to fit well into the principle of self-management. Democratisation and decentralisation were seen as a continuation of the “withering away of state” and the granting of more freedoms to lower sectors. It was the

⁸⁹⁰ For the general discussion on 1961 see Horvat (1976: 22-25); for detailed historical account see Samary (1988: 138-156).

⁸⁹¹ From the very start Yugoslavia had a massive trade deficit with Western economies and its exports were also less competitive. Contrary to this, the trade relations with Eastern Communist states, and non-aligned states were on more favourable terms. Before 1965 the numbers for the percentage of trade were more favourable with the East, but from 1965 the trade with COCAM 36% went down to 25% in 1970, while the trade with OECD countries in 1965 augmented from 47% to 62% in 1970, whereas the trade with the non-aligned world remained at around 15%. The biggest problem was how to bring foreign currency into the trade relations with the West that increasing lost value. Trade with the East was for Yugoslavia always favourable, but payments were often delayed, or paid in other products (gas, industrial raw materials...). See Samary (1988), Horvat (1976), Rubinstein (1970).

⁸⁹² See Brborić-Likić (2003).

call to depoliticisation guided by expert knowledge that claimed to dissolve ideological phrases and rigid rules as the winning argument that mobilized support for the reform. The central aim of the reform was to open Yugoslavian economy to competition and liberalize the majority of prices according to market criteria.⁸⁹³ This would end state protectionism with regard to the economy and expand the de-etatisation assault on the remnants of the authoritarian rule of state socialism and its monopoly over politics and economy.

The vocabulary of market reform and its chief promoters were full of liberal arguments that promoted market mechanisms, economic rationality and efficiency. In their view the state mechanisms would need to only correct the major disparities. The old Marxist vocabulary became an ideological façade through which liberal ideology was gaining grounds. Let me take a symptomatic passage that speaks directly of this shift:

The League of Communists acknowledges that under contemporary conditions socialist commodity production is the only possible form of the rational expansion of productive forms and an objective prerequisite for the development of self-management and direct socialist democracy. For this reason it is necessary to energetically pursue the policies of the reform towards a fuller assertion of more developed and freer forms of socialist commodity production, opposing any subjectivism and statist denial of the effects of its economic laws...⁸⁹⁴

The criteria of world prices, of developmental policies, structure and the degree of economic development should form the basis of the system and policy of prices.⁸⁹⁵

This would not be at all surprising if taken from a pamphlet of economist or experts from abroad, but was a core passage from a *Resolution of the 9th Congress of the LCY* in 1969 that apart from the Constitution was the most important document that defined the major aims and goals for next five or more years. The LCY embraced the determining role of the global market and “socialist” commodity production, which became the central criteria for setting the prices of commodities in the economy. This in turn resulted in the further disempowerment and abolition of existing institutions, such as the *Bureau of Prices, Fund for Investment* on the one hand and strengthening of the autonomous sector of commercial banks and international loans on the other hand. Luka Marković for example argued that this was laissez-faire model of socialist development⁸⁹⁶

⁸⁹³ Horvat (1976: 24).

⁸⁹⁴ 1969: 48.

⁸⁹⁵ Ibid.: 52.

⁸⁹⁶ 1978: 118.

Reading the text closely one cannot avoid the conclusion that even the most official document of that time was permeated with liberal discourse and supported by most of the “hard-liners” in the socialist leadership. The document testified to a formal recognition of the shift in power struggles within the socialist apparatus: the capitalist tendency (commodity production, global market) was acknowledged as a dominant material force that was receiving shapes in political form. I would argue that this shift that subjugated self-management and socialist democracy to the rule of the market and the expansion of “socialist commodity production” was a first striking sign of post-communism under the banner of the liberal ideology of expert knowledge. Moreover, it directly challenged the existing industrialist model of socialist development.⁸⁹⁷ The previous equilibrium of the market and the plan mediated on different levels began to lose ground. Favouring market over strategic planning was a prelude to the historical rise of the *technocracy* that fought its way within the established apparatus, but also remained present and active on the micro-levels, in the self-managed community. The fierce power struggle and existence of plural ideological positions within the LCY testifies to a much more dynamic contestation for the future development of Yugoslav socialism.⁸⁹⁸

The reform thus pointed to the changing modes of socialist economy and manifested itself in a previously ambivalent relationship between two mutually “exclusive” principles: firstly, the *plan* which would still be guided by the central authority that would activate and promote a set of self-management institutions; and secondly, the *market* principle by opposite socioeconomic forces that advocated the consequent extension of self-managed rights to enterprises and micro-levels.⁸⁹⁹ The liberal development model in Samary’s opinion came at the expense of macroeconomic coherence and redistributive mechanisms.⁹⁰⁰

⁸⁹⁷ This temporal twist in detecting the moments of post-communist transition before they were generally accepted is very well documented by Boris Buden (2009; 2010).

⁸⁹⁸ This thesis runs against the approaches that reduce “new class” to political bureaucracy or even dictatorship and the cult of personality of the whole self-management project.

⁸⁹⁹ This central antagonism echoed through a number of dichotomies and tensions that received different advocates and representatives in different periods of socialist development: Is Yugoslavia a federation of states or should there be a Yugoslav community with one integrative market? Should there be a federation or agreement between states? And what about centralization or decentralization, or socio-political communities and economic organizations? Market or plan? The shift towards the market undermined the hybrid economy that was according to Branko Horvat one of the major contributions of Yugoslav economic self-management theory and practice (1975, 1976).

⁹⁰⁰ Samary (1988: 123).

The critique of Stalinism (and state socialism) that was inscribed on the Yugoslav socialist road took on a different guise. If the critique of the politics of nationalisation and collectivisation was at first done in order to socialize the production process and extend it into the very core of the enterprises and their production processes, one could now argue that the critique hit its limit by receiving a subtle re-appropriation by the market. Samary argues that, “the solution to economic troubles was sought in further decentralization, in the perfection of self-governed autonomy, in the development of a more competitive market and in integration into the world economy.”⁹⁰¹ The market reformers advocated for the removal of chronic deficits in trade and balance payments on the one hand, and to reduce subsidies and correct price disparities on the other. The expansion of self-management rights into the whole society in turn triggered many unanticipated effects and here I side with Albert Meister’s comment that the move from centralization and socialist development came at the price of “withering away of egalitarian ideals”.⁹⁰² Market reform in my view marked the decisive point of socialist transition that shifted from “maintaining the partisan rupture” to socialist reproduction that fully integrated the capitalist tendency in a new balance of powers. This was the beginning of the end, or the gradual exhaustion of Yugoslav communist politics.

7.4. Critique of socialist reproduction: class struggle in socialist Yugoslavia after the market reform

Discussion is displaced from social to economic development ... all the questions are configured as questions of *economic rationality* (and not as questions of *proletarian revolution*).

Luka Marković, *Klasna Borba i Konceptije Razvoja*

In following sections I will develop a more detailed analysis of different aspects and instances of “socialist self-management reproduction” ranging from economic topics and changes (labour-capital analysis; underdevelopment; unemployment) and political class struggle (political class composition, technocracy and workers’ opposition) to a critical

⁹⁰¹ 1988: 21.

⁹⁰² 1970: 36-43.

evaluation of the role of the Law (social ownership) that is in the end linked to ideology critique (nationalism; liberalism).

There seems to be certain uneasiness, a veritable quandary when addressing the class analysis in the context of an “anti-systemic” socialism that strived to abolish classes and state by focusing on the transference of power to society. Even if Karl Marx did not have in front of him a socialist economy, his theoretical validity might be even more confirmed (or rejected) on the case that seemingly does not fit his critique of the capitalist mode of production. This section will be interested in exploring the special modality of exploitation and domination within Yugoslav socialism that entered into the “market” phase, thus the most evident question is how to detect the class struggle in socialism?

There are two general paths that were used to dissect the class question in socialist Yugoslavia. The first path directly applied Marxian categories to the context of socialist industrialization, which as showed above created a large industrial complex, rapid urbanisation, economic growth and also an industrial working class. A direct application of concepts would all too easily identify socialist experiences with the general term “state capitalism”.⁹⁰³ A second path of class analysis was connected to the sociological approach that measured different classes in socialism, that is, to count how many peasants, workers and professionals would there be, how much would they earn. The empirical data would be then correlated to the material wealth and the privileges of the “new class” that shows that socialist leadership/political bureaucracy had more money and personal property than “working people”.⁹⁰⁴ Both approaches fail to sufficiently address the specificity of class struggle within socialism, which cannot be measured by a difference between material wealth (objective empirical data), or reduced to eternal laws of capital.

The class question needs to be tested in a system of concepts with concrete determinations, in a kind of creative translation into a different (socialist) context, otherwise it risks becoming an empty formula or a catch phrase, which contributes nothing analytically novel to a given political situation.⁹⁰⁵ My central thesis will start from two Althusserian theoretical emphases from chapter 5: firstly, I will show the class

⁹⁰³ Parts of analysis of KDS (1985) and Bockman (2011).

⁹⁰⁴ Suvin 2012.

⁹⁰⁵ Lev Centrih interestingly notes that to perform Marxian analysis does not mean to repeat the old formulas of Marx, but the opposite, to pose Marxian questions, to open analysis into very different contexts. (2011).

recomposition took shape in relation to the crisis of socialist development and reorganization in production (economic transformation), and secondly, read his political thesis that *there are no classes without class struggle*⁹⁰⁶ into concrete struggles that occurred in the socialist past. I will demonstrate both the primary aspect of struggle that formed the dynamic and politics of the ruling class, and also the conflict between the ruling class and the dominated class (the working people). I will closely rely on Catherine Samary's *L'autogestion Yugoslave* (1988) and to the only critique of socialist political economy the collective book *Labour + Capital in SFRY* (1985).

Market reform performed a systemic change in the conditions of production in socialism, which resulted in fractures within the management of capital. What was in the first decades monopolised chiefly by the bureaucratic state apparatus, namely the macroeconomic regulation and directing flows of investments, in short, management of “social capital” was, during the 1960s, gradually complemented by management of “independent capitals”.⁹⁰⁷ The latter were left to the management of workers' councils and workers' collectives, while the former, social capital was still largely in the hands of the state bureaucracy: all major developmental and infrastructural projects, the facilitation with foreign trade and big investment projects abroad remained in the hands of federal government. Nevertheless, from 1960s onwards the leadership of the republics started interfering in the distribution of national product and imposing demands of decentralisation. The central apparatus and its federal Funds started losing ground while their determining role in development was gradually replaced by a “smoother” operator: the market. The latter amplified the economic power of “independent capitals” within existing self-management legislation. In short, the major change resulted in the diversification of “social capital” that started to co-exist with “independent capitals”. Instead of independent capitals being controlled by workers, in practice, technocrats were in charge of managing them. In other words, the income generated by enterprises (with new flows of credits from banks) came into the hands of technocrats, engineers and

⁹⁰⁶ I have worked on this thesis in chapter 5 referring mostly to RTJL and MIHL.

⁹⁰⁷ Independent capitals are means of productions, flows of investments/credits in all socialist enterprises that came to be “owned” by society (“social ownership”), where the state authorities stepped back and only managed the larger macroeconomic flows of capital.

directors, who possessed the “know-how”, had a better knowledge of the situation and established good links with banks, local municipalities and other authorities.

The market reform took place through formal LCY channels and with the support of Tito’s inner circle that legitimized a new path to socialist development, thus it cannot be regarded as a kind of conspiracy of the technocratic faction. The new slogan that was used by all Party cadres promoted the intensification of commodity production. In this respect Bavčar et al. have shown nicely how socialist economists/ideologues that supported market reform “elevated the value form of the product in a specific kind of transhistorical determination of all modes of production or more precisely of all modes of the exchange of products”.⁹⁰⁸ Marx’s thesis that the central domination of one mode of production would sooner or later defeat other economic organisations, in this case the socialist experiment, was blissfully forgotten. The famous Yugoslav socialist ideologue Edvard Kardelj added a further sense of legitimacy to this new orientation: “commodity production and the market are a form of the free exchange of labour between different self-managers”.⁹⁰⁹ In contradistinction to the liberal tendency shared by the majority of socialist economists, the authors of KDS argued that “only in capitalism [does] the commodity form of production and exchange start to dominate over the whole economic scene.”⁹¹⁰ The characteristic of capitalism is not only that people freely exchange, but also that they are placed into a position of inequality. If for Edvard Kardelj commodity production and the market itself were not sources of inequality or capitalist relations, then the authors of KDS replied that the individual commodity is always inextricably bound up with labour power and its subordinate role in new socialist enterprise. They put forward a convincing thesis in so far as it shows how labour power remained rooted in the asymmetrical relationship between capital and labour,⁹¹¹ despite repeating a rather transhistorical gesture in failing to observe when and how this capitalist tendency took place. My thesis will argue that the relationship between capital and labour entered into a specific constellation only in the historical period 1965-1971.

⁹⁰⁸ KDS: 14.

⁹⁰⁹ Quoted in KDS: 14.

⁹¹⁰ Ibid.: 22 (text modified).

⁹¹¹ KDS: 10-35.

How did Marx – in the most determinant way – define the political moment of economic exploitation? Marx introduced one important structural feature that defined the (re)production of the capitalist mode of production, namely the fundamental separation⁹¹² of worker from the means of production, which are in the hands of the capitalists. This is the necessary condition for exploitation and for the workers' alienation within production. The serious analytical question is if the historical development in the developed capitalist countries in the second part of 20th century do not already correct or rectify this thesis⁹¹³ and demands the invention of new criteria that show a continuation and displacement of capitalist exploitation with other means and in other places.⁹¹⁴

The structural separation in the context of socialist transition and reorganisation of economic production was at first at least partially suspended by the politics of expropriation of the big landowners and industrial capital. The expropriation of the old ruling class (big landowners, Church, monarchy, foreign and local industrial capital) referred to as “nationalization” and “collectivisation” did not lead to the “socialization” of the means of production that transformed the relations of production. The emerging political bureaucracy guided after the post-war economy and executed socialist modernisation. The authors of KDS suggest that the state bureaucracy became a political representative of “social capital”, overall social wealth and in this way effectively controlled the production process. It can be argued that socialist transition meant more regulated exploitation for the workers, who were socially more protected, while the process of the distribution of surplus value and the national product were premised on egalitarian principles. This does not mean that distribution was subjugated to workers' control and become more “democratic”, however it did become increasingly socialised.⁹¹⁵ Yugoslav socialism practiced an egalitarian politics in the first decades, which was reflected in distributive mechanisms and in strong social investments in the public infrastructure with

⁹¹² For a detailed analysis of the concept of *Trennung/Scheidung* in Marx (Močnik 1985a).

⁹¹³ This is one of Močnik's theses in his evaluation of self-management (2010b).

⁹¹⁴ This was one of the major critiques done by (post)operaismo, especially by Negri (1996b); on the other hand also Moulner attempted to show how cognitive criteria bring new importance for understanding biopolitical labour today (2007); also feminist theorists contributed to the analysis of reproductive labour that is constitutive of the wrong term „productive labour“ (see Federici 2012).

⁹¹⁵ One could critically update Althusser's thesis that the socialisation of the means of production is a necessary but not sufficient condition that leads towards the abolition of exploitation and more democratically spread control for the workers (SLR: 94f).

education and social housing.⁹¹⁶ Job creation was one of the first priorities of the new state; the social sector saw a steady growth and also regulated the wages of the employed via the *Institution of Arbitration Board for incomes and prices*.⁹¹⁷ Within the sphere of production it can be asserted that the separation of workers from the means of production continued to exist, while the central distributive mechanism regulated the general economic flows according to non-economic criteria. Income in the enterprises was largely invested in building the infrastructure and social activities, which favoured development of under-developed regions (*Fund for Investment*).

This strategic orientation changed dramatically with the market reform that re-orientated flows of money from richer to poorer republics, and via the decentralisation of the market mechanism opened the Yugoslav economy to global oscillations making it more vulnerable to crises and flows in both the regional and global economy. The rules of economic sovereignty with less state authority were modified and the most important struggle yet again emerged in the heart of socialist economy: who will be able to dispose of income and investments in enterprises now that they were freed from a more general criteria of plan and state control? Also, who will manage and dispose of funds on the level of the self-managed communities? Who will decide how much money is re-invested back in the production process, how much is to be spent on the public infrastructure and directed to a more equal development of the socialist republics? All these questions blurred responsibility between different instances and triggered the formation of an “ad hoc” technocratic faction that started with the effective “self-management” of their own particular interests on the market. If now with the arrival of social ownership everyone (and no one) was the owner of the means of production that in itself did not yet erase the class moment, but it merely displaced it to the moment of the “appropriation” of surplus value.

New economic changes in regulatory mode resulted in two structural separations not so foreign to the tendencies of late Fordist capitalist societies: firstly, the separation

⁹¹⁶ Mandič (1996) discusses the topic of ownership of flats from comparative and transitional perspective in Slovenia from the period of 1970s to 1990s.

⁹¹⁷ See Tempo (1982: 369-370) and Woodward (1995a) about the history of bargaining and defining the level of wages, which moved from state control to collective bargaining between the self-managed communities, workers and trade unions with the republics; and finally the legal possibility of workers’ right to intervene and determine their share in the collective income of the enterprise (BOAL) in the mid 1970s.

taking place on the level of the market that manifests itself through the competitive separation *between* production units⁹¹⁸ and secondly the separation taking place via the political struggle between managers (technocrats) and workers *within* the production units.

7.5. Separation 1: competition of enterprises, formation of market discipline

The gradual transition towards the “socialist” market economy meant that certain social and egalitarian criteria were abandoned, while economic rationality was introduced as the first measurement of an enterprise’s success. With a more relaxed and flexible flow of credits, a larger circulation of money through the National Bank and foreign credits, socialist enterprises entered into fierce competition that reflected inter-regional differences. Rastko Močnik describes a textbook example of market competition between the Slovenian enterprises Gorenje and Montenegrin Obodin, which both specialised in the production of white technology (refrigerators and washing machines). They started from a very different economic environment: Gorenje had substantially greater investment capacities⁹¹⁹ and also “an extremely good network of services that stretched all across Yugoslavia”, which allowed it to develop in terms of domestic and later international recognition.⁹²⁰ The comparative advantages were structurally conditioned; richer regions had bigger credit capacities with the support of regional powers and were able to employ lower waged labour power that came from poorer regions. The internal migration in 1960s and 1970s accentuated and was accompanied by a wide range of different flexible labour contracts that I will describe later. The process of the flexibilization of market of credits and labour power simply meant that enterprises in richer republics could take a greater share within the Yugoslav market and in terms of crediting, and if exceptionally successful, they could count on federal support for their expansion on the foreign market.

⁹¹⁸ Production units are disciplined by the market mechanism, but as I will show this was not fully executed, as there was still the last instance of “social property” and the state corrective, which would at certain moments release the responsibility of even some grossly miscalculated investments, and badly guided enterprises. In this respect, the critique of the hybrid—bad market and bad state—is valid.

⁹¹⁹ (Močnik 2010b). Gorenje was also supported by *Ljubljanska Banka*, which from 1967 started economic exchange with foreign banks.

⁹²⁰ (2010b: 142).

The crucial spaces of political dispute took place on two levels. On the one hand, at the macro-level major discussions on the question of “equal” redistribution of national income were debated; the holding and managing of foreign currency either in the hands of the National Bank or in the republics; the development of strategic industries for each republic (autarchy or common market). On the other hand there was the micro-level with a more flexible setting of the prices of products, and where more authority was given to determining the level of incomes and types of contracts (especially in private, and in semi-social sectors) with further possibilities for crediting (money circulation). These sites of struggle were vital for the formation of the technocracy that cooperated with local and regional political elites, against the centralized federal authority that struggled to keep influence within the economy and the overall development of the state. New class compromise between technocracy and bureaucracy resulted in a historical change of economic planning that had far reaching consequences. The alternative either market or plan, decentralisation or centralisation was condensed in the vital question of the (re)distribution of national product (the reproduction of society as a whole i.e., its development). This was internally linked to the question of the organisation of production and the reproduction of labour power, that affected both the working people, but also the general conditions of inter-republic development. The contradictory process of the production and reproduction of social and independent capitals in Yugoslavia cannot be explained only through the factional fighting between bureaucracy and technocracy nor through their factional infighting, but has to be seen in the contradictory relation to the totality of the world-system and special local conditions of development of underdevelopment in Yugoslavia.⁹²¹

I would emphasize that market socialism did not bring a completely flexible market that would support private initiative. There was still quite a big restraint on foreign capital investments. It needs to be said that neither all prices of products nor all wages were liberalised, especially the social sector that represented more than half of all employed workers still retained an important regulatory function. For example, the level of income was subjected to collective bargaining that involved trade unions, the political bureaucracy

⁹²¹ For a detailed theoretical analysis of relation between the core global capitalism and Yugoslav economy see Kirn (1982: 51-53).

and management of enterprises, while the prices of strategic products, raw materials and energy resources remained heavily subsidized and thus accessible at a low cost to industrial branches and households.⁹²² This type of investment and social subsidisation supported industrial development, which prioritized heavy industry in all the regions of Yugoslavia. Almost till the mid 1960s, historically coinciding with the market reform, industrial capacities and outputs grew on an impressive yearly basis, but from then onwards “underdevelopment” manifested itself in different ways.

Admittedly, one cannot draw an immediate causal connection between the market reform and underdevelopment, since the underdevelopment was immanent to the industrial development from the very start of socialist transition.⁹²³ However, it was in the time of market socialism that the negative effects of underdevelopment accumulated and were shaped in more material forms: an ever-growing gap between poor regions (South) and richer republics (North),⁹²⁴ structural unemployment and dependency on foreign loans.⁹²⁵ Besides economical manifestation this gap took the form of an ideology of competition and nationalist interest. Politically, the market reform brought two important institutional changes that gave the technocracy and richer republics a temporary victory: reform of the banking sector and the *Fund for Investment*. The question of the decentralisation of independent capitals was most clearly demonstrated in granting new authorities to banks and the dismantling of the *Fund for Investment*.

7.5.1. The new role of banks and growing external debt in market socialism

The National Bank of Yugoslavia sustained a relative autonomy from other institutions and remained the crucial agent of economic policy, although the rise of the commercial banks in this period announced new conditions of monetary circulation. Once the *Fund for Investment* was abolished the majority of the money was transferred directly to banks.⁹²⁶ Also, the massive amount of money injected by fresh international loans from the IMF and

⁹²² Samary (1988: 79).

⁹²³ Kirn 1982.

⁹²⁴ Močnik (2010b: 142-144).

⁹²⁵ I will return to the question of unemployment and *Gastarbeiter* later.

⁹²⁶ Samary (1988: 167).

the WB, was constantly flowing to regional and various banks in republics that could start making contracts with foreign capital. Commercial banks were granted a greater role in short-term crediting and investing in the enterprises. Samary writes that commercial banks imposed a set of financial criteria with a market discipline upon the enterprises, which needed to prove their viability for the future by way of business plans and potential product demand.⁹²⁷ The former monopoly by bureaucracy was replaced by a new class coalition, which Samary describes in following ways: “*there was an osmosis of directors of enterprises, banks and local powers.*”⁹²⁸ This was also the major political agency that pushed for a liberal development of the Yugoslavian economy and prepared an ideological assault on the central apparatus. Once workers found themselves blocked from participating in the strategic decisions within the economic system and had a limited access to influence in general social development, then the self-managed model came under serious threat.

Major investments consisted of IMF international loans and were directed into large infrastructure projects, from construction of highways, improvement of existing transport routes and building of tourist facilities.⁹²⁹ This was called opening up to the West, since it was meant to attract future foreign investments and tourists into a country that had been isolated for some time. Also, in order to repay (refinance) the debt, Yugoslav developmentalists knew that they had to bring in foreign currency if they were to be able to get a new round of loans. After 1965 the Yugoslav economy introduced the liberalization of prices and imports, which on the one hand elevated the level of inflation, which reached

⁹²⁷ 1988: 197. If it is true that the workers’ councils existed within banks, they did not have any possibility to influence crediting or decisions on crucial matters. Instead, the *Committee of Credits* was composed and consisted of experts, which disposed with proper bank funds by circulating money-capital and monitoring the economy. Once workers no longer participated in the strategic decisions within the economic system that directly influenced not only their wages, but also had a limited access to the influence of general social development, then the self-managed model was truly under threat.

⁹²⁸ 1988: 169.

⁹²⁹ It is telling to look close for the development in the urbanisation, that is, how the state project of tourism went together with architecture modernism and how it was implemented in various hotel infrastructural projects. Yugoslavian urban planners attempted to develop a different type of tourist infrastructure, which will also show on the public and educational side of tourism that would be complemented by consumerist side. See especially the book *Unfinished Modernisation* that discusses various topics of construction industry, modernist architecture in the times of socialist Yugoslavia (2012); for specific take on Croatian tourism see Mrduljaš and Šerman (2010).

more than 14%.⁹³⁰ On the other hand the monetary injection into economy meant that there was now too much money for the quantity of “domestic” commodities on the market and so a massive import from Western economies began. Many small companies oriented towards import activity, which was accompanied by the construction of big modernist department stores in all larger cities. These signs of Yugoslav modernity also had a negative side: not the usual moralistic judgment of consumption habits of Yugoslav workers, but much more importantly this opening to the global market made the Yugoslavian economy more vulnerable to fluctuations and integrated it into the relationship of debt dependency that soon afterwards went out of federal control and was used as a disciplinary mechanism by IMF

In her book *Balkan Tragedy* Susan Woodward’s main critique is addressed to the policies from the WB and IMF that imposed austerity in times of severe economic crisis. The WB and IMF had a special agenda that centred on the liberalisation of prices and trade and that demanded institutional reforms for monetary discipline and the cutting of public spending.⁹³¹ The restructuration of Yugoslavian market socialism can be analysed only when one takes into account the integration of Yugoslavia in the global economy in relation to its internal recomposition of forces and the external pressure that accumulated during the 1970s. Srečo Kirn aptly argues that instead of recognizing the Yugoslavian economy as just a “regional territorial unit, we should address it in terms of a world process”.⁹³² Due to the growing deficit in trade with the West in the beginning of 1970s and large highway and industrial projects the Yugoslavian economy seemingly had no other choice but to take on new debts with even more severe interest rates.⁹³³ The situation was coupled by an economic recession in western economies that had a tremendous effect on semi-peripheral and peripheral countries. According to Woodward the new economic policy was based on a solution that would seek “short-term coverage (through IMF

⁹³⁰ In 1955, the inflation rate was 4% and afterwards it was growing slightly. For statistical data see Samary (1988: 187-189) and Horvat (1976). The whole discussion in economic policy was for a great amount of time devoted to the problem of inflation, which by the 1980s became acute.

⁹³¹ 1995a: 49.

⁹³² Kirn (1982: 53).

⁹³³ Foreign debt grew from only 700 million dollars in 1964 to 2.7 billion, from which 90% was in foreign currency. This was still at normal levels, as it represented 30% of GDP in 1971. A bit more troublesome was the fact that World Bank was the principal creditor in the long-term (more than 40%) and Eastern countries only 14%. The growing debt was strengthened by a plurality of initiatives made by commercial banks after 1966.

credits), to try to refinance the debt, to cut imports to the bone, and to promote all conceivable commodity exports to hard currency markets in the West.”⁹³⁴ This demand came in contradiction with a general trend of deregulation and decentralisation of the Yugoslav economy: since the authority over monetary matters (credit, foreign exchange) was increasingly fragmented and dispersed, this made it “impossible to have any effective monetary and exchange rate policy, let alone effective industrial and foreign trade policy.”⁹³⁵ This was a period when foreign intervention started shaping the general direction of future reforms through economic pressure; the IMF demanded that the country *break down* all the innovative elements of the self-managed system:

of bilateral contracts between suppliers and manufacturers; of payment arrangements through producers' cartels that rationed foreign exchange to prevent production bottlenecks; of corporatist social compacts among firms, governments, and unions to regulate wages and salaries; and of local party and government networks that had developed during the 1960-1972 period: Monetary authority should be returned to the National bank, and the independence of the bank strengthened, so that the government could implement a true macroeconomic policy to manage demand.⁹³⁶

This suggested a course of development that was not recommended by economic experts, but had a clear political agenda that intervened into the internal affairs of Yugoslav socialism.⁹³⁷ The implementation of these policies would prompt a radical reform of the self-managed system and its intermediate levels with workers representatives and corporatist interest that held the market forces and federal authorities in check; at the same time this course called for strong federal authority with less political freedoms, where working people would be accountable to the rational decision on the market. Thus, strong autocratic government and market discipline were the recipe for the Yugoslavian crisis, what one could term a policy of economic Stalinism, or in formal vocabulary structural adjustment program⁹³⁸ The consideration and demands from the IMF fell on fertile ground in certain governmental and federal circles that advocated recentralisation, but which would also mean less market elements, that is, a return to a more Keynesian (pre-market

⁹³⁴ Woodward (1995a: 51).

⁹³⁵ Ibid.: 59.

⁹³⁶ Ibid.

⁹³⁷ For different types of enterprises joint-ventures with foreign capital and citizen groups enterprises see Samary (1988: 201-207), where she describes the fluid legislation and possible abuse of economic power that would short-circuit taxes or economic responsibility.

⁹³⁸ At the same time the neoliberal model combined with autocracy was practiced and tested in Pinochet's Chile (Klein 2008).

reform) planning guided by political bureaucracy. Paradoxically, the liberal currents – the advocates of market reform that seemed to be natural allies with the IMF – within the LCY and the republican leadership in rich republics (Croatia, Slovenia) stood on the side of “independent capitals”, the technocracy that promoted regional integration that would protect the development of domestic capital. The latter relied on the aforementioned networks of local political elites, the technocracy and emerging banks. They advocated decentralisation and more authorities for the political powers of particular republics.⁹³⁹

The situation in the period between 1965-1971 is complicated by unusual coalitions, marked by the rise of technocracy, which was pro-democratic and the proto-capitalist bearer of “liberalism”, it sustained itself through new institutional and less formal networks of power. The real antagonism between the federal and republican powers, between technocracy and bureaucracy, pointed to a symptom related to a significant politico-economic problem that would haunt the future of Yugoslavia: (under)development. If the critique of the existing industrialist model of development seemed to run into economic catastrophe, then perhaps one could argue that already the mid 1960s pointed to a gradual implosion and exhaustion of communist politics. The problem of cadres (clientelism, opportunism and careerism in the LCY), the importation of external solutions and the dependency on foreign loans came at a price: the conditioning of the foreseeable future and the waning of the theoretical and political powers of the communist forces. Above all, what in the war and in the post-war period constituted and continued a strong link between the working masses and political organisation had begun to fade away. The liberal development resulted in the unequal development of republics and resulted in downgrading the social security of working people.

7.5.2. (Under)development in Yugoslavia: Kosovo reloaded

⁹³⁹ Susan Woodward analyses closely the main economist positions in the late 1970s and 1980s (more than a decade after the market reform) and argues that Keynesians and neoliberals occupied the opposing poles. This conflict translated into the political coalition of Keynesians and the political representatives of Federation that opted for collaboration with the IMF on the one hand, and neoliberals that represented the particular interests of the more affluent republics and small enterprises on the other hand. Neoliberal economic representatives were opposed to giving a more centralized authoritative role to the Federation, and consequently to the IMF (1995a). See also Močnik (2010b: 141-143).

Due to the heterogeneity of economic disparities in Yugoslavia one of the major the post-war goals was to establish the *Fund for Investment* that would promote solidarity and minimize economic gaps. The federal authority along with the *National Bank, Bureau for Prices* and the *Fund for Investment* pursued a set of monetary and fiscal policies that moved towards the goal of more even development. Most notably, the *Fund for Investment* redistributed national product from rich to poor and execute large industrial projects in poorer areas, which was particularly beneficial to the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro in the period from 1947 to 1956. A study of Kosta Mihailović convincingly demonstrated that the results of this more just development would only be detected on a long-term basis; there cannot be any economic wonder he stressed, however, that the development should focus more on new employment opportunities and the development of better conditions for the enterprises. As can be read from the statistical figures, the Fund did not prevent the re-emergence of inequalities at least between some regions.⁹⁴⁰ The differences in the economic output of national product were further strengthened by the existing social structures, where poor regions accumulated different disadvantages from demography, insufficient and costly infrastructures to fewer qualifications and less fertile land for cultivation.⁹⁴¹

A very frequent critique from liberal experts targeted the inefficiency (corruption) of existing institutions, particularly of the *Fund for Investment*. There is no doubt that some of the money was channelled into the local clientelistic network of republican bureaucrats and enterprises,⁹⁴² as both sides protected their privileges and secured the continuation of big industrial projects. I believe, however, that it is more productive to assess the real deadlock within the model of industrialization that was given as the only possible path to development. The latter entered into a serious crisis by the mid 1960s.⁹⁴³

One should be reminded that already before the market reform the reproduction of unequal relations between republics and regions existed in the industrialist model.

⁹⁴⁰ If one takes the richest republic, Slovenia, and the poorest region of Kosovo, in 1947 the Slovenian economy represented 153 units of the Yugoslav average (100) and Kosovo region 50, then in year 1963 Slovenia's share grew to 177, while Kosovo's economy stagnated at 36. See table of incomes and living standards in KDS: 64.

⁹⁴¹ See Samary 1988.

⁹⁴² See Močnik 2010b.

⁹⁴³ One should have in mind that industrialization remained the key recipe, a sacred cow of Yugoslavian socialist leadership in the whole post-war period up until mid 1980s Bavčar (1982: XI-XII).

Particularly interesting was the detection of the blind spot in a “system of differentiated prices” that favoured special industrial branches. More developed countries produced the final products (more expensive, more market oriented), while poorer regions extracted raw materials and supplied richer republics with energy. Samary argues that these processes were all centrally (state) regulated and prices were retained on the low levels:⁹⁴⁴

It has been seen that the control of the prices of raw material and energy that was established in 1954 and that was putting the growth of prices of raw material and energy on average 30% below the average wages, came hand in hand with the Fund for the development of underdeveloped, that had favoured the energy and raw materials available in Kosovo.⁹⁴⁵

When taking into account the composition of industrial capital and high technologies between republics, the system of “differentiated prices”, then it is clear which regions “functioned” as “Third World” countries in Yugoslavia: Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and some other poor regions. They provided cheap raw materials and energy resources that formed a core of their “extensive accumulation” with also greater unemployment and a larger peasant population that migrated toward the more developed centres of the richer regions. On the other hand, there were the developed parts of the federation that invested in “intensive accumulation”, where enterprises used the comparative advantage on the market. The political strategy of less developed regions and republics could then only rely on and demand from the central political apparatus constant flows from the *Fund for Investment*, while economically they were forced to retain low prices for purchase from rich republics. Before one addresses the corruption of the Fund, one should first tackle these structural problems that were inscribed into the very perspective of the Yugoslav economy as a whole and not only its particular parts.

The new liberal orientation favoured richer republics and regions that became more autonomous in terms of economic sovereignty. The liberal argument popularised by technocrats and the republican leaderships in rich republics assessed that their republics were paying an unequally high percentage of the overall budget of the Fund and received much less input. Taking into account the statistical data the argument was correct. However, one needs to observe the contradiction at the core of this statement: how should

⁹⁴⁴ Samary (1988: 129).

⁹⁴⁵ Ibid.: 79.

one impose the criterion of economic rationality to the *Fund*, whose central role was precisely to diminish inequalities? In other words, to take from the richer republics in order to promote and create more equal conditions for everyone has become highly troublesome. This argument was also economically irrational and I completely agree with analysis done by Močnik, who argues that richer republics benefited from the development of the poorer republics. Who else would be buying the products from the enterprises in the Yugoslav North, if they did not have a basic infrastructure and enough money within their economies? If the argument of corruption and clientelism was to some degree justified, abolishing the Fund made things far worse for the poor regions, which became more dependent on central aid and the volatility of the market. One can add that the liberal approach was destructive for the richer parts of Yugoslavia as well, which due to the underdevelopment of poorer parts could no longer sell their products as effectively as before. The market reform effects entered into a vicious circle.

On the question of the *Fund for Investment* liberal forces won: the *Fund* was abolished and replaced by the *Fund for Development*, which had a far less important role as well as less finance capabilities.⁹⁴⁶ In the new situation it was more difficult to impose effective state regulation and sustain a clear overview of the republican economies and inter-state planning. If the *Fund* was reproached as a remnant of state socialism, its diminishing role in the times of the economic crisis made the situation worse. In that moment the Fund could effectively direct the processes of social reproduction. Thus, even if one is sympathetic to decentralisation in terms of enabling broader democratic participation of the working people, the big institutional changes that were wheeled by marketization came at the time when planning and state regulation were most needed. Instead, the chief mechanism of the regulation of capital flows (credits, investments) fell into the hands of banks that became important agents of new (under)development.

The market reform showed its true colours in the least developed region of Kosovo, where socio-economic and political tensions were coupled in a deep economic crisis.⁹⁴⁷ Despite some impressive facts in the historical development of the region, it would be in

⁹⁴⁶ For precise numbers see Samary (1988: 167).

⁹⁴⁷ The economic crisis hit the poorest regions hardest, but in the 1980s, growing economic insecurities hit the centre of Yugoslavia, which can be seen as one of the major reasons for the break-up of Yugoslavia. See comprehensive studies of Magaš (1993) and Woodward (1995a), who connect this to the IMF and WB policy of austerity as the “external” reason for the destruction of Yugoslavia.

vain to simply compare the numbers of industrial indexes, if we do not explain why at the end of the day, the productivity rate and use of capacities remained low.⁹⁴⁸ Kosovo became an infamous example of “bad development”⁹⁴⁹ and was from the 1960s onwards transformed into the grounds for an ideological struggle of republican or federative forces that either favoured decentralisation or recentralisation. In this situation, the regional bureaucracy in Kosovo did not invest in “social power that would organize more employment”,⁹⁵⁰ but translated the issue of economic underdevelopment into a national issue that fostered nationalist sentiments. These power struggles were the “displacing of the class antagonism that was radicalised in the crisis”⁹⁵¹ and one could add, that the very core of the Kosovo question remained unanswered. In opposition to the project of Yugoslavia as an “unfinished state” that demanded constant popular emancipation and was dedicated to the idea of the “withering away” of the state, the unfinished character of Kosovo represents the other side of Yugoslav “modernisation”; it became the “weakest link” of socialist Yugoslavia that paradoxically, in another way, assisted in the “withering away”.

7.6. The second separation within the enterprise: the technocracy VS. the workers

The socialist enterprises were not neutral spaces of economic activity regulated only by the respect for self-managed law. Enterprises were sites of high political and ideological investment: as constitutionally defined Yugoslavia was the state of the working people and had to legitimize its different, non-Soviet approach to people’s democracy. Undoubtedly the LCY still remained an important agent that directed the course of development, however, the over-generalized condemnation of Mastnak runs into trouble, once one wants

⁹⁴⁸ De-agrarization, higher education, Pristhina University registers 500% rise of students in the period from 1964-1975. For statistical analysis of economic indexes see Kirn (1982: 64-67) and for social educational indexes see (ibid.: 68-72).

⁹⁴⁹ one should have in mind also the *per capita* revenue in Kosovo never ceased falling from the 52% of the Yugoslav average in 1947 to 33% in 1975 and to 28% in 1979 and continued to plummet throughout the 1980s. Kirn (1982: 73-77).

⁹⁵⁰ Bavčar (1984: XIV).

⁹⁵¹ Kirn (1982: 80). The political bureaucracy in Kosovo was dependent on external help, and at the same time it was also the core mechanism for the reproduction of power and the stability of the *status quo* in the region.

to understand closely the special dynamic and internal transformation of the regulatory mode of capital and labour in market socialism.

Already in the first phase of development the Yugoslav socialist economy differed from the rigid state planning, and was rather defined as a hybrid between a state regulated plan and a certain accession to workers' self-management. Once we enter into the mid 1960s and the gradual transition to market (de)regulation takes place things become more complicated. The market reform created favourable conditions for the strengthening of management (technocracy) within enterprises and undermined the role of political bureaucracy (and with it, also the role of the LCY) as the only agent that "represented" capital. With dispersion of power and emergence of independent capitals (commercial banks), the executive and managing power over social and independent capital was shared within the ruling class. Even if the LCY was still a leading agent in political matters, the economic policies were much more driven by the technocracy. "Democratisation" and the greater rights for self-management among the workers were to be guaranteed with a legal foundation limited by the shift of power relations within the production units. It was here that the technocracy dominated and acquired – even if not in numbers – a political majority in all workers' councils. Legally, the majority of the constituency in the workers' councils was guaranteed for the workers, but more or less formal networks of power with local and regional political centres and banks "spontaneously" emerged. Professionalization and depoliticization were the catchwords of new liberal ideology, but behind them the real transference of (political) power to "depoliticized" experts was taking shape. In the course of the 1960s some authors would already speak about the economic monopoly of power,⁹⁵² at the same time a range of struggles for cultural hegemony was taking place.⁹⁵³

⁹⁵² Rus 1988.

⁹⁵³ It would take us too far from the subject at hand to analyse cultural hegemony in Yugoslavia. We will only refer to an interesting account of excellent analysis of Lev Kreft on avant-garde and other art practices (1998) and Lev Centrih's analysis of cultural apparatus that supported proliferation of all (2003). For an analysis of the ideological domination of the technocracy, see the authors of SFRY (1985). The ideological domination of the technocracy over the bureaucracy and the complex dynamic of different instances expose the problematical claim of mainstream theories of totalitarianism that try to portray merely the bureaucracy as a new class. This new class supposedly determined economical, political and ideological domains. Thinking class without class struggle is impossible. One of the first advocates of this type of reasoning was Milovan Djilas, a former hard-liner of the Communist leadership (1982), first published the book *New Class* in 1952.

The goal of workers' control within the production process went unrealized, instead management took the upper-hand in all decision-making processes. Economic rationality and other profit-oriented criteria replaced social benefits and other socialist ideals. This resulted in an elevated exploitation within production and amplified class stratification that triggered a series of strikes. Needless to say leading bureaucrats and technocrats enjoyed a set of (class) privileges⁹⁵⁴ that can be detected in higher wages and higher pensions, better holiday facilities, and more easily received credits for building a house. Even if private property was abolished, it did not prevent the accumulation of personal property in the ruling class.

Notwithstanding the major economic shifts, the dominant ideology still promoted “egalitarian” ideals and the *integration of capital and labour under the control of the workers*. Many supporters of market reform believed that this task could be executed only by decentralisation and the dispersal of political power. In this respect, they were right to criticize the political monopoly of power (the critique of the LCY and state bureaucracy) from the “leftist” perspective.⁹⁵⁵ They hoped that within the new decentralized conditions of the economy managers and workers would form a new class coalition, which would yield a new organisational form, or re-animate communist politics. The political wager was based on a spontaneous economist thesis that all the workers (together with the technocrats) within the production process could construct collective forms of workers’ democracy. Economically speaking technocrats were also workers and legally they did not own the means of the production. Thus, if the conditions for workers are ripe and power is given to the workers, it followed that their would be a genuine workers’ democracy. Unfortunately, the political wager took a very different course, instead of workers’ control over labour and capital, enterprises underwent disintegration through further specialization and division of labour. This resulted in an “irreconcilable contradiction that is embodied in the workers’ class and working people on the one hand, and technocracy and bureaucracy on the other hand”.⁹⁵⁶ The technocratic faction won the power struggles in production, which disclosed a discrepancy between labour and capital as the cardinal contradiction in

⁹⁵⁴ See Samary for effects of market reform (1988: 170-189).

⁹⁵⁵ The chief of trade unions Svetozar Tempo-Vukmanović (1982), himself coming from the partisan struggle and leadership of the LCY close to Tito, was fiercely promoting the reform in order to re-animate and re-create the conditions of workers’ self-management. See also Samary 1988.

⁹⁵⁶ KDS: 66.

times of market socialism: “socialist self-management is a form of control and management of capital after labour”.⁹⁵⁷

Equal stress should be then given to both *dominant separations* that sharpened in the period after market reform: *first, between production units* (market mechanism; underdevelopment) *and second within production units* (the struggle between management and bureaucracy on the one hand, and the workers on the other hand). A fundamental separation in the capitalist mode of production, a separation between the means of production and workers was in the socialist context displaced into the question of the appropriation of surplus value and its redistribution between different regions/republics and the investment in the social infrastructure of self-managed communities. These were the central points that enable us to trace the strategic nexus of production and distribution of market socialism, the special form of exploitation, and which reveal the experiences of workers’ politics.⁹⁵⁸

7.6.1. Workers’ politics: between the technical composition of capital and wildcat strikes

I have focused on the side of capital and its role in the restructuration of a new class coalition through struggles in self-management institutions. It is necessary to also ask, what happened on the workers side of the struggle? Were they simply satisfied with their political situation and their representatives in the political and economic realms? Rastko Močnik assesses well the situation:

The management of the enterprise then represented the social nature of work for the workers, by dint of the fact that it took the form of the institution of social ownership: the reality of

⁹⁵⁷ (ibid.: 48).

⁹⁵⁸ In these circumstances S.Kirn’s diagnosis on the falling accumulation capacity of national production accompanied by less regulated social protection for the working class and the process of autarchization and the de-integration of production called either for a stronger étatist approach or further technocratic manipulation (1982: 57). Interestingly as a response to the reform of 1965, when Yugoslavia entered the global market, Edvard Kardelj in the 1970s came up with the concept of the free exchange of associated labour. According to Močnik this was “an attempt at a postfordist alternative in the condition of the socialist state and solidarity, that is, equality as a cornerstone of official ideology and not as a neoliberal alternative to fordism capitalism that stepped into the crisis. I am pretty sure that socialist states were social states on the periphery in conditions of relative poverty. They performed the same function as a social-democratic state with more prosperity, which were located in the centre of the capitalist system.” (2008) Unfortunately, neither the market in the 1960s nor the reformed plan in the 1970s could bring Yugoslavian socialism out of the economic crisis.

this “self-management” relation resulted in the manipulation of workers by the management of the enterprise and in the resistance of workers outside the mechanisms of self-management.⁹⁵⁹

Workers were not only separated from the means of production, the introduction of “social property” made this separation valid for everyone,⁹⁶⁰ what is more troublesome was their separation from the organization of the production process and the decisions on all strategic questions in the working place. They found themselves separated from the process of the “appropriation” of surplus value (distribution) and also the possible negotiation of loans (investment). Even if the surplus value in the socialist enterprise was more socialized and justly distributed than in the capitalist corporation, it was not so clear, how workers can control and direct the process of appropriation. Legally, workers had the possibility to influence decisions, even directly negotiate wages, but they were either not sufficiently informed about the new situation or mostly failed to address the new political situation. In the new situation the major antagonistic force became the technocratic-municipal-bank network that to a certain degree by-passed the formal institutions, but also often dominated the existing workers’ councils from within. Workers transferred responsibility to experts and their elaborate plans that would save or improve the conditions of the enterprise. Workers at times relied on the good intentions of directors, or hoped that the “state” will take care of them. They were left with a symbolic ceremonial function to confirm the decisions taken by others. This – in a more philosophical sense – pointed to the sustained division of labour in times of mature self-management; manual and cognitive divisions of labour were clearly inscribed and reproduced within companies, which reflected the unrealized promise of socialist development and can to some degree also explain why workers had difficulties organizing; this was certainly also related to the lack of (necessary) time to do so.⁹⁶¹ This division of labour in production, where workers were represented by technocracy was strengthened by political role of the LCY and the

⁹⁵⁹ Močnik 2010a.

⁹⁶⁰ I will return to the question of law in respect to social ownership in the next sections.

⁹⁶¹ Why did workers not involve themselves more actively in the political processes? Not because of their lower intelligence as some obscure, elitist thinker would make us/them think; and also not due to their laziness; they were working long hours in their factories, and working places, and many times had little remaining energy to devote to politics.

political apparatus that represented the interest of the working people. Both representatives promoted the workers' policies in the name of workers.⁹⁶² The situation hit the deadlock:

In its static aspect, the system of self-management carried out a corporatist inveiglement of labour power in industrial production, and in this way ensured the reproduction of its technical composition. What is more, it blocked the political constitution of workers as a working class, since the political dimension was already occupied by the mechanisms of self-management, in which social ownership was represented by the enterprise's executive managers. In the dynamic aspect of the system, the individual bearers of labour power were integrated as individual consumers, whilst the political dimension was once again usurped, this time by the apparatuses of the State-party that, representing the working class *in general* (as the corporation of corporations), appropriated the management of social ownership in general.⁹⁶³

This dual blockage was systemic, however one must acknowledge that in many situations, where the level of exploitation was particularly high or where social insecurity rose dramatically, workers started their own self-organisation from wild-cat strikes to internal opposition.⁹⁶⁴ The workers' opposition was born during the 1960s, when the economic crisis grew stronger.⁹⁶⁵ Most often workers' protests and strikes demanded unpaid wages or higher wages, much more rare were demands for a bigger role in the management of the means of production and further investment strategies.⁹⁶⁶ Also, most of the workers' strikes were limited to their own enterprise and working place, and thus prevented a more general workers' movement or radicalisation of trade unions' politics. One of the positive aspects of market reform was the facilitation, at least legally, for workers to influence the level of wages to a larger degree and their integration into collective bargaining process.⁹⁶⁷ Unfortunately for many different reasons such as shortage of time, disinterest, lack of

⁹⁶² It is not about promoting holistic transparency and a total direct democracy at every instance; the question is more, what kind of institutions to install so that the workers as well as others rotate and participate in these institutions; what kind of decisions are taken and if social control is possible? Is an alternative course possible to discuss and formulate, or is it relegated to the realm of expertise?

⁹⁶³ Močnik 2010a.

⁹⁶⁴ Even if this analysis is very critical towards the role of the LCY in failing to continue revolutionary politics, it has to be said that the socialist system nevertheless for many decades succeeded in the reorganisation of labour relations and more just redistribution of value, thus creating the socialist welfare state that enabled working people to live on an impressive social standard, relative freedom of movement and high educational conditions. This makes the Yugoslavian experience different from the Eastern socialist state experiences.

⁹⁶⁵ The first general strike happened in Trbovlje, the mining region in Slovenia already in 1957 (Samary 1988: 152-153). The same year there was the first *Congress of all Workers' Collectives*. Unfortunately, this all-workers'-collectives organization did not continue to develop and grow stronger; its role was in certain historical moments taken by trade union movement, most notably in late 1980s (Stanojević 1994).

⁹⁶⁶ Suvin correctly evaluates that the strikes were usually linked to a single enterprise and did not amount to a more general organisation (Suvin, 2012).

⁹⁶⁷ Collective bargaining always implied three agents: enterprise(s), trade unions and local government (Samary 1988: 153). Mostly workers had merely a consulting role in this process.

information or simply relegating these issues to experts, workers did not take advantage of the formal mechanisms and institutes that had been developed.⁹⁶⁸ What they did, is mostly organize strikes, which became the most normal way to express dissatisfaction, but the authorities did not always positively greet them, moreover on occasion protests were met by severe police repression.

No matter how “reformist” (concentrated only on their enterprise) the workers’ strikes were, they nevertheless showed ways of self-organisation that went beyond the formal channels and institutions. Moreover, these strikes were catalysing the revolutionary upheaval at the end of 1960s and should not be forgotten within the historical experiences of workers’ struggles for a different form of self-management.⁹⁶⁹ Strikes were also a clear indicator of the accumulated contradictions of socialist industrialization and the shifts of power in market socialism, however they mostly failed in asserting a more long-term workers’ control vis-à-vis professional political and economical class. Also, it has to be said that even in the period of crisis in the 1960s there was quite a large support for the socialist leadership and only very exceptional protests (in Kosovo and later Maspok in Croatia) had anti-regime or anti-communist political message.

There was a set of interesting paradoxes that were present in the development of socialist Yugoslavia (but also in other socialist countries): not only was it difficult to conceive the struggle against workers’ “own” representatives, the LCY, or other delegates that represented the people’s interests in the self-managed community, this striking socialist dilemma became even more paradoxical as time went on. In mature self-management it appeared to be increasingly difficult to conceive the model of workers’ self-management within the new conditions of market socialism. Let me only for a moment speculate on the hypothetical “ideal” situation: workers would dominate over the technocracy and bureaucracy, and also impose workers’ control in production, which would send their delegates to higher levels and remain fully accountable to the workers’ councils. But then again, doesn’t this maximal demand of the ideal worker run into another

⁹⁶⁸ The mechanism of self-valorisation (the defining wage) was legally expanded in the 1970s within enterprises that received the new name Basic Organisation of Associated Labour (BOAL), but as Tempo recounts the history of workers’ struggles, the majority of workers or trade union organisations did not struggle for their wages within these formal channels. See Samary (1988: 153) and Vukmanović-Tempo (1982).

⁹⁶⁹ One of the best studies on workers’ self-management and strikes was written by Tonči Kuzmanić, on precious experiences of workers’ revolt/strike in Labin, Croatian Istria (1988).

paradox? To impose control in the production process does not yet lead to abolition of the structural relation between capital and labour. It seems that instead of the struggle against wage labour and capital, workers would then occupy the structural place of the capitalist. In this constellation workers would then fight, like Don Quixote did, against themselves, whilst the capital windmills keep on turning. The social relation of domination undoubtedly changes, once the worker controls the production process, but it does not simply make the exploitation disappear. Finally, even in my ideal case of successful self-management, where workers would be able to control the process of valorisation and decide directly on the appropriation of surplus value, they would impose a form of self-exploitation on themselves, which would lead “only” to a more egalitarian relation in production and distribution.⁹⁷⁰

As *authors of SFRY* would suggest the reality of self-management enterprise instead of workers’ control resulted in the “integration of capital and labour”.⁹⁷¹ This less explored paradox of the workers’ situation in self-management in reality led to a spontaneous development of atomistic self-managed interests. In the light of the strategic shift from the planned to market economy in the 1960s, atomization and fragmentation of independent capitals weakened the political capacities of the worker and technocrats dominated the class struggle in enterprises, which resulted in their domination over the workers. However, the assessment of workers struggle and technocratic domination needs to be seen not only from the “autarchic” perspective within one state. My analysis stresses the understanding of the specific period of market socialism in a “world” perspective pointing to the integration of the Yugoslavian economy and its workers into the global market of capital and labour power. Also, it might be clearer why the “autarchic” self-management within one (Yugoslav) state could not abolish the capitalist tendency that still persisted in Yugoslavia and dominated the world-system.

⁹⁷⁰ This can be further complicated by the introduction of two aspects of social property: the economic and the legal, which brought some confusion into the economic practice in 1960s. One of the most important Yugoslavian legal theorists Bajt argued “if these contradictions are not resolved institutionally, they will be internalized in each worker”(1975 vol.II: 160). Each worker in the developed form of self-management would be assigned a double aspect: as a wage-worker, relating to general social property (from everyone), and as being a share-holder, relating to economic property. Workers would ideally all participate in the working process and decide about how to reinvest their “shares”, or rather their former labour into new investment cycles and to the future of their enterprise. I will return to the legal aspects in the following section.

⁹⁷¹ KDS.

7.6.2. Politics of excluded: the unemployed and an additional note on the new typology of work

The previous sections demonstrated that Yugoslav socialism encountered different theoretical and practical contradictions: on the one hand the ruling ideology announced the withering away of state and the realization of the community of self-managed interests, while on the other hand more institutions and legal documents proliferated in the society. The structural crisis of socialist industrialization was accompanied by a wave of workers' strikes, popular unrest and massive student protests that culminated during and after the May '68.⁹⁷² The history of student struggles is well researched and has formed a part of a more visible perspective of "dissident politics", of those groups that were certainly recognized, or at least temporary tolerated by the central socialist authorities and Tito to have the right to protest and express their dissatisfaction. I would like to briefly turn my attention to the politics of excluded, to those who went silently into the dark night of history.

Whenever someone mentions the "excluded", one immediately has in mind the "marginalized" or "excluded" identity groups that are either repressed, dominated or cast to the margins of the society running on a parallel track of bare survival. But perhaps a much more cliché account of excluded is present in many dissident retrospective memories that posited the genius of the individuals, artists and intellectuals as marginalized/excluded by the socialist regime. Anyone that did not fit into the grey landscape of mediocrity was lost in the average uniformity of individuals. Anyone who did not enter the Party, or anyone who did not feel as a part of the real working class, was thus excluded and uncared. From this perspective the only saviour was located in dissident gestures such as the recitations of poems and performances, the writing of critiques of the "red bourgeoisie" that subverted the totalitarian order. This kind of retrospective and romantic illusion of dissidents (also from 1980s) could not be more distant from the real struggles of workers,

⁹⁷² See Kanzleiter (2011), Štrajn (1971), Baškovič et al. (1982). Surely, struggles in the late 1960s ranged from workers' strikes, students demonstration that were in their own way connected to a general political framework of May 1968. Some of the student demands were heard and received new political and cultural forms: student organizations, radio, publishing houses... parts of student movement were also met with police repression.

students and art collectives that took place in late 1960s. The radical critiques coming from cultural or student circles often addressed Yugoslav socialism from the perspective of communism, and were rarely anti-communist and anti-regime. Socialist leadership, Party intellectuals were monitoring concisely all symbolic activities and protests, which showed that official political institutions feared of potential threat of critics/critique to the political order, and the possibility that radical ideas would reach the masses. In this regard, the work of intellectuals was not excluded, but rather monitored and carefully re-appropriated in the dominant intellectual apparatus of the LCY. Intellectual activities at that time had certain political efficacy.⁹⁷³

Much more than from the (intellectual) dissident or identitarian frame that wanted to be more recognized within the socialist state, I will address the question of the excluded with the help of Rancière's political theory, who courageously broke with the mainstream conception of identitarian politics that will be further contextualized in order to pinpoint a structural blind spot in socialist reproduction. The question is then who were in the Yugoslav context the real "part without parts" and how the dominant logic of the police that distributes spaces and subjects, made some audible and visible and others non-audible/visible?⁹⁷⁴

One possible appropriation of Rancière's political theory is to take seriously the political work of the "real" invisible and unheard without romanticising their political stance. In this respect, it is correct to assert that certain social groups were not properly represented or even recognized by official socialist institutions. This type of research would privilege either Kosovo Albanians or Roma people as second-class citizens of Yugoslavia,⁹⁷⁵ but would all too easily be recuperated in the model of "ethnic

⁹⁷³ I agree with Žižek (2001), who argues that the socialist regime was 'enlightened' in that it believed in the power of ideas. Thus, to refute new artistic movements or theoretical readings of Marx, it did not suffice to censor them. Frequently, Party-sponsored critics wrote treatises to fight against the 'incorrect' or 'decadent' deviations in art, theory and science. See also Kirn (2012).

⁹⁷⁴ The reconstruction of the logic of the police in Rancière (1999). A tacit presupposition of Rancière's theory equates non-visible/non-heard with a passive element, running in accordance with the order of the police, whereas the active force is precisely the one that breaks with the police, with its logic of counting, which makes some invisible and unheard,

⁹⁷⁵ Although it has to be said that Kosovo Albanians were not only recognized as a ethnic group but also formed the majority in the political institution (but not police!) in Kosovo; also the University of Pristina's (founded in 1969) had two languages of instruction Albanian and Serbo-Croatian. This is why it is not entirely justified to speak about a complete exclusion of Albanians from the official institutions.

identification”,⁹⁷⁶ which was opposite to the open and multinational character of Yugoslavia. Demanding an affirmative action for ethnic groups would fall behind the “official” ideology of the state apparatus and behind Rancière’s take that this part without part needs to address an egalitarian maxim that is open to all, and not only the particular identity group within the order.

A more productive move for the Yugoslavian context can bridge the Rancierian logic of counting with the above suggested class analysis. The non-visibility and non-audibility of the special “part with no part” is then not conceived only as an abstract effect of the logic of counting and exclusion, which makes the “part with no part” (immediate) victims, but rather includes into this mechanism of (mis)count also the relations of exploitation, which “normally” function as invisible ties. This means a slight rectification of Rancière’s presupposition of silent (passive) partners in the order of police, since it cannot be claimed that the relation of exploitation involves “silent” (non)parts, or that they are by default absent from political institutions. In times of socialism, these less visible parts – working people - were integrated into exploitative relations and they were presented as the active part of society. Preceding section analysed how workers, who were supposed to be the most included in the socialist order were in fact absent from many aspects of decision-making and were subjugated to a “dual blockage” within production (technocracy) and generally in politics (bureaucracy). On the one hand, one could argue that workers were included through exclusion: self-management was done in the name of working people, while on the other hand they still had not only formal, but many times facilitated access to different institutions from workers’ collectives to different cultural and residential associations that relied on the people’s involvement (voluntary work, solidarity actions, etc.). Some moments of self-organisation of workers in workers’ strikes failed to produce rupture that would address the whole of workers’ solidarity in Yugoslavia.

All in all, according to the relatively stable status of the employees and evolving trade union movement, even if mostly blocked from the political domains, it is not justified

⁹⁷⁶ This is not to say the analyses of this sort are counter productive or do not bring much further understanding of the complex relations between different nations and republics. It could be further researched how certain identifications are related to the question of the general “identification” – being Yugoslavian (Momčilović 2012). What is today mostly missing from identity analysis is the link between it and other inter-sectional categories of class and gender. This can be read as an ideological effect of the dominant ethnical cannon/institutions (see also Močnik 1995).

to speak of the worker as being the most “excluded” in self-management socialism. The analysed period of market socialism uncovered a fierce class asymmetry between developed and underdeveloped regions, but the real “part without part”, the excluded were the unemployed, who faced more and more precarious positions before they could enter the market of labour power. There was no possibility of entering any of the aspects of socialist reproduction without entrance to the sphere of work. Without the sphere of work, the life of the unemployed meant to occupy the sheer reproduction of life. Full employment and housing for all, the cornerstones of post-war socialist policies were being radically undermined in the period of 1960s, especially after the market reform. Officially socialist leadership continued to nurture the myth of full employment and big achievements, although they were aware that a structural change was needed in order to resolve the growing popular unrest and also the explosive tendency of the growing “reserve army of labour power”.⁹⁷⁷ Marx showed lucidly that unemployment is a structurally necessary part of the capitalist system of exploitation, which threatens the existing labour power both in terms of the latter’s employment security and also needs a “reserve army” to intensify exploitation by the lowering of existing wages. Srečo Kirn aptly argued that in Yugoslavia “growth of unemployment is one of the most radical manifestations where the wage position is winning over the position of the associated self-manager.”⁹⁷⁸ The official line of the socialist leadership on unemployed people remained pretty cynical; the leadership regarded it as a voluntary choice, but as a temporary and short-lived experience, rare to occur in Yugoslavia. In the self-management vocabulary the unemployed were called “communities of interest for employment”.⁹⁷⁹

⁹⁷⁷ In Vol.I of Capital Marx has very rich vocabulary to explain this phenomenon: “The law, finally, that always equilibrates the relative surplus population, or industrial reserve army, to the extent and energy of accumulation, this law rivets the labourer to capital more firmly than the wedges of Vulcan did Prometheus to the rock. It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, i.e., on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital.” (MECW vol.35: 639-640).

⁹⁷⁸ Kirn (1982: 57).

⁹⁷⁹ See especially chapter 6 in Susan Woodward seminal work *Socialist Unemployment* (1995b), where she opened a wide range of topics, unfortunately not all of them could be properly addressed.

The phenomenon of unemployment and the pressure of the reserve army of labour power in mature self-management created of a whole range of new contracts.⁹⁸⁰ Regular contracts (defined by the state) or a regulated bargaining wage at the level of the (industrial) branch co-existed with flexible contracts that became normal, especially for employees in the non-social sector. This shift in the typology of work took place as early as in the 1950s in the sphere of culture that first institutionalized the “flexible labour contract”.⁹⁸¹ But this “flexible” and exceptional status became a “mass” condition also for those whose nature of work was not *a priori* defined as “project-work”. The exodus of the agricultural population⁹⁸² to urban centres was accompanied by the stagnation of industrialization and resulted in the large numbers of “irregular workers”. Darko Suvin estimates that by the mid-1970s there were around “1.5 million part-time workers” and more “so-called peasant workers, fluctuating conjuncturally between industry and agriculture but growing in absolute numbers”.⁹⁸³ Susan Woodward registered different types of work that developed independently from state regulation and categorized them into three main types: 1.unskilled labourers that travelled from one short-term contract (construction job) to another; 2. Unemployed who gathered and waited for job-recruiters, or waited on informal labour markets at the outskirts of cities; also seasonal work, and lastly 3. Large numbers of peasant workers (seasonally they went to mines, or they stayed there).⁹⁸⁴

Yugoslav statistics did not register properly different types of contracts, and also (un)employment was measured merely in the social sector. According to Woodward’s study it becomes clear that unemployment shaped in a determinant way the contours of crisis and also, unemployment was no longer a sporadic or cyclical phenomenon, but

⁹⁸⁰ This topics were first critically addressed in films of the so-called Black Wave: Živojin Pavlović’s *When I am dead and pale* (1967), or Želimir Žilnik’s *Black Film* (1971) and *Unemployed* (1968), for the first time analytically opened the issues that were put under the carpet by technocrat and bureaucrat power.

⁹⁸¹ Pavle Levi described the situation in the film industry: “Workers’ councils were thus introduced as decision-making bodies overseeing film production, distribution, and exhibition, while the creative personnel associated with the process of filmmaking (directors, cinematographers, screenwriters) were given the status of freelance professionals” (2007: 15). In my article I attempted to show some similarities between the post-fordist conditions in the West and Yugoslavia, where this formalization of labour in culture would be the first example in law (2010). For more detailed view on cultural workers see Ćurčić (2011) and Krašovec (2010).

⁹⁸² By 1970s peasants still represented around 40% of total population.

⁹⁸³ Suvin refers to data from Žuvela et al. (1984: 144-50; 243-55).

⁹⁸⁴ Woodward (1995b: 191-192).

became structural in the 1960s.⁹⁸⁵ The last statistical census in 1981 showed that from 22 million people in Yugoslavia, there were around 13 million in the active population and only seven million held a regular employment. From the remaining 6 million 1 million were registered as unemployed and another million was temporarily working abroad as so-called “*Gastarbeiter*”. Since state statistics did not cover the private sector one can only speculate how many of these remaining 4 million were unemployed, un-registered and how many worked in the private sector with above mentioned types of contracts and low social security.⁹⁸⁶

Even if the socialist leadership officially did not recognize unemployment, it nevertheless attempted to solve the issue with the integration of Yugoslav workers on the European market of labour power. State contracts between Yugoslavia and different West European countries (Denmark, Germany, Austria, Sweden) were signed during the 1960s and later.⁹⁸⁷ Suvin gives us an example of Yugoslav *Gastarbeiters* in Germany in the 1970s that experienced “horrendous circumstances there, but their average monthly wage was 750 West German marks, as compared to about 210 marks at home.”⁹⁸⁸ This was a big incentive, because becoming a *Gastarbeiter* meant to get a job with a relatively high wage. Around 1 million workers went abroad by the end of 1970s and “fuelled the exodus to western Europe”, also with internal migration, especially to the richest republic Slovenia, was growing yearly.

The *Gastarbeiter* employment can be seen as the central state policy that attempted to integrate the “excluded”, this time through the systemic exclusion outside Yugoslavia. *Gastarbeiters* were integrated to the European market of labour power and subjugated to the special regimes of working discipline that intensified exploitation and competition in Western capitalist countries. In Yugoslavia the socialist leadership kept favouring a concept of employment in the social sector with stable and regular contracts⁹⁸⁹ and the promise of industrialization, which would guarantee the full employment. With a newly urbanized labour power and the mass of peasants a whole range of non-regulated “self-

⁹⁸⁵ In the period of the 1950s the unemployment rate moves from 5%-8%, while in the mid 1960s it reaches more than 10%, and afterwards started growing up to 17.5% towards the end of 1980s. And these are only the numbers for the “social sector” (Woodward 1995b: 191).

⁹⁸⁶ Ibid.:192.

⁹⁸⁷ For a general overview of “Guest worker” in Germany see Chin (2007).

⁹⁸⁸ Suvin 2012.

⁹⁸⁹ This was the core for Edvard Kardelj’s concept of employment (see Woodward 1995b: 196).

management”, even black market work began. The majority of these workers were left to themselves outside of all institutions that would represent their interests, thus becoming dependent on the spontaneity of the market and *ad hoc* employment in the private sector. One can conclude that the figure of self-managed worker is much more nuanced: on the one hand we dealt with state-social sector regular employment and the *Gastarbeiter* as a dominant state solutions, while on the other hand the unemployed and a whole range of flexible and seasonal part time contracts, which perhaps expressed a sort of spontaneous market self-management. The unemployed were a crucial blind spot, the Rancierian “part with no part” in socialist reproduction.⁹⁹⁰ Instead of investing in social power and infrastructure that would work on further employment and stronger regulation of the economy that would establish stronger links with other socialist countries, market socialism rather oriented to the West and foreign loans and global market that only deepened the economic crisis.

7.7. The role of Law in Yugoslav socialism

In the previous section I briefly touched the question of different types of working contracts that developed in mature self-management, whereas this section will bring into light the specific role Law had in relation to socialist state and restructuration of the market economy. Socialist transition was full of contradictions, displacements and detours, which can be also observed in the development of the “socialist” Law. Already Lenin intriguingly noted in the emerging socialist reality “with (half-bourgeois) law, also the (half-bourgeois) state hasn’t totally disappeared.”⁹⁹¹ And for this to happen, the state and law have to wither away. If this anti-sovereign and revolutionary experience was very much inscribed in the Yugoslav project, the times of self-management socialist transition presents us with new challenges. The Yugoslav state strove towards decentralization and eventually dissolution of the state apparatus into the community of self-managed interests, where power would be in hands of working people. This was the Yugoslav version of the utopian withering away

⁹⁹⁰ Also, unemployed and “Lumpenproletariat” became one of the most important political forces in the historical crisis of late 1980s that turned decisively into a nationalistic revival. Interesting note, but from the more optimistic side, relating to Želimir Žilnik’s films see Dimitrijević (2009), from a slightly different perspective interesting also Ćurčić (2009).

⁹⁹¹ Lenin (1972: 32).

of the state, but, as my thesis goes, the whole process of state de-regulation and decentralisation took place by and through Law and new institutions. Isn't it paradoxical to observe such a recurring use of Law in the socialist political apparatus, which remained the ultimate horizon, or even a dominant ideology of the dominant class? This is not to say that one should embrace a simple opposition between self-managed freedom and self-managed institutions; certainly, it is only through the functioning of the institutions that "ideas" and freedoms are struggled for and won; however, the stubborn insistence and reliance on Law remained symptomatic for the whole period of socialist Yugoslavia. Law was not only a mere reflection of the objective laws of society, but supported the emerging "juridical consciousness" and the dispersed State that organized social ties, co-determining the social organization with other social forces.⁹⁹² The social ownership that was invented in Yugoslavian self-management attempted to move away from state property, but what did it achieve? How was it connected to the economic changes and development?

7.7.1. Law as dominant political ideology of socialist leadership and as the other side of the primacy of production forces

Yugoslav self-management was famous for the perfection of legal texts; a massive production of new laws and two complex and long constitutions in 1963 and 1974 (more than 300 pages long) were set in motion to accommodate constant changes and modifications and to set special orientations and norms that would make reality correspond to legal communism. Socialist Law was designed to regulate society until the point where the conditions for the self-regulation of society were created. This was utopian kernel that was inscribed into legal documents of socialist leadership, most notably to the texts of Edvard Kardelj.

One can assess the importance all major resolutions adopted at the Congress of the LCY had for the Yugoslav development. The resolutions were not only legal documents, but also sites of contested factional and ideological struggle, where the strategic orientation of the next five years would be determined. Even if ideally, the political wager of new juridical procedures and re-adjustments was designed to make decision-making accessible

⁹⁹² See also Žun (1975).

to the vast majority of working people, a paradox of the self-management model became strikingly clear. Socialist theorists and ideologues attempted to relegate authority at the micro-level, to decentralize and de-regulate the political apparatus (critique of the Party), but evidently this political process always needed regulation and supervision that the LCY was not ready to totally give away. The legal framework was the ultimate horizon of Yugoslav socialist theorists and ideologues and when descended from state institutions and spreading into all social spheres, the reference to socialist Law and its hegemonic interpretation was crucial for the social organisation.⁹⁹³

Law assisted the Party (LCY) to sustain its avant-garde role in ideological interpretation and the guidance towards socialist transition. Not that socialist transition should be always opposed to legal solutions, but I find the constant reference and even naïve belief that through good legal solutions – a form of legal communism – we are attaining socialist reality, that is that we are coming closer to the goal, extremely troublesome. Also, importantly, once the workers' organisation, cultural and student movements took seriously the idea of self-management, then they immediately hit the avant-garde position of the Party (LCY), which uncovered the unresolved paradox of political principles (organisation from below VS. democratic centralism). However, it should also be added that this paradoxical situation propelled socialist development in different directions and produced unanticipated effects. One of the latter was mainly exposed in the 1960s, where the socialist hard-line leadership was forced to make concessions with the aspiring “liberal” tendency and form a class coalition with technocrats. Samary suggests reading the strategic laws, resolutions and constitutions as results of class compromises.⁹⁹⁴ I agree with this reading, which also confirms a strategic blind spot, or rather a peculiar reliance of the socialist leadership on Law as force in politics and Law as organising Society in the State-form.

In this regard, Branko Horvat remarked that very often the official proclamations and laws were premised on “good ideas”, but were painstakingly (mis)translated into social

⁹⁹³ One should read all the texts from the major ideologue Edvard Kardelj as directing interpretations of legislation, which would suture the more fluid passages within legal texts. I have to thank Lev Centrih for this remark.

⁹⁹⁴ For details especially of 1974 constitution see Samary 1988 (225-239).

practices.⁹⁹⁵ Translation and drawing consequences from ideas is one part of the problem, I would be critical already of the core “Marxist” ideas advocated by the Yugoslav leadership in the time of the market reform. Not only did socialist leadership and ideologues fail to address the class question (they were part of the problem) and provided an extremely vulgarised reading of Marx, but also they have seemed to be content with the reproduction of socialist authority that relied on either an ever changing legislation, constant adaptation to market and innovation or, if necessary, resorted to repression of a stronger opposition, within or outside the LCY.

Socialist theorists/ideologues most often followed an unfortunate Marxist methodological claim on the simple causality and *uni-linear determination of base and superstructure, where primacy is assigned to the side of productive forces (in the base)*.⁹⁹⁶ In this spatial metaphor where a secondary role is ascribed to the superstructure, law is conceived as a reflex or a partial instrument in the hands of the ruling class. If socialist ideologues observed Law as secondary and instrumental in the capitalist state, then it seems surprising that they continued to rely on Law in the process of socialist transition. It is perhaps this point that testifies to the key blind spot of the core recipe of socialist development: if the content of the law was “communist” (abolition of private property, labour legislation), it will not necessarily bring us to communism.⁹⁹⁷ In political practice, the major formula of socialist transition relied on a double task: on the one hand the self-managed withering away of the state that promoted legal communism and industrial modernization with technological progress on the other. Thus, communism will be achieved via growing industrial output (competing against the West) that is accompanied by a legal progression: from abolition of private property to the establishment of social property. In my view these two sides formed a core of socialist development.

But wasn't it awkward for socialist ideologues to insist that the change in property relations, legal progression of communism (*nota bene*, law was the superstructure) will be so crucial for the general change in the economic base? This seemed to be running against

⁹⁹⁵ 1976: 168-171.

⁹⁹⁶ As shown in chapter 5 this causal model was from the very start a major target of Althusser's return to Marx and his settling of accounts with economism and Stalinism.

⁹⁹⁷ Yugoslav socialist ideologues did not monopolize and determine the use of communism, even if they strived to put it in most ideal legal terms. Communism has always been a highly contested concept of Marxian and post-Marxian scholarship and revolutionary practice.

the formula that the economic base determines the (legal) superstructure. Even if one can agree that the abolition of private property is a necessary part of socialist politics, this by no means ends with relations of exploitation.⁹⁹⁸ No matter how inconsistent this formula, one can be even fascinated by its simple design and political efficacy. It has to be said that this minimal plan – legal changes and the growth of industrial forces – was very successful in the first two decades after the war and yielded much higher living standards for the majority of people and formally enabled the possibility for greater popular participation in emerging institutions. The growing socialisation of capital and the distribution of value and national product was undoubtedly the most egalitarian economic system in the history of ex-Yugoslavian countries and resulted in an impressive social infrastructure.

Notwithstanding sympathetic affirmation in material achievements and legal experimenting with forms of property, it needs to be critically said that the cognitive horizon of this legal-economic recipe prevented a serious consideration of long-term socialist development. The old industrial model fuelled on the illusion of superiority of social ownership came into grave crisis in the mid 1960s. The cure for revision of the former course came from the LCY that in 1965 embraced a liberal strategy, which wanted to move beyond the old industrialist model, but as shown earlier, it produced a decentralized and fragmented society of interests competing against one another, where the social property was “hijacked” by a fraction of the ruling class. In this sense the liberal project of market self-management failed to even larger degree than its predecessor.

7.7.2. Few notes on social property: legal/economic aspect and displacement of class antagonism

⁹⁹⁸ In the 1970s Yugoslav legal and political practice continued to work on “social ownership” and in response to the dangers of market reform, it adopted and formalized what Marx termed the “association of producers”. The law on associated labour in 1975 – perhaps the most advanced form of legal communism – renamed socialist enterprises into the Basic Organisation of Associated Labour (BOAL, see appendix 2), where workers gained complete and democratic access to the determination of wages and the use of the social ownership in the BOAL. They would also connect horizontally and vertically with larger organisations. Practically, this formal empowerment did not change much in terms of workers’ politics (Marković 1975 vol.I: 347). Moreover, even within this law Rus argues that the institute of associated labour is ambivalent since it is based on both communitarian grounds and possibility for more private appropriation (1988: 19).

As noted above Yugoslav socialism launched the state planning that abolished private property and nationalized key industrial branches (*state property*). This was long believed to resolve and abolish capitalist contradictions,⁹⁹⁹ however the emerging self-management model took a step further and expropriated the state of its ownership over means of production and consequently undermined its exclusive handling of social capital. Ownership of all former state enterprises, land and facilities became *social property*, a property for everyone and no one. Socialist ideologues believed that the agents who extract surplus value (“social income”) in the production process were neither the private capitalists nor the state bureaucracy. Therefore, capitalism (domination of private property) and state socialism (state property) ceased to exist. But, however progressive the departure point, it seems that the Yugoslav critique of the capitalist/socialist State returned to new paradox of state through a strong reference of very old schema of social contract.¹⁰⁰⁰ This time the withering state would make contract between self-managed society and self-managed working people, who would transfer the whole (former) state property to the society. According to this new self-managed contract, the property was not in hands of few, or one capitalist class, neither it was in the hands of state. Social property in Yugoslavia signalled the process of not only the “socialization of capital” but also its diversification, making it increasingly open and democratic, regulated by working people. Social property became real, but it did not abolish other types of property: personal, communal, municipal and state forms of property co-existed even if they were in many respects to become immersed into social property. One could argue that the co-existence of different types of legal property followed the general line of decentralisation and de-étatization of self-management.

From a more technical perspective social property implemented different aspects of property in production, which also brought some confusion. A recognized legal theorist from that time Aleksander Bajt argued that social property enabled a development of two core aspects: first, “individual social property”, which made it possible that one could for

⁹⁹⁹ For a substantial and extensive critique of socialist economists and ideologues in Yugoslavia, see KDS (1985). Poverty in theoretical research reflected the absence of a critique of socialist political economy.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Kardelj’s theory of self-management (legal conception of politics) was largely inspired by Rousseau, and according to his transition/leap from state of nature to society, one can also develop the scheme of the social contract that shows the shifts from capitalist to state socialist and finally to self-managed society. I explain the basic differentiation between “exchange” in new situation elsewhere (2010).

example manage individually how machines and incomes were handled, and how the land was used; second, this concerns “collective social property”, which guaranteed that nobody could simply sell the land or machines of a company, as these remained in the hands of everyone in the working collective.¹⁰⁰¹ The legal owner of a self-management enterprise disposes with the means of production and stands for the interest of the workers’ collectives, therefore no manager or political bureaucrat could simply close the factory down or sell it: social property was un-alienable.

Bajt further differentiates a “double inscription” of legal and economic aspect¹⁰⁰² at the level of the socialist “enterprise that would be legally the owner of the means of production, which the workers would manage in reality. The workers’ collective is then the economic owner of the means of production”.¹⁰⁰³ Veljko Rus added that the enterprise had the right of disposal, while the workers’ collective had managing rights.¹⁰⁰⁴ Both authors locate a troubling point that pertained to the improper institutional solution that could properly implement this division of ownership rights between the workers’ collective and enterprise. Rus claimed that:

the workers’ collective would decide about matters that relate to management, while the enterprise or rather its representatives would decide on matters that relate to disposal. If workers themselves would accumulate means/resources in their working organisation, then they would be also the owners of the enterprise’s capital, while if these means would be invested by other subjects, e.g. banks, foreign investors etc., then they would have the disposal rights.¹⁰⁰⁵

Rus promoted decentralisation and democratisation in the production units, and could partially agree with a search for an improved institutional framework of legal and

¹⁰⁰¹ Bajt (1975 vol.II: 163)

¹⁰⁰² A similar point for bourgeois private law was made by Alain Lipietz who claimed that the juridical right of property is logically different from the economic. According to Lipietz, the legal relation deals with a contractual relationship between persons (legal subjects), thus property relations codify relations between persons and things. The difference between “property” and “juridical property” lies not in the supports that they relate to (means and things), but that they are “inscribed in two *different* and relatively autonomous instances” (1993: 108). Moreover, “the relation of ‘economic ownership’ has as a condition of existence (is over-determined by) the relation of juridical ownership” (ibid.: 111). Accordingly, the social law makes the same distinction but is dominated by a different form of property, not private, but social.

¹⁰⁰³ Bajt (1975 vol.II : 159).

¹⁰⁰⁴ Legally, we speak of common or collective property Rus (1988). See also Žun (1975).

¹⁰⁰⁵ Rus (1988: 19). He advocated for the introduction of private property, which will bring more types of property and also allow the self-employment, and private initiative of the individual, which is extremely problematic, as it only develops the side and logic of (capitalist) cooperatives and their shares.

economic property, which suggests even more elaborate differentiation between use, possession and disposal of things/machines within the production process.¹⁰⁰⁶ However, as implied by Rus in subjects of investment who would retain disposal rights, this runs dangerously close to the re-introduction of private property. According to Bajt it was precisely due to lack of distinction between the right of use, the right of managing and the proper institutional form that the “social ownership of the means of production ... creates a situation in which social ownership is fragmented and economically approaches private ownership because the system of income distribution virtually fails to recognize interest of capital.”¹⁰⁰⁷ Even if I agree with Bajt’s evaluation of the dangerous return to private property, I would argue that in the period of market socialism, it was not the interest of capital, but the interest of workers that was not recognized. Since the institutionalisation of social ownership was not defined sufficiently, this resulted in the incorrect allocation of social capital and what I add, in the incorrect management of independent capitals that led to confusion in the self-managed economy. This confusion was an ideal ground for the spontaneity of the market forces that imposed economic rationality.

The differentiation between economic and legal aspects, according to the account of many legal theorists, very often fails to address precisely the core of the struggle between workers and socialised and independent capital in market socialism that subjugated the worker. In this respect Igor Bavčar correctly noted the limits to this analysis that takes the “property relation as conceptualised as the legal-formal relation, and not as management with the real production conditions”.¹⁰⁰⁸ Moreover, the major obstacle for potential of social ownership can be explained by blockage within the apparatus of social management.¹⁰⁰⁹ As already explained with the rise of technocracy in the previous section, the most important separation in self-management was fought around the *control* over the means of production, over both managing and executing rights. This implied questions

¹⁰⁰⁶ Importantly, Charles Bettelheim considering the articulation between politics, economy and law in terms of the distinction of three different moments in the production process: holding, possession and property. Their specific combination is crucial in the definition of a type of property. The relationship of immediate producers and the means of production with a possible use of products are taken into account as a basic matrix of his distinction (1975: 57-96).

¹⁰⁰⁷ Bajt (1975 vol.II: 162).

¹⁰⁰⁸ Bavčar in Mauke (1982: 8).

¹⁰⁰⁹ Močnik argues that “‘Social management’, a legal-political category of self-management outside the enterprise, appears as an anticipation of what is currently called ‘governance’: the management of society by depoliticisation.” (Močnik 2010a).

such as: who determined the material subsistence of labour power, and who decides on future credits and development plans? Ironically, the new labour legislation was becoming more favourable to workers' direct access to the decision-making process and determination of wages, but their real political power was diminished. The decision-making process was in reality largely determined by management and their effective disposal of ownership over the means of production. Veljko Rus pertinently noted the central source of domination was to be found in the "right of disposal":

nobody in the Yugoslav system of social property has the right to dispose with, since this right can actually not be extracted, but it is only established by an ad hoc bureaucratic-technocratic coalition of power, at times made from managers, municipal men or functionaries of political organisations. Most often this role of dominant coalitions is assumed by political agencies, where one has a combination of state Party and managerial groups; they are the ones that perform the function that Finžgar calls the 'non-ownership legal function'.¹⁰¹⁰

Rastko Močnik made a parallel observation that in the self-managed enterprise system, workers were "assigned rights that they weren't in a position to assert, as they were separated from the intellectual capacities of the work process, which were incorporated into management."¹⁰¹¹ This comes from the special division of labour within the Yugoslav economy, where the necessary time for the political activity of workers is reduced to a minimum, and where this moment of "ad hoc" coalition was taken by technocracy who became the central agent that appropriated surplus value and also decided how this surplus was to be re-invested. In the conditions of market socialism and the growing power of the technocracy the *organisation of production* itself became an actual form of the appropriation of surplus value. Bajt criticized this new situation, which could be transformed only by re-claiming the ownership in an economic sense, since social ownership failed to "liquidate the power of ownership in relations among collectives."¹⁰¹² Once the self-management economy was too exposed to the market, the dangers to partial privatisation began lurking; however Bajt relegated the solution only to the work

¹⁰¹⁰ Rus (1988: 16).

¹⁰¹¹ 2010a.

¹⁰¹² Bajt 1975. The same argument was used from a more liberal perspective, for example by Bogomir Kovač in the 1980s. For him, the plurality of self-managed interests would be achieved only by the development of independent capitals (enterprises), which calls for the "re-privatisation of social property that would enable the real constitution of self-management" (Kovač 1986). The liberal answer was that only more capitalism could bring increased development.

collectives (economic sense) without taking into account macro-economic instruments, which were at that time already decentralized.

The critical observations on the development of socialist law point to its strategic role in the formation of legal communism, and more deeply how the legal metaphor of social contract was indispensable for the model of socialist development. Also, it showed that socialist ideologues imagined even the withering away of state via legal means as if the Law was the only possible, or even ultimate horizon of the coming society. The new form of “social property” opened a fascinating experimental path that stripped the disposal power of the political bureaucracy, but had inserted new power relations within the production units. Thus, the legal progression needs to be read dialectically in relation to other fields of socialist society. Also, socialist ideologues were well aware that merely legal adaptations to the new situation, new laws and resolutions are not sufficient, but that the working people needed to be mobilized for the socialist cause. The chief Yugoslav socialist ideologue Edvard Kardelj spoke clearly that Law is inherently connected to the ideological function and needs to be integrated into a general ideological struggle for self-management. It would be the LCY and other socialist organisations (Youth) that would carry the major task of mobilizing the masses and develop the shaping of a self-managed subjectivity. This brings us to the intersection of the relations between the State, Law and Ideology in Yugoslavia, as the major forces of social cohesion and the reproduction of self-managed relations.

7.8. From Juridical Ideology to Ideology Critique: The Humanist Figure of the Self-Manager, Rise of Nationalism and Liberalism in the Late 1960s

Why should one conceptualise the obvious, namely that self-management was the official dominant ideology¹⁰¹³ in Yugoslavia? But what is the most evident and “riddled with

¹⁰¹³ Rastko Močnik introduced an important conceptual difference between “dominant ideology” and “ideology of dominant class” (1985: 7-22). These two ideologies are almost never equal; also the ruling class as such cannot instrumentally control, which ideology will become dominant.. For example in Yugoslavia the dominant ideology was self-management, but the ideology of dominant class navigated through a very diverse panorama and internal ruptures: from the more partisan, internationalist, communist orientation to democratic centralism, Stalinism and even to liberalism and nationalism. These shifts and ideological inter-

doxa” can perhaps provide us with some productive insights into the ideological panorama, to locate specific changes in the relation between state, ideological forms and ideological subject. Perhaps this is the additional challenge at the background of official ideology proclaiming the withering away of state.

Yugoslav self-management started as the major reform “from above” and as the ideology of the socialist leadership. As was demonstrated, the reform comprised a series of delayed and unanticipated effects that saw a greater autonomy of production units and the rise of a technocracy. Self-management became a dominant ideology gradually and was not imposed as a rigid set of rules that were applied in reality, or as a uniform hard-line ideological formation. Rather one should conceive of it as the omnipresent ideological horizon, translation apparatus¹⁰¹⁴ through which many different political ideologies intersected and struggled; especially in the period of the 1960s the ideological struggle was marked by extreme polarities. Self-management ideology can be seen, to paraphrase Marx, as a “general light tingeing all other colours”, modifying them, but not completely determining them. There was a pluralism of ideological orientations, but one can discern three central dominant ideologies of the ruling class: Stalinism (democratic centralism, a politics of purges and their ideological justifications), socialist ideology (a mix of Keynesian and Marxist positions regarding the plan, development and construction of the future for working people) and from the market period onwards, liberalism (experts and technocrats advocating a free market economy).¹⁰¹⁵

In this general ideological panorama I would like to dissect only one small, but very important ideological shift that had to do with the figure of self-management politics. What was the central political agency for state apparatuses, but also for other counter-hegemonic political projects? For a state of working people, it is more than evident that the dominant narrative of historical agency would be ascribed to the guidance of an unerring Party and the becoming of the proletariat. This expectation was fulfilled in the first decade of socialist reconstruction and within five years, worker, working class, working people

penetrations depend on the specific conjuncture and cannot be simply deduced from the mores of people, or politico-economic system.

¹⁰¹⁴ For closer conceptualisation of “nation” as a zero institution, neutral medium, through which other ideologies are translated and refracted see last part of Močnik (1999); at this point I use self-management as the dominant institution of socialist Yugoslavia, since there was no uniformed nation or language that would serve as a neutral instance/medium.

¹⁰¹⁵ I have discussed this in detail with the help of Woodward’s analysis of economic reforms.

were key ideological investments; on top of them was the ideal figure of the “shock worker”, who would constantly break monthly norms.¹⁰¹⁶ However, and surprisingly, this strong reference to the working class and proletariat starts to fade away in the period of late 1960s. A few major setbacks can be registered in this period, most notably a re-politicisation of the figure of Man. The historical stage prepared the ground for entrance of *Man*, the pluralism of self-managed interests (*market*) and even the ‘lofty’ idea of the *nation*. If the development of History was constantly on the side of avant-garde LCY, the ideological struggles seriously undermined this role and its sovereign interpretation of History. The challenge came both from within their own political circle, but also outside of the LCY where the arena of ideological struggle extended to the workers’ strikes, student and other mass protests that opened the political imaginary and invested, even invented new figures of politics. The next sections outline three important ideological shifts in the 1960s and in 1970s: firstly, the return of the self-manager ideal in the figure of Man; secondly, the ideological contours of the market reform that were shaped and supported (by) the rise of liberalism, and finally, the development of a reactionary response in nationalism and the ideal of the nation.

7.8.1. From the worker to the Man as key agent of self-management?

So far I mentioned workers only briefly in their self-organisation of strikes, and mainly *per negationem*, as being blocked or excluded from the political struggles and the self-management of institutions that were designed for them. This is perhaps a bit too “pessimistic” a diagnosis, which does not render the proper modality characteristic of the worker. Unquestionably, there was an important history of workers’ everyday life with cultural activities in workers’ clubs, music bands, educational groups, collective trips and holidays, which demanded semi-organized or voluntary engagement of groups of workers. However, at this point I am interested only in the very narrow shift that took place at the end of the 1960s and during early 1970s, in the replacement of the figure of worker and

¹⁰¹⁶ In the Soviet Union there was Stakhanov (promoted by Stalin in the 1930s), in Yugoslavia there was Sirotanović. Shock worker worked over the norms and was not very welcomed by other workers, because they needed to work more. This was a socialist appropriation of Taylorisation.

working people that figured in the central referential frame of the industrial plan and addressed by socialist leadership.

Addressing and representing the working people at all levels of Yugoslav society became a crucial ideological investment, no matter who spoke, the theoretical and political addressee were working people; the major decisions were done on behalf of the working class. The constant reference to the position and tasks of workers testified to an engaged and continuing investment of the State, which undoubtedly led to an over-politicisation, or as some would critically remark it ended in an over-satiation of the figure of the worker. Also, how was it possible to organize “emancipatory” struggle and the working class, when the political apparatus has appropriated the subjective figure of the worker and even promoted the very same emancipatory ideals?

The symptomatic turn from the worker can be thus understood first as a critical reaction to the master narrative of the LCY, which occupied the privileged place from which it addressed the working people and spoke in the name and for the future of workers. This dominance was challenged in 1960s with a series of cultural works, from Black Wave films, critical studies to the student movement that at times spontaneously reacted or contributed towards a rather negative image of the worker. It is valid to launch a hypothesis that theoretical and film production participated in a radical disinvestment or detachment from the figure of the worker.¹⁰¹⁷ Many critical intellectuals and artists saw perhaps the task of critically re-appropriating the figure of the working class as utopian or redundant, or perhaps it was their way to indirectly criticize the position of the LCY. What is clear is that the political figure radically shifted towards political subjectivity outside of Party control.¹⁰¹⁸ The idea of ‘Man’ became a name for real human emancipation that also

¹⁰¹⁷ Black Wave cinema was full of pessimistic references to workers, either dancing and listening to bad music, or an easy prey to the governmental apparatus (for the anticommunism of some film-directors see Boynik 2012); Praxis philosophers more than speaking about the worker spoke about ‘Man’ as a figure of a humanist politics – of human emancipation (see Kirn 2012). This is quite an under-explored topic, which needs further elaboration.

¹⁰¹⁸ A much more elaborate study should document and analyse the cultural works, educational programs, workers’ clubs activities, workers’ strikes and political pamphlets that would show different ideological formations of workers during this period (see Rajković 2012). This would most probably bring us to see the existence of several figures of the worker: from the more militant ideological subject sponsored by the state apparatus - the shock worker and a more normalized labourer and consumer; to the reproduction of the division of generalized work (patriarchal ideology), which calls into question the notion of the woman-worker; workers empowerment through workers’ strikes and other forms of political organization; and finally

criticized the Yugoslav self-management system for failure to provide the entire necessary infrastructure to prosper.

The key theoretical contribution and intervention onto the Yugoslav Marxist scene was done by the so-called Praxis school, which was of humanist orientation and participated in the current of Western Marxism. The Praxis school existed in the ten years between 1963-1973, when yearly different Marxian theorists from East and West sojourned on the island of Korčula for a summer school.¹⁰¹⁹ The major stress of the school was given to the tradition of German Idealism and Young Marx. Mihailo Marković summarizes the basic position of Praxis group around central tenet: “Man is essentially a being of *praxis*, i.e., a being capable of free activity by which he transformed the world, realizes his specific potential faculties and satisfies the needs of other human individuals”¹⁰²⁰ Praxis school states that individual activity should be basis for collective activity¹⁰²¹ For my interest here the most interesting part of their philosophical foundation si to be found precisely in the figure of Man and their re-interpretation of the concept of “praxis”¹⁰²² in the widest sense as human creative and self-creative activity. Ozren Pupovac observed an interesting point of this humanism that

resided in its opposition to any biological or naturalistic definition of the human being, and even wider, in the rejection of any essential coupling of man and finitude. The question of ‘Man’ is not a question of an ‘animal’ confined to finite conditions of nature or society; rather, it is a matter of the affirmation of the infinitude of human capacities of thinking and acting.¹⁰²³

The Praxis School explicitly rejected the thinking of human essence in terms of its determination by objective conditions. Pupovac argues “the essence of ‘Man’ was seen as

a more negative representation of workers in different films and artworks; also in intellectual /cultural/ discourse, we encounter an extremely picturesque landscape of figures of the “worker”.

¹⁰¹⁹ See Rosa Luxembourg Foundation’s publication on Praxis (2011; forthcoming).

¹⁰²⁰ M.Marković (1979: xxviii).

¹⁰²¹ Tadić (1975 vol.I: 406).

¹⁰²² *Praxis* stands for the practical becoming of ‘Man’ as a being capable of ceaselessly rising above the limits of the conditions into which he has been thrown. I would refer to three important contributions that demonstrate central push of Praxis school: firstly, a short but poignant article on the concept of alienation and Man by Gajo Petrović one of the leading representatives of Praxis (1975 vol.I: 363-366), then Tadić’s article on the individual freedom versus order (ibid.: 405-415) and last but not least Stojanović’s critique of discrepancy between ideals and socialist reality (ibid.: 467-478). For more detailed account see Popov (2003), Mikulić (2009) and Praxis journal archive accessible mostly in Serbo-Croatian: http://praxis.anarhija.org/index.php/Glavna_strana.

¹⁰²³ Personal correspondence with Pupovac.

radical internality, and radical subjectivity: it was freedom itself qua a thinking-willing-acting self-determination.”¹⁰²⁴ Praxis’ radical humanism did not reside in a biological definition of the human being; nevertheless it showed an immanent anthropological kernel despite its ambivalent take on “radical subjectivity”. Slavoj Žižek would for example criticize Praxis philosophers as “Heideggerian Marxists”, who sustained a naïve belief in so far as they posited that the “essence of the modern man can be found in the essence of self-management”.¹⁰²⁵ The Praxis group did not therefore want to change self-management but rather wanted to bring it to its full realization, which would happen via a humanist praxis and the realization of the “generic” man. The Praxis school predominantly read the young Marx and one of the key passages from *The German Ideology* spoke of the realization of the Man’s capacities in communist society, where:

each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.¹⁰²⁶

Any consideration of concrete political determinations, organisation outside of the LCY was absent, Praxis philosophers on different occasions distanced themselves publicly from a direct engagement in politics.

There can be no questions about recognizing the importance of Praxis philosophy to have contributed many stimulating treatises in a landscape of general theoretical poverty, where “official” phrasings and the vulgar canonization of Marx in textbooks brought more damage than benefit to Marxian theory. Also, it has to be said that some of Praxis’ notions importantly influenced the student movements in the late 1960s, where also some Praxis professors in Belgrade supported and participated in the student revolt. In this respect, even if at face value remaining neutral and refraining from direct engagement in politics, they articulated a new theoretical space, which challenged the position of the Party as an organic collective intellectual that supplies the working people with ideas and orientations. The Praxis intervention was thus one of the first serious intellectual challenges for the Party.

¹⁰²⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰²⁵ Žižek (2000: 113).

¹⁰²⁶ MECW (vol. 5: 47).

Perhaps their critical step to intervene in a dubious vulgarisation of Marx was correct, but I would argue that it was done in the wrong way. Firstly, I have serious doubts regarding the considerations of Man in relation to the conceptual doublet of alienation-disalienation. This is further strengthened with a failure of Praxis' conceptualisation of Man to move beyond vague abstractness of its definition of Man, and finally (self-)condemns Man to an utter "depoliticization". Perhaps their political slogan could be boiled to the following sentence that was reiterated in different works: the basis for collective emancipation is individual emancipation.¹⁰²⁷ Despite the vague reference, it seems that the closest approximation of the political figure of Man can be taken from the frame of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Man was conceptualised along the lines of liberal individual freedoms that stemmed obviously more from the French Revolution than on the socialist revolutions that were in many ways critical of positing Man and saw in this a constituent aspect of the bourgeois legal subject. In this respect, Man became the equal-free ("egalibre") subject of sovereignty that the bourgeois State institutes as a major point of ideological investment.¹⁰²⁸ My second critical reservation comes from the class perspective; nobody from Praxis school, even their sociologists or economists that were inspired by it, developed an elaborate theory on the socialist forms of domination and exploitation that would grasp contradictions of the self-management model beyond Djilas' "new class" or ideological critique.¹⁰²⁹

No matter how troublesome the idealist conceptions of Man, it has to be said that much more troublesome was the LCY's dealing with some members of the Praxis group that supported student protests. There was a repression against these members in the early 1970s (some could no longer teach at the University of Belgrade) and also the Praxis school ceased to exist as a summer school and journal. Nevertheless, even if repressed, the humanist seed was already successfully planted, because only a few years later, in the mid 1970s the chief Party ideologues integrated the concept of Man in the progressively depoliticised agenda of Yugoslav socialist politics that abandoned the revolutionary concepts

¹⁰²⁷ See also Stojanović (1998: 82).

¹⁰²⁸ See Bidet (1995) and the last section in my chapter 5, where I discuss the primacy of legal subject in construction of (capitalist) State.

¹⁰²⁹ Kirn (2012; forthcoming).

of the communist movement, participating in the Eurocommunist tide.¹⁰³⁰ Surprisingly, it was the chief socialist ideologue Edvard Kardelj who ceased to promote a uniformed vision of the militant worker or working people.¹⁰³¹ The former notions of “dictatorship of proletariat” and “working people”, or strengthening of productive forces now received a radical adaptation and the “self-manager in the self-management society”.¹⁰³² Not an “abstract citizen”, self-management will promote real man with a brand new goal: achievement of happiness! Let me quote a longer passage from late 1976:

The happiness of man does not depend on the state, neither on the system nor on the political party, but depends on man himself. Not himself independently but within equal relations with others. In these relations man needs to freely and in a self-managed way (control) master his particular and general social relations – and in adequate democratic organizational forms – also the state, system and political party as instruments of his own self-management practice. Avant-guard forces of socialism and socialist society have thus only one goal – that in relation to the possibility of a given historical moment create conditions in which man will be most free in his personal expression and creation (production), and that he will – on the basis of social ownership of the means of production – work freely and create in order to attain his happiness. This is self-management.¹⁰³³

Thus, not only do we get a new figure with a new goal, we even receive a new definition of self-management that is radically personalized, one is tempted to say “socialist realist”. Instead of the class question and industrialization there is this shift to happiness, is it really that old Voltairian trope from 18th century that promoted the self-cultivation of happiness? Instead of the classical references to the avant-guard force of the LCY or the working people Kardelj embraced happiness and man. The proper cultivation of self-managed relations can only come from within; neither from Tito nor the Party, but Man as the real agent of history will change the world. This is not a science fiction, Kardelj is deadly serious and against his earlier “utopian” attempts to construct a system he now relies on a socialist realist utopia of the individual. Or in his own words “we all suffer from one and

¹⁰³⁰ In this respect one could agree with Bockman’s claim (2011) that discerned the left-wing origins of neoliberalism. The support of economic innovation and freedoms was coupled with the ideological critique of “State” and is a shared kernel of the liberal and the self-management critique of socialist leadership. I remain critical regarding one theoretico-political conclusion: positing retrospective illusion of neoliberalism might cost us some insights in the internal labour of socialist contradictions and hybrid solutions that cannot be abstracted into one model.

¹⁰³¹ See Kardelj (1980). Originally published in 1977.

¹⁰³² Ibid.: 174-176.

¹⁰³³ <http://www.osaarchivum.org/files/holdings/300/8/3/text/82-5-109.shtml> (12th and 13th November 1977, speech given by Kardelj in Zagreb; taken from Borba).

the same illusion ... to find a miraculous system, state, institution, parliament, one or several parties which would then – via ministries or similar mechanisms – solve the problem of man’s happiness”.¹⁰³⁴ Self-management is reduced to a humanist path of self-management through the individual self-manager. This comes as a striking echo, a kin of the “return of the repressed”, as a symbolic victory of the Praxis notion of Man and individual emancipation. From victory to victory to the final defeat in Eurocommunist movement?¹⁰³⁵

Even if Praxis philosophers and Edvard Kardelj were aware that the emancipation of Man could happen only with the radical transformation of the material conditions, the definite shift and emphasis to depart from the individual was a symptomatic turn to a very different conception of the new socialist Man. The ideal figure of the self-manager was not only a shock worker, but also a shock bureaucrat and a shock manager. Should one then speculate that to become a happy self-managed worker, one should occupy all social positions? The self-manager has thus become a *total Träger*: bureaucrat in the morning, technocrat in the afternoon, collective organizer in the evening, and finally worker during the whole day and at night if necessary to educate oneself. Self-management can thus succeed only on the condition of the maximal engagement of the individual, who is emancipated in a “self-manager”. This is a perfect example of Althusser’s ideological interpellation, the utopia of the self-managed state that needs neither repression nor further ideological mobilization but merely a self-managed subjectivity. To conclude with the figure of the self-manager as Man was not the only ideological figure, but one which had to compete with other figures.

¹⁰³⁴ Ibid.: 175 (text modified). Also taken from Kardelj’s report in *Borba* from 15th July 1977.

¹⁰³⁵ Interestingly, Kardelj’s book and speeches in 1977 ceased to mention the “dictatorship of the proletariat”, or if he does, it is more negative (1980: 174). As Slobodan Stanković correctly observes, “until now the official Yugoslav theory has been that the workers’ self-management system is a special kind of dictatorship of the proletariat. No doubt, however, now that this slogan has been abandoned by some pro-Soviet and independent communist parties and by the CPSU itself (in the draft text of the new Constitution) -- the Yugoslavs also seem to have decided to no longer use the term, and have turned to “self-management pluralism” instead. This term is obviously the diametrical opposite of “dictatorship of the proletariat” (1977: <http://www.osaarchivum.org/files/holdings/300/8/3/text/82-4-92.shtml>). Interestingly, in the same year that Kardelj published the book, the famous controversy in the French Communist Party’s 22nd Congress over abandoning the concept of the dictatorship of proletariat occurred, which Althusser vehemently opposed and saw as the defeat of communist politics (Althusser 1977; Johnson 1981).

7.8.2. The cognitive frame of market reform and economic crisis: liberalism and nationalism competing for ideological hegemony

The economic crisis that struck Yugoslavia in the period of the mid-1960s and the disastrous effects of market reform unfolded in a chain of events: from the workers' strikes and student protests in May '68-'72 to the first mass nationalistic gatherings (in Croatia 'Maspok', in Kosovo Albanian nationalist sentiments). Even if the economic crisis hit the country, there was still a relative economic prosperity on the one hand, and high degree of freedom with impressive self-managing infrastructure that enabled flourishing and critique in the fields of art, culture, education, theory and political activism on the other.¹⁰³⁶ Especially, critically engaged art witnessed an unprecedented boom and produced various internationally acclaimed works that, among other things, also shed a critical light on the market reform and failures of Yugoslav socialism and the cult of personality. Political events and ideological shifts within the ruling class demonstrated that liberalism became a counter-hegemonic political force that performed a dramatic makeover of the Yugoslavian landscape. Theoretical Praxis intervention was accompanied by revolts and protests that in the late 1960s undermined the avant-garde role of the LCY as the central agent of history. This type of cultural and political critique were very often taken from anticolonial, feminist, anarchist and also communist positions.¹⁰³⁷

However, at the turn of the 60s-70s Yugoslav political space witnessed a formation of two currents that began shaping two dominant ideologies: first, liberalism, which can be seen as an internal critique to the socialist development and received direct expression in the rise of new professionals and technocrats that advocated for market reform and forced a class coalition with old and hard-line cadres within the LCY; secondly, the first pragmatic uses of nationalist arguments that were launched through the economic question of (under)development and found most direct expression in the local and republican socialist leaderships. This current was accompanied by a more "genuine" nationalist agenda of cultural bureaucracy (linguistic recognition, emphasizing ethnical/identity differences).

¹⁰³⁶ See Germani (2010) and Šuvaković (2003). Ana Janevski showed how the self-management infrastructure of cine clubs and an amateur film festival enabled an impressive rise of the quality in aesthetical and critical films (2012).

¹⁰³⁷ The ideological and political orientation of the student movements was quite heterogeneous; generally they belonged to New Left positions.

The latter directly attacked the kernel of multinational solidarity and the modernisation project that was inherent to Yugoslavia.

After numerous student protests and workers' struggles, but especially after the Soviet intervention in Prague in 1968, Tito and the socialist leadership became increasingly weary and paranoid of any sort of critique. Some years later after the appeasement of students, a repressive period of re-Stalinization of the LCY followed, when most of liberal currents in the LCY and its republican leaderships, most notably Croatian, were completely purged.¹⁰³⁸ The wave of political repressions struck with little regard for the differences between Right and Left "deviations", and was felt in the cultural/theoretical field.¹⁰³⁹ This repression did not solve any socio-economic or political antagonisms, but resulted in a vacuum within political organisations. The old generation of partisans strengthened their forces, but paid a high price for their elitist reproduction: the LCY opened the way to opportunism and careerism for the new cadres.¹⁰⁴⁰ This was one of Tito's and his inner circle's major political errors, which seemed to delay severe antagonisms coming a decade later. As was typical of some other ecclesiastical organisation, the LCY re-appropriated both liberal and national demands within the new Yugoslav Constitution of 1974.

7.8.3. Liberalism and market forces

¹⁰³⁸ Repe's historical (text)book presents us with a general overview of liberalism in Yugoslavia, especially in Slovenia (1992). In my article (2011) I shed some critical light on the central ideological position of Repe's study that is most evidently embraced in his conclusions: "Liberalism' in Slovenia was an important point on the historical path to an independent, economically successful, socially responsible and democratic state opened to the world." (1992: 260). Not only is it problematic to see "liberal" as important, it almost becomes a necessary point in the becoming of Slovenian state, one could also ask if Slovenia after the transition became more economically successful or has not only enjoy the labour of the past. The economic indicators show signs of trouble (unemployment that was always below 4%, jumped to 12% in 1990s). Is it more democratic? And what are the criteria of openness to the world? Perhaps being open for foreign investment, and to an even bigger dependency on the IMF? The liberal presuppositions are thus the lenses through which he arrives to the conclusions of his study.

¹⁰³⁹ For example, a part of the Praxis group from Belgrade University were barred from teaching further, it was difficult to publish more critical reviews in 1972-1973. Lazar Stojanović was imprisoned after making the film *Plastic Jesus* (1972), some Black Wave film-directors had difficulties getting new projects, some left the country etc.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Goldstein (2005).

I showed that the first ideological shift came from within the socialist cadres in the major political organisations with many high functionaries in all republican leaderships advocating for liberalisation and market reform. This tendency was analysed in detail in previous sections, that is why I add only a few notes on the re-birth of liberalism. Jasna Sosso-Dragović correctly acknowledged different conceptions of “Yugoslavisms” in the course of 1960s as “essentially unifying notions were effectively abandoned [...] in favour of the affirmation of Yugoslavia’s national diversity and the call for economic decentralisation”.¹⁰⁴¹ Liberalism supported arguments on decentralisation and the subsidiary delegation of power to micro-levels, where individual and entrepreneurial initiatives would be unburdened by any political content. The major representatives of the emerging economic monopolisation of power were condensed into osmotic relationships between the directors of enterprises, new banks and local functionaries, whereas their major political force and representatives were invested in the republics. The latter were agents that “spontaneously” worked on decentralisation and regional development that promoted national interest.¹⁰⁴² Especially, regarding the question of the fair re-distribution of the national product and foreign currency solidified the power of the rich republics (Slovenia and Croatia¹⁰⁴³) and presented a major ideological battlefield that led to the first paralysis and crisis on the axis between republican (liberal) and federal (Keynesian, centralistic) government. In the late 1960s a first shift or the beginnings of an ideological coalition between liberalism and nationalism also took place. What started as a call to *depoliticisation*, decentralisation and economic efficiency ended on a highly political note. Let us have a closer look.

In the late 1960s Yugoslavia strongly pursued the construction of highways and the development of tourism facilities all across the country. The central political event, that was also used as a prelude to a final crackdown on the liberal republican elite by the federal leadership, was the so-called “motorway affair”. The question was of economic nature, because it included the question of the distribution of massive international loans

¹⁰⁴¹ 2002: 29.

¹⁰⁴² See Woodward 1995a, Močnik 2010b.

¹⁰⁴³ The Croatian demand for a less centralized approach to handling foreign currency that came to Yugoslavia mostly through Croatian tourism was an economically justified argument.

from the IMF.¹⁰⁴⁴ The conflict between the Federal authorities and the Slovenian republican leadership took place due to an alleged abuse of the “national key” policy. A tacit rule was that each republic waited its turn, namely if one republic did not get part of the international loan in the first round, then it will get it the next time. In 1969 it was expected that Slovenia would get a part of the loan to finance a few sections of highway, yet the loan was channelled to building highways in other parts of Yugoslavia. A part of the Slovenian delegation was missing at the meeting and due to poor communication-it can be only speculated how politically motivated this was-the news of priorities of where the loan was to be distributed first, sparked a fire. Many irregular meetings of the functionaries followed a real media campaign on the unfair distribution of the loans across Slovenia; for the first time after WWII nationalistic phrases were voiced within the *League of Slovenian Communists* (LCS), especially from the local municipalities. The slogans of independent Slovenia and the exploitation of the Slovenian economy from the centre (Belgrade), the plea over the unequal distribution of national product and the constant (excessive) distribution of funds to the more undeveloped parts of Yugoslavia forced their way onto the political agenda.

Despite the public outcry and the general support of the liberal demands the motorway affair did not trigger larger protests across Slovenia, but was used for the power struggle within the LCS. The dominant liberal faction supported by the technocracy demanded larger authority and more autonomy for republics, which came in ideological congruity with the Croatian leadership that promoted a common Yugoslav confederation, where central authority would take care of foreign diplomacy and a common army, while republics would get more authorities for creation of economic independence.

The demands for political re-organisation went together with the further suggestions for continuing market reform. One could argue that the liberal current formulated an impressive, genuine “post-fordist” answer¹⁰⁴⁵ that consisted of greater autonomy for all economic subjects and where the central emphasis on the future economy was placed on innovation. An important economist Ermin Kržičnik argued that the Slovenian economy should be directed towards banking, the tertiary-service industry,

¹⁰⁴⁴ For a historical study see Repe (1992).

¹⁰⁴⁵ See my article (2010).

research, and the efficient use of its geo-transport position, boutique industry, design, engineering intellectual development and computers.¹⁰⁴⁶

Contrary to liberal expectations, the federal authorities, Tito and the inner circle of the socialist leadership launched a famous counter-offensive that succeeded to defeat all liberal currents in the LCS and other republics (Serbia, Macedonia, Croatia). The power struggle that authorized the technocracy was defeated and with it, the liberal agenda was at least temporary suspended. Socialist leadership for the last time recentralized the Yugoslavian developmental plan and held to an old recipe of industrialization with some market elements.

In the beginning of 1970s it became clear that the socialist leadership was merely defending its own “raison d’être”, reproducing the existing social relations in order to survive as the ruling (political) class. Looking retrospectively on the rise and fall of liberalist tendency in socialism, one of representatives of the younger generation of Slovenian liberals exclaimed:

historically speaking Slovenian liberalism (like Serbian, Dubček and others...) was actually an attempt in immature historical circumstances to perform a democratisation of ‘socialism’. That was certainly not possible due to the rigid and monolithic ideological model that must be ruined before it can be destroyed. Because it was cracked, one could not save it, and that was the case in the whole of Eastern Europe. Then, instead of towards democratic socialism, it progressed on the path of right-wing orientation and the restoration of rudimentary forms of capitalism. If liberals in Yugoslavia, and Dubcek in Czechoslovakia, had succeeded then something from socialism would remain. In this respect the liberal variant was a historical possibility. Those that destroyed it have actually destroyed socialism in positive sense.¹⁰⁴⁷

Certainly I agree that a part of historical responsibility for the destruction of socialism should be ascribed to the socialist leadership itself and their at times brutal repression against the liberal currents within the LCY and especially the external workers/student opposition.¹⁰⁴⁸ However Petrič already writes from the perspective of accomplished fact, from the necessity that real existing socialism must fail and only liberalism could act as a social corrector, a kind of liberal socialism. My thesis here is a bit more radical: neither the Party-line that compromised between plan and market to sustain its domination of power, nor the liberal way that strengthened market elements could have saved this “positive”

¹⁰⁴⁶ Quoted in Repe (1992: 41).

¹⁰⁴⁷ Quoted in Repe (1992: 236).

¹⁰⁴⁸ Kirn 2011, Goldstein 2005, Repe 1992.

sense of socialism. What were absent in these proposals were consideration of the link that would oppose the tendency to underdevelopment, and the whole problematic of unemployment. The strategic link that failed to re-animate communist politics was the missing link between working people and new currents in political organisations at the beginning of the 1970s: a failed encounter between the new communist forces and students revolts that took place from below. Petrič forgets to add that the small episode of the rise and fall of economic liberalism, actually for the first time in the history of socialist Yugoslavia outlined a new political coalition that became a victorious historical block of liberalism and nationalism at the end of the 1980s.

7.8.4. Nationalism and nation-state

Let me conclude this analysis with some notes on the rise and return of nationalism. Nationalist ideology struck Yugoslavia almost like a “return of repressed” in late the 1960s, when many officials hid behind the banner of “brotherhood and unity”. Many that believed in the unfinished project of Yugoslavia and fought or supported the *People’s Liberation Struggle*, perceived nationalistic outbursts as remnants of the long past era, typical of old Yugoslavia, and its backward rural past. There were many that considered nationalism as a forgotten past that seemed to lurk behind, but it also seemed to touch on the all too *unheimlich* and traumatic presence of the civil war and the local collaborationism of WWII. The latter was ignored, demonized and not sufficiently discussed.¹⁰⁴⁹

The glorious past was synthesized in the victorious narrative and celebration of partisan struggle. Perhaps socialist ideologues hoped that the official ideology of antifascism would guarantee the disappearance of fascism. Not that the memory of victory should be forgotten or revised (as is the case today), but the rise of a nationalist discourse should be taken much more seriously. For anyone alert to the sudden resurfacing of nationalist passions and the history of nationalism and liberation in 20th century Balkans,

¹⁰⁴⁹ *The Man from the Oak Forrest*, was one of the first films that portrayed Chetnik in a more complicated and exoticised way (M.Popović, 1964). After the initial silence after the screening, it received big applause in Pula film festival. See Goulding (2002). This type of reaction is telling about the taboo that existed on certain topics in former Yugoslavia.

the dramatic rise of nationalist slogans and gatherings at the end of the 1960s simply cannot come as a complete surprise. Even if one desired not to see it and also not to overestimate its initial shape and intensity, one needed to acknowledge its dumb presence. Nationalism was back on agenda in Yugoslavia, plain and evident, even in the midst of discussions in the LCY and in everyday situations. But how did it become so agile?

One of the most important economists of that time Branko Horvat suggested that the rise of nationalism should be understood as a response to the general feeling of economic insecurity that resulted from the crisis of development. The mass exodus of the agricultural population to the urban milieu was faced with material shortages, which in turn was linked with the economic deprivation of some regions and the issue of unemployment.¹⁰⁵⁰ In light of the disenchantment with the socialist project and the betrayed ideals of the revolution, parts of cultural and intellectual circles fuelled additional frustration and apathy. More or less subtle forms of resentment accompanied the critique of the authoritarian and rigid character of the LCY and the socialist leadership. In these circumstances the quintessence of the national-political *quid pro quo* took clear sides in the lasting opposition between either a larger nation that supposedly dominated others (evil Centre), or in richer republics that economically exploited other parts (North). The structural problems were used as a major justification for imposing a policy of autarchic closures, the shutting down of economies propelled by calls for republican sovereignty that started paralyzing Yugoslavian federalism and the development of the Yugoslav economy. All these socio-economic processes shaped the general economical contours and reasons for the rise of nationalism. One can agree with the proposed framework when discussing nationalism, although with one critical observation: the purely “economic” explanation would bring the question too close to the general underestimation of the nationalistic danger that was so common for the Yugoslav federative leadership.

Research on nationalism needs to bring into light the politically unresolved issues that accompanied the new Yugoslavia. The already mentioned “anti-Albanian” sentiment and the troubles at the end of the WWII spoke about the unresolved status of Kosovo that became an autonomous region of the *Socialist Republic of Serbia*. Due to the fiercest underdevelopment in the whole country, the local bureaucracy in order to ideologically

¹⁰⁵⁰ Horvat (1976: 38).

threaten the centre and receive greater financial re-distribution launched Albanian nationalist arguments. Some Albanian groups at the end of the 1960s demanded an equal status in Yugoslavia that would grant Kosovo the status of a republic.¹⁰⁵¹ The protests were met by political repression and left open very direct references to ethnic identification and the status of different nations (and nationalities) within the Federation and the Republic.

Furthermore, research on nationalism needs to add the cultural-ideological aspect that began dominating over the two other aspects (political and economic) without which one cannot understand the genealogy of nationalism. This is obviously to walk on thin ice, since many that worked on the field of nationalism and ethnical differences and identities helped to produce an ideological effect that retrospectively sees Yugoslavia as “artificial entity”, which nurtured a myth of the possible peaceful co-existence of many nationalities and religions. In this respect, I share Susan Woodward’s deep criticism that undermines the “ethnical hypothesis” that works as “a self-fulfilling prophecy”.¹⁰⁵² Much more than telling something about the Yugoslav past retrospective ethnicisations rather seems to stand on an apologetic and reproductive standpoint of their currently new nation-states. As if the relative stability and existence of this same country for almost half a century never existed. Simultaneously with this disclaimer, any research has to deal, both politically and theoretically, with the ideological and political forms of nationalistic movements that were present in socialist Yugoslavia. In this respect, studies of Jasna Dragović-Sosso and Andrew Wachtel aptly brought attention to debates in linguistic and cultural circles, connected to intellectual history yielding very material effects.¹⁰⁵³ A general historical account might categorize this event as minor, but in terms of nationalist renaissance, this was a crucial event. In 1954 there was an established thesis that the Serbo-Croatian language is one language with two variants.¹⁰⁵⁴ In 1967 this thesis was “scientifically” undermined by *Matica hrvatska* (Croatian cultural organisation), which started to demand the official separation of languages, Croatian and Serbian again became two different

¹⁰⁵¹ Magaš (1993).

¹⁰⁵² Woodward already speaks in the light of the recent break-up of Yugoslavia, but criticizes the approaches that tend to eternalize national conflicts: “Ethnic differences, even substantial differences, do not set a society inexorably on a path toward war. Few states are free of the potential for animosity along ethnic, religious, racial, or communal lines. All countries have histories, even unresolved quarrels and expunged traumas, but they do not inevitably become the cause of war.” (1995a: 18)

¹⁰⁵³ Dragović-Sosso (2002), Wachtel (1998).

¹⁰⁵⁴ This was the agreement between linguists and cultural workers in 1954 in Novi Sad (Dragović-Sosso 2002: 32).

languages.¹⁰⁵⁵ *Matica hrvatska* became a centre of the national renaissance, which later grew – in the changing economic conditions and struggle for greater economic sovereignty – into a mass movement called “Maspok” (masovni pokret: eng. mass movement) that was joined by various other groups, from intellectuals and liberals to students and workers. The movement was publicly supported by the LCC, the Croatian leadership and used in order to gain further authorities for the republic. But at one point the political demands became very conservative and the growing popularity of *Maspok* brought nationalistic tensions to the fore in ethnically mixed regions of Krajina and elsewhere, where a Serbian minority lived. Apart from the linguistic demand for separation and economic authority over foreign currency, parts of *Maspok* demanded Croatian independence and the declaration of Croatia as a state of Croats eliminating Serbo-Croatian not only as linguistic but also as a political reference. The Croatian state would become the state of the Croats without Serbs, which became a reality in 1990s.

Maspok and other nationalistic outbursts can be read at least in two ways: on the one hand as a reactionary political response to May ‘68 and leftism with its direct anti-communist kernel, and on the other hand as a reply to an economic crisis that came via the critique of the socialist leadership’s incapacity to solve challenges. In this respect, a path towards a more liberal management within the frame of the nation-state was opened, which challenged both the federative constitution and the socialist orientation of Yugoslavia.

Things began to get out of control; that the situation was particularly grave can be read from following words of Tito’s speech in 1971: “Do we want to have 1941 all over again? That would be a catastrophe.”¹⁰⁵⁶ The Maspok movement was repressed in 1971 with some of its political leaders arrested and imprisoned.¹⁰⁵⁷ The political repression continued into all levels of the LCC. The answer to Tito’s entourage and dominant line in the LCY was a clear and direct “no” to nationalism, although it is known that the repressive methods did not make the problem disappear. A few years later in 1974 the new Yugoslav Constitution *de facto* proclaimed a political move towards confederation and gave republics more authority that would become the constitutional basis for the future

¹⁰⁵⁵ Parallel to these writers also in Serbia started following the example and advocating the thesis of one nation one language.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Quoted in Dennison Rusinow (1978: 299).

¹⁰⁵⁷ Repe (1992: 250).

independent nation states. Ideologically, ethnical identification gained an important recognition in the Constitution, where more emphasis was placed on “national” belonging.¹⁰⁵⁸ In a similar way, as with the liberal tendency, once particular sects and groups were dealt with by repressive measures, an ideological compromise was nevertheless undertaken. But a compromise with (left)liberalism is one thing, while with nationalism it is something completely different.

Undoubtedly, the Party’s political repression of the leftist and liberal tendencies on the one hand, and the nationalist tendency on the other had the desired short-term effects: it re-asserted the political control of the inner socialist circle with Tito and temporarily suspended the plurality of different ideological orientations. Taken from a longer strategic perspective repression showed that it was actually the final outcry of the partisan generation that guided people in the PLS and courageously fought against external threats by pursuing the socialist transition. The old partisan elite was now glued to power and faced certain deadlocks of its own self-management project. It pointed to further weaknesses in the political and ideological mobilization of the LCY that could not muster new revolutionary cadres within the socialist institutions. It would be one-sided to put the whole historical responsibility for the exhaustion of socialist Yugoslavia merely on the “totalitarian” character of the socialist leadership that imploded due to the absence of democratic accountability and the rule of law. One cannot understand the tragic break-up of Yugoslavia without a long political, economic and cultural investigation of two suggested ideological tendencies: liberalism and nationalism.

The ideological amalgam or the first embryo of the alliance of liberalism and nationalism gives us insights to outline new ideological and political forms that were “in progress”, in transit. The purist activity of separating languages accompanied by demands for the recognition of national and economic sovereignty was not limited to linguistic field; on the contrary it carried the alternative model of a political constitution: the model of “one nation in one state”. The nationalist ideological shift did not address or employ the figure of the self-manager and the working class; the Nation now occupied the political space, which was in the 1970s perhaps the most “utopian” subjectivity that fomented nationalist

¹⁰⁵⁸ It is also interesting to note that the group that named itself “Yugoslav” was constantly growing up until the end of Yugoslavia, in all parts of Federation. This has to do with the unfinished character and ambivalent notion of “Yugoslavness” (Pupovac 2007).

outbursts. The Nation-form returned to the historical stage and the presupposed ethnical substance began looking for its most ideal political form that could no longer be easily reconciled with the multi-national federation in the times of growing crisis. It found it a decade later in the legal state, or rather in the utopian couple of “Nation-State” that started shaking the political forms of Yugoslav socialist self-management.

7.9. Summary

This chapter utilised a loosely Althusserian perspective to analyse major shifts in the functioning of market socialism: the political system (self-management from the perspective of a withering away of state; the institutional framework and changes due to market reform), shifts and births of dominant ideologies (the figure of the self-manager and Man; liberalism and market, nationalism and nation), the speciality of self-management law (social ownership supporting and displacing the class question) and economical transformation (the major contradictions of market socialism: capital and labour, unemployment, underdevelopment, external dependence on the IMF). The research provided elements for critique of “socialist reproduction”, but also touched a few moments of struggles that culminated in the social and political critique of socialist development. The period between 1965 and 1971 was extremely rich on different levels and mapped out a specific amalgam of forces that were engaged in power struggles: from communist and anarchist to liberal and nationalist. The ideological shifts uprooted the exclusivity of the chief agent of history, the Party (LCY) and its traditional referent the working class.

The ideological and political assault was fought “from within” and was explained by the rise of the technocratic fraction, which became a part of the ruling class. The political efforts of this faction were not detected only in the making of market reform, but also in all sorts of resolutions and legislation that affirmed the new class compromise that created a new mode of regulation with further decentralization and de-etatization of the political apparatus. This did not result in workers’ control of the production process, but enabled the direct control of technocrats over labour power. Rather than enthusiastic workers controlling social and independent capitals, expert technocrats ruled in the

economy and professional functionaries in decentralized politics, which produced a double blockage for workers' politics.

The situation became worse after Yugoslavia opened its economy and integrated into the global flows of capital and labour power. Firstly, it became more dependent on "external help" in the form of the IMF/WB loans, which made the level of indebtedness grow. Entering into financial circuits and opening to West made Yugoslav economy more vulnerable to external movements (oil crisis, crisis of the Welfare model), while the internal contradictions such as the spiral of underdevelopment and unemployment with growing inflation demonstrated that what was in crisis was *Yugoslavian self-management model that rested on the productionist model of socialist industrialization*, which stripped of central authority risked even bigger crisis. The late 1960s saw all the key constants of socialist industrialization under severe threat: full employment, economic growth, the balance of growing production and consumption, trade balance with foreign countries, regular working contracts. Only the social infrastructure, tourism and some major industrial projects seemed to be impervious to the crisis. However, saving this model with the liberal recipe resulted in disaster, resulting in only a bit more than 2% growth with some industrial branches stagnating for the first time after WWII.¹⁰⁵⁹ The foreign investments did not meet even pessimistic expectations and the level of public debt started to grow dramatically.

Liberalism was not the only alternative to save the Yugoslav economy from its internal fracturing, but rather the contrary, it seemed to have injected large degrees of reforms that the economy and the working people were not willing to agree with. A liberal understanding of the self-managed principles did not result in empowering and enabling workers' control, or in developing the politics of the workers' collectives. On the contrary, the effects of reform strengthened economic policy and uprooted the workers. Market reform brought the imposition of fiercer competition amongst enterprises (the liberalisation of prices, the disciplinary effects of the market), the underdevelopment of poorer regions and republics (the abolition of the *Fund of Investment*) and within the enterprises the domination of technocracy over workers. These two strategic separations within production units and between production units should be seen as the major referential

¹⁰⁵⁹ Samary (1988: 168-171).

frame to navigate and understand the character of class relations in Yugoslav self-management. The evaluation of market socialism allowed us to confirm the thesis that the strengthening of the capitalist tendency was materialized through the *class struggle between labour and capital, although with different intensifications and changing class constellations. The side of capital consisted of the balancing of class coalitions between the political bureaucracy and the technocracy (the ruling class), while the workers' class struggle was a secondary aspect that sporadically emerged via certain existing institutions (trade unions, working collectives) and more spontaneous workers' strikes.*

The economic shifts were analysed from an ideological perspective, where I pursued the panoramic ideological critique focusing on the most privileged figure of politics. Firstly, a symptomatic turn can be detected in the change of figure: the working people and working class were replaced by the individual initiative and (self)manager as the central architects of future socialism. The centrality of Man in all activities was bridged with a more political framework, where the leadership of enterprises in the delegated system started to rely on republics as the main centres of power to implement and negotiate self-managed interests. The imaginary underlying of this move was informed by a legal subject of rights and freedoms on the political side, while the more pragmatic economist view promoted the subjective figures of managers and enterprises entangled in the objective laws of the market that should guide Yugoslav development.

On the other side of the political spectrum nationalist ideology rose for the first time in the history of socialist Yugoslavia and brought back the political referent of the Nation. The two at that time exclusive ideologies of nationalism and liberalism met more than a decade later. More than a mere displacement of class conflicts or the epiphenomena of crisis, nationalist movements tell us something about the self-management of political institutions and Yugoslavian society. As such it deserves to be researched in its full contradictory nature combining political, economical and ideological moments of its formation.

Market socialism in the time of economic and political crisis was a period, when socialist transition started losing the teleological grounds of socialist progress and where two central cognitive frames in dealing with the crisis came out as solid, but at that time competing ideologies: liberalism and nationalism. The historical processes showed not

only that nationalism is born out of a specific set of analysed politico-economic conditions, as their simple reflection, but also that it needs to be seen as one of the major ideological forces. Ideology does not simply reflect the world, but created and changed the socialist world; internally and externally it shook the long ideological dominance and belief in socialist progress and multinational community. The 1970s saw the embryo of the Nation-State develop that later became the ultimate agent of research and politics that eventually defeated socialist Yugoslavia. It was also the ultimate hero of the recent wars that were fought in none other than its national-liberal framework.

8. Concluding remarks: from Althusser's break to additional notes on the break-up of Yugoslavia

The dissertation thesis departs from a theoretical and political diagnosis that marks the whole post-Yugoslav context, namely, the historical experience of the failure of Yugoslav self-management socialism with its transition to various forms of more or less neoliberal capitalism and more or less extreme nationalism within liberal State in the 1990s. This historical transformation was accompanied by the burial of Marxist theory and theoretical transition to various postmodernist theories and open nationalist historiographies that legitimize the present state of affairs: the birth of new nation states has finalized the process of centuries old romantic aspirations. *Chapter 1* beside the contextualization of research sheds some light on pertinence and importance of a return to two, not only physically, but in the horizon of "post" symbolically dead objects: *Louis Althusser* and *socialist Yugoslavia*. It seems that these two referents can today be perceived only as historical curiosities, however their spectral dimension is still felt in the present, registering on different political and theoretical occasions.

The return to these two referents is connected to theoretical and political scandal. On the one hand I deal with a return to the name of Louis Althusser whose work is marked by a scandal in philosophy, and especially in the Marxist theory, Althusser was and remained a Marxist till his end, while announcing from interiority the crisis of Marxism. Contrary to the immediate post-Marxist temptation, his announcement calls for even a

more rigorous return to Marx. Althusser for the Stalinist or left-wing communist remained a name of theoretical scandal. On the other hand I deal with the experiment of socialist Yugoslavia, which was created after a successful antifascist partisan struggle of WWII and as a specific road to socialism initiated in the split with Stalin. Yugoslavia was first to openly reject the dominance of first socialist country and posited Lenin's idea of "withering away of the state" in the frame of the workers' self-management, which opened to a non-aligned movement in bipolar world. Yugoslavia in the past, but also in the present post-Yugoslav horizon is a name of political scandal. This research is more than a recurrence to a historical curiosity guided by a search for "partisan" counter-archive, historicization of communist sequences¹⁰⁶⁰ and socialist experiences on the one hand, and returning to/reconstructing some conceptions from the work Althusser, which confront the relegation of these objects "riddled with doxa" to the "dustbin of history".

The dissertation consists of three equally important parts, which can be read autonomously, but are in many ways relating to each other. They loosely correspond to general moments in Althusser's work: philosophy and its position (part I); Marxist theory of politics and reproduction (Part II); historical study of revolutionary sequences and decline of Yugoslav socialism (Part III). The reconstruction of some of Althusserian and post-Althusserian concepts will serve us to revisit socialist Yugoslavia and in turn, revise and continue certain theoretical limits of Althusser's work: a striking absence of a concrete study of class struggles, which has been only announced in his work, will here receive its "realization".

Part I returns to Althusser through one seemingly marginal concept: theoretical solitude, which always accompanies great theoretical discoveries. *Chapter 2* makes a close reading of two post-Althusserian thinkers: Gregory Elliot, one of the biggest authorities in Althusserian scholarship and Jacques Rancière, his former student, who later turned his pen fiercely against his teacher. In the case of Elliot's defense of early Althusserianism his final judgment of Althusser's solitude seems to correspond with our *Zeitgeist*: Althusser is seen as a mere "transitional form" between Marxism and post-Marxism that is now long gone; however, and here one should go against following the necessity of the future turn to post-Marxism, the most creative moment lies in Althusser's return to Marx, which points

¹⁰⁶⁰ Bosteels (2010: 59).

to what and how are we to deal with such a return today.¹⁰⁶¹ Rancière's critique attacks the famous "symptomatic reading" and the circle of Marxian position that revolves in supposed union between revolutionary theory (intellectual) and revolutionary practice (working class).¹⁰⁶² If Rancière's central argument is to restore Althusser to theoretical solitude that would cut him from the circle of debt "communist-Marxist", he consciously excludes the option to continue Althusser's thought in points that remained incomplete. Evidently, the gist of my thesis fully embraces precisely this incompleteness and demonstrates that Althusser –even if frequently exerting symptomatic reading– did not pretend to answer everything *for Marx*.

This critical dialogue opens a fascinating question that was so often presupposed in the history of Marxism: the union of theory and practice with its presupposed agents of history: working class, masses, Communist Party and Party intellectual. In *Chapter 3* I reconstruct the question of theoretical and political practice through a reading of the *Theses on Feuerbach*. This is also the point where Althusser's position on the role of philosophy oscillates and suggests a radically different direction revising both his earlier "theorist" external position and his more "politician" stance on philosophy as revolutionary weapon. His proposal of Marxist philosophy embraces a much more paradoxical position that I name "engaged distance". Criticizing the pragmatist and Stalinist temptation to register and translate theoretical slogans into politics, that is, to make theory subservient to politics, Althusser opens a more intriguing thesis, that philosophy, even by taking sides and being combative, works on its own field, between the "scientific" and the "ideological" that is "at a distance" from political reality. Philosophical effects are most often "theoretical", remain within philosophy and cannot be prescribed with political value and efficacy. That does not mean that Althusser refrains from philosophical intervention, this was always a strategic mark of his enterprise, but he shows at the theoretical level of philosophy that does not pretend to be able to finally "resolve" all paradoxes of capitalism and set precise formula for political action.¹⁰⁶³ At the same time I highlighted what "new materialism" for today would be: ambitious continuation of collective theoretical (and political) project that would

¹⁰⁶¹ Elliot 1993.

¹⁰⁶² Rancière 2004.

¹⁰⁶³ This influenced another of his students, Alain Badiou, who has developed an impressive study of philosophy and its conditions (2009).

work on three fields, between the tenth and eleventh *Thesis on Feuerbach*. The collective materialist enterprise consists firstly in performing a historical analysis (of past and present state of affairs); secondly, of philosophical investigation (supplying theoretical concepts, rethinking the idea of communism, taking the standpoint of the future); and, thirdly, political practice. Contrary to the certain readings¹⁰⁶⁴ that reduce Althusser to either a thinker of conjecture (politics of rupture) or thinker of structure (reproduction), my reading proposes to read both currents together. It is precisely this inherent tension within Althusser's thought, which makes it so contemporary for today.

This reading is inscribed in *Part II* of the thesis, where chapter 4 reconstructs Althusserian theory of politics and chapter 5 the Althusserian theory of reproduction. *Chapter 4* diagnoses the move to Machiavelli as crucial in his continuing occupation with Lenin and the socialist revolution in Russia as the theory of "weakest link". For Althusser Machiavelli had a strategic role and place for the Marxian theory of politics, while his major question was how to think novelty? How to think the *New prince in the new principality*? Althusser was fascinated by Machiavelli's innovation due to his consideration of novelty that laid outside the ideological coordinates of his times (humanism; theology) and by opening the theoretico-political horizon that was completely new in that situation: *Italian national unity*. At this point I supplied an Althusserian reading of the encounter of *virtù* and *fortuna* with some concepts from Jacques Rancière's theory on politics that turned out to be a fruitful combination. Apart from developing a more nuanced view on revolutionary novelty that can be re-imported into Marxian theory, the crucial point for the Althusserian reading immediately resonates in another question: how to think the inscription of novelty into reality, or how a rupture "takes hold", how to continue the revolutionary encounter? One of the possible paths that I suggested is to re-appropriate Machiavelli's formula of "mantenere lo stato" into "mantenere la rottura". This opened a series of theoretico-political questions that provided Althusser with insights for considering a new "transition" beyond both evolutionary and teleological perspectives.¹⁰⁶⁵ In other words, the theory of encounter can be fruitful to understanding the taking hold of the capitalist mode of production with all its transitory and contradictory historical forms. And

¹⁰⁶⁴ Balibar 1993.

¹⁰⁶⁵ See Morfino (2005).

here Machiavelli is the first not only to posit the question of violence for a political project, but also to open the question of State, which leads me into the next chapter.

The major wager of *chapter 5* reconstructed Althusser's "middle phase" concentrating on his posthumously published manuscript *Sur la Reproduction* (only the ISA essay published) that reshaped his return to Marx in elaborating on some burning limitations to Marxian theory. Althusser's major contribution can be conceived in his element of reproduction, where State, Ideology and Law play a pivotal role. His call for "assuming the standpoint of reproduction" did not only mean that production itself is already split, as it always needs to be reproduced to continue its existence, but more deeply he performed a double task: firstly to understand the specificity of (capitalist) reproduction with its different structural dynamic, but also to answer a very pressing political question of the day: why May '68 failed? Contrary to the majority of post-Althusserian studies that have been focusing on the level of ideology and ideological interpellation, my reconstruction primarily focused on the Althusserian theory of the State through the conception of "machine" and "apparatus" that account for both an homogenous, totalising approach to the instance of State and its heterogeneous nature that is vital in the reproduction of social relations and exerting the mechanism of ideological interpellation. The theory of the State needs to be necessarily complemented with theory of Law and only in this way enables a powerful dissection of a set of relationships and structural dependencies between ideology, repression and exploitation in specific social formations. This argumentative path allows the pointing out how (an) Althusser (-ian) considers the structural coupling of state-capital-law and enter into productive dialogical terrain that connects the Marxian and Foucauldian approach. I briefly explore, how this inventive take can be related to recently revisited topics, such as the "primary accumulation of capital", "mode of regulation" and "governmentality". Also importantly, the political wager of Althusserianism that tried to answer the deadlock of May 68 -despite providing some important lucid theoretical comments- failed to produce an historical analysis of concrete class struggles. If the Althusserian project is to be continued it has to practice one of its fundamental declarations: *analysing reproduction and adopting the perspective of class struggle*. This is the point that I shifted attention back to Marx and socialist Yugoslavia as

a case study that can be read as a “test” of some theoretical reconstructions on the rise and demise of Yugoslav revolutionary politics and continue the task, where Althusser stopped.

Part III deals with the specific historical experiences of Yugoslavia: *chapter 6* offers an analysis of three revolutionary/communist sequences in Yugoslavia, while in the last chapter 7 I performed a close reading of historical processes that signaled the crisis of socialist transition. In chapter 6 the analysis proceeds with a critical examination of the history of “emancipatory ideas” and struggles recovering the militant subjectivity of the partisan and also particularly the productive experiments that worked with and against the emerging socialist State. Thus, firstly I read closely the political experience of partisan struggle, or what is referred to as (1) *People’s Liberation Struggle* (PLS) that was waged against fascist occupation and local collaboration (civil war). In order to “resurrect”¹⁰⁶⁶ the partisan as a militant subjectivity I first released it from Carl Schmitt’s spell by a close “deconstruction” of his determinant element –telluric– which interpellates the partisan into a “counter-revolutionary” entity. Contrary to the telluric theorem of the partisan, I argued that the Yugoslav partisan was the only anti-nationalist force in the political landscape of the occupied country, the only movement that included forces from all different religions and nationalities, and which was not struggling in name of an exclusive Nation that would be predicated on substance, as already the term partisan suggests. With its delocalised and desubstantialized modality it undoes any kind of “telluric” moment, or in other words, the political commitment overdetermines the telluric. Moreover, following some insights from Ozren Pupovac, I historically retraced the principle of national liberation, which was later in the war context based on internationalist antifascist struggle entering into a very close connection with the principle of popular liberation. The PLS became the revolutionary mass movement with a set of political forms on liberated and occupied territories during the struggle against occupation and also against old Kingdom of Yugoslavia. This had tremendous political consequences for the post-war period and created a new political form: the federative and socialist state of Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁶⁷

¹⁰⁶⁶ See Toscano 2008.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Evidently the topic of the PLS was included in the etatist project and ideological legitimacy of new Yugoslavia that was integrated to immense cultural production, thus, any critical research has to be attentive not to fit into later socialist narrative. Although this warning is pertinent, in the light of absence of Yugoslavia today, and with the rise of nationalisms, the antifascist legacy (and PLS) remains a very

Apart from the partisan interwar sequence (1941-1945) I focused on two other important ruptures that had to do with split of Yugoslavia with Stalin in 1948. (2) Internally, the critique of Stalinist politics developed an independent “road to socialism” and created the model of “self-management” that had most productive moments in the 1950s. (3) Geopolitically, the split with Stalin performed a serious challenge for the Yugoslav communists, who had to give up on the idea of the *Balkan Socialist Federation* and began exploring a more global orientation that tackled Cold War bipolarity and the division into two camps. Especially, in its initial period between 1955-1963 Yugoslavian communists – isolated from West and East – participated in the creation of the non-aligned movement (NAM) that was to become a political platform of very different countries with a strong anticolonial dedication. These three moments constitute a kernel of Yugoslav revolutionary politics that yielded consequences on local, regional, and even the global level. The revisiting of these revolutionary sequences would easily lead us to a nostalgic dwelling and romanticizing of past heroic moments, however, this affirmation comes with a dialectical twist, that is, it is followed by a rigorous critique of “next” stage of socialist transition, which regressed towards capitalism.

Historical and other types of analysis have all too frequently placed attention on the democratic and free-market transition in the 1990s, *chapter 7* here reorients our historical attention to a period between 1965 and 1971. This period was full of contradictions and antagonisms, which in many ways demonstrated firstly that socialism is a contradictory historical form combining capitalist and communist elements, and secondly, that the historical transition to a strong capitalist tendency in the market reform of 1965 already took place decades earlier as presumed by transitologists.¹⁰⁶⁸ My general thesis inspired by the conceptual apparatus from chapter 5 observed the paradoxical movement of socialist transition: the project of withering away of the state and workers’ self-management hit its internal limit at the moment when all major political and economic decisions were concentrated and professionalised. The decentralized state apparatus did not yet mean the end of the state, but the proliferation of intermediary institutional forms on the one hand,

contemporary political and theoretical topic, which goes beyond (post)Yugoslav context and can intervene in the creation of new European antitotalitarian memory.

¹⁰⁶⁸ In this respect I share a general line of criticism put forward by Immanuel Wallerstein, who criticizes the focus on the transition/globalisation which seemingly arrived only in late 1980s (2008). See also Rakita (2011).

and market (economic) discipline on the other hand. This process resulted in an implosion and exhaustion of revolutionary politics. If Althusser diagnosed May '68, my major wager operated on a similar point of failure in (Yugoslav) socialism.

A close analysis of concrete class struggles in Yugoslavian market socialism brought me to grasp a strategic conflict taking place on two major levels: first, on macro level in the relocation of social capital that affected the development of a whole federation and existing fair distribution of national product that worked as a social transfer from rich to poor regions. Market reform dismantled the central institution of the *Fund for Investment* and transferred the power of re-location and crediting to a whole set of new commercial banks that strengthened the position of republics vis-à-vis the federation. The underdevelopment between regions further favoured the richer parts of Yugoslavia that would now compete with less constraint on the market. A second strategic conflict took place within the socialist enterprise, where the economic decentralisation and freedoms legally guaranteed more freedom for workers' self-management; in reality all strategic decisions were concentrated in the hands of directors and engineers – known as the technocracy, which was the major advocate of the market reform and its implementation. This showed that the struggle was taking place around the management of social and independent capitals in the enterprise (wage and investment), where workers were blocked from both political institutes: on the one hand by political bureaucracy in their formal representative bodies and on the other hand by economic bureaucracy in their own working place.

The industrial model of development was hit by crisis in the mid 1960s and once the new class coalitions, or rather new ruling class formulated the liberal program that opened Yugoslavia to the global market of labour and capital, introducing the criteria of economic rationality, things became much more worse. With catastrophic economical results following the implementation of the market reform, social consequences followed: the level of exploitation in enterprises strengthened, unemployment rose (*Gastarbeiter* was one way to deal with the issue) and underdevelopment accumulated differences between regions accumulated already grounded structural disadvantages. This economic and political recomposition was accompanied by a series of workers' strikes, massive student protest and cultural critique. Yugoslavia was entering into its most rich, but also one of the

most critical periods in terms of economic stagnation, which in early 1970s received even its first major nationalist outbursts; apart from some prior incidents and nationalist protest in Kosovo, Croatian political scene saw the rise of the movement called “Maspok” that for the first time after the war articulated nationalist, anti-communist and anti-etatist platform. The ideological makeover of the socialist landscape was immense: instead of the figure of the working class, a shift toward individual initiative, the concept of Man, and even Nation. After the Soviet intervention in Prague, socialist leadership was even more weary of critique; the period ended in a wave of repression, which cut the flowers on the Left and Right, with no exceptions.

The self-management project which after the period of market socialism continues with the compromises and perfecting of legal communism, which essentially failed to organise and promote social forces that could shift the capitalist tendency into a more communist sequence. The self-management model did not fail, as some would claim, because it was not liberal enough, which actually confirmed its inadaptability and inefficiency in terms of the world economy.¹⁰⁶⁹ The project failed because it was not communist enough: it did not continue revolutionary politics in all fields of society; it did not reanimate the link between masses, working class and the LCY. When workers cannot gain control over the means of production and are systematically excluded from the very institutions of workers’ participation this pointed to the deep crisis of socialist transition that had exhausted communist politics.

The close analysis of socialist failure in the period of 1965-1971 shed a different light on the highly contested question of the break-up of Yugoslavia¹⁰⁷⁰ and the historical location of “transition” to capitalism. As this opened at the end of my thesis I would like to only sketch some questions and observations for future research that could make a sequel to the Althusserian revisiting of socialist Yugoslavia. The history handles irony well and it seems that the Yugoslav project, which strongly departed from the critique of state socialism and Stalin fell precisely on the same ground, namely on the level of State. As was shown, the self-management model did not abolish the state, but decentralized authority and dispersed political power within socialist society. The constant critique of

¹⁰⁶⁹ Mencinger (1994), Repe (1992).

¹⁰⁷⁰ Ramet synthesized heterogeneous approaches and arguments on the break-up of Yugoslavia (2005).

State pushed the model to its limits following the path of “deregulation” that opened a path to liberal regulation, which externally integrated the Yugoslavian economy to financial circuits and internally loosened the socialist redistributive mechanisms. Most of all, what seemed to target the bureaucratic political and economic monopoly that would guarantee the conditions for real self-management was hijacked by an ad hoc bureaucratic-technocratic coalition of power, which in the words of Veljko Rus “were made from managers, municipal men or functionaries of political organisations. Most often this role of dominant coalitions is assumed by political agencies, where one has a combination of state Party and managerial groups.”¹⁰⁷¹ The asymmetrical class antagonism came into existence despite an impressive legal documentation and formalisation of ever growing socio-economic and political rights of the self-managed worker and community, which I called a form of “legal communism”. It seemed that the Yugoslav reality of the “withering away of state” more and more turned into reality of strengthening of the market over state. This can be taken as a strategic lesson for the contemporary discussion on the “idea of communism” that takes the State as the crucial arch-enemy.¹⁰⁷²

The historical analysis adopted also the world-system perspective that evaluated the entering of Yugoslavian market socialism into a growing asymmetrical relationship between socialist economy and capitalist world system. This was accompanied by its own internal dynamic in the relationship of labour and capital, but also it signalled a reversed relationship between core and periphery within Yugoslavia that resulted in diminishing of egalitarian parameters, the communist elements within socialist transition. These effects of the world-system and “financialisation” should not be seen as one-sided and linear, but –in a specific temporal delay- one could also observe that the gradual defeat and failure of socialism in Yugoslavia, and generally in the East, affected the demise of the Keynesian welfare state model in the West. This dialectical relationship should be revisited in much stronger terms, as it is usually accepted in the master-narrative of neoliberalism. The complex dynamic between core and periphery, between capitalist and socialist economies, between state and market translated and displaced the asymmetrical relationship also onto

¹⁰⁷¹ Rus (1988: 16).

¹⁰⁷² Bosteels (2010) is critical of a sort of leftwing communism that idealistically portrays the antagonism in simple opposition between masses/people and state, and acknowledges the need for a more concise understanding of contradiction. And the withering away, and also transitional forms between different sequences, has to do with the question of socialism, and the question what comes after the state.

the global level. And in this respect, we are nowadays living in a post-socialist world, where considering the historical forms of socialism requires a serious theoretical effort helpful in supplying some notes to rethinking communism and criticising both the dominant totalitarian studies of the socialist past and the neo-liberalist “end of history”.

The geopolitical changes and new writing of history were written from a less triumphant, very tragic perspective in the case of the break-up of Yugoslavia. The new state projects were products of the ideological amalgam of national-liberalism that came from above and from below, and at the point, where nationalism embraced the masses in the second part of 1980s, the war bell tolled and the political referent of “nation-state” rose like a phoenix from the dustbin of history. This process took place and prepared the grounds for ethnical civil wars that advocated ethnically cleansed territories, but at least, transitology *dixit*, one-party system was replaced by multi-party system and the mechanism of the legal state and market was progressively installed in the route towards the European Union that was simultaneously in the making. The transition to post-Yugoslav condition is at the same time the transition towards European Union, for which the people in Yugoslavia paid a high price. One could only grin that this utopian image of Europe became much darker at the end of the Balkan tunnel. The European Union today is miles away from democratic accountability, imploding due to the severe economic crisis that have been exhausting all cultural and political legitimacy that it was presumably based on. Even if the geopolitical situation today is very different from 20 years ago, one could reread the historical lesson of Yugoslavia into the core-periphery and future of Greece and other peripheral regions within a new Europe. If anything is to remain from European Union it should take a step into a radically new direction. But this more than to future and end, leads my closing words of the dissertation to the past and beginning, to words of Karl Marx from 1872 that seem so contemporary for our times:

Citizens, let us bear in mind this fundamental principle of the International: solidarity! It is by establishing this life-giving principle on a reliable base among all the workers in all countries that we shall achieve the great aim which we pursue. The revolution must display solidarity, and we find a great example of this in the Paris Commune, which fell because there did not appear in all the centres, in Berlin, Madrid, etc., a great revolutionary movement corresponding to this supreme uprising of the Paris proletariat.¹⁰⁷³

¹⁰⁷³ MECW vol. 23: 256.

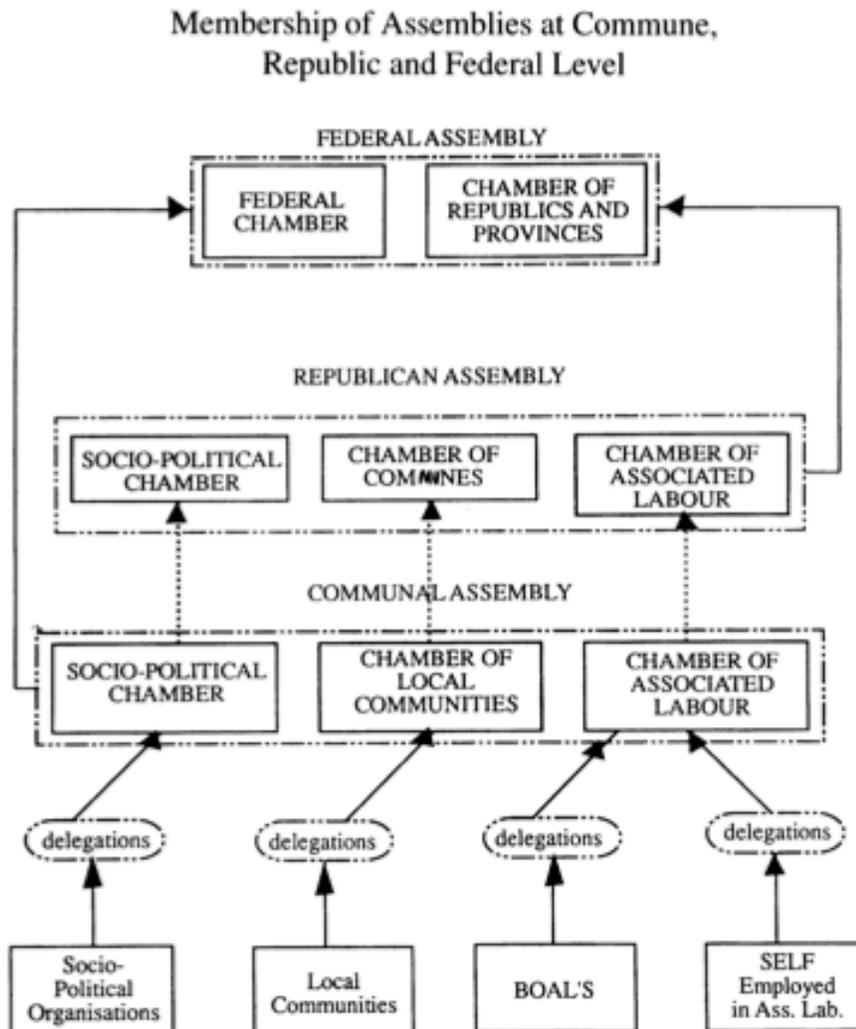
Appendices

Appendix 1: Table of major political processes and ruptures in socialist Yugoslavia

Historical period	Political form(ations)	Space of struggle	Major topics
1941-45 People's Liberation struggle, civil war, socialist Revolution	Partisans, popular masses Communist Party	Revolutionary war Encounter of masses and Communist Party	Break-up with old Yugoslavia People's Liberation Struggle Socialist revolution
'45-'52 State socialism	Bureaucracy	International stage: anti-Stalinism State: social capital Autarchy: planned economy	Nationalisation Collectivisation Expropriation *self-management
'53-'64 Workers' self-management	Bureaucracy (BC) VS. Technocracy (TC) Constitution of ruling class	Foundations for development, federation against republics International stage: non-aligned movement	First serious crisis Constitution 1963 Opening up to the West
'65-'71 Market socialism	BC, TC, student revolt, a series of workers' strikes Ruling class vs. revolutionary politics from below vs. nationalist politics	Universities Banks VS Central Bank Federation VS Republics No equilibrium in production and consumption Unemployment	Management over investments, circulation of money, credits, taxes (market reform) Effects of global crisis: unemployment, inflation, debt (IMF) Nationalism and liberalism
Agreement socialism After '80 Alternative Neoliberalism Nationalism (New wars)	Wave of repressions, constitutional compromise 1974 Tito's death New social movements, civil society, workers (trade unions) TC and national BC against federal BC Extreme nationalist movements	Fund for Development Factories; strikes (Kosovo) Major economic crisis, major corruption scandals Regulation: IMF, rationalisation, austerity policies	General crisis: state of exception (army, status of regions); crisis of socialist state; democratisation Intensification and translation of social conflict into national conflicts; break-up Geopolitical shifts Making of new Europe

Historical periodisation taken from Brborić-Likić (2003: 88).

Appendix 2: Table of multiple self-managed levels – established system in the 1970s



Source: Potts (1996: 286).

In the text I have defined all major instances but BOAL, which stands for socialist enterprises that were in 1976 renamed to *Basic Organisation of Associated Labour* (BOAL), which were supposed to make agreements and future plans among themselves.

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Slovenian-language Summary

Uvod

Disertacija »Pojmovanje politike in reprodukcije v delu Louisa Althusserja: primer socialistične Jugoslavije« začne analizo s kontekstualizacijo lastne teoretske intervencije, se pravi, z diagnozo nekaterih ključnih teoretskih in političnih referentov naše post-jugoslovanske in post-socialistične sedanosti. Po krvavem razpadu Jugoslavije zgodovinski prehod poteka po vseh ključnih družbenih ravneh: spremljajo ga pojavi večanja razrednih razlik in ekstremnega nacionalizma, prejšnjo federativno konstitucijo nadomestijo republiški demokratizirani aparati, po privatizaciji lahko govorimo po eni strani o plenjenju družbenega premoženja (neoliberalizem), po drugi pa o delnem ohranjanju keynesijanske družbenoekonomske usmeritve. Model nacionalne države (ena nacija, ena država) postane paradni konj oziroma nov narodni heroj celotnega post-jugoslovanskega konteksta. Širša politično-ekonomska slika dobi pravi naboj šele skozi temeljito delovanje ideoloških aparatov države, ki se kažejo v zgodovinskih revizionizmih, v odprti nacionalizaciji kulture, v liberalni ideologiji trga in v za nas posebej zanimivem skorajšnjem odmrtnju marksizma. Mesto marksizma zasede plejada postmodernističnih teorij, za našo tezo pomemben prehod v postmarksizem in seveda ustoličenje nacionalnih historiografij in revizionizmov: tako se vzpostavi po eni strani metodološki relativizem, ki družbene procese motri iz pluralnih perspektiv, po drugi strani pa etnometodološki pristop, ki usidra večnost nacije.

Na podlagi izhodiščne diagnoze lahko formuliramo tole zagato: kako se lahko danes vrnemo k tistim teoretskim vsebinam in polpretekli politični zgodovini, ki so jih v zadnjih desetletjih uradne ideologije poskušale kar najskrbneje pokopati, izbrisati, v najboljšem primeru pa romantizirati? Drugače rečeno, zakaj bi danes sploh vztrajali na objektih, ki sta ne le fizično, temveč za mnoge tudi simbolno mrtva: na *Louisu Althusserju* in *socialistični Jugoslaviji*? To početje bi nemara lahko upravičili kot primer zgodovinske kuriozite in ne resnega političnega ali filozofskega problema sedanosti, saj sta oba objekta del 20. stoletja, ki je dokončno končano. Pa vendar se pretekli duhovi še niso pomirili, še več, nikakor se ne morejo sprijazniti z lahko spravo našega časa. Četudi je od razpada minilo že dvajset let, je mogoče trditi, da so ti objekti še vedno »polni dokse«, kot

bi rekel Benjamin, in ravno zato zahtevajo resen teoretski pretres. V 1. poglavju in v delu 2. poglavja tako svojo vrnitev k objektoma povežem z mišljenjem teh objektov kot škandalov v teoriji in politiki. Na eni strani, in to je v disertaciji ključnega pomena, se spoprijemam z vrnitvijo k Louisu Althusserju, čigar delo je zaznamoval pravi škandal v filozofiji in zlasti v marksistični teoriji. Althusserjeve teze se mnogokrat dotaknejo travmatičnega jedra¹⁰⁷⁴ v marksizmu, ki navrta minimalni konsenz vrnitve k Marxu. A njegova je pozicija še bolj ambivalentna: Althusser je do konca svoje poti ostal zavezan marksizmu in ideji komunizma, a je hkrati iz notranjih pozicij – brez konverzije v liberalizem ali francosko »novo filozofijo« – najavljal krizo marksizma v času, ko je bil ta prava materialna in politična sila. A njegov kritični spoprijem z marksizmom je bolj kakor teleološki prehod v postmarksizem prakticiral rigorozno vračanje k Marxu. Althusserjeve intervencije so v tistem času ostale neprebavljive tako za staliniste, ekonomiste, socialistične upravljalce in voditelje Komunistične partije Francije kakor za utopiste, levičarje in liberalce. Prav tako se mu godi danes, saj je celo v najradikalnejših diskusijah o »ideji komunizma« referenca nanj zgolj postranska in se večinoma sklicuje na njegovo pozno, aleatorno fazo ali na njegov prispevek k teoriji ideologije. Na drugi strani se v zadnjem delu disertacije lotevam treh komunističnih sekvenc Jugoslavije: partizanskega boja, neodvisne poti v samoupravni socializem in gibanja neuvrščenih po prelomu s Stalinom. Ta jugoslovanska politična sekvenca pomeni prvo zarezo v mednarodnem delavskem gibanju: politični škandal, ki pa je v našem post-jugoslovanskem kontekstu še bolj izrazit. Prej kakor v eksotizacijo tega škandala želim svoje teoretiziranje umestiti v raziskave partizanskega »proti-arhiva«, ki potekajo na ravni althusserjanske rekonstrukcije in historizacije komunističnih sekvenc.

Doktorska disertacija prinaša tri enakovredne dele, skozi katere teče rdeča nit, ki v določeni meri uprizarja tri glavna področja Althusserjevega dela: 1. del teoretizira vlogo in nihanja Althusserjeve koncepcije filozofije in razvija klic k »novemu materializmu«; 2. del se loti rekonstrukcije althusserjanske teorije politike in reprodukcije; 3. del pa poda študijo revolucionarnih sekvenc in obdobja tržnega socializma (1965–1971), pri čemer v precejšnji meri prakticira ravno tisti moment, ki je v Althusserjevem delu najbolj izostal: analizo konkretnih razrednih bojev.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Dolar 1991.

1. del

2. poglavje odpira velik filozofski problem, ki zaznamuje Althusserjevo teoretsko pot: vprašanje novega, reza oziroma preloma, ki se Althusserju skozi različne tekste pojavlja v raznih preoblekah. V teh sekcijah pokažem na notranjo premeno zastavitve reza kot dokončnega dejstva do reza, ki se mora venomer znova vpisovati v realnost. Morda presenetljivo nas odkritje novega vodi do koncepta, ki mu malokdo pripisuje kaj več kot eksistencialno vrednost: vprašanje samote, ki po Althusserju spremlja vsako teoretsko odkritje. V tem poglavju soočim dve diagnozi »Althusserjeve samote«: diagnozo Gregoryja Elliotta kot enega najbolj znanih althusserologov, in diagnozo Althusserjevega bivšega učenca Jacquesa Rancièra, ki se je kmalu ostro obrnil proti svojemu učitelju. Medtem ko Elliott simpatizira z mladim Althusserjem (faza epistemološkega reza, teoreticizma), pa na splošno obsodi althusserjanstvo kot zgolj »prehodno formo«¹⁰⁷⁵ med marksizmom in postmarksizmom, katere čas naj bi že zdavnaj minil. Althusser je bil osamljen ravno v zavzetju te vmesne formacije. Tako Elliott. Na drugi strani Rancièrova kritika leti na neko drugo samoto, in sicer na Althusserjev strah *pred* samoto, strah pred tem, da bi vstopil v polje teorije (in politike) brez referentov, kot norec v puščavi.¹⁰⁷⁶ Rancière lucidno razvija argument, kako Althusser predpostavi krog, ki je ključen za njegovo misel in utemeljen na dolgu marksističnega intelektualca, ki daje odgovore delavskemu razredu. Na eni strani kroga torej (marksistična) Teorija, na drugi delavske množice (komunizem), ki so po učiteljevi intervenciji seveda sintetizirane. Rancière se na samem začetku odpove podjetju, ki bi nadaljevalo Althusserjevo misel tam, kjer je ostala nerazvita.

Kritični dialog, ki ga začne Rancièrova kritika, odpre pertinentno vprašanje, ki je vsekoli preganjalo marksizem: marksizem ni bil zgolj teorija, temveč je vsaj želel intervenirati v politično realnost, kar predpostavlja še kako angažiran odnos med teorijo in prakso s predpostavljenimi agenti Zgodovine. V 3. poglavju poskušam preko ponovnega branja Marxove 10. in 11. teze o Feuerbachu pokazati, kako se karte o vlogi, statusu in poziciji marksistične filozofije pri Althusserju temeljito premešajo. Od njegove zgodnje

¹⁰⁷⁵ Elliott 1993.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Rancière 2004.

definicije filozofije kot Teorije teoretskih praks, ki bi sodila med napačnim in resničnim (zunanja pozicija), do bolj politične definicije filozofije kot revolucionarnega orožja delavskega razreda, se Althusser premakne na bolj paradoksnu pozicijo, ki jo imenujem »zavzemanje pozicije z distanco/e«. Če je svoji zgodnji poziciji očital zunanost in idealizem, je neposredna političnost spravila teorijo v službo politike (stalinistična skušnjava), medtem ko ta opredelitev omogoči nadaljevanje z filozofijo kot intervencijo, a se hkrati zaveda omejenih učinkov lastnega dela. Se pravi, filozofija ne bo spremenila sveta, v najboljšem primeru bo v tem projektu sodelovala. Filozofija deluje na področju med ideološkim in znanstvenim, a njeni učinki niso neposredni, pač pa se vpisujejo v znotrajfilozofsko polje. Znotraj marksizma gre to tezo brati kot imanentno kritiko diskusij in pozicij, ki so druga drugi poskušale dokazati, da imajo edini resnični dostop do Marxa in do lociranja temeljnega protislovja v kapitalizmu ter s tem povezane morebitne odrešitve. Althusserjeva gesta ostaja ambiciozna, a stopi raje korak nazaj in se ne zaslepi za vednost o obstoju temeljnih protislovij in simptomov današnjega časa: četudi lahko s teorijo zajamemo momente razrednega boja in mehanizme kapitalistične reprodukcije, so teoretski učinki zunaj našega dometa, zlasti pa ne morejo biti predpisani v filozofske formule za politiko. To tezo gre brati znotraj programa novega materializma, ki ga v althusserjanskem duhu predpostavim kot nadaljevanje kolektivnega projekta na treh področjih: v zgodovinski analizi (preteklosti); v filozofskem raziskovanju (teoretsko delo, epistemološka vprašanja, pozicija proletariata in prihodnosti) in v politični teoriji-praksi. 3. poglavje nakaže glavne metodološke smernice disertacije, hkrati pa naznani notranjo omejitev Althusserja in nadaljevanje njegovega dela *Sur la reproduction*, najave analize konkretnih zgodovinskih bojev, ki niso bile nikoli napisane.

2. del

4. poglavje zastavi vprašanje začetka v politiki. Althusser je poskušal na vsak način zajeti oziroma izluščiti novum Lenina in socialistične revolucije v Rusiji, a Leninova teorija »najšibkejšega člana« ga nikakor ni prepričala. Interpretacija socialistične revolucije pomeni vsakokrat kontroverzo v marksizmu, in tudi pri Althusserju ni nič drugače. Althusser naredi gesto, ki ga vodi nazaj k Machiavelliju: po ovinku preko buržoazne revolucije naj bi Machiavelli prispeval k marksistični teoriji politike. Namesto da bi

nadaljeval z Leninom, se odpravi na pot mišljenja preloma sodobne politične misli pri Machiavelliju, ki je prvi, ki misli politiko kot prelom, ki se postavlja sama v sebi, in ni odvisna od nobene ekonomske ali ideološke vpetosti ali kakih drugih pogojev. Althusserja pri Machiavelliju fascinira vprašanje novosti: *novi princ v novi državi*, kar v srednjeveških ideoloških koordinatah pomeni odpoved kategorijam humanizma in teologije. Althusserjev Machiavelli postavi nov zgodovinsko-teoretski oder, na katerem poteka pravcati partizanski boj: antikolonialni klic osvoboditve Italije oziroma horizont italijanske nacionalne države v času, ko je bilo v tej realnosti to pravzaprav nemogoče misliti. Njegova teorija političnega preloma je ostala v povojih in na tem mestu konceptualiziram srečanje *virtù* in *fortune* z nekaterimi koncepti Rancièrove teorije politike.¹⁰⁷⁷ Politika preloma se tu še ne izčrpa, saj v sebi nosi že vprašanje o nadaljevanju srečanja oziroma tega, kar Althusser imenuje »sprijem srečanja« in dolgo trajanje. Kako torej misliti vpis kontingentnosti v samo realnost, kako misliti revolucijo kot proces in ne kot prelom? Tu predlagam premeno Machiavellijeve slavne formule »mantenere lo stato« (vzdrževanje stanja, države) v »mantenere la rottura« (vzdrževanje preloma), kar nadaljuje misel o stalnem problematiziranju izvršenega dejstva. Vprašanje nadaljevanja in konstruktivne rabe nasilja v politiki je izhodiščna točka, ki pelje Althusserjevega Machiavellija od politike k mišljenju zgodovine, tj. k vprašanju prehoda v kapitalistični produkcijski način oziroma dopolnitve Marxove teorije primarne kapitalistične akumulacije.

Tako pridemo do 5. poglavja, v katerem poleg evalvacije srečanja med Machiavellijem in Marxom orišemo kratko genealogijo koncepta reprodukcije. Celotno poglavje gre brati kot rekonstrukcijo Althusserjevega posmrtno objavljenega rokopisa *Sur la reproduction*¹⁰⁷⁸ in še nekaterih drugih poznih spisov, ki pričajo o obratu k reprodukciji, ki so ga poleg Althusserja v marksizmu začeli tudi drugi teoretiki od Henrija Lefebvrea do marksističnih feministk. Althusserjev največji prispevek gre iskati v mišljenju reprodukcije onkraj topike baza/nadzidava, saj se koncepcija strukturne vzročnosti razširi na razumevanje specifične dinamike treh področij – Države, Prava in Ideologije –, ki sem jih v tem primeru preimenoval kot ideološko-državno in pravno-ideološko področje (instanca). Ključno vodilo analize reprodukcije družbenih razmerij je uperjeno ravno proti kasnejšim

¹⁰⁷⁷ Rancière 1999.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Razen eseja Ideologija in Ideološki Aparati Države (ISA) je bila večina del objavljenih nedavno.

obsodbam funkcionalizma: po Althusserju je zavzetje stališča reprodukcije mogoče zgolj s perspektive razrednega boja. Althusser ne le vnaša v marksizem drzno tezo, da je reprodukcija primarna in da je produkcija venomer že razcepljena, pač pa si hkrati zastavlja dvojno nalogo: prvič, kako razumeti specifičnost kapitalistične reprodukcije in njenih aparatov, ki so ključno zagotovilo produkcijskega načina; in drugič, kako odgovoriti na politično vprašanje, zakaj je maj '68 spodletel?

V nasprotju z veliko večino post-althusserjanskih študij, ki se osredotočajo na tematsko področje ideologije, ideološke interpelacije in ideološkega subjekta, se moja rekonstrukcija osredotoča na njegovo teorijo države in prava kot materialnih zagotovil družbene reprodukcije, kjer je ideologija tisto (tiho) vezivo, ki prežema vsa družbena razmerja. Tu se Althusser izkaže za izvirnega bralca mladega Marxa in poskuša nadaljevati tam, kjer je Marx končal oziroma kjer je prišlo do največje omejitve marksistične teorije: pri državi. Althusserjansko koncepcijo države sem razvil skozi dve koncepciji: država kot mašina in država kot aparat; to omogoči komplementarno mišljenje homogenizirajoče, totalizirajoče Instance, ki prevaja razredni boj v pravno materijo, in heterogene narave aparatov, ki skozi vsakdanje prakse materializirajo in reproducirajo ideologijo. Skozi ta horizont postane jasno, kje so bili ključni zastavki mehanizma ideološke interpelacije in teorije ideologije. V drugem koraku sem vprašanje države navezal na pravo, teorijo katerega je bilo treba šele razviti. Pravo je na stičišču represije, ki poteka skozi državne aparate, in moralne ideologije, ki deluje kot »nujno dopolnilo« pravnih procedur in tekstov in ki odgovarja na vprašanje, zakaj ostane večina pogodb in pravil spoštovana. Tu sem nakazal na temeljno zagato Althusserjeve misli, ki preveč shematsko loči represijo od ideologije, prisilo od morale, kar se izkaže ravno ob razumevanju prava. Tako postavljena in revidirana teorija reprodukcije omogoča mišljenje niza strukturnih razmerij med ideologijo, represijo in eksploatacijo v določeni družbeni formaciji. Če je po eni strani prispevek k teoretski analizi družbene vezi, se zdi, da Althusser kaže tudi na možnost družbene razveze, ki bi potekala ravno na ramenih reprodukcije. Pravo ali država namreč nista nujni in večni entiteti urejanja medčloveških odnosov in vse kompleksnejših družbenih sistemov. Kljub klicu k razvezi in analizi konkretnih razrednih bojev Althusser tega podjetja ne izpelje. Tu smo vprašanje maja '68 zamenjali z vprašanjem vzpona in padca jugoslovanskega komunizma/socializma.

3. del

6. poglavje postavi koordinate partizanskega proti-arhiva v imenu mišljenja zgodovine emancipatoričnih idej in praks – komunističnih sekvenc v nekdanji Jugoslaviji. Analiza je osredotočena na partizanski bojem (NOB), ki je bil boj proti fašistični okupaciji in domačim kolaborantom. V tem poglavju uporabljam nekaj koncepcij iz 4. poglavja, s katerimi je mogoče misliti politiko preloma in ubraniti militantno figuro partizana. Ta je v politični teoriji razmeroma dolgo ostala pod jurisdikcijo fašističnega misleca Carla Schmitta.¹⁰⁷⁹ Schmittova teorija zvede partizana na določujoči element teluričnosti (Fichtejev moment) in razloži esenco partizanskega boja skozi njegovo navezanost na zemljo. To javlja neko zagato in razkol v mišljenju partizana. Skozi konkretni primer jugoslovanskega partizanskega boja ta telurični teorem postane sekundaren oziroma določen s strani političnega načela, ki se ne bori za staro Jugoslavijo (Schmitt nekje enači Mihajlovičeve in Titove partizane!) ali za izključujoče nacionalne države. Partizanski boj že na samem začetku preveva osvobodilni boj, v katerega je zapisana radikalna transformacija družbenih razmerij. Poleg boja proti okupatorju pomenijo jugoslovanski partizani tudi edino antinacionalno formacijo, ki v svoje vrste sprejema vse antifašiste ne glede na njihovo veroizpoved, nacionalno ali razredno pripadnost. Partizanski boj ni konstituiran na vnaprej dani nacionalni substanci, ki bi izključevala druge nacije, nasprotno, skozi boj se pravzaprav šele afirmira horizont vseh drugih nacij in nacionalnosti, ki so bile pred in med vojno potlačene ali izključene. V svojem jedru NOB ne pristaja na telurično načelo, pač pa ga vodi deteritorializirajoče načelo. O zemlji lahko govorimo kvečjemu kot o svobodni zemlji. Po Pupovčevi analizi je nacionalno osvoboditev treba brati v širši mednarodni antifašistični perspektivi, ki se v jugoslovanskem primeru sreča z nekim drugim načelom, tj. z ljudsko emancipacijo oziroma konstitucija revolucionarnega delovnega ljudstva. Priča smo neverjetni produkciji novih kulturnih¹⁰⁸⁰ in političnih form, ki na koncu vojne kulminirajo v novi federativni in socialistični državi Jugoslaviji.¹⁰⁸¹

¹⁰⁷⁹ Za nekatere poudarke kritike Schmitta gl. Toscano 2008.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Komelj 2009.

¹⁰⁸¹ Vsekakor se je treba ograditi od romantizacije, ki lahko vodi v obnovo socialistične ideologije NOB. A odkar Jugoslavija ne obstaja, so ta teoretski prostor in tematiko okupirale nacionalistične revizije in

Poleg partizanske sekvence (1941–1945) tematiziram prelom s Stalinom iz leta 1948, ki ga je treba brati dvojno: prvič, pride do notranje kritike stalinske politike in državnega socializma, kritike, ki začrta neodvisno pot v samoupravni socializem, ki v obdobju petdesetih let proizvede veliko politično-ekonomskih eksperimentov in drugačnega upravljanja; in drugič, navzven pride do geopolitične izolacije: Jugoslavija ne spada ne na Zahod ne na Vzhod, zaradi blokade mora zapustiti balkansko povezovanje, neposredni učinek je padec grških komunistov in odprto vprašanje Kosova. Tako vznikne najbolj kreativna točka zunanje politike: v letih 1955–1963 se vzpostavi gibanje neuvrščenih, ki pomeni tako potrditev antikolonialnih gibanj in držav kakor možnost drugačnega povezovanja in zunajblokovske delitve. Ti trije momenti so jedro jugoslovanske politike preloma, rečeno v žargonu: tri komunistične sekvence. Tej afirmaciji smo v zadnjem poglavju dodali kritiko socialistične tranzicije, ki priča o izčrpanju komunistične politike.

7. poglavje poskuša re-orientirati gledišče tranzitoloških študij, ki demokratični prehod in tranzicijo v tržno ekonomijo locirajo v 90. leta.¹⁰⁸² Tako analitično uporabljam koncepte iz 5. poglavja, ki jih dopolnim z obstoječimi kritičnimi študijami jugoslovanskega socializma, ki poskuša ključni moment prehoda v postsocializem iskati že dve desetletji prej, med letoma 1965 in 1971, ko jugoslovansko samoupravljanje vstopi v tržni socializem. Leta 1965 pride do velike tržne reforme, s katero se izkristalizira vrsta protislovij in antagonizmov, Jugoslavija pa se odpove velikemu delu državnega protekcionalizma ob vstopu na svetovni ekonomski trg. Analiza pokaže, prvič, da je socializem v sebi protislovna historična formacija, v kateri se prepletajo komunistični in kapitalistični elementi, in, drugič, da v tem zgodovinskem obdobju prevladujejo kapitalistični elementi, ki se javljajo v različnih instancah. Zgodovinska ironija je, da je projekt, ki se je začel kot odmiranje države skozi delavsko samoupravljanje, trčil na lastno mejo ravno na točki države. Rečeno drugače, na mesto politične birokracije in državne regulacije ekonomije stopi tehnokracija z ekonomskimi kriteriji in disciplino trga.

rehabilitacije domačih kolaborantov. Zato tudi s ponovitvijo nekaterih tez, ki so bile skozi masovno kulturno produkcijo v Jugoslaviji resda izpraznjene, sodelujemo v ustvarjanju drugačnega »arhiva«, ki se neposredno konfrontira tako z domačimi nacionalizmi kakor z novim evropskim projektom antitotalitarnega spomina (Kirn 2010).

¹⁰⁸² V tej luči gre brati Wallersteinovo tezo, ki kritično analizira diskurz globalizacije in neoliberalni vzpon. Brez padca socializma ne moremo razložiti padca socialne države na Zahodu (2008).

Decentralizacija in deregulacija sami po sebi nista pripeljali več svobode in političnega odločanja za delavce, prej nasprotno. Skozi proliferacijo intermediarnih ustanov nastopi dvojna blokada: delavci so ločeni od formalnih političnih institucij, kjer jih predstavlja politična birokracija, medtem ko na delovnem mestu, v delovnih kolektivih pobudo prevzamejo tehnokrati in njihova profesionalizacija tehnične delitve dela.

Ti momenti se kažejo skozi konkretne razredne boje tržnega socializma in potekajo zlasti na dveh ravneh: na makro-ravni poteka spopad glede integracije v svetovni-sistem s problematiko financiranja. Zlasti pomembno postane vprašanje relokacije socialnega kapitala in mednarodnih finančnih tokov, ki ključno vpliva na jugoslovanski razvoj nerazvoja, ki dotlej pravičnejšo porazdelitev obrne v prid bogatim: razvitejše regije in zlasti severne republike pridobijo na konkurenčnosti. Ukinitve Fonda za investicije pomeni zmago liberalnih sil, hkrati pa podeli veliko večjo monetarno kontrolo komercialnim bankam, ki lažje kreditirajo podjetja in vzpostavljajo razmere tržne konkurence. Na mikro-ravni spopadi za prevlado potekajo znotraj socialističnih podjetij, kjer se vse strateške odločitve, ki naj bi bile formalno v rokah delavcev, začenejo koncentrirati v tehnokraciji. Poleg družbenega kapitala se pojavijo avtonomni kapitali, s katerim upravljajo *ad hoc* koalicije menedžerjev, bankirjev in lokalnih funkcionarjev. Reforma ima katastrofalne posledice: poleg povečane ekonomske krize, ki jugoslovansko ekonomijo počasi izpostavlja zunanjemu nadzoru preko finančnega dolga, pride do prvih resnih socialnih problemov: rast nezaposlenosti, vse večja nerazvitost že prej šibkih, zamujanje s plačami, slabše upravljanje z infrastrukturo – vse to vodi v prve velike delavske stavke na eni strani ter študentske proteste in kulturno kritiko na drugi. Če se je industrijski model razvoja začel sesuvati vase, pa liberalnejši koncept razvoja v tej situaciji pomeni še slabše možnosti upravljanja in reševanja krize. Nova razredna koalicija med tehnokrati in birokrati, ki nastopi v času, ki je kulturno in teoretsko najbolj bogat, najavlja postsocialistične prvine, in tako že na začetku 70. let dobimo prvi nacionalistični odgovor na krizno situacijo in medrepubliška izsiljevanja. Poleg perečega vprašanja Kosova se preko Matice hrvatske in Maspoka profilirajo nacionalistične zahteve, ki so prvič izrazito antikomunistične in celo pozivajo na neodvisnost Hrvaške. Ideološki premiki so izraziti: pride do obrata od nekoč predpostavljenega delavskega razreda in figure delavca k individualni iniciativi in sreči, Človeku in naciji. To množično vretje je v obdobju 1972–

1973 zatrla federalna stara partizanska linija s Titom na čelu: represija je sicer sekala brezkompromisno na levo in desno, a hkrati spraznila politični prostor. Namesto odkrite kritike in temeljne diskusije se je obnovilo kompromisarstvo in še bolj izpopolnjen sistem legalnega komunizma. To je zgolj prestavilo oziroma zamrznilo nekatera ključna vprašanja socialističnega razvoja, hkrati pa pozabilo na glavno nalogo: re-animacijo vezi med delovnimi množicami in komunistično organizacijo. Zgodovinska možnost, ki so jo odprla gibanja in stavke konec 60. let, je bila zaprta, samoupravljanje pa v vse večji krizi. Samoupravljanje torej ni propadlo zato, ker ne bi bilo dosti liberalno,¹⁰⁸³ temveč zato, ker ni bilo dosti komunistično. Ravno v tem oziru beremo izčrpanje komunistične politike v Jugoslaviji, hkrati pa opozarjamo na sodobnost Althusserjeve misli, ki je kljub regresiji in odpovedim v mednarodnem delavskem gibanju in marksistični teoriji nadaljevala pot v komunizem. Tako nazaj proti Marxu kakor naprej k zlomu kapitalističnega svetovnega sistema.

¹⁰⁸³ Mencinger (1994), Repe (1992).