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ALAIN BADIOU'S EMANCIPATORY POLITICS AND MAOISM: TOWARD A
REFORMULATION OF THE COMMUNIST HYPOTHESIS

A Dissertation

Presented to the

Department of Philosophy

School of Arts and Sciences

University of San Carlos

Cebu City, Philippines

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy

By

REGLETTO ALDRICH D. IMBONG

May 2020

APPROVAL SHEET

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“Investigation may be likened to the long months of pregnancy and solving a problem to the day of birth.” – Mao Zedong

The long months, perhaps the long years of intellectual pregnancy finally gave way to the birth of this humble contribution to thought. But the truth of this intellectual pregnancy was, in fact, not a smooth nor an easy process. There had always been the threat of complications whose result might be the premature birthing of an incomplete idea if not the death of the idea itself. But alas, if investigation is likened to the long months of pregnancy and solving a problem to the day of birth, then writing is to the labor.

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ABSTRACT

Communist discourses are resurging in various disciplines across the globe. Philosophy has its share of this resurgence especially after the global financial crisis of 2008 made a number of its thinkers convene in various conferences and intellectually meet in a host of publications. In these intellectual engagements, the idea of communism is once again interrogated as the moribund capitalist system failed humanity its promise.

Alain Badiou is among the leading figures in the philosophical task of (re)interrogating the idea of communism. Badiou raised the urgency of reformulating what he calls as the communist hypothesis for it to both reconsider its supposed failures of the past and better suit the current conditions. Badiou is particularly guided by the lessons of the May '68 of France, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of China, and various contemporary popular uprisings to develop a reformulation of the communist hypothesis. In advancing a laborious task of reformulation, Badiou inevitably rejected a core category of the Marxist-Leninist tradition: the party. The rejection is supported by a view of the party that reduced it to its supposed fusion with the State, i.e., the party-State fusion. Such a fusion is characterized by either parliamentarian or insurrectionary politics. In this politics, Badiou argues that the party is obstructed from advancing further the proletarian revolution as it is tied to a Statist procedure.

This work develops a Maoist reformulation of the communist hypothesis. Along the course of the socialist constructions of Russia and China, certain moments of what can be called as indigenized and mobilizational politics characterized periods that escape what Badiou reduced the party into, i.e., the party-State fusion. The Maoist notions of the mass line and protractedness come out as indispensable requisites in developing the concepts of

indigenized and mobilizational politics. These moments depicted what can be called as the party-masses fusion and provided practical resources not only for the rectification of the supposed failures of the past but also for a reformulation of the communist hypothesis. Through the development and employment of the category of the party-masses fusion and the politics that determine it, the reformulation of the communist hypothesis is supported by a discourse of success rather than of defeat.

Keywords: communism, proletarian revolution, mobilizational politics, indigenized politics, mass line, protractedness, party-masses fusion.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

There is a resurgence of an emancipatory politics, a kind of politics that locates in the collective movement of the masses, and not in the State, the real of politics, whose maxim is nothing less than equality and justice.¹ Alain Badiou's unique elaboration of the general theme of emancipatory politics is his reformulation of the communist hypothesis.² This is an emancipatory politics guided by the faithful deployment of the idea of communism, despite, or precisely because of its supposed failures. Badiou insisted that failure is the mere history of the hypothesis' proof, for as long as the hypothesis is not itself abandoned.³

The communist hypothesis, despite its supposed failures and setbacks, indeed resurges but in a way lacks the programmatic dimensions of real and victorious socialisms of the past. Programs or concrete strategies are what the current thinkers, including Badiou, are trying to avoid. This is opposed to the spirit of Lenin's *What is to be Done* where he laid out why and how a proletarian party has to be established in carrying out a proletarian

¹ See a lengthy discussion of Badiou of what politics is in Alain Badiou, *Metapolitics*, trans. Jason Barker (New York: Verso, 2005), 141-152.

² There are various versions, often opposing ones, of emancipatory politics. For example, there is Jodi Dean's "The Communist Horizon," Bruno Bosteels' "The Actuality of Communism," J. Moufawad-Paul's "The Communist Necessity," and John Robert's "The Communist Imaginary." Badiou's "The Communist Hypothesis" is his unique and original elaboration of emancipatory politics. See Jodi Dean, *The Communist Horizon* (New York: Verso, 2012), Bruno Bosteels, *The Actuality of Communism* (New York: Verso, 2014), J. Moufawad-Paul, *The Communist Necessity* (Quebec: Kersplebedeb, 2014), and John Roberts, "Art, 'Enclave Theory,' and the Communist Imaginary," *Third Text* 23 (4) (2009): 353-367.

³ Alain Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, trans. by David Macey and Steve Corcoran (New York: Verso, 2010), 7.

revolution.⁴ The resurging tide of communist discourse points to ends but are not definite with the means of carrying out such ends.

Acting on the spirit of May '68, Badiou called for a reformulation of politics.⁵ This call to reformulate politics was a response to the mass movements that challenged not only the French government then but also the entire global economic order at that time. This was also the height of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) of China where massive protests and demonstrations challenged the Chinese communist party and State. Badiou saw in these movements a potential that could revitalize what appeared to be the dead specter of communism, but only if such movements would be guided by a new formula. He viewed these sequences from the lens of his system and regarded them not only as events capable of producing truths that challenge the immediacy and inevitability of capitalism but also as conditions for philosophy itself.⁶ Badiou is indispensable in today's task of reformulating politics as, to a certain degree, he still proclaims fidelity to the communist idea which Marx, Engels, and the forerunners of the proletarian revolution have also proclaimed.

However, for Badiou, today's emancipatory procedure must be a politics without a party. This new politics advanced by Badiou is incompatible with the party as the latter is guided by what Badiou rejects as a parliamentary and/or insurrectionary politics. On the one hand, the parliamentary politics of the party provided the principles and conditions for its transformation toward a form opposed to its teleology. The assumption of a form opposed

⁴ See for example the foreword of Bosteels to Badiou's book *Philosophy for Militants*. Alain Badiou, *Philosophy for Militants*, trans. Bruno Bosteels (New York: Verso, 2014), i.

⁵ Alain Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, trans. David Macey and Steven Corcoran (New York: Verso, 2012), 49-50.

⁶ See for example Alain Badiou, *Conditions*, trans. Steven Corcoran (New York: Continuum, 2008), 162-163.

to the teleology of the party – ultimately traceable to the party’s fusion with the State – expressed itself in bureaucratic leadership and militarist discipline.

On the other hand, the party’s insurrectionary politics, one that is influenced by Marxism, presupposes the taking of power.⁷ While the taking or seizing of political power seems to establish a negative relation to the State, one that could perhaps be considered as a politics at a distance from the State, Badiou insists that this model of politics still works in a “conflictual alliance with the State.”⁸ Insurrectionary politics is still a politics of relation (not subtraction) to the State, albeit in its negative form. Badiou believes that the insurrectionary politics of the party follows the logic of negative dialectics where destruction comes before the act of creation. This is because Badiou regards politics not as an assumption of but a subtraction from power.⁹

Further, Badiou’s development of the category of the State, the metastructure of structure, led both to an understanding of a transcendent State and a position of impossibility for the party.¹⁰ As the transcendent State assumed the function of representation, the party, consequently, lost its reason for being. But Badiou’s method is flawed as it confuses the contingent and historical from the necessary and *a priori* categories.¹¹ It develops a conception of the State which rather is quite the opposite of what the socio-historical

⁷ “‘We Need a Popular Discipline:’ Contemporary Politics and the Crisis of the Negative. *Inquiry*, 07 February 2007; available from <https://www.lacan.com/baddiscipline.html>. 09 July 2020;

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (New York: Continuum, 2007), 90-91, 106-107.

¹¹ Ricardo Nirenberg and David Nirenberg, “Badiou’s Number: A Critique of Mathematics as Ontology,” *Critical Inquiry* 37 (4), (2011): 586.

situation reveals. Ironically, this understanding of the State, being *necessary*, would even lead to the impossibility of its withering away.¹²

Based on the problematic of the party, Badiou advanced a reformulated hypothesis. How is the reformulation specifically achieved? First, based on the centrality of the question of organization, Badiou advanced that today, politics must still assume an organizational form. However, this should in no way replicate the model of the party. It must be a politics without a party, in its subtractive form. In other words, while Badiou still presupposes the political organization, the latter must assume a non-statist character, one that challenges the State. Second, concerning the politics without a party, Badiou gives a new formula of the State: a necessary and transcendental historical-social category. It is the metastructure beyond the access of any class and its representing parties. The State is not anymore the instrument of the ruling class.¹³ Third, inspired by the May '68 and the GPCR, Badiou assigns in the collective subjectivity of popular movements the real of politics. In his more recent political work *The Rebirth of History*, Badiou examines the riots of the Middle East in the past decade and asserts how an initially riotous crowd could potentially bring about an uprising, i.e., the rising of the inexistents to their existence.¹⁴ For Badiou, a political truth is always rooted in a massively popular event.¹⁵

Badiou's reformulation of the communist hypothesis hinges on the reduction of the party as a party-State apparatus. However, the party cannot be reduced to its supposed fusion with the State as instances or moments contrary to the said fusion were extant during

¹² Badiou, *Being and Event*, 105.

¹³ Ibid., 105-106.

¹⁴ Badiou, *The Rebirth of History*, 56.

¹⁵ Ibid., 89.

the periods of socialist experiments. The said party-State fusion should be considered as something relative rather than absolute. Its development was determined by conditions that are political and the variety of political forms during these periods equally resulted in various and opposing organizational forms of the party, one of which is the party-State fusion. In other words, there were moments of successes characterized not by the party-State but by the party-masses fusion. A reformulation of the communist hypothesis in relation to the realization of its third sequence should rather proceed as a continuity of these moments of successes, i.e., the instances of the party-masses fusion. Hence, this dissertation will develop a reformulation of the communist hypothesis not anymore on what Badiou calls as the “bad thing of failure,” but of the theoretical richness of success. The response could only be a Maoist one. Maoism today proceeds from the theoretical richness of the party-masses fusion to gain “combative excellence of knowledge.”¹⁶ The reformulation should proceed from the narratives of successes rather than of defeats.

From the moments of successes, certain forms of politics could be identified and developed to help advance not only the dialectics of the party, the State, and the mass movement but also to articulate the party of a new type. This party of a new type is structured according to the principle of scission signified by the party-masses fusion. Furthermore, learning from the moments of successes, the party in scission deploys an indigenized and mobilizational politics in relation to the masses and the State, respectively. Only through the party-masses fusion, determined by an indigenized politics and advances based on a mobilizational politics (against the State), can the State be withered away.

¹⁶ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 12.

For a renewed deployment of the communist hypothesis, there is a need to recognize Maoism as the latest development of the revolutionary science of Marxism and utilize its rich textual resources as strong theoretical support. In other words, if one were to rectify the communist hypothesis, one has to start, not really by starting from the beginning, but by recognizing both ruptures and continuities in the revolutionary science of Marxism elucidated by both past and present communist movements, especially the Maoist people's wars waged in backward agrarian countries and the GPCR that rocked the foundations of the party and the State.

Maoism is both continuity of and rupture against Marxism-Leninism. It did not succumb to the easiest and most tempting response to the limitations of Marxism-Leninism by rejecting the latter altogether. It is against the dismissive attitude common among leftists (immediately after the triumphant yet deviant realization of the Stalinist monolithic party structure) who wanted absolute beginnings by embracing a different theory altogether: neo-anarchism, Draperism, postmodern praxis, to name but a few.¹⁷ Maoism remained faithful to the science of Marxism-Leninism and precisely because of this fidelity recognized that “by virtue of being scientific and thus open to the future,” Marxism-Leninism “must encounter crises.”¹⁸ For Žižek, Maoism even affirmed Marxism's universality when Marxism survived the violence of being uprooted from its original context and transported into an alien soil. where it creatively adjusted to the idiosyncrasies of a foreign land.¹⁹

¹⁷ Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture: Philosophy in the Maoist Terrain* (Washington: Zero Books, 2016), 86-87.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁹ Slavoj Žižek, *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction* (New York: Verso, 2007), 2.

Maoism ruptured Marxism-Leninism and specifically reformulated the question of the class composition and offered the proletarian mass-line.²⁰ It did not abandon the primacy of class and the party in relation to the problem of doing a revolution. In so doing, Maoism not only clarified the problem of the organization but also and most importantly developed the question of strategy. For Maoism, a revolutionary party is a process; the Maoist theory of strategy, which emerges from the mass-line, is simply the conscious recognition of this fact: the revolutionary party is a protracted process that should make people's war.²¹ Maoism as a choice for a theoretical foundation would give a rich reserve of ideological, political, and organizational lessons that will highly help the task of responding to Badiou's reformulation of the communist hypothesis.

This research aims to advance a Maoist reformulation of the communist hypothesis. It agrees with Badiou on two terms. First, that emancipatory politics is still the ultimate overcoming of capitalism. In this regard, the withering away of the State – or communism – is still the ultimate goal of any emancipatory politics today.²² Second, that the excesses of past world historical revolutions have to be criticized and carefully considered in reformulating a communist hypothesis. While in the 1930s the communists declare that the party is always right, today communists should bear in mind that the truth of such a conviction could only be if it locates its support on the masses. Hence, today, the communists could proclaim that the party is right only if it is integrated with the masses.

²⁰ Ibid., 146. A discussion on the concept of Maoist rupture will be discussed in the third chapter.

²¹ Ibid., 212.

²² Badiou and Engelman, *Philosophy and the Idea of Communism*, 48.

This research, however, disagrees with Badiou in the sense that, while the withering away of the State is the ultimate goal and that excesses of past revolutionary sequences have to be taken into account, these in no way suggest that the party is reducible to the party-State fusion and that excesses equal abandonment of supposedly excessive institutions. The withering away of the State must problematize – not distance – the State itself by engaging it head-on, through a revolutionary party integrated with the masses. The main thesis of this research is that in advancing today’s communist hypothesis, the dialectics of the party-masses and the State have to be properly defined within the general procedure of a proletarian revolution. These are integral moments of the revolution and their absence within the entire sequence makes the sequence already distorted if not a failure.²³ The research further argues that the party should be a party of a new type, one whose being is the protracted process of rooting and identifying itself with the masses, a being defined by *scission*. *Scission* here is a Badiouian category but developed through the Maoist lens. The party in *scission* could only be the support for the protracted process of the State’s withering away.

Theoretical Background

Various leftist intellectuals interrogated the resurging idea of an emancipatory politics. They became the vanguard thinkers of an emancipatory politics anchored on a certain degree of fidelity to the communist hypothesis. These thinkers took the thinking of the idea of a new possibility as their task. This notion of “idea” is reminiscent of Badiou’s

²³ The case of the Occupy Movements, a procedure wholly characterized by movements without hierarchical forms of organization and anxious of seizing State power, will be discussed in the succeeding chapters.

definition of the Idea, referring to that which offers the vision of a new possibility.²⁴ In his foreword to the London conference of 2009, Badiou argued that only the communist hypothesis could be of any interest to a philosopher. And what is imposed as a philosophical task to a philosopher today is the search for a new mode of being of the hypothesis, for it to deploy itself in its newness.²⁵

Also, for Bosteels, the reemergence of communism's name in contemporary times could bring the possible transformation of the present State of things. In this way, such a reappearance could not only be a flight of philosophical fancy.²⁶ These thinkers assessed the validity of the communist hypothesis especially today when the world is facing "an utterly cynical capitalism."²⁷ In affirming the hypothesis, there is a crucial need, according to Badiou, to combine conceptual constructs with the experimentation of truths, i.e., their actual deployment in history.²⁸ Judith Balso likewise proposed three important points concerning the communist hypothesis. First, such a hypothesis is a "political hypothesis."²⁹ Second, concerning the different experiments in the past century, it "failed to find the path for a political capacity that exists for all."³⁰ Lastly, about the second point, the hypothesis

²⁴ Alain Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, trans. Louise Burchill (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 14.

²⁵ As quoted by Campbell in Duncan Campbell, "Move over Jacko, Idea of Communism is Hottest Ticket in town this Weekend," in *The Guardian*, 12 March 2009; available from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2009/mar/12/philosophy>; 23 May 2018.

²⁶ Bosteels, *The Actuality of Communism*, 9.

²⁷ Alain Badiou, "The Idea of Communism," in *The Idea of Communism*, 14.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Judith Balso, "To Present Oneself to the Present: The Communist Hypothesis: A Possible Hypothesis for Philosophy, an Impossible Name for Politics?," in *The Idea of Communism*, 16.

³⁰ Ibid.

does not suggest impotence or surrender to the structures of submission but that it opens up new ways for the political will towards what can be called a “politics for all.”³¹ For Balso, its validity rests on this task of creating new spaces for a politics for all. For Douzinas, the supposed period of defeat accompanied by a melancholic introspection and penance has reached its conclusion with the recent crisis of global capitalism.³² Emancipatory politics has returned, and, emphasizing the importance of the category of rights, for him, only the communist idea can salvage the notion of rights.³³ Lastly, for Michael Hardt, the communist hypothesis’ validity worked out on the seeming dichotomy between capitalism’s obsession with private property and socialism’s desire for public property. If the communist hypothesis has to deploy itself in history, there is a need to explore a possibility other than the private property of capitalism and the public property of socialism. This possibility for Hardt is “the common in communism.”³⁴

Žižek also emphasized the need for a “re-affirmation of the idea of communism.”³⁵ According to him, Badiou’s idea of communism endures but as a Kantian regulative concept that lacks any mediation with historical reality and the communist hypothesis is “Kritik der reinen Kommunismus” or the critique of pure communism.³⁶ Any attempt at overcoming this lack, for Žižek, is an intervention that regresses to a historicist evolutionism and thus

³¹ Ibid.

³² Costas Douzinas, “*Adikia: On Communism and Rights*,” in *The Idea of Communism*, 81.

³³ Ibid., 100.

³⁴ Michael Hardt, “The Common in Communism,” in *The Idea of Communism*, 131. Several other thinkers like Bosteels, Buck-Morss, Eagleton, Hallward, Nancy, Negri, Ranciere, Russo, Toscano, Vattimo, and Žižek presented assessments on the validity of the communist hypothesis in the book *The Idea of Communism*.

³⁵ Slavoj Žižek, “Why the Idea and why Communism,” *Symptom* 12, (Fall 2011): 27.

³⁶ Ibid.

betrays the purity of the idea. Žižek invoked the Hegelian idealist maxim that emphasizes the self-constitutive act of the Spirit and justifies that the communist hypothesis as a regulative idea could become, like a religious Idea that, on its own, seizes the spirit of the masses could become a powerful historical force.³⁷

In a conversation with David Riff, Dmitri Vilensky however reads differently Badiou's communist hypothesis, especially when contrasted with the earlier notion of the communist imaginary. The latter seems abstract while the former is practical. According to Vilensky, in the communist hypothesis, "you set out to prove" while the communist imaginary simply speculates without practical consequences.³⁸

Common to the preceding thinkers and Badiou is the realization that communism is still the idea of radical politics. Badiou however goes a bit further. For him, politics always necessitates the question of a subjective organization. According to Badiou, this question of organization gained new interest, especially with Mao's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.³⁹ Hence, the researcher deemed it helpful to respond to the question of political organization from the theoretical support of Badiou's contributions. The succeeding discussions are theoretical resources that expound Badiou's notion of political organization.

Marios Constantinou discusses the subjective politics of Badiou's emancipatory politics. He reiterates a common Badiouian point that the State is non-political or anti-

³⁷ Ibid. 28.

³⁸ David Riff and Dmitri Vilensky, "From Communism to Commons?" *Third Text* 23 (4), (July 2009): 465.

³⁹ See for example Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 155-156.

political as it is far from being able to drive systemic change.⁴⁰ This was the case for example of the October Revolution when Lenin, nearing his death, had observed the despairing permanence of the State or the Chinese Cultural Revolution when Mao had seen “that not much had changed after all.”⁴¹ According to Constantinou, these existing communisms failed precisely because they “underestimated the resilient, unmanageable, and 'shellproof' character of the State” which therefore necessitates an emancipatory politics that should be conscious of a model of politics that subtracts and distances itself from the State.⁴² The subjectivity of the process highlights the importance of political militants as the subjects of the political procedure that consciously and persistently subtracts the same procedure from the determinations set by the State.

In this regard, emancipatory politics, following the model of subtractive politics, has to appeal to “a logic of destatification.”⁴³ The State, for Constantinou, must be put at a certain distance while engaging it face to face. What this suggests is that emancipatory politics, in deploying itself as the harbinger of the New, must not be limited within the structure and language of the State because the same structure and language need to be ruptured. It is not the State but the event which serves as the harbinger for the New. This event is the indiscernible within a particular situation and transgresses or ruptures the very structure and language of the State. This is why for example Badiou consistently portrays a dismissive attitude towards parliamentary elections.

⁴⁰ Marios Constantinou, “Forcing Politics: Badiou’s Anabasis in the Age of Empire,” in *Badiou and the Political Condition*, ed. Marios Constantinou (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 2.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 3.

⁴³ Ibid.

For Constantinou, Badiou lays the theoretical foundations for the notion of the event by crossing the Leibnizian hypothesis; Leibniz maintains that nothing ever happens by pure chance. In other words, the indiscernible or the event is impossible since the Leibnizian God cannot tolerate the undecidable excess of the State.⁴⁴ Tracing the theoretical affinities of both Badiou and Lyotard, the Leibnizian hypothesis, according to Constantinou, has a semblance of the Heideggerian Gestell which accomplishes metaphysics by way of explaining the world through causality and, hence, naturalizes the event by rationalizing the present.⁴⁵

Since the state, an entity similar to the Leibnizian God does not allow the chance of the event, the real of politics, as maintained by Constantinou, must be forced through “an actively produced step-by-step intervention.”⁴⁶ For him, the event itself is not sufficient as it needs a “supplementary intervention sustained by a procedure of fidelity” embodied by the collective organization of political and militant subjects.⁴⁷ In this regard, Badiou’s emancipatory politics, being conditioned by an evental rupture, necessitates an interventionist subject that forces upon the situation the real of politics.

These notions of the event and the subject are also discussed by Keith Bassett. In tracing the commonalities and differences between Badiou’s and Ranciere’s radical politics, Bassett elaborates such theoretical categories as the event, subject, equality, and political organization. For Bassett, Badiou criticizes Ranciere because, for the latter, “events are just pure historical occurrences” instead of chance which opens a new possibility embodied in a

⁴⁴ Ibid., 8.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Badiou as quoted by Constantinou. See Ibid., 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

truth process.⁴⁸ The truth process is primarily an affirmation of the new. Here, according to Bassett, Badiou places an ontological priority to the category of affirmation over negation (or destruction), outrightly rejecting the Hegelian dialectical model wherein negation synthesizes the new.⁴⁹ For Bassett, the event cannot be reduced to a negation of what there is but rather an opening up of a new possibility and the creation of a new subjective body.⁵⁰

The truth process is supported by a body of subjects determined to pursue the consequences of the event. According to Bassett, Ranciere and Badiou would agree that before events, there are no subjects in the strict sense of the term. Subjectivization is a process concurrent with the truth process of the event itself. However, for Badiou, according to Bassett, every subjectivization is an organized and disciplined procedure, a matter which Ranciere, at least for Badiou, fails to see.⁵¹ The question of subjectivization then will lead to the problem of the organization – the party-form in particular – a topic to be discussed in the succeeding discussions.

Hoffman examined the positions of various thinkers concerning the supposed anxiety in relation to the party-form.⁵² For Hoffman, Jodi Dean erroneously claims that leftist thinkers after 1968 have abandoned the party-form as the locus of emancipatory politics. With this refutation, one could be more hopeful that a number of these contemporary leftist thinkers, including Badiou, have not abandoned the notion of organization or the party in

⁴⁸ Keith Bassett, “Event, Politics, and Space: Ranciere or Badiou?” *Space and Polity* 20 (3), (2016): 281.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 284.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 282

⁵² Marcelo Hoffman, “Sources of Anxiety about the Party in Radical Political Theory,” *Theoria* 149 (63), (December 2016): 18.

political movements. By identifying the specific historical circumstances that contributed to variegated notions of anxiety about the party, Fanon, Foucault, and Badiou have, according to Hoffman, critically engaged the traditional twentieth-century characterizations of the party-form, allowing them (especially Foucault) to welcome other forms of political engagement (e.g. Foucault's "group") without however totally abandoning the party-form *as such*.⁵³

The idea of a "politics without a party," for Hoffman, recurs throughout Badiou's notion of emancipatory politics. According to Hoffman, anxiety springs from the relation between the party and the State since the party's commitment to the creation of a new State inevitably pushes it to morph into a figure of suture (of the party-State), which ironically blocks in advance any emancipatory politics.⁵⁴ Hoffman recognized in Badiou how the latter identified the character of ambiguity of the party-form, or more specifically, the communist party: while the communist party commences as a revolutionary organization which has seized political power out from the bourgeoisie, it however is finally stifled by the time it assumes political or State power, i.e., when finally the dictatorship of the proletariat is supposed to have been realized. Instead of the parties subjecting the State to its programs, parties eventually are subjected to the State.⁵⁵ Hoffman seemed to advance the irreconcilable themes of the party and the State.⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibid., 24.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 29.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 30.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

However, Hoffman did not abandon the firmness for a “party of a new type.” As to what this new type of party means, he failed to elaborate except on a short exposition of Badiou's involvement with the Union of Communists of France Marxist-Leninist (UCFML) which the former believed “hardly resembled a party in a formal sense.”⁵⁷ In the end, Hoffman clarified and advanced Badiou's commitment to a new form of political organization. The claim abandonment of the party, for Hoffman, is not absolute but a qualified one which is anchored on the importance of remaining faithful to the Event that in the first place made possible the movement led by the party.⁵⁸

Inspired by the renewed discussions on political organizations in the field of radical politics, Peter Thomas argued for a need to reconsider the role of organizational or partisan politics in today's political movements. For Thomas, these discussions have quickly developed into a debate on which organizational or party-form is the most adequate in today's politics. What is needed, however, is to situate these discussions historically and recognize that such discussions represent the theorizing of the fundamental themes of the movements that took place in the 1990s and the 2000s – i.e., the globalization and anti-war movements.⁵⁹

Crucially affirmed by Thomas is the necessary connection between communism as a hypothesis and the political organization needed for the hypothesis' actualization. Even as Thomas made a lengthy elaboration on the three models of political organization – the Compositional Party and the Multitude, the Laboratory Party and the Political Subject, and

⁵⁷ Ibid., 29.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 32-33.

⁵⁹ Peter Thomas, “The Communist Hypothesis and the Question of Organization,” *Theory and Event* 16 (4), (2013): 1-3.

The Modern Prince and the Expansive Party-form, proposed by Hardt and Negri, Lukács, and Gramsci, respectively – his shorter segments on Badiou manifest his low regard for Badiouian appreciation of party-form. For him, Badiou strongly opposed the idea that the affirmation of communism equally entails an affirmation and consideration of the political party.⁶⁰ Badiou’s communist hypothesis – the Idea – instantiates itself in history as communist invariants which today requires a new mode of historical being outside of the party.⁶¹ According to Thomas, this “stridently ‘philosophical’ formulations” of Badiou’s communist Idea “seems to represent a type of ‘neoplatonic war of position’: blocked on the terrain of history itself, ‘Communism’ retreats to the stronghold of the Idea, awaiting the moment of its renewed ‘emanation’ or even ‘incarnation’ in a ‘Programme,’ before its final realization in a mimetic chain as ‘Organization.’”⁶² Against the affirmation of abstract eternal communism, what is needed however, according to Thomas, are applications of forms of organization that consider and integrate the peculiarities of the present condition.”⁶³

Jason Smith replied to Gavin Walker’s erroneous utilization of Badiouian emancipatory politics “for a reactivation of the figure of the party.”⁶⁴ While Smith and Walker do have points of convergences, overall, Smith contended against Walker’s mistaken use of Badiou’s notion of emancipatory politics as a theoretical foundation for the re-

⁶⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 4.

⁶³ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 1.

articulation of the question of the party-form.⁶⁵ For Smith, Walker erroneously invokes Badiou as a thinker whose conceptual formulations could provide theoretical support for the renewal of a politics based on the party; it was Badiou himself who both advanced the problem of saturation concerning the party form – without really fully theorizing what such saturation means – and suggested that the party-form “no longer offers resources for contemporary political thought and practice.”⁶⁶ There is a fundamental impasse or a structural inability “to properly articulate the dialectic of party and the state” in such a way that would successfully overcome the impasse suffered by 20th century actual socialisms: bureaucratization of the party through the state.”⁶⁷ The emphasis of the party and the (post-revolutionary) State’s seeming irreconcilability is a recurring theme, one which was also raised by Hoffman in the preceding paragraphs, among Badiouian critics. Badiou’s abandonment of the party-form as the locus of politics does have, as Smith maintained, grave theoretical consequences; positions which are essentially neo-Marxist if not anti-Marxist as they deviate to the standard deployment of proletarian parties in advancing the communist movement.

For Smith, Badiou gradually loosened on the crucial Marxist notion of seizing political power from the bourgeoisie. For instance, Badiou’s theoretical intervention on the Polish workers’ movement in Gdansk in 1980 was a clear ideological deviation. Badiou departed from the structure and role of the traditional political organization. The latter is no

⁶⁵ Jason Smith, “Contemporary Struggles and the Question of the Party: A Reply to Gavin Walker,” *Theory and Event*, 16(4), (2013): 1-2.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

longer thought of as having and realizing an antagonistic relationship with the State.⁶⁸ The relation is now thought of as something that keeps a certain distance from the State thereby relinquishing the party's reason for being, i.e., "seizure, conquest and destruction of state power."⁶⁹

Bosteels clarified contemporary variations of what Lenin long ago criticized as left-wing communism, an infantile disorder. Lenin defined leftism as a principled opposition against what are perceived as bourgeois politics such as parliamentary elections, union, and even party discipline.⁷⁰ For Bosteels, Leftism is weak and dangerous as it equates to a petty-bourgeois politics characterized by diffuseness and instability, which, therefore, is incapacitated for a sustained and organized action. It would inevitably destroy the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.⁷¹ Such a Leftism ends up in advancing a notion of pure communism which is reminiscent of semi-anarchism or what Bosteels would otherwise call as "petty-bourgeois revolutionism or massism."⁷²

For Bosteels, contemporary leftism has two figures. The first figure involved the dilution of the fundamental Marxist principle of contradiction by reducing contradiction according not anymore to the complexities of class relations and contradictions but the simplistic characterization of contradiction as between masses and the State.⁷³ This figure

⁶⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ As discussed by Bosteels in Bruno Bosteels, "The Leftist Hypothesis: Communism in the Age of Terror," in *The Idea of Communism*, 37.

⁷¹ Ibid., 38.

⁷² Ibid., 37.

⁷³ Ibid., 40

would accordingly result in a massist ideology, a non-dialectical assessment of a political movement which, as the Maoist Union of French Communists Marxist-Leninist (UCFML) suggested, inevitably would result in the rejection of proletarian leadership, Marxism, and even the idea of the class party.⁷⁴ Thinkers and philosophers belonging to this first figure of leftism reduce the struggle into a formal antagonism with only ideology as its weapon. And while they proclaimed the universality of revolt, they subject the logic of revolt to politics, the real “transformation of the world in its historical particularity.”⁷⁵

The second figure of leftism strictly affirms the principle of immanence and reciprocal presupposition of power and resistance.⁷⁶ Dismissing the idea of a radical break, communism is sketched from within the immanent spatiotemporally of capitalism itself.⁷⁷ Unlike Marxist-Leninist conceptions of history which presuppose a radical break, a point of dialectical rupture between the old and the new, this figure believes that the new is itself already embedded in the immanence of the old. In other words, this figure would propose not the traditional notions of radical break and rupture but would rather presuppose “seizing the new warped into the old.”⁷⁸ In its insistence of the immanence of the new, it misreads the Maoist principle “where there is oppression, there is rebellion.”⁷⁹ Proponents advancing this figure exploit this Maoist idea to justify that rebellion itself is an always already process as it is presupposed in every act of oppression. What they wanted to highlight is the ontological

⁷⁴ As quoted by Bosteels in *ibid.*, 42.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 44-45.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* As quoted by Bosteels.

priority of rebellion compared to oppression, an assertion which Badiou himself refuted when he emphatically contended that the timely happening of a revolt passes judgment on the historical trajectory of oppression.”⁸⁰ Negri shared the principles of the second figure by claiming that communism is already operating even within bourgeois society, in clandestine economic forms dedicated to cooperation in production.⁸¹ Bosteels immediately rebutted that the principle of immanent reversibility would only make resistance dependent on capitalism as it would seem that resistance presupposes capitalism and that communism's emergence is conditioned by the presumption or the lingering of capitalism.⁸²

Against these contemporary leftist figures or trends, Bosteels proposed two tasks for the communist hypothesis. First is to historicize the communist hypothesis by going beyond what Western Europe and the former Soviet Union had offered to history. Reiterating the Marx in the *German Ideology*, Bosteels insisted communism as “the real movement which abolishes the present state of things.”⁸³ Communism must be embodied through a political subjectivity without making necessary the party as the form of this subjective embodiment.⁸⁴ For Bosteels, the party might have been victorious in deposing bourgeois regimes of the past; it failed however in the construction of a proletarian dictatorship that guarantees the transitory and withering nature of the State. Instead, the party-State morphed into a new

⁸⁰ Ibid. 46-47.

⁸¹ Ibid., 47.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Karl Marx, “The German Ideology,” *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 187.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 59.

form of authoritarianism.⁸⁵ The second task entails a thoroughly Badiouian notion of distancing from the State. The real of politics, Badiou would insist, involves the conscious distancing from the State, i.e., of not transforming into a party-State as the former communist parties in the twentieth century had become. Badiou reiterated that whether socialist or not, the State cannot guarantee the subjective deployment of communism.⁸⁶

These two tasks, obviously at odds with leftism (as it does not take off from a concrete analysis of the concrete situation, the thorough and painstaking organizing work in the most concrete of circumstances), would end up praising parliamentarianism. Bosteels ultimately took as a contemporary model for the communist hypothesis the case of the parliamentary struggle waged by Evo Morales's running mate for the 2005 Bolivian elections, Álvaro Garcia Linera.

In "From Logic to Anthropology: Affirmative Dialectics," Badiou advanced the notion of politics as a distancing from the State. The contemporary crisis of the power of negativity, Badiou claims, underscores the importance of finding a new logic of doing (politics). The supposed failures of the State-form of socialism requires a new logic, a new philosophical standpoint sufficient for every form of creative novelty.⁸⁷ What Badiou proposed is a reversal of the classical logic of dialectics so that negation merely results from an original and primary affirmation.⁸⁸ Badiou wanted to secure, through the ontological prioritization of affirmation, the autonomy of the new subjective body even from within the

⁸⁵ Ibid., 52.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 51.

⁸⁷ Alain Badiou, "From Logic to Anthropology: Affirmative Dialectics," in *Badiou and the Political Condition*, ed. Marios Constantino (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 45.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 46.

old situation.⁸⁹ By securing such independence, Badiou believed it would be possible for a politics to emerge which will “stand entirely outside state power.”⁹⁰ This Badiouian notion of politics at a distance from the State seems to be revolutionary. However, what Badiou meant by this is the impossibility of politics to be within the State or, in more general terms, to aim for State power.⁹¹ Badiou explained that the new subjective body operating through the new affirmative framework of dialectics must be outside the State because working within the State only means lingering in the negative figure of opposition.⁹² With this rejection also comes along the irreconcilability and impotency accorded by Badiou to party politics, including communist parties.

The preceding theories discussed several key points. First, the communist hypothesis still is the name for an emancipatory politics today. Second, this hypothesis must be thoroughly historicized, i.e., inscribed into history through a (new) subjective body. Third, this subjective body need not be the Leninist vanguard party of the proletariat. Lastly, if indeed this inscription calls for a party, it should be a party of a new type. In this regard, the preceding theories affirmed the necessity of organizing communism through a (re)new(ed) subjective body (critical of Lenin’s vanguard party). At least in the foregoing discussions, communism is still affirmed as something that results from a radical or militant collective process (rather than parliamentary elections) of breaking away from the capitalist order, albeit not necessarily organized through a withering communist party. To this, one shall place these notions of emancipatory politics under the category of radical communist

⁸⁹ Ibid., 48.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 51.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., 52.

hypothesis. The succeeding literature would essentially differ from what has been previously tackled as it focuses on what is called the parliamentary communist hypothesis.

Hans Löfgren narrated the origins, rise into power, and eventual downfall of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) – hereafter called CPIM. In the earlier part of the article, Löfgren already pointed a glaring phenomenon: as communist parties in Western Europe gained electoral support, the notion of the revolutionary vanguard was toned down, if not abandoned.⁹³ From this, Löfgren would reecho previous literature about CPIM's being “a party of parliamentary communism.”⁹⁴ From this purely parliamentary perspective, one can easily identify errors reducible to three important points. First, there is a criticism in CPIM's ideological foundations as it rejected every need to reevaluate Marxism-Leninism, or worse, it has ultimately abandoned Marxism-Leninism.⁹⁵ A critical point was observed that CPIM does not hesitate in imploring the vocabulary of Marxism-Leninism although in substance it rolled out mere social-democratic reforms. Coming from this, it can be said that the CPIM failed to be radical.⁹⁶ This gross ideological bankruptcy would cause the CPIM to adopt the revisionist road of the 1990s China and impose an industrial policy driven purely by neoliberal agenda.⁹⁷

Second, CPIM purely relied on the legalist political strategy of winning bourgeois democratic elections as a means to hold political power. As Löfgren aptly assessed, the

⁹³ Hans Löfgren, “the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Left Government in West Bengal, 1977-2011: Strains of Governance and Socialist Imagination,” *Studies in Indian Politics* 4(1), (2016): 1.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 11

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

CPIM governed a region that is still subject to a democratic parliamentary and federal system. A lot of policy levers were outside of its control and the party was always subjected to the regular democratic re-elections.⁹⁸ In this regard, rather than establishing what Marx described as a dictatorship of the proletariat, CPIM contented itself with dominating a single federal State yet still within the obvious framework of preserving the dictatorship of landlord and comprador power. CPIM abandoned its vanguard role in the local and national struggle against neoliberal hegemony.⁹⁹

Lastly, the CPIM alienated itself from the masses as proven by their anti-peasant and anti-people policy of neoliberal re-transformation of West Bengal. The party organizational line of democratic centralism was disregarded. As Prasenjit Bose charged, the party's flow of information happens only from top to bottom as the leadership has become intolerant to critical opinions from below. The formalization of decision-making bodies, like the party congresses, has also become an obstacle to a more open and democratic process of making decisions.¹⁰⁰ CPIM has morphed into a piece of bureaucratic and hierarchic State machinery whose function is merely to administer the affairs of the people without however immersing itself in the people to ground policies and induce a stronger political movement.

Aside from Löfgren's assessment of the organizational and political shortcomings of the CPIM, Antonis Ellinas and Yiannos Katsourides also evaluated the parliamentary struggle of the Communist Party of Cyprus. For them, the electoral endurance of the party was a result of its organizational continuity and discipline. As the authors contended, the

⁹⁸ Ibid., 11.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 9.

Communist Party of Cyprus preserved in its organizational structure despite its Western counterparts departing from the traditional Leninist model of organization.¹⁰¹ The same political parliamentary strategy was also adopted by the Brazilian Communist Party. In The Brazilian Communist Party and João Goulart's Administration, Jorge Ferreira identified the Brazilian Communist Party's (BCP) strategies and performance during the administration of Goulart. Like the Communist Party of Cyprus, the BCP succeeded in its parliamentary struggle. However, both parties' rise to political power, limited to the framework of parliamentary struggle, failed to eradicate the roots of bourgeois and landlord rule and was far from erecting a proletarian dictatorship. The said parliamentary framework even became the reason for the Communist Party of Cyprus' demise as communists were persecuted during a dictatorship of the military after the latter mounted a coup.¹⁰²

The aforementioned theories discussed communist parties waging parliamentary struggles which, despite years of assuming political authority, failed to establish authentic socialist or communist order. They deployed the so-called communist hypothesis within the framework of electoral struggles, the rules of which however are clearly defined by the logic of communism's nemesis. In so doing, their strategy and tactics were eventually limited to the possibilities allowed under a capitalo-parliamentarian politics and, as was the case of the CPM, such parties became vulnerable to neoliberal dictates.¹⁰³ Essentially, they believed

¹⁰¹ Antonis Ellinas and Yiannos Katsourides, "Organisational Continuity and Electoral Endurance: The Communist Party of Cyprus," *West European Politics* 36 (4), (2013): 876.

¹⁰² Jorge Ferreira, "The Brazilian Communist Party and João Goulart's Administration," *Revista Brasileira de História* 33(66), (2013): 133.

¹⁰³ In *Being and Event*, Badiou describes the alliance between the market and parliamentarism as capitalo-parliamentarism. See Badiou, *Being and Event*, xii.

that they could vote communism into existence, a position which proletarian revolutionaries like the Paris Communards and the Russian Bolsheviks dismissed as an illusion.

Parties of this type can be categorized as waging a parliamentary communist hypothesis. While they affirm the communist party as the locus of actualizing the communist hypothesis, they however erroneously deployed such a hypothesis within the confines set by communism's arch-enemy, capitalism. Badiou's emancipatory politics is suspicious of this type of politics.¹⁰⁴ For him, this type is a political procedure that either work within the framework of bourgeois democracy (in the case of communist parties not holding absolute control of the State yet) or morphs into a bureaucratic and monolithic party structure alienated from actual mass movements (in the case of parties successfully seizing political power).¹⁰⁵

In both radical and parliamentary communist hypothesis, the role of the party is either dismissed or distorted. In either case, the party, contrary to the theory and practice of great socialist revolutions, loses its role as the concentrated force of the proletariat committed to the historical task of changing the world.

In the radical communist hypothesis, thinkers vary as to their appreciation of the communist party: qualified abandonment of the party, the party of the new type, or a party that distances itself from the State. In any case, there is somewhat a degree of affirmation of a subjective body tasked to realize the communist hypothesis but at the same time a clarification that such a subjective body is far from assuming the model set by the Leninist vanguard party. These thinkers commonly affirmed both the perfection of the Leninist

¹⁰⁴ Badiou, *Metapolitics*, 44.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. This is what Badiou calls as statification of the party. Ibid., 39 and 134.

vanguard party in Stalin yet wished to distance themselves from the horrors of the Stalinist monolithic party structure. As a result, many of these thinkers opted for a movementist politics which, in trying to avoid the supposed failures of the classic vanguard party, contents itself with spontaneous and oftentimes tailist conceptualizations of radical politics. Badiou's emancipatory politics, because of its dismissive stand against politics modeled after the Leninist vanguard party – a political organization that does not surrender history to the spontaneous movements of the masses – borders on movementism, tailism, and/or ultra-leftist distrust towards parliamentary struggles.¹⁰⁶ Here lies the limit of Badiou's notion of emancipatory politics: the party's vanguard role is dismissed in favor of nebulous and abstract notions of organization or the collective. This is the critique raised by Moufawad-Paul against these contemporary leftist figures, including Badiou.¹⁰⁷

For Moufawad-Paul, there is a continuity-rupture relation in the revolutionary science of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. For him, indeed the Leninist vanguard party was already perfected through Stalin, and that such a perfection sadly resulted in a structural monolithism.¹⁰⁸ However, although Leninism reached its limits in Stalin, there also is the need to “find a way to transform the Leninist moment of universality from the perspective of Maoism.”¹⁰⁹ According to Moufawad-Paul, the universality of Maoism is capable of

¹⁰⁶ Movementism is the belief that social change comes “as the result of an accumulation of the power and influence of ‘social movements,’” while tailism is the view which underestimates “the political consciousness of the masses or to pander to conservative or reactionary elements among the masses.” Stella B., “What is the Mass Line?” *Uprising* 6, (Summer 2015): 17.

¹⁰⁷ J. Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture: Philosophy in the Maoist Terrain* (Washington: Zero Books, 2016), 199-205.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 189.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 204.

transforming Marxism-Leninism as Maoism – a revolutionary science which emerged out from the struggles in the global peripheries – “is not simply an addition to Marxism-Leninism, just as Leninism wasn’t simply an addition to Marxism, but a transformation.”¹¹⁰ What is crucial in this regard is that such an emergence of Maoism also means the reemergence “of the vanguard party as the primary locus of anti-capitalist organizing.”¹¹¹ In such a case, this vanguard party does not just resemble the ones which espouse the purely parliamentary struggle of the parties aforementioned, but something which is not limited to parliamentary or electoral struggles to give way to more revolutionary forms of political struggles.

Fundamental elements of Maoism were deployed by Moufawad-Paul to reformulate and forward what a party of a new type means. The Maoist notion of the mass-line for example was used not only to reformulate the question of party organization but also to advance a critique of the movementist politics of the '90s. According to him, the mass line is correctly deployed when “[t]he party seeds itself into the masses, trying to pull in those that are most aware of the need to end capitalism, and thus becomes a mass party.”¹¹² In saying that the party becomes a mass party, a reformulated organizational structure is introduced.

Mao’s mass-line recognized the necessary combination of the central leadership and the mass movement. For him, all leadership would ultimately be fruitless if alienated from the masses.¹¹³ Mao warned against bureaucratic leadership detached from lower party units

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 188.

¹¹² Ibid., 199.

¹¹³ Mao Zedong, “Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 3 (New York: Pergamon Press, 1965), 117.

and the masses. According to him, persons in higher party positions would be incompetent in giving general guidance unless they derive the authority of their leadership from the experiences of the lower organs and of the masses.¹¹⁴ For Mao, a method of leadership devoid with the mass line will end as commandism, “for all correct leadership is necessarily 'from the masses to the masses.’”¹¹⁵

The mass line is discussed as well by many scholars. It was affirmed by D’Mello in discussing the three crucial elements of Maoism: the vanguard party, the mass organizations, and society.¹¹⁶ For D’Mello, the Maoist conception of the Leninist vanguard party has been radically altered as the former supplements the mass-line with the traditional organizational line of democratic centralism. The mass-line, encapsulated in the maxim “from the masses, to the masses,” better guides democratic centralism’s principle of “freedom of action, unity of action” as it involves the masses not only in decision making but also in its implementation.¹¹⁷ Also, for Stella B., the mass line is “the communist method of leadership” which aims at social transformation and resolves what appears to be a contradiction between the Marxist principle that the masses are the makers of history and the Leninist emphasis on a vanguard party.¹¹⁸ Lastly, the mass-line as a resolution of the two apparently contradicting tendencies of mass movement and vanguardism is also affirmed by

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 118.

¹¹⁵ Mao Zedong, “Combat Bureaucracy, Commandism and of Violations of the Law and of Discipline,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5 (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1977), 39-41, and Mao Zedong, “Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership,” 119.

¹¹⁶ Bernard D’Mello, “What is Maoism,” in *Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine*, 22 November 2009; available from <https://monthlyreview.org/commentary/what-is-maoism/>; 26 November 2018.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Stella B., “What is the Mass Line?” 13.

Wei-Hsun Fu. According to him, the mass line is the “emancipation of the masses by the masses,” and that through it, centralized authority and democratic autonomy are effectively combined.¹¹⁹ This means that correct proletarian leadership is not bureaucratic and alienated but deeply engaged with and engages the masses in the making of history. For Moufawad-Paul and these scholars, this transformed organizational structure will overcome the contradictions of leadership from above and mass membership from below, a contradiction which Stalin obviously failed to resolve.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

The researcher will answer these specific questions:

1. What is Maoism and how did it develop into a new stage of the revolutionary theory of Marxism?
 - a. How did Maoism develop Marxism-Leninism?
 - b. How did Maoism achieve the status of universality?
2. What is Badiou’s notion of an emancipatory politics?
 - a. How did his ontology provide a conceptual basis and categories for his emancipatory politics?
 - b. How did Badiou reformulate the communist hypothesis?
3. How can Maoism contribute to the task of reformulating the communist hypothesis?

¹¹⁹ Charles Wei-Hsun Fu, “Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as an Ethical Theory,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 5, (1978): 355.

- a. What is Maoism's response to Badiou's reformulation of the communist hypothesis?
- b. What is the dialectical relation between the party, the State, and the mass movement?
- c. Informed with Maoism, what form of a political organization an emancipatory politics should assume?

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study will redound to contribute to the theory of doing a revolution. On the one hand, the results of this study will contribute to the ongoing debates and discussions on the role of a political organization in emancipatory politics. This is particularly interesting given that, in the current debates, voices coming from non-European regions are still relatively few. On the other hand, the point of clarifying the question of political organization in emancipatory politics is still, as Marx has argued, to change the world. The findings of this research will serve as a theoretical guide in understanding what emancipatory politics means and how it proceeds based on a solid organizational force.

Scope and Limitation

This research will focus on Badiou's notion of the communist hypothesis and theoretical resources of Maoism. In discussing Badiouian notion of the communist hypothesis, the researcher will be utilizing primary works of Badiou like *Being and Event*, *Being and Event II: Logics of Worlds*, *Theory of the Subject*, *Metapolitics*, *Philosophy for Militants*, *Philosophy and the Event*, *Ethics*, *The Communist Hypothesis*, *The Rebirth of History*, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, and *Conditions*. Due

to linguistic constraints, the researcher will be limited to the English translations of Badiou's works, which however are translated by reputable Badiouian scholars. The researcher will also limit the discussion of the topic to the fundamental principles of Badiou's ontology, the latter's implications to politics, Badiou's notion of communism found in the book *The Communist Hypothesis*, and the said hypothesis' repercussions to the communist party.

In elaborating Maoism, the researcher will be employing translated documents from the various Maoist parties and organizations. The researcher will limit the discussion to the political dimensions of Maoism, i.e., how Maoism became and can be a powerful weapon in waging, winning, and consolidating the proletarian revolution. Hence, the experiences of actually existing socialisms (in the USSR and China for example) or those that victoriously seized political power and established a socialist regime, are given focus in this paper. Their experiences are most relevant in the task of elaborating on the precarious relationship between the party, the State (as instrumentalized by the ruling communist party), and the mass movement as they have not only waged but also actually won and consolidated, to a certain degree, the socialist revolutions. While the experiences of Maoist parties that have not yet seized political power, like the Communist Party of the Philippines, is also useful, they may be useful only on the level of waging a revolution, not yet of winning and consolidating it. And the task of reformulating the notion of a vanguard party requires the lessons of parties that waged, won, and consolidated the socialist revolution.

Special attention will be given to the five characteristics of Maoism, i.e., the protracted people's war new democracy, cultural revolution, the law of contradictions, and mass line. It is also from this perspective that the researcher will raise certain limitations of Marxism-Leninism, i.e., the crucial role of proletarian politics in consolidating a socialist

economy and society. What will be excluded are the economic aspects of Maoism that are not only applications of Marxism-Leninism but also actual experiences of doing Marxism-Leninism in a socialist economy. As the whole study focuses on the problem of the party, an emphasis on revolutionary politics (rather than economics) is then crucial and primary.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is an interpretative and analytical study of Badiou's notion of emancipatory politics and Maoism's contributions to the question of political organization. The method of interpretation, on the one hand, is used to understand relevant texts. Specifically, the researcher will study varied materials to understand a concept's socio-economic and political origins, its author's motives, and how such a concept gradually developed and is understood today. For example, to understand Marxism as a concept, the socio-economic and political conditions of Europe during Marx's and Engel's time have to be carefully considered. Also, Marx's and Engel's motives behind their voluminous works must be recognized. Through interpretation, the researcher will be able to discover the meaning of concepts and use such an understanding in developing a new framework that will support the main claims of this research.

The method of analysis, on the other hand, is used to examine the internal and external relations of concepts. The researcher will breakdown some complex and comprehensive concepts to establish basic principles and focus. Also, these concepts will be placed side by side with other concepts to trace relations. Lastly, links and continuities as well as breaks or ruptures will be identified to further understand a concept by tracing its relationship to other concepts. For example, Marxism as a complex theory has to be broken down into simpler and more basic principles (e.g. primacy of the category of class in

analyzing societal and historical development, the revolutionary character of the proletariat, and communist leadership to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat). But Marxism is not only analyzed internally as an independent concept. Rather, it is also juxtaposed with concepts external to it, for example, Leninism and Maoism. This juxtaposition will aim to understand both the links and breaks to uncover the relationship between concepts. In this way, particular discussions (on Marxism and Leninism for example) will better cohere with the general argument of this research.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Communist hypothesis is Badiou's contribution to the elaboration of emancipatory politics. It upholds that the logic of class is not inevitable but something that could be overcome.¹²⁰ But unlike the intelligibility accorded to it by modernity, the meaning of the term communist, for Badiou, has been existing "since the beginnings of the state."¹²¹ He explained that the hypothesis, or its fragments, begins to appear whenever mass action challenges State oppression in the name of equality and justice.¹²² Thus, even during the ancient period, the hypothesis already appeared in the sequences initiated by Spartacus.

According to Vilensky, in Badiou's communist hypothesis "you set out to prove" while the communist imaginary simply speculates without practical consequences.¹²³ Badiou's book with the same title suggests that fidelity to the communist hypothesis,

¹²⁰ Alain Badiou, "The Communist Hypothesis," *New Left Review*, Jan-Feb 2008; available from <https://newleftreview.org/issues/II49/articles/alain-badiou-the-communist-hypothesis>; 27 May 2020.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ David Riff and Dmitry Vilensky, "From Communism to Commons?" *Third Text* 23 (4), (July 2009): 465.

especially those advanced by Marx, Lenin, and Mao, is crucial in the current task of clarifying the idea of communism especially as it is clouded by the misconceptions arising from the supposed tragedies and failures of 20th-century socialisms. These failures then must rectify and guide the current task of realizing communism, for “failure is nothing more than the history of the proof of the hypothesis, provided that the hypothesis is not abandoned.”¹²⁴

Correct political line implies the internal struggle within the party structure and the resolution of such a struggle through practice. There is no ready-made and complete political line in the same way that for Mao, ideas do not fall from the sky.¹²⁵ Adherence to the correct political line implies that the party constantly struggles, rectifies, and criticizes and self-criticizes for the correct line to be collectively discovered and practiced. The correctness of such a line could only come from practice, i.e., through the struggle for production, class struggle, and scientific experiment.¹²⁶

Emancipatory politics is a political sequence that organizes and establishes an order according to the maxim of justice and equality. In this sequence, politics is subsumed under the authority of the collective, the concrete expression of which has varied throughout history. The collective’s latest expression, which today has suffered the most vilifying attacks from both the liberals and self-proclaimed communists, is the communist party. Emancipatory politics is advanced by many thinkers.

¹²⁴ Alain Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, trans. by David Macey and Steve Corcoran (New York: Verso, 2010), 7.

¹²⁵ Mao Zedong, “Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction* (New York: Verso, 2007), 167.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

An event is a happening, wholly removed from the logic and structure of a given world. Badiou describes it as that which brings to light an impossibility, or a possibility that was even unthinkable which, therefore, reminds that a possibility has been ignored.¹²⁷ The Event, as a rupture of the normal and accepted routines or systems (in science, art, politics, or love), “interrupts the law, the structure of the situation, and thus creates a new possibility.”¹²⁸

Fidelity is the procedure which discerns those multiples, within a given situation, whose existence is linked or dependent to an evental multiple.¹²⁹ Fidelity is to be understood as the process by which a world’s logic and norms are to be organized according to the demands and consequences of the Event. Through this process, the evental truth, which happened by pure chance, is affirmed and its consequences inscribed into the logic of a new world. Badiou further likens fidelity to an apparatus whose mode of operation is the separating out, within a given situation, of those multiples which depend on an event.

Mass line is the correct method of proletarian leadership expressed in the injunction “from the masses to the masses.” This means two things. On the one hand, all policies and directives are simply concentrated ideas derived from the leadership’s direct contact with the masses. The core leadership will simply formulate these ideas into a general call.¹³⁰ On the other hand, members and cadres do not only hand down general calls and directives to the

¹²⁷ Alain Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, trans. Louise Burchill (Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2013), 19.

¹²⁸ Alain Badiou, “From Logic to Anthropology: Affirmative Dialectics,” in *Badiou and the Political Condition*, ed. Marios Constantino (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 47.

¹²⁹ Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, 232.

¹³⁰ Mao Zedong, “Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 3 (New York: Pergamon Press, 1967), 119.

masses (and other lower units) but also give them direct and immediate guidance.¹³¹ The mass line specifically rectifies bureaucratic and detached leadership. Through the mass line, cadres do not only formulate general programs but also most importantly include themselves in the process of executing or implementing the said program. In doing so, the leadership avoids being divorced and isolated from the masses.¹³²

Mass movement is a collective action of a group or a group of people oftentimes converging into a broader yet loose formations. These people characteristically are “undergoing intolerable suffering and are therefore waging various forms of resistance.”¹³³

October Revolution or the Bolshevik Revolution is the revolutionary sequence in Russia in 1917 led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin. After successfully destroying Tsarism in the February 1917 Revolution, the Bolshevik Party advanced the revolution to build socialism in Russian soil. The October Revolution was the first successful proletarian revolution that established a socialist State and inaugurated the Soviet regime.¹³⁴

Politics of indigenization (or indigenized politics) is derived from an early Soviet policy on national minorities known as *korenizatsiia*.¹³⁵ Coming from its etymology, the concept is developed to mean not only the act of making oneself a native but the process of

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Mao emphatically reminded the Party “to form close ties with the masses and not to divorce [itself] from them.” Mao Zedong, “Rectify the Party’s Style of Work,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 3, 48.

¹³³ Jose Maria Sison, “Build the Bolshevik-Type of Party and the Revolutionary Mass Movement,” *Jose Maria Sison: Filipino, Patriot, Internationalist*, 11 September 2017, retrieved <https://josemariasison.org/build-the-bolshevik-type-of-party-and-the-revolutionary-mass-movement/>; 10 March 2020.

¹³⁴ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, “October Revolution,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 09 February 2018, retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/October-Revolution-Russian-history>.

¹³⁵ Alan Ball, “Building a New State and Society: NEP 1921-1928,” in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, Vol.3, ed. Ronald Gregor Suny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 176.

identifying oneself as begotten of local identity. This politics is specifically employed to describe the dialectical relationship between the party and the masses. Through this, the party not only makes itself a native but also identifies itself as begotten of local identity and a particular movement (peasants', workers', women's, racial, etc.).

Politics of mobilization (or mobilizational politics) is characterized by the constant movement of the masses with the party as its core to achieve identified political objectives. Here, the resources of emancipatory politics are derived not from the State but from the party-masses fusion (which include but are not limited to mass protest actions and people's wars). In this way, through the politics of mobilization, the party-State fusion escapes the count or hold of the State.

Proletarian revolutionary movement refers to a revolutionary sequence initiated and/or led by the proletarian class. This movement is usually aimed at the overcoming of capitalism and the establishment of socialism or communism. Examples in history where this movement occurred are the Paris Commune of 1871, the October Revolution of 1917, the Chinese Revolution of 1949, and the GPCR of 1966, among others.

Radical politics is an organized and collective emancipatory procedure that aims to overcome the root of the matter. In the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*, Marx explained that "to be radical is to grasp the root of the matter."¹³⁶

Reformulation of the communist hypothesis refers to Badiou's contribution to rethinking the idea of communism based on giving a new formula to the category of political organization and its relation (or non-relation) to the State.

¹³⁶ Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law," in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Collected Works Vol. 3* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 182.

Revisionism is the systematic revision of the basic doctrines of Marxism. Revisionism could be classical or modern. The former was the trend among social democratic parties that dominated the Second International in 1912. Among others, they rejected the revolutionary essence of Marxism in favor of evolutionism or the natural development of capitalism to socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and endorsed colonial wars, social pacifism, and reformism.¹³⁷ Modern revisionism refers to the distortion of Marxism among the leadership of the ruling communist parties of Europe and China. They denied the class character and struggles within the socialist State and the communist party.¹³⁸

Subject is the mediation between the trans-historical truth the Event instantiated and the historical intervention that inscribes within the world the procedure of the truth. For the Event not to dissipate into a myriad of fleeting images, thus losing the rare chance of constructing the New, it has to be affirmed. The act of affirmation demands an intervention from subjects who are determined to seize the New the event is pregnant with.¹³⁹ Different truth procedures (science, politics, art, and love) produce different kinds of subjects. In politics, the Badiouian subject is oftentimes attributed to the collective or the militant (in his or her singularity).

¹³⁷ Armando Liwanag, Stand for Socialism Against Modern Revisionism, 15 January 1992; available from <http://www.padepaonline.com/pag-aaral-sa-sari-saring-rebisyunista-at-kontrarebolusyonyong-ideya-at-paglilinaw-sa-mga-ito/manindigan-para-sa-sosyalismo-laban-sa-modernongrebisyunismo>; 26 May 2020.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Badiou defines intervention as “any procedure by which a multiple is recognized as an Event.” Ibid., 202.

Tailism is an error in politics where the supposed revolutionary leadership of the proletariat drags and tails behind the spontaneous movement of the people.¹⁴⁰

Trade unionism (also referred to as economism) regards the economic struggle for workers' rights and welfare as in itself a political struggle. Trade unionism and economism aim to "secure from the government measures for alleviating the distress to which their condition gives rise, but which do not abolish that condition."¹⁴¹

Trans-temporal is, for Badiou, the character of truth.¹⁴² Truth is infinite in the sense that it could be reactivated in and migrated to trans-temporal worlds, or in worlds other than where these truths initially were created and pursued. Truth is not limited to the finitude of its own time and place but can be reinvented in yet another time and place that possesses different characteristics from the original time and place. Truth's trans-temporality also clarifies its infinity: it transgresses the finity of time and place.

Vanguard party refers to the Leninist advanced detachment of the proletariat. Coming from Marx and Engels who, in *The Communist Manifesto*, distinguishes the communist from the other working-class parties, Lenin saw the need to establish a "strong organization of revolutionaries" in the conduct of waging a revolution to "ensure the stability of the movement as a whole and carry out the aims both of Social Democracy and the trade unions proper."¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Lenin, *What is to be Done?* 52.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁴² Badiou, *Being and Event*, 129.

¹⁴³ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Communist Manifesto," in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Collected Works Vol. 6* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 497. Vladimir Lenin, *What is to be Done: Burning Questions of our Movement* (New York: International Publishers, 1972), 117.

Vanguardism is the Leninist belief on a vanguard party that serves as the advanced detachment of the proletariat.

Void of a situation is the suture to its being, the “errant cause” based on which there is being.¹⁴⁴ In *The Theory of the Subject*, Badiou invokes the concept of the void as a vanishing cause, the background of blankness out from which the qualitative difference of a sign or a mark establishes itself.¹⁴⁵ For Badiou, the void is the figure which designates the gap between the One as a result of the count – i.e., being in its consistency – and based on which there is the count.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 55.

¹⁴⁵ Badiou, *The Theory of the Subject*, 68.

¹⁴⁶ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 55.

Chapter 2

BADIOU'S EMANCIPATORY POLITICS AND THE PROBLEM OF ORGANIZATION

This chapter discusses Badiou's notion of ontology, emancipatory politics, and his dismissal of the party. The first section discusses Badiou's position on philosophy and his ontology. The opening section presents Badiou's commitment against postmodernism. This commitment is consistent with his ontology and politics of truth. His ontology is supported by mathematics, specifically set theory. The choice for set theory reveals the latter's affinity with the task of discoursing being-qua-being. Specifically, set theory, especially the tradition developed by Zermelo, Fraenkel, and Cantor, presents being-qua-being as a multiple that originally escapes the One. This, for Badiou, is an *a priori* condition for any possible ontology. An ontology based on set theory determines existence purely through relations and from these relations are derived the categories of situation, structure, and metastructure. These categories are important as these will trace how Badiou developed his theory of the State. The elaboration of Badiou's concept of the State is crucial as this will help understand his rejection of the party in particular and appreciate his emancipatory politics in general.

The second section elaborates his notion of politics. It commences with the introduction of the State as a historical-social category. The latter is ever wary of the appearance of the void in the situation and so secures the One through the second count. The second count, the representation of presentation, makes the metastructure or the State a necessity for *every* socio-historical situation. But as the void is the suture to being itself, it erupts on what is called an evental site. An event is the happening of the foundational, i.e.,

of the void. But its happening is rare and undecidable especially from the perspective of the State. The event's happening is affirmed by the faithful intervention of a subject. The notion of the subject is important as it will reveal the condition for the State's withering away. The same notion also touches on the category of the party, being a subjective organization of the event's consequences.

The third section elaborates Badiou's reformulation of the communist hypothesis and his stand vis-à-vis the party. The section begins with tracing what Badiou considers as the two sequences of the communist hypothesis. An examination of what Badiou calls as the question of the new politics follows. Here, his notion of a politics without a party is discussed in detail, tracing such a politics from Badiou's critical stand against parliamentary and insurrectionary politics.

On Ontology and Philosophy

This section discusses Badiou's position on ontology and philosophy. Badiou's philosophical system developed, from among others, as a reaction to postmodernism. This reaction squares with Badiou's commitment to an ontology and politics of truth. Badiou's ontology finds support in mathematics, specifically set theory. The affinity between set theory and the task of discoursing being-qua-being, i.e., of presenting being itself, allows Badiou to make a choice in favor of set theory (over phenomenology for example). An ontology developed through set theory presupposes that existence is comprehended only through relations. The categories of situation, structure, and metastructure are derived. These categories are important as these will enlighten Badiou's theory of the State and, consequently, the reason behind Badiou's rejection of the party.

a. *The Postmodern Challenge*

In Badiou's *Being and Event*, the case of philosophy or, more specifically, ontology, is successfully resuscitated and defended against the debilitating attacks of postmodernism.¹⁴⁷ Postmodernism challenges the fundamental tenets of philosophy, thereby eventually undermining such philosophical categories as truth, subject, reason, and many others; postmodernism rather advances relativist and culturally-oriented characterizations of truths, insists on the preeminence of plurality and heterogeneity, and outrightly denounces reason as capable of formulating grand narratives.¹⁴⁸ Postmodernism, as correctly and concisely claimed by Lyotard, is "the incredulity toward metanarratives."¹⁴⁹

Because of postmodernism and the hype for "democracy" and "freedom," and the linguistic (re)turn advanced by both continental and analytic philosophers, philosophy's fate in the intellectually trying times of the 80's was, according to Badiou, reduced to either a painstaking defense of the supposed universality of democratic values, or a linguistic sophistry that legitimizes the freedom and right to cultural difference as opposed to a universalist posing of truths.¹⁵⁰ Throughout the twentieth century, philosophy became so

¹⁴⁷ It might be recalled that Frederic Jameson discusses "the end of philosophy" vis-à-vis his explication on the emergence and eventual dominance of a variant of postmodernism which effaced boundaries between high and low cultures, or between the academic and mass or philistine culture. This led to the subsumption of what then were various theoretical productions (of philosophy, and also of political science) under the kind of writing simply called as "theory." This phenomenon was very common in France, properly described as French theory. Frederic Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern 1983-1998* (New York: Verso, 1998), 8. Badiou, however, did not simply save the prestige of philosophy as an academic discipline; as will be shown, he also anchored the latter on set theory mathematics in order to save its fundamental categories like truth, subject, and being.

¹⁴⁸ Nick Hewlett, "Engagement and Transcendence: The Militant Philosophy of Alain Badiou," *Modern and Contemporary France*, 12(3), (2004): 339 and 342.

¹⁴⁹ Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), xxiv.

¹⁵⁰ Badiou, *Being and Event*, xii.

obsessed with language and how it is constructed and regulated. Elaborating on what Badiou describes as the currents of the post-Heideggerian period, Bartlett reiterates the three predominant philosophical tendencies that marked this period: the hermeneutic, analytic, and postmodern tendencies. According to Barlett, their commitment to language, with its rules, capacities, and diversity, and the recognition that the former is the “great historical transcendental of our time,” marks what is common between the three tendencies.¹⁵¹ On the one hand, philosophy, specifically the variant which pursued the cultural turn, had suited itself to and even defended a kind of thinking which limits thought within the framework of local and relative discourses.¹⁵² Localized linguistic rules were regarded as the ground for the construction of sense and meaning. Culture became the rightful arbiter of what counted as sensible. The standard of sensibility, just like opinions, was as diverse as the many linguistic rules immanent in the world. On the other hand, philosophy, with its insistence on a metaphysics of presence, gave up the kind of thinking which for Badiou is characteristic of ontology: the thinking of the infinite, the void, or the nothing. It is in the nature of philosophy to think (although not produce) truths, and truths, as will be discussed later, could only be a consequence of the void’s happening through an event. Springing from the same challenging decades, Badiou defiantly resisted the tide of postmodernism and rather forwarded a philosophical system faithful to the great Platonic tradition – one which Nietzsche described as a sickness – and grounded on the truths of set theory mathematics. In

¹⁵¹ Adam Bartlett, “‘Adjust your Dread’: Badiou’s Metaphysical Disposition,” in *Contemporary Encounters with Ancient Metaphysics*, eds. Abraham Jacob Greenstine and Ryan Johnson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 91.

¹⁵² Patrick O’Connor and Frederick Aspbury, “The Courage for Infinity: Mortal and Immortal Ethics in Alain Badiou,” *Journal for the British Society for Phenomenology* 44, (2), (May 2013): 130.

this way, Badiou was able to dispel the relativism characteristic of postmodernism and anchored philosophy on the stability of a truth emanating from an event.

b. Mathematics as Ontology

As he famously declares, “mathematics is ontology.”¹⁵³ For Badiou and Plato, only through mathematics can being-qua-being be understood. According to Badiou, “mathematics, throughout the entirety of its historical becoming, pronounces what is expressible of being qua being.”¹⁵⁴ Mathematics in this regard is understood as the discourse of being, not that the world is mathematical or that there are mathematical objects, but that mathematical discourse (specifically in set theory mathematics, as will be presented later) presents being in itself.¹⁵⁵ But this does not mean that mathematics is the sole discourse on being, as other disciplines talk about being especially as how it appears in various circumstances (like how being human is studied by anthropology and sociology in various socio-cultural circumstances). Mathematics as ontology means that mathematics alone literally inscribes being, referring to “nothing other than itself,” embodying nothing, and revealing nothing.¹⁵⁶ Mathematics writes being as being, marking being not according to how beings appear and thought as things but as being in its foundational point. As Hallward

¹⁵³ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 4.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 8. In stating this, Badiou aligns himself with the two great philosophical traditions whose origins are traceable to two intellectual giants, Plato and Heidegger. Badiou raises a challenge to those who profess commitment to Philosophy and philosophizing.

¹⁵⁵ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 7.

¹⁵⁶ Jon Roffe, “Alain Badiou’s Being and Event,” *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*, 2(1) (2006): 330.

argues, what is articulated in mathematics is *be-ing* itself. Rather than describing, representing, or interpreting being, mathematics, in itself, thinks of being *tout court*.¹⁵⁷

Badiou's Platonism allows him to engage the problem of being not in the same way as Heidegger's phenomenology dealt the same problem. In his Platonic turn, Badiou (specifically in *Being and Event* as the *Logics of Worlds* would have a different theme and therefore a different theoretical support) located in mathematics, and not in the phenomenon of the appearance of being, the possibility for the thinking of being in itself.

The decision to make mathematics as the theoretical support for ontology is not an arbitrary act. There is the affinity between being and mathematics so that by employing the latter through the use of its marks and symbols being presents itself. In other words, through the formalisms of mathematics, being presents itself and allows itself to be thought of by the formal language of mathematics. It is not phenomenological description or logical abstraction that allows being to unconceal itself but through the resources of formal and mathematical language. The recourse to mathematics is one of the three fundamental decisions made by Badiou to establish his ontology.¹⁵⁸ The first is "the decision for numbers over things."¹⁵⁹ In this decision, Badiou becomes consistently Platonic, placing priority on the mathematical rather than on the empirical. But in favoring mathematics over other possible means of engaging being, Badiou would leave the materialist method of analysis elaborated by Marx and Engels. According to this method of analysis, one commences from

¹⁵⁷ Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*, 54.

¹⁵⁸ Kenneth Reynhout, "Alain Badiou: Hidden Theologian of the Void?" *The Heythrop Journal* 52 (2011): 223.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

real premises which can only be verified in purely empirical processes.¹⁶⁰ This, I argue, will have a serious consequence to his conceptualization of the State (and consequently, to the party).

For Badiou and Heidegger, only through the support of the ontological question can philosophy, as such, be re-assigned.¹⁶¹ Philosophy must therefore find its place within the framework of the question of being. In dealing with this question, Badiou, again, made a fundamental choice in asserting that, over the One, being is multiple. In raising this claim, Badiou presents no evidential support or any external justification except those self-evidential axiomatic principles that run throughout his ontology. He simply decides (to break) and upon this decision laboriously deduces coherent principles that form a new and unified system. Both the processes of decision and deduction, characteristic of set theory itself, is Badiou's method in *Being and Event*.¹⁶² For Roffe, this method is also a characteristic of philosophy as a discipline. Philosophy starts from an axiomatic break. It faithfully proceeds on the basis of this break and patiently deduces from the procedure itself important theoretical consequences.¹⁶³ Paul Livingston observes the same. According to him, this decisive claim is not something which results from a deductive or an inductive reasoning but something that is made from a free decision, like a mathematician's decision to accept or decline certain axioms in the course doing mathematical thinking.¹⁶⁴ This

¹⁶⁰ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The German Ideology," *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Collected Works*, vol. 5 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 31.

¹⁶¹ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 2.

¹⁶² Reynhout, "Alain Badiou: Hidden Theologian of the Void?" 224.

¹⁶³ Roffe, "Alain Badiou's Being and Event," 329.

¹⁶⁴ Paul Livingston, "Review of Being and Event," *Inquiry*, 51(2) (2008): 219.

method, as we will see, is in immanent contradiction with the Marxist system itself as being's intelligibility is derived from the abstract formulations of mathematics, its axiomatic principles, rather than on the concrete relations of historical determinants. Engels explained that one does not commence investigations with principles but arrives at them as final results. Far from applying these principles to nature and history, these are abstracted from the latter.¹⁶⁵ The validity of principles depend on their being in conformity to the material world. Evident in this decision is how Badiou regarded set theory mathematics, especially the tradition developed by Cantor and Zermelo-Fraenkel, to be eventual itself: an event that needs a retroactive decision in order to establish it within the situation of ontology.

For Badiou, being does not have any fixed and defined character, a One which forms a unifying totality or provides a foundational unit that pre-determines being into a consistent whole.¹⁶⁶ The One, in this regard, has to be understood either as a “constitutive basic unit,” or “an all-encompassing absolute unity.”¹⁶⁷ In favoring the multiple, Badiou took recourse to a discipline which in itself deals with being in its multiplicity: set theory. Only through the discourse of mathematical set theory can being in itself, the being of beings, the ontological and not the ontic, be presented.¹⁶⁸ The decision in favor of mathematics, however, is not a choice of mere convenience. If it were a matter of convenience, Badiou would have opted

¹⁶⁵ Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1976), 33.

¹⁶⁶ As he argues, “being cannot be signified within a structured multiple.” Badiou, *Being and Event*, 26.

¹⁶⁷ Fabio Gironi, *Naturalising Badiou: Mathematical Ontology and Structural Realism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 26.

¹⁶⁸ As discussed by Gironi, “mathematics ‘inscribes being as such... as opposed to any other intellectual discipline whose objects are determinate, *ontic* beings.” He further contends that “what can *inscribe* Being/inconsistent multiplicity without *describing* it is only an axiomatic system” deployed by set theory mathematics. *Ibid.*, 18.

for a sociological approach, as his Marxist bias would suggest, or a psychoanalytic one, as his expertise of Lacan's theories would surely help.¹⁶⁹ But Badiou sees in mathematics its natural inclination towards being in itself. Hence, he would assert that it "pronounces what is expressible of being qua being." In asserting such a claim, Badiou took away from the philosophers what supposedly their privilege is and assigned it to the mathematician: the answer to the question of being.¹⁷⁰ For philosophers to participate in the historical development of ontology and of philosophy, they must study the mathematicians of their era.¹⁷¹

c. Set Theory and the Inconsistency of Being

Badiou's ontology is strongly supported by set theory mathematics. The latter is particularly suitable for the task of discoursing being in its pure multiplicity, at least for three reasons. First, set theory is a discipline which concerns itself with multiples.¹⁷² As will be explained later, multiplicity here does not simply mean the many but an "inconsistent multiplicity" which invalidates any prior structuring.¹⁷³ Second, the category "set" is deprived of any definition or fixed meaning, even within set theory itself.¹⁷⁴ For Roffe, any *a priori* mode of counting-as-one the contents of a set is immediately prevented by the

¹⁶⁹ For example, in the case of Jodi Dean, she takes from Lacan the theorizing of the party. Jodi Dean, *Crowds and Party* (New York: Verso, 2016), 10.

¹⁷⁰ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 8.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁷² Roffe, "Alain Badiou's Being and Event," 332. As Roffe explains, a set is nothing more or less than a multiple. *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ As Gironi explains, this inconsistent multiplicity "cannot simply be interpreted as the 'Many', since such a domesticated multiplicity (an indefinite iteration of 'ones') pertains only to that which is presented." Gironi, *Naturalising Badiou*, 14.

¹⁷⁴ Roffe, "Alain Badiou's Being and Event," 332.

absent definition of a set.¹⁷⁵ Being's multiplicity escapes all constitutive definition, thereby rejecting the priority of the One. Lastly, set theory's principles of axiomatization immunizes itself from any self-compromising paradoxes. In order to overcome, or at least not to suffer the paradox of self-membership, Livingston explained that Russell prohibited sets from becoming members of themselves.¹⁷⁶ Later set theorists called this the axiom of foundation. Through the axiom of foundation, paradoxes in the construction of sets are immediately foreclosed.¹⁷⁷

According to set theory, all relations can only be comprehended through a multiplicity of sets.¹⁷⁸ Being is neither a unity comparable to the classical understanding of substance, nor a Hegelian Whole that prescribes unto being the dialectical becoming of a subject through a process of self-alienation and self-actualization. Being for Badiou is a

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Livingston, "Review of Being and Event," 225. Bertrand Russell discovered the paradox of self-membership (although this was also earlier noticed by Ernest Zermelo). In § 78 of the *Principles of Mathematics*, Russell raised the issue of self-membership or self-belonging. Ordinarily, "predicates... cannot be predicated of themselves," although by "introducing negative predicates, it will be found that there are just as many instances of predicates which are predicable of themselves." Russell's paradox concern more on those sets that are not members of themselves (e.g. the class of all red bikes is not a member of itself, i.e., it does not have the predicate of being a red bike). Since they are not members of themselves, Russell explained that it is but natural to assume that "they form a class having a defining predicate." This defining predicate will be the set (p) of all sets that are not members of themselves. If it is assumed that p belongs to the set ($p \in p$), then it must have satisfied the property of non-belonging $\sim(p \in p)$. It, therefore, does not belong or is not a member of itself. But if it is also assumed that it does not belong to the set $\sim(p \in p)$, then it must have satisfied the property of belonging ($p \in p$). It, therefore, belongs or is a member of itself. Here comes the paradox. If p belongs to or is a member of the set, then it is not; but if it does not belong to or is not a member of the set, then it is. Bertrand Russell, *Principles of Mathematics* (New York: Routledge, 1903), 80-81. Badiou expressed the paradox formally as $(p \in p) \leftrightarrow \sim(p \in p)$. Badiou, *Being and Event*, 41. He uses the symbol of material equivalence (\leftrightarrow) which suggests that if $(p \in p)$ is true then $\sim(p \in p)$ is true and if $\sim(p \in p)$ is true then $(p \in p)$ is also true. The paradox here is that in saying $(p \in p)$ is true (or false), its negation is likewise affirmed as true (or false).

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ O'Connor and Aspbury, "Courage for Infinity," 131.

multiple of multiples.¹⁷⁹ Coming from set theory mathematics, being, for Badiou, is constituted by elements which in themselves are also sets and consequently also have constitutive elements. Elements of sets as sets of yet other “smaller” elements proceed to an infinite regress, until it reaches the foundational point which for Badiou is the nothing, or the void. Nothing is the name of the void.¹⁸⁰

Being is, in itself, characterized not by consistency which is guaranteed by a presupposed rule of a count, but by random inconsistency, i.e., being in its original presentation escapes all constitutive determination that fixes the meaning or character of being on a single definition. Being is subtracted from any operation of structuring or counting (of its elements) and thus simply be in its inconsistency. In this regard, original presentation refutes the One. “For if being is one,” according to Badiou, “then one must posit that what is not one, the multiple, *is not*.”¹⁸¹ However, Badiou continues that such is unacceptable for thought since it is the multiple that is presented and that there is no access to being aside from presentation. However, if presentation is not, it would not make any sense to define being as that which presents itself. For Badiou, if *there is* presentation, then *there is* necessarily multiplicity.¹⁸²

Being as inconsistent does not however suggest the mutual exclusion of either inconsistent or consistent multiplicity. As will be elaborated later, both *are* but on different “stages” of presentation. And presentation, in this regard, is the *inscription* of being through

¹⁷⁹ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 29.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁸¹ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 23.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

mathematics, i.e., through set theory. In other words, through the formalizations of mathematics, being is presented and thought (in its multiplicity).¹⁸³

Consistency, or the One, is a byproduct or a result of a count's imposition into being's inconsistent multiplicity. Again, the One here could mean either a constitutive basic *unit* or an all-inclusive *unity*. In other words, pure being, as inconsistent multiplicity, can neither be a unit nor a unity. Although being is pure multiplicity, according to Vertabedian, one can, using the operations of set theory, develop from the pure multiple One *as a result*.¹⁸⁴ This One "as a result" is what, for Badiou, is the gathering-into-one of different multiplicities, thus defining the character of the multiple-qua-one.¹⁸⁵ The gathering-into-one is possible because of what Badiou called as ontology's "explicit operator," what Vertabedian identified as set theory itself.¹⁸⁶ The one or any property is not a condition for being but simply results from being through an operator: there is one or a property because initially being, as multiple, is devoid of any given identity. In simpler terms, there really is no object or a thing; what is deemed as an "object" – say a book – is in essence a set of multiples – colors, textures, symbols, materials, which in themselves are also multiples – that are irreducible to a unity or the One. The original presentation of the book is an inconsistent addition of multiple properties that retroactively make into or results to an object-book through structured presentation or a counting into One.

¹⁸³ According to Badiou, the question of mathematics' distinct nature of relation to being is reflected in the axiomatic decision in which set theory is authorized. *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁸⁴ Becky Vertabedian, *Multiplicity and Ontology in Deleuze and Badiou* (London: Palgrave Macmillan: 2018), 5.

¹⁸⁵ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 29.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

For Badiou, “what *presents* itself is essentially multiple; *what* presents itself is essentially one.”¹⁸⁷ Philosophy throughout its history has long held the equivalency between being and the One. Being is immutable, undivided, and, therefore, not many. In holding this axiom, the multiple has been discarded as that which is not being, as it is the manifestation of becoming itself. Badiou highlighted here a double impasse on thought. If being is one, then the multiple is not.¹⁸⁸ But such a presupposition is hostile to thought, for “what is presented is multiple” and all access to being is only through its presentation.¹⁸⁹ In this regard, the multiple is and will therefore reject the equivalency of being and the one. But Badiou maintained that the assertion of being as multiplicity is equally unacceptable to thought, for presented being is a definite *this*, intelligible only as a One thing, e.g., the immanent diversity of a table’s component elements is rendered intelligible only by their synthetic unity in the table itself. What Badiou referred as an impasse in this case is contradiction itself: a thing cannot be (one) and not be (many) at the same time. Since there is an impasse, a limit, Badiou’s suggestion is to make a decision which would break with the mystery of the one and the multiple.¹⁹⁰ Here follows Badiou’s characteristic axiomatic decision in favor of the many over the One. This decision could only take the form of a rejection: the one *is not*.¹⁹¹ Original presentation cannot be defined by a fixed “whatness” of a One; it is only after an operation of counting or structuring does One’s “whatness” appear.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 23.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

In this regard, the supposed unity of an object's *whatness*, (e.g., the synthetic unity of the "table") according to Badiou, is but a result of a count as the original unstructured *presentation*, is, in itself, an inconsistent multiple (e.g., the diversity of the table's component elements). The One for Badiou "solely exists as an *operation*" and therefore does not have an ontological reality and priority insofar as being inconsistent.¹⁹² Ontology, theoretically informed and supported by set theory, subtracts itself from the regime of the One."¹⁹³ What *presents* itself as a multiple is being in its original presentation secured by the axiomatic decision to render the One as not; *what* presents itself as One is being's original dimension denied by the ontological operation of counting as One *thing* its component elements.

There are however two types of multiplicities as distinguished by Georg Cantor: consistent and inconsistent. According to Vertabedian, Badiou adopts this Cantorian distinction in order to avoid the paradox of "no set of all sets." In relation to the problem of an ordinal number not counted in the set of all ordinal numbers, Cantor presupposes consistent multiples that are closed and organized while posits inconsistent multiples that are not closed and not organized "for the ordinal numbers to proceed unencumbered by closure."¹⁹⁴

Badiou however went beyond Cantor in claiming that inconsistent multiplicity can be counted or totalized by an Absolute divine being. As Badiou himself explains, Cantor, finding himself in an impasse, forced himself into his doctrine of the absolute. Here, Cantor

¹⁹² Ibid., 24.

¹⁹³ Kelly Louise Rexzy Agra, "How to Change the World: An Introduction to Alain Badiou's Subtractive Ontology, Militant Subjectivity, and Ethic of Truths," *Kritike* 11 (2), (2017): 178.

¹⁹⁴ Vertabedian, *Multiplicity and Ontology in Deleuze and Badiou*, 5.

remained consistent in associating the inconsistent with the absolute. In the impossibility of the count-as-one, there stood God.¹⁹⁵ Relying this time on the Zermelo-Fraenkel (ZF) system, Badiou takes a step further the theory of pure multiplicity. According to Badiou, the ZF system has three major characteristics. First is that the system contains only one relation, that of belonging, \in . Through this, the ZF system only allows relations of belonging, and the concept of a set, understood as a one-multiple, having a concept that determines its being-a-set, is immediately excluded. For Badiou, the one-multiple “is assigned to the sign \in alone,” and the sign \in , the “*unbeing* of any one, determines, in a uniform manner, the presentation of ‘something’ as indexed to the multiple.”¹⁹⁶

Second is that the ZF system only has one type of variable, i.e., one list of variables.¹⁹⁷ So in the relation $\alpha \in \beta$, i.e., α belongs to β , both α and β come from the same list of variables, and that one cannot distinguish which is the object and which is the group/s of objects.¹⁹⁸ By allowing only one type of variables, the ZF system has secured that “all is multiple, everything is set,” and that, since these sets are themselves irreducible to a one, sets are themselves multiplicities.¹⁹⁹

Lastly, the ZF system only allows the determination of a multiple if such a multiple is supposed to have been there already as a presented initial multiple. What this means is that, against Cantor who fixed the determination of sets through the priority of intuition or

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. Badiou, *Being and Event*, 41.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 44.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

thought over the multiple, the ZF system “subordinates the induction of a multiple by language to the existence, prior to that induction, of an initial multiple.”²⁰⁰ In this regard, the inconsistency of being comes before any unifying property and that the nothingness of being precedes the appearance of being as something else. These characteristics of the ZF system strengthens Badiou’s claims on being as inconsistent multiplicity. The One is not assigned to the concept or definition of a set – as the latter is a pure multiple, whatever the variable it assumes – but on the relationship alone, i.e., of the operation of belonging to, of being in a situation. The identity of things in this regard is not induced from their “essential” characteristics but from their relations or contradictions alone.

This insistence on relations rather than on things would have an important repercussion to the contemporary analysis of class as against the prevalent notion of class essentialism in the past. For example, the assumption that the proletariat rigidly refers to an essential character, that of the industrial laborer, is guilty of class essentialism. It fails to consider that class as a category is determined by actual relations between people as they develop within the terrain of revolutionary struggle. Hence, this category could expand and develop as in the case of Mao’s “masses.” Past communist parties limited within the narrow interpretation of the “proletariat” ultimately failed in recognizing the relevance and idiosyncrasies of local mass struggles which appears to portray non-class characteristics (race, gender, ethnicity, etc.). For example, many Marxists are accused of misunderstanding and downplaying the issue of race and the struggle against racism as it apparently has

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 45.

nothing to do with class struggle.²⁰¹ They are restricted within a dogmatic view of class essentialism and a distorted interpretation of class reductionism.²⁰²

d. The Situation, Structure, and Metastructure

From an ontology based on set theory, existence can be determined purely through relations, i.e., its belonging to or by being presented in another set since self-belonging or self-presentation is impossible.²⁰³ The logic of presentation speaks of multiples belonging to or being a member of a set multiple presented in a structured situation, the latter being an infinite multiple itself. It is the wager of Badiou's *Being and Event* that "*ontology is a situation.*"²⁰⁴ The situation allows for a particular structure that counts-as-one the elements of the situation. Situation and structure are technical terminologies in Badiou's ontology. The situation, for Badiou, is any presented multiplicity.²⁰⁵ It is the appearance of a one-thing organized as to be intelligible and identifiable. It is the place where being takes place or "appears," in the sense that, through the operation of counting, it presents itself as a one-multiple. The presentation of the one-multiple is possible as every situation allows its own method or operator of counting into one what initially is a pure multiplicity. This operator is

²⁰¹ Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, "Race, Class, and Marxism," *Socialist Worker*, 04 January 2011, retrieved from <https://socialistworker.org/2011/01/04/race-class-and-marxism>; 09 march 2019.

²⁰² Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture*, 151.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 85.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 27. It is a wager because it is an effect of a choice, i.e., the choice to abandon the "Great Temptation" of denying that ontology is a situation. See *Ibid.*, 26. In making this wager, Badiou set out as his task the overcoming of the contradiction between the presentation of being (as multiple) and the count-as-one.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

the structure of the situation (or in the ZF system, the relationship of \in belonging). The situation in question is but a result of such a structuring.²⁰⁶

Structuring entails counting and, according to Badiou, there are two different operators of counting: the counting of the structure of a set, and the counting of the set of all the subsets of the set in question.²⁰⁷ The former, through the operation of belonging \in , “forms a one out of the multiples which belong to” a set, the latter through the operation of inclusion \subset “forms a one out of the multiples included in” a set through the power-set or the set of all the subsets of the set in question.²⁰⁸ Zermelo introduced the axiom of power-set. The axiom implies that for every set in question, there is always another set, called the power-set, which contains as its members all the subsets of the set in question.²⁰⁹ As will be shown below, since the power-set counts all the set including the null set of the set in question, the size of the power-set would be too large to be grasped and its power could only be determined rather ambiguously.²¹⁰

In belonging \in , the members of the original set or presentation are counted through a structure. Structure allows for the counting of all that belongs to the situation. Given a property γ , $\{\alpha \in \beta \text{ such that } \gamma\}$ if γ is a property of α , and β counts all and every multiple with the property γ , then $\alpha \in \beta$. In inclusion \subset , presentative structure is represented through a second counting of all the subsets of the set in question. Say for example the multiple β ,

²⁰⁶ Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*, 94.

²⁰⁷ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 83.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ Zermelo, “Investigations in the Foundations of Set Theory I,” in *Ernest Zermelo: Collected Works Vol. 1*, 197.

²¹⁰ Ulrich Felgner, “Introductory Note to 1908b, in *Ernest Zermelo: Collected Works Vol. 1*, 177.

with the elements α and χ . Representative structure counts not the elements themselves but, through the axiom of the subset, organizes and counts new subsets included in β . These subsets, $\{\alpha\}$, $\{\chi\}$, and $\{\alpha \chi\}$, are included in the power-set $\{\emptyset, \{\alpha\}, \{\chi\}, \{\alpha \chi\}\}$. There is a second count, a sort of metastructure which reduplicates the count.²¹¹

The metastructure is necessary since all multiples are incapable “of forming-a-one of everything it includes.”²¹² The original multiple presentation cannot count itself and so must posit a second count “in order to verify itself.”²¹³ Without this second count, the foundational point of being, the void, or the nothing, resurges as an uncounted specter.²¹⁴ Without the second count, “*something*,” according to Badiou, “within presentation” eludes the counting, i.e., the count itself.²¹⁵ An image, for example, could not capture itself but only that which it captivates, the captured spectacle. But this captured spectacle is structured already as to provide meaning yet also to hide the given: the originally lucid transition of spectacles that, without the image, would simply inconsist. There is the unrepresentable, the hidden as in the analogy of the image, with which structure, or the image, is the proof. Structure melts into thin air when confronted with the real of the inconsistent, of the void. In this confrontation with the real, the appearance of being would be, like to a toddler’s eyes uninitiated into the conventions of language, mere squiggles on a white background devoid

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Badiou, *Being and Event*, 85.

²¹³ Ibid., 94.

²¹⁴ Set theory was plagued by the question, “how much bigger is this power set, the set of the points on a continuum, than [the original set] itself?” This problem is what is called the continuum hypothesis, and from the standard of ZF system, “the continuum hypothesis is neither *provable* nor *refutable*.” Livingston, “Review of Being and Event,” 229.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 93.

of meaning. Thus, “it is necessary that structure be structured” to guarantee oneness and meaning and for the void to be prohibited from presentation.²¹⁶

Here lies the necessity for a metastructure to serve as structure’s structure itself. According to Badiou, it is necessary for structure to be (re)structured, to validate Oneness, to prohibit the void in making itself present in the situation.²¹⁷ This structure of structure, or the metastructure, is the set of all the subsets in a particular set. This metastructure is a new multiple whose existence is assured by a special ontological idea called the power-set axiom. In the example given above, the initial set β has a power-set $p(\beta)$ which has as its elements $\{\emptyset\}$, $\{\alpha\}$, $\{\chi\}$, and $\{\alpha \chi\}$. The power-set is also called the state of the situation, one which Badiou describes as an absolutely distinct set from the presentative or original set. If the initial set β is what Badiou calls as the situation, then the power-set $p(\beta)$ is the state of the situation.²¹⁸ In other words, the state of the situation represents and forms-into-one the subsets of the initial set in order to suppress the void, which paradoxically defies the count and summons the state. The state of the situation becomes a second structuring principle which represents or restructures the original situation in order to exorcize the specter of the void.²¹⁹ Here lies a major distinction between presentation, the original presentation that counts as one all the elements that belong to the initial set, and representation, the second count that presents again all the subsets that are included in the power-set. The distinction between presentation and representation provides Badiou a

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 93-94.

²¹⁸ Livingston, “Review of Being and Event.,” 223.

²¹⁹ Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*, 95.

framework which not only clarifies the question of being but also allows him a novel analysis and critique of a politics grounded on the system of representation.

Since a multiple presentation cannot form-a-one of everything it includes, the power-set arises to secure the count through a second count. This also means: “there is always both presentation and representation.”²²⁰ There is therefore at least one element of the power-set which is not an element of the original set in question.²²¹ In the new power-set $p(\beta)$, for example, it is slightly larger than the original set in question, having this time three elements $\{\alpha\}$, $\{\chi\}$, $\{\alpha \chi\}$, compared to the two $\{\alpha\}$ and $\{\chi\}$ elements of the original set β . In other words, there is an element in the representative set which is not an element of the presentative original set, the third subset $\{\alpha \chi\}$. Badiou’s ontology posits the excess of inclusion over belonging as the representative set includes a term $\{\alpha \chi\}$ which does not originally belong to the presented multiple ($\{\alpha\}$ and $\{\chi\}$).²²² Since for Badiou the power-set is the state (of the situation), the latter therefore is always in excess over original presentation.²²³

From this position that there is an excess of inclusion over belonging, Badiou develops the three categories of presented-being: normality, excrescence, and singularity. Normality refers to the effective “re-securing of ordinary one by the state of the situation” of the initial presented multiple. The state of the situation guarantees that every term is counted. Terms under normality are both presented and represented, i.e., they both belong

²²⁰ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 94.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

²²² Badiou, *Being and Event*, 89; Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*, 95.

²²³ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 89.

and are included.²²⁴ The university setting, for example, offers a rich resource of analogies of presentation and representation. The university itself is a presentation of elements (faculty, staff, students, etc.) and a representation (through its board). In the case of a faculty, he/she is both presented and represented inasmuch as he/she is both recognized as one (i.e., he/she passed all the processes of hiring making him/her belong as an individual, an element of that university) and included in a department/program (i.e., the department/program allows him/her to be represented in the overall structure of the university). Excrescence pertains to the state of the situation's excessive nature. It has a term which is represented but not presented (in the initial multiple). This could manifest in the university's composition of a board where some members oftentimes represent none of the elements of the original presentation. But oftentimes, this could also mean the excessive power of the university to make resolutions that obviously do not represent the voices on the ground but echo concepts of foreign origin (the influence of neoliberalism, for example, in the revision of the curriculum). Lastly, singularity points to the elements which, although are "subject to the one-effect... are not accepted by the count."²²⁵ These are terms that are presented but are not represented. Oftentimes, the faculty organizes their strength in order to make themselves as a new part of the university, a union for example. However, most often, this new part, deemed detrimental to the overall interest of the university to maximize profit, is never represented as a part similar to other recognized parts (departments, programs, offices, etc.). Their composition is immediately compromised by either treating them merely as individuals or as respective parts of their own programs/departments.

²²⁴ Ibid., 99.

²²⁵ Ibid.

Ontology and Badiou's Emancipatory Politics

This section opens through a discussion of the State as a historico-social category. A characteristic anxiety haunts the State as the threat of the void's appearance in the situation is always imminent. But since the void is the suture to being itself, it erupts within an evental site. The event is the happening of the foundational, the rupture of the situation through the chance encounter with the void. But the event's happening is rare and undecidable especially from the perspective of the State. The event could only be through a faithful intervention of a subject. The category of the subject is important as it will touch on the issue of the party, being a subjective organization of emancipatory politics itself.

a. The State as the State of the Historical-Social Situation

Singular multiples pose a threat to the state of the situation's re-securing count. As will be shown later, these types of multiples contain elements that are already "on the edge of the void." The void is the reminder that the power-set or the state of the situation fails to form-into-one the elements that constitute some of the subsets of the set; the void poses as a great danger to the consistency of the multiple-situation in question. As a result, the state of the situation becomes excessive, having within it elements that are represented although not presented in the original situation. Badiou further illustrated the excessive nature of the state of the situation by employing the model of the state of the historical-social situation.²²⁶ The state of the historical-social situation is what Badiou simply calls as the State.

When Badiou uses the term State, he refers both to the term's political and ontological senses simultaneously, at least in the context of the discussion on the State of the

²²⁶ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 106-107.

historical-social situation.²²⁷ In fact, his meditation of the State (of the historical-situation) is but an empirical argument in support of the thesis of the state (of the situation). The former is to the historical while the latter is to the conceptual. But both presuppose the same ontology. This is why for Badiou, the State does not only verify the concept of the state but also provide an opportunity to elaborate normality, singularity, and excrescence, three categories of presented-being.²²⁸ The political state is that which guarantees Oneness not in the immediate society but in the representation of society's subsets (or classes). The State is the necessary metastructure not only for a specific historical-social mode or development but of every historical-social situation.²²⁹

In conceptualizing the State from the resources of set theory, Badiou revises it away from its Marxist-Leninist meaning. While Marxism argued that the State is the State of the ruling class, Badiou recasts this formulation of the State not anymore as a possession but as a uniformity, a One-effect.²³⁰ For Badiou, it would be entirely meaningless to say that the State is a possession, an instrument, of a particular class. Rather, the State has to be purely understood as a (meta)structure that secures the "uniformity of effect."²³¹ The notion of the ruling class is no other than the designation of the uniformity guaranteed by the State. For him, this State cannot be a mere instrument possessed by any class as it is the structure that

²²⁷ Hallward, *Badiou: Subject to Truth*, 96.

²²⁸ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 104.

²²⁹ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 105.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ *Ibid.*

guarantees the law of the count.²³² Since the State “is what ensures the structural count of a situation’s *parts*,” Badiou claims that “the rule of counting *does not hold forth any particular part as being paradigmatic of being-a-part in general.*”²³³ There is no privileged subset or ruling class that does the counting for all of the situation or the world. In this way, Badiou departed from the Marxist-Leninist analysis of the State and ventured into the heights of abstract or transcendental thought.²³⁴ In his *Logics of World: Being and Event II*, Badiou would assign to a transcendent of a world the organization of that same world for it not to be reduced to the pure multiple.²³⁵

The State is ever anxious of the void lurking behind every presentation, as its occurrence would certainly challenge the rule of the count and disrupt State structure. Badiou gives an example of this State anxiety which inevitably results to the latter employing a re-securing count, the count of inclusion. For him, one cannot take it for granted that whenever a manifestation of the void surfaces within a society, oftentimes in the form of a riotous crowd, governments immediately prohibit gatherings and demonstrations.²³⁶ In this re-securing count, i.e., the count of inclusion, the State forms a One out of the parts, subsets, or classes of a situation, making (the State) itself, although linked to immediate presentation, wholly distinct or separated from the latter.²³⁷ The

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Badiou, *Conditions*, 167.

²³⁴ The Marxist-Leninist analysis of the State is discussed in the next chapter.

²³⁵ Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II*, 101.

²³⁶ Badiou, *Being and Event*. 109.

²³⁷ Ibid., 106-107.

separated nature of the State could be attested by the presence of its own elements that initially are not present yet generated as a response to the threat of a rioting crowd: the army, the police, the prisons, and the courts. These State elements are sanctioned to deal with the riotous activities of those whom State believes would undermine its own unity.

The State, for Badiou, does not deal with individuals but with parts or classes. The voter, from the perspective of the State, is not the ordinary individual with all of his/her unique individuality but the individual of a part represented by the State.²³⁸ The State, therefore, “*always re-presents what has already been presented.*”²³⁹ Again, it does so because the void wanders over presentation, constantly challenging the count; the State has to ensure that all the parts or classes of the situation are included. The void in this regard is both the unrepresented (by the State) and the unrepresented (in the presentation of immediate society).

b. The Evental Site

The State is ever wary of the void’s eruption which only comes upon through the happening of the event. It must be noted that, since the void is both the unrepresented and the unrepresented, the void’s occurrence in an event is something which goes undetected both of the immediate society’s and of the State’s radar.²⁴⁰ The decision of the event’s occurrence, i.e., that it is thought through an anticipation of its abstract form and revealed through the

²³⁸ Ibid., 107. For Badiou, this re-securing count of the State is supported by a fundamental coercive act, one which does not allow someone to belong to society but rather makes that someone included, through a part or a class, within society. Ibid. From this perspective, Badiou would also describe communism, being the process of the abolition of parts or classes, would be in its real sense the unencumbered regime of the individual. Ibid., 109.

²³⁹ Ibid., 106.

²⁴⁰ As Badiou explains, “the event is not actually internal to the analytic of the multiple.” Ibid., 178.

retroaction of an intervention is incomprehensible by the structure, not even that of the State.²⁴¹ The event is undecidable. Without having the knowledge of the event's occurrence, the State is therefore hell bent on prohibiting its happening and the militant inscription of its consequences.

Badiou distinguishes between two types of situations, natural and historical. The former refers to a situation or set wherein all its terms are normal.²⁴² Again, a normal multiple is both presented and represented. So if $\alpha \in \beta$, under a normal or natural situation, it is also the case that $\alpha \subset \beta$, i.e, α is not only an element but also a subset or part of β since all the elements of α are presented in α , making it a valid part or subset (of β). For Badiou, a natural situation has, as its ontological criterion, stability. In other words, it is immune from any eventual instability and transformation. A historical situation, on the other hand, has, in its presented multiples, at least one multiple which is singular. Again, a singular multiple is presented but not represented. This is the case since all the elements of α are not presented in α which immediately invalidates α being a part or subset (of β).²⁴³ It may be the case, for example, that, during 1892 and the years immediately following it, the *Katipunan* was an element of the Spanish colonial government by uniquely presenting itself as a recalcitrant force. Its members, however, working in clandestine and having torn their *cedulas* in defiance to colonial rule, are not counted-as-one as such – i.e., in their individuality – but

²⁴¹ Ibid., 178. That is why for Badiou, a political activist is a warrior who patiently watches over the happening of the void through the event. Ibid., 111.

²⁴² Ibid., 123-133.

²⁴³ Ibid., 174.

only through the multiple from which these individuals form a one.²⁴⁴ In other words, the *Katipunan* belonged to (or presented in) the Spanish colonial society but is not included (or represented) in the Spanish Colonial Government.

A singular multiple in a historical situation is called an “evental site.” According to Badiou, “the site, itself, is presented, but ‘beneath’ it nothing from which it is composed is presented.”²⁴⁵ What is peculiar for this site is that, while it is presented, is not a part (a subset) of the situation. For Badiou, the evental site, the singular multiple which is presented but not represented, is “*on the edge of the void, or foundational*” as it is a “multiple being minimal for the effect of the count.”²⁴⁶ As foundational, the evental site, in regard to structure, is an “undecomposable term” as it cannot be further decomposed into a more basic term.²⁴⁷ There is only *nothing* more basic to it.²⁴⁸

“[T]he definition of an evental site is, [unlike a natural situation], local.”²⁴⁹ An evental site can only be defined and supported by local sites of inconsistencies where multiples are considered to be on the edge of the void. The concept of local here is opposed to that of being global. For Badiou, an evental site depends on local *points* for the historical to proceed; an evental site concerns the historical, but not History (as a totality of structured

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 175.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ For Livingston, the axiom of foundation allows sets to be decomposed into more basic sets, in order to avoid the problem of self-membership. Livingston, “Review of Being and Event.,” 225.

²⁴⁹ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 176.

and necessary developments).²⁵⁰ The historical refers to an evental site that is *relative* to a situation; a natural situation, however, is immediately global as all and the totality of its multiples are normal.²⁵¹ The evental site conditions the being of the event.²⁵²

To say that the site is the condition of being for the event does not mean that an event necessarily happens in *every* evental site. The event is not necessary, it is merely contingent and accidental.²⁵³ In the succeeding discussions, it will be pointed out that without a subject that decides to affirm an event, the event simply is not. The matheme of the event inscribes that it is both the presentation of the evental site and the event itself. Say N is the evental site (a multiple which, while presented, is unrepresented) where the event e happens, then the “event of the site N ” e_n is $\{n \in N, e_n\}$. The event (of the site) represents both all the elements n that belong to the site N and the event e_N itself.²⁵⁴ It both makes an inventory of all the unrepresented elements of the evental site N but without however being trapped to an infinite recording of these same elements that co-existed with it as it also, through itself, makes a halting point for this counting.²⁵⁵ In other words, while it counts all the other elements of the evental site, it also counts or presents itself as an element of itself.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid., 179.

²⁵³ For Badiou, “the confusion of the existence of the site... with the necessity of the event itself is the cross of determinist or globalizing thought.” Ibid. As Badiou explains, “the existence of a multiple on the edge of the void merely opens up the possibility of the event.” Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 189.

c. The Event as Rare and Undecidable

The axiom of foundation regularity, one of the ZF axioms, prohibits sets to be members of themselves. Since sets derive their definiteness upon a certain relation of belonging \in (i.e., they are separated or partitioned out from a given set), a set must have gathered itself from an original belonging. Yet the axiom of foundation prohibits an infinite regress of belonging. Say for example that there is a set α and β belongs to α ($\beta \in \alpha$), β is said to be foundational, i.e., on the edge of the void, when no element of β is an element of α . Their only relation is one of non-relation (since they do not have any element in common) and the “intersection of these two sets can only be named by the proper name of the void: $\alpha \cap \beta = \emptyset$,” thus “they have *nothing* to do with one another.”²⁵⁷ The void is the foundational point on the basis of which there is belonging, i.e., being. The void is the Other than being that guarantees its immanent foundation.²⁵⁸ A “halting point establishes a kind of original finitude” for a set (or being) which marks the origin as well as the historicity of the set (or being).²⁵⁹ As was mentioned earlier, the axiom of foundation guarantees that a set is decomposable to a more basic or original element which cannot be decomposed any further. The axiom requires a set to be decomposable and thus prohibits its self-membership.²⁶⁰

In Badiou’s ontology, the category of the event, being the happening (in the site) of the foundational void or the *nothing*, breaks away with the axiom of foundation. As Livingston points out, the self-membership of the event is not a rejection of ontology or set

²⁵⁷ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 186.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 187.

²⁶⁰ Livingston, “Review of Being and Event.,” 225.

theory itself, but “an index of the event’s capability to go *beyond* ontology in introducing happening into the intrinsically non-evental order of being.”²⁶¹ For Badiou, ontology is silent about the event, and it “demonstrates that the event is not.”²⁶² But it is also precisely of the event’s inconsistency relative to the structure of any (re)presentation that Badiou establishes “the potentiality of the event to produce novelty.”²⁶³ According to Badiou, an event is a rare and undecidable moment which opens a new possibility within a given situation.²⁶⁴ As a rare moment, an event happens in a highly exceptional manner when disruptions to the normal order of things suddenly take place and a novelty is pursued in the event’s name. Badiou would oftentimes identify a number of rare moments when mass rebellions challenged the irrational excesses of the State. In politics, there were the rare instances of rupture realized by the rebellion of Spartacus, the French Revolution, the Paris Commune, the Bolshevik Revolution, the May 1968 of France, and the Chinese GPCR, to name but a few. In the Philippines, it can also be argued that the *Cry of Pugadlawin* was an event in Badiou’s sense.²⁶⁵

As undecidable moment, an event is subtracted from the logical structure of a particular world or situation.²⁶⁶ The established structure cannot decide its happening as it signals something without the old structure: the new. The decision is not for the old structure

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Badiou, *Being and Event*, 190.

²⁶³ Livingston, “Review of Being and Event,” 225.

²⁶⁴ Alain Badiou, *Conditions*, trans. Steven Corcoran (New York: Continuum, 2008), 24.

²⁶⁵ Regletto Aldrich Imbong, “Violence in Alain Badiou’s Emancipatory Politics,” *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 10 (2), (2016): 214.

²⁶⁶ Regletto Aldrich Imbong and Jerry Imbong, “Emancipatory Faith: Reflection on Alain Badiou and the Christians for National Liberation,” *Budhi: A Journal of Ideas and Culture* 21 (1), (2017): 53.

to initiate but for subjects ready to organize the event's consequences. The event is an opening that conditions novelties in either science, art, politics, or love which, far from being a normal continuity of their logical structures and established traditions, disturbs their law and structure, thus creating a new creative possibility in either of the four conditions.²⁶⁷ An event is a moment which both defies the normal and the stable, since every event is abnormal, and that there is no natural or neutral event.²⁶⁸ An event proposes a new way of being that escapes the comprehension of the old structure. Hence, anything evental is initially incomprehensible, absurd, and even illogical. In this regard, all events are singular in the sense that, against normality, events instead open a novelty whose happening is not an effect of a situation's logic or a consequence of law.²⁶⁹ In the examples mentioned above, all of these political sequences organized and pursued an order highly novel yet deemed to be illegal, impossible, and unthinkable according to the language of the ruptured State (e.g., freedom of the slaves, emancipation of the working class, dictatorship of the proletariat, and mass revolt against the communist party-state.) The *Cry of Pugadlawin* for example organized an impossibility which was prohibited by the Spanish colonizers: nationhood.²⁷⁰

Unlike what is commonly argued in theology or religion where liberation is in the order of the transcendental, evental novelties are immanent as their consequences will be concretely inscribed in a particular situation. This is why the event is always the event of a

²⁶⁷ Badiou, "From Logic to Anthropology: Affirmative Dialectics," 47. See also Imbong, "Violence in Alain Badiou's Emancipatory Politics," 213.

²⁶⁸ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 175 and 178.

²⁶⁹ Imbong and Imbong, "Emancipatory Faith: Reflection on Alain Badiou and the Christians for National Liberation," 54.

²⁷⁰ Imbong, "Violence in Alain Badiou's Emancipatory Politics," 214.

site e_n .²⁷¹ In order for an event not to disintegrate into the fleeting appearances of a situation thereby losing the chance of organizing a novelty, it has to be affirmed in its immanence. Without this affirmation, no event will have taken place and routine rather than rupture or break will mark the order of a situation or a world. In the words of the poet Mallarmé, a statement which Badiou fondly uses to describe a “relapse into the general space,” or a lost evental chance, “nothing will have taken place but the place.”²⁷²

d. Faithful Intervention and the Truth Procedure

To inscribe the event into the situation, a decision for its affirmation has to be made. To affirm here means that the event, which again is prohibited by the initial situation and its state, be made as a part of the situation, i.e., to affirm its belonging to or presentation in the situation.²⁷³ The event’s belonging to a situation can only be solely supported by an act of wager, a decision.²⁷⁴ This does not mean that the event itself is decided by an established structure. Again, the structure could in no way necessitate an event as the latter is undecidable.²⁷⁵ An event’s happening is retroactively affirmed and instituted by a decision.²⁷⁶ The decision by retroaction gives meaning to what could have been something other than an event. The Cry of *Pugadlawin* could have been an ordinary gathering of

²⁷¹ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 179.

²⁷² Alain Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, trans. Bruno Bosteels (New York: Continuum, 2009), 10, and Badiou, *Being and Event*, 205.

²⁷³ For Badiou, the event either does belong or does not belong to the situation. If it does not belong to it, “then, given that the terms of its event-site are not presented, nothing will have taken place.” However, “if it does belong, then it will interpose itself between itself and the void, and thus be determined as ultra-one.” Badiou, *Being and Event*, 201.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 203.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

dissatisfied natives if it were not for the retroactive decision to name it as a symbolic act of defiance against a colonial government and make it as an inspiration to remain in the struggle.

The decision is an intervention made in relation to the event. An intervention recognizes both that there is an event and that such an event belongs to the situation.²⁷⁷ Not that the event can be counted according to the names available in the situation, but that the event is indexed by an element of the site that does not exist, as it is unrepresentable.²⁷⁸ As Badiou clarifies, if the indexical term of the event was derived by the intervention from the existing nominations, then it would have to be admitted that the count-as-one structures the intervention in its entirety.²⁷⁹ The event as indexed follows the principle of indexicals. The latter are expressions whose objects are not “given once for all” as they semantically change from one context to another.²⁸⁰ Pronouns like “I,” “you,” and “it” as well as the expressions “yesterday” and “today” are examples of these. The indexicality of an event immunizes it from an absolute identification to a local occurrence and also allows its truth to be trans-temporal, a concept which will be discussed subsequently. The act of intervening and making an event belong to a situation is indexing that event to a particular occurrence. In love, for example, an intervention happens when the effects of a chance-encounter of two lovers, with a prior recognition that the encounter is part of an amorous event, are seriously pursued, organized, and built into a new structure of existence for both lovers. The

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 203.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 205.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Graeme Forbes, “Indexicals,” in *Handbook of Philosophical Logic*, vol. 4, ed. Dov Gabbay and Franz Guentner (The Netherlands: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1989), 463.

organized structure based on the chance-encounter is a totally new and different one as it takes into account that which was not or impossible prior to the chance encounter: love and the decision to stay in love.

It is in this regard that the intervention follows an illegal procedure, as “it cannot conform to any *law* of representation.”²⁸¹ By being illegal, the intervention disrupts the law by extracting from the edges or borders of the site, the inexistent or unrepresented elements that escapes the count, the name of the event. The event’s name, therefore, is “a representative without representation, the event remains anonymous and uncertain.”²⁸² Being *both* on the edge of the void *and* the name of an unrepresentable of a site, the event is an ultra-one, a name that overcomes the state’s count-as-one. This is why for Badiou the event is, in essence, the Two: already in its matheme, it is the representation both of all the elements of its site $\{n \in \mathbb{N}\}$ and itself $\{e_n\}$.²⁸³ The event, in its “belonging” to a situation, is not a term, but an *interval*: “it establishes itself, in the interventional retroaction, between the empty anonymity bordered on by the site, and the addition of a name.”²⁸⁴

The addition of a name reveals that there is outside of the situation which the latter cannot name or cannot discern. This is the indiscernible, \varnothing .²⁸⁵ Positively designated, the

²⁸¹ Ibid. The intervention is illegal relative to its being an eventual procedure that challenges the law of representation because of the novelty it organizes. In science, for example, the Copernican revolution was an illegal intervention which challenged the legality, in the field of science, of the geocentric model. In politics, radical alternatives, like liberation of the slaves, the election of the sovereign leaders, and the dictatorship of the proletariat, were once illegal relative to the order that they challenge (i.e., slavery, feudalism and monarchy, and capitalism, respectively).

²⁸² Ibid., 206.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 327.

indiscernible ♀ is the generic, since it is in its real sense the situation's general truth, the truth of its being.²⁸⁶ Truth requires a generic procedure which "*groups together all the terms of the situation which are positively connected to the event.*"²⁸⁷ This is the procedure of fidelity. The procedure of fidelity has to discriminate positively and negatively connected terms to avoid the relapse into the old pre-evental situation and to advance the new post-evental one. In other words, the procedure has to be in fidelity to the event, forming a one-multiple of the positively evental terms in order to include it in the situation.²⁸⁸ In this regard, a fidelity is a sort of a counter-state as it counts not through presentations but on representations; a fidelity institutionalizes (or legalizes the contingent character of the event), rather than merely presents.²⁸⁹ The ultra-one of an event is seized and seizes a faithful collective thus creating a counter-state. But as this counter-state, being an effect of the event's ultra-one, is an overcoming of the State's count-as-one, this counter-State is not the State in its traditional sense but, I will argue, an ultra-state, a revolutionary State on the way to its own withering away. This is the State whose being is the dialectical process of negating itself, along with the political organization that attaches itself to it and the parts or classes that dialectically maintains and is likewise preserved by the State.

Fidelity is in the order of legitimizing and including within the situation a wholly new political constellation resulting from the discerning and grouping together those that

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 335.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 233.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

proceed from the eventual rupture.²⁹⁰ Granting that there is a faithful deployment of an event's consequences, there is in the situation "a kind of other situation" whose legitimacy springs out from both the event and the fidelity resulting from the event and whose institution is not the work of the situation in question.²⁹¹ These acts of legitimizing and institutionalizing are on the level of representation and must, therefore, touch upon the category of the State. But as was explained earlier, being an overcoming of the traditional State, this is a counter-state or an ultra-state. Badiou, in a rather self-contradicting statement, argues that fidelity deploys itself within the terrain of the *state* of the situation, thus creating what can be called a sub-state or a counter-state.²⁹² The counter-state becomes the site where the truth is forced within a situation.

Since the situation only allows the nameable in its accepted knowledge, the act of addition is an act of forcing the indiscernible, the truth, in the situation. For Livingston, subjects force a truth into the situation, making it a situation supplemented $S(\varnothing)$ by the generic procedure.²⁹³ The addition into the situation of the generic procedure, for Livingston, is the generation of a truth.²⁹⁴ Hence, the intervention which adds into the situation the generic procedure is also a truth procedure as it proceeds from the consequences of an event and institutionalizes these consequences into the situation in

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid. 238.

²⁹² Ibid., 233. This is self-contradicting because, as will be seen in the succeeding sections, Badiou describes politics as a "distance from the State." Understood from this framework of distancing, fidelity should not be touching even the borders of the State. Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 256.

²⁹³ As explained by Livingston, in intervention, a subject forces a novel situation which, like Cohen's "generic extension," adds a set of consequences to the original situation. Livingston, "Review of Being and Event.," 232.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 231.

question through the ultra-state. Again, since the event is a happening of the void, the uncountable of both presentation and representation, its consequences are “subtracted” from the nominations or knowledge of the situation in question.²⁹⁵ A truth creates “a hole in knowledge.”²⁹⁶

e. The Faithful Subjects

The fidelity of subjects who are resolved to seize in the event the promise of the new realizes the intervention, which allows for an incorporation of a multiple who would steadfastly pursue the event’s consequences and inscribe these into the organization of a particular world or situation. In science, the subjects (i.e., the subjects of a truth) are the scientists who discover alternative paradigms that succeed in explaining a physical phenomenon which earlier scientific models failed to. In art, the subjects are the new systems of works that “configure a new subjectivity.”²⁹⁷ The subject in art is not the creator but the whole novel system that prescribes a new era of artistic form. In love, the subjects are the amorous couples determined to overcome the contingency of an event-encounter and establish a certain degree of tenacity.²⁹⁸ This new subjectivity manifests the regime of multiplicity as it experiences the world not anymore from the tyranny of the One but the dialectics of the Two.²⁹⁹ In politics, the subjects are the various militant collectives summoned and incorporated in order to put to an end the excesses of the (political) State and

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 232.

²⁹⁶ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 327.

²⁹⁷ Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 70.

²⁹⁸ Alain Badiou, *In Praise of Love*, trans. Peter Bush (London: Serpent’s Tail, 2012), 32 and 43.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 39.

eventually, the State itself by way of the ultra-state. What all these subjects have in common are both the recognition of an event's happening and the organization of that event's consequences into the world or the situation. In other words, subjects make immanent the truth of an event and in the process, advance along the procedure of this truth. What supposedly is a truth that is beyond history is indexed, through an intervention of subjects, to a particular situation itself. Truth is embodied through a body of subjects pursuing the consequences of an event.

There have been various subjects in the past. Political subjects, for example, intervened into the situation or the world in order to inscribe a truth of politics: freedom against slavery in the case of Spartacusian subjectivity, proletarian movement in the case of the Paris communards, seizure of political power and dictatorship of the proletariat in the case of Leninist communist subjectivity, and mass communist movement in the case of Maoist communist subjectivity. Without subjects, the truth could not make itself immanent in a situation, for the truth, being the indiscernible or the generic (\varnothing) has to be forced into the situation, making the latter a supplemented situation $S(\varnothing)$. Truth is supported by the subjects.³⁰⁰ In other words, subjects become the local configuration of a generic procedure. They are *local* configurations of a truth procedure as subjects support a global truth, a truth that exceeds the finitude of the subject supporting it.³⁰¹ Consequently, subjects also mean the form where intervention and fidelity is preserved and persevered, for the event to be incorporated in the situation.³⁰² For Badiou, it is redundant to say subject in relation to a

³⁰⁰ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 391.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 396.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 393.

truth for – alluding to his three forms of the subject – a subject could only be in the service, denial, or occultation of a truth.³⁰³

The process of making new subjects is what Badiou calls as subjectivization.³⁰⁴ Starting from the *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II*, Badiou already distinguished three subjective processes, all in reference to an event: the faithful, reactive, and obscure subjects.³⁰⁵ The obscure subjects display hostility towards the new. They regard it as something malevolent that needs to be destroyed.³⁰⁶ The reactive subject portrays indifference towards the new. They act as if nothing really new has taken place.³⁰⁷ The faithful subjects, the central theme of an emancipatory politics, shows eagerness for the new. They incorporate themselves in the legalization of an event's consequences.³⁰⁸ The faithful subjects treat the successive points where a truth is executed. These points, for Badiou, are the singular choices that confront the situation.³⁰⁹ By treating these points, the subjects deal with the most practical questions of which underlying consequences either deny or affirm the truth. These decisions, for example, include: What sort of struggle is needed to confront state power, legal or armed? Should the proletarian party field candidates in the

³⁰³ Alain Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II*, 50. This study however will limit on the faithful subject of Badiou.

³⁰⁴ As explained by Bosteels, the term is borrowed from Lacan. Differences in translation caused the variations of subjectivation and subjectivization. Bruce Fink and Oliver Feltham, for example, used the variation “subjectivization,” while Žižek, Toscano, and Bosteels himself opted for the more literal “subjectivation.” Bruno Bosteels, “Translator’s Introduction,” in *Theory of the Subject*, xxxvi.

³⁰⁵ Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II*, 50-62 and Badiou, *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, 92.

³⁰⁶ Badiou, *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, 92.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 91-92.

³⁰⁹ Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II*, 51.

parliamentary elections? Are the landlords, in general, class enemies? The faithful subjects incorporate the truth in its temporal dimension without however forgetting truth's trans-temporality. The subjects, likewise, become the fragile support of an eternal truth: they plot "the present of the body as the new time of a truth."³¹⁰ As the subjects make choices, these choices also make them or constitute them into an organized and disciplined collective. Thus subjectivization, as Bassett emphasized, must be an "organized and disciplined process" which therefore presupposes an organization that subjects itself to a specific form of discipline.³¹¹

That there is truth is one which is conditioned by an evental rupture. Against the Heideggerian thesis of being's co-belonging with truth, Badiou locates truth on that-which-is-not-being or on the evental.³¹² Badiou distinguishes between truth and veridical. The latter is relative to any knowledge or is determined by a situation's encyclopedia of knowledge. Truth, however, is organized by the procedure of fidelity, thus linking it both to the event and to the intervention.³¹³ This is also where, for Badiou, truth and knowledge differ. The latter is the regime which determines and classifies elements within a situation according to the available vocabularies in what Badiou calls as an encyclopedia (of knowledge).³¹⁴ What this means is that everything is and can be determined and classified from within the resources of the said encyclopedia. There is nothing that can be said to be outside of the

³¹⁰ Badiou, *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, 93.

³¹¹ Keith Bassett, "Event, Politics, and Space: Ranciere or Badiou?," *Space and Polity*, 20 (3), (2016): 282.

³¹² Badiou, *Being and Event*, 355.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 332.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 328-329.

resources mentioned, which means that everything has been determined and classified. In other words, there would be nothing new in the situation. This is why knowledge “does not know of the event because the name of the event is supernumerary, and so it does not belong to the language of the situation.”³¹⁵ Truth, as was mentioned earlier, punches a “hole in knowledge,” as truth, being evental, eclipses a certain area of knowledge.

Truth, for Badiou, has the character of being trans-temporal.³¹⁶ It is infinite in the sense that it could possibly be reactivated in and migrated to trans-temporal worlds, or in worlds other than where these truths initially were created and pursued. A truth is not limited to the finitude of its own time and place but has the capacity to be reinvented in yet another time and place that possesses totally different characteristics from the original time and place. Truth’s trans-temporality also clarifies its infinity: it transgresses the finity of time and place. Truth’s infinity contrasts to a subject’s finitude. While the subject is a fragile and finite moment of support for a truth’s institutionalization into a world, truth however is not commensurate with a subject: the former’s infinity is infinitely great for the latter to own for itself.³¹⁷ This also means that while not literally inscribed or legalized into a world since a subject could lose fidelity to an event’s truth, truth remains in the stronghold of an Idea ever ready to replicated in new and foreign contexts.

Truth only proceeds through the chance happening of the event. For Badiou, truth, is a procedure conditional on the event in the scientific, political, artistic, and amorous domains. These conditions produce truths – contrary to the classic claim that “philosophy

³¹⁵ Ibid., 329.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 129.

³¹⁷ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 396.

produces truth” – and that the truths produced by these truth-conditions are eternal or trans-temporal.³¹⁸ The notion of temporality enlightens two important significations of truth. Truth is not an absolutist notion that prescribes dogmatic devotion among blind political adherents. It is not an established doctrine immune from creative reinventions. Truth also is not as some relativist claims that gain support from dispersed and oftentimes conflicting cultural contexts. It is founded not on otherness but on sameness. Truth therefore is universal as it can be creatively reinvented in various spatio-temporal circumstances through the support of subjects faithful to its regime. And its fragility only affirms its non-absolutist character as anytime – especially when subjects begin to be unfaithful to the event that opens the truth-procedure – its regime can just end. The truth procedure of the Paris Commune for example only lasted for seventy-one days. But its universality was once again affirmed when succeeding proletarian revolutions reinvented (i.e., faithfully applied its lessons to new revolutionary sequences) its truth, in Russia in 1917 and in China in 1949.

Every truth procedure depends on a certain level of fidelity among its subjects. It is even the case that contemporary subjects reiterated or recognized a past event but which they contemporaneously integrated into their different political procedures. This is because, again, truths are trans-temporal. It is the case for example that the October Revolution of Lenin and the Chinese GPCR of Mao recognized the historic significance and the truth of the Paris Commune as the event which “served as an important guide to subsequent proletarian theorizing and struggle.”³¹⁹ This notion of fidelity is as true in politics as it is in

³¹⁸ Badiou, *Conditions*, 11.

³¹⁹ See footnote number 7 of Imbong and Imbong, “Emancipatory Faith,” 55. Also see Badiou’s opening statement to the third chapter of *The Communist Hypothesis*, “The Paris Commune: A Political Declaration on Politics,” in Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 1.

other truth procedures. The scientist, artist, militant, or lover discern upon the situation or the world multiplicities that are dependent on the event. In the Chinese Revolution for example, and especially after the implementation of the New Democracy, multiplicities which work within the framework of private ownership over collective or State ownership were gradually abandoned.³²⁰ Communal or State ownership was the post-evental consequence that sustained the said initial evental rupture in the Chinese Revolution. For Badiou, fidelity is an apparatus which separates out terms that are either dependent upon or independent of the event. To be faithful is to gather the terms and legalize what supposedly was a mere chance.³²¹

According to Badiou, “if a multiplicity appears in a world, one element of this multiplicity, and one alone, is an inexistent” of that world.³²² This multiplicity’s inexistence is not in the sense that their existence is ontologically nil. Rather, their inexistence is an “existential distinction” which is “internal to appearing” and that their “self-identity is measured, in a given world, by the minimal degree.”³²³ The inexistents are there, but theirs is an existence which, for the State, does not matter. For him, they are those “who are present in the world but absent from its meaning and decisions about its future.”³²⁴ In other words, the State does not represent them. Politically speaking, these are the groups or classes

³²⁰ Stuart Schram, “Mao Tse-Tung and the Theory of the Permanent Revolution,” *The China Quarterly* 46, (April-June 1971): 227.

³²¹ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 168.

³²² Badiou, *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, 60

³²³ *Ibid.*

³²⁴ Alain Badiou, *The Rebirth of History: Times of Riots and Uprisings*, trans. Gregory Elliot (New York: Verso, 2012), 56.

who are relatively alienated from the State and therefore unrepresented by the latter. Since the “State is always the State of the ruling class,” it only represents the class which rule the said world or situation.³²⁵ The proletariat, for example, is the inexistent of a bourgeois State since the latter represses the former’s existence and simply perpetuates the interest and guarantees the existence of its own class. As inexistent, it is not the case that the proletariat under a bourgeois State has no being; rather its “political existence” is “completely subtracted from the sphere of political presentation.”³²⁶ The proletariat collectively realizes that in a State where there is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, they are simply nothing. From this sharp realization, however, the proletariat become conscious of the historic need to reconstitute and make their existence maximally felt in the situation in question. They then transform themselves into subjects (of a truth) in order to be all. For Badiou, this is what the proletarian song *Internationale* essentially proclaims: we are nothing, let us be all!³²⁷

This “becoming all” necessitates a change of the situation or the world, a possibility which can only be upon the happening of the event and the faithful gathering and organizing of its consequences. An event raises to a maximum degree the existence of the inexistents. The event is “what makes possible the restitution of the inexistent.”³²⁸ From the perspective of the communist subjectivity realized by both the Bolsheviks and the Chinese revolutionaries, this restitution necessitates the dictatorship of the proletariat – as against the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie – possible only under the communist hypothesis.

³²⁵ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 105.

³²⁶ Badiou, *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, 61.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Badiou, *The Rebirth of History*, 56.

Communist Hypothesis and the Problem of Organization

This section explains Badiou's take on the communist hypothesis and the party. It discusses what Badiou calls as the two sequences of the communist hypothesis and the requirements should a third sequence already proceed. In the supposed third sequence, Badiou argues for a new politics, his reformulation of the communist hypothesis. In this reformulation, Badiou proposes for a politics without a party. It is Badiou's contention that this politics without a party avoids the errors of both parliamentarian and insurrectionary politics. Both forms of politics supposedly entangle the party to the State thus rendering it inert and incapable of advancing further the victories of the revolution. For Badiou, only through the subtractive nature of the politics without a party could emancipatory politics effectively carry forward its objectives.

a. The Communist Hypothesis and its Sequence

Badiou believes that emancipatory politics is still the ultimate overcoming of capitalism. He regards capitalism as containing "neither sense nor truth" and markets "this lack of truth and absencing thought as 'natural sense.'"³²⁹ He equates capitalism with barbarism and sees the need to organize various political experiments for its overcoming.³³⁰ Badiou insists the contrast between the wickedness of capitalism with the real of peoples movements and their ideas.³³¹ From this contrast, Badiou asserts that the emancipatory theme has not lost its power although communism, the longtime name for this power, needs

³²⁹ Badiou, *Conditions*, 166.

³³⁰ Alain Badiou and Peter Engelman, *Philosophy and the Idea of Communism*, trans. Susan Spitzer (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 50 and 53.

³³¹ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 100.

to be resuscitated “in all its new clarity.”³³² Badiou echoed Marx how communism will allow “*an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.*”³³³

While there are parallelisms between Badiou’s communism and Marxism, the former insists that the two be distinguished. Badiou understands communism in its “generic sense,” the equality of individuals within their social function’s multiplicity and diversity. This means the destruction of a division of labor that renders manual workers at an economically disadvantaged position, the industrialization of the countryside, and the establishment of a politics supported by popular assemblies supervising the affairs of the State.³³⁴ But unlike the intelligibility accorded to it by modernity, in which communism is regarded as a historical category, the meaning of the term communism, for Badiou, has been existing “since the beginnings of the state” and already present since Plato.³³⁵ He explains that the communist hypothesis, or its fragments, starts to appear whenever a mass action challenges State oppression in the name of equality and justice.³³⁶ Thus, even during the ancient period, communism already appeared in the sequences initiated, for example, by Spartacus. And this is consistent with Badiou’s notion of a trans-historical truth developed in his

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Alain Badiou, Felippo del Luchesse, and Jason Smith. ““We Need a Popular Discipline:’ Contemporary Politics and the Crisis of the Negative. *Inquiry*, 07 February 2007. Retrieved from <https://www.lacan.com/baddiscipline.html>. 09 July 2020; and

³³⁵ Alain Badiou, “We are at a New Beginning of Marxist Thought,” *Verso*, 21 November 2018, retrieved from <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4133-alain-badiou-we-are-at-a-new-beginning-of-marxist-thought>; 13 July 2020 and Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 17.

³³⁶ Alain Badiou, “We are at a New Beginning of Marxist Thought,” *Verso*, 21 November 2018, retrieved from <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4133-alain-badiou-we-are-at-a-new-beginning-of-marxist-thought>; 13 July 2020.

ontology, one in which a truth transcends the contexts of its origin to be transposed into foreign spatio-temporal conditions. In other words, communism is not historical, but trans-historical.

Badiou explains that the communist hypothesis develops from two separate sequences, with a forty-year gap between each. The first sequence happened from 1792-1871, or the period between the French Revolution and the Paris Commune. This sequence is the “setting in place of the communist hypothesis” and is characterized by popular insurrections that aimed to overthrow the existing order.³³⁷ The revolution was seen as the necessary sequence for the abolition of the old forms of society and the establishment of equality.³³⁸ The concept of the revolution was structured according to the logic of class struggle, the resolution of which i.e., the dissolution of category of class itself, defines the era of communism.³³⁹ The first sequence ended with the tragic defeat of the Paris Commune.

The second sequence happened from 1917-1976, or the period between the Bolshevik Revolution and the end of the GPCR. The question that dominated this period is “how to win?” How to win from the counterrevolutionary reaction of the overthrown classes and remain steadfast in the consolidation of socialism. This period centered on the problem of the organization, i.e., the party. Lenin was a paradigmatic figure in this period in the sense that he provided the basic principles of the theory and politics of the party. This was in response to the tragic defeat of the Paris Commune. For Badiou, Lenin’s idea was to dispel

³³⁷ Badiou, “The Communist Hypothesis,” *New Left Review*, Jan-Feb 2008, retrieved from <https://newleftreview.org/issues/II49/articles/alain-badiou-the-communist-hypothesis>; 27 May 2020.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 17.

once and for all the bloody failure of the Commune.³⁴⁰ And in this regard, Lenin was victorious. Badiou explained that “what the 19th century had dreamt, the 20th century had accomplished.”³⁴¹ In this sequence, the party emerged as an effective solution to problems inherited by the first sequence.³⁴²

While Badiou recognizes the victories of twentieth century socialism, i.e., the first two periods of the communist hypothesis associated to the “proper names” of Lenin and Mao, Badiou insists that the socialism resulting from the supposed revolutionary takeover of State power eventually degenerated.³⁴³ As these socialist experiments were then led by communist parties that eventually fused itself with the State, these experiments swung from right to “ultra-leftist” errors as the party-State fusion has rendered the experiments detached from the masses. These errors obstructed the revolutionary experiments to make giant leaps and ultimately conditioned their failures. On these failures Badiou opens thought to the task of rethinking, or better yet, reformulating the communist project, what he oftentimes refers to as the communist hypothesis.

Badiou emphasizes the significance of the Paris Commune, the May 1968 of France, and the GPCR in relation to the supposed “failures” of the communist hypothesis using an analogy in mathematics. He is alluding to the proof of “Fermat’s theorem.” For Badiou, there were many attempts to prove the said theorem. And many of these attempts started significant mathematical developments even if these did not actually solve the problem

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 18.

³⁴¹ Badiou, “The Communist Hypothesis,” *New Left Review*, Jan-Feb 2008, retrieved from <https://newleftreview.org/issues/II49/articles/alain-badiou-the-communist-hypothesis>; 27 May 2020.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Ibid.

itself. While it was only later that the English mathematician Wiles actually proved the said theorem, all the lessons of every failure, and all the processes of investigating them and their implications, became the lifeblood of mathematics.³⁴⁴ The same goes with the hypothesis that advanced communist movements and socialist societies the world over. All these were informed by the lessons of past failures starting from the Paris Commune. Žižek echoes the same point. For him, “theory is the theory of failed practice.”³⁴⁵

While it must be accepted that many socialist experiments of the past century failed, their failures nevertheless are far from suggesting the irrelevance of the communist idea. On the contrary, these failures only challenge renewed and more creative deployments of this constantly resurging idea of communism. The supposed failures therefore must seriously take into account the question: how would an emancipatory politics advance its cause with all the lessons laid down by the supposed failures of the communist cause? This advance of emancipatory politics requires not only a nostalgic resurrection of past models of political sequences, but also above all, a fidelity that actualizes a particular thought and action that, precisely because it failed, has to a certain degree offered a radically different political and economic possibility. Failure, in this regard, must be understood via the history of the hypothesis’ proof, provided, however, that the same hypothesis is not surrendered.³⁴⁶ Epistemologically speaking, “the bad thing of failure,” for Badiou, must be transformed “into the combative excellence of knowledge.”³⁴⁷ The supposed failing points of past

³⁴⁴ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 7.

³⁴⁵ Slavoj Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes* (New York: Verso, 2009), 3.

³⁴⁶ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 7.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

revolutionary sequences must be summed up and raised to theoretical knowledge, so that through the latter, the next revolutionary sequence could be more theoretically equipped than the previous ones.

There are twofold notions of this failure. On the one hand, there is the transformation of radical politics into a model which confined itself within the framework of elections and the parliament. In France, for example, after the May 1968 event, many of the Maoist renegades and a great number of the petty bourgeoisies, according to Badiou, succumbed to the irresistible temptation of parliamentarian politics.³⁴⁸ These individuals, mostly intellectuals, were eventually corrupted by the Mitterrand government, by inviting them “into the vicinity of power.” For Badiou, even Deleuze accepted a dinner invitation with the French President – “and handing out credits to the ‘associations’” the same government was so keen on.³⁴⁹ This notion of politics which can be reduced to the peaceful coexistence between communism and bourgeois politics, for Badiou, is the classic rightist failure.

On the other hand, there is the failure to, in the words of Mao, properly distinguish the nature of contradictions as either antagonistic or non-antagonistic.³⁵⁰ Contradictions among the people are handled by the socialist state and the party in power through purging. Brutality, death, and terror, rather than the proletarian spirit of painstaking persuasion and political education, guided the supposed proletarian dictatorship in order to overcome the contradictions arising from, for example, the unenlightened rich farmers of Russia – the famous *kulaks* – and some intellectuals starting in the 1930’s. The socialist construction of

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 18.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 17.

³⁵⁰ Mao Zedong, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People,” *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5, 219-256.

Russia, which started in 1929, in this regard, was “trapped within the dark limits of terror.”³⁵¹ Since the problem of terror is a consequence of the drive to seize and consolidate power, it is supposedly inherent in an insurrectionary politics. This notion, according to Badiou, is the “ultra-left” failure.

In illuminating these failures, Badiou draws from the rich historical resources offered by the Paris Commune, the May 1968 of France, and the GPCR. For Badiou, there were four May 1968. First were the revolts and uprisings of school and university students.³⁵² Second were the general strikes organized by workers across the country.³⁵³ Third were the libertarian movements that concerned themselves with and questioned the existing morals.³⁵⁴ And last was the May 1968 that searched for a new politics, guided by the question “what is politics?”³⁵⁵ For Badiou, the first three overlap with each other in relation to the fourth, i.e., the question of a new politics. The overlapping points to the truth of the May 1968 as an event: the reformulation of politics.

Despite the uncertainty of its character, Badiou is no less optimistic of a third sequence of the hypothesis’ development. Badiou suggests to retain the historical and theoretical lessons of the first sequence and the centrality of victory of the second.³⁵⁶ However, Badiou contends that the political procedures that will spring from the third

³⁵¹ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 19.

³⁵² Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 46-47.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 47-49.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

sequence will neither be the formless or multi-form popular movements nor the mass communist party of the Trotskyites and the Maoists.³⁵⁷ Bringing the negative experiences of the 20th century socialist states and the supposed ambiguous lessons of the May '68 and the GPCR, Badiou highlights the task of bringing “the communist hypothesis into existence in another mode,” while being ambiguous himself on what this another mode really is.³⁵⁸

b. The Question of a New Politics

Learning from the tragedies of the revisionist Russia, what he labeled as the classic rightist and “ultra-leftist” failures, Badiou reformulated the question of politics, especially the so called classical revolutionism that assigned the party as the locus of emancipatory politics and identified as its aim the conquest of political power.³⁵⁹

Badiou argues that today’s emancipatory procedure must be a politics without a party. This new politics advanced by Badiou is incompatible with the party as the latter is guided by what Badiou rejects as parliamentary and insurrectionary politics. On the one hand, the parliamentary politics of the party provided the principles and conditions for its transformation toward a form opposed to its teleology. Badiou believes that in principle, a parliamentary politics is internally linked to the State.³⁶⁰ The assumption of a form opposed to the teleology of the party – ultimately traceable to the party’s fusion with the State – expressed itself in bureaucratic leadership and militarist discipline. From what he observes as the fusion between the party and the State (characteristic of both Russia then and

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 57.

³⁶⁰ Alain Badiou and Peter Hallward, “Politics and Philosophy: An Interview with Alain Badiou,” *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 3, (3), (1998): 114.

China today), Badiou claims that the party-State fusion merely enforces either bureaucratic “formalism or [red] terror.”³⁶¹ Such bureaucratic formalism is evident in today’s communist parties that have entirely devoted their struggle within the State’s parliament yet have totally abandoned the revolutionary struggle for communism. Badiou’s personal assessment of the socialist-turned-French-President Francois Mitterrand is telling in this regard.³⁶² Mitterrand conjured the remaining chimeras of what once was considered as the “left,” specifically its petty bourgeois elements, and corrupted them by inviting into the jurisdiction of power.³⁶³

Furthermore, for Badiou, the party’s transformation into a bureaucratic apparatus severely opposed the direction of communism.³⁶⁴ Badiou observes how after and despite the victories of the second sequence of the communist hypothesis, the party created further a problem. Here, the party would become the very obstacle for the advance of the revolution it initially won as it “developed into a new form of authoritarianism.”³⁶⁵ While it succeeded in the overthrow of reactionary regimes, Badiou argued that the party proved itself incapable for the construction of a proletarian dictatorship in its Marxist sense and intention.³⁶⁶ Instead of allowing its gradual withering away, the party perpetuated the State and obsessed itself

³⁶¹ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 113.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 16-17.

³⁶³ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 16-17.

³⁶⁴ We are at a New Beginning of Marxist Thought,” *Verso*, 21 November 2018, retrieved from <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4133-alain-badiou-we-are-at-a-new-beginning-of-marxist-thought>; 13 July 2020.

³⁶⁵ Badiou, “The Communist Hypothesis,” *New Left Review*, Jan-Feb 2008, retrieved from <https://newleftreview.org/issues/II49/articles/alain-badiou-the-communist-hypothesis>; 27 May 2020.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

with statist politics where bureaucratic inertia and police coercion, among others, dominated the state of affairs.

For Badiou, politics does not originate from the party-State fusion.³⁶⁷ Politics originates from real situations and processes beyond the totalizing effect of such a fusion. In other words, this politics must remain independent and subtracted from the State, i.e., a politics at a distance from the State. Since Badiou considers the party to be inherently fused with Statist politics, or internal to the parliamentary State, then the party cannot be the locus of this politics.³⁶⁸ Not that Badiou rejects the question of the political organization altogether since politics is always collective and has to be organized in a certain sense.³⁶⁹ However, Badiou recasts the content and form of such an organization such that it is not supposedly subordinated to the fusion of the party-State.

Badiou gives an example of this politics subtracted or at a distance from the State in the *Organisation Politique*. Concerning the *sans-papiers* or those immigrants without papers, Badiou explains that the expected political response is for the immigrants to revolt against the State. However, Badiou explains that instead of such a negative and destructive act, they must rather invent a political process that creates the conditions where the State will be led to change its policies concerning undocumented immigrants.³⁷⁰ This is what Badiou calls as the “prescriptions against the state” organized by the politics of the

³⁶⁷ Alain Badiou and Peter Hallward, “Politics and Philosophy: An Interview with Alain Badiou,” *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 3, (3), (1998): 113.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 114.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 113.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Organisation Politique.³⁷¹ It highlights or considers as primary the creative rather than the destructive dimension of the political procedure. Here, Badiou's affirmative dialectical framework is supposedly deployed. But Badiou denies that this political process participates in the State as such a process excludes the electoral system and party representation among its activities. However, Badiou also denies that such a process is in radical exteriority to the State as the former does not lose sight of the State and continues to make "prescriptions" against it by forcing it to change its policies on the basis of the conditions created by the political process.³⁷²

On the other hand, the party's insurrectionary politics, one that is clearly influenced by Marxism, presupposes the taking of power.³⁷³ Badiou's communism differs from Marx's not only in the sense that the former's trans-historicity opposes the historicity of the latter, but also because it could no longer be reduced today to a Marxist insurrectionary politics. For Badiou, communism could not be any more modeled according to the classic understanding of a revolutionary seizure of power.³⁷⁴ The revolutionary takeover of the State power by the proletariat from the bourgeoisie characterized the past communist projects.

While the taking or seizing of political power seems to establish a negative relation to the State, one that could perhaps be considered as a politics at a distance from the State, Badiou insists that this model of politics still works in a "conflictual alliance with the

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ "'We Need a Popular Discipline: Contemporary Politics and the Crisis of the Negative.' *Inquiry*, 07 February 2007. Retrieved from <https://www.lacan.com/baddiscipline.html>. 09 July 2020;

³⁷⁴ Alain Badiou, "We are at a New Beginning of Marxist Thought," *Verso*, 21 November 2018, retrieved from <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4133-alain-badiou-we-are-at-a-new-beginning-of-marxist-thought>; 13 July 2020.

State.”³⁷⁵ In other words, its negative and dissident character, while mobilizing a certain antagonistic politics with the State, provides the conditions for its subordination to the State and its power. Insurrectionary politics is still a politics of relation (not subtraction) to the State, albeit in its negative form. Badiou believes that the insurrectionary politics of the party follows the logic of negative dialectics where destruction comes prior to the act of creation. This is because Badiou regards politics not as an assumption of but a subtraction from power.³⁷⁶

Badiou opposes the negative dialectics of the party’s insurrectionary politics with his affirmative dialectics characteristic of a subtractive politics. Working on the consequences of the category of the event, Badiou wanted to advance “a new logic in the wake of Hegelian dialectics” as the latter (and also the Marxist notion of dialectics) is haunted by what he called as “the problem of negativity.”³⁷⁷ For Badiou, a notion of dialectics that is framed within the priority of the negative makes newness a mere result of the process instead of that which is primally affirmed.³⁷⁸ In this regard, the principle of movement is negation instead of affirmation. Hence, Badiou’s ontology of the event and the subject make affirmation the condition for the event’s coming to be.

In the example of the *sans-papiers* mentioned earlier, Badiou illustrates a political process, organized by the *Organisation Politique*, which does not revolt against the State but rather distances itself from the State by creating conditions on the basis of which the latter

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Alain Badiou, “Affirmative Dialectics: From Logic to Anthropology,” *The International Journal of Badiou Studies*, 2(1), 1.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 1-2.

changes its policies. Badiou believes that through the act of creation, the new could come before the act of destruction, i.e., through the new conditions the organization create, the State would eventually change (i.e., negate) its policies. Badiou believes that the insurrectionary politics of the party is immediately destructive and negative which therefore only makes the new as a result.³⁷⁹ The affirmative dialectics illustrated by Badiou could only be compatible with a politics that subtracts itself from the State. But since the insurrectionary politics of the party supposedly entangles itself negatively with the State, it could not be a subtractive politics capable of an affirmative dialectics.

It can be said that the party's entanglement with the State, either in its positive form through parliamentarism, or in its negative form through insurrectionism, provided the basis for it to gradually assume a form opposed to its teleology. For Badiou, the fusion of the party with the State gradually cut the latter off from the masses.³⁸⁰ What does this mean? On the one hand, Badiou recognizes the masses and their movements to be an important category in the procedure of an emancipatory politics. But the statist politics of the party eventually alienated itself from the masses thus defeating the project of emancipation. On the other hand, the party's alienation is not an always-already given. One should take note how even Badiou recognizes the *gradual* process of the party's fusion with the State along with its bureaucratization.³⁸¹ This is important so as not to fall into the erroneous assessment that such a fusion and bureaucratic management have been there from the very beginning. In

³⁷⁹ “‘We Need a Popular Discipline:’ Contemporary Politics and the Crisis of the Negative. *Inquiry*, 07 February 2007. Retrieved from <https://www.lacan.com/baddiscipline.html>. 09 July 2020;

³⁸⁰ Alain Badiou, “The Alleged Power of Capitalism Today is Merely a Reflection of the Weakness of its Opponent,” *Verso*, 03 January 2018, retrieved from <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3549-alain-badiou-the-alleged-power-of-capitalism-today-is-merely-a-reflection-of-the-weakness-of-its-opponent>; 16 July 2020.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*

other words, there were periods or moments when the party remained steadfast to its revolutionary goals, maintained its autonomy from the State, and immersed itself with the masses. The empirical evidences and the theoretical importance of identifying a multiplicity of opposing moments during the previous socialist experiments will be elaborated in more detail in the next chapter.

The party, for Badiou, is sutured to the State and in the process lost its emancipatory power. He would refer to Stalin as the proper name that statized the communist idea.³⁸² The statist form of the idea expressed itself in the supposed socialist dictatorships that claimed to represent communism through the State bureaucracy.³⁸³ Badiou attributed the development of this State to the party, hence the category of the party-State.³⁸⁴ Badiou charged that the party-State claimed to itself the representation of the proletariat. Further, such a representation was represented by a proper name: Stalin. Arguing that this was altogether not the idea of Marx, Badiou explains that the relation of the great dictatorships was rather inversed. For Badiou, there was only the party-State and that outside it is an externality outside of the proletarian movement.³⁸⁵

Consequently, Badiou would invoke the contribution of Mao to contrast that of Stalin and thereby salvage the communist idea. Banking on the Maoist Cultural Revolution, Badiou interprets Mao to be an anti-Statist and a genuine revolutionary thinker who saw the

³⁸² Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 19.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

possibility of communism only through a movement.³⁸⁶ But what Mao unleashed as a movement against the State, Badiou saw as a signal for the party's obsolescence.³⁸⁷ Badiou argues that Mao "lashed out at the very essence of that of which he was the product," referring to the party-State fusion. It would appear that in the image of Mao Badiou found a proper name for his reformulation of the communist hypothesis, a reformulation that rejected the party as it is supposedly a party-State fusion. However, such an appearance is an expression of a reductionist reading that forces the absoluteness of the party-State fusion and thus disregards the opposing instances behind which principles conducive for the party-masses fusion were rather active.

c. Ontology and the Historical-Social State

Theoretically, the rejection of the party results from a more fundamental principle which Badiou laid out in his ontology, particularly that of the State.³⁸⁸ Setting off from the universe of mathematics, Badiou erected an ontology on the basis of which political categories are deduced. The deduction, however, assumes that the contingent and historical aspects of politics would square with the purely formal and abstract categories of set theory.

His ontology is based on some *a priori* conditions totally independent from empirical construction. Badiou's meditation one of the *Being and Event*, for example, is entitled "The One and the Multiple: *A Priori* Conditions for any Possible Ontology."³⁸⁹ The impossibility of the One as a given and the givenness of multiplicity are rather presupposed *a priori* rather than proven empirically. And while sets are indeed constructed, their constructability follow

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ See pp. 65-68 of the current document.

³⁸⁹ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 23.

from the purely abstract and formal axiomatic principles.³⁹⁰ The political categories as derivations from these *a priori* constructions merely participate in their being. Here, Plato's remarks of the "good in itself" echo. And out from this "*idea* of the good" all the other good things participate.³⁹¹

The formal principle of a metastructure derived from the axiom of the power set, presupposed to be *necessary* for *every* socio-historical situation, was used to develop the empirical category of the State. From the regions of pure mathematics, Badiou conceptualized a transcendental understanding of the category of the State and with it laid the basis for the dismissal of the party, a category whose functionality rests both on the historicity and instrumentalization of the State.³⁹² The reason behind Badiou's dismissal of the party finds its theoretical support from the State as a metastructure.

Badiou favors the transcendental conceptualization of the State where it is no longer an instrument in possession of any ruling class but a metastructure that guarantees the count for a particular situation or a world beyond or independent of classes.³⁹³ Without a paradigmatic part or party "that validates the count of the State," Badiou argues that the State "can only be validated by a set of *rules*" that are said to be applicable to all. Rather

³⁹⁰ Badiou maintains that the seven axiomatic principles remain true if they are restricted to that of the constructible set. Badiou, *Being and Event*, 300.

³⁹¹ Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, 2nd ed., trans. Allan Bloom (USA: Basic Books, 1968), 402.

³⁹² Peter Thomas has a similar criticism to Badiou, this time to his notion of communism. Thomas argues that the "stridently 'philosophical' formulations" of Badiou's communist Idea "seems to represent a type of 'neoplatonic war of position': blocked on the terrain of history itself, 'Communism' retreats to the stronghold of the Idea, awaiting the moment of its renewed 'emanation' or even 'incarnation' in a 'Programme,' before its final realization in a mimetic chain as 'Organization.'" Peter Thomas, "The Communist Hypothesis and the Question of Organization," *Theory and Event* 16 (4), (2013): 4, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1492424159?accountid=12763>; 13 June 2018.

³⁹³ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 105-106 and Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 101.

than the class validating or instrumentalizing the State, it is the latter, through its relationship of inclusion, that validates the classes of the situation. Representation becomes the function solely of the State thus dissolving or denying this from any party that proclaims to represent a class. The party has lost its purpose with the development of a metastructure that owns to itself the function of representation.

d. The Reformulated Communist Hypothesis

The classic conception of revolutionism, according to Badiou, was slowly dying especially after the 70's when the traditional organizations of the left, including the communist parties, were hugely challenged concerning their legitimacy.³⁹⁴ The supposed rightist and “ultra-leftist” failures obviously questioned their reputations as the vanguards of liberation movements. Even the GPCR, according to Badiou, was a response to the degeneration of the ruling communist party in China.³⁹⁵ It was Mao who correctly pointed out that it is within the party itself where the bourgeoisie reconstitutes and reorganizes itself.³⁹⁶ Thus, the GPCR, for Badiou, was a “historical development of a contradiction” that saw the need to “arouse mass revolutionary action in the margins of the state” as even in a “proletarian state” ruled by a communist party, class struggle continues.³⁹⁷

In this context, Badiou describes today's era, starting from May 1968, as “the era of the reformulation of the communist hypothesis.”³⁹⁸ This is the era when the question of

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 55.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 113-114.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Ibid. 113.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 66.

organization has to be seriously reconsidered. For Badiou, we are still contemporaries of May 1968 because we are still confronted with the same problem, that of the political organization.³⁹⁹ The question however does not entail an abandonment of organization in relation to the subjective realization of an emancipatory politics. Rather, a new form of organization has to be discovered, one that follows a subtractive politics.

It is in the seriousness which Badiou assigned to the question of organization that the reformulation of the communist hypothesis finds its support. On the basis of the problematic of the party, Badiou advanced a reformulated hypothesis. How is the reformulation specifically achieved? First, on the basis of the centrality of the question of organization, Badiou advanced that today, politics must still assume an organizational form. However, this should in no way replicate the model of the party. It must be a politics without a party, in its subtractive form. In other words, while Badiou still presupposes the political organization, the latter must assume a non-statist character, one that challenges the State. Second, in relation to the politics without a party, Badiou gives a new formula of the State: a necessary and transcendental socio-historical category. It is the metastructure beyond the access of any class and its representing parties. The State is not anymore the instrument of the ruling class.⁴⁰⁰ Third, inspired by the May '68 and the GPCR, Badiou assigns in the collective subjectivity of popular movements the real of politics. In his more recent political work *The Rebirth of History*, Badiou examines the riots of the Middle East in the past decade and asserts how an initially riotous crowd could potentially bring about an uprising, i.e., the

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 62.

⁴⁰⁰ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 105-106.

rising of the inexistents to their existence.⁴⁰¹ For Badiou, a political truth is always rooted in a massive popular event.⁴⁰²

In a more specified illustration, Badiou still presupposes a political organization which, however, does not fuse or suture itself with the State. Badiou cannot surrender emancipatory politics to anarchist models of social movements.⁴⁰³ He raises the problematic dialectics between the popular movements, on the one hand, and the political organization on the other and their dialectical relation with the State. He illustrates a political organization that, rather than obeys the State, forces it in the direction of communism, i.e., of its own withering away.⁴⁰⁴ This organization, however, cannot be the party, or at least, must not assume the name “party.”⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰¹ Badiou, *The Rebirth of History*, 56.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 89.

⁴⁰³ Alain Badiou, “We are at a New Beginning of Marxist Thought,” *Verso*, 21 November 2018, retrieved from <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4133-alain-badiou-we-are-at-a-new-beginning-of-marxist-thought>; 13 July 2020.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁵ Badiou, *The Rebirth of History*, 63.

Chapter 3

THE THEORY OF DOING, WINNING, AND CONSOLIDATING THE REVOLUTION: MARXISM-LENINISM-MAOISM

This chapter discusses the theoretical development of Maoism. Robert Alexander explains the existence of three tendencies of Maoism in the international communist movement in the 1980s. The first refers to those who proclaimed loyalty to the ruling group of the Communist Party of China (CPC). The second points to those supporting the Albanians. The last refers to those who proclaimed to be the “true Maoists” who continued to advance the principles of Mao especially of the GPCR.⁴⁰⁶ This chapter focuses on the third tendency of international Maoism especially as to how that tendency developed theoretical categories – like the mass line, GPCR, and criticism and self-criticism – helpful in making a critical and self-critical mass communist party.

The first section explains the general characteristics of Marxism and Leninism. For Maoism’s development to be properly traced and appreciated, it has to be placed against the backdrop and limits of Marxism-Leninism. In doing so, continuities as well as ruptures are drawn out and emphasized. The second section deals with the specific principles of Maoism and how they contributed to the theoretical and practical advance of the theory of doing, winning, and consolidation the proletarian revolution. Special attention is given to the five central and original Maoist principles. The last section discusses the development of Maoism as a universal theory of proletarian revolution.

⁴⁰⁶ Robert Alexander, *Maoism in the Developed World* (London: Praeger, 2001), 4.

Waging and Winning the Revolution: The Case of Marxism and Leninism

Maoism today is not just a distinctively new historical process and development of the theory of proletarian revolution independent from previous revolutionary sequences; it sums up Marxism-Leninism and even overcomes the latter's limits. Marxism and Leninism are considered as theoretical guides by proletarian parties of both past and present in waging and winning a revolution. Waging a revolution means laying the theory that would not only aim at communism but also understand the historical and politico-economic conditions and contradictions that trigger revolutionary processes. The waging of a proletarian revolution is Marxism's greatest contribution. On the other hand, winning a revolution means clarifying organizational strategies and programs that would, using and developing further the theory that was previously laid out, effectively rally the people into doing, sustaining, and ultimately winning the proletarian revolution. The winning of a proletarian revolution is Leninism's supreme contribution.

Marxism is a theory developed by both Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.⁴⁰⁷ In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels were arguing for a single science, "the science of

⁴⁰⁷ Some Marxists and commentators of Marx regard Marxism as a science. There have been debates in the past on this issue. It is not within the scope of this research to prove whether Marxism is a science. Hence, the research opted for the commonly used term "theory." Here, Hawking's concept of a theory is borrowed. For him, a (good) theory satisfies two things: "it must accurately describe a large class of observations" and "make definite predictions..." Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (New York: Bantam Books, 2017), 10. On the subject Marxism as a science, see Michael Burawoy's discussion in Michael Burawoy, "Marxism as Science: Historical Challenges and Theoretical Growth," *American Sociological Review* 55 (December 1990): 775-793. He argued that the better model in understanding Marxism as a science is the methodology provided by Imre Lakatos. The said methodology suggested that "scientific knowledge grows and is based on a hard core of postulates that are defended from being refuted through the development of a series of auxiliary theories. Ibid, 775. One of the many hard core of postulates in Marxism, for example, are the surplus value as the basis of capitalist accumulation and the overcoming of capitalist relations as the condition for communistic socio-economic order. What later auxiliary theories did, like Lenin's *State and Revolution* and *Imperialism* is to test and prove these principles. Consequently, such testing and proving enlarged the said scientific knowledge. The model of science that Burawoy attributed to Marxism is progressive rather than regressive especially that successive theoretical developments are consistent with the core, and are able to explain anomalies and make predictions. Ibid, 775.

history.”⁴⁰⁸ According to Marx and Engels, history can be viewed and seen from two sides, “the history of nature and the history of [humanity].”⁴⁰⁹ And the same as with the aims of Marx and Engels centuries ago, this research does not concern with the history of nature but with the history of humanity.⁴¹⁰ In this science, humanity in itself is not the object of inquiry but humanity being determined by the material conditions and the different relations of contradictions that propel the history of humanity. In more particular terms, the science of history advanced by Marxism concerns itself with discovering, on the one hand, the historical development of capitalism as a mode of production, its necessity in a specific period, and its foreseeable doom; on the other, the unconcealment of the essential character of the capitalist mode of production which sustains its being, surplus-value.⁴¹¹ With the discovery of these two principles, what used to be rejected by the earlier socialists (also called by Engels as utopian socialists) as “evil” is now elaborately discussed in every detail and interconnection.⁴¹² This means that both the process of capitalist production and of the (re)production of capital were explained.⁴¹³

The search for a theoretical basis of doing a proletarian revolution was against the pervading concept of utopian socialism then that only spoke in broad and abstract terms socialism and equality without however discovering the fundamental elements of (bourgeois) society that would enable that same society to develop into a higher stage of

⁴⁰⁸ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “The German Ideology,” in *Karl Marx Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, Vol. 5 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 28.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1976), 26.

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

society (i.e., the socialist one).⁴¹⁴ Socialism was seen as something that happens by accident. In discovering this theory of doing a proletarian revolution, which later would be called as Marxism, socialism did not anymore appear as something accidental which would not have happened as well.⁴¹⁵

The theory of Marxism has three essential elements, all of which were drawn out from the most advanced ideas of three socio-historical conditions of Marx's and Engels' time: materialist philosophy from Germany, political economy from Britain, and social science or socialism from France.⁴¹⁶ David McLellan described Marxism as a science in the sense of being able to not only describe the dynamics of society but also provide the theoretical and practical tools in doing and winning proletarian revolutions.⁴¹⁷ This is why Gramsci and Mao, in Peter Worsley's reading, understand Marxism not as a detached theory but a "guide to action."⁴¹⁸ For Edwin Roberts, many praxis-oriented Marxists believe that Marxism as a science is "a practical guide to social action, offering the means to unlock the

⁴¹⁴ For a thorough discussion of the views of the utopian socialists (like Saint Simon, François Marie Charles Fourier, and Robert Owen, to name a few) and the eventual development of utopian socialism to scientific socialism see Frederick Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (New York: International Publishers, 2015), 31-44.

⁴¹⁵ Frederick Engels, "On the History of the Communist League," *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works in Three Volumes*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1983), 179.

⁴¹⁶ This was elaborated one by one by Frederick Engels and structured his book *Anti-Dühring* into three parts: philosophy, political economy, and socialism. Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1976), 33-325. Jose Maria Sison, *Continuing Validity and Vitality of Marxism*, 03 May 2018, retrieved from <https://josemariasison.org/continuing-validity-and-vitality-of-marxism/>; 05 January 2019.

⁴¹⁷ For McLellan, some exponents of Marxism simply view the latter as "a description of how society works" and an "instrument of analysis." David McLellan, *Marxism and Religion* (London: Macmillan Press, 1987), 160. What is lost if not denied in this version of Marxism, however, is its practical dimension, i.e., that it is not just an instrument for understanding the world but a practical weapon for changing it.

⁴¹⁸ Worsley, *Marx and Marxism*, revised edition (New York: Routledge, 2002), 102.

conscious strivings of the oppressed and exploited working class.”⁴¹⁹ This claim to science specifically suggests that historical and societal phenomena can only be correctly grasped “if it recognizes class struggle as the motive force” behind all social and historical developments.⁴²⁰ The primacy of class struggle and practice made Hilary Putnam criticize Karl Popper for being reactionary. According to Putnam, Popper rejects *a priori* the Marxist scientific standpoint that “there are laws in society,” and that “these laws can be known,” and that finally human beings “can and should act on this knowledge.”⁴²¹

Since Engels did not have enough knowledge or training either of philosophy or of Hegel, Marx solely developed the dominant philosophy of Hegel that time.⁴²² As a young Hegelian, Marx thoroughly studied Hegelian philosophy, especially its notion of dialectics. Marx even showed unparalleled grasp of Hegel’s thought especially when compared to his young Hegelian colleagues.⁴²³ Here, Marx was fascinated with and adopted the Hegelian idea that society develops as a result of the internal contradictions “which work themselves out in the historical process.”⁴²⁴ Also, Marx engaged the materialist philosophy of Ludwig

⁴¹⁹ Edwin Roberts, “From the History of Science to the Science of History: Scientists and Historians in the Shaping of British Marxist Theory,” *Science and Society*, 69(4), (October 2005): 530.

⁴²⁰ Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture: Philosophy in the Maoist Terrain*, 62.

⁴²¹ Hilary Putnam, “The ‘Corroboration’ of Theories,” in *The Philosophy of Science*, ed. Richard Boyd, Philip Gasper, & J.D. Trout (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991), 134.

⁴²² According to Rockmore, Engels, unlike Lenin, “knew neither philosophy nor Hegel well.” Tom Rockmore, *Marx After Marxism: The Philosophy of Karl Marx* (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 162. See also *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 178.

⁴²⁴ Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (Walnut: MSAC Philosophy Group, 2008), 78. In emphasizing the “outstanding achievement” of Hegel’s philosophy, especially in its *Phenomenology*, Marx noted how the former regarded self-creation as a process of continual alienation and transcendence of this same alienation. But the notion of alienation here, as Marx read Hegel, happens only in their abstract form as thoughts, i.e., as thought-entities. All these estrangement and alienation must find an ultimate solution which Marx saw in communism. “Communism,” for Marx, “is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution.” Communism resolves to transcend through the movement of history the

Feuerbach who radically claimed that human beings create the idea of God.⁴²⁵ For Engels, Feuerbach's materialism, as a result of the science of mechanics of the time, was mechanical and was unable to understand the universe as a continual process, as matter which undergoes uninterrupted historical development.⁴²⁶ Marx overcame these limitations by combining Hegelian dialectics with Feuerbach's materialism. This view would later be labeled, although not by Marx himself, as dialectical materialism.⁴²⁷

Being the son of a rich owner of a textile factory in England, Engels was informed and immersed with the conditions of the working class during the time. He further engaged with them by making regular visits to the slums, in order to know in detail their economic conditions.⁴²⁸ Engels himself claimed that he has lived long enough amidst them to know something of their circumstances.⁴²⁹ Because of this concrete and direct experience with the working class of England, coupled with his mastery of the science of political economy (which he would later teach to the more speculative Marx), Engels was able to write from

most concrete form of alienation: private property. Marx further contends that "the positive transcendence of *private property*, as the appropriation of *human* life, is therefore the positive transcendence of all estrangement..." Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Vol.3* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 293-297 and 333.

⁴²⁵ As quoted by Rockmore, *Marx After Marxism: The Philosophy of Karl Marx*, 46. Rockmore explained the so-called transformational criticism wherein "the usual view of the relationship between God and human being" is inverted thus anticipating Sigmund Freud in contending that "human beings create the idea of God." Ibid. The materialism here lies in the priority of material existence (of a human being) over its self-created idea of God.

⁴²⁶ Friedrich Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy," in *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Lewis Feuer (New York: Anchor Books, 1959), 211.

⁴²⁷ The term dialectical materialism was introduced by a successor of Marx and Engels, J. Dietzgen. Teodor Oizerman, "On a Critical Reflection on Dialectical Materialism," *Russian Studies in Philosophy*, 55(2), (2017): 100.

⁴²⁸ Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engels: A Biography* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1935), 46.

⁴²⁹ Friedrich Engels, *Condition of the Working Class in England*, Panther edition (Moscow: Institute of Marxism-Leninism, 1969), 29, retrieved from <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/condition-working-class-england.pdf>; 06 January 2019.

1844-1845 the book *Condition of the Working Class in England*.⁴³⁰ For Engels, the concrete condition of the working-class is the basis for all social movements and the knowledge of their condition is necessary in providing a correct ground for socialist theories.⁴³¹ But being more systematic compared to Engels, Marx developed a more comprehensive critique of the British science of political economy, and ultimately, capitalism. This critique can be traced even from his earliest economic work *Economic and Political Manuscripts* to the *Grundrisse* and finally to his voluminous work in *Das Kapital*.⁴³² He comprehended the labor theory of value of Adam Smith and David Ricardo and “came up with the theory of surplus value to explain exploitation,” emphasizing that surplus value is the basis for “industrial profit, bank interest and land rent.”⁴³³ Here, Marx laid down a scientific critique of political economy and capitalism, an effective conceptual category for the working class to understand their economic conditions and shape a proletarian consciousness among them that will aid in their class struggle against the bourgeoisies.

Marx and Engels keenly discovered how social revolutions are triggered. Social revolutions result from the contradictions within the mode of production, comprised of the forces of production and relations of production, on the one hand; and between the mode of production, or the base structure, and the superstructure, on the other. For Marx and Engels, the productive forces constantly grow along with the revolutionized means of production.

⁴³⁰ Mayer, *Friedrich Engels: A Biography*, 60.

⁴³¹ Friedrich Engels, *Condition of the Working Class in England*, 31. Or as he also claimed in another work, “to make a science of socialism, it had first to be placed upon a real basis.” Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (New York: International Publishers, 2015), 44.

⁴³² David MacLellan’s introduction to the chapter “Economic and Political Manuscripts,” in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. David MacLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 83.

⁴³³ Sison, *Continuing Validity and Vitality of Marxism*, 03 May 2018, available from <https://josemariasison.org/continuing-validity-and-vitality-of-marxism/>; 05 January 2019.

However, the growth of the productive forces will eventually conflict with the relations of production, i.e., the ownership and control of the means of production, participation in the process of production, and the appropriation of the products and profit of production. As the ownership and control of the means of production, as well as the appropriation of the products and profit, solely belong to and is defined by the bourgeoisie, and the productive forces' development are suppressed by the former, class contradictions sharpen, initially sparking crises and ultimately exploding into violent revolutionary episodes.⁴³⁴ For Engels, in all crises, society is smothered underneath the weight of its own products and productive forces, which it cannot anymore use, and stands helpless as it faces the absurd contradiction that those who produce have nothing to consume.⁴³⁵ These relations, from being the conditions of development of the forces of production, eventually transform into its very own fetters.⁴³⁶ In Engels' terms, the conflict between the mode of production and the relations of production is the incompatibility between social production and capitalist or private appropriation.⁴³⁷

Furthermore, the mode of production is also the base structure from which all legal and political forms and the entirety of a superstructure arise.⁴³⁸ Any transformation, therefore, in the base structure also means a transformation, either more or less rapidly, of

⁴³⁴ Ibid. Also see Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Lewis Feuer (New York: Anchor Books, 1959), 7, 9, and 13; Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, 35 and 51.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 71.

⁴³⁶ Marx, "Preface to a Critique of Political Economy," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 425.

⁴³⁷ Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, 58.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

the whole superstructure.⁴³⁹ Revolutionary transformations in the relations of production and the whole social relations also mean revolutionary upheavals in the political, legal, and cultural fields.

While Marx's and Engels' writings on dialectical materialism, political economy, and social science were based on their rigorous reading and contact with the working class, these works remained theoretical. The rapid revolutionary explosions that swept Europe in 1848 eventually tested the correctness of their theories.⁴⁴⁰ Marxism provided the fundamental principles in doing proletarian revolution. These were drawn out not from mere speculative thinking, but from an extensive and intensive reading of the socio-economic and political conditions of Europe at the time. These principles were already present in Marx's and Engels' earlier political and philosophical works, like *The German Ideology*, but were later published in a manifesto that was commissioned to them by the London-based Communist League and in the later political writings of both thinkers.⁴⁴¹ For the purposes of this research, Marxism as a political theory can be summed up into three principles.⁴⁴²

First, historical developments are primarily determined by class contradictions.⁴⁴³ In examining the historical development of societies from the feudal up to the capitalist society, the most advanced society at the time, Marxism discovered and argued how internal class contradictions, triggered by the conflict between the relations of production and the

⁴³⁹ Marx, "Preface to a Critique of Political Economy," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 425.

⁴⁴⁰ David McLellan's introduction to "The Communist Manifesto," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 239.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 240.

⁴⁴² Different interpretations of Marxism variedly reduce Marxism into some basic principles. According to Burawoy, for example, Marxism (specifically historical materialism) has seven postulates. Burawoy, "Marxism as Science: Historical Challenges and Theoretical Growth," 780.

⁴⁴³ Marx and Engels, "The Communist Manifesto," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 246.

continuing growth of the forces of production, propel social revolutions.⁴⁴⁴ Marxism puts the primacy of class in the analysis of society and its internal contradictions. Class serves as an important category that will clarify any question concerning social movements and revolutions.

Second, in the period of capitalism, class antagonisms have been simplified as society is ever splitting up into two great antagonistic camps, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.⁴⁴⁵ These two contradicting classes in a capitalist society confront each other head on. There may be middle classes that appear to be in between and independent of the class antagonisms of the two, but their place in the socio-economic and political organization of society becomes clear when a key component of the relations of production is clarified, i.e., the question of the ownership and control of the means of production. In relation to this, Marxism asserts that the proletariat is the true revolutionary class.⁴⁴⁶ This principle is still affirmed by contemporary thinkers like Jodi Dean. For her, the specific task of the working class is to abolish capitalism and construct communism.⁴⁴⁷

Third, the most advanced and resolute section of the proletariat, the communists, have to form the proletariat into a conscious class that will overthrow bourgeois supremacy and establish the power of the proletariat.⁴⁴⁸ Here, the dictatorship of the proletariat will replace the old State under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Its historical task is not the

⁴⁴⁴ Marx, "Preface to a Critique of Political Economy," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 425.

⁴⁴⁵ Marx and Engels, "The Communist Manifesto," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 246.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 253.

⁴⁴⁷ Jodi Dean, "Response: The Question of Organization," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 113 (Fall 2014), 4: 821.

⁴⁴⁸ Marx and Engels, "The Communist Manifesto," 256.

perpetuation of its power nor of classes in general, but its own abolition and the abolition of classes in general. According to Marx, proletarian dictatorship is the transitory phase to the abolitions of classes.⁴⁴⁹

Class struggle and the primacy of class, the revolutionary character of the proletariat, and the dictatorship of the proletariat are the central principles of Marxism as a political theory. First, in any social movement, and especially when other sites of oppression that do not immediately display their class character emerge, a thorough class analysis has to be done. While the particularities of each site of oppression and struggle has to be thoroughly investigated, their characteristics could be better described and their trajectories could be more correctly predicted if analyzed within the framework of class contradictions. This method could be charged as reductionism but a science, in its attempt to make sense with reality, aims at reducing, at least, a particular phenomenon to simple and abstract formulas.⁴⁵⁰ Second, especially in the era of capitalism, the category of the proletariat (but not strictly the industrial proletariat, as discussed in the previous chapter) is truly the revolutionary class determined to resolve the said contradictions. Third, the resolution of the said contradictions necessitates the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship which will pave the way for the gradual abolition of classes themselves and the State.

These principles however need an actual revolutionary sequence in order for them to be validated and further developed. The only historical event that, during Marx's and Engel's time, came close to validating and shedding light on these principles was the Paris

⁴⁴⁹ Marx, "The Class Struggles in France," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 323. For Badiou, "the political project of the proletariat is the disappearance of the space of the placement of classes." Alain Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, trans. Bruno Bosteels (New York: Continuum, 2009), 7.

⁴⁵⁰ Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture: Philosophy in the Maoist Terrain*, 150.

Commune of 1871. The Paris Commune realized what Marxism argues as the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was the single event that tested and validated but at the same time developed the theory of Marxism. As Lenin later discussed, Marx saw in the revolutionary movement of the Paris Commune an historic experiment the importance of which is gigantic in scale. It is a certain advance of the world proletarian movement, a practical step more important than a hundred programs and discussions.⁴⁵¹ Being materialists, Marx and Engels needed a concrete proletarian revolution that will not only validate their theoretical claims but also develop these according to practical results in order to raise these theories to new and higher theoretical levels. Being tasked by the First International to make a statement on the Paris Commune, Marx evaluated that the proletariat, upon seizing political power, “cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.”⁴⁵² This assessment was later incorporated in the 1872 preface to the corrected *The Communist Manifesto*. According to Marx, the old State machinery was transformed by the proletariat by: 1) abolishing the standing army in favor of the armed people or the national militia; 2) electing working people to administrative positions; 3) allowing only short and revocable terms for all elective positions; 4) structuring of the towns into communes (i.e., by elections of working people subjected to the power of recall and revocation) and representing these towns by electing representatives in the national delegation; and 5) instituting among public servants a workingman’s wage.⁴⁵³ In the revolutionary sequence instituted by the Paris Communards,

⁴⁵¹ Vladimir Lenin, *State and Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 2011), 20.

⁴⁵² Karl Marx, “The Civil War in France,” in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 584. This work was never published until the Commune was destroyed, after seventy-one days of proletarian power.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, 587-590.

bourgeois democracy was transformed into proletarian democracy, and the State itself into that which no longer really resembled the State, as far as its traditional sense is concerned.⁴⁵⁴ To say then, as Jacques Ranciere suggests, that communism is the complete implementation of a universality already immanent and at work in a capitalist organization of production and in the bourgeois forms of life does not only miss the point but above all distorts the truth of Marxism.⁴⁵⁵ This model of communism regards capitalism as sufficient with the economic and social resources for the flourishing of communism so that the latter could happen here and now. Ranciere's concept of communism would regard cooperatives, for example, as models for economic and social organization and so contents with either co-existing with the still living capitalist system that overarches that alternative model. Instead of overcoming capitalism, such a view offers a peaceful co-existence with capitalism. Ranciere's view of "communism" will lead to a kind of opportunism common during the Second International which suggested a preservation of and working within bourgeois State structures instead of the State's abolition.

Marxism succeeded in providing the theoretical tools for waging a proletarian revolution. But because of the limitations of the material conditions then, it was not able to advance further the theoretical tools for winning the revolution. Marx and Engels were limited to the actual revolutionary sequences of their time. Given that the proletariat had just formulated their theoretical tools, they still lack the practical experience of actually doing and winning a revolution. Even Marx and Engels themselves needed to adjust and correct the original program of the Communist Manifesto as this now is "in places out of date." This

⁴⁵⁴ Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 37.

⁴⁵⁵ Jacques Ranciere, "Communists Without Communism?," in *The Idea of Communism*, 170.

was their assessment in 1872, a year after the Paris Commune.⁴⁵⁶ The eventual failure of the Paris Commune after its 71-day rule is a proof.⁴⁵⁷ Viewed from this perspective, it can be argued that while both Marx and Engels were able to produce “a science of history that demanded the necessity of proletarian revolution,” they however were unable to formulate a strategy for winning a proletarian revolution.⁴⁵⁸

Things even became unfavorable after Marx’s death, especially when doubts were already cast upon his supposed predictions. Events seemed to not have corresponded as to how he and Engels assumed they would be. Capitalism centralized and concentrated capital (as against its supposed end, capitalism merely ended competition); the proletariats in Britain surrendered their revolutionary goals; and social democrats in Germany mastered the struggle in the electoral arena (as against the initial revolutionary sequence of the Paris Commune).⁴⁵⁹ It appeared that Marxism was a failure as its analysis of the capitalist system of production and the eventual victory of the proletariat were invalidated by the state of things then. In other words, not only Marxism’s truth but also its universality were at risk during the time.

But for its universality to be borne and validated, Marxism, or any theory for that matter, has to be uprooted from its original context and be transposed into new and unique ones.⁴⁶⁰ In the case of Marxism, this uprooting and transposition have to do with the need of

⁴⁵⁶ As quoted by Lenin in Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 32.

⁴⁵⁷ According to Putnam, failures do not negate or falsify theories. Putnam, “The ‘Corroboration’ of Theories,” 131.

⁴⁵⁸ J. Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture: Philosophy in the Maoist Terrain*, 107.

⁴⁵⁹ Burawoy, “Marxism as Science: Historical Challenges and Theoretical Growth,” 781.

⁴⁶⁰ Slavoj Žižek’s introduction to *On Practice and Contradiction*, edited by Slavoj Žižek (New York: Verso, 2007), 2.

doing and winning a proletarian revolution in a radically different spatio-temporal order other than what Marx and Engels originally had in mind and encountered. It was Leninism which displaced Marxism from its original context and enacted the first Marxist revolution.⁴⁶¹

Leninism was principally developed by Vladimir Lenin and later upheld and advanced by Joseph Stalin. It clarified three important issues concerning the proletarian revolution: imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism, the State and revolution, and the vanguard party.

After reaching what Lenin called as the last stage of capitalism, imperialism no longer worked according to how Marx and Engels originally imagined.⁴⁶² This time, not only the proletariat but also the peasantry and even segments of the bourgeoisie were subjected to cruel capitalist exploitation and oppression.⁴⁶³ This was especially true in the late nineteenth century Russia where both the peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie predominate over that of the industrial proletariat.⁴⁶⁴ The classical model of a proletarian revolution solely waged and won by the industrial workers did not fit the Russian contexts and, if applied dogmatically and mechanically, would certainly lead to doom.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁶² The argument in support of the claim has already been presented in Regletto Aldrich Imbong, "From Lenin to Badiou: The Philippine Revolution against Neoliberal Capitalism," *Lo Sguardo* 25 (2017): 115.

⁴⁶³ According to Lenin, in Asia "the bourgeoisie there is *as yet* siding with the people against reaction." Vladimir Lenin, "Backward Europe and Advanced Asia," in *Lenin Collected Works*, vol. 19, trans. George Hanna, ed. Robert Daglish (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), 99. Even Lenin affirmed that, "the proletariat," in Europe of 1871, "did not constitute the majority of the people." Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 35.

⁴⁶⁴ David Moon, "Estimating the Peasant Population of Late Imperial Russia from the 1897 census: A Research Note," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 48(1), (1996): 144 and 146. Vladimir Lenin, "The Tasks of the Revolution," in *Revolution at the Gates: Selected Writings of Lenin from 1917*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (New York: Verso, 2002), 124.

Because of the supposed failures of Marxism, many revisionist theorists who succeeded Marx and Engels intentionally distorted the three basic principles of Marxism. It was Lenin who painstakingly defended Marxism against the opportunists and the revisionists of the Second International who forwarded the ideological banner of Kautskyism.⁴⁶⁵ In the era of imperialism, the characteristic feature of capitalism is not, as claimed by Kautsky, industrial but finance capital.⁴⁶⁶ For Lenin, finance capital does have an immense political power that it can subject states supposedly enjoying the highest political independence into a state of dependency.⁴⁶⁷ According to Lenin, finance capital is one of the five characteristics of imperialism and it is bank capital “i.e., capital in money form which is thus actually transformed into industrial capital,” and controlled by banks. But definition of finance capital is incomplete if not taken within the context of the rising monopolies and the coalition between banks and industry.⁴⁶⁸ Annexations in the form of colonialism was therefore a typical policy of imperialism.⁴⁶⁹ For Kautsky, however, imperialism is “the policy itself and as such strives for annexations.”⁴⁷⁰ Lenin rejected this idea.

First, according to Lenin, imperialism is not a matter of policy of monopoly capitalists but in fact a special and the last stage of capitalism itself. This was the case when

⁴⁶⁵ Vladimir Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 12. Kautskyism was developed by Karl Kautsky. According to Lenin, Kautsky was the leading Marxist theoretician of the era of the Second International – the twenty-five years between 1889 and 1914. *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 85.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 44-45.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 71-78.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 85.

the fundamental characteristics of capitalism “began to change into their opposites.”⁴⁷¹ This change is the inevitable economic process of the “displacement of capitalist free competition by capitalist monopoly.”⁴⁷² Kautsky’s claim that imperialism is a mere policy of capitalism does have serious political implications.⁴⁷³ As what will be opposed is the “policy” called imperialism and not imperialism itself (as a special stage of capitalism) this view will ultimately lead to the opportunist and revisionist political line that accepts capitalism as a necessary historical sequence while opposing its imperialist policies or tendencies. According to Lenin, Kautsky isolated the economics of imperialism from its politics and talks about annexations as a mere policy preferred by finance capital.⁴⁷⁴ In believing so, Kautsky illusioned to oppose another bourgeois policy which, he claimed can still work “on the very same basis of finance capital.”⁴⁷⁵ But even worse than what Lenin had observed is the principle of passivity in the face of imperialism which Kautsky openly advocated. For Kautsky, the self-defeating bankruptcy of the monopoly capitalist’s imperialist policy would only be hastened if it continues the same policy.⁴⁷⁶ In other words, the principal force for the destruction of imperialism is not any proletarian revolution thus rendering the agency of the proletariat insignificant. For Kautsky, “until [imperialism] has exhausted the resources of the

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 82.

⁴⁷² Ibid.

⁴⁷³ Karl Kautsky, *Imperialism and the War*, November 1914, retrieved from <https://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1914/09/war.htm>; 28 December 2019.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., 86.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid. Žižek argues on this illusion of Kautsky then. For Žižek, Kautsky already bordered on the ridiculous when he formulated in the 1920’s his thesis that “the logical form of the first stage of socialism,” of the transition from capitalism to socialism, “is the parliamentary coalition of bourgeois and proletarian parties.” Slavoj Žižek, “Afterword: Lenin’s Choice,” in *Revolution at the Gates*,

⁴⁷⁶ Karl Kautsky, *Imperialism and the War*, November 1914; available from <https://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1914/09/war.htm>; 28 December 2019.

agricultural regions... it will not necessarily perish in an economic cataclysm.”⁴⁷⁷ Only a total environmental disaster could ultimately negate the policy called imperialism.

Also, for Lenin, imperialism is not just, as claimed by Kautsky, an annexation by big industrial centers of backward agrarian nations. Kautsky characterized imperialism to be a special phase of capitalism where there is that tendency to export capital to undeveloped and agrarian lands with the aim of reducing these lands to a status of political dependence.⁴⁷⁸ What Kautsky is trying to suggest here is that imperialism creates (neo)colonies but only among backward agrarian countries. However, Lenin refutes this claim of Kautsky. For Lenin, imperialism generally is “a striving towards violence and reaction.”⁴⁷⁹ Because of this drive towards violence and reaction, it does not only annex backward agrarian nations but also highly industrialized ones, with the goal of weakening and undermining the rival nation’s hegemony.⁴⁸⁰ Further, these annexationist and expansionist agenda do have serious repercussions to the proletariat itself. Specifically in Britain, more members of the British proletariat became bourgeois and some allowed themselves to be led by men paid by, if not bought by, the bourgeoisie.⁴⁸¹ In this regard, imperialism can also divide the proletariat by creating within it as a class a privileged section detached from broad masses of the proletariat.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁹ Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 85.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid, 100.

⁴⁸² Ibid., 99.

Conscious of the possible opportunist attitude of the proletariat, which in Russia was advanced through the theory and practice of reformism, trade unionism, and economism, Lenin rigorously clarified the position of Marxist politics not only in the era of imperialism but also in a period where opportunism and revisionism seemed to dominate the international communist movement. According to him, the labor movement then, through some bourgeois and opportunist elements in it, adulterated Marxism by omitting, obliterating, and distorting “the revolutionary side of its teaching, its revolutionary soul.”⁴⁸³ For Lenin, these opportunists, again under the lead of Kautsky, specifically distorted Marx’s and Engels’ teachings on the State.

For Kautsky, the revolution is generally a conquest of State power.⁴⁸⁴ According to him, a particular political party, say the party of the proletariat, is “bound to endeavor to turn the power of the State to its own advantage.”⁴⁸⁵ Kautsky painted an idealistic picture where the proletariat peacefully co-exists along with the bourgeoisie and gradually develops, extends itself, grows in moral and political power, broadens its horizon, and makes its organizations larger and more compact until the “certainty and inevitableness of the final triumph of the proletariat” is achieved.⁴⁸⁶ When that day has come, “the property-holding classes have already been seized with fear at their approaching end.”⁴⁸⁷ Kautsky’s conquest

⁴⁸³ Vladimir Lenin, *State and Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 2011), 7.

⁴⁸⁴ Karl Kautsky, *The Class Struggle*, trans. Daniel De Leon (New York: Labor News Company, 1899), 20. It is characteristic of Kautsky to explain concepts in their most general and abstract sense. For example, in his “The Prospects of the Russian Revolution,” he explained the two things needed by the proletariat, democracy and socialism. However, for Lenin, Kautsky advances these indisputable principles “in an exceedingly general form,” so that essentially, Kautsky “says nothing and explains nothing.” Vladimir Lenin, “Letters from Afar,” in *Revolution at the Gates*, 55.

⁴⁸⁵ Kautsky, *The Class Struggle*, 20.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

of State power, unlike Marx's and Engels' view of a violent seizure of power and the consequent dictatorship of the proletariat, is one which illusions to take hold of political power "by making use of the liberties which exist" or are allowed within bourgeois societies.⁴⁸⁸ It is a conception that obviously forgets the lessons of the Paris Commune.

In relation to the conquest of State power, Kautsky failed to incorporate the most valuable lesson drawn by Marx from the Paris Commune that one cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery as this needs to be destructed and blown up by the proletariat.⁴⁸⁹ According to Kautsky what was necessary is for the proletariat to take possession of the State machinery without even destroying it.⁴⁹⁰ In his notion, a "general strike," within the old bourgeois State is never about abolishing the State but only to pressing concessions from the government on some specific questions.⁴⁹¹ The goal of the proletarian political struggle, then, according to Kautsky, is occupation of State power through winning a majority in the parliament.⁴⁹² Further, democracy could work well and be rectified along the dynamisms of State power. In a rather unusual if not revisionist take on the nature of the State, Kautsky argued that the State may get into conflict with the productive forces but it is when this absolute nature of the State creeps in will it be urgently needed for the government to submit itself to public criticism and for the free organizations

⁴⁸⁸ Karl Kautsky, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981), 9.

⁴⁸⁹ Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 584 and Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 89.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 89 and 90.

⁴⁹¹ As quoted by Lenin in *Ibid.*, 99.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*

of the citizens to offset the increasing power of the State.⁴⁹³ Rather than conquering it and organizing its own withering, Kautsky wants to perpetuate the being of the State by the free organizations of citizens.

Lenin dismissed Kautsky's line as a mere lip service for the revolution, by describing it as a rejection of revolution in deeds, while honoring it in words.⁴⁹⁴ Lenin made a hard stand concerning the question of the State and the revolution. Coming from Marxism, Lenin clarified the historical role and nature of the State. According to him, the State is the inevitable result and the indication of not only class antagonisms but also their irreconcilability.⁴⁹⁵ It has special coercive institutions and groups that are used by the ruling class to exploit the oppressed class.⁴⁹⁶ It must be noted that this understanding of the State is already dismissed by Badiou through his mathematical ontology.

Hence, for Lenin, only through a violent revolution can the proletarian conquest of State power be achieved and the destruction of the State be advanced.⁴⁹⁷ But against the anarchists, this destruction of the State does not happen overnight. For Lenin, it first requires the abolition of classes through a socialist revolution.⁴⁹⁸ For this reason, this gradual

⁴⁹³ Kautsky, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, 26.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12-15. But Lenin also recognizes that these coercive apparatuses, especially the army and the police, can be used otherwise through the "self-acting armed organisation of the people." *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 9, 19 and 20.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 94.

destruction of the State, along the eventual destruction of the classes, is the withering away of the State.⁴⁹⁹

In 1902, Lenin also engaged and struggled with the erroneous political and organizational principles advanced by the economists and trade unionists. Specifically, Lenin clarified the three fundamental problems of the movement then: the character and content of political agitation; organizational tasks; and the need to form a national political organization.⁵⁰⁰

These questions centrally concern the need and the nature of a vanguard proletarian party. If the proletarians have to fight bourgeois rule, then they must assume a vanguard role which can only be realized through a party guided by the most advanced theory.⁵⁰¹ Having a vanguard role, this party must clarify ideological questions, define the general political line, and set organizational discipline among proletariats. Contemporary leftist thinker Jodi Dean reiterates this point. According to her, the party “galvanizes and leads the working class in political struggle.”⁵⁰²

First, this party must ideologically arm itself with the theory of Marxism and socialism. The most advanced members of the proletariat represented in this party have to improve their understanding concerning all theoretical questions and to always remember that socialism, being a science, demands that it also be pursued as a science, i.e., that

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 15-17. Marx, already in the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, describes “a period of revolutionary transformation” or a “transition period” from a capitalist to a communist society. Karl Marx, “Critique of the Gotha Program,” in *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings in Politics and Philosophy*, 137. The state cannot be abolished overnight as even the communist society inevitably has to inherit some of the defects of the old society. Ibid., 119.

⁵⁰⁰ Vladimir Lenin, *What is to be Done?: Burning Questions of our Movement* (New York: International Publishers, 1972), 5-6.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 26.

⁵⁰² Dean, “Response: The Question of Organization,” 821.

socialism be theoretically engaged and studied.⁵⁰³ Second, this party, according Lenin, has to constantly battle against ideological blunders like opportunism, revisionism, tailism, trade unionism and economism, among others.⁵⁰⁴ It must clarify that the proletarian movement is at the forefront of the struggle of the working class, to bargain better terms not only for the sale of labor, but also for the destruction of the social system upon which the propertyless are compelled to sell themselves to the propertied.⁵⁰⁵ The proletariat must not primarily concern itself with reformisms, without however outrightly rejecting the struggle for reforms. For Lenin, the maximization of legal and economic reforms is a point of divergence between the anarchists and Marxists. Unlike the former, the latter never misses “a single ‘possibility’ of winning and *using* reforms” without however reducing proletarian struggle to economic reforms.⁵⁰⁶ This means that while the proletarian revolutionary movement may include the struggle for reforms as part of the overall struggle, it subordinates the struggle for reforms to the revolutionary struggle for communism.⁵⁰⁷

Third, coming from Kautsky, for Lenin, this vanguard party must clarify that the question of proletarian revolutionary consciousness does not spontaneously arise from the working class themselves.⁵⁰⁸ Since the working class could be subjected to the ideological hold of the bourgeoisies as proven by trade unionism and economism, opportunism, and

⁵⁰³ Lenin, *What is to be Done?: Burning Questions of our Movement*, 28.

⁵⁰⁴ The main opportunist line opposed by Lenin during this time was the bourgeois social-reformist line mainly developed by Bernstein and the French socialists. In this line, social democracy was reduced to reformism. *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁵⁰⁶ Lenin, “Marxism and Reformism,” in *Lenin Collected Works*, vol. 19, 374.

⁵⁰⁷ Lenin, *What is to be Done?: Burning Questions of our Movement*, 62.

⁵⁰⁸ Karl Kautsky, *Neue Zeit*, 21(3) (1901-1902), 79, as quoted by Lenin in Lenin, *What is to be Done: Burning Questions of our Movement*, 40.

revisionism, this proletarian revolutionary consciousness is introduced from outside the proletarian class struggle and not something that spontaneously arose from within it.⁵⁰⁹ In other words, this kind of consciousness has to come from outside of the working class untied to economic struggles and capable of clearly articulating not only this consciousness itself but also its repercussions of doing Marxist politics. A more salient difference between Lenin and Kautsky in relation to the intellectuals as articulators of revolutionary consciousness can be seen in Žižek's reading of Lenin. Comparing both Kautsky's and Lenin's take on the matter, Žižek holds that Lenin's paraphrase of Kautsky radically differs. While Lenin believed that proletarian consciousness could only come from non-working intellectuals outside the economic struggle, he however emphasized that these same individuals must not be divorced from class struggle.⁵¹⁰ According to Žižek, Lenin clearly saw that intellectuals "themselves are caught in the conflict of ideologies... which is inevitable."⁵¹¹ The intellectuals that Lenin is referring to therefore are not those who are detached from the class struggles of the proletariat but who are immersed and eventually have become an organic part of such a struggle.

Politically, this party must unite the broad masses of the people towards the revolution.⁵¹² For Lenin, the consciousness of the proletariat can never be authentic class-consciousness unless it has a comprehensive political exposure to various classes that also

⁵⁰⁹ Kautsky as quoted by Lenin in *Ibid.*, 40. For Lenin, the theory of socialism was developed by the intellectuals, i.e., "the educated representatives of the propertied class." Marx and Engels were themselves not workers but bourgeois intellectuals. *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵¹⁰ Žižek, "Afterword: Lenin's Choice," in *Revolution at the Gates*, 183.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁵¹² Vladimir Lenin, "Our Tasks and the Soviet of Workers' Deputies," in *Lenin: Collected Works*, vol. 10, ed. Andrew Rothstein (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), 24.

stand in opposition to bourgeois rule.⁵¹³ The proletariat must not only focus and advance its particular class interests but also support every revolutionary movement of various classes and define a “general democratic tasks before the whole people.”⁵¹⁴ This means that, first, the Marxist proletarian revolution could only be realized if it would establish an alliance with both the proletariat and the peasantry.⁵¹⁵ This trustful attitude with the peasantry became one of the points of divergences between Lenin and Trotsky. Trotsky accused Lenin of overrating the autonomy of the peasantry and said that Lenin also accused him of underrating the revolutionary potential of the peasantry.⁵¹⁶

Second, the proletarian revolution must draw to its ranks the petty-bourgeoisie. For Lenin, victory will be “assured easily, peacefully, quickly, and smoothly” when the proletarian revolution will be joined by the petty-bourgeoisie despite the latter’s vacillating character.⁵¹⁷ Lastly, the proletarian revolution has to make alliances with such other sectors as political, military, or other progressive sectors, for the interest of broadening the influence and advancing the strength of the proletarian-led revolution. For Lenin, alliances are crucial in any movement. According to him, only those who are unsure of themselves fear the conclusion of temporary alliances even with the most unreliable people. For a political party

⁵¹³ Ibid., 69-70.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., 82.

⁵¹⁵ Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 35. Lenin also clarified the said alliance with the peasantry, the latter’s democratic demands, and the proletariat’s “still greater and more important goal” of fighting and winning socialism in Vladimir Lenin, “The Proletariat and the Peasantry,” in *Lenin: Collected Works*, vol. 10, 43.

⁵¹⁶ Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture: Philosophy in the Maoist Terrain*, 236. Upon the victory of the Russian Revolution, Lenin’s trustful attitude and confidence with the peasantry was once again revealed. For him, “the peasants will understand that the salvation of the peasantry lies only in an alliance with the workers.” Vladimir Lenin, “Meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies,” in *Revolution at the Gates*, 163.

⁵¹⁷ Vladimir Lenin, “The Tasks of the Revolution,” in *Revolution at the Gates*, 124.

can never exist and sustain itself without forging alliances.⁵¹⁸ These alliances may even include sections of the reactions armed forces, like in the case of the Russian Army and Navy, who were revolting in Russia as a result of the forced enlistment by the reactionary state for the World War then.⁵¹⁹ This reaching out to other classes, sectors, and parties is far from liquidating the leadership of the vanguard party. While Lenin recognized the significance of intellectuals concerning the production and articulation of revolutionary ideas, he likewise unflinchingly criticized their liquidationist tendencies. Liquidationism, for Lenin, is the attempt of a section of party intellectuals to dissolve or abolish the organizational leadership of the vanguard party.⁵²⁰ The party must be even more firm in its leadership and political line to the point of defining lines of demarcation. Most importantly, the proletarian vanguard party must act in a way that *all* the other delegations recognize and are obliged to admit that they march with and in the political compass of the vanguard.⁵²¹

Organizationally, the proletarian party must strengthen itself through a centralized leadership of professional revolutionaries. These professional revolutionaries should not be understood exclusively as petty-bourgeois professionals becoming revolutionaries but individuals who make revolutionary work their profession in the sense that they dedicate their time and life to it. While the revolutionary movement as a whole will take charge in defeating and seizing political power from the bourgeoisie, a central leadership is necessary in guiding this movement. In other words, at the core of this movement is a compact and

⁵¹⁸ Lenin, *What is to be Done: Burning Questions of our Movement*, 18.

⁵¹⁹ Lenin, *Lenin: Collected Works*, vol. 10, 52 and Lenin, “Advice of an Onlooker,” in *Revolution at the Gates*, 143.

⁵²⁰ Lenin, *Lenin: Collected Works*, vol. 19, 150 and 163.

⁵²¹ Lenin, *What is to be Done: Burning Questions of our Movement*, 23 and 83.

centralized (and if the situation demands, secret) leadership which ensures the stability of the movement as a whole and carries out the objectives both of trades union and of social democracy.⁵²² Centralized leadership, however, does not mean that this leadership will “do the thinking for all,” and that outside of this leadership individuals will not assume important tasks in the movement. For Lenin, the leadership will promote into its ranks professional revolutionaries from outside of its party after years of training and doing revolutionary work.⁵²³ There must be a solid core of individuals whose very profession is their revolutionary activity regardless whether these individuals are workers or intellectuals, for distinctions within and between trade and profession must be eradicated.⁵²⁴

Lenin’s theories on the State and revolution, on imperialism, and on the vanguard party were eventually put to the test as these were laid into the concrete practice of proletarian revolution. Especially in the case of the theory of the vanguard party – that essential element of Leninism which provided concrete organizational and political strategies in winning a revolution – the proletariats of Russia, compared to the Communards of 1871, were better theoretically armed. As Badiou aptly described it, what constituted the victory of the October Revolution is the combination of the party discipline of the Bolsheviks and the mass democracy of the Soviets.⁵²⁵

While Leninism overcame Marxism’s lack, i.e., of a clear organizational strategy for winning a proletarian revolution, it however faced new limits by the time it constructed socialism in Russia. Being the first in world history to advance in this regard, Lenin and

⁵²² Ibid., 117.

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., 109.

⁵²⁵ Alain Badiou, “On the Russian October Revolution of 1917,” *Crisis and Critique*, 4(2): 22.

Stalin had to work from practically a blank slate and construct a new world nearly out from scratch. This meant facing yet unknown contradictions and limits without the certainty of overcoming these.

Especially after the death of Lenin when Stalin continued the socialist construction, new contradictions become more acute. While some were successfully resolved, others were not (e.g., between the proletariat and the peasants, between urban areas and the countryside, and the question of the contradiction of classes itself, i.e., do classes still exist?). These contradictions eventually became the limits of Leninism, limits which it failed to overcome as it is yet ill-equipped and inexperienced to face them. It was Maoism, by virtue of its being relatively informed of the assessments and summations of Marxism-Leninism, and specifically the experience of the Soviet Union, that succeeded in overcoming these Marxist-Leninist limits.⁵²⁶

Winning and Consolidating the Revolution: The Case of Maoism

As pointed out by Robert Alexander, there were three tendencies in the international communist movement in the 1980s that claimed to advance Maoism: those who proclaimed loyalty to the ruling group in the Communist Party of China (CPC), those supporting the Albanians, and those who proclaimed to be the “true Maoists” who continued to advance the principles of Mao especially of the GPCR.⁵²⁷ The first “Maoist” tendency lost credibility when Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平, 1904-1997) himself, after ascending to power, lost all

⁵²⁶ As Armando Liwanag described it, “Mao had the advantage of learning from the theory and practice of Lenin and Stalin in building socialism and understanding the origins and development of modern revisionism.” Armando Liwanag, *Long Live Lenin and Stalin, Condemn the Modern Revisionists, Resume the Proletarian Revolution*, 08 November 1996, available from <http://www.bannedthought.net/Philippines/PPP/Rebolusyon/1997/N1-Jan-Mar/Rebolusyon-1997-1-LongLiveLeninStalin.pdf>; 07 March 2019.

⁵²⁷ Robert Alexander, *Maoism in the Developed World* (London: Praeger, 2001), 4.

interest in international Maoism.⁵²⁸ The second tendency, while initially supporting Mao and his principles, eventually attacked him especially after he proposed his Three Worlds Theory.⁵²⁹ This research focuses on the third tendency of international Maoism.

Maoism was developed and advanced by Mao Zedong (毛澤東, 1928-1976) in China. With the victory of the Russian October Revolution of 1917, China, like many countries, was inspired to wage the same proletarian revolution, this time guided by Mao and the theory of Marxism-Leninism.⁵³⁰ Mao himself affirmed the world-wide significance of the victory of the proletarian revolution in Russia. According to him, the experience of the Soviet Union led by Lenin and Stalin has an international significance. Every communist party has to regard the experience and the theoretical contributions of Lenin and Stalin as important guides.⁵³¹

The vast theoretical and practical contributions of Mao Zedong to the theory of Marxism-Leninism makes Maoism a comprehensive and extensive theory. In the interest of this research, the discussion on Maoism will be limited to the five fundamental Maoist

⁵²⁸ Ibid. Deng became the leader of the People's Republic of China from 1978-1989.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ The founding of the Communist Party of China for example is attributed by some scholars to the influence of the Bolshevik party of Russia. Tony Saich for example reviewed different scholarly works in order to trace the link, or the absence thereof, between Russian and Chinese communist movement. While some scholars suggest that the Comintern helped bolster Marxism and Leninism, others would also highlight the indigenous roots of the Chinese communist movement. Tony Saich, *The Chinese Communist Party During the Era of the Comintern (1919-1943)*, 14 August 2014, retrieved from <https://sites.hks.harvard.edu/fs/asaich/chinese-communist-party-during-comintern.pdf>; 16 January 2019.

Also, the creation of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in 1930, for example, was a result of a resolution of the Third International. Jose Maria Sison, *Impact of the Third International on the Founding and Development of the Communist Party of the Philippines*, 05 May 2016, retrieved from <https://josemariasison.org/impact-of-the-communist-international-on-the-founding-and-development-of-the-communist-party-of-the-philippines/>; 28 March 2017.

⁵³¹ Mao Zedong, "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 1 (New York: Pergamon Press, 1975), 194-195.

principles: 1) protracted people's war; 2) new democracy; 3) cultural revolution; 4) law of contradictions; and 5) mass line.

a. Protracted People's War

In the 1930's, China was invaded by the aggressive forces of Japanese imperialism. Although Japan was a smaller country compared to China, it was more advanced militarily, politically, and economically. Being a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country, China was relatively weaker in the three aspects just mentioned.⁵³² Because of this status, two opposing theories of either national subjugation or quick victory emerged among some Chinese. On the one hand, the defeatists preached the inevitable subjugation of China by Japan, while on the other hand groundlessly optimistic nationalists spoke of China's quick victory.⁵³³ Mao rejected these theories and laid down, through a materialist analysis of the internal and external factors that could significantly change the balance of forces within and between China and Japan, the necessary conditions for China's victory and Japan's defeat.⁵³⁴

According to Mao, China would neither be subjugated nor attain quick victory. Mao forwarded the notion of a protracted people's war which carefully considers relative strengths and weaknesses of both the enemy and the revolutionary forces. By doing so, in an extended period of time, Mao believed that the advantage of the enemy can be lessened and his shortcomings heightened while the advantages of the revolutionaries can be augmented and their shortcomings corrected through various efforts.⁵³⁵ A protracted war primarily relies on a guerilla warfare and consciously transforms guerilla zones into stable base

⁵³² Mao Zedong, "On Protracted War," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 1, 123.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, 122-131.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, 134.

areas.⁵³⁶ And since a protracted guerilla war will extend a certain length of time, it will also undergo the sub-stages of strategic defensive (where the enemy is superior and the revolutionary forces are inferior), strategic stalemate (where there is relative equilibrium), and strategic offensive (where the enemy is inferior and the revolutionary forces are superior, and national victory is impending).⁵³⁷

This revolutionary war is also a people's war because it unites all anti-Japanese forces and builds a national united front against the ruthless aggression of the Japanese imperialists. Since the enemy is relatively advanced militarily, protracted revolutionary guerilla warfare has to primarily rely on the solid and invincible strength of the people. For Mao, "it is people, not things, that are decisive. The contest of strength is not only a contest of military and economic power, but also a contest of human power and morale."⁵³⁸ The core of this united front is the Communist Party which unites and leads the entire people in order to defeat colonial aggression and local reaction.⁵³⁹ The idea of a united front is further clarified by Mao in his notion of New-Democratic Revolution.

The protracted character of a revolution has much to offer to the reconceptualization of the party form. The party is not anymore a monolithic structure whose existence is absolutely sustained by itself, but a process that protractedly grows from and also eventually withers away through a solid engagement with the masses. The party ideologically,

⁵³⁶ Mao Zedong, "Problems of Strategy in Guerilla Warfare," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 1, 97.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, 103-106. Also, see Mao Zedong, "On Protracted War," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 1, 136-140.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁵³⁹ Mao Zedong, "The Role of the Communist Party in the National War," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 1, 198 and 201.

politically, and organizationally strengthens itself by solidly linking with the masses. Its being is determined by the protracted process of rooting and identifying itself among the masses, to prepare its gradual non-being or its dissolution. The notion of protractedness implies the impurity of the party, its imperfection. The party is impure, that is why it undergoes the protracted process of purification, of self-criticisms and rectifications while being solidly linked with the masses. The protracted character of the party and its relationship with the masses will be discussed in more detail in the fourth chapter.

b. New Democratic Revolution

Mao Zedong's idea of New-Democratic Revolution advanced the theory of Marxism-Leninism by taking into account the concrete circumstances of the Chinese nation then. While Mao highly regarded the significance of the Russian proletarian revolution, such an appreciation did not translate to a mechanical application of the same revolution to Chinese soil.⁵⁴⁰ His view is in keeping with what according to Lenin is the soul of Marxism: "concrete analysis of concrete conditions."⁵⁴¹ In this way, Marxism is not the uncritical acceptance of dogmatic theories and principles but a method in analyzing concrete and varying conditions.

For Mao, revolution has been radically altered the moment world history entered into the era of proletarian revolution, specifically upon the victory of the October Revolution of 1917 – such a victory opened a new era wherein anti-imperialist revolutions waged in colonies and semi-colonies no longer belong to the old category of bourgeois-democratic

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., 195.

⁵⁴¹ As quoted by Mao in Ibid.

world revolutions led by the petty-bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie.⁵⁴² This time, revolutions in colonies and semi-colonies were led by the proletariat. This new type of revolution aims, in its first stage, the establishment of a “new-democratic society and a state under the joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes.”⁵⁴³ For Mao, the first stage of the new-democratic revolution is not and cannot be the creation of a capitalist society under bourgeois dictatorship. Rather, the first stage of the revolution will result in the creation of a new democratic society characterized by the joint dictatorship of all revolutionary classes, under the leadership of the proletariat.⁵⁴⁴ Only upon the fulfillment of the first stage will the second stage of the revolution, i.e., the establishment of the socialist society, be carried forward.⁵⁴⁵ The new-democratic society established after the first stage of the revolution is necessary, given China’s backward economic conditions, but also transitional as it must give way to the building of socialism in China.⁵⁴⁶

Such a two-staged revolution is necessary given China’s unique socio-economic and political conditions. Unlike the military-feudal tsarist Russia, the bourgeoisie oppressed by imperialism in colonial and semi-colonial countries like China has a peculiar revolutionary tendency (at certain periods but to a certain and limited degree) which makes the national bourgeoisie in the backward countries a potential class ally of the proletariat and the petty

⁵⁴² Mao Zedong, “On New Democracy,” in *Collected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 1, 344.

⁵⁴³ Ibid. Among the keys to the CCP’s success in consolidating control was its “ability to maximize support and minimize fears.” Here, the democratic dictatorship and the united front worked in the favor of the CCP. For a more detailed discussion, see Frederick Teiwes, “Establishment and Consolidation of the New Regime,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 14, part 1, ed. Denis Twitchett and John Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 92.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 347.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., 350.

bourgeoisie in fighting imperialism. While placing his confidence to national bourgeoisie, Mao however qualified this confidence to the national bourgeoisie by emphasizing the extent of this potential alliance: at certain periods and to a certain degree. This confidence is far from the Trotskyite charge of class collaborationism of Mao's New-Democratic Revolution as Mao was clear of the dual character of the national bourgeoisie. For him, the Chinese national bourgeoisie also has another attribute, i.e., a tendency to conciliate with the enemies of the revolution.⁵⁴⁷

Also, Mao's New-Democratic Revolution seriously took into account the semi-feudal conditions of China at the time. This being the case, China, unlike the industrial centers in Europe, has a minimal number of industrial proletariat. The Chinese workers only rank second in number compared to the peasants. According to Mao, the revolution waged in China is a peasant revolution, while retaining the basic Marxist principle that such a revolution can never succeed without the modern industrial proletariat because it is the truly revolutionary class.⁵⁴⁸ The new-democratic revolution being a peasant revolution also means that it carries forward the bourgeois demand of the peasantry specifically the private ownership of land. Mao recognizes as a requirement for building a socialist economy a "rich peasant economy" in the countryside. For him, a socialist organization of the agriculture will not be possible yet in the first stage of the revolution, although some types of co-operative economic endeavors developed from the democratic principle "land to the tiller" will already include socialist elements.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 349.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., 366-377.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 354.

Mao's New-Democratic Revolution conducted a united front work among the national bourgeoisie in order to forge a broad alliance against imperialism and local feudalism. The hostility of Chinese capitalists against privileged foreign businesses and the experience of the nationalist war against an invading Japan made the CPC both realize how it was possible to build a unity with the majority of the people and learn degrees of compromises for the strategic advance of the revolution.⁵⁵⁰

To a certain extent, the capitalist development in an economically backward China was a requirement for the eventual building of socialism, provided that capitalist production does not dominate over the livelihood and the lives of the people.⁵⁵¹ In relation to this, the two stages of the new democratic and socialist revolutions simply emphasize that the first is a condition for the second and that the two stages must be consecutive, thereby prohibiting any intervening stage characterized by bourgeois dictatorship.⁵⁵² This is why Mao repeatedly emphasized the role and leadership of the Communist Party in doing united front work with other revolutionary classes.⁵⁵³ Through the party, the victory and continuity of the two stages of the revolution and the eventual building and advancing of socialism towards communism are guaranteed.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵⁰ Jack Gray and Patrick Cavendish, *Chinese Communism in Crisis: Maoism and the Cultural Revolution* (New York: Frederick Praeger Publishers, 1968), 52.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 360. Emphasis added.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*, 365-366. Mao's theory and practice of a united front was specifically tested during the war of resistance against Japanese aggression. Mao correctly formulated the united front formula by emphasizing how the Chinese communists then, along with the other anti-Japanese forces and the entire Chinese population, only has as their course the striving for unity of all forces for the defeat of the Japanese aggressors. Mao Zedong, "On Protracted War," in *Collected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, 114.

⁵⁵⁴ Badiou argued that socialism is not, i.e., it does not exist, for only communism is. For him, socialism is simply a name for an obscure arsenal of new conditions" where the contradiction between capitalism and communism will be clarified. Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 7-8.

By 1949, the Chinese New-Democratic Revolution achieved national victory. Mao's principle was proven correct as it was able to rally all the progressive forces in China in not only crushing Japanese colonial aggression but also defeating the reactionary forces of the Kuomintang government.

Upon the victory of the first stage of the revolution, the second stage, the socialist revolution was immediately carried forward. While the socialist revolution had to implement state capitalism, the latter however took on a socialist quality which benefited the workers and the state.⁵⁵⁵ State capitalism, or what Mao calls as a state-capitalist economy of a new type, is in its character socialist since, according to him, only a quarter "of the profits produced by the workers goes to the capitalists." The remaining three-quarters are equally distributed for the workers "in the form of welfare fund," for the state "in the form of income tax," and for the expansion of productive capacity.⁵⁵⁶ State capitalism was necessary for laying the foundations of a socialist economy. However, the goal of the revolution was not capitalism but socialism, and ultimately communism. Hence, in the 1950's, Mao was already directing, through the Communist Party, the Chinese economy towards co-operative transformation of agriculture and the socialist transformation of capitalist private ownership.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁵ Mao Zedong, "On State Capitalism," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5 (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1977), 53.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁷ Mao Zedong, "On the Co-operative Transformation of Agriculture," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5, 103-126 and Mao Zedong, "Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5, 257-258. On China's path to industrialization, see Mao Zedong, "China's Path to Industrialization," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5, 254-256. The period of New Democracy was finally over by the end of the Great Leap Forward. This time, the problem was not anymore of how to establish the context needed for socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat, but how to maintain and consolidate such an economy and a dictatorship, and ultimately prepare the social relations needed for communism. J. Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture*, 246.

Especially during the Great Leap Forward (GLF), in the period 1958-1960, Mao aggressively pushed the revolution towards the heights of socialism. Alfred Chan criticized Mao for being a dominant if not a bullying figure during the GLF. Chan charged that Mao “took personal charge of running the economy by bullying all his detractors into submission.”⁵⁵⁸ Mao’s exercise or exertion of considerable power must be seen within the context of the period. Prior to the GLF, Mao had alliances with and gave concessions to the national bourgeoisie of China. His act was consistent with the principle of New Democracy. While these alliances were temporary in nature, many of the party leadership already fell into the idea that these were absolute. In this way, state capitalism instead of socialism ironically would be the goal of the revolution. Mao had to counter these rightist tendencies to push further the gains of the revolution and not to stop with the status of State capitalism. These were revolutionary times and Mao had to exert and exercise power and struggle over the other party leaders to counter tendencies that obstruct the revolution from moving forward. It is even baseless to claim that Mao simply “pushed his personal views” to initiate the GLF as Chan himself recognized that, in struggling with the other cadres of the party, Mao had to cite the Marxist theory of the revolution in permanence to justify the GLF.⁵⁵⁹ What happened during this period within the party was an ideological struggle that would make itself manifest and sharp during the GPCR.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁸ Alfred Chan, *Mao’s Crusade: Politics and Policy Implementation in China’s Great Leap Forward* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 280.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 281.

⁵⁶⁰ A more balanced view of Mao’s leadership was explained by Frederick Teiwes. Contrasting Mao from Stalin, Teiwes argued that Mao “never set his colleagues at each other’s throats” nor did he demand that “they have close factional links to himself.” The leadership of the Chinese Communist Party then were “men of talent and major figures in the history of CCP in their own right.” This implies that Mao never manipulated the leadership by surrounding himself with figures docile to him yet incompetent of their office. This would also belie that Mao simply pushed his personal views as if the other members of the leadership then

Chan likewise criticized Mao for overly relying on mass mobilizations. He portrayed the latter in pejorative terms and presented a Mao who had no recourse other than mobilizing popular support to prove his claims.⁵⁶¹ What Chan failed to see here is how Mao mobilized the dynamic relationship between the economic and structural transformations (during the GLF) and the needed superstructural interventions. In other words, it is not enough to change the economic structures, politics should still be in command of everything. Mao, through the party, had to mobilize a mass-oriented politics to make the revolution in permanence. In this way, the party would still be rooted in the masses and their movements. This political procedure was actually a rehearsal of what will happen in the GPCR. In both the GLF and the GPCR, Mao was ever conscious of the dialectical relationship between the mass movement and the party, i.e., of democracy and centralism, in bringing about revolutionary transformations.

Chan's charge of Mao's reliance on mass mobilizations led him to conclude that Mao was a spontaneist, i.e., someone who relied on the spontaneous sentiments of the people.⁵⁶² His basis was the absence of a clear blueprint of how to do a socialist economy. Chan is partly correct and wrong on this accusation. While China adopted some of the lessons of Soviet socialist development, the former did not fully apply a Soviet-inspired socialist policy. China did apply these policies on the industrial sector, causing distortions that were not beyond correction. However, it did not follow a system of tribute of the

were men ready to take Mao's words as final and executory. Teiwes, "Establishment and Consolidation of the New Regime," in *The Cambridge History of China: Vol 14*, 61.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., 282.

⁵⁶² Ibid., 283.

Soviets imposed to the peasantry.⁵⁶³ Mao had a blueprint but did not dogmatically apply this for two reasons. First, he had to consider the unique conditions and demographics of China being a peasant-dominated population. Second, a dogmatic application of a Soviet-influenced policy is disastrous politically as it would ruin the worker-peasant alliance.⁵⁶⁴ Chan could not just dismiss Mao of being arbitrary. Also, the fact is that each stage of socialist development in China was identified and guided by “a set of official documents which enumerated the tasks for the upcoming period.”⁵⁶⁵ Mao’s adherence to principles and their corresponding tasks manifest in his stand concerning a gradual and planned economic development.⁵⁶⁶ The charge of being arbitrary is far from being believable especially that, on the one hand, Mao and the CPC had indeed a blueprint or an experience to rely on to, and on the other, the CPC itself drew guidelines in the form of official documents to serve as guides and basis for making particular policies during this period.

With the concept of the New-Democratic revolution, not only are the stages of a proletarian revolution clarified, but also is the role of the party as the force that consolidates the achievements of the revolution, in any of its stage emphasized. In consolidating the

⁵⁶³ Samir Amin, *The Future of Maoism*, trans. Norman Finkelstein (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1981), 65.

⁵⁶⁴ Amin concluded that by consciously avoiding a system of tribute imposed to the peasantry, Chinese socialism was able to preserve the worker-peasant alliance. Ibid. Mao’s general critique of the Soviet style socialism is found in his *Critique of Stalin’s Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*. Mao Zedong, “Critique of Stalin’s Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 117-129.

⁵⁶⁵ Amin, *The Future of Maoism*, 72.

⁵⁶⁶ Mao Zedong, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 161-164. During the start of the socialist construction, when delays resulting from the Korean War and the negotiations with the Soviet Union for economic aid, only annual plans were possible. However, with the elimination of the delays the two events just mentioned, China was able to make comprehensive planning reflected for example in the Five-Year Plan of 1953-1957. Teiwes, “Establishment and Consolidation of the New Regime,” in *The Cambridge History of China: Vol 14*, 92.

achievements of the revolution, the party, in Badiouian terms, institutionalizes or legalizes the consequences of the event.

c. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

While the socialist economy in China was already established, another lengthy period, however, is still required for its consolidation.⁵⁶⁷ Again, Marx pointed out that the superstructure – which includes politics, laws, religion, culture, or ideology in general – transforms along with the transformation of the economic structure.⁵⁶⁸ Revolutionizing further the Marxist principle of the superstructure’s transformation along with the base structure, Mao would need to consolidate socialism. For Mao, consolidating socialism not only means uninterrupted revolution in the economic front, but also painstaking education in the political as well as ideological fronts.⁵⁶⁹ Ideological or cultural revolution was necessary because for Mao, even in a socialist society where the proletariat dictates, class struggles still exist. According to Mao, while the revolution had succeeded in transforming the economy, the question of who, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, will end up victorious is an ideological question which still needs to be settled.⁵⁷⁰ He continued that the Party still has to raise a protracted struggle against the ideology of the bourgeois and the petty-bourgeois.⁵⁷¹ Sison further clarified the matter. For him, Mao pointed out how socialism stretches a significantly long historical period. This same period is still

⁵⁶⁷ Mao Zedong, “Speech at the Chinese Communist Party’s National Conference on Propaganda Work,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5, 258.

⁵⁶⁸ Marx, “Preface to a Critique of Political Economy,” in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 425.

⁵⁶⁹ Mao, “Speech at the Chinese Communist Party’s National Conference on Propaganda Work,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5, 258.

⁵⁷⁰ Mao Zedong, “Speech at the Chinese Communist Party’s National Conference on Propaganda Work,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5, 258.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 269.

characterized by classes, class contradictions, and class struggles. In particular, there is the struggle between the socialist and the capitalist roads with the constant danger of capitalist restoration.⁵⁷²

Why does it have to be done? It must be recalled that Stalin committed a fundamental error in 1936, when he prematurely declared the dissolution of classes in the then USSR. Describing the significant achievements of both the agrarian and urban industries of USSR then, Stalin assessed that the socialist system has been victorious in all areas of the economy, which means that the exploitation between and among human beings has been eliminated.⁵⁷³ For Stalin, the contradiction was not anymore between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, but between the Soviet people and the external enemies.⁵⁷⁴ Consequently, petty-bourgeois mode of thinking was propelled among the surging number of intellectuals and those in the bureaucracy.⁵⁷⁵ Liwanag criticized that Stalin misunderstood socialism as “a matter of increasing production, improving administration and technique” while allowing only the cadres to decide everything and at the same time to simply provide them, the experts, and the toiling masses “with ever increasing material benefits.”⁵⁷⁶ And since classes were supposed to be dissolved, the new intelligentsia brought about by the fast

⁵⁷² Jose Maria Sison, “Tribute to the Great Communist Mao Zedong,” in *Building Strength Through Struggle* (The Netherlands: International Network of Philippine Studies, 2013), 393.

⁵⁷³ Joseph Stalin, “On the Draft Constitution of the USSR,” in *J.V. Stalin Works*, vol. 14 (London: Red Star Press, 1978), 156.

⁵⁷⁴ Joseph Stalin, “On the Final Victory of Socialism in the USSR,” in *J.V. Stalin Works*, vol. 14, 315 and 321. See also Armando Liwanag, *Stand for Socialism Against Modern Revisionism*, 15 January 1992, retrieved from <http://www.padepaonline.com/pag-aaral-sa-sari-saring-rebisyunista-at-kontra-rebolusyonaryong-ideya-at-paglilinaw-sa-mga-ito/manindigan-para-sa-sosyalismo-laban-sa-modernong-rebisyunismo>; 19 January 2019.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

increasing educational system were “presumed to be proletarian so long as they rendered bureaucratic and professional service,” although in fact their proletarian class stand has been steadily decreasing.⁵⁷⁷ These new breed of petty-bourgeoisie eventually ended up in the upper echelons of party leadership and promoted bureaucratized leadership that alienated the party and the State from the masses.⁵⁷⁸

In general, Stalin was only concerned with the relations of production, while totally disregarding the role of the superstructure or politics, and of the masses.⁵⁷⁹ It may be the case that socialist relations of production have been carried forward, but the superstructure still lags behind, as remnants of the bourgeois and feudal ideas still freely proliferate in the ideological field. A revolution in the field of culture is necessary, and the masses themselves have to be mobilized in this regard.

The transformation in the field of culture and ideology is the GPCR’s main aim. As Badiou describes it, the said revolution wanted “to change the human being in what is most profound.”⁵⁸⁰ It created a mass movement that primarily combatted bourgeois ideas that not only circulated freely in society but also were deeply rooted among party members themselves. It mobilized the youth and other leftist organizations and individuals in China in order to carry through to the end the Socialist Revolution. Mao during this time was fully

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰ Alain Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, trans. David Macey and Steven Corcoran (New York: Verso, 2010), 102. Although Badiou argues that the GPCR ranged from November 1965 to July 1968, most historical accounts would say that its duration span from 1966-1976. His basic criterion is the “existence of a political activity of the masses.” Ibid. 111.

aware of anti-Marxist elements and factions within the Party.⁵⁸¹ Even before the GPCR, Mao already recognized the rightist tendencies of some of the party members and ordinary civilians. Being rightists, they, in varying degrees, opposed the collectivization efforts during the Great Leap Forward in favor of a system that perpetuated the same bourgeois property rights especially in agriculture. These individuals either obfuscated or denied as class struggles the contradiction between collectivist efforts and the “spontaneous capitalist tendencies” of the peasantry especially the more prosperous ones.⁵⁸² Mao, however, did not fully unleash a revolution in the level of ideology for two reasons. Politically, Mao was preoccupied with preserving unity. Gracy and Cavendish observed how the collections of Mao’s little red book, while representative of the more general thoughts of Mao, avoided the more controversial issues such as the polemic with Soviet Russia and revisionism in general.⁵⁸³ Ideologically, the party, and perhaps Mao himself, before the GPCR, was still in the process of and so has not completed an anti-revisionist stand that could counter bourgeois and individualist tendencies inside and outside of the party. In fact, such an anti-revisionist stand could only come from outside of China and its party, i.e., it had extrinsic origins. This was argued by Samir Amin who emphasized how the capitalist restoration of USSR and the transformation of the Soviet State into an oppressive and exploitative instrument made the Chinese party members and Mao himself realize the dangers of

⁵⁸¹ According to Mao the Party already had factions within itself. These factions are primarily defined as to their attitude towards the mass movements. Mao Zedong, “Speech at the Closing Ceremony of the Eleventh Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee,” in *Chairman Mao Talks to the People: Talks and Letters: 1956-1971*, 263.

⁵⁸² Gray and Cavendish, *Chinese Communism in Crisis: Maoism and the Cultural Revolution*, 52.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.* 47.

revisionism.⁵⁸⁴ It can be said that the GPCR was an expression of the maturation of Mao's and the Communist Party of China's political and ideological standpoints. In this matured form, Mao and the CPC fiercely struggled the revisionist lines of the anti-Marxist party members.

Many of these anti-Marxist elements even came to the point of suppressing youth dissidents, the Red Guards. Mao admonished these elements and reminded them that the "youth is the great army of the Great Cultural Revolution."⁵⁸⁵ Further, according to him, communists should not fear the student movement, otherwise they would outrightly be anti-Marxists.⁵⁸⁶ Talking to the leaders in Beijing, Mao stressed the importance of putting politics in command of everything, and of always going among the masses in order to be one with them.⁵⁸⁷

Mao's most radical claim during this time was that the bourgeoisie lay not only outside but also inside the Communist Party itself.⁵⁸⁸ Hence, the Party members and cadres needed to undergo remolding, and rectify individualist, elitist, and bourgeois ideas. While

⁵⁸⁴ Amin, *The Future of Maoism*, 72.

⁵⁸⁵ Mao Zedong, "Talks to the Leaders of the Centre," in *Chairman Mao Talks to the People: Talks and Letters: 1956-1971*, ed. Stuart Schram (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 253.

⁵⁸⁶ Mao Zedong, "Talks to the Leaders of the Centre," in *Chairman Mao Talks to the People: Talks and Letters: 1956-1971*, 253.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid. In another gathering of key leaders of the Party, Mao warned the delegates that "if you don't make revolution, the revolution will be directed against you." Mao Zedong, "Speech at a Meeting with Regional Secretaries and Members of the Cultural Revolutionary Group of the Central Committee," in *Chairman Mao Talks to the People: Talks and Letters: 1956-1971*, 257.

⁵⁸⁸ Mao, (no particular work cited), as cited by Fang Kang, "Capitalist Roaders are the Bourgeoisie Inside the Party," *Peking Review*, no. 25, 18 June 1976. According to Sison, the revisionist bourgeois headquarters of Liu Shaoqi "was shaken from the base to the rafters and eventually collapsed under the crushing blows of the masses. Portions of the proletarian dictatorship usurped by the capitalist roaders were wrested back." Sison, "Tribute to the Great Communist Mao Zedong," 395. This notion of the capitalist roaders conveniently hiding inside the party is also quoted in Badiou and the latter further contended that "the bourgeoisie had indeed found a convenient hiding place inside the party." Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 70.

for two to three years, after the victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949, party members and cadres still exemplified plain and simple living, little by little, however, they arrogated for themselves certain material advantages.⁵⁸⁹ Liu Shaoqi (劉少奇, 1898-1969), the leader of the Chinese State from 1959-1968, implemented a system of salaries in 1951 which were modified and enlarged in 1955 and 1956. Senior cadres and party members enjoyed higher pay and, on some occasions, better housing. Special schools were also established for the children of party functionaries and cadres.⁵⁹⁰ All these despite Mao's strong opposition.⁵⁹¹ Mao's and Liu Shaoqi's standpoints diverged on this regard. Where Mao placed weight on the nature of party members and cadres being servants of the people who enjoy no privileges, Liu Shaoqi proclaimed how they could function on optimum conditions only when better facilities are accorded to them. This resulted to the same individualist, elitist, and bureaucratic attitudes which the revolution supposedly aimed to overcome. Gray and Cavendish correctly pointed out how elitism and bureaucratism created the conditions for the emergence of a new class, the bureaucracy, who owns nothing yet enjoys everything.⁵⁹²

Mao also criticized Bo Yibo's (薄一波, 1908-2007) bourgeois mistake and claimed that this was not an isolated case as this was already entrenched in a number of Party members then.⁵⁹³ This mistake fundamentally departed from the general line that prescribed

⁵⁸⁹ Jean Daubier, *A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, trans. Richard Seaver (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 17.

⁵⁹⁰ Teiwes, "Establishment and Consolidation of the New Regime," in *The Cambridge History of China: Vol 14*, 123.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

⁵⁹² Gray and Cavendish, *Chinese Communism in Crisis: Maoism and the Cultural Revolution*, 51.

⁵⁹³ Bo Yibo was the Vice Premiere of the People's Republic of China from 1957-1966 and 1979-1982.

socialism, not capitalism, as the goal. For Mao, the Party membership fell into three categories: the unwaveringly Marxist-Leninists, the Marxist-Leninists who are also infected by some non-Marxist-Leninists ideas, and the small number who are no good and whose thinking are already non-Marxist-Leninists.⁵⁹⁴

Further, Mao emphasized the need to combat revisionism. For him, revisionism is just another form of bourgeois ideology.⁵⁹⁵ Modern revisionists who were also inside the Party denied the fundamental differences between socialism and capitalism, especially between the proletarian and bourgeois dictatorships.⁵⁹⁶ Revisionists carried forward not the socialist but the capitalist line. This is why, along these lines, Badiou explained what today determines the proletariat. According to him, the proletariat's dialectical actuality is determined by "its internal purification from modern revisionism."⁵⁹⁷

Mao's famous battle cry during the GPCR was to "bombard the Communist Party's headquarters" as many of the party members were already taking the capitalist road and were alienated from the broad masses of the Chinese people.⁵⁹⁸ As the Chinese people, especially the youth, were revolutionized during this period, cultural revolutionary groups that were set up envisioned "the destruction of the political monopoly of the party."⁵⁹⁹ Further, these groups were not temporary political powers that stand in direct opposition to

⁵⁹⁴ Mao Zedong, "Combat Bourgeois Ideas in the Party," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5, 54-62.

⁵⁹⁵ Mao Zedong, "Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5, 269-27.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid. 270.

⁵⁹⁷ Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 9.

⁵⁹⁸ Sison, "Tribute to the Great Communist Mao Zedong," 395.

⁵⁹⁹ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 123.

the party, but “permanent, standing mass organizations.”⁶⁰⁰ The mass movements and organizations that not only actively revolutionized the cultural life of China then but also criticized the party were powerful statements against what was deemed as the infallibility of the party.⁶⁰¹ As a response to the errors and excesses of party functionaries prior to the GPCR, the latter likewise touched on key issues on education. To correct past mistakes like the establishment of special schools for the children of party members and cadres, educational innovations were implemented guided by two notions. First, best teaching was to be derived from the practical application of any given work.⁶⁰² This innovation was against book learning that tended to detach the learner from his/her concrete environment especially from production. Second, promotion of students is based on “their measure of devotion to the collective enterprise” rather than on individualist and elitist standards. By this time, the aim of being an expert rather than being both a red and an expert had eroded the collectivist aims of the socialist revolution of China. The GPCR had to address this erosion.

Politically, the GPCR was a testament that class struggles indeed still truly exist in socialist societies, and that, ultimately, the mass movement is necessary in order to keep in check the authority and excess of the Party.⁶⁰³ Philosophically, the GPCR highlighted the dialectical relation of the objective (economic conditions) and the subjective (power of the

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ It was said that in the thirties, “the Party is always right.” Ibid. 152.

⁶⁰² Daubier, *A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 8.

⁶⁰³ It was reported that the entire Party leadership during this period, with exception of Mao and Lin Biao, were subjected to mass criticism of this popular movement. Suzanne Pepper, “Education,” in *The Cambridge History of China: Vol. 15 Part 2*, ed. Denis Twitchet and John Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 549.

collective). Revolutions do not only happen in the objective but have to be carried forward by the subjective.⁶⁰⁴ That is why during the GPCR, the Yanan period (1942-1944), the center of the Chinese revolution was constantly invoked as “a model of communist subjectivity.”⁶⁰⁵ For one to successfully consolidate the gains of socialism, one has to invoke a particular subjectivity that coheres with the overall project of transforming the economic conditions. With the GPCR, it can be said that Maoism is a proletarian revolution in the level of ideology against all remaining forms of individualism, elitism, and bureaucratism.⁶⁰⁶

While the GPCR succeeded in further developing the theory of doing, winning, and consolidating the proletarian revolution, it failed to fully realize its objectives. Being the first of its kind, it still has to perfect itself both as a theory and a practice. As summed up by Gray and Cavendish, the rectification campaigns that went along during the GPCR were not as extensive, comprehensive, defined, detailed, and immediate in the provinces compared to Beijing.⁶⁰⁷ This evaluation raises a question as to the organizational capacity as well as the ideological determination of both the party and the masses to combat party and State apparatus morphing into new bourgeois entities. Organizationally, the party still accorded leadership roles to party leaders who were already criticized in the past for their rightist mistakes. Because of their leadership roles inside the party, they, like Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, placed certain limits to the GPCR in the provinces thus producing relatively

⁶⁰⁴ For Badiou, any movement or leap from a quantitative to a qualitative transformation “includes the effect of a subject.” Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 4.

⁶⁰⁵ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 112.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

⁶⁰⁷ Gray and Cavendish, *Chinese Communism in Crisis: Maoism and the Cultural Revolution*, 118-119.

meager results in these regions.⁶⁰⁸ Ideologically, an anti-revisionist standpoint has not fully matured then. A party apparatus morphing into a bourgeois structure advancing anti-proletarian ideas and policies was still so vague and obscure to these Chinese communists. Some of the CPC leaders, unlike Mao, were even reluctant in condemning Khrushchev's CPSU as revisionist.

Gray and Cavendish divided the crisis of the GPCR into five stages. First, the period of resistance represented by Peng Zhen (彭真, 1902-1997) and the hierarchical party control over the movement. Second, the June-July 1966 period where Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi maneuvered to control the cultural revolution teams. Third, the defeat of both Deng and Liu at the end of July or beginning of August 1966 Central Committee meeting thereby unleashing the GPCR as a mass movement led by the Red Guards beyond party control. Fourth, the attempt in 1967 to use the mass movement led by the Red Guards not only for political purging but also of a revolutionary take over similar to the Paris Commune; Lastly, the reimposition of party and State control expressed through the three-way alliance.⁶⁰⁹ Given the organizational and political shortcomings of the CPC then, the GPCR, that period characterized by the creative action of the masses of workers and students led by the Red Guards, culminated into the reimposition of party and state control expressed in the three-way alliance of the revolutionary forces, the army, and the revolutionary cadres.⁶¹⁰ The revolution was impeded. The party and the State slowly solidified into static structures totally detached and even hostile towards the movement of the masses. Especially after the

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid., 120.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., 115.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

death of Mao, the party-state suture became the basis of a new form of class oppression and exploitation.

d. Law of Contradictions

Mao's theory of contradictions enabled him to properly grasp the varied contradictions among and within varied socio-political forces during both the new democratic revolution and the socialist revolution and construction. While Marxism developed and Leninism likewise further advanced what was later called as dialectical materialism, Mao carried it forward by arguing that contradiction is "the law of the unity of opposites."⁶¹¹ Contradictions simply abound in nature, war, and society: positive and negative, hot and cold, advance and retreat, expansion, and consolidation, and exploiter and exploited. He formulated central claims concerning contradiction: the universality and particularity of contradiction, the principal contradiction, and the principal aspect of a contradiction; the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction; and the place of antagonism in a contradiction.

Hitting on the dogmatists who mechanically applied foreign theories and practices, Mao claimed that they failed to understand that the universality of a contradiction inheres in the particularity of contradictions.⁶¹² Its universality suggests that everything in the material world is characterized by self-contradictions that cause these things to become what they are not. Capitalism could only be if it accumulates itself by extracting surplus value from the workers. A butterfly could only be if it develops itself by overcoming the immediacy of the larva and the egg. A star could only be if it combusts itself by consuming its own energy

⁶¹¹ Mao Zedong, "On Contradiction," in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 67.

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, 72.

until it runs out of it and collapses on itself. Material things, in general, are in constant contradiction with itself thus pushing it to overcome and transform itself into a higher state. However, the form that this universal contradiction may take assumes various particularities. While contradictions are inherent in all of material reality, such contradictions manifest themselves in various particular forms. This is the particularity of contradictions. Dogmatists simply and lazily affirmed the abstract universality of a contradiction without doing the harder work of discovering this universal contradiction within particular and different circumstances. Difference, according to Mao, is determined by the particular essences of things which distinguish one from the other.⁶¹³ While there is universal contradiction, one should not presuppose that such a contradiction is absolutely the same in all particular and different circumstances.

The New-Democratic Revolution for example was a result of Mao's conscious effort to apply on concrete conditions the universality of contradictions. While the bourgeois-proletariat contradiction universally permeates the whole process of the capitalist system, this contradiction however manifests differently in semi-colonial or colonial countries like China. The many classes with particular and definite contradictions in China then made the process more complex.⁶¹⁴ Here, Mao had to discover the principal contradiction in order to formulate the correct line and correctly resolve such a contradiction. When China was aggressively invaded by the imperialist Japan, the principal contradiction was not anymore

⁶¹³ Ibid. 76.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., 87.

the bourgeois-proletariat contradiction, but the contradiction between imperialist Japan against the Chinese revolutionary front.⁶¹⁵

For Mao, it is crucial for Marxist-Leninists to deploy appropriate methods of resolving different contradictions. The inability to discriminate particular differences is the fundamental error of dogmatists.⁶¹⁶ The communists should discover not only the principal contradiction, but also the principal aspect of a contradiction. While different aspects openly stand in contradiction with each other, one aspect at a certain moment or stage is dominant while the other dominated. In their contradiction, there is unity (identity, coincidence, or interdependence) of the two aspects and the transformation of each aspect to its opposite.⁶¹⁷ In their unity, both aspects presuppose each other (the revolutionary presupposes the reactionary). In Badiou's words, contradiction is not merely the placement of difference, but the process of the unity of opposites. This unity does not recognize any fusion of the Two by virtue of a third term, but assumes the One in the very movement of the Two.⁶¹⁸ In the process of the contradiction's movement, each aspect would ultimately turn into their opposites (and the revolutionary will become the reactionary and vice-versa). The bourgeoisie for example was a revolutionary force during the feudal period. After it has revolutionized the means of production and the latter's ownership contradicted the social character of production, the bourgeoisie became a reactionary force and the proletariat a

⁶¹⁵ According to Mao, all the various classes, except for some traitors, can temporarily build an alliance for a national war against imperialism. In this regard, "the contradiction between imperialism and the country concerned becomes the principal contradiction," rendering as secondary all the other contradictions within the said country. Ibid.87.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid. 78.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid., 93.

⁶¹⁸ Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 24.

revolutionary one.⁶¹⁹ In each contradiction, conditions are established to turn one into its opposite, i.e. from something to nothing and vice versa. For Mao, even the establishment of the Communist Party is “in fact to prepare the conditions for the elimination” of the said party and all other parties. Of course, Mao is referring to the communist society where, along the withering away of the state, classes (and the parties that represent them) are also gradually abolished.⁶²⁰

Mao’s concept of contradiction is unlike Badiou’s notion of dialectics. While Mao rejected the notion of a negation of negation, emphasizing the basic law of the unity of opposites, he, however, argued that every moment in the chain of events is an instance both of affirmation and negation and that none of the two categories is in absolute priority over the other.⁶²¹ While Badiou’s logic endeavored to secure an affirmative dialectics that creates and grounds the autonomy of the new subjective body even from within the old situation, Mao insisted that the new and the old could exist side by side but that this is only a momentary fragment of the whole.⁶²² The ultimate goal is not the co-existence of the subject within the situation of the old but the elimination of the old by the new which Mao called as the method of synthesis.⁶²³ In this way, for Mao a contradiction has been resolved. The subject not only exists independently within the old situation but also confronts the latter in the process of overcoming and transforming it. The subject, in Mao’s account, remains and

⁶¹⁹ Marx and Engels, “The Communist Manifesto,” in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 247-250.

⁶²⁰ Mao Zedong, “On Contradiction,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 95.

⁶²¹ Mao Zedong, “Talk on Questions of Philosophy,” in *Mao: On Practice and On Contradiction*, 181.

⁶²² Alain Badiou, “Affirmative Dialectics: From Logic to Anthropology,” *The International Journal of Badiou Studies*, 2(1), 1, Mao Zedong, “Talk on Questions of Philosophy,” in *Mao: On Practice and On Contradiction*, 181.

⁶²³ *Ibid.*

is active in the process of overcoming the old and is expressed in the category of the party immersed in the mass movement.

The resolution of a process or contradiction would lay the condition for a new form of contradiction. In this new contradiction, a new principal contradiction arises and the aspects of this contradiction. When the New-Democratic Revolution, for example, finally resolved the contradictions within a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, a new form of contradiction in a socialist society emerged.⁶²⁴ And because a particularly new society with its definite forms of contradiction arises, new forms of contradiction likewise emerge. In this case, new methods of resolving the contradiction have yet to be discovered through a materialist analysis of the concrete conditions.⁶²⁵

In a socialist economy, for example, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie as well as that of the urban areas and the countryside gains new meaning. In its desire to rapidly collectivize the agricultural sector, the Soviet Union in 1928-1933 classified the peasants into poor, middle, and rich (the infamous *kulaks*).⁶²⁶ But as there was a state of generalized poverty among the peasantry, the criteria for classification only created a confusion as “the other two categories often joined the kulaks in their resistance to forced collectivization.”⁶²⁷ As a result, a new but obscure category of the *subkulak* was introduced: a peasant who is economically too poor to be considered as a kulak, but

⁶²⁴ When Mao was writing “On Contradiction,” they were still more than a decade to the victory of the New-Democratic Revolution. Mao only had to learn from the experience of the USSR that, at the victory of the revolution and the construction of socialism, new contradictions arise. Ibid. 95.

⁶²⁵ Dialectics, from a Marxist lens, should always be understood as materialist. Hence, any method in investigating and discovering particularities of material contradictions and as to how these reflect in human consciousness must be materialist. This is precisely what Badiou means when he said that “the dialectic, inasmuch as it is the law of being, is necessarily materialist.” Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 3.

⁶²⁶ Zizek, “Introduction: Mao Tse-Tung, the Marxist Lord of Misrule,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 14.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

“nonetheless shared the kulak’s ‘counter-revolutionary’ attitude.”⁶²⁸ This category resulted to the blurring of class analysis and subjected virtually every peasant to a “hermeneutics of suspicion.”⁶²⁹ Even the Soviet State newspaper *Pravda* conceded that “even the best activists often cannot spot the kulak.”⁶³⁰ By identifying as counter-revolutionaries (i.e. enemies) practically the entire peasantry – by virtue of their hesitance to undergo collectivization – the party leadership erroneously branded as antagonistic a contradiction which supposedly is not. In characterizing such a contradiction as antagonistic, the party leadership fell into the grave error of terrorizing and purging the *kulaks*. Later, Mao, in his theory of contradictions, would clarify that contradictions “within the ranks of the people,” are non-antagonistic and these include that between the workers and the peasants.⁶³¹ This means that the contradictions within the people’s ranks do not necessarily require terror and purge but non-antagonistic or democratic means like persistent persuasion and dialogue.

Further, for Mao, Stalin was mistrustful of the peasants as he limited commodity production to subsistence level, thereby intentionally hindering the economic growth of the said class.⁶³² Limiting commodity production directly runs counter to the Maoist principle of allowing a rich peasant economy as a requirement for the construction of socialism, while gradually aiming for agricultural co-operative transformation.⁶³³ Informed by the experience

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶³⁰ *Pravda*, 21 October 1930, as quoted by Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 120.

⁶³¹ Mao Zedong, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 131.

⁶³² Mao Zedong, “Critique of Stalin’s Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 118.

⁶³³ Mao Zedong, “On New Democracy,” in *Collected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 1, 354.

of the Soviet Union, Mao realized the necessity of establishing a rich peasant economy as a requirement for constructing socialism.⁶³⁴

Zizek has a take on the matter concerning this Soviet mistrust against the peasantry.⁶³⁵ For him, through this mistrustful attitude, the Soviet power resolved to destroy the political inertia of the peasants, their essential attachment to the land, to ‘proletarianize’ them and make them exposed to the dynamics of modernization.⁶³⁶

Badiou affirmed this claim of Zizek on the Soviet economic error. Using the Maoist critique of the USSR economy, he held that Mao’s idea was not “to collectivize through force and violence” the peasantry of the countrysides “in order to ensure accumulation at all costs in the cities.” Against the Soviet economic model, Mao, according to Badiou, wanted to locally industrialize the countryside to give it relative economic independence, thus averting the savage and catastrophic proletarianization and urbanization that took shape in the USSR.⁶³⁷ For Badiou, Mao simply aimed to resolve the contradiction between the urban and the countryside and not through the the violent devastation of the latter in favor of the former.⁶³⁸ These particular contradictions were Leninism’s historical limitations, and it was only through an assessment of the latter (through Maoism) that such contradictions could be overcome.

⁶³⁴ Ibid., 115.

⁶³⁵ Zizek, “Introduction: Mao Tse-Tung, the Marxist Lord of Misrule,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 4.

⁶³⁶ Slavoj Zizek, “Introduction: Mao Tse-Tung, the Marxist Lord of Misrule,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 4.

⁶³⁷ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 109.

⁶³⁸ Ibid.

In general, for Mao, unity is relative but struggle is absolute.⁶³⁹ The appearance of unity, stasis, or equilibrium could only be a signal of a newly emerging contradiction. Hence, a communist must not let his/her guard down during these periods. It is against this formula that Zizek criticizes Maoist dialectics and explains Mao's theoretical mistake. For Zizek, Mao erred in rejecting the Hegelian negation of negation as Mao believed that such was only a compromise "between a position and its too radical negation."⁶⁴⁰ Ultimately, Mao was caught within "the 'bad infinity' of endless negating, scissions into two, subdivision," which, when translated into practice, made Mao lenient and open even to the enemy.⁶⁴¹ Zizek here is referring to Mao's *Talk on Questions of Philosophy*, where the latter, overly emphasizes class struggle, even goes to the point of allowing some elements to take the capitalist road so that one sidedness be avoided and the unity of opposites be observed. Here Mao said: "let them do it. Let them attack us madly, demonstrate in the streets, take up arms to rebel – *I approve all of these things*. Society is very complex, there is not a single commune... a single department of the Central Committee, which one cannot divide into two."⁶⁴² Zizek is, however, wrong in portraying Mao's position as an avoidance of compromise. Of course, in matters pertaining to a revolution, compromise, although strategic, does not have an ultimate value. Mao's concept of New Democracy allowed for temporary compromises. Mao was even open to compromises and consensus for the sake of

⁶³⁹ Mao Zedong, "On Contradiction," in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 98.

⁶⁴⁰ Slavoj Zizek, "Introduction: Mao Tse-Tung, the Marxist Lord of Misrule," in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 19.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² Emphasis added. Mao Zedong, "Talks on the Questions of Philosophy," in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 173.

higher unities, strategic to the general advance of the revolution.⁶⁴³ Mao rejected the negation of negation for two reasons. First, Mao had to affirm the absoluteness of struggle, that one could only be by the presupposition of the other. Marx earlier affirmed this identity or unity of opposites. For example, in the *Grundrisse*, he explained that “production, then, is also immediately consumption, consumption is also immediately production. Each is immediately its opposite.”⁶⁴⁴ Or in Mao’s terms, every moment in the chain of events is an instance both of affirmation and negation.⁶⁴⁵ The political value of this position is so important especially that in socialism, unlike how Stalin described it to be, classes and their contradictions still exist. One cannot just deny contradictions by antagonistically or brutally eliminating a dissenting party, just for the sake of a dogmatic allegiance to a higher synthesis.

Second, Mao wanted to show that the concept of synthesis could only come from the affirmation and the painstaking work of struggle itself. This means that the notion of a higher unity or synthesis does not just drop from skies without doing the hard work of having to struggle over with people, society, and the world. There is no “bad infinity” in this regard inasmuch as there is no bad synthesis in the sense of a higher unity arbitrarily added into a situation and does not result from the immanent contradictions of things.

Against Zizek’s position, Mao’s radical notion of dialectics, that seemingly avoids higher synthesis, is not the weakness but in fact the strength of Maoism. In the GPCR, Mao recognized the hard struggle with party members headed towards the capitalist road. But

⁶⁴³ Gray and Cavendish, *Chinese Communism in Crisis: Maoism and the Cultural Revolution*, 53.

⁶⁴⁴ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (London: Penguin Books, 1973), 91.

⁶⁴⁵ Mao Zedong, “Talk on Questions of Philosophy,” in *Mao: On Practice and On Contradiction*, 181.

Mao did not idly adopt a brutal liquidationist policy but fought with them head on, ideologically. If it were so, a Liu, a Po, and a Deng would not have survived by the time Mao died. By struggling with them, Mao “undermined the ideological and social base of their policies.”⁶⁴⁶ The conditions would have been worse if Mao, in trying to find a higher synthesis of the contradictions then, an arbitrary unity that sought to haphazardly eliminate contradictions, simply liquidated the so-called capitalist roaders while maintaining the same social and ideological base. Mao placed a great deal of weight on struggle as a condition for unity. Only through struggling with the erring elements and in mobilizing the masses in this struggle can the capitalist roaders and their motivations be unmasked.⁶⁴⁷ The unmasking, reached again only through struggle, becomes a point of higher unity between the masses and the party.

While contradiction or struggle is absolute, antagonism however is not. Antagonism is only one form of the struggle of opposites. This means that not all contradictions are antagonistic and a true Marxist must learn to distinguish whether the contradiction is antagonistic or not. This claim also teaches that class antagonisms in the form of social revolutions are not only necessary but also practicable, and that contradictions could be antagonistic and non-antagonistic.⁶⁴⁸ Antagonistic contradictions can only be resolved through violent and deadly means, while non-antagonistic ones through democratic,

⁶⁴⁶ Daubier, *A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 13.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶⁴⁸ Mao Zedong, “On Contradiction,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 99-100.

persuasive, and educational methods.⁶⁴⁹ And to properly determine the nature of the contradiction, one must observe the materialist method of analysis, especially the mass line.

e. The Mass Line

The last fundamental Maoist principle is the mass line. The masses play a definitive role in not only bringing into victory a proletarian revolution but also in keeping the correct line and methods of leadership of the party itself. In saying that the only correct method of leadership is “from the masses to the masses,” correct leadership can only be possible if the mass line is observed. This means two things. On the one hand, all policies and directives are simply concentrated ideas derived from the leadership’s direct contact with the masses. The core leadership will simply formulate these ideas into a general call.⁶⁵⁰ On the other hand, members and cadres do not only hand down general calls and directives to the masses (and other lower units) but also give them direct and immediate guidance.⁶⁵¹ The mass line specifically rectifies bureaucratic and detached leadership. Through the mass line, cadres do not only formulate general programs but also most importantly include themselves in the process of executing or implementing the said program. In doing so, the leadership avoids being divorced and isolated from the masses.⁶⁵² The mass line becomes an efficient method of mutual education between the leaders and the led.⁶⁵³

⁶⁴⁹ Mao Zedong, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 130-142.

⁶⁵⁰ Mao Zedong, “Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 3 (New York: Pergamon Press, 1967), 119.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵² Mao emphatically reminded the Party “to form close ties with the masses and not to divorce [itself] from them.” Mao Zedong, “Rectify the Party’s Style of Work,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 3, 48.

⁶⁵³ Gray and Cavendish, *Chinese Communism in Crisis: Maoism and the Cultural Revolution* (New York: Frederick Praeger Publishers, 1968), 49-50.

The principle of the mass line, just like other principles developed along the application of Maoism in China, is highly influenced by the conditions of China then. Gray and Cavendish identified a particular problem in pre-modern societies such as China. They claimed that obedience to newly enacted laws as well as to authority itself is both not automatic and complete.⁶⁵⁴ Laws and decrees become effective only when they are expressions of the summation of local experiences and campaigns and through discussions, local communities adopt and commit themselves to obedience.⁶⁵⁵ The uniqueness of the mass line is that it is a principle that aimed to resolve certain issues on collectivist and participatory governance.

Through the mass line, the Party is not solidified into a “general staff” of the proletariat apart from the class and the masses it claims to represent. Against Stalin who was too caught up in mobilizing experts and cadres, Mao this time reoriented the order of importance: from the masses (the Party leadership simply concentrates and unites ideas, then descends back) to the masses. This time, the Party is not the infallible expert, but the vanguard organized through, informed by, and integrated with the masses. The mass line pulls the communist back to the source of its being: the masses.

Maoism is the latest and the most advanced theory of proletarian revolution. Again, it is not just a distinct and independent concept that appeared from nowhere and external from the original theory. As Zizek clarifies, Maoism is “not just the reaction to an external shock, it remains an inherent transformation of the *same* theory of the overcoming of

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid.

capitalism.”⁶⁵⁶ In Hegelian terms, Maoism is the same theory which, through a reinvention of itself in a totally alien context, “returns to itself in its otherness.”⁶⁵⁷ In this regard, Maoism is Marxism-Leninism in its otherness. It affirms the central Marxist principles of class struggle and the primacy of class in doing social analysis, the revolutionary character of the proletariat, and the dictatorship of the proletariat. It further affirms the fundamental Leninist teachings of the State and revolution, imperialism, and the vanguard party. And coming from the limitations and contradictions of Marxism-Leninism, it builds its own unique principles that overcome the said limits.

Maoism has not gone far enough. It met a temporary failure not because it went too extreme, but because it was “*not radical enough*.”⁶⁵⁸ The bourgeoisie within the Party de-radicalized Maoism. Today, in the era of the reformulation of the communist hypothesis and cynicism against the Party as locus of emancipatory politics, one should not just operationalize, but re-radicalize Maoism.

Maoism’s universality could be asserted through the five features just mentioned. Those features were not just mere descriptions of a successful revolutionary thought that applied Marxism-Leninism in Chinese soil. This means that Maoism, through its five features, could be applied but not in a mechanical manner in various contexts outside from its original site. The communist parties of the Philippines, Nepal, Peru, India, and many other developing countries have invoked the concept of Maoism. Even the Communist Party of Canada, a developed capitalist country, invoked Maoism as a theoretical guide and even

⁶⁵⁶ Zizek, “Introduction: Mao Tse-Tung, the Marxist Lord of Misrule,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 4.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁸ Zizek alluding to “the problem of hitherto revolutionary attempts.” Ibid., 23.

declared in its program that the path to revolution in Canada is through a protracted people's war.⁶⁵⁹ This is an unlikely declaration since Mao Zedong Thought originally asserted that protracted people's war could only be applicable to developing or semi-feudal countries. This is also Sison's critique of the followers of Chairman Gonzalo of Peru who, he charged, tore apart Maoism "and exaggerated protracted people's war as prescription for all countries under all circumstances."⁶⁶⁰ To exaggerate here means to place as primary the "militarist" element of Maoism instead of regarding the latter as a comprehensive system that also has other equally important elements or features.

Those characteristics were faithful continuities as well as ruptures to Marxism-Leninism's three essential components: scientific socialism, philosophy or dialectical materialism, and political economy. In this regard, Maoism's universality is not only in its applicability to foreign sites of potential revolution. It also expands the concept of Marxism-Leninism itself by developing its three essential components which could already take into account experiences and conditions that were formerly untouched by the original concept.

Scientific socialism essentially has to do with doing, winning, and consolidating a revolution. In Mao's case, he ruptured Marxism-Leninism by operationalizing the concept in a totally foreign soil, through his notions of protracted people's war, new democratic revolution, and the great proletarian cultural revolution. His two-staged revolution clarified the nature of revolutions especially in peripheral regions. It further clarified, the proletariat, the basic alliance of the peasants and the workers, and the possibility of class alliance – to a limited extent and duration – with middle or national bourgeoisies. As to the proletariat,

⁶⁵⁹ Revolutionary Communist Party of Canada, "Programme," 01 January 2007; available from <http://www.pcr-rcp.ca/en/archives/category/programme>.

⁶⁶⁰ Correspondence with Jose Maria Sison, 18 November 2019.

Mao theoretically expanded its meaning thereby allowing even the peasants, petty-bourgeoisie or intellectuals to be proletarians provided that they adhere to the party line. While this view is rejected by Anthony James Gregor as a distortion of Marxism, thereby rendering Maoism to be theoretically empty of Marx's and Engels' Marxism, such a view by Gregor failed to consider the actual historical developments of Marxism itself.⁶⁶¹ Leninism had already developed the theory of a party with a proletarian consciousness developed not by the proletariat themselves but by the intellectuals who are one with the struggles of the proletariat. Again, Marx, Engels, and Lenin were not themselves proletariat but intellectuals. To accept Gregor's view is to accept Marx's and Engels' thoughts to be once and for all completed and immutable systems immune from further developments. But to accept Marxism as an already finished and immutable system is a big disservice to Marxism itself as a revolutionary theory that adheres to the principle of dialectics.

The protracted character of revolutions is not a truth of revolutions only in peripheral regions but also in the industrial centers. The protracted people's war has already been considered as the revolutionary strategy of the proletariat.⁶⁶² Even Lenin, starting in the early years of the 1900s, went through a protracted process of doing organizing, propaganda, and agitational works, and all the other necessary revolutionary works in order to win the revolution later in 1917.⁶⁶³

Dialectical materialism was ruptured by Mao when he, unlike Engels who was more inclined to accept the notion of the Hegelian negation of the negation, radicalized the former

⁶⁶¹ Anthony James Gregor, "Classical Marxism and Maoism: A Comparative Analysis," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 52, (2019): 85-86.

⁶⁶² Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture*, 209.

⁶⁶³ Moufawad-Paul, in elaborating further how a Leninist party does a revolution, explains the need to involve oneself in legal struggle. See *Ibid.*, 208.

by developing the concept of the perpetual struggle of opposites.⁶⁶⁴ For Mao, the unity of opposites is the most basic law of all and the negation of the negation just does not exist.⁶⁶⁵ The practical implications of such a view enabled Mao even to recognize the party as a site of division or faction. It also allowed him to criticize the Soviet's premature declaration of a classless society.

Political economy was applied and ruptured by Mao through the years of socialist revolution and construction in China. Socialist political economy did not stay as dead theories but was lively applied in an agrarian and pre-industrial context. Mark Selden pointed out Mao's five unique contributions to the development of socialism in China which, he contended, "defied most post-colonial and developing nations."⁶⁶⁶ Xu Dixin also discusses that Mao's contribution to a socialist political economy include the establishment and development of socialist production relations, the development of the productive forces through the same relations of production, and the continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶⁴ See Friedrich Engels, "The Dialectics of Nature," in *Karl Marx Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, vol. 25 trans. Clemens Dutt (New York: International Publishers, 1987), 356.

⁶⁶⁵ Mao Zedong, "Talk on Questions of Philosophy," in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 181.

⁶⁶⁶ These five achievements are 1) an economy of self-sufficiency and self-reliance that is free from foreign capital and control; 2) the eradication of capitalist exploitation and the initiation of an egalitarian society characterized by citizen participation; 3) the feeding of a billion population and the guarantee of basic welfare for all; 4) the industrialization of both heavy and small-scale decentralised rural industries; and 5) the solution to the peasant question through land reform, cooperation, and communisation. Mark Salden, "Mao Zedong and the Political Economy of Chinese Development," *China Report* 24 (2), (1988): 125.

⁶⁶⁷ Xu Dixin, "Chairman Mao's Contribution to the Development of Marxism on the Questions of Transforming Production Relations and Developing the Productive Forces," *Chinese Economic Studies*, 12(3), (1979): 57-77.

Further, Mao corrected the errors of Soviet socialism.⁶⁶⁸ Soviet socialism heavily emphasized the development of heavy industries in the urban areas to the detriment of agriculture and the peasantry in the countryside. This development imbalance created a distortion in the economic field as there was an imbalance in economic production and likewise conditioned the political oppression of the peasants. While a similar distortion periodically reappeared in the development of socialism in China then, there was a general attempt to overcome this distortion through what Mao referred to as walking on two legs.⁶⁶⁹ Chinese socialism respected the “principle of equal exchange between the countryside and the city,” despite the reproduction in Chinese soil bureaucratic and centralized planning pioneered by the USSR.⁶⁷⁰ Mao and the CPC then endeavored to curb the dangers of this bureaucratic and centralized planning by organizing the commune as the basic production unit autonomous from bureaucratic and centralized planning. In this way, the commune became a concrete expression of an industrialization strategy grounded not only on heavy industries but also of agricultural development.⁶⁷¹

The notion of continuity should be understood as a faithful working within the same conceptual framework laid out by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. This framework has to do still with surplus value in political economy, materialism and dialectics in philosophy,

⁶⁶⁸ Teiwes explained that Mao and the CPC altered the Soviet Model from time to time. This happened especially “when the Party has its own established competence,” like in rural policy. Teiwes, “Establishment and Consolidation of the New Regime,” in *The Cambridge History of China: Vol 14*, ed. Denis Twitchett and John Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 64.

⁶⁶⁹ Mao insisted that the Soviets exaggerated the significance of heavy industries, insisting that steel was the foundation and that machinery the heart and soul of socialist development. The Chinese position is that grain is agriculture’s mainstay while that of the industry is steel. Mao Zedong, “Concerning Stalin’s Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 112-113.

⁶⁷⁰ Amin, *The Future of Maoism*, 67.

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

and class struggle and proletarian politics in scientific socialism. The notion of rupture is the presupposition of continuity itself. While there is a working within the same conceptual framework, of the same whole, the immediate categories of the whole are conceptually enlarged as an effect of various developing historical determinants. Such immediate categories gain a whole new meaning as these are juxtaposed with new relations and conditions.⁶⁷² Rupture means the conceptual enlargement, the becoming of the same categories and the whole system into their otherness as these are determined by new concrete historical developments.⁶⁷³ Maoism is a rupture as it unleashed the categories of Marxism-Leninism towards their otherness, e.g., from a theoretical to a practical or actually existing socialism, from a negation of negation to a conception of dialectics that posits the unity of opposites (negation and affirmation), and from an expert-driven to a mass-determined party structure. While the process of rupture from Marxism-Leninism was a dynamic and long process, such a rupture can be symbolized by the proclamation in 1960 of the Anshan Charter. As opposed to the Soviet Magnitorsk approach whose essence is that the technical or expert “cadre decide everything,” the Chinese Anshan charter followed five basic principles. First, the precedence of politics over economics. Second, the organization of the economic life by the party, not by the technical cadre. Third, the essential role of the masses in defining general and particular objectives. Fourth, the requirement of the cadre to

⁶⁷² In explaining the development of simple categories into complex ones, Marx emphasized the immanence of development within a given whole or society unfolding through history. These categories, originally appearing as simple and even irrelevant in lower historical developments make a “historic appearance in its full intensity only in the most developed conditions of society.” Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (London: Penguin Books, 1973), 103.

⁶⁷³ Engels denounced Dühring who affirmed that truth is absolute and immutable. For Engels, knowledge or conceptual categories are relative, inasmuch as their investigation is limited to the interconnections and consequences of particular social and state forms which exist only in definite periods. Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 87.

participate in productive labor. Lastly, the involvement of workers in management responsibilities and in the efforts to innovate technology.⁶⁷⁴

The Maoist rupture is reached because of its continuity with the basic categories of Marxism-Leninism. Maoism is a sublation of Marxism-Leninism, i.e., the overcoming “as regards its form,” and preservation “as regards its real content.”⁶⁷⁵

The Assertion of Universality: From Mao Zedong Thought to Maoism

When the post-Stalin USSR initiated and carried forward the revisionist lines of Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev, and Mikhail Gorbachev, and especially when capitalism was almost restored in the Russian block and the post-Mao Communist Party of China (CPC), in the guise of “reforms,” implemented capitalist dynamics in the Chinese economy, the whole international proletarian movement was placed in a state of total confusion.⁶⁷⁶ When Khrushchev, for example, in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union’s (CPSU) 22nd Party Congress, reported that the new Party Program aimed to resolve the most

⁶⁷⁴ Amin, *The Future of Maoism*, 68.

⁶⁷⁵ This is how Engels described how modern materialism sublated, i.e., negated the negation, of philosophy. Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 137.

⁶⁷⁶ For a thorough analysis and critique of post-Stalin revisionism of the CPSU, see Communist Party of China, *The Leaders of the CPSU are the Greatest Splitters of our Times*,” 04 February 1964, available from <https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/documents/polemic/splitters.htm>; 02 February 2019. Here the CPC charged that “never before has the unity of the international communist movement been so gravely threatened as it is today when we are witnessing a deluge of modern revisionist ideology.” Also, in another work, the CPC criticized that “Khrushchev completely negated Stalin at the 20th Congress of the CPSU.” See CPC, *On the Question of Stalin*, 13 September 1963, available from <https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/documents/polemic/qstalin.htm>; 02 February 2019. Also the CPP and Armando Liwanag contributed on this decisive ideological struggle. See Armando Liwanag, *Stand for Socialism against Modern Revisionism*, <http://www.padepaonline.com/pag-aaral-sa-sari-saring-rebisyunista-at-kontra-rebolusyonyong-ideya-at-paglilinaw-sa-mga-ito/manindigan-para-sa-sosyalismo-laban-sa-modernong-rebisyunismo>; 13 May 2014, and Armando Liwanag, *Long Live Lenin and Stalin, Condemn the Modern Revisionists, Resume the Proletarian Revolution*, 09 November 1966, available from <http://www.padepaonline.com/pag-aaral-sa-sari-saring-rebisyunista-at-kontra-rebolusyonyong-ideya-at-paglilinaw-sa-mga-ito/mabuhay-sina-lenin-at-stalin-kondenahin-ang-mga-modernong-rebisyunista-ipagpatuloy-ang-proletaryong-rebo>; 13 May 2014.

crucial question of communist practice and theory, - i.e., the supposed evolution of the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat into a state of the entire people – he radically altered the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of proletarian revolution in general and the politics of the vanguard party in particular.⁶⁷⁷ For Tom Clark, Gorbachev succeeded in raising into theory what had been practiced by many communist parties all along.⁶⁷⁸ The Marxist-Leninist principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the core of a socialist society that paves the way for the transition into a communist one was systematically revised by supplanting it with the more obscure notion of “a state of the entire people.”⁶⁷⁹ This revisionist line of Khrushchev will eventually lead him to the anti-Marxist position of a peaceful co-existence with capitalism.⁶⁸⁰

Also, when Deng Xiaoping unflinchingly carried forward his dictum of building “socialism with capitalist methods,” he has prepared the path of China’s capitalist counter-revolution.⁶⁸¹ In his opening speech to the Twelfth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Deng advised the party members to carry out socialism that “proceeds from Chinese realities.”⁶⁸² This may seem as a thoroughly Marxist stand that concretely analyzes concrete conditions. However, a careful analysis of this notion of socialism would reveal that Deng loosened the gains of the previous Maoist years in China by accommodating

⁶⁷⁷ As quoted by Tom Clark, *State and Counter-Revolution: A Critical History of the Marxist Theory of the State*, 1983; available from <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1a/tom-clark/index.htm>; 03 February 2019.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁰ Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture*, 6.

⁶⁸¹ The Workers’ Advocate, *Condemn the Capitalist Rulers of China!*, 01 July 1989; available from <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-7/mlp-china.htm>; 03 February 2019.

⁶⁸² Deng Xiaoping, “Opening Speech at the Twelfth National Congress of the Communist Party of China,” 01 September 1982; available from <http://en.people.cn/dengxp/vol3/text/c1010.html>.

bourgeois individuals and parties within so-called “democratic parties.” While it is true that progressive and democratic parties fought alongside the party in the stage of the democratic revolution, making a party policy that will perpetuate a lasting cooperation with all democratic parties and individuals misses the concept of the New Democratic Revolution and negates the gains of the socialist construction.⁶⁸³ In the previous sections, it was clarified that the Maoist concept of alliance with national bourgeoisies is limited to certain periods and to a certain degree. And such an alliance was even made because of the common fight against Japanese aggression. This is why Mao, in the 1950’s, was already directing, through the Communist Party of China, the Chinese economy towards co-operative transformation of agriculture and the socialist transformation of capitalist private ownership, a move that irked the interests of the bourgeoisies who wanted to maintain state capitalist production in China.⁶⁸⁴ This entailed the compromise of whatever alliance there was with the national bourgeoisie. Such an alliance should not be the reason for the dissolution of the gains of socialism but should rather be immediately dissolved in favor of socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This revisionist policy was not only reflected in China’s gradual capitalist restoration of the economy, but also ironically manifested in the CPC’s fearful attitude against the working class themselves.⁶⁸⁵ Invoking what it called a neo-authoritarian ideology (or what bourgeois media labeled as Marxist tradition of tyranny), Chinese party leaders waged a

⁶⁸³ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁴ Mao Zedong, “On the Co-operative Transformation of Agriculture,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5, 103-126 and Mao Zedong, “Speech at the Chinese Communist Party’s National Conference on Propaganda Work,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5, 257-258.

⁶⁸⁵ The Workers’ Advocate, *Condemn the Capitalist Rulers of China!*, 01 July 1989; available from <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-7/mlp-china.htm>; 03 February 2019.

brutal crackdown against leftist workers and youth, and ultimately declared a martial law against the Chinese people.⁶⁸⁶

The party became a party of the bourgeoisies detached from the masses of peasants and workers. Its hostility against mass movements not only detached the party from the masses, but also antagonized its peaceful mass actions. As these revisionist parties departed from the essential and decisive concept of proletarian leadership and dictatorship, they eventually yielded to a supra-class unity which prepared the ideological and political conditions for the restoration of capitalism in former socialist states. These parties likewise altered the proletarian quality of the state and the party as the latter is determined first and foremost by party intellectuals or cadres and not by revolutionaries tempered by class struggle and immersed with the masses.⁶⁸⁷

These were the '60s up to the '90s. Many communist and radical movements retreated as wholesale betrayal characterized most of the dominant communist parties and organizations in various countries.⁶⁸⁸ Anti-Marxism and anti-Sovietism sparked the interests of renegade leftist intellectuals, especially in France.⁶⁸⁹ Fukuyama and other bourgeois apologists would already preach capitalist triumphalism.⁶⁹⁰ In its attempt to denounce Soviet

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁷ Clark, *State and Counter-Revolution: A Critical History of the Marxist Theory of the State*, 1983, retrieved from <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/nem-1a/tom-clark/intro.pdf>; 10 March 2020.

⁶⁸⁸ Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture*, 93-95.

⁶⁸⁹ An interesting material on the decline of interest of French intellectuals on Marxism and socialism can be read on a CIA-sponsored research paper entitled *France: Defection of Leftist Intellectuals*. See Central Intelligence Agency, *France: Defection of Intellectuals*, December 1985; available from <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP86S00588R000300380001-5.PDF>.

⁶⁹⁰ J. Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture*, 94.

revisionism, the New Left, “denounced the mainstream communist parties following Khrushchev’s line but also the history of Leninism.”⁶⁹¹

There was at least one figure from among those in these turbulent period who, while raising a critical attitude towards what was then called as the crisis of Marxism, saw from this crisis itself a renewal of Marxist theory and a modification of its ideology along with its organizations and practices to open a genuine future of social, political, and cultural revolution for the proletariat.⁶⁹² Unlike the parties in power that time, who were unwilling and unable to recognize the actual crisis of Marxism itself, Althusser argued that the only proper attitude among Marxists towards the obviousness of the crisis is to recognize it and to work the difficult but not impossible way out from it.⁶⁹³

Althusser’s combative optimism, especially as he recognized the importance of mass movements in pointing out and possibly supplementing the inherent crisis of Marxism, missed to invoke what was then a resounding mass movement that took place in China, the GPCR. In fact, in the same article that supposedly problematizes and finds a way out from the crisis of Marxism, Mao was merely mentioned once and a discussion of his theoretical contributions wanting. Maoism would have been a potent fourth reaction to his three-fold schema of reactions of the crisis of Marxism.⁶⁹⁴ In Maoism, Soviet revisionism is criticized and condemned without hesitation and reservation. The said movement absorbed the shock of the crisis, believes still in the power of a movement, and (re)viewed the matter with sufficient historical, political, and theoretical perspectives. But, unlike the other previous

⁶⁹¹ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁹² Louis Althusser, “The Crisis of Marxism,” *Marxism Today*, July 1978: 215.

⁶⁹³ Ibid., 216 and 220.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid., 217.

forms of reaction, this movement believes in a wider movement of the oppressed – that includes movements that seemingly miss to portray proletarian characteristics of struggles – and the historical, theoretical, and political lessons of Mao Zedong Thought.

Because of the apparent betrayal of socialist states and their communist parties, and especially the revisionist turn of the CPSU and the CPC, the whole Marxist-Leninist tradition was seemingly undermined. For Moufawad-Paul, Marxism-Leninism at the time left a theoretical void in which other traditions like postmodernism, post-Marxism, post-colonialism, among others, rushed to fill the said void and offered explanations to “oppressions outside of class exploitation in a manner that was eclectic, speculative, quasi-materialist, or just baldly idealist.”⁶⁹⁵ In this new theoretical and political constellation, the Leninist vanguardist politics was likewise put into question especially by disheartened leftists and intellectuals who were former members or sympathizers of communist parties, as the party seemingly ended up not being the locus of revolution but of counter-revolution.⁶⁹⁶ The point here is not to dismiss the charges of these intellectuals and the shortcomings of the party-form. One must even recognize these shortcomings in order to reformulate better the communist hypothesis. But in reformulating the communist hypothesis, one must not be at a distance from the hypothesis itself but rather live with it in its gradual development. The disheartened leftist individuals in the 1970s, however, distanced themselves from socialism in general.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid., 139.

⁶⁹⁶ As assessed by the CIA, leftist academics have been marking themselves at a distance from socialism, both in its party and ideological forms, starting from the early 1970s. Led by communist renegades who called themselves as the New Philosophers, they formed the New Left intellectuals which not only rejected Marxism but also developed a deep-seated antagonism and hatred against the Soviet Union. It is said that anti-Sovietism had become the basis of legitimacy in leftist groups. Central Intelligence Agency, *France: Defection of Leftist Intellectuals*.

The communist movement did not retreat as a whole. Various attempts to rescue its revolutionary and universal aspects continued. The most notable of all these attempts was the anti-revisionist movement of Mao Zedong Thought. This movement centered on a critique of revisionism of the CPSU in favor of the CPC (when the latter was still ferociously waging the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution) and, in general, attempted to make sense of the contradiction between proletarian revolution whose proponents were coming mainly from the middle class.⁶⁹⁷ A paradigmatic example of this anti-revisionist movement is the Workers Communist Party (WCP), formerly the Canadian Communist League (Marxist-Leninist). The new WCP adopted as its theoretical guide Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and carried forward an anti-revisionist cause that would reclaim the “Marxism-Leninism abandoned by those parties following the Soviet Union under Khrushchev.”⁶⁹⁸

In a comprehensive assessment of the experience of the international communist movement after Soviet Revisionism, Tom Clark argued that the proletarian revolution suffers an inherent contradiction, an impasse. While regarded to be the political doctrine of the proletariat, its main proponents and theorists, however, are drawn from middle class intellectuals.⁶⁹⁹ Clark showed a contradiction from within the proletarian movement itself. While it supposedly is a movement of the proletariat towards its self-emancipation, the consciousness and leadership of such a movement were articulated by elements outside of

⁶⁹⁷ Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture*, 93 and 96.

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁹⁹ Tom Clark, *State and Counter-Revolution: A Critical History of the Marxist Theory of the State*, 1983; available from <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1a/tom-clark/index.htm>; 03 February 2019.

the class in need of emancipation, i.e., the petty bourgeois intellectuals. This contradiction seemed to compromise the Leninist vanguard party.

In the previous sections, the vanguard Leninist party was discussed, and it was pointed out that, because of the working class's inclination towards spontaneism and economism, only elements outside of the said class are capable of formulating a thoroughly revolutionary and socialist theory. Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin are not themselves coming from the working class but intellectuals from the petty-bourgeois class. By virtue of their privileged status of having been educated and enjoyed leisure time, these intellectuals concluded that political theory must come from them.⁷⁰⁰ However, Clark charged that the social privileges that allowed these intellectuals to formulate socialist theories were laden with various opportunist views that ultimately choke and undermine the theories themselves.⁷⁰¹ In other words, these intelligentsia failed to be revolutionary through to the end and likewise failed to ultimately revolutionize the party. Of course, this is a genetic fallacy as what is rather emphasized is the history or origin of the intelligentsia rather than their actual standpoint in relation to the revolution. This confusion of the original and actual class standpoints also denies the Maoist principle that a revolution in culture could actually revolutionize the standpoint, viewpoint, and method of intellectuals. In a pessimistic tone, Badiou clarified the problem. For him, the USSR demonstrated that “the Leninist party is incommensurable of the task of the transition to communism.”⁷⁰² Failing to distinguish

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

⁷⁰² Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 205.

whether the fall that the USSR suffered was due to its thoroughly communist cause or blatantly revisionist line, the philosopher concluded that “the Leninist party is over.”⁷⁰³

Moufawad-Paul simplified the meaning of the said contradiction by saying that since the proletariat cannot “spontaneously develop a revolutionary party with a revolutionary ideology,” it needs the petty bourgeoisie to develop a revolutionary party and “carry a revolution to its completion.”⁷⁰⁴ For him, this contradiction is not of the type wherein one is affirmed in favor of the other. That is, this contradiction does not simply let one choose between workers exclusively organizing themselves without the intellectuals and intellectuals solely problematizing proletarian ideology and revolution. This contradiction is a dialectical one as it forces a resolution, and, for Moufawad-Paul, this necessitates a Maoist rupture.⁷⁰⁵ Furthermore, he argued that this contradiction is not that of the proletarian revolutionary theory and practice as a whole, but a particular contradiction of the Marxist-Leninist tradition.⁷⁰⁶

When the movement carrying the banner of Mao Zedong Thought encountered this contradiction, it was not yet capable of grasping its meaning outside of the limits of Marxism-Leninism. Because of the anti-revisionist impulse of this movement, Mao Zedong Thought was desperately defending Marxism-Leninism by using the latter’s own language, despite the obvious impasse which this tradition has already encountered.⁷⁰⁷ In particular, it

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture*, 99.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid., 100.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁷ It is to be noted however that it was not only Mao Zedong Thought that initiated an anti-revisionist movement, a cause directed against Soviet communism. There were also some, like the Frankfurt School and the Situationists, which, because of their strong stand against the bureaucratization of Soviet revisionism,

asserted for a Leninist vanguardist politics without however reformulating the latter according to Maoist methods of work and leadership. For Moufawad-Paul, this anti-revisionist movement of Mao Zedong Thought “primarily concerned with keeping the theoretical boundaries clearly defined: with continuity rather than rupture.”⁷⁰⁸ It failed to recognize the key to the resolution of this Marxist-Leninist impasse in the comprehensive and extensive experience of Mao. Ultimately, the anti-revisionist movement of Mao Zedong Thought failed to recognize and assert that Maoism, far from being a mere application of Marxism-Leninism in Chinese contexts, is a new and higher stage of development of the said revolutionary science, and that it possesses theoretical and practical tools that could effectively help in the resolution of the said Marxist-Leninist contradiction.

It should be noted that among the experiences of Mao in consolidating the gains of the socialist revolution in China was the literal rupture it did from the influence of the USSR. The rupture already happened in the 1950s especially after Stalin died and Khrushchev assumed leadership in Russia. When Khrushchev, in 1956, dismissed the legacy of Stalin and when the Chinese communists rejected Khrushchev’s policy of peaceful coexistence, the ties between the Chinese and Russian communists were severed.⁷⁰⁹ In 1960, the Soviet government cancelled all its economic aid in and withdrew all its technical experts from China.⁷¹⁰ This situation would have adverse effects to China who, by this time, has initiated the Great Leap Forward, a movement which necessitated all the technical as

“argued for the need to return to the foundations of Marxism for a reassessment of revolutionary philosophy.”
Moufawad-Paul, *The Communist Necessity*, 116.

⁷⁰⁸ Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture*, 164.

⁷⁰⁹ Alexander, *Maoism in the Developed World*, 2-3.

⁷¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

well as economic aid for its success. By 1963, the CPC took to the international communist movement its conflict with the CPSU.⁷¹¹ In doing so, it not only laid bare a contradiction within the international communist movement, but it also challenged the leadership of the said movement which, until this time, was accorded to the USSR. The international communist movement rallied either to Khrushchev's or to Mao's party. It can be said that Maoism is a rupture, a schism within the international communist movement at a time when communist parties, especially powerful ones, deviated from their revolutionary objectives.⁷¹²

By 1983, Manuel Ruben Abimael Guzman, also known as Chairman Gonzalo of the Peruvian Communist Party (PCP), asserted Maoism's universality. When asked what made Maoism the third and highest stage of Marxism, Gonzalo explained that the former succeeded in developing the three components of Marxism: philosophy, political economy, and scientific socialism.⁷¹³ This means that Mao did not simply succeed in applying Marxism-Leninism; he also advanced its basic theories by rupturing through its theoretical limits while maintaining a fundamental continuity, as Maoism is still the theory of doing, winning, and consolidating the proletarian revolution. The theoretical framework of Mao Zedong Thought did not fully comprehend this historical achievements of Mao, but merely limited Mao within the great debate against revisionism by using the theoretical framework of Marxism-Leninism. This was a point of criticism by the Dem Volke Dienen against

⁷¹¹ Ibid.

⁷¹² The notion of Maoism as a schismatic movement was elaborated by Alexander in Ibid., 5.

⁷¹³ Chairman Gonzalo and El Diario, *Interview with Chairman Gonzalo*, July 1988; available from http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/dawson/data/Interview_with_Chairman_Gonzalo.pdf; 04 February 2019. In philosophy, Mao further developed the concept of dialectics by "focusing on the law of contradiction," arguing that it is the only fundamental law. In political economy, Mao elaborated both on the concept of bureaucrat capitalism and political economy of a socialist society. For Gonzalo, it was Mao "who really established and developed the political economy of socialism." Lastly, in scientific socialism, Mao developed the strategy of a people's war. Ibid.

Sison, when the latter denied any essential difference between the contents of Mao Zedong Thought and Maoism.⁷¹⁴ For the Dem Volke Dienen, if both Mao Zedong Thought and Maoism were terms having the same content, there would be no difference as well in either saying Marxism or Marx Thought, or Leninism or Lenin Thought. However, the “ism” in Maoism has to be distinguished as it means the systematization and closed development of all the three components of Marxism “to a higher level and to a higher truth” and not merely as an individual contribution of a Chinese communist.⁷¹⁵ In this sense, Maoism is not a simple addition to the previous science of Marxism-Leninism, but a whole new rupture with it, and precisely because of this rupture, enabled a rather smooth continuity of the same science in its otherness.

Sison defended himself and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). He explained that the CPP later adopted Maoism instead of the Mao Zedong Thought as “a matter of transcription and symmetry alongside the terms Marxism and Leninism.”⁷¹⁶ Sison explained that it was the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) itself, during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR), that acclaimed Mao Zedong Thought as “representing the third stage in the development of the universal revolutionary theory of the proletariat.”⁷¹⁷ He was fortunate to be able to visit China at the start of the GPCR and had enlightening conversations with members of the Central Committee of the CCP. Sison

⁷¹⁴ Dem Volke Dienen, *First Critical Remarks about the Role of the Communist Party of the Philippines in the International Communist Movement*, 19 October 2018; available from <http://www.demvolkedienen.org/index.php/en/t-dokumente-en/12-dokumente/2726-first-critical-remarks-about-the-role-of-the-communist-party-of-the-philippines-in-the-international-communist-movement>; 04 February 2019.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid.

⁷¹⁶ Personal correspondence with Jose Mari Sison, 18 November 2019.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid.

pointed out that Mao and his comrades had the “modesty of being averse to glorifying himself by the term Maoism.”⁷¹⁸ Mao Zedong Thought was purposefully chosen by Mao himself, his comrades, and the CPP and not the more glorious-sounding Maoism to avoid the cult of personality. This is why for Sison, unlike Moufawad-Paul and Gonzalo, Mao Zedong Thought and Maoism do have the same contents and would refer to the same thing, i.e., the third stage of proletarian theory whose primary contribution is that of the continuing revolution, through the cultural revolution, under the dictatorship of the proletariat to curb and overcome the dangers of revisionism and capitalist restoration and to consolidate socialism.⁷¹⁹ In this way, Mao Zedong Thought or Maoism “has gained universal significance long before Gonzalo called it Maoism.”⁷²⁰ By eliminating the semantic difference of the two terms, Sison resolved the seeming contradictions of the two terms raised by Maoists in the last three decades of the 20th century and retraced its moment of universality within the procedure of the GPCR itself.

The character of universality is not the task of the proponent himself, i.e., it was not for Mao to consider his thought as universalizable. Universality comes under two conditions. On the one hand, a collegial body of successors and militants should test the claims of the new paradigm. Under circumstances with which the proponent himself/herself was unable to imagine, the new paradigm seeks to resolve issues and problems with which previous paradigms could only confront as impasses. In the international communist movement, this body was the Revolutionary International Movement (RIM). While the

⁷¹⁸ Ibid.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid.

⁷²⁰ Ibid.

Peruvian Communist Party in 1988 first declared the universality of Maoism, varied revolutionary organizations the world over, under the banner of the RIM, assessed the “successes and failures of the Chinese Revolution so as to succinctly define Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, crystallizing a basic theoretical terrain for Maoism in 1993.”⁷²¹ Not that Maoism’s universality was validated based on the authority of the RIM but the inverse: the RIM, upon recognizing universalizable themes of Maoism convened itself as a faithful collegial body of proletarians guided by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Upon doing so, they argued for and preached the universality of Maoism.⁷²² Here, the elements upon which the problems Maoism endeavored to overcome indeed originate in foreign soil, but these same elements did assume a value common beyond cultural, political, or geographical diversities. This is why representative parties composed through the RIM affirmed the universality of Maoism and later on applied it in contexts outside of China.⁷²³

On the other hand, a specific enemy himself/herself universalizes a particular theory. This idea was interestingly elaborated by Žižek. According to him, “the dialectical irony of history is that only a (nominal) ideologico-political enemy can” make a theory into a universal concept.⁷²⁴ Žižek argues that the moment of victory happens when even the enemy communicates through your language and when one’s message is accepted as having a

⁷²¹ Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture*, 12.

⁷²² Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, *Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!*, 26 December 1993, retrieved from http://www.bannedthought.net/International/RIM/AWTW/1995-20/ll_mlm_20_eng.htm; 11 May 2019.

⁷²³ Robert Alexander’s study of Maoism’s application in the developed world corrects the commonly accepted knowledge that Maoism is Marxism for Third World Countries. Here, he traced how Maoism was creatively applied in countries like the US, Canada, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Great Britain Greece and many others. Alexander, *Maoism in the Developed World*, 7-191.

⁷²⁴ Žižek, “Mao Tse-Tung, The Marxist Lord of Misrule,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 17.

universal content, even by the enemy.⁷²⁵ But Žižek's point also means that the enemy already recognizes the terrain of struggle – not only in the domain of language but also in the actual political field – that his/her enemy is using against him/her. Generally, this would mean reciprocating the revolutionary episodes of a proletarian party with an escalated State violence and repression.

The converse of this revolutionary overcoming is impossible. Since it is the State which the communists ultimately aim to overcome, and not bourgeois rule itself, and since the State is not just the bourgeoisie's own making but a product of a long development of history starting from the slaves then to the feudal lords, a communist revolutionary episode does not validate the bourgeoisie nor the State itself. Since the State is but the negation of a more original and primitive form of communal organization, i.e. a classless social order, the State's repressive response to a revolutionary episode of a communist movement validates that which the State itself originally cancels but which this time emerges as a systematic revolutionary overcoming of that which cancels. In other words, the communists could never talk the language nor tread the path of its enemies. Its enemies, however, comfortably use, i.e. revise, the communist language to distort the meaning of communism.

In this way, Marxism-Leninism is vindicated: the State is, indeed, a violent instrument of the ruling class. In this regard, one should be keen as to be able to recognize the respective "enemies" of Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism as theories, and eventually elevated the said theories into a universal concept. In the case of Marxism, it was the bourgeoisie, with all its economic and political power (aimed against the proletariat). In the case of Leninism, coming from Marxism, it was the bourgeoisie morphing itself into a monopoly capitalist, with all its imperialist agenda. Lastly, in the case of Maoism, and

⁷²⁵ Ibid.

coming from Marxism-Leninism, it was the bourgeoisie hiding itself in the party. Overall, Maoism is just Marxism: the overcoming of the bourgeois rule and ultimately the State. However, it is not simply the same Marxism that was yet incapable of winning and consolidating a revolution. The point here is that Maoism is not in itself a simple alienation from the original theory of Marxism by way of the latter's transplantation into a radically different context. The transplantation alters the original content of the theory itself. When the same theory returns to itself bringing with it some foreign contents, i.e., in its otherness, its very substance likewise transforms. However, this transformation could not just be a reaction to an external shock as the theory remains to be the same theory of the overcoming of capitalism.⁷²⁶

⁷²⁶ Ibid., 4.

Chapter 4

TOWARD A MAOIST REFORMULATION OF THE COMMUNIST HYPOTHESIS

This chapter develops a Maoist reformulation of the communist hypothesis. As Badiou's reformulation of the communist hypothesis hinges on the reduction of the party as a party-State apparatus, the response is aimed against this reductionism. The party cannot be reduced to its supposed fusion with the State as instances or moments contrary to the said fusion were extant during the periods of socialist experiments. The said party-State fusion should be considered as something relative rather than absolute. Its development was determined by conditions that are political and the variety of political forms during these periods equally resulted to various and opposing organizational forms of the party, one of which is the party-State fusion. In other words, there were moments of successes characterized not by the party-State but by the party-masses fusion. A reformulation of the communist hypothesis in relation to the realization of its third sequence should rather proceed as a continuity of these moments of successes, i.e., the instances of the party-masses fusion. In response to Badiou's emphasis on the "bad thing of failure," Maoism today should proceed from the theoretical richness of the party-masses fusion in order to gain a "combative excellence of knowledge."⁷²⁷ The Maoist reformulation proceeds from the narratives of successes and rather than of defeats.

From the moments of successes, certain forms of politics could be identified and developed to help advance not only the dialectics of the mass movement, the party, and the State, but also to articulate the party of a new type. This party of a new type is structured according to the principle of scission signified by the party-masses fusion. Furthermore,

⁷²⁷ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 12.

learning from the moments of successes, the party in scission deploys an indigenized and mobilizational politics in relation to the masses and to the State, respectively. Only through the party-masses fusion, determined by an indigenized politics and advances on the basis of a mobilizational politics (against the State), can the State be withered away.

The chapter is composed of five sections. The first section discusses the convergences between Maoism and Badiou's emancipatory politics. The second section develops a careful response to Badiou's reformulation of the communist hypothesis. It also clarifies the issues of errors and failures attached to the concept of the communist hypothesis. The third section discusses the dialectics of the mass movements, the party, and the State. The politics of indigenization and mobilization, with their corresponding requirements of protractedness and the mass line, will be employed to support the argument for a party-masses fusion or the party in scission. The category of the party-masses fusion, which is also the party in scission, is the Maoist formula for the reformulation of the communist hypothesis. The fourth section explains what this party in scission is. The last section presents the seeming paradox or contradiction within Badiou's system.

Convergences Maoism and Badiou's Emancipatory Politics

There are obvious convergences between Maoism and the communist hypothesis. These convergences would not be a result of pure chance as Badiou himself is a professed Maoist, or at least during the 70s in his *Theory of the Subject* years. This means that Badiou advances a model of emancipatory politics which is not altogether too different from what Maoism is likewise doing. Indeed, if one most common point were to be highlighted between these two theories, it is their unwavering stand for the overcoming of capitalism in favor of communism.

a. Maoism and Badiou's Local Evental Sites

In overcoming capitalism, Maoism cannot wait for a future event that would overcome the said (dis)order.⁷²⁸ To wait for the coming of *the* event is to fall into the opportunist line of merely waiting for the objective conditions to ripen, without organizing the equally important aspect of the subjective forces. There have been various evental ruptures in the past that both generate interventionist subjects and force a new generic procedure. Again, the Paris Commune, the October Revolution of 1917, and the GPCR, among others, were generic procedures that forced the indiscernibles or the unthinkable relative to their own time and situation (a politics that ruptures State structure in the case of the Paris Commune, Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the case of the October Revolution, and mass movement against the party-state suture in the case of the GPCR). What is needed today is a renewed fidelity towards these historic events of the past in order to generate political procedures aiming for the overcoming of capitalism. Žižek argued for a notion of repetition that recognizes in the past a sense of openness, as the future is already a “is as having-been (*gewesende*)” in the past, but not in the sense that we live in a closed universe where all possibilities are already pre-contained in the past. Rather, repetition, for Žižek, is a sort of retrieval “of those elements in the past which the past itself, in its reality, betrayed, stifled, failed to realize.”⁷²⁹ The notion of repetition here is similar to a faithful gathering of an event's consequences, the retrieval that Žižek suggested, except that the former is not so much derived from the notion of a past evental rupture but a realization of a future always-

⁷²⁸ Or as Badiou explains, “it's not a matter, then, of desperately awaiting a miraculous event but, rather, of following through to the very end, to the utmost degree, what you've been able to extract from the previous event...” Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 12.

⁷²⁹ Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, 141.

already in the past. Renewed fidelity should therefore mean a reworking or re-experimenting of past elements like the rupture of State structure (in the case of the Paris Commune), dictatorship of the proletariat (in the case of the October Revolution), and mass movement critical of the party state (in the case of the GPCR) in today's struggle against capital to clear the path for a communist future. A fidelity which traces its inspiration in the victories and defeats of world historical revolutions becomes a potential force that will challenge statist violence and capitalist exploitation.

But this interventionist procedure cannot be global, as the elements that would succeed in supporting it, the inexistents of a particular situation, are found in local (evental) sites. The inexistents, which again are not really non-existing elements but whose "self-identity [are] measured... by the minimal degree" by the State, are the singular multiples presented yet unrepresented by the latter.⁷³⁰ They could be the blacks in the USA right now, or the migrants in Europe, or the workers in China, or the peasants in Latin America, or the Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines. It is not the task of this research, however, to identify them one by one as conditions change from one context to another (i.e., their identity of being inexistents is not a given and immutable). It will be the obligation of the political subject to do concrete analysis of the concrete conditions in order to identify them *and identify with them*.

Trotsky, in arguing that Marx's point of departure was the world economy with a "mighty and independent reality that has been created by the international division of labor," suggested that capitalism is a global mode of production as it has long ago torn national

⁷³⁰ Badiou, *The Rebirth of History*, 56.

boundaries.⁷³¹ In arguing so, Trotsky placed the historic task of doing and winning a revolution not on the proletariat of the colonies or semi-colonies (or on those countries where capitalist development has not or has just begun) as they are still insufficiently prepared politically.⁷³² Trotsky charged that the proletariat in these countries, unlike the ones in the industrial centers, are “incapable of bringing the democratic revolution to its conclusion.”⁷³³ Trotsky died nine years earlier to be able to witness the exact opposite of his own claim, the victory of the democratic revolution of China in 1949.

Trotsky’s reading not only disregarded the maturity of the backward agrarian countries for the revolution (as they are the weakest links of imperialism), but also missed the theoretical expansion of the category of class itself. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the proletariat does not, in the era of imperialism, rigidly refer to the industrial proletariat in the imperialist centers. The category of the proletariat has expanded, especially with Mao’s deployment of the category of the masses. And what is peculiar of the masses and their movements is that their struggles are never global, but merely local and spontaneous, as they are fragmented into local sites of oppression (e.g., the queer community, the blacks in a locality, national minorities in their domains, women in a particular patriarchal set-up, workers in their unions, farm workers in *haciendas*, etc.). Past Marxist-Leninist parties confined within the narrow interpretation of the “proletariat” ultimately failed in recognizing the relevance and idiosyncrasies of local sites of struggle which seem to portray non-class characters of struggle. For example, many Marxists are

⁷³¹ Leon Trotsky, “The Permanent Revolution,” in *The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects* (Washington: Red Letter Press, 2010), 160.

⁷³² *Ibid.*, 313.

⁷³³ *Ibid.*, 314.

accused of misunderstanding and downplaying the issue of race and the struggle against racism as it apparently has nothing to do with class struggle.⁷³⁴ They are restricted within a dogmatic view of class essentialism and a distorted interpretation of class reductionism.⁷³⁵ In this regard, Maoism must advance an analysis which properly considers the locality of struggles. It may seem that in their locality the issue of class in these struggles has been eroded or obscured and all they portray are non-class characters of resistance. But in the appearance of non-class struggles tacitly lurks and operates the ubiquity of class oppression and exploitation.⁷³⁶ Women living under oppressive agrarian relations, for example, are not merely oppressed by patriarchy; their being entrenched in a semi-feudal system allowed them to be exploited as well by *hacenderos* and compradors who generate job on the condition that wages are raised to the bottom.

b. Badiou's Subjectivization and the Maoist Party

While sites (of oppression) are local – making subjects as local configuration of a procedure – the truth (generated by the faithful intervention of subjects) is global.⁷³⁷ This also means that the subject is incommensurable to the truth it produces, “for the subject is finite, and the truth is infinite.”⁷³⁸ For Badiou, truth is “the global and intra-situational result of the event.”⁷³⁹ That truth is global implies a significant point. The resolve made earlier that

⁷³⁴ Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, “Race, Class, and Marxism,” *Socialist Worker*, 04 January 2011, retrieved from <https://socialistworker.org/2011/01/04/race-class-and-marxism>; 09 march 2019.

⁷³⁵ Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture*, 151.

⁷³⁶ Dean has a similar take on the matter. Dealing this time on multiplicity of struggles, she argues that the category of multiplicity should not be understood as something that replaces class “but be understood as a class characteristic.” Jodi Dean, *Crowds and Party* (New York: Verso, 2016), 20.

⁷³⁷ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 396.

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.*, 397.

a future evental rupture against today's capitalism need not be waited is further affirmed. A truth generated by previous revolutionary episodes, since it is intra-situational or trans-temporal (as discussed in the previous chapter), can be re-activated in and migrated to virtually any situation or locality. In other words, new subjects can emerge from the same (eternal) truth and new forms of fidelity can be deployed in yet different contexts.

Badiou's turn to mathematical ontology eventually led him to a transcendental notion of a State. This notion of a State, as was shown in the previous chapter, has a consequence towards how the party in particular and politics in general are to be understood relative to the State. Badiou raised, in *The Communist Hypothesis*, the need to reformulate the hypothesis itself and therefore discover a new politics. The question of a new politics initially led him to a notion of a "party of a new type" in order to respond to the question of political organization in deploying an emancipatory politics.⁷⁴⁰ However, eventually, Badiou would already dismiss the party as the site of an emancipatory politics.⁷⁴¹

Maoism, however, forces the question of a new politics within the ambit of the party. By not exhausting the theoretical categories of Maoism and by starting not at an empirical but a mathematical origin, Badiou suggests that the party can never be revolutionary and so its form must be abandoned.⁷⁴² However, Maoism has mechanisms such as the mass line, criticisms and self-criticisms, and rectifications, among others, that, if followed through to the very end, would overcome the bureaucratic errors of the Marxist-Leninist party sutured

⁷⁴⁰ Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 205.

⁷⁴¹ Badiou, *Metapolitics*, 122.

⁷⁴² Badiou, "The Communist Hypothesis," *New Left Review*, Jan-Feb 2008, retrieved from <https://newleftreview.org/issues/II49/articles/alain-badiou-the-communist-hypothesis>; 27 May 2020.

to the State.⁷⁴³ In the most challenging times of the Communist Party of China, when the masses literally bombarded the party headquarters, Mao was not aiming at the party's destruction but its rebuilding and rectification. He asserted that the party needs to be rebuilt and that each of its branch or organ needs to be rectified *among the masses*.⁷⁴⁴ In asserting the need to be faithful to past events to overcome capitalism, it must be argued that such a cause necessitates an organization that is nothing less than a communist party, but in its Maoist otherness. Badiou is correct when he said that the proletariat has to be "transformed into a subjective power" which will be "represented by a specific organization."⁷⁴⁵ But from Mao, it has to be asserted that this organization, again, is nothing less than the Maoist communist party. The specific organization that Badiou is referring to is the same party in its Maoist otherness.

The distinction between the locality of struggles and the infinity of a truth must also clarify the distinction between the inexistents and the subjects. While the inexistents of an evental site provide the conditions for the happening of an event, events, as discussed in the previous chapter, do not necessarily happen in *every* evental site. That is, not all inexistents do have the discipline and the courage to pursue the consequences of the event. Badiou already distinguished between immediate (which are more nihilistic, destructive, and negative) and historical riots (which are pre-political and do advance a positive historical

⁷⁴³ For example, during the political education period of 1951-1952, the practice of criticism and self-criticism resulted to an overall assault against "corruption, bribery, waste, bureaucratism" and all the other manifestations of bourgeois mode of thinking in the enterprises, government offices, schools, and universities. Suzanne Pepper, "Education for the New Order," in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 14, part 1, ed. Denis Twitchett and John Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 205.

⁷⁴⁴ Mao Zedong, "Talk at the First Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party," in *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, 288. Emphasis added.

⁷⁴⁵ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 53.

form).⁷⁴⁶ And while he correctly identifies the element of a progressively *unified* people for the historical riot to be possible, he however fails to identify how such unity of a people can easily slip into division if not eventual degeneration if a solid organization is wanting. To be more specific, the failure of the Occupy Wall Street could be an example. Manuel Castells attribute the degeneration of the Occupy Wall Street to the digitalization of culture that emphasizes on networks rather than on solid organizations and allows these networks to flourish without leaders.⁷⁴⁷ In this model of networks, movements are understood as loose formations that avoids morphing into solid and verticalized organizational structures. From solid forms of organization, movements today degenerate into networks of individuals oftentimes with competing ends. This degeneration could also mean a movement “becoming instruments of the systems they contest.” Dean recognizes that there has been an increasing number of occupy movements in the past decades. The challenge is for those who engage themselves in this movement to make their work the work of parties, i.e., the mass parties not of electoral democracy but “the responsive and revolutionary parties of the previous century.”⁷⁴⁸

In making a distinction between the inexistents and the subjects, the distinction between spontaneous mass protests and riots on the one hand, and the disciplined, scaled, and organized intervention of conscious subjects on the other hand, also has to be emphasized. As the experience of the Occupy Wall Street has shown, a disorganized,

⁷⁴⁶ Badiou, *The Rebirth of History*, 33.

⁷⁴⁷ See Manuel Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age* (Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2012), 229.

⁷⁴⁸ Jodi Dean, “Occupy and UK Uncut: The Evolution of Activism,” *The Guardian*, 27 December 2012, retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/dec/27/occupy-uncut-evolution-activism>; 14 May 2019.

spontaneous, and anarchist model of a movement will eventually falter.⁷⁴⁹ As will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, the Occupy Movement was generally speech-oriented, spontaneous, and a social mobilization.

For the State, the being of the inexistents does not matter, being simply presented but not represented. It is, therefore, in the process of subjectivization and in the gradual construction of a “counter-state” that they make their existence, relative to the event, maximal. If their inexistence is brought about by the lack of a unity, an organized collectivity, then their existence can only be through a conscious decision of unity and organization. Divided workers are practically inexistent in a bourgeois society; their interests and well-being are wantonly disregarded by the capitalist-rulers. That is why they have (or are) nothing. It is not for nothing, then, that Marx appealed for the workers of the world to unite. While it is the event that “makes possible the restitution of the inexistent,” it is only through the party that such a possibility is organized.⁷⁵⁰ Subjectivization is only possible through and within the (Maoist) party. This is why, again, for Marx and Engels a communist is a “follower of a definite revolutionary party.”⁷⁵¹

c. The Priority of Division Over Unity and Scission as the Possible Being of the Party

One cannot disregard the parallelism between Maoism and Badiou’s ontology, especially in the latter’s assertion that the One is not.⁷⁵² For Badiou, there is the priority of the multiple over the One. And this multiplicity is a radically inconsistent one as it escapes

⁷⁴⁹ Jodi Dean, *Crowds and Party*, 9.

⁷⁵⁰ Badiou, *Rebirth of History*, 56.

⁷⁵¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, “The German Ideology,” *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Collected Works* vol. 5, 57.

⁷⁵² Badiou, *Being and Event*, 23.

any definitive unity or a foundational unit. For as long as there is, such can be subjected to the rule of decomposability (or division) until it reaches its foundational unit which for Badiou is the void. It can be said that division, rather than unity, has a structural priority. This is why, for example, Badiou insisted that *scission* is “the only form of existence of the something in general.”⁷⁵³ The empty notion of *something*, for example, is dialectically divided between itself and its other, i.e., “between something and something other...”⁷⁵⁴ The concept of being is derived from its division, from itself and from its other, and not from its unity.⁷⁵⁵ What distinguishes Badiou’s and Mao’s notions of division, however, lie in where they trace the primary location for such a division or scission. For Badiou, it lies generally in all of existence without making distinctions whether such a scission primarily comes from the material or the ideal level. In fact, for Badiou, any dialectical thought is immediately materialist.⁷⁵⁶ This is why he regarded Lenin to be reading Hegel as a materialist.⁷⁵⁷ But this is not the case for Mao. Mao is categorical in tracing this division within the material environment but argues that the same material environment has a determining factor on the ideal realm.⁷⁵⁸

In saying that scission is the form of existence, Badiou nevertheless echoes what the great proletarian revolutionaries had already insisted. Lenin already explained the essence of

⁷⁵³ Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 10.

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁸ Mao was even very clear that such a division primarily happens in the practical level (production, class struggle, and scientific experiments) and consequently determines the intellectual level, that is, forms knowledge. Mao Zedong, *On Practice*, “Mao: On Practice and Contradiction,” 52-55.

dialectics, i.e., the division of a single whole and the understanding of its contradictory parts.⁷⁵⁹ And Mao, in his theory of contradiction, likewise emphasized that there is no single entity which cannot be divided into two.⁷⁶⁰ The splitting and dividing in this regard are not effects of an immediate One, but operators which retroactively unravel the priority of scission. In other words, it is not that thought divides the One resulting into Two but that the Two, appearing itself to be One, has to be carefully discovered through thought. Here is where Badiou's "materialism" be made obvious. For him, following the ZF system, the induction of a set presupposes an initially existing set.⁷⁶¹ Thought presupposes that which is thought of (in its division). This why Badiou insists that "the dialectic, inasmuch as it is the law of being, is necessarily materialist."⁷⁶²

This dialectical materialist assertion of reality as a "scission" has much to offer to the problem of the party. To say that the party sustains the fidelity of the intervention is actually to recognize that the party is not a One but a Two, a scission. In saying so, the party is not only considered as included in the State; paradoxically, it also is an effective challenge and a negation of the State. That is why the party's fidelity to the event is a counter-state or an ultra-state – faithful to the ultra-one of the event, – a State which literally is not a State as the former prepares for its own abolition. But as to what this party is and its special relation to the State and the mass movement still has to be properly formulated.

⁷⁵⁹ Vladimir Lenin, "The Question of Dialectics," in *Lenin: Collected Works*, vol. 38 (Moscow: Moscow Publishers, 1976), 357.

⁷⁶⁰ Mao Zedong, "On Contradiction," in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, ed. Slavoj Zizek (New York: Verso, 2007), 173.

⁷⁶¹ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 45.

⁷⁶² Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 3.

In discussing that there are only two sides of an emancipatory politics, mass movements and the party, Badiou misses the point.⁷⁶³ Not only are there two, but also three sides: mass movements, the party, and the State. Badiou should have theoretically grasped the importance of the third term as he himself already emphasized that dialectics has to comprehend that the kernel of all difference is the third term from which is marked the gap between the other two.⁷⁶⁴ Only through a proper appreciation of the three terms and the recognition of the third term that would reconcile the other two can a renewed commitment for an emancipatory politics succeed in overcoming capitalism. In dismissing the State, Badiou eventually rejected the party as well, since the State would eventually end up in the party-state suture. However, the State has to be properly grasped and engaged by an emancipatory politics, for two reasons. First, emancipatory politics, in one way or another, has to touch the more practical issue of governance. The abstract principles of equality and justice advanced by emancipatory politics have to be deployed within concrete modern State institutions. And these have to be deployed even within the old situation itself, especially that Badiou believes the new subject can and should co-exist within the old situation.⁷⁶⁵ One could not just disregard the State (of the old situation) in this regard especially that, *given the current circumstance*, “the authority for government is necessarily the State.”⁷⁶⁶ Or, to

⁷⁶³ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 54. Badiou explains what he believes still survives today, i.e., the classic conception of an emancipatory politics which recognizes that there is a party and that this party has as its social basis the different mass movements like those of the trade unions. *Ibid.*, 53-54. What is missed, if not denied, is the presence, role, and power of the State in relation to the deployment of an emancipatory politics.

⁷⁶⁴ Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II*, 4.

⁷⁶⁵ Alain Badiou, “Affirmative Dialectics: From Logic to Anthropology,” *The International Journal of Badiou Studies*, 2(1), 1.

⁷⁶⁶ Yu Keping, “Governance and Good Governance: A New Framework for Political Analysis,” *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and the Social Sciences* 11 (2018): 3. *Given the current circumstance* has to be emphasized as politics today is still highly statist.

employ Badiou himself in his reading of Mao, while “the state is not the communist solution,” it is “the new context for that revolution.”⁷⁶⁷ Disregarding the State in the pretext that it is reactionary does more harm than good. For example, in advancing agrarian reform within the current context, a law enacted by a legislative department is required. If the purely anti-statist paradigm governs an emancipatory politics, the poor peasants of today have to trust their fate on a distant yet hazy promise of liberation in the future. It would be an escapist and impotent solution to the predicaments of the oppressed.

Second, emancipatory politics must identify an enemy in the same way as philosophy does.⁷⁶⁸ This enemy, just like an opponent in a debate, must not be neglected but rather engaged and, consequently, through such an engagement reveal his/her inherently erroneous positions. By engaging and revealing the State’s inherent counterrevolutionary nature, emancipatory politics could effectively rally the collective towards the State’s dissolution itself. If, on the contrary, the State would just be ignored and abandoned, or its dialectical relationship with the party and the mass movement not considered within the trajectory of an emancipatory politics, the collective would lose a unifying opportunity that could strengthen itself as a movement.

On Badiou’s Reformulation of the Communist Hypothesis

a. The Irreducibility of the Party to the Party-State Fusion

Badiou believes that the fusion of the party with the State – whether in its parliamentary or insurrectionary form – transforms the latter towards a form opposed to its

⁷⁶⁷ Alain Badiou, “An Infinite Leader: A Dialogue Between a Chinese Philosopher and a French Philosopher,” *Leap*, 13 December 2014, retrieved from <http://www.leapleapleap.com/2015/03/creative-nonfiction-a-lecture-performance-by-alain-badiou/>.

⁷⁶⁸ Justin Clemens, “When the Levee Breaks: Badiou, Philosophy, Politics,” *Contemporary Political Theory* 15 (3), (August 2016): 16.

teleology. In its bureaucratic form, for example, the party abandons the revolution as it gets preoccupied with the State and the task of maintaining its various apparatuses. Badiou explains that the party's bureaucratic form rendered it inert especially in relation to its revolutionary objectives.⁷⁶⁹ It functioned as an ordinary party tasked to organize and manage the various apparatuses of the State. It hyper-fixated on these functions to the point of disregarding and alienating itself from the revolutionary concerns and activities of the masses. Further, in formalizing itself as a State apparatus in the party-State fusion, it failed to push the revolution further for it reduced communism to a statist politics. It ossified as a party-State apparatus.

But what needs to be emphasized is the *gradual* process of this ossification. Badiou himself, whether wittingly or unwittingly, recognized this *gradual* transformation of the party towards its opposite.⁷⁷⁰ By gradual, this means that the ossification was not an always-already given in the sense that it is the absolute identity (or concept) of the party but that it is something that developed along the course of the revolution's development. In his foreword to the *Grundrisse*, Martin Nicolaus pointed out how for Marx, as for Hegel, the problem of grasping a thing's concept (*Begriff*) is grasping it in its *motion*.⁷⁷¹ One should not regard a concept – e.g., ossification, stagnation, party-State fusion – as if it is already completed in advance and even prior to its deployment in reality. From a Marxist dialectical perspective,

⁷⁶⁹ Alain Badiou, "We are at a New Beginning of Marxist Thought," *Verso*, 21 November 2018; available from <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4133-alain-badiou-we-are-at-a-new-beginning-of-marxist-thought>; 13 July 2020.

⁷⁷⁰ Alain Badiou, "The Alleged Power of Capitalism Today is Merely a Reflection of the Weakness of its Opponent," *Verso*, 03 January 2018; available from <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3549-alain-badiou-the-alleged-power-of-capitalism-today-is-merely-a-reflection-of-the-weakness-of-its-opponent>; 16 July 2020.

⁷⁷¹ Martin Nicolaus, "Foreword," in Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Penguin Books, 1973), 28-30.

the ossification of the party was not immediate, necessary, and absolute but a product of a mediated process of development the conditions of which developed as the revolution itself advanced. This dialectical method of analysis, although not directly utilized to comprehend the problem of the party, was employed by Marx in understanding the concept of capital. For Marx, it is in the unity of opposites (e.g., production and realization) that a concept be grasped. However, this unity (and the concept itself) is not immediate in the sense of a completed and given category but a process that is linked to and required certain conditions for its development.⁷⁷² In his notion of dialectics, Mao reiterated this Marxist unity of opposites and reemphasized how this unity is subject to certain given conditions without which their unity and transformation would be impossible.⁷⁷³ For Nicolaus, the distinction whether a unity is absolute, immediate, and unconditional or not marks the essential difference between the idealist and the materialist method of dialectics. The latter presupposes the relativity, mediacy, and conditionality of a unity and its contradictions.

The significance of pointing out the processual and conditional aspects of a concept is crucial in drawing out the proper understanding of the supposed fusion of the party and the State, the condition for the former's inertia and ossification. This is to point out that the entire revolutionary experiments of the past were periodized into particular moments out from which variances in politics and the consequent identity of the party could be distinguished. To be more specific, this is to highlight that there were moments when the party succeeded in both maintaining a critical distance from the State and sustaining an immersed identity with the masses and their movements. The moments of ossification or fusion could be distinguished from the moments of genuine revolutionary activity. The

⁷⁷² Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Penguin Books, 1973), 407.

⁷⁷³ Mao Zedong, "On Contradiction," in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, " 98.

fusion was not absolute in the sense that the entire revolutionary experimentation of the twentieth century could be simplistically reduced to the notion of a party-State fusion. It is from these genuinely revolutionary moments that the continuity of the communist hypothesis should be established.

It is but helpful to quote from the historical lessons of past socialist experiments. As the State is an entirely expansive and complicated entity, composed of a number of interlinked apparatuses, the present analysis will limit and deal with its most important apparatus, the military, and the supposed militarist paradigm of the party.⁷⁷⁴ However, the analysis by no way presents an exhaustive account of long, dynamic, and complicated revolutionary episodes. It only aims to establish the truth of the multiplicity of politics and the irreducibility of the party to Badiou's generalizing claim of a party-State fusion.

While the Soviets emerged victorious after the Civil War (1918-1921), the following years posed new and serious problems especially concerning the consolidation of political power, the restoration of economic activity, and the overcoming of the Soviet State's economic backwardness. Lenin's rigid "War Communism" was immediately replaced by the New Economic Policy. Under the latter, certain bourgeois concessions, like allowing land ownership to the peasants, were permitted to restore the economic strength of the Soviet State. It was during these years that the Red Army was established and debates concerning its organization and character were at its peak. For example, there was the question of whether the army should retain its class character (i.e., a workers' and peasants' army) or expand its composition to integrate "experts" from the Tsarist imperial army.⁷⁷⁵ These

⁷⁷⁴ The analysis of the four Constitutions is limited by the availability of their English translations. Unfortunately, the online archives do not have the English translation of the 1924 Constitution.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 64.

debates, represented by the leading Marxist military theorists Leon Trotsky and Mikhail Frunze, spanned the entire decade of the 1920s, undermined Trotsky's military leadership, and allowed Frunze's "Unified Military Doctrine" to lay the theoretical basis for the Red Army's organization throughout the USSR years.

Frunze saw the need to unify the military force of the Soviets under a single and cohesive doctrine. For Frunze, the "Unified Military Doctrine" provided the "instruction accepted in the army," the character of the "armed forces' development," the methods of training troops, the guidance on the basis of the ruling views of the State, and the means of resolving military tasks.⁷⁷⁶ This doctrine proceeds from the State's supposed class orientation and is determined by the country's forces of production.⁷⁷⁷ Explaining Frunze's doctrine, Glantz raised two points. Theoretically, "there is a proletarian method of war," and that such a method reflects the actual forces of production. Practically, the Soviet military is an instrument for the spread of the world proletarian revolution and that the *aktivnost* or the offensive or active zeal is crucial in the military formation.⁷⁷⁸ While recognizing how wars and the armed forces still assume class characteristics, the Doctrine advanced by Frunze, which later on was adopted by the USSR in the reorganization of its military apparatus, defined the latter as being solely determined by the State and its military policy.⁷⁷⁹ Frunze suggested that the organizational form of the military apparatus must take that which is

⁷⁷⁶ Mikhail Frunze, "Unified Military Doctrine," trans. David Stone, 2012, *Kansas State University Personal Web Pages*, available from <http://www-personal.k-state.edu/~stone/FrunzeDoctrine>; 20 July 2020.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁸ David Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art: In Pursuit of Deep Battle* (New York: Frank Cass, 1991), 65.

⁷⁷⁹ Mikhail Frunze, "Unified Military Doctrine," trans. David Stone, 2012, *Kansas State University Personal Web Pages*, retrieved from <http://www-personal.k-state.edu/~stone/FrunzeDoctrine>; 20 July 2020.

demanding by the general aims and programs of the State.⁷⁸⁰ Banking on the notion that the socialist State of the Soviets then was to face the inevitable and long war against the bourgeois States, it inculcated the idea that the former was in a state of siege and will continue being so for as long as capitalism reigns.⁷⁸¹ State propaganda, education, and the general structure of Soviet social life must therefore prepare the psychology of the public not only in the inevitable struggle against capitalism but also of the need for an active and offensive attitude against class enemies.

Though seemingly revolutionary, Frunze's doctrine is based on and advanced a militarist politics which later on resulted to serious ideological and organizational errors. This is the prize to pay for being the first to tread on unchartered socialist territories. The Soviet communists then were at a loss on how to create a military apparatus that, while combative and disciplined at its core, is also proletarian in its character. The militarist politics behind Frunze's Doctrine has serious repercussions to the theory of class struggle, army building, and social organization within a socialist society.

First, such a politics reduced the struggle against capital to a purely militarist one, with the State and its functions having a determinative role in this struggle. Consequently, it reduced all class contradictions as antagonistic. This is contrary to what Mao distinguished as antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions, with peaceful and dialogical methods for the resolution of the latter.⁷⁸² Through the operation of the State military apparatus, class struggle was viewed purely as a military struggle against perceived class enemies. Frunze

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

⁷⁸² See p. 97 of the current document.

believed that when the proper opportunities present themselves, the proletariat will be forced along the course of the revolution. Military art and general politics will then be in complete agreement, erroneously equating proletarian politics with militarist offensives.⁷⁸³

Second, such a politics is guided by the erroneous assumption that military strength determines the strength of proletarian politics. Recognizing the technological backwardness of the Soviet military strength then, Frunze insisted on the need to find ways to equalize this disadvantage, without however being clear as to how such a technological disadvantage could be compensated.⁷⁸⁴ What is clear, however, is the USSR's trust in its industrial development to provide the basis for its technological and military progress.⁷⁸⁵ Obvious here is Frunze's technological determinism, a belief characteristic of Soviet socialism then and even Chinese revisionism today.⁷⁸⁶ Mao's contribution to the question of military strength is not only advanced but definite in this regard. For Mao, it is not weapons or technology in general that is decisive, but people.⁷⁸⁷ For the question of military strength is not only about technological or economic power but also human power and morale.

Third, such a politics provided the principles for a bureaucratized and elitist military apparatus. Frunze believed that the Red Army, just like all the other armies, must be instilled with a proper discipline. However, Frunze's depiction of discipline is elitist and works

⁷⁸³ Mikhail Frunze, "Unified Military Doctrine," trans. David Stone, 2012, *Kansas State University Personal Web Pages*; available from <http://www-personal.k-state.edu/~stone/FrunzeDoctrine>; 20 July 2020.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁵ For example, Glantz noted how the 1929 Field Regulation, a military theory highly dependent on a mechanized defense force, was translated into reality after the USSR implemented forced collectivization and industrialization. Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art: In Pursuit of Deep Battle*, 24.

⁷⁸⁶ Satya Gabriel, "Technological Determinism and Socialism with Chinese Characteristics," *China Essay Series*, October 1998; available from <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/courses/sgabriel/economics/china-essays/8.html>; 21 July 2020.

⁷⁸⁷ Mao Zedong, "On Protracted War," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 1, 143.

through a top-down model of organization. He narrowly illustrated how discipline could be maintained in three ways: 1) through the self-consciousness of the leading elements of the army to display sacrifice and heroism; 2) through the ability of these leading elements to connect to the mass of the army; and 3) through a correct political and technical leadership of these leading elements. Obviously crucial in the maintenance of discipline in Frunze's illustration is the role of the leading elements. However, it is silent with what Mao identified as the decisive element: the people in their movements. The problem is not on the existence of hierarchical forms of authority but on how such an authority delinked itself from the struggles of the (civilian) masses.

Fourth, such a politics enabled a militarized structure in various social institutions and the social life of the USSR. As the social life was generally structured according to the narrative of a perpetual state of siege, a militarized paradigm was internalized within social institutions, including the party and the State. The general structure of society was organized according to how best to maximize military potential.⁷⁸⁸ In another article, Frunze emphasized the need for the country to flexibly shift from peacetime to wartime methods "quickly, easily, and painlessly." For this flexibility to be as quick, easy, and painless as possible, Frunze stressed the adoption of a militarized civilian apparatus during peacetime.⁷⁸⁹ And as military discipline then was structured according to elitist and bureaucratic principles, the social institutions (e.g., the party, the State, the military) developed according these principles.

⁷⁸⁸ Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art: In Pursuit of Deep Battle*, 51.

⁷⁸⁹ Mikhail Frunze, "Front and Rear in War of the Future," *Springer*, n.d.; available from <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/bbm%3A978-94-011-9112-8%2F1.pdf>; 21 July 2020.

The Doctrine advanced by Frunze provided the theoretical basis and eventually paved the way for the gradual creation of a standing Red Army being the organizational form of the armed forces. In the 1918 (or Lenin) Constitution, the provision for universal military training was articulated as part of the “General Provisions of the Constitution of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic.” The notion of defense being equated to a standing army was still absent. The defense of the revolution *through arms* was specifically assigned to “the toilers” while allowing “the non-toiling elements” to perform other military duties.⁷⁹⁰ The 1918 Constitution specifically decreed that all the toilers be armed (through the Red Army) and that the propertied class be disarmed.⁷⁹¹ Here, the task of defense is not only an immediate and a popular obligation especially for those who toil, but also structured according to a specific class orientation.⁷⁹² David Glantz pointed out certain principles behind the creation of the early defense system of the Soviet Republic among which are the leadership of the communist party, class approach to the army’s construction, and the army’s unity with the people.⁷⁹³

The specifics and spirit of Frunze’s Doctrine persisted in the 1930s and was implemented in more detail by Stalin. While still recognizing universal military service, the military apparatus under the 1936 (or Stalin) Constitution is more formalized as it is fixed, organized, and developed by the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR, the highest

⁷⁹⁰ “Russian Federation’s Constitution of 1918”, art. 19, *Constituteproject.org*; available from https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Russia_1918.pdf?lang=en; 18 July 2020. Emphasis added.

⁷⁹¹ Russian Federation’s Constitution of 1918”, art. 3, no.7, *Constituteproject.org*; available from https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Russia_1918.pdf?lang=en; 18 July 2020.

⁷⁹² David Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art: In Pursuit of Deep Battle* (New York: Frank Cass, 1991), 60

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*, 54.

executive and administrative organ of State authority.⁷⁹⁴ In its 1944 amendments, it also allowed for the creation of military formations within each Union Republic.⁷⁹⁵ Centralization of military power was not as pronounced as the succeeding 1977 (Khrushchev) Constitution.

Contrasting the 1936 and the 1977 Constitutions, the concept of a standing army tasked to supposedly defend the motherland was nowhere more defined than in the latter. Unlike its predecessor, it has a specific provision entitled “Defence of the Socialist Motherland” where, banking on the dangers of external enemies during the Cold War period, it maintained a regular and standing armed force.⁷⁹⁶ Not that the creation of armed bodies is absolutely wrong, but how it is controlled and the form it takes are crucial in a period of socialist construction. The party’s militarist politics would soon reflect on its organizational form. The party internalized and developed along a bureaucratic and militarized paradigm.⁷⁹⁷

Lenin explained that the existence of a standing army and police are the primary instruments of State power, one which could seriously contradict the principle of a gradual withering away of the State.⁷⁹⁸ In opposition to the notion of a standing army alienated from the masses, Lenin, echoing Engels, pointed out the need for the maintenance of “self-acting armed organisation of the population,” one which is mass-oriented and is itself identified

⁷⁹⁴ “1936 Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,” art. 68, *Bucknell.edu*; available from <https://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/const/36cons02.html#chap05>; 20 July 2020.

⁷⁹⁵ “1936 Constitution of the USSR,” art. 18b, *Bucknell.edu*; available from <https://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/const/amend.html>; 20 July 2020.

⁷⁹⁶ *1977 Constitution*; available from <https://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/const/1977toc.html>; 09 July 2020.

⁷⁹⁷ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 277.

⁷⁹⁸ Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 10.

with the people as they are themselves the people in their self-conscious social existence.⁷⁹⁹ They would no longer be paid as regular professional combatants enlisted from the ranks of ordinary civilians. While practicing their respective professions, the pool of self-acting armed organizations volunteers in the defense of their people and socialism. Proletarian politics has to conceptualize the problem of defense within the framework of a mass movement and not within some dreaded militarist and statist approaches. Instances or moments of a non-militarist approach to the socio-political ordeals of the Soviet society in its early phase can be cited as examples. Identifying these moments are important for the purpose not only of distinguishing these from the obviously militarist paradigm that developed later but also of refuting a generalizing claim of a supposed party-State fusion.

Massive peasant unrests threatened the early years of the socialist construction. Tens of thousands of peasant fighters bravely faced Bolshevik commanders and seemingly undermined the newly installed socialist regime. From a party-State point of view, one which renounces any form of mass movement, the only way to resolve such an obviously threatening situation was to mobilize the military State apparatus to quell what seemed to be a rebellion. However, the party under Lenin's leadership then did not resort to an antagonistic and militarist response which rendered as counter-revolutionary the peasants' mass movement. On the contrary, the inflamed situation in the countryside convinced Lenin to devise a new approach, one which not only took account the demands of the angry peasantry but also brought unprecedented economic developments to the general populace later on.⁸⁰⁰ The party congress then approved what turned out to be the start of the New

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid. 11

⁸⁰⁰ Alan Ball, "Building a New State and Society: NEP 1921-1928," in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, Vol.3, ed. Ronald Gregor Suny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 170-171.

Economic Policy.⁸⁰¹ As a result, the death rate declined, the inflation eliminated, the budget balanced thus producing a surplus in 1924 and 1925, the industrial production improved, rail transport recovered, and the standard of living of an increasing number of workers increased.⁸⁰² But as successful as the said policy was, it later encountered new contradictions difficult to reconcile with the socialist vision (e.g., extravagant consumption as a result of a prospering economy, the packing of theaters and concerts, opening of Casinos, etc.).⁸⁰³ Here, one can see how successes are but conditions for new contradictions (and new errors) to be overcome.

Another example is on how Lenin's party resolved the question of national autonomy and identity. From the point of view of a newly established socialist regime that followed the Marxist tradition but without the privilege of a precedence, this issue is not only crucial but also defining especially as to how a class-based Marxist politics ought to respond to non-classed issues such as ethnicity. The decision the party adopted during this time was significant as it explicitly rejected a purely militarist, pacifist, or statist response.⁸⁰⁴ Known as the indigenization (*korenizatsiia*), the party approach recognized, foremost, that the past Russian oppression against a number of ethnic groups, which now form part of the Soviet Union, had caused valid complaints.⁸⁰⁵ The indigenization approach accepted, rather than suppressed, national sentiment and directed it towards the socialist vision.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid., 168.

⁸⁰² Ibid., 171.

⁸⁰³ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁴ Ball, "Building a New State and Society: NEP 1921-1928," in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, Vol.3, 176.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid.

Consequently, the State supported the proliferation of various languages and cultures and sought individuals coming from ethnic groups to fill the administrative positions of their respective localities.⁸⁰⁶ The party itself used indigenous languages and forms of art in the promotion of socialism. This approach significantly increased the party membership by absorbing elements coming from various ethnic groups.⁸⁰⁷ Without in any instance liquidating party and State authority, the same authority became less alien and absurd as it has been successfully indigenized and localized.⁸⁰⁸ More important than the external manifestation of the politics of indigenization, whereby the party recognized an identity other than its own, is its effect in the internal life and identity of the party, making itself more native and less alien. This approach could be contrasted with the current CPC's intolerance against Muslim minorities in contemporary China.⁸⁰⁹ The failure of the latter is not so much on it being a party as its inability or intolerance to indigenize and develop an identity native to the masses they claim to serve.

While the process of indigenization was a particular response of the Soviets to the ethnic and national issues, its concept could be developed in a more general sense for methodological purposes. Coming from its Latin etymology, *indu* and *gignere* which mean “within” and “to beget,” respectively, indigenization could be conceptually developed to mean not only the act of making oneself a native but the process of identifying oneself as begotten of a local identity. The Soviet's politics of indigenization, a process whereby the

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁹ Amy Qin, “In China's Crackdown on Muslims, Children have not been Spared,” *New York Times*, 01 July 2020; available from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/28/world/asia/china-xinjiang-children-boarding-schools.html>; 10 July 2020.

party identifies itself with the masses in the sense of making itself a native to their varied identities and struggles (e.g. the peasant unrest and national and ethnic issues), is irreducible to the party-State policy of bureaucratization and militarization. This is why during these years, the party leaders were explicit not to solely rely on “military pacification and Politburo commands.”⁸¹⁰

The politics of indigenization is opposed to the militarist politics advanced by Frunze. It can be said that during the early stage of Soviet socialist construction, the party in particular, and the Soviet society in general, were experiencing a contradiction within the level of politics and ideology, a suprastructural confrontation of opposing worldviews the resolution of which demanded, foremost, the recognition of class contradictions in the level of ideas. But the Stalinist premature declaration of the abolition of classes within the Soviet society not only deprived the party of a method of analysis but also rendered it incapable of resolving suprastructural contradictions appropriately.

Having as its precedence the Soviet experience, it can be said that the Chinese socialist experiment was more privileged and better equipped theoretically. Badiou, while acknowledging the common features between the Soviet and the Chinese experiences, also identified glaring differences. What struck Badiou is how the “antagonistic confrontation with power and the political experimentation” differ crucially in the temporal dimension, i.e., duration.⁸¹¹ The Soviet experience was characterized by an insurrectionary political procedure, one which imposes a sense of constant urgency.⁸¹² The Chinese experience was

⁸¹⁰ Ball, “Building a New State and Society: NEP 1921-1928,” in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, 176.

⁸¹¹ Alain Badiou, “The Communist Idea and the Question of Terror,” in *The Idea of Communism*, vo. 2, ed. Slavoj Žižek (New York: Verso, 2013), 8.

⁸¹² *Ibid.*

rather characterized by a sense of protractedness, one in which process, movement, deliberation, and long-range trends, rather than sudden armed takeover, characterize politics.⁸¹³

But protractedness is not only a matter of duration or time but also of space, i.e., the organization of things and their mutual relations. The protracted nature of the political procedure determines in advance certain ways of being, organizing, and relating encapsulated in the category of the mass line.

From its inception in 1927, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which was then generally called the Red Army, was a workers' and peasants' army (although other groups or classes were also included in its composition).⁸¹⁴ It relates to itself as an army organization and to others through the principle of the mass line.⁸¹⁵ It organizes itself on the basis of democracy where leading commands are regarded merely as "processing plants." Their task is to go deeply into the experience of the (armed and unarmed) masses, to process their experiences and opinions, and out from these carry out a program through among the masses.⁸¹⁶

But going deeply into the experience of the masses and formulating from these experiences programs and actions entail protractedness and a certain trust and confidence with the masses, i.e., the mass line. If for Badiou protractedness characterizes the temporal dimension or the duration of the Chinese experience, the mass line is the spatial or relational

⁸¹³ Ibid.

⁸¹⁴ RAND National Security Research Division, *The People's Liberation Army as Organization*, ed. James Mulvenon and Andrew Yang (Virginia: RAND, 2002), 10.

⁸¹⁵ Ho Lung, *Democratic Tradition of the Chinese People's Liberation Army* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1965), 2.

⁸¹⁶ Ibid.

aspect of the said experience. Protractedness is the temporal form of the mass line while the latter is the former's spatial form. Both could not be separated as the revolutionary experience, or all experience in this regard, is spatio-temporal. To identify, therefore, that protractedness is a distinct feature of the Chinese experience is to equally identify as distinct the mass line. Emphasizing the importance of the mass line is significant to highlight how it is determinative in the political line and organizational form of the party.

A protracted approach to the wholly distinct Chinese experience proved effective in the implementation of an important party policy: land reform. Even after the revolution's national victory in 1949, the party adopted a gradualist approach to institutional transformation.⁸¹⁷ This is distinguishable to the forced collectivization and industrialization programs in the USSR then. Being a collective desire of the poor peasants in China then, an expression of the mass line, the party's land reform program effectively consolidated the support of the peasant masses and eradicated the rule of the rural elite.⁸¹⁸ But more than the forging of a strong political unity between the party and the masses, the policy likewise ushered in an unprecedented economic development to the lives of the poor peasants. While still far from being egalitarian in its results, due to the gradual and protracted nature of the development, the income of the poorest peasants doubled between the 1930's and 1952.⁸¹⁹ With the conclusion of the land reform, the party furthered the socialist construction by

⁸¹⁷ Nicholas Lardy, "Economic Recovery and the 1st Five-Year Plan," *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 14, part 1, ed. Roderick MacFarquhar and John Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 153.

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸¹⁹ *Ibid.*

promoting voluntary cooperativization where one's income was linked to one's labor and formerly private-owned lands were collectivized.⁸²⁰

The party's trust and confidence in the masses were further mastered during the succeeding period of the Great Leap Forward (1958-1962). What is characteristic during this time is the party's adoption of a mobilizational alternative wholly opposed to the Soviet model of centralized and expert-driven development.⁸²¹ This alternative was driven by a strong mass mobilization aimed at combatting some major errors like bureaucratism. This created tensions between the party and State apparatuses especially that it stripped the powers of some central ministers in favor of decentralization.⁸²² Such tensions only show that the party-State fusion is in no way absolute.

But what was the role of the PLA in these revolutionary and mobilizational moments? Mao was specifically opposed to the Soviet model of army organization characterized by the preoccupation on weapons, equipment, and technology.⁸²³ He believed that the PLA should be more of a guerilla force than a regular standing army. This guerilla conception of an army demanded the PLA to create closer working relations with the civilian masses, i.e., to stay in close contact with them.⁸²⁴ While this guerilla and mass-oriented concept of an army was never smoothly implemented as a number of resistances were recorded, this was however expressed as an important provision in the two Constitutions of the People's Republic of China.

⁸²⁰ Ibid., 154.

⁸²¹ Ibid., 304

⁸²² Ibid., 303.

⁸²³ Ibid., 308.

⁸²⁴ Ibid., 309.

The 1954 Constitution recognized the PLA to belong to the people. Its main tasks are national defense, safeguard of the people's peaceful labor, participation in national construction, and service to the people.⁸²⁵ The 1975 Constitution regarded the PLA and the people's militia as the workers' and peasants' army. Without identifying it as a standing army, the said Constitution crucially recognized its character not only as a fighting force but also simultaneously a working and production force. The principle laid by the Constitution defined the army as a mass-oriented organization which not only identifies with the masses but also works and produces as the masses do.

The mobilizational concept of politics embodied itself in the military dimension when the party under the leadership of Mao implemented the "everyone a soldier" campaign in 1958. Being opposed to the highly technical, bureaucratized, regularized, and nuclear-driven military structure of the USSR then under Khrushchev's leadership, Mao initiated a militia movement which not only was a an "all-inclusive mass movement" but a "permanent feature of society."⁸²⁶ The development of the militia force from a purely elite to a mass organization speaks of the overall military and political development of China then. The said movement was specifically a response to both the deteriorating Sino-Russian relations and the nuclear threat of imperialist powers, which China described as paper tigers.⁸²⁷ The mass movement of the armed Chinese people was seen as an effective deterrent against foreign invasion, for it is people not things or weapons that are decisive in the question of war. National and civil defense are conceptualized within the very framework of a mass

⁸²⁵ "1954 Constitution of the People's Republic of China," art. 29, retrieved from <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4c31ea082.pdf>. 23 July 2020.

⁸²⁶ John Gittings, "China's Militia," *The China Quarterly* 18, (1964): 100.

⁸²⁷ *Ibid.* 105.

movement, one in which military mobilization is not rigidly determined by a statist army apparatus but by the self-conscious capacity of the people to arm and defend themselves against aggressors. But not only was the militia a fighting force, it was also a production force. It was an integral part of the communes then. The communes were the basic unit of China's socialist structure. In the communes, the masses, including the militia force, conduct comprehensive work which includes industry, agriculture, trade, education, and military affairs.⁸²⁸ The militia were also militant activists having an important role in the land reform movement.⁸²⁹

During the GPCR, while being subject itself to the class contradictions of the Chinese society in general, the prevailing principle that guided the PLA was one which strongly opposed the bureaucratized model of the Soviets and acted in the general spirit of the army's identification with the masses. What was crucial in the struggle against army bureaucratization, which the Soviet model missed, is the recognition of class contradictions within the army organization itself. The PLA was characterized by intense power struggles during the entire GPCR as Mao asserted on combating the bourgeois military line within the PLA.⁸³⁰ What is interesting here is how the PLA leadership during this time was dominated by the pro-Mao radicals. From the perspective of the party-State fusion, an easy way out from this turbulent decade is a military takeover to suppress dissident party and military cadres. However, the PLA then, under the leadership of the party, did not overthrow the political power to take over the State.⁸³¹ In the general spirit of ideological contradictions

⁸²⁸ 104.

⁸²⁹ 102.

⁸³⁰ RAND National Security Research Division, *The People's Liberation Army as Organization*, 63.

⁸³¹ Ranjana Kakkar, "The Role of the PLA during the Cultural Revolution," *China Report*, 13 (5): 30.

then, the PLA “aided the political leadership in an intra-party conflict.”⁸³² Had the party instrumentalized the PLA in the takeover of the State, pro-Mao radicals would have probably swept the country and the likes of Deng liquidated.⁸³³ But what persisted during this time was the militance of the party to conduct a mobilizational politics and wage suprastructural struggles.

The mobilizational politics that dominated the Maoist years, but specifically during the GPCR, produced organizational reforms within the military apparatus. The GPCR’s insistence on a rankless military structure, while met with a number of resistances and portrayed by Western military historiography with cynicism, was laudable especially when viewed from the perspective of preserving a mass-oriented, working, and producing army.⁸³⁴ Contrasting the PLA from the Soviet Red army defined by Frunze’s Doctrine, the former during the PLA emulated the principles of self-reliance and democratic equality thus effectively curbing bureaucratism.⁸³⁵

However, the 1978 Constitution, a post-Mao and post-GPCR constitution, deleted the principle which laid the basis for the army’s mass-orientation. Without acknowledging anymore the people’s militias as part of the workers’ and peasants’ army, it only recognized the PLA to be the “pillar” of the supposed proletarian dictatorship. Rather than the PLA’s identification and simultaneous involvement with work and production, the Constitution resolved to devote “major efforts to the revolutionization and modernization” of the PLA, a policy highly opposed to Mao’s conception of the PLA being a guerilla force. The 1982

⁸³² Ibid.

⁸³³ Ibid.

⁸³⁴ Benjamin Lai, *The Chinese People’s Liberation Army: Ground Forces* (Oxford: Osprey), 15 and 54.

⁸³⁵ Kakkar, “The Role of the PLA during the Cultural Revolution,” *China Report*, 30.

Constitution and its succeeding amendments furthered this plan of revolutionization and modernization while making explicit that the PLA is a regular standing army.⁸³⁶ The PLA developed and ossified into a state apparatus the organization of which was again characterized by bureaucracy cut off from the masses.

Like the politics of indigenization of Lenin against the militarist politics of Frunze, the mobilizational politics of Mao against the statist politics of the post-Mao era indicated the multiplicity of opposing politics. What does this really mean in relation to Badiou's charge of the party being limited by either/both parliamentary and insurrectionary politics? Further, how does this respond the generalizing charge that the party is inherently fused with the State?

First, the variances in politics (indigenized, militarist, mobilizational, statist, and perhaps several more) establish multiple and opposing moments during the socialist experiments of the previous century. These moments are determined by opposing political and ideological views that translated themselves into the organizational structure of the party (and the social life in general). As a process of subjectification, the party was subject to various political articulations the effect of which in the aspect of organization are likewise varied. The party is not independent from the multiplicity of contending politics in the sense that its organization autonomously and absolutely determines specific political forms. On the contrary, it is the political form that determines the organization of the party. Hence, one cannot simply reduce party politics as being parliamentary and/or insurrectionary. The determination of an emancipatory politics follows from the party and its relation or non-relation with the masses. The more crucial category then in the assessment of the previous

⁸³⁶ 1982 Constitution of the People's Republic of China," art. 29, retrieved. From <https://china.usc.edu/constitution-peoples-republic-china-1982>; 23 July 2020.

socialist experiments is the party-masses fusion and not the party-State. This means favoring the narrative of success rather than of defeat.

Second, from the foregoing discussions, there were moments and political forms where the category of the party-masses succeeded in effectively carrying forward the economic, political, social, cultural, and military transformations within the period of a socialist construction. Again, it is wrong to reduce the past experimental periods as being purely a party-State disaster. Badiou himself recognized that “Mao is the name which, *in the party*, cannot be reduced to the state’s bureaucracy.”⁸³⁷ There is a specific party formulation (i.e., party-masses) which is irreducible to statist inertia and Mao is the proper name of this formula. This formula of the party-masses refutes the generalizing claim that insurrectionary politics is entangled with the State, albeit in a negative form. While perhaps working in some of the State’s institutions and apparatuses, the party-masses fusion is immediately a moment of the party’s severance from the State.

Third, while the past socialist experiments are also irreducible to the successes of the party-masses fusion, a reformulation of the communist hypothesis should have been better and stronger had it been laid on the basis of a continuity from these successes. Theoretically, it would be weak to reformulate the third sequence of the communist hypothesis if it outrightly rejects as statist the theory and practice of, say for example, an indigenized and mobilizational politics *of the party*. Since these political processes emerged out from the effective dialectical relationship between the masses and the party, the efforts to reformulate the communist hypothesis to pave the way for its third sequence should have commenced not from a rejection but from a continuation of genuinely revolutionary moments. Rather

⁸³⁷ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 153. Emphasis added.

than starting from a new beginning – signified by Badiou’s insistence of a new beginning of Marxist thought – the third sequence has to commence from the successes of earlier party-masses experiences.⁸³⁸ Here, it is not the “bad thing of failure” but the theoretical richness of success that is transformed into the “combative excellence of knowledge.”⁸³⁹

Fourth, given that moments of successes determined by indigenized and mobilizational politics could be distinguished and, on their bases, the third sequence of the communist hypothesis should proceed, it is but counter-productive to dismiss the party just to discover a new organizational form that forges itself with the popular movements of the masses. History has shown that in various moments, the party was capable of forging a strong unity with the masses. And in these moments, various advances were made in different fronts. The search for a new organizational form, having the character of a new beginning relative to the end of the party form, would only prolong the commencement of the communist hypothesis’ third sequence (granting that it has not really commenced). As the interim period is still highly characterized by uncertain experiments of what this new organizational form could be, the the hypothesis’ reactivation is further delayed. Consequently, capital’s overcoming is likewise indefinitely postponed. While protracted in its duration, emancipatory politics should tread along the duration within the spatio-temporal space of the party-masses mobilizational and indigenized politics.

Badiou’s *Organisation Politique* is still far from embodying an emancipatory politics that effectively rallies movements in their mass scale. As capital is a massive economic

⁸³⁸ We are at a New Beginning of Marxist Thought,” *Verso*, 21 November 2018; available from <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4133-alain-badiou-we-are-at-a-new-beginning-of-marxist-thought>; 13 July 2020.

⁸³⁹ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 12.

force which, through the State, could effectively mobilize an equally massive political, cultural, and military counter-revolutionary force, it also has to be confronted in a massive scale. The “few dozen genuine militants” of the *Organisation Politique*, granting that they could really do more than what forty others might do a little, had not really created the supposed conditions wherein the French State bends itself to accommodate the interests of the *sans-papiers*. On the contrary, the State was only more determined to refuse in granting rights to supposed illegal migrants and to expel them wherever possible.⁸⁴⁰ Particularly interesting as to why the *sans-papiers* movement ended as an unfinished struggle was the failure to make strong and lasting alliances with other opposition groups especially the *parties* of the left.⁸⁴¹ Emancipatory politics could not just ignore the existence of a thoroughly counter-revolutionary State that is determined to crush emancipatory movements. If these movements are not supported by a strong skeletal core determined to equally challenge the determination of the State, these would dissipate and end up as memoirs of unfinished struggles.

Lastly, in the mobilizational and indigenized politics of the party-masses, neither creation nor destruction is prior. Mao’s law of dialectics argued that every moment in the chain of events is an instance both of affirmation and negation and that none of the two categories is in absolute priority over the other.⁸⁴² For example, in negating the Kuomintang State then, the Maoist revolution created what can be called as a counter-state, the organs of

⁸⁴⁰ Jane Freedman, “The French ‘Sans-Papiers’ Movement: An Unfinished Struggle,” in *Migration and Activism in Europe Since 1945*, ed. Wendy Pojman (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 81.

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁸⁴² Mao Zedong, “Talk on Questions of Philosophy,” in *Mao: On Practice and On Contradiction*, 181.

political power in the countryside.⁸⁴³ It confronts the Kuomintang State on the basis of its autonomy as a counter-state. And this was also true in the GPCR. The struggle *against* bourgeois culture and ideology was also a struggle *for* the supposed proletarian standpoint. From a Marxist perspective, this is the immediate identity of opposites where opposing moments are related to one another, “makes them appear indispensable to one another, but still leaves them external to each other.”⁸⁴⁴ The party-masses fusion, with its mobilizational and indigenized politics, is not only a subtractive but also a supplemental politics. Its subtractive character is constituted not because of an intentional distantiation from the State but of a conscious integration with the masses. And in this integration, it adds a supplement similar to the generic or truth (♀) of Badiou’s ontology, a moment irreducible to the logic of the State.

b. On Errors and Failures

The party-State fusion boils down to the problem of the party entangling itself with the State and alienating itself from the masses. It was entangled with the State because it isolated itself from the masses and their movements; it became mistrustful of the masses because it was too confident with its State apparatuses. But these failures in no way were absolute, as if these were already pernicious backlogs that doomed the revolution from the very beginning. There are no readymade mistakes and failures. They develop along the actual advance of things. This means that there were periods when the dialectics of the party and the mass movement was effectively grasped and deployed in the service of the socialist construction. This needs to be emphasized so as not to fall into the error that these failures

⁸⁴³ Mao Zedong, “The Struggle in the Chinggang Mountains,” in Mao Tse-Tung: Collected Works, vol. 1, 75-76.

⁸⁴⁴ Marx, *Grundrisse*, 93.

are inherent to the party itself which would consequently result to a dismissive attitude against the latter. Even Badiou admits of the victories reaped by the parties and even the socialist States then.⁸⁴⁵

As socialism or any new economic system for that matter develops, novel contradictions arise that bring the militants of a new truth to uncharted zones. From the perspective of non-precedence, mistakes, errors, and failures are inevitable. Even the capitalist system, in its earliest period, never enjoyed a smooth and continuous process of development devoid of errors and setbacks. When the French Revolution won, it supposedly ended the monarchic and feudal rule in France, as the Revolution's objectives supposedly envisioned. However, the process was stalled as monarchy itself was restored through the crowning of Napoleon Bonaparte as an emperor in 1804. Not only that, Bonaparte himself legitimated his monarchic rule on the basis of the instruments of the French Revolution.⁸⁴⁶ And the same process also took place in England upon the restoration of monarchy during Charles II's rule (1660-1685), following the commonwealth of Oliver Cromwell. Was capitalism and bourgeois party politics altogether negated because of such failures? Not at all. It only proved that history does not move in a simplistic linear process devoid of turns and failures. And perhaps this is why even Badiou would describe the period of actually existing socialisms then as an experiment, because a complete formula to newly emerging contradictions was absent and that the leaders of the revolution had to grapple with uncertainties.⁸⁴⁷

⁸⁴⁵ Badiou, "The Communist Hypothesis," *New Left Review*, Jan-Feb 2008; available from <https://newleftreview.org/issues/II49/articles/alain-badiou-the-communist-hypothesis>; 27 May 2020.

⁸⁴⁶ Joseph Kostiner, "Monarchy," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 09 June 2020; available from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/monarchy/Monarchy-in-the-modern-era>.

⁸⁴⁷ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 52, 61, and 62,

But failure, just like success, is relative rather than absolute. A failure may strengthen a resolve thus driving one towards success; a success may reinforce complacency thus leading one towards failure. For if the failure of the early capitalist development then, along with its party and parliamentary politics, was considered as absolute, then capitalism and bourgeois politics would have been altogether an impossibility.

The important attitude towards these failures is self-criticism and an openness to rectify grave mistakes. Going back to the issue of the party and the mass movement, since the early stages of socialist construction proved itself successful in operationalizing its dialectics, dismissing the party on the basis of errors or failures not only is a disservice to its proven effectiveness but also a rejection of history's lessons. History should not be seen as a smooth unfolding of events especially if major economic and political upheavals open new worlds devoid of the proper instruments and knowledge for their mastery.

It is not enough not to surrender the socialist or communist cause, the material categories (the party and the mass movement) for its construction must not be abandoned as well. The material categories for socialist construction, given that they were still in their embryonic period, were still too young to be considered fully developed. The proletarian party was still learning the ways and methods of proletarian politics especially after it seized power. Granting that bourgeois politics and capitalist development started at the middle of the seventeenth century, Cromwell being the point of reference (although mercantile capitalism started a century earlier), then it practically took capitalism centuries to finally develop and succeed as an industrial power with parliamentary politics as its superstructural support (although remnants of the old feudal culture still linger up to this day). And what capitalism developed for centuries, socialism – Russia (excluding the post-

Stalin years) and China (excluding the post-Mao years) combined – developed only in six decades. And six decades is as embryonic as the early decades of mercantilist capitalism and bourgeois parliamentarism was in the middle ages.

One last point concerning failures. These should be viewed from the context of their own historical development, specifically the contradictions within the international communist movement. When Mao cautioned that the bourgeoisie’s hiding place during a socialist construction is within the party itself, he was already referring to the usurpation of modern revisionism within the proletarian party.⁸⁴⁸ The same as with the monarchs of the old, the bourgeoisie will mount a difficult fight against the proletariat and will wage struggles in various fronts just to obstruct the socialist development. Not that they will sneakily enter the ranks of the party but that through a still intact bourgeois ideology in a socialist society, a new brand of the bourgeoisie could emerge from within the party itself. As discussed in the previous section, remnants of the old ideology linger in the new society, despite the latter having revolutionized the economic structure.⁸⁴⁹ The superstructure does not mechanically transform itself along with the structural transformation. On the contrary, transformation in the economic base could even reinforce the old superstructure. For example, the developing system of education and the rising standard of living in the USSR enabled the increase of an unremolded petty bourgeoisie along with its ideology.⁸⁵⁰ These provided the condition for a purely technical and expert-oriented approach towards socialist

⁸⁴⁸ Mao, (no particular work cited), as cited by Fang Kang, “Capitalist Roaders are the Bourgeoisie Inside the Party,” *Peking Review*, no. 25, 18 June 1976.

⁸⁴⁹ See. p. 82-83 of the current document.

⁸⁵⁰ Armando Liwanag, *Stand for Socialism Against Modern Revisionism*, 15 January 1992; available from <http://www.padepaonline.com/pag-aaral-sa-sari-saring-rebisyunista-at-kontra-rebolusyonyong-ideya-at-paglilinaw-sa-mga-ito/manindigan-para-sa-sosyalismo-laban-sa-modernong-rebisyunismo>; 19 January 2019.

construction. Again, new successes only condition new contradictions (and failures) that need to be overcome.

But this entry of non-proletarian ideology within the party in no way invalidates the latter but only confirms, on the one hand, the sharpening of contradictions during the socialist construction and, on the other, the need for constant remolding and rectification within the party. Internally, the party erred for it thought that contradictions no longer existed within itself, the State, and the socialist society. This is the classic Stalinist error which prematurely proclaimed the abolition of classes and their contradictions. This error only identified as its enemies the external imperialist countries.⁸⁵¹ Banking on a superfluous assumption that the USSR then was already without classes, this error ideologically weakened and pacified the party and the socialist society by altogether denying the contradictions. In the absence of a supposed contradiction, any party proclamation (e.g., Frunze's Doctrine) is deemed as immediately proletarian in its standpoint. This error magnified especially during the post-Stalin years. Khrushchev's maneuver to transform the State from a dictatorship of the proletariat to that of the entire people is a classic example of this revisionism.⁸⁵² In China, Deng Xiaoping's "socialism with capitalist methods," one which "proceeds from Chinese realities," is also another.⁸⁵³ Their revisionisms silently provided the bourgeoisie the avenue to resurrect their economic and political interests but using the instruments and language of the communist party itself.

⁸⁵¹ See p. 148 of the current document.

⁸⁵² s quoted by Tom Clark, *State and Counter-Revolution: A Critical History of the Marxist Theory of the State*, 1983; available from <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1a/tom-clark/index.htm>; 03 February 2019.

⁸⁵³ Deng Xiaoping, "Opening Speech at the Twelfth National Congress of the Communist Party of China," 01 September 1982; available from <http://en.people.cn/dengxp/vol3/text/c1010.html>.

Shortly after Khrushchev's revisionist and vague declaration of a dictatorship of the entire people, Mao, in 1964 openly criticized the latter's "phoney communism" and insisted on the protracted process of the abolition of classes as the old bourgeois power was merely overthrown but not totally eradicated.⁸⁵⁴ Their remnants, especially their ideology, actively corrupt members of a socialist society, may they be party members or not. Hence, Mao insisted that the struggle against the bourgeoisie in all fronts, but especially in the ideological field, must not stop.⁸⁵⁵ And here lies one of Mao's greatest contribution, the GPCR, which, while successful in mobilizing the masses in an active and critical confrontation with the party and the State, was conceptually and practically in its embryonic stage to have survived the aggressive counter-revolution of the revisionists. The high point of twentieth century socialism was the GPCR as it theoretically and empirically provided the basis for a dialectical relationship between the party and the mass movement.

c. On the State as a Necessary Metastructure

Badiou's ontology led him to abandon the classic Marxist-Leninist understanding of the State. Abandoning the traditional Marxist-Leninist understanding of the State as an instrument of the ruling class, Badiou likewise abandoned the materialist understanding of the State as a product of a long historical development, the contradiction of classes (relative to the seizure of political power), and the seizure of the victorious from the vanquished class.⁸⁵⁶

⁸⁵⁴ Mao Zedong, "On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism and its Historical Lessons for the World: Comment on the Open Letter of the Central Committee of the CPSU (IX)," 1964, *Marxists Internet Archive*, retrieved <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/1964/phnycom.htm>; 12 July 2020.

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁶ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 105. Cf. Vladimir Lenin, *State and Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), 7-12.

Ricardo Nirenberg and David Nirenberg criticize that Badiou confuses the contingent qualities of informal models with the necessary effects of the mathematical axioms.⁸⁵⁷ The political and philosophical principles derived from set theory could in no way be grounded in the latter.⁸⁵⁸ While Nirenberg and Nirenberg present several examples to support their claim, only examples that are most relevant to the current discussion will be elaborated. On the one hand, is the State. Nirenberg and Nirenberg argue that while Badiou alluded to the metaphorical affinity between the state (of the situation) and politics, this affinity Badiou also takes to be a mathematical truth expressed in the power set.⁸⁵⁹ In other words, Nirenberg and Nirenberg suggest that the affinities between the state, the State, and politics are mathematically expressed in the power set, where $P(x)$ is 2 to the power of n .⁸⁶⁰ This is the representation of the state, the counting of the count, the metastructure aligned with the power set as supposedly indicated in Badiou's table.⁸⁶¹ For Nirenberg and Nirenberg, "politics becomes the power set through puns."⁸⁶² In this way, politics becomes a derivation of metaphorical affinities which, since expressed through set theoretical axioms, are unaffected by the empirical world.

On the other hand, are the ideas of infinity and the event. Nirenberg and Nirenberg discuss how Badiou employed as an analogical device mathematical models to supposedly

⁸⁵⁷ Ricardo Nirenberg and David Nirenberg, "Badiou's Number: A Critique of Mathematics as Ontology," *Critical Inquiry* 37 (4), (2011): 586.

⁸⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid., 596. Cf., Badiou, *Being and Event*, 95.

⁸⁶⁰ The example given in p. 143 suggests that, since there are two elements (n), the power set, which is 2 to the power of two, produces four elements, including the empty set and the set itself as subsets.

⁸⁶¹ Nirenberg and Nirenberg, "Badiou's Number: A Critique of Mathematics as Ontology," *Critical Inquiry*, 596. Cf. Badiou, *Being and Event*, 102.

⁸⁶² Ibid.

give sense to empirical and historical events. In this way, Nirenberg and Nirenberg observe that Badiou slips into a position which assigns a certain character of infinity to events that are finite in character. For example, they explain that Badiou characterizes the French Revolution as an infinite multiple. As the “one of the event” cannot be captured by the historical approach which only does an inventory of the site’s elements, the said approach thus loses the event in the always infinite counting of the gestures, things, and words that co-existed with it.⁸⁶³ Badiou instrumentalizes the infinite through the set theoretical construction of the event’s matheme formalized as $e_x = \{x \in X, e_x\}$. Nirenberg and Nirenberg charged that, from a mathematical point of view, the totality of all human history is rather finite. To deny this is to obscure the fundamental ontological differences that were shaped through the modern discovery of the idea of infinity.⁸⁶⁴ Further, the matheme itself is problematic. Since it contains itself (e_x), the event is defined in terms of itself which set theorists call a not-well-founded set.⁸⁶⁵

Nirenberg and Nirenberg rather emphasize the limits of set theory. They underscore that these limitations are derived from the axioms themselves as the latter only admit restricted sorts of objects and sets. What rather are admitted, in particular, are numbers and structures and, in general, are those objects that are always the same and unaffected by any possible event.⁸⁶⁶ One example given by Nirenberg and Nirenberg here is the Zermelo-Fraenkel principle of union where elements put together would retain their identity

⁸⁶³ Nirenberg and Nirenberg, “Badiou’s Number: A Critique of Mathematics as Ontology,” *Critical Inquiry*, 598. Cf. Badiou, *Being and Event*, 180.

⁸⁶⁴ Nirenberg and Nirenberg, “Badiou’s Number: A Critique of Mathematics as Ontology,” *Critical Inquiry*, 598.

⁸⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 606.

unaffected by the union itself.⁸⁶⁷ So the set {a b} when put together with the set {c d} would result to the new set {a b c d}, with their individual identities intact and unaffected by the union. But things are different in the empirical world. For example, the mixture of chemicals having various elements would surely affect the said elements to the point that their identities change. Matter and quiddity, Nirenberg and Nirenberg argue, are subject to changes due to their interaction and thus resist their “full reduction to unchanging number.”⁸⁶⁸ In this case, an altogether different science, physics, should take over the role of set theory. And in the study of the highly contingent events and categories in the social and historical world, it should be politics, with its empirical and materialist methodologies, that should take over ontology.

Not that mathematics can in no way be used in the analysis of politics. There have been various suggestions as to how mathematics can effectively be used in explaining or predicting political phenomena.⁸⁶⁹ While in these mathematical applications formal models are used to deduce political outcomes, it by no way suggests that these models are Platonic forms independent and *a priori* from the very empirical world with which they aim to give sense to. These models are constructed according to certain assumptions. Rational choice assumptions, for example, dominate formal modelling approaches in political science.⁸⁷⁰ These models are constructed from what rational choice assumption suggests that self-

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid., 607

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid., 608.

⁸⁶⁹ Terry Clark, Jennifer Larson, John Mordeson, Joshua Potter, Mark Wierman, “Applying Fuzzy Set Theory to Comparative Politics,” in *Applying Fuzzy Mathematics to Formal Models in Comparative Politics: Studies in Fuzziness and Soft Computing*, vol. 225 (Berline: Springer, 2008), 1-27 and Michael Taylor, “Review Article: Mathematical Political Theory,” *British Journal of Political Science*, 1 (3), (1971): 339-382.

⁸⁷⁰ Terry Clark, Jennifer Larson, John Mordeson, Joshua Potter, Mark Wierman, “Applying Fuzzy Set Theory to Comparative Politics,” in *Applying Fuzzy Mathematics to Formal Models in Comparative Politics: Studies in Fuzziness and Soft Computing*, vol. 225 (Berline: Springer, 2008), 8.

interest and the maximization of utility drive individual political actors.⁸⁷¹ These models, further, presuppose certain institutions (like electoral law) and their designs impact political outcomes.⁸⁷² In other words, models are constructed according to certain empirically derived assumptions. The mathematical modelling in political science by no way resembles the Platonic set mathematical ontology that Badiou derived his emancipatory politics from.

Badiou's method is one which proceeded from heaven to earth with the consequence of rendering intelligible earthly contingent categories through divine and eternal illuminations and not through the historical unfolding and revelation of the earthly categories themselves. While this is a peculiar method in philosophy, such would diminish if not obscure, in favor of *a priori* and formal principles, the active role of history in the determination of political categories (e.g. the state, the party, the revolution, etc.). As suggested by Nirenberg and Nirenberg, Badiou's mathematical ontology, which supposedly is the support for the category of the State, diminishes freedom and agency as the *a priori* categories are brandished as having the force of necessity.⁸⁷³ Badiou characterized the State, the metastructure of *every* historical-social situation, as *necessary*.⁸⁷⁴ Since all multiples are incapable "of forming-a-one of everything it includes," i.e., that the original multiple presentation cannot count itself, there ensues the necessity of a second count in order to verify the initial count.⁸⁷⁵ The State, in this regard, does not count the immediacy of society

⁸⁷¹ Ibid.

⁸⁷² Ibid., 10.

⁸⁷³ Ibid., 612.

⁸⁷⁴ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 105.

⁸⁷⁵ Ibid., 85 and 94. The necessity of the metastructure or the State is discussed in pp. 143-144.

but in the mediacy of society's subsets, i.e., classes.⁸⁷⁶ In other words, the State is an expression of a paranoia triggered by the social unbinding which it prohibits.⁸⁷⁷

The confusion of the formal with the informal, of the necessary with the contingent, raises the question of compatibility between a mathematical ontology and the political assumptions supposedly derived from such an ontology. Badiou's formulation of the State, however, is incompatible especially when it is to be interrogated as what it is: a historical-social category.

The development of the historical-social category of the State was determined by the purely contingent events of history.⁸⁷⁸ The historical development of the State by no way suggests that it is *necessary* in the sense that it is inevitable and natural in such a way that it has always been there securing the representation of *every* social-historical situation. Badiou traces the necessity of the metastructure from the inconsistency of being itself. It must be remembered that the one and the multiple are but what Badiou presupposes as *a priori* conditions of being. For Badiou, the metastructure's necessity resides in the point of its operation as a second count which thereby re-secures the One.⁸⁷⁹ The imminent threat of unbinding, brought about by the void, makes the State a necessary and inevitable re-securing count of inclusion for *every* socio-historical situation.⁸⁸⁰ Aside from the character of inevitability, this necessity for every socio-historical situation gives a quality of eternity of

⁸⁷⁶ Ibid., 105.

⁸⁷⁷ Ibid., 109.

⁸⁷⁸ Roland Axtmann, "The State of the State: The Model of the Modern State and its Contemporary Transformation," *International Political Science Review*, 25 (3), 259-261 and William Spellman, *European Political Thought: 1600-1700* (London, Macmillan Press, 1998), 135-165.

⁸⁷⁹ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 94.

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid., 109.

the State, as if it has been there from the very beginning and will last in eternity. However, instances in pre-modern history suggest that political authority was exercised and shared from among a variety of religious and secular institutions as well as individuals.⁸⁸¹ The State only came in later as a centralizing authority that replaced the overlapping powers of previous non-State institutions. Again, the category of the State derived from a mathematical ontology is incompatible with the socio-historical category of the State as it really developed in history.

Descending from the heights of mathematical abstractions down to the concrete category of the party, Badiou justified the dismissal of the latter through Marxist jargon. This could be due to Badiou's unwavering commitment to the communist hypothesis, albeit in a revised formula. As laudable as this effort of Badiou could be, such would only obscure the real of politics which Marx himself elaborated in his works. Badiou read Marx to be advancing a politics that cannot be represented (reminiscent of and faithful to his ontology of the pure multiple). For example, Badiou would frequently use the passage from the *Manifesto* which explained that "the communist do not form a separate party opposed to other working class parties."⁸⁸² Badiou would explain that "the communists constitute an existing dimension of the whole set of the working-class movement, of that which Marx calls 'working-class parties.'"⁸⁸³ What Badiou did here is to remove the statement from its context. Engels and Marx simply did not want the party to be sectarian, i.e., separated from

⁸⁸¹ Axtmann, "The State of the State: The Model of the Modern State and its Contemporary Transformation," *International Political Science Review*, 259.

⁸⁸² Alain Badiou, *Can Politics be Thought?*, trans. Bruno Bosteels (London: Duke University Press, 2018), 64-65. Cf. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, vol. 6, 497.

⁸⁸³ Alain Badiou, *Can Politics be Thought?*, trans. Bruno Bosteels (London: Duke University Press, 2018), 65.

and opposed to the mass of the workers. In fact, in the succeeding paragraph which Badiou failed to quote, Engels and Marx underscored the dialectical relationship between the communists, the most advanced and resolute section of the workers, from the mass of the proletariat.⁸⁸⁴ Here, the party assumed the task of representing and articulating in general and political terms what the workers in their dispersed and ununited givenness could only express, at best, as economistic calls. With an advanced and resolute section, the workers' movement is strengthened with a core determined to carry forward the revolution in its various stages.

Using the psychoanalytic method similar to that of Freud, Badiou contended that politics is unrepresentable because "its subject-effect is in the perceivable order of the symptom."⁸⁸⁵ Indeed, Marx set out his politics through or on the basis of the symptomatic or evental episodes that fractured the course of history. This is evident in the case for example of Marx's intervention-interpretation of the Paris Commune in his *The Civil War in France*.⁸⁸⁶ This is what Badiou described politics to be as an "actively intervening-interpreting thought."⁸⁸⁷ As Badiou already rejected the insurrectional form of politics, one which aims for power, Badiou referred politics not anymore to the seizure of power but of a subtraction from it, specifically the subtraction from State.

⁸⁸⁴ Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, vol. 6, 497.

⁸⁸⁵ Alain Badiou, *Can Politics be Thought?* trans. Bruno Bosteels (London: Duke University Press, 2018), 38.

⁸⁸⁶ Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France," *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), 178-246.

⁸⁸⁷ Badiou, *Can Politics be Thought?* 36.

But Marx did not stop from this framework of intervention-interpretation. Marx argues, in the same work mentioned above, how after each revolution that marks a progressive development in the class struggle, the repressive character of the State stands out in bolder and bolder form.⁸⁸⁸ And this is why, for Marx, such a State has to be overcome through the dictatorship of the proletariat that aims at bringing about communism. Thus, for Marx, the Commune was the direct antithesis to the empire of monarchical and class rule itself.⁸⁸⁹

The assumption of power, and not mere intervention-interpretation, is but a necessary procedure of a communist politics. This means the conquest of power, an action totally impossible from within the framework of a transcendent State. In this connection, Engels claims how the State is but a machine that aids in the oppression of one class by another.⁸⁹⁰ But this seizure of power is a crucial Marxist element which does not fit with Badiou's ontology and emancipatory politics. Politics, for him, is the mere act of intervention-interpretation and "not the assumption of a power."⁸⁹¹ In this regard, the communist, which for Badiou is the political capacity of the proletariat, is "absolutely mobile, nonstatist, unfixable" and could, therefore, not be represented. Being unrepresentable, Badiou already denies in advance the truth of politics in the party.⁸⁹²

Since representation is already denied by Badiou from the party, Badiou predicates the meaning of the communist to the proletariat (as if both are identical), a distortion which

⁸⁸⁸ Marx, "*The Civil War in France*," 218.

⁸⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁸⁹⁰ Engels, "Introduction to *The Civil War in France*," *Ibid.*, 189.

⁸⁹¹ Badiou, *Can Politics be Thought?* 36.

⁸⁹² *Ibid.*

was long time ago and in a slightly similar vein suggested by Ludwig Feuerbach but which was criticized by Marx and Engels themselves. Feuerbach transforms the concept “communist” as a predicate of “man,” which in Badiou’s case is the predicate of the proletariat. But Marx and Engels categorically contended that the word “communist” means, in the real world, “the follower of a definite revolutionary party.”⁸⁹³ Here, Marx and Engels clarify that the being of a communist originates from and is sustained by the revolutionary party of the proletariat. The party becomes the site of fidelity where the organization of the new brought about by the event is organized. In this regard, politics is not only an act of intervention-interpretation (as correctly suggested by Badiou) but also the conquest of political power through the proletariat’s revolutionary communist party.

The contradiction, if not danger, of a transcendent notion of a State lies, again, in how it is developed and conceived as a *necessary* historical-social category. The obvious consequence to this is the idea of inevitability. While the *Being and Event* serves as Badiou’s foundational work – the system out from which his theory of the event, the subject, and emancipatory politics in general are developed – nowhere in the work is the essential communist dictum of the withering away of the state even mentioned. While this dictum has been affirmed and re-echoed by Badiou in some of his minor works, its absence in a foundational work is at the very least disappointing. The dictum’s absence, or the silence of the *Being and Event* concerning it, could only be understood from the very impossibility of withering away a *necessary* therefore inevitable socio-historical category. However, this conclusion by no means deny the authenticity of Badiou’s commitment for the communist

⁸⁹³ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, “The German Ideology,” *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Collected Works* vol. 5 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 57.

cause. It only shows how his mathematical method ultimately renders as impossible a historical objective: the withering away of the State and the party along with it.

If the State has to wither away, it does not wither objectively, that is, on its own. A subjective dimension for its voiding is required in an emancipatory procedure. But in such a procedure, the subjective dimension must do away with the idea of a State which is transcendent and necessary. The initial resources for the theorization of this subjective dimension is already present in Badiou's system. The affirmation of an event *organizes* the process of subjectivization i.e., the constitution of the subjects, along with the truth procedure that also *organizes* the new in the old. Without subjects, the truth could not make itself immanent in a situation, for the truth, being the indiscernible or the generic (\varnothing) has to be forced into the situation, making the latter a supplemented situation $S(\varnothing)$. If the new has to be organized, a subjective capacity which is *organized* and disciplined is required for the State's voiding. The question of organization must not be dismissed but rather reformulated.

The Dialectics of the Mass Movement, the Party, and the State

In this section, the dialectics of the mass movement, the party, and the State is elaborated. The notion of dialectics here is a Maoist one. It presupposes the unity or identity of opposites as the basis for the overcoming of a contradiction. Against the supposed negative dialectics of the Hegelian or Marxist system, the Maoist theory of dialectics presupposes the simultaneity of both negation and affirmation in the movement of things. Mao rejected the Hegelian (and also Marxist) idea of negation of negation.⁸⁹⁴ Both affirmation and negation exist simultaneously as both moments presuppose or are the conditions of each other. But more important than their mutual dependence is "their

⁸⁹⁴ Mao, "Talk on Questions of Philosophy," in *Mao: On Practice and On Contradiction*, 181.

transformation into each other,” i.e., in their movement, they turn towards their opposite.⁸⁹⁵ In this regard, unity or identity is relative while struggle or contradiction is absolute.

The triad of the mass movement, the party, and the State presupposes an antagonistic relation between the State on the one hand, and the party and the masses on the other. It is on the basis of this contradiction that the party-masses fusion (or unity or contradiction) is forged. But such a fusion is determined by a certain political form as its condition for being. This is the developed politics of indigenization. The being of the party-masses fusion is the determination to overcome the State, i.e., lead it to its gradual withering away. The fusion’s relation (of non-relation) to the State is again determined by another political form. This is the mobilizational politics exemplified during the Maoist years in China.

a. The Mass Movement

Since the financial crisis in the last years of first decade of the 21st century, global capitalism has been challenged by various forms of resistances. The most famous and global of these are the Occupy Movements that swept the world over. In these episodes of concentration and protest, participants denounced what they believe are social inequalities and corporate greed resulting from the unabated advance of neoliberal capitalism. Occupy protesters also asserted a more democratic socio-political order.⁸⁹⁶ Occupy Movements portray some of the characteristics of today’s mass movements. However, there are also other movements that could help determine another character of today’s mass movements. These movements largely come from the identity-based movements initiated in the 1970’s.

⁸⁹⁵ Mao, “On Contradiction,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 94 and 98.

⁸⁹⁶ Esther Addley, “Occupy Movement: From Local Action to a Global Howl of Protest,” *The Guardian*, 18 October 2011; available from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/17/occupy-movement-global-protest>; 05 May 2019.

Because of the advances of technologies and mass communication, the Occupy Movements overcame the sporadic nature of mass movements. Originally conceived in 2011 with the Arab Spring as its inspiration, the Occupy Movements mushroomed the world over with nine hundred cities around the world, including the Philippines, hosting similar occupy activities.⁸⁹⁷ There were Occupy Movements in Cairo, Egypt; in Ontario, Canada; in Santiago, Chile; in Hong Kong and Germany; in Athens, Greece; and of course in the United States.⁸⁹⁸

Speeches, discourses, and communication characterize the said gatherings. Some common themes of all these activities are the use of social media for communication and “the human microphone – where the crowds chant back phrases uttered by a speaker, and shaky ‘jazz hands’ to indicate agreements.”⁸⁹⁹ As Dorothy Kidd argued, these movements did not really aim for the transformation of some state institutions. On the contrary, the Occupy Movements’ goal was inward, i.e., to allow “direct grassroots democracy through the cultivation of democratic communications.”⁹⁰⁰ These spaces of popular control provided avenues for conversation “in which all can participate and in which all can determine

⁸⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁸ See Jack Shenker and Adam Gabbatt, “Tahrir Square Protests Send Message of Solidarity to Occupy Wall Street,” *The Guardian*, 25 October 2011; available from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/25/egyptian-protesters-occupy-wall-street>; 05 June 2019; CTVNews.ca Staff, “Protesters ‘Occupy’ Parks in Cities Across Canada,” *CTV News*, 15 October 2011, retrieved from <https://www.ctvnews.ca/protesters-occupy-parks-in-cities-across-canada-1.711409>; 05 June 2019; Lois Beckett, “Here’s what Sparked ‘Occupy’ Movements from Chile to Germany,” *Business Insider*, 26 October 2011, retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/heres-what-sparked-every-occupy-movement-from-chile-to-germany-2011-10>; 05 June 2019; and Au Loong Yu, “Hong Kong Spontaneity and the Mass Movement,” *Socialist Review*, 396, (November 2014), retrieved from <http://socialistreview.org.uk/396/hong-kong-spontaneity-and-mass-movement>; 05 June 2019.

⁸⁹⁹ Esther Addley, “Occupy Movement: From Local Action to a Global Howl of Protest,” *The Guardian*, 18 October 2011, retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/17/occupy-movement-global-protest>; 05 May 2019.

⁹⁰⁰ Dorothy Kidd, “Occupy and Social Movement Communication,” in *The Routledge Companion to Alternative and Community Media*, ed. Chris Atton (New York: Routledge, 2015), 458.

together what the future should look like.”⁹⁰¹ As sites that sustain and are sustained by communication, Occupy Movements are heavily constituted by social media.⁹⁰² Similar protests can easily mushroom or be replicated in various spaces because of the avenue provided by social media.⁹⁰³ And the social media help in the shaping of narratives concerning the movement and increase the conversations of protestors online.⁹⁰⁴ There is in these movements a fetishization of conversation, of communication, and of speech so that, ultimately, victory is equated to the mere assertion of the freedom of speech.

The sustained conversation that characterized the movement was actually a sign of an impasse rather than of a victory. This was also coupled with the desire to remain spontaneous. As the experience of the Hong Kong Occupy Movement showed, spontaneity led to its own impasse. Although the protesters indeed discovered and secured “new initiatives expressing democratic demands everyday,” the protesters, however, did not have “a clear strategy of how to achieve their goal.”⁹⁰⁵ Worse, because the occupied site itself

⁹⁰¹ Marina Sitrin, “Horizontalism and the Occupy Movements,” *Dissent*, (Spring 2012) ; available from <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/horizontalism-and-the-occupy-movements>; 05 June 2019.

⁹⁰² Anastasia Kavada, “Creating the Collective: Social Media, The Occupy Movement, and its Constitution as a Collective Actor,” *Information, Communication and Society*, 18, (2015): 1.

⁹⁰³ Judy Lubin, “The Occupy Movement: Emerging Protest Forms and Contested Urban Spaces,” *Berkeley Planning Journal*, 25, (2012): 187.

⁹⁰⁴ Jennifer Preston, “Protestors Look for Ways to Feed the Web,” *New York Times*, 24 November 2011; available from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/25/business/media/occupy-movementfocuses-on-staying-current-on-social-networks.html>.

⁹⁰⁵ Au Loong Yu, “Hong Kong Spontaneity and the Mass Movement,” *Socialist Review*, November 2014, retrieved <http://socialistreview.org.uk/396/hong-kong-spontaneity-and-mass-movement>; 10 March 2020. This situation of an absence of a strategy is foretelling of what might happen to the current Yellow Vest Movement in France. While the said movement, just recently, has organized what it called an assembly of assemblies, it is still characterized by its centrifugal structure. As Harrison Stetler described, the Yellow Vest Movement is “a wave of cathartic frustration” that coalesced in a spontaneous and decentralized grassroots popular movement that brought together people many of whom have never participated in political life. The same as with the Occupy Movements, the movement in France is “demanding more democracy everywhere,” but as to how such a goal is to be achieved the movement is silent if not hesitant to address. Harrison Stetler,

became a market place of ideas, protesters even presented divergent strategies on how to realize their desired goals.⁹⁰⁶ Simply put, the preservation of spontaneity and the desire of unimpeded communication led to the movement's own impasse, its own dead end. Or, as scholars of Occupy Wall Street would describe the movement, the latter failed to effect what it could have been possible to because of its aversion to a formal vertical structure.⁹⁰⁷

Relying on a horizontalist paradigm, proponents of the Occupy Movements wanted to rather preserve the spontaneity of these movements where everything is dependent on the spontaneous creativity of the masses rather than from some hierarchic and verticalist structure that issues concrete programs and strategies.⁹⁰⁸ Advocates of these movements were serious about the anarchist principles propagated among their ranks to the point of denying leadership role to anyone.⁹⁰⁹ In the absence of a clear strategy and leadership with only spontaneity that determines it, a movement could simply flourish for a while.⁹¹⁰

"France's Yellow Vest Movement Comes of Age," *The Nation*, 05 February 2019; available from <https://www.thenation.com/article/france-yellow-vest-movement-macron/>; 07 May 2019.

⁹⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁷ Daniel Kreiss and Zeynep Tufekci, "Occupying the Political: Occupying Wall Street, Collective Action, and the Rediscovery of Pragmatic Politics," *Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies*, 13(3), (2013): 2.

⁹⁰⁸ Au Loong Yu, "Hong Kong Spontaneity and the Mass Movement," *Socialist Review*, November 2014, retrieved <http://socialistreview.org.uk/396/hong-kong-spontaneity-and-mass-movement/>; 10 March 2020.

⁹⁰⁹ Alasdair Roberts, "Why the Occupy Movement Failed," *Public Administration Review*, 72(5), (2012): 756.

⁹¹⁰ This is also the challenge to the Yellow Vest Movement in France. While having organized an "assembly of assemblies" just recently, the Yellow Vest Movement has not really determined yet a concrete strategy and political line for sustaining and continuing the said movement. Speaking still within the language of liberal democracy, the Yellow Vest Movement is demanding "more democracy everywhere." But as to how this end could be won remains still to be a matter of conversation for the participants of the movement. Harrison Stetler, "France's Yellow Vest Movement Comes of Age," *The Nation*, 05 February 2019, retrieved from <https://www.thenation.com/article/france-yellow-vest-movement-macron/>; 05 June 2019.

The Occupy Movements of 2011 did not really sustain their struggles; they were short-lived.⁹¹¹ The speech-oriented character of their struggles that do not raise the fight to the political arena coupled with a spontaneous horizontalist organizational paradigm that structured the protests resulted to some serious impasses and failures. Not only did the Occupy Movement “[burn] itself out,” it also failed to remedy “the problems associated with the neoliberal project.”⁹¹²

But the Occupy Movement did not fail as a whole. For one, it reawakened a latent desire of a people to challenge the neoliberal agenda. It made people hope for something to matter again, for something to change.⁹¹³ It also realized a kind of solidarity, although still short-lived, anchored on mutual aid and respect amongst its participants.⁹¹⁴ It created a social mobilization that fueled the hope for a world liberated from the grip of capitalist exploitation. Such a social mobilization anchored itself on authentic human solidarity where everyone gets to express himself/herself and participate on matters that concern the collective.

Speech-oriented, spontaneous, and socially mobilize characterize mainly the Occupy Movements. Identity politics, however, portray another characteristic other than what the Occupy portrayed. While movements based on identity politics are still social mobilizations, they are more sectarian in their orientation, as they are divergences from the traditional class-based politics. Identity politics portray a sectarian orientation, i.e., their struggles are

⁹¹¹ Or as Roberts described it, the “Occupy movement briefly flourished and then failed.” Roberts, “Why the Occupy Movement Failed,” *Public Administration Review*, 758.

⁹¹² Ibid.

⁹¹³ Quinn Norton, “A Eulogy for #Occupy,” *Wired*, 12 December 2012; available from <https://www.wired.com/2012/12/a-eulogy-for-occupy/>; 05 June 2019.

⁹¹⁴ Roberts, “Why the Occupy Movement Failed,” *Public Administration Review*, 757.

oftentimes limited to the sector (or identity) they represent (women, transgender, race, etc.).⁹¹⁵

Identity politics portrayed in the Occupy Movements are social mobilizations. They mobilize elements belonging to a particular cultural group to forward a particular claim (for gender and racial equality for example). Borrowing the model of class oppression in traditional Marxist language, identity politics traces oppression in some particular “social location.”⁹¹⁶ But especially in its more rigid form, in its insistence on difference rather than on sameness, identity politics could get more sectarian as it utilizes the language of essentialism.⁹¹⁷ Proponents of an identity politics based on difference claim that “equality of sameness cannot be achieved without a form of equality based upon the recognition of difference.”⁹¹⁸ Social actors having the said assumption radicalize differences by way of trying to discover a sort of an essential form or idea that could positively support difference.

In stressing difference, identity groups struggle against oppression through what they believe are terms that are radically different from and are not defined by the oppressors (men, whites, etc.). Consequently, their views would “undermine progressive coalitions” and would tend to isolate them as yet another oppressed group.⁹¹⁹ This is where the danger of

⁹¹⁵ Narzanin Massoumi, “Identity Politics and Social Movements,” in *Muslim, Women, Social Movements and the ‘War on Terror,’* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 11.

⁹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁹¹⁷ Against this essentialist politics of identity, there are those who advance an anti-essentialist position. As discussed by Massoumi, Judith Butler argued for a “politics of performativity” that deconstructs categories founded on some essentialist views. *Ibid.*, 18. A critique of this anti-essentialism, however, refuted that anti-essentialist scholars “ignore cases in which claiming essentialist differences is a strategic maneuver made by activists rather than an ontological position.” See Mary Bernstein, “Identity Politics,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 31, (2005): 51.

⁹¹⁸ See the discussion of Massoumi in *Ibid.*, 15.

⁹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

sectarianism in identity politics arises. In contrast to this sectarian view, a feminist group in the Philippines called *Gabriela* explains the woman question not from an essentialist view but from a determinist one. They argue that “as long as the semi-feudal economy keep most of our people in bondage and poverty, many more women and children will suffer.”⁹²⁰ It argues that the question of gender is primarily determined by the socio-economic question of semi-feudalism which ultimately squares with the question of class. Having overcome the question of essence, *Gabriela* overcomes sectarian views and joins wider political struggles with other oppressed sectors and classes in the Philippines.

Today’s mass movements are primarily characterized by their being social mobilizations, speech-oriented, and spontaneous. Highlighting these characterizations will help establish the proper relationship between mass movements and the party on the one hand and mass movements and the State on the other.

b. The Party (of a New Type)

In his earlier work the *Theory of a Subject*, Badiou still affirms the party as the site of doing emancipatory politics. According to him, it was the Cultural Revolution that forced the thinking of a “party of a new type,” a post-Leninist party which would rectify the errors of Soviet communism and be the basis for the total recast of Marxist practice.⁹²¹ However, this Maoist spirit of Badiou would gradually wane, and so also is his belief and trust in the party. In his later works, he does not only seek a different name of the communist party but

⁹²⁰ Gabriela, *The Fight Against Violence on Women in the Philippines: The Gabriela Experience*, n.d., retrieved from <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/ngocontribute/Gabriela.pdf>; 07 June 2019.

⁹²¹ Badiou, *Theory of a Subject*, 205.

also proclaim its obsolescence.⁹²² For him, the task of emancipatory politics today is the thinking of a politics without a party.⁹²³ In so doing, he nostalgically reverts to Marx himself, and claims that, for Marx, the communist party is “a simple party of the workers’ movement in general,” and not another organization similar to a vanguard.⁹²⁴ This detour of course is an obvious great leap backward, as Badiou simply negates the victories brought about by the party-form itself, placing his notion of emancipatory politics nearer to the border of movementism.⁹²⁵

Instead of totally surrendering the problem of the party by declaring its obsolescence, emancipatory movements and leftist thinkers must however seriously reconsider the question of the party. First, all emancipatory political procedures summon, being an exercise of a social group, a collective body who would steadfastly pursue an event’s consequences, incorporating these into the structure of the world itself. This body, oftentimes referred to by Badiou as militants (of truth), comes to be because of the demand to make an event’s consequences be inscribed or institutionalized in the world; militants serve as the fragile support of the consequences of the event.⁹²⁶

However, not all individuals are capable of becoming subjects. As discussed in the second chapter, subjects are relative to an event. That is, only a few who recognize in the

⁹²² Badiou, *The Rebirth of History: Times of Riots and Uprisings*, 80. Explaining Mao, for Badiou, the party is “inappropriate because it had shown itself powerless to organize true equality.” Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 19.

⁹²³ Badiou, *Metapolitics*, 122.

⁹²⁴ Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 17.

⁹²⁵ For Moufawad-Paul, movementism assumes that particular movements, while divided along lines of identity or other political interests, could reach the needed critical mass that could effectively end capitalism, without the recourse to supposedly useless Leninist vanguardist politics. Moufawad-Paul, *The Communist Necessity*, 9.

⁹²⁶ Badiou, *Being and Event*, xiii.

event that the new is possible would submit to the discipline of working tenaciously the construction of the new possibility. In fact, in his later work, Badiou would argue that not all subjects would even affirm the event, as some subjects either obscure or deny the said event.⁹²⁷ The non-subjects or the masses could only be historical, not political. This is a crucial distinction emphasized by Badiou during his Maoist years. While Mao argued that only the masses create history, the masses' sum of riotous and rebellious acts, for Badiou, "does not make a subject."⁹²⁸

The failure to raise the struggle to the political arena is a glaring limitation of the Occupy Movements. These spontaneous mass movements, which intentionally avoided hierarchical and visible organs or figures of leadership, could only ironically affirm the relative strength of capitalism.⁹²⁹ That is, because it simply played according to the rules set by the liberal democratic space, a space that sustains and is sustained by the capitalist system itself, it could only succeed in affirming the freedom of expression and the right to peaceably assemble of a liberal democratic order. Because this collective space generated by the Occupy Wall Street, for example, could simply sustain itself by invoking the democratic ideals of capitalist society, it ultimately "foundered against a contradiction at its core."⁹³⁰ This contradiction, according to Dean, is the undermining of "the collective power the movement was building" by "the individualism of its democratic, anarchist, and

⁹²⁷ In his *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II*, Badiou explained the three types of subjects: the faithful, the reactive, and the obscure. Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II*, 50-61.

⁹²⁸ Badiou, *Theory of a Subject*, 44.

⁹²⁹ This description is perfectly captured by Nathan Shneider in his introduction to Chomsky's book. Describing the experience of the participants of the Occupy Wall Street, according to him, these people aspired to organize horizontal forms of associations that refused to deliver their demands to proper authorities and prided itself on the paucity, if not absence, of leaders. Nathan Schneider, "Introduction" *Anarcho-Curious? or, Anarchist Amnesia*, in Noam Chomsky, *On Anarchism* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013), viii.

⁹³⁰ Jodi Dean, *Crowds and Party* (New York: Verso, 2016), 9.

horizontalist ideological currents.”⁹³¹ In this context, capitalism simply thrives. And this lingering of a relatively strengthened capitalist system simply creates a confusion among participants of movementist politics themselves, as they themselves were unsure of what to do next.⁹³² After all, they would reject as Leninist nonsense any answer to the fundamental question, *What is to be done?*

Capitalism’s relative strength is possible because of the absence of an organized, disciplined, and political concentration of the masses into a vanguard party, albeit movements have been exploding the world over.⁹³³ The explosions of protest, the most recent of which is the Yellow Vest Movement that swept the streets of Paris, also resonate the need for a concentrated and organized political force of the party that will lead these spontaneous movements. According to Badiou, “a minimal and purified political heterogeneity is a hundred times more combative” than say a thousand spontaneous mass uprisings.⁹³⁴ This formula has been tested most notably by the Bolshevik and the Chinese Revolution and simply affirms the Leninist principle that “the mandatory focal point for a politics” is the party.⁹³⁵ Only the party is capable and determined to raise the mass movement into a political struggle which will settle the decisive issue of the seizure of state power and the dictatorship of the proletariat.⁹³⁶ In this regard, subjectivation could only be

⁹³¹ Ibid.

⁹³² Nathan Schneider, “Introduction” *Anarcho-Curious? or, Anarchist Amnesia*, in Noam Chomsky, *On Anarchism*, viii.

⁹³³ Some of the massive protest movements across the globe were discussed by Dean in Ibid., 8-22.

⁹³⁴ Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 44.

⁹³⁵ Ibid. 46.

⁹³⁶ For Dean, many of the contemporary leftist thinkers agree to the party as the “emerging site of an answer.” Further, since social movements across the globe have been constantly pushing “to consider the possibilities in and of the party form, we have to recommence imagining the party of communists.” Dean,

inside and not outside of the party. The party is the concentrated space for political subjectivization. Against the later Badiou who, until today, is still searching for a model of a politics without a party, today's deployment of the communist hypothesis must affirm and secure the category of the party as the site of doing, winning, and consolidating proletarian revolution.

Recognizing the party's role in the deployment of an emancipatory politics clarifies the priority of decision over the contingent. An event, being the undecidable in a particular situation, is always contingent. Its appearance could not be predicted by established logic. However, for the event to happen and for its consequences to be institutionalized, a decision that an event has happened has to be made. Again, the decision is not that of the established structure as the event is undecidable; the decision is a retroactive process of giving an evental meaning to what could have been an ordinary moment.⁹³⁷ While initially the contingency of the event may trigger spontaneous actions or movements by the masses, its consequences and the duration of its procedure however cannot be guaranteed without faithful subjects who decide to affirm the event. Without the decision (of the party), that which could have been an event would simply be another moment of the structure's continuity. In political terms, without the decision of the subjects formed into a party, the contingent mass actions would merely end up either as a chaotic and nihilistic display of emotions or a reaffirmation of the strength of the established order. Not that the party itself decides the event, but that, on the one hand, the event may happen but fails to flourish or

Crowds and Party, 10. However, unlike Dean who would draw from Robert Michels and Jacques Lacan the theoretical support for the rethinking of the party-form, contemporary leftist thinkers should assert the theoretical and practical contributions of Maoism as the principal support for this task.

⁹³⁷ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 203.

sustain its intensity without the party; on the other, the party's decision emanates from an eventual fidelity itself.

But what could this party be other than the revisionist parties exemplified by the then CPSU and the detested CPC today, to name but a few? What could this party be after the RIM assessed the failures and the successes of the Chinese Revolution? Again, the principle of the mass line, which underscores in no uncertain terms the trust in the masses, is crucial for the reactivation of this party of a new type. It was the mistrustful attitude of Stalin against the peasants that caused the counter-revolutionary actions he initiated against them. And this mistrustful attitude only emerges when the party is detached and alienated from the masses, as the party becomes thoroughly arbitrary with its decisions and programs: it makes policies that no longer reflect and resolve objective problems. The party's alienation simply crystalized a separate entity of intellectuals and experts. Rather than struggling for its non-being (i.e., its gradual withering away, along with the state and the classes), the party perpetuates in being. Its perpetuation into being consequently perpetuated in turn the state and of the masses' non-being, thereby ultimately defeating and negating the goal of communism.

This party of a new type is the same (Leninist) party, but in its (Maoist) otherness. It is still the same Leninist vanguard party that serves as the advanced detachment of the workers and the entire masses and that is ideologically armed with the science of proletarian revolution, politically determined to carry forward the revolution, and organizationally united to observe party discipline. But other than these, this is also a party that ideologically, politically, and organizationally strengthens itself by solidly linking with the masses. Its being is the protracted process of rooting and identifying itself among the masses, to prepare

its (and the state's) gradual non-being: the dawn of the classless and stateless society.⁹³⁸ As Mao emphasizes, the party must firmly believe in the boundless innovative force of the masses and always trust and identify itself with them.⁹³⁹

c. The State

With a clear political line, the initially dispersed struggles enter into a stronger solidarity which, while works on the peculiarities of the varied mass movements, also effectively rallies these struggles towards a common enemy. If for Badiou “philosophy *must* have a theory of the enemy,” emancipatory politics must not only theorize an enemy but also name and attack this enemy.⁹⁴⁰ The enemy, as elaborated by Lenin, has been the State itself; the state of the historical-social situation which, because of its excessive nature, becomes an effective support of classes and class domination.

However, unlike Badiou, the notions of the State's transcendence and necessity must be abandoned. Badiou claims that the ruling class is, by definition, not statist but rather social and economic.⁹⁴¹ However, already in Marx's (and Engels') first major political work, *The Communist Manifesto*, the ruling class, and in this case the bourgeoisie, is already portrayed as having an inherent relation with the State. By preoccupying on the economic and social definition of the ruling class, or the bourgeoisie in this regard, Badiou utterly disregarded what Marx and Engels claim that every stage in the bourgeoisie's development

⁹³⁸ Moufawad-Paul has a similar concept, although not thoroughly emphasizing the transitory character of the party: “the revolutionary party is a protracted process that should make a people's war.” Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture: Philosophy in the Maoist Terrain*, 212.

⁹³⁹ Mao Zedong, “On Coalition Government,” *Collected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 3, 266.

⁹⁴⁰ Justin Clemens, “When the Levee Breaks: Badiou, Philosophy, Politics,” *Contemporary Political Theory* 15 (3), (August 2016): 16.

⁹⁴¹ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 106.

was accompanied by a similar political advance of the same class.⁹⁴² This political advance is rather not an arbitrary acquisition of whatever site of power but the bourgeoisie's conquer "for itself, *in the modern representative State*, exclusive political sway."⁹⁴³ Marx and Engels argued that "the executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."⁹⁴⁴ As a committee, the bourgeoisie makes *in the modern representative State* a special instrument for political power. That State, therefore, cannot be any entity or set that transcends or is independent of all the other sets.

On the other hand, the State is not a necessary historical-social category. On the contrary, it only emerged at a certain point in history when the conditions for its being were already developed. Consequently, when the right forms of social organization would have been discovered and the conditions for its flourishing eliminated, it would wither away. Hence, only by abandoning what Badiou regards as the necessary metastructure of every situation will the theorization of the withering away of the State be possible.

Mao need not formulate a new and separate theory of the State. Mao insisted in defending Marxism-Leninism, and along with the latter is the truth of Lenin's theory of the State.⁹⁴⁵ Again, Lenin argued that the State is an instrument for the exploitation of the oppressed class, not an independent and transcendent entity above all the other classes. The only way to overcome the State, as earlier developed by Marxism, is by a proletarian

⁹⁴² Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1983), 110.

⁹⁴³ *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

⁹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 110-111.

⁹⁴⁵ Mao Zedong, *On the Question of Stalin*, 13 September 1963, retrieved <https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/documents/polemic/qstalin.htm>.

revolution that would pave the way for its withering away.⁹⁴⁶ Specifically, this requires the dialectical relation of the State, on the one hand, and the party-masses, on the other. Such a relation is actually a relation of non-relation as it is guided by a mobilizational politics whose resources are derived from the party-masses fusion and not from the State. These resources include but are not limited to mass protest actions and people's wars. In other words, the dialectics between the State and the party-masses is one which is mobilizational, a process for the protracted and mass line-oriented overcoming of the State and its apparatuses.

d. The Party and the Mass Movement: The Party Masses Fusion

The party is sustained by the mass movement, and in return, the party sustains the said movement of the masses. This dialectical relationship can be described by the developed concept of indigenization where the party not only makes itself a native to but also identifies itself as begotten of a local identity and a particular movement (peasants', workers', women's, racial, etc.). On the one hand, the party could only develop itself in this indigenized process, i.e., if it draws into its ranks the native yet most advanced elements of the mass movement. As the experience of the Soviets showed, authority is not liquidated but rather indigenized and linked to the lives and aspirations of the masses. On the other hand, the masses in their movements could only advance as a determined revolutionary force if its indigenized core is led by the party. In other words, the mass movements cannot assume the same organizational form of the most recent yet short-lived movements which outrightly rejected hierarchical forms of organization. Sison explained this symbiosis between the

⁹⁴⁶ Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 12-20.

party and the mass movement by emphasizing that a “ruling communist party or socialist state cannot survive and progress without relying on the mass movement.”⁹⁴⁷

Both the party and the mass movement bring opposing and extreme forms of organization. The former mostly relies on centralism while the latter on democracy. Mao insisted that “democracy is correlative with centralism and freedom with discipline” and that centralism and democracy are “two opposites of a single unity.”⁹⁴⁸ From a Maoist, perspective, centralism without democracy is lame, while democracy without centralism is blind. As Douglas Howland explains, democracy in its extreme form could be pernicious to the revolutionary movement as it promotes individualism, liberalism, selfishness, and opportunism.⁹⁴⁹

The party-masses fusion is determined by a politics of indigenization. While Soviet in origin, the politics of indigenization has a universal dimension characterized by the party’s willingness to preserve and engage the masses in their local differences and be shaped by these differences. But in this engagement as well, the party could effectively lead the masses as its leadership is one which reflects the indigeneity, locality, and identity of the masses in their movements. In other words, they avoid being alienated from the masses. The dialectical relation determined by an indigenized politics is one which is supported by the categories of protractedness and the mass line. The party’s process of indigenization takes place within a protracted duration of education, persuasion, agitation, propaganda, and cultural work among the masses in their dispersed and fragmented localities. At the same

⁹⁴⁷ Correspondence with Jose Maria Sison, 18 November 2019.

⁹⁴⁸ Mao, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 135.

⁹⁴⁹ Douglas Howland, “Popular Sovereignty and Democratic Centralism in the People’s Republic of China,” *Social Text*, 30, (1), (2012): 4.

time, such a duration rigidly follows the dictum of the mass line, from the masses to the masses, to formulate unifying programs and objectives. The mass line conceptualizes policymaking as protracted in nature, where the masses' role is given emphasis in the process.⁹⁵⁰ It can also be said that the spatio-temporal requirements of the politics of indigenization is protractedness and the mass line. Without these, there could be no party-masses fusion. The democratic centralist form of organization of the party-masses fusion is determined by an indigenized politics that requires protractedness as its duration and mass line as its method.

Concerning the locality of the masses' struggle, the party must avoid the dogmatic approach of some of the anti-revisionist parties of the past which narrowly and mechanically interpreted the proletariat as a proletariat that strictly resembling that of western Europe's, i.e., the industrial worker.⁹⁵¹ Instead of uniting other sites of oppression into the political line of proletarian revolution, this dogmatic approach erroneously ignored "struggles that are supposedly 'not about class' in order to emphasize the primary importance of class struggle."⁹⁵² A case in point is the response of the Revolutionary Communist Party of the USA condemning as "bourgeois decadence" the question of the queer and their identitarian resistance rooted in sexuality.⁹⁵³ A dogmatic approach to contemporary mass movements would ultimately defeat the soul of Marxism: the concrete analysis of concrete conditions.

⁹⁵⁰ Marc Blecher, "Consensual Politics in Rural Chinese Communities," *Modern China* 5, (1), (1979): 108.

⁹⁵¹ According to Moufawad-Paul, this is a positivist reading of class which regards the latter as something that can be empirically found among varied industrial sites "rather than a scientific category employed to make sense of the general logic of a given mode of production." Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture: Philosophy in the Maoist Terrain*, 118.

⁹⁵² Ibid. 146-147.

⁹⁵³ Ibid., 152.

Marxist parties could not just dismiss as decadent the movements that do not follow the classical model of class struggles; rather, these movements, as they are also participated by the *inexistents* clothed in the garments of identity politics, must be analyzed in their concreteness in order to discover their link to the general emancipatory project.

In the case of the CPP, for example, it succeeded in drawing towards its revolutionary cause movements and sectors that apparently do not display class character in their struggles. For example, through the National Democratic Front, it has forged a revolutionary alliance with the indigenous peoples (through the Cordillera People's Democratic Front, Moro Resistance Liberation Organization, and the Revolutionary Organization of Lumads) and even with the Christians (through the Christians for National Liberation).⁹⁵⁴ The united front approach of the CPP enables it not only to forge a strong unity with the other sectors, but also to gain wide mass membership where it could integrate and identify itself with. If it could sustain itself as a mass party, if it could effectively practice the mass line as a mode of its being, then it would succeed in challenging and voiding the State in the future.

The challenge to make sense of contemporary mass movements is pointed out by Dean. With the appearance of crowds, Dean argued that the left is forced to raise again the questions of organization, endurance, and scale.⁹⁵⁵ Returning again to the question does not simply mean questioning what a party should be in relation to the class struggle, but further questioning the party's role in the apparently fragmented, identitarian, and non-class politics of contemporary mass movements. This party of a new type must be prepared to engage and

⁹⁵⁴ National Democratic Front of the Philippines, *Allied Organizations*, available from <https://www.ndfp.org>; 11 March 2019.

⁹⁵⁵ Dean, *Crowds and Party*, 10.

make sense of the seemingly non-class character of other sites of oppression like those of the women, the queer community, the national minorities, the racial and ethnic minorities, among others.⁹⁵⁶

Central, therefore, to this conceptualization of a new party is the latter's understanding of the category of the "masses" in the mass movement. The Maoist rupture to Marxism-Leninism did not only broaden the classic definition of the category of the proletariat but also clarified it in the era of imperialism and international proletarian movement. Since Stalin argued that revolutions must first explode in the "weakest links" of imperialism, i.e., in the global peripheries where imperialism has a weaker hold and whose demographics typically have a lesser count of the industrial proletariat, then such revolutions are mainly driven by classes other than the latter. For Stalin, "the front of capital will be pierced where the chain of imperialism is weakest."⁹⁵⁷ This specifically means that the world proletarian revolution can only speed up its victory if it breaks "the chain of the world imperialist front at its weakest link," i.e., those nations which are relatively economically backward or less developed than those at the centers of imperialist powers.⁹⁵⁸ In such contexts, a proletarian revolution has to creatively adapt to the concrete conditions by

⁹⁵⁶ Louis Althusser, in 1978, already raised the question of the mass movement's role in proletarian politics. Arguing what he called as the crisis of Marxism in an article with a similar title, Althusser asked how relations could be established within the mass movement which will allow the free development of the people's initiatives while transcending the usual distinction between the party and the trade union. Louis Althusser, "The Crisis of Marxism," *Marxism Today*, (July 1978): 220. In the same article, Althusser traced three reactions to the said crisis. What is glaring is Althusser's absence of appreciation to the third world initiatives at the time that are mainly guided by Mao Zedong Thought then. These initiatives were also reactions to the perceived crisis of Marxism by establishing continuity-ruptures from Marxism-Leninism, especially using its anti-revisionist position.

⁹⁵⁷ Joseph Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism*, n.d.; available from <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1924/foundations-leninism/ch03.htm>; 10 February 2019.

⁹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

mobilizing towards the revolutionary cause not only the classic proletariat but also the broad masses exploited and oppressed by both foreign and local forces, the inexistents of a particular situation. Assigning to the category of the masses a revolutionary role is not revisionism of a basic Marxist principle but “a theoretical expansion” of the classic category of the proletariat which this time, in the peripheral regions, assumes the expanded category of the “masses.”⁹⁵⁹

The masses can come in manifold appearances under different garments of oppression.⁹⁶⁰ They are dispersed in varied socio-economic circumstances whose idiosyncrasies generate multiple sites of oppression, and likewise dispersed and contingent forms of struggle. Movements explode according to the immediate interests of these sites, and they could likewise be immediately extinguished if a “supplement that extends beyond [these dispersed movements’] immediacy” is wanting.⁹⁶¹ For Dean, crowds or movements are primarily determined by their immediacy which makes them temporary collective entities.⁹⁶² They are not only temporary but also spontaneous as discussed above. It is therefore the task of the party to 1) supplement the movements’ immediacy in order to sustain a more protracted and scaled struggle; 2) unite these multiple forms of struggle towards a general political line; and 3) raise the movements’ spontaneity into a thoroughly revolutionary movement.⁹⁶³ In Badiouian terms, the party, equipped with the ideological,

⁹⁵⁹ Moufawad-Paul, *Continuity and Rupture*, 147. According to him, this is not a mere replacement of the proletariat with the masses but a deployment “of the latter concept as a substitute for the simplistic *working-class*.” Ibid.

⁹⁶⁰ For Moufawad-Paul, “class is always clothed in the garments of oppression.” Ibid., 148.

⁹⁶¹ Dean, *Crowds and Party*, 12.

⁹⁶² Ibid.

political, and organizational strength, sustains the needed fidelity to an eventual rupture. Further, its procedure of fidelity, unlike the masses' spontaneous movement, creates a counter-state as it does not simply work on immediate presentation but on representation, on institutionalizing what formerly is regarded by the old order as impossible.

In its dialectical relation with the masses, the party becomes a native to their various movements but at the same time unites the multiplicity of the masses' movements to a unified political line. Again, this relationship is characterized by the process of indigenization where the party is begotten of the identity of the other while the other is united through a single leadership. This means that emancipatory politics neither belongs to the masses in their movements nor in the party in their leadership alone but in the dialectical relation of indigenization of both the party and the masses. Politics is determined by the party-masses fusion. Such a fusion requires the protracted character of revolutionary time and the mass line of creating a revolutionary space.

e. The Party-Masses and the State

In figure 1, the party is the small red dot within the larger space of the mass movement. This diagram signifies the party-masses fusion, the party within the ocean of the masses' movements.

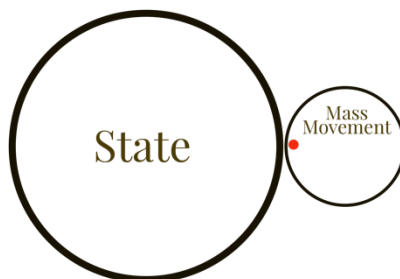


Fig. 1

⁹⁶³ As the Bay Area Communist Union pointed out, "it is through the leadership of the communist party that mass movements pass from spontaneity and become thoroughly revolutionary." Bay Area Communist Union, *The Party Building Movement Today*, July 1977; available from <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-5/bacu-2/resolution1.htm>; 10 February 2019.

Since the mass movement is composed of elements unrepresented by the State, they are outside of the State. By saying they are outside of the State, they are not represented within the State machinery and that their existence is reduced to the barest minimum characteristic already of an inexistence. The party, being the concentration of subjects faithful to an event, is on the edge of the void confronting but also overcoming the State. This is in keeping with the basic Badiouian principle that political events are always outside of the State's logic.⁹⁶⁴

The party-masses' engagement or confrontation with the State is characterized by a mobilizational politics. By mobilizational, this politics is characterized by the constant movement of the masses with the party as its core to achieve identified political objectives. As will be discussed subsequently, this politics combines both legal and illegal forms of struggle not only to attain the identified objectives but also to preserve political autonomy against statist subjection. Here, emancipatory politics is located within the party-masses fusion itself and sources its procedure and operation not from within the State apparatus but from within the fusion mentioned. In other words, it is the party and the masses, in their active deliberation, dialogue, criticism and self-criticism, and mutual work that determine the procedure of the State's overcoming. By sourcing from the party-masses fusion the procedure of the political process, emancipatory politics gains a certain level of autonomy. But what does this autonomy look like?

In China, for example, the organs of political power were gradually developed as the new democratic revolution was waged by the communists in the hinterlands. From the perspective of the State, such an inventive struggle is illegal, thus escaping the hold or count of the State. Even while the Kuomintang government was holding political power, the Communist Party of China was already establishing political power in the countryside.

⁹⁶⁴ Badiou, *Being and Event.*, 111 and 178.

These organs were regarded as “governments of the workers, peasants and soldiers” that protractedly carried the agrarian revolution.⁹⁶⁵ These organs collectively became a counter-state established within a supposed territory of the Kuomintang State. And as a counter-state, these organs were already confronting the land problem and institutionalizing reforms *as if* they were the State.⁹⁶⁶ In this regard, the party-masses fusion achieved a certain level of autonomy in carrying out the policy of land reform. While engaging the State, they engaged it on their own terms as they built for themselves an autonomous political power the resources of which were solely derived in the party-masses fusion. In its active participation with the politics, the mass movement would already enlarge. Consequently, the party would also grow in proportion to the mass movement (see figure 2).

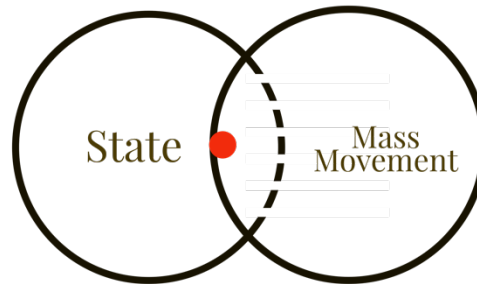


Fig. 2

Under bourgeois dictatorship, the State is thoroughly counter-revolutionary. Hence, in no uncertain terms does Maoism still affirm the Marxist principle of the seizure of political power as the State has to be gradually abolished. After the victory of a proletarian revolution and under proletarian dictatorship, the State is *still* counter-revolutionary. This is what Marx precisely meant in 1871 when, assessing the Paris Commune, he explained that

⁹⁶⁵ Mao Zedong, “The Struggle in the Chingkang Mountains,” in *Mao Tse-Tung: Collected Works*, vol. 1, 75-76.

⁹⁶⁶ Mao Zedong, “The Work of Land Reform and of Party Consolidation in 1948,” in *Mao Tse-Tung: Collected Works*, vol. 4, 257.

“the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.”⁹⁶⁷ This is also why Lenin unwaveringly argued for the withering away of the state.⁹⁶⁸ If the State could be revolutionary, then there would have been no sense of gradually abolishing it. This is one of Badiou’s sharpest points. For him, “even if the route of political change... is always bordered by the State, it cannot in anyway let itself be guided by the latter, for *the State is precisely non-political,*” i.e., it cannot be the locus of an emancipatory politics.⁹⁶⁹ This also is in line with an earlier assertion that politics is within the indigenized process of the party-masses fusion. Badiou was at his sharpest (again, during his thoroughly Maoist years) when he concluded that the bourgeois inversion of the proletariat is modern revisionism.⁹⁷⁰ And while Mao certainly pointed out that these revisionists comfortably hide within the party itself, it must also be highlighted that they conveniently utilize the State to defend their counter-revolutionary objectives.⁹⁷¹

However, this does not mean an absolute distantiation from the State. In other words, emancipatory politics must not avoid the State. This is also where Badiou would err (and where a Maoist reformulation of politics is required), as he would already surrender to the

⁹⁶⁷ Karl Marx, “The Civil War in France,” in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 584.

⁹⁶⁸ Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 15-20.

⁹⁶⁹ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 110. Emphasis added.

⁹⁷⁰ Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 9.

⁹⁷¹ Consider for example the recent crackdown of the CPC against young Maoist intellectuals in Beijing. CPC takes full recourse to state apparatuses (and launched surveillances, threats, and arrests) in order to curb the resurging Maoist movement both among the intellectuals and the working class. See Benjamin Haas, “Student Activists Detained in China for Supporting Workers’ Rights,” *The Guardian*, 12 November 2018, retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/12/ten-student-activists-detained-in-china-for-supporting-workers-rights>; 10 February 2019, and Mimi Lau, Chinese Campus Crackdown on young Marxist Activists Expands in Major Cities,” *South China Morning Post*, 14 November 2018, retrieved from <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/2173090/chinese-campus-crackdown-young-marxist-activists-expands-major>; 10 February 2019.

practice of separating politics from the State. Anxious of the past failures of what he refers to as the suture of the party-State, Badiou would reject any form of struggle that is deployed within State structures. This is so because for him, the party-State is a space which only allows either formalism or terror, the former referring to the managerial tasks of state bureaucracies, the latter pointing to excessive subjective force in purges.⁹⁷² Freedom of thought and, ultimately, politics, for Badiou, is a distancing from the State.⁹⁷³ Jason Barker aptly expresses this anti-statist politics of Badiou. For him, Badiou's notion of emancipatory politics withdraws "from all forms of political representation" and shows no interests in parliamentary struggles.⁹⁷⁴

Previous historical experiences prove that the party could not be reduced to the party-State fusion. Also, Lenin already warned about an infantile leftist disorder which dismisses as anti-Marxist any legal or parliamentary struggle in behalf of the proletariat. It was and is not only correct but also obligatory to creatively combine both legal and illegal forms of struggle, and that it was and is still obligatory to join even in the most reactionary parliament.⁹⁷⁵ Through the State Duma, the parliamentary body of then Tsarist Russia, the Bolsheviks were able to do agitational and propaganda work, resulting to a massive support of the workers to the communist cause.⁹⁷⁶ Mao himself unhesitatingly engaged State power under the Kuomintang regime. What is more interesting is that this engagement is not one which directly aims at obliterating bourgeois State power, but one which rather talks peace

⁹⁷² Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 113.

⁹⁷³ Badiou, *Metapolitics*, 43.

⁹⁷⁴ Jason Barker, "Translator's Introduction," in Badiou, *Metapolitics*, xii.

⁹⁷⁵ Lenin, "Left-wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder," in *Lenin: Collected Works*, vol. 31, 36.

⁹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

with it but with the long-term and protracted view of ultimately obliterating it. This was the time when China was aggressively attacked by the Japanese forces and the Chinese communists, in order to defeat a common enemy, had to establish an anti-Japanese united front. Far from being revisionist, Mao was simply applying his theory of dialectics, of being able to sharply analyze the principal contradiction and the principal aspects of the contradiction. According to him, after the war with Japan, both the CPC and the Kuomintang might “bring about a new stage of cooperation” which will prompt the party “to master all methods of legal struggle and intensify its work in the Kuomintang areas.”⁹⁷⁷ However, without any trace of confusion or hesitation, Mao was preparing the movement should the Kuomintang still wage a counter-revolutionary civil war against the communists. According to him, the “Party is powerful, and if anyone attacks [it] and if the conditions are favourable for battle, [the party] will certainly act in self-defence to wipe [the Kuomintang] out resolutely, thoroughly, wholly and completely.”⁹⁷⁸ History has shown that Mao was sincere in wiping out the bourgeois State of the Kuomintang, even while initially engaging with it. Rather than being drawn towards and in turn retaining the bourgeois Kuomintang State, Mao advanced by seizing power through a proletarian revolution and thereby started the socialist revolution and construction.⁹⁷⁹

⁹⁷⁷ Mao Zedong, “On Peace Negotiations with the Kuomintang: Circular of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol.4, 48-49.

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁹ Another reading suggests that Mao Zedong modified the Koumintang State. Robert Bedeski argued that the program Mao employed for building the socialist State followed the broad guidelines of the second united front. Emphasized in this regard is the bourgeois democratic stage as envisioned by Sun Yat-sen. He concluded that if such a formulation is correct, then it could be said that the system of State of the People’s Republic of China, at least until the Cultural Revolution, is a modification, if not a fulfillment, of the Koumintang state, rather than its complete elimination. Robert Bedeski, “The Concept of the State: Sun Yat-Sen and Mao Tse-Tung,” *The China Quarterly* 70, (June 1977): 354. In either case, it is not the Koumintang State as it is that was retained after the revolution as socialist aspects both of its politics and economy primarily defined it.

Dismissing the State because it is thoroughly counter-revolutionary misses how through the State also initial socialist constructions were accomplished (as shown by Lenin and Mao). Because the State is thoroughly counter-revolutionary, it also has to be thoroughly engaged, not distanced. And it can only be engaged through a faithful procedure of an event that creates a counter-state or an ultra-state. It is an ultra-state because, unlike the traditional notion of the State which is the perpetuation of one class rule, this State, faithful to a bygone event, radically aims at its own dialectical abolition. Being a faithful procedure of the event, the engagement with the State through the party-masses fusion could only be in a mobilizational form of politics, a procedure which determines politics from the resources of the said fusion itself.

In figure 2, the counter-state is represented by the overlap between the state and the mass movement. But it is not thoroughly a State in the sense of the existing (bourgeois) State for two reasons. One, the bourgeois dictatorship is still well established (represented by the larger space of the State compared to that of the counter-state). Second, as the counter-state is already broken from within (represented by the dotted lines), it already allows the masses or the inexistents to directly participate in its protracted overcoming. The party lies at the core of both the counter state and the mass movement and assumes its vanguard role by directly confronting the State head on.

Being a counter-state that engages the State, the aforementioned organs of political power were determined to overthrow the armed forces of the feudal lords in order to establish and consolidate that of the peasants.⁹⁸⁰ As the revolution advanced, the forces led by the Communist Party of China were able to seize political power (as represented in figure

⁹⁸⁰ Mao Zedong, "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan," in Mao Tse-Tung: Collected Works, vol. 1, 41.

3). Here, it must be remembered that the party, being the concentrated force that will seize national political power, must be national in character. This is against Dean’s contention for an international communist party.⁹⁸¹ While proletarians are internationalists, commencing proletarian struggles in international levels actually do not make sense as capital is sustained by a national State.⁹⁸²

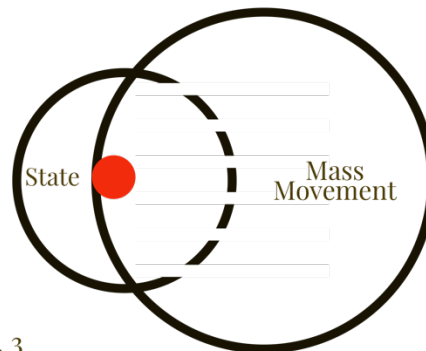


Fig. 3

Again, what has to be re-affirmed in this seizure of political power is the basic Marxist principle of the withering away of the State, as it is resolutely counter-revolutionary. In figure 3 for example, the old State is relatively smaller this time compared to the counter-state, i.e, the new dictatorship, that of the proletariat. This is also to emphasize the need to sustain massive mass movements even after the seizure of political power. This is the case because power has been seized from the bourgeoisies (and all reactionary classes) but the bourgeois understanding of the State and the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois views may still

⁹⁸¹ Jodi Dean, “The Party and Communist Solidarity,” *Rethinking Marxism* 27(3), (2015): 332.

⁹⁸² The irony of neoliberalism is that, while it claims for capital’s absolute autonomy from the State, during times of financial crises, however, it is the State that salvages capital, specifically finance capital, in the form of bail outs. In the US for example, at least \$200 billion was invested by the Treasury Department to “prop up capital and support new lending.” Special Report, “Bailed Out Banks,” *CNN*, 17 November 2008; available from <https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=bailout+for+finance+capital&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8;> 07 June 2019.

be existing even after the victory of the revolution.⁹⁸³ Jean Daubier reminded how contradictions in the division of labor of the old society, for example, could be inherited by the new socialist society.⁹⁸⁴ The continuity of residual elements of past contradictions rationalizes the State's continued existence in a socialist society so that proper division of the gross national product on the basis of one's work or contribution may be enforced.⁹⁸⁵ This notion of inherited contradictions from the old society in a new society gave the Chinese socialist State then an enormous task as it not only inherited bourgeois but also feudal economic, cultural, and political practices.

Democratic parties other than the communist party could still exist and are allowed to exist in this counter-state. As Mao insisted (in the early phase of their socialist revolution, i.e., in 1956), it is better to have several parties as this means "long-term coexistence and mutual supervision."⁹⁸⁶ But this should in no way hinder the ultimate goal of communism.⁹⁸⁷

⁹⁸³ In other words, bourgeois ideology still has an influence both on the level of ideas and material organizational structures like the state and the party. Jörg Nowak, "Louis Althusser's Critique of the Communist Party and the Question of the Postrevolutionary State," *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture, and Society* 29(2), (2017): 239.

⁹⁸⁴ Daubier, *A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 3-7.

⁹⁸⁵ Ibid. 7.

⁹⁸⁶ Mao Zedong, "On the Ten Major Relations," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5, 173.

⁹⁸⁷ In post-Mao China years, while there was the absolute leadership of the communist party, such a party had actually deviated from the goal of communism. Several instances could be cited that would prove this claim. The political restoration of Deng Xiaoping eventually restored his "reformist" dreams. In the guise of reducing "bureaucratic centralised management of the economy and eliminate bureaucratic and political impediments," Deng opened the formerly co-operative and socialist types of ownership in agriculture and industry into private ownership amongst party cadres. See Clem Tisdell, "Economic Reform and Openness in China: China's Development Policies in the Last Thirty Years," *Economic Theory, Applications, and Issues* 55, (2009): 7. Through the years, the Chinese communist party have integrated itself with the private sector either "by co-opting entrepreneurs into the Party" and/or "encouraging current Party members to go into business." Bruce Dickson, "Integrating Wealth and Power in China: The Communist Party's Embrace of the Private Sector," *The China Quarterly* 192, (2007): 827. It would have been easy for the deposed landlord and bourgeois classes to enter and climb into party leadership as it was also during Deng's reformist years that he reversed the policy of non-acceptance of known relatives and family members of deposed landlords and bourgeoisies into the universities. In the guise of favoring academic merit over familial relations, unremolded petty-bourgeoisies were given opportunities to secure the needed cultural capital. Tisdell, "Economic Reform

Hence, the counter-state, as represented by that part with broken lines (See Fig. 3), is starting the process of its protracted withering away. In the Chinese experience, this meant opposing bureaucracy and “a cumbersome apparatus” by streamlining the government organs and reducing it by two-thirds.⁹⁸⁸

As it confronts the State, the party and the mass movement would temporarily take control of and work within some of the State institutions. The taking control is temporary in line with the protracted process of the State’s withering away. However, in the same way that the Chinese army apparatus then assumed a radically mass-oriented character during the Great Leap Forward and especially the GPCR, the party-masses fusion should also see to it that initial transformations of the State – its bureaucracy and apparatuses – be immediately carried out. This requires that the State has to be regarded as an entity in contradiction. The early years of the Chinese socialist revolution has an experience in this regard.

Political power was regarded as both “state form” (or *guoti*, 国体) and “government form” (or *zhengti* 政体).⁹⁸⁹ The State form refers to the social relations among various classes, e.g., its identity as a dictatorship of the revolutionary classes or of the proletariat. The State form identifies the class basis and the constitution of a political power. On the

and Openness in China: China’s Development Policies in the Last Thirty Years,” *Economic Theory, Applications, and Issues* 55, (2009): 5. Later, Deng would also reform the strategy of administering economic and political affairs. From opting for both reds and experts who are tempered with the particularities of the socialist revolution, administration has become professionalized, trusting only in the (unremolded) academics and scientists the “future of economic development and international standing of China.” Ibid., 7. Today, after decades of reversals of Mao’s achievements, all the basic services and labor itself have been commodified prompting Marxists “to deem modern Chinese society to be anything but socialist.” Tiago Nasser Appel, “Just How Capitalist is China?” *Brazilian Journal of Political Economy* 34 (4), (October-December 2014): 656.

⁹⁸⁸ Ibid., 174. The cutting of the government organs by two-thirds should be done provided that “no person dies and no work stops” and should not mean “getting rid of the democratic parties.” Ibid.

⁹⁸⁹ Douglas Howland, “Popular Sovereignty and Democratic Centralism in the People’s Republic of China,” *Social Text* 30, (1), (2012): 1.

other hand, the government form is the organizational basis of political power. Here, a specific class consolidates its power through the mobilization of various apparatuses and institutions. The governmental form, being the organizational basis of a political power, follows the system of democratic centralism.⁹⁹⁰

Being a State in transition, a State on the way towards its own withering, it could only be a State in contradiction. The point or moment of this contradiction is its intersection with the party-masses in their fusion. Here, it is not the party nor the masses in their movements alone that engage or intersect with the State, but their fusion, determined by an indigenized politics and deploys a mobilizational politics. The withering away of the State could only be through a communist movement of the party-masses. This means that the State should be organized according to the democratic centralism of the party-masses where popular sovereignty determines policy and party discipline concentrates the vision and the gains of the said policy.

The withering away of the State, unlike how anarchists imagine it to be, does not happen overnight.⁹⁹¹ But aside from stressing the protracted process of the State's withering away, what has to be emphasized as well, coming from the Maoist theory of dialectics, is that the condition for the State's withering away is internal, not external, to it. Which means to say, the State can only disintegrate and wither away from within. External factors may hasten the entire process, but it is the internal force which is decisive in this regard. Opposing what he called as the metaphysical outlook, Mao argued that the development of a thing is caused fundamentally by its internal contradictions. While the external

⁹⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁹¹ As discussed by Lenin in Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 51.

contradictions are conditions of change, the internal causes are the basis of change.⁹⁹² Badiou still subscribes to the idea of the withering away of the State.⁹⁹³ However, Badiou's silence on the same concept in *Being and Event* is troubling, because this exposes a certain contradiction in Badiou. While in other works he mentions the withering away of the State as the characteristic of communism, it is however untouched and undeveloped using the formal language of mathematics in his *Magnum Opus*.⁹⁹⁴ This will cast doubt as to the fidelity of the method of mathematics or set theory to the principles of Marxism.

The Party as a Scission as the only Possible Being of the Party

The internal disintegration of the State once again invokes the role of a vanguard party that, in Badiouian terms, works on the representation, institutionalization, and legalization of the eventual consequences. In the case of the Chinese experience, both before and after their victory in 1949, the counter-state that was led by the party worked on to organize the eventual consequences initiated by past events like the Paris Commune, the October Revolution, and the Soviet Socialist Construction. While waging the national democratic revolution, the party adopted a political economy of people's war.⁹⁹⁵ The base areas where organs of political power were established became self-reliant and self-sufficient.⁹⁹⁶ The party protractedly responded to feudal problems through the reduction of

⁹⁹² Mao Zedong, "On Contradiction," in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 69-70.

⁹⁹³ Alain Badiou and Peter Engelmann, *Philosophy and the Idea of Communism*, trans. Susan Spitzer (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 48.

⁹⁹⁴ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 248 and 256; Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 325.

⁹⁹⁵ Selden, "Mao Zedong and the Political Economy of Chinese Development," in *China Report*, 126.

⁹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 127.

land rent and interest loans and the implementation of tax reforms.⁹⁹⁷ Mutual aid and cooperation were institutionalized and a mixed economy that not only determined the typologies of proprietorship but also effectively responded to the problem of production was formalized.⁹⁹⁸ During the socialist revolution and construction, the party still displayed a “fidelity to the core principles of the political economy of People’s War in the evolution of rural policy.”⁹⁹⁹ The core of the strategy is redistributive land reform.¹⁰⁰⁰ Later, the party would adopt the political economy of the Great Leap Forward characterized by national industrialization and collectivization.¹⁰⁰¹

The indigenized relation of the party-masses fusion and its mobilizational politics against the State is decisive for the latter’s overcoming. Sison explained that “no socialist state and society can ever arise and develop if there were no revolutionary party of the proletariat that leads the people’s army and the masses in overthrowing the bourgeois state.”¹⁰⁰² This is why notions attempting to situate the party outside of the State, including that of Badiou, is wrong. This party outside of the State is also Jörg Nowak’s misreading of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.¹⁰⁰³ A State is always entangled with party

⁹⁹⁷ Ibid., 127-129.

⁹⁹⁸ Ibid., 129-132.

⁹⁹⁹ Ibid., 133.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰¹ Ibid., 134-137.

¹⁰⁰² Correspondence with Jose Maria Sison, 18 November 2019.

¹⁰⁰³ Nowak reads Althusser’s demand for a party outside of the state to be a Maoist one. Nowak, “Louis Althusser’s Critique of the Communist Party and the Question of the Postrevolutionary State,” *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture, and Society*, 251. This reading however is wrong. While Mao indeed mobilized the masses against the party *nomenclatura*, he however preserved the party as he recognized that there are still a number of good party members and cadres. Mao Zedong, “Summary of Chairman Mao’s Talks with Responsible Comrades at Various Places During his Provincial Tour,” in *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, 299. Mao had already laid out the task of the proletarian state which he

dynamics and vice-versa. As the analysis of Petr Kopecký suggests, the symbiosis between parties and states (in post-communist Europe, for example) manifests as either “the dependence of parties on the state, the management of parties by the state, and the parties’ colonization of the state.”¹⁰⁰⁴ As will be elaborated, neither of these, however, correctly applies to the proletarian party and the ultra-state.

Unlike bourgeois parties, the communist party only needs the State for a while. Specifically, it needs the State not for freedom’s sake but for defeating its antagonists; as soon as it is possible to talk of freedom, the State, as such, will cease to exist.¹⁰⁰⁵ In other words, it is not for the sake of freedom or democracy that the party seizes power, for if this were the case, then the party would be no different to other political parties. The party takes hold of political power exactly because of the State’s counter-revolutionary character, its impure character. Like a miner who refines an ore from its impure elements by eventually obliterating the ore in order to give way to the precious gold, the party purifies the State from its counter-revolutionary elements (both in structure and superstructure), by eventually obliterating the State (and itself), in order to give way to the golden stage of communism. It is not for nothing that Badiou describes that “the party *is* purification.”¹⁰⁰⁶ It is purification in a twofold sense. On the one hand, it purifies itself from the tendencies and errors of

described, even until the Cultural Revolution Years, as a people’s democratic dictatorship (it was only in the 1975 Constitution that the dictatorship of the proletariat was recognized. See Bedeski, “The Concept of the State: Sun Yat-Sen and Mao Tse-Tung,” *The China Quarterly*, 338. For Mao, this dictatorship has an internal function, i.e., “to suppress the reactionary classes and elements and those exploiters who resist the socialist revolution...” Mao Zedong, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 133.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Petr Kopecký, “Political Parties and the State in Post-Communist Europe: The Nature of Symbiosis,” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 22 (3), (September 2006): 251.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 73.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 38.

modern revisionism; on the other hand, it purifies the State from both the counterrevolutionaries and their representatives in the State, who also are the modern revisionists. The revisionists, again, do not only hide in the party but also in the State. In this regard, it is correct to say that the internal purification of the proletariat from modern revisionism is what determines its dialectical actuality today.¹⁰⁰⁷

The revisionists are the tares which the reapers, the communists, have to weed out. Lenin's metaphor is telling in this regard. For him, "it is not [the communist's] business to grow wheat in flower-pots."¹⁰⁰⁸ The party becomes the dirty field where the wheats and all the other weeds *may* grow. There shall be no illusion of finding an unblemished "flower-pot," a pure political collective that only grows the best of the wheats. The party is impure, that is why it undergoes the protracted process of purification, of self-criticisms, and rectifications. The method of criticisms and self-criticisms have always been an important ideological tool of Marxists to improve styles of work and methods of leadership.¹⁰⁰⁹ The effects of "closed-door" self-criticism sessions even work minimally despite the distortion and mockery done to it by the current Communist Party of China whose members' ego were bruised after supposedly being criticized.¹⁰¹⁰ Against the communists of the 1930's, it shall be said that the party is not always right, although it constantly struggles for what is right.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid., 9.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Lenin, *What is to be Done?* 113.

¹⁰⁰⁹ In advising his party comrades, Mao clarified that "conscientious practice of self-criticism is still another hallmark distinguishing our Party from all other political parties." Describing the need to constantly rectify erring standpoints and practices, Mao, using metaphors, continued that "dust will accumulate if a room is not cleaned regularly, our faces will get dirty if they are not washed regularly." In the same way, Mao concluded that the minds of party comrades and the party's work "may also collect dust, and also need sweeping and washing." Mao Zedong, "On Coalition Government," in *Mao Tse-Tung: Collected Works*, vol. 3, 266.

¹⁰¹⁰ Dan Levin, "China Revives Mao-era Self-Criticism, but this Kind Bruises Egos," *The New York Times*, 20 December 2013; available from <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/21/world/asia/china-revives-mao-era-self-criticism-but-this-kind-bruises-few-egos.html>; 22 May 2019.

Through criticism and self-criticism, the party can keenly recognize errors, weed them out, and rectify itself to develop further its proletarian standpoint, viewpoint, and method.¹⁰¹¹ In rectifying itself, it prepares a thousand-fold of reapers tasked “not only to cut down the tares of today, but [also] to reap the wheat of tomorrow.”¹⁰¹² The only criterion for this reapers, in this regard, is the readiness to sustain itself in the struggle and the willingness to criticize itself especially in front of the masses and not behind closed-doors.

From this perspective, criticism and self-criticism is an effective anti-thesis against the mad drive of purging, whether within or outside party elements. Mao’s theory of contradictions illustrated how the party should discriminate as to the form of the contradiction involved, whether it is antagonistic or not.¹⁰¹³ Especially among elements within the party and among the masses, the method of criticism and self-criticism should be consciously pursued against erring individuals so as to cure the sickness and save the sick. Also, since contradictions express themselves in the ideological dimension, it should likewise be pursued and engaged ideologically (not militarily, as Frunze’s Doctrine seem to suggest). The proletarian spirit of persuasion and principled criticism should be the weapon against ideas or tendencies that obviously run counter to the achievements and objectives of socialism. The party has to excel in engaging ideologically its perceived enemies, no matter how hard this engagement entails. For only through it can the mass line be carried out in its intent.

¹⁰¹¹ As Mao explains, “we have the Marxist-Leninist weapon of criticism and self-criticism. We can get rid of a bad style and keep the good.” Mao Zedong, “Report to the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 4, 374.

¹⁰¹² Ibid.

¹⁰¹³ Mao Zedong, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People,” in *Mao: On Practice and Contradiction*, 131.

The purification does not happen in a vacuum. Purification is not an effect of a transcendent grace, but a process sustained by one's integration with the masses. This is why the indigenized relation between the party and the masses requires both protractedness and the mass line as purification could only be gradual, mass-oriented, and mass-dependent. Both the State's internal purification and that of the party necessitates a dialectical relation to a strong communist mass movement. In doing self-criticism, for example, unlike how today's Chinese communist party officials mock the process, the masses should be involved; if not a mere spectator then a critic herself/himself. But in broader terms, purification must happen alongside with and within a mass movement. This mass movement should be guided by the communist cause. To reiterate, communism is nothing more but the *movement* that abolishes the present state of things.¹⁰¹⁴ The mass movement, like those that swept all over China during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, must be critical of both the State and the party. It must not hesitate in unleashing all forms of protests, especially that State and party excesses are still very possible at this time. Since the State is essentially detached from immediate society, as Lenin's *State and Revolution* and Badiou's *Being and Event* have demonstrated, it can never create a (communist) mass movement, nor will it integrate itself with the masses.¹⁰¹⁵ It will no longer be the State if it was the case. In this regard, only the party in its indigenized character can create a strong and enduring mass movement. And it can only do so if it solidly links and identifies itself with the masses. The mass line, once again, resurfaces as an integral process in the being of the party. The party can only be so

¹⁰¹⁴ Marx, "The German Ideology," in *Karl Marx Selected Writings*, 187.

¹⁰¹⁵ Explaining Engels, Lenin argued that the state is a power that arises from society, but places "itself above it and becoming more and more separated from it." Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 10. Badiou also explains that the State, through the count of inclusion or representation, forms a one out of the parts, subsets, or classes in the immediate presentation, thus ultimately separating itself from the latter. Badiou, *Being and Event*, 106-107.

long as it is rooted in the different sectors and areas of the mass movement, both learning from and leading the latter. The protracted rooting of the party in the mass movement is its internal process of purification and the condition for the lengthy process of its own withering away.

It can be said, therefore, that the party is a scission. On the one hand, it is immersed in the counter-revolutionary state, doing administrative jobs that help establish a socialist economy and mobilizing State resources in order to suppress the revisionists and the deposed counter-revolutionary elements. On the other hand, it is also integrated in the progressive movement of the masses. This is because the masses and the masses alone, according to Mao, are the driving force of history.¹⁰¹⁶ But such a statement should in no way deny the instances where the masses could fail in this historic task, especially if left unguided. Mao explained that “if the masses alone are active without a strong leading group to organize their activity properly, such activity cannot be sustained for long, or carried forward in the right direction, or raised to a high level.”¹⁰¹⁷ Mao stressed the danger of an unguided Masses, something which might turn out to be pure mob or vengeful violence. Badiou even affirms this view of Mao. He said that “the masses themselves, in their static being, their structural positioning, their statist placement, constitute the historical world.” Badiou refers here to the immediacy of the masses’ presentation in the world. He continued that it is from the basis of the masses that “any figure of the State draws its sustenance, and it is from the consensus that holds them together that any given social being receives its

¹⁰¹⁶ Mao Zedong, “On Coalition Government,” *Marxist.org*, 24 April 1945; available from https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_25.htm; 03 June 2020.

¹⁰¹⁷ Mao Zedong, “Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership,” *Marxist.org*, 01 June 1943; available https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_13.htm; 03 June 2020.

definition.” These masses “not make history so much as they *are* history.”¹⁰¹⁸ Here Badiou iterates the danger of how the masses could become the support of the State’s integrity itself. There is the need to organize the masses into a combative force. Hence Badiou, again, explains, “a minimal and purified political heterogeneity is a hundred times more combative than a parliamentary armada of represented struggles.”¹⁰¹⁹ The problem of organization, presupposes a party leadership which for Mao could effectively be executed only through the mass line. This could only be a party in scission signified by the party-masses fusion.

In this regard, the party, as a scission, is a Two, not a One. Once again, Badiou’s ontology that the one is not is properly embodied by the party. The party as a decision is a *de*-scission: a total scission from between the institutional counter-revolutionary State and the progressive yet contingent movement of the masses. The party in its scission institutionalizes, through a careful fidelity to the event, the consequences of the latter. As a Two, the party cannot be absolutely counted-as-one by the State as, through its *de*-scission, it has always something included in it that is uncounted by the state, the unrepresented masses, the inexistents on the edge of the void. Hence, in its mobilizational form of politics, the party-masses fusion is a relation of non-relation with the State.

As a scission, the party is an interval between the excess (of the State) and the void (which wanders in a historical situation during mass riotous episodes). The excess (of the State) becomes a negation that invalidates some existences (of the unrepresented) and even the event itself. Only through the decision of the party can the consequences of the event proceed; the State can only normalize the event. If for Badiou singularities and events can be

¹⁰¹⁸ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 63.

¹⁰¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

neutralized or normalized by the State, it must be the obligation of the party to support the singularities of the inexistents in the edge of the void against the normalizing and counter-revolutionary tendencies of the State.¹⁰²⁰

The party as the interval becomes the protracted process of the voiding of the excess (of the State and the party itself), and it can only do so if it takes its collective strength from the masses, from the inexistents on the edge of the void. By interval, the party becomes the historical process that culminates from its direct confrontation with the State up to the ultimate point shortly before the voiding or dissolution of classes, the State, and itself.¹⁰²¹ Again, by interval, the party only comes to be upon the darkness of the State's excesses, persisting in the struggle, until eventually the dawn of the new day comes. The party lingers by the night, seeing only the dawn but not the new day itself as it would have been dissolved by then.

In this regard, this interval or gap between excess and the void must be sustained (by the party). In other words, the interval, as a process, should not be institutionalized for such would only absolutize the being of the party. The interval can only be supported by the party-masses fusion, a party strongly and protractedly integrated with the masses. The mass line sustains the gap between the party and the masses; the mass line is a constant reminder that the State is always excessive and counter-revolutionary (which demands it to be voided, but not avoided) and that the contingent mass movement (of the inexistents) needs the protracted process of the party. Stalin's mistrust of the peasant masses was not only a

¹⁰²⁰ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 176.

¹⁰²¹ Mao explained that both the communist and democratic parties are all products of history. And all that emerges in history also disintegrates in history. He concluded that the party will disappear one day, and also the democratic parties. Mao Zedong, "On the Ten Major Relations," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 5, 174.

display of a negative attitude towards the latter, but also a positive demonstration of State excess made possible because of the absolutization and the instrumentalization of the party. Monolithic and bureaucratized communist parties no longer serve as processes and intervals; rather, they have solidified into strong bridges that facilitate the normalization and the colonization by the state of the inexistents. With the mass line wanting, the revisionist parties like the CPSU then and the CPC today become the instruments of State counter-revolution. They have become effective instruments for the count-as-one of the State, as they themselves have become a One (devoid from the inexistent masses).

There is then an affinity between the event and the party. Both follow the structure of the Two. Like the event's belonging to a situation as a mere interval, the party's inclusion (as it works on the realm of fidelity, of institutionalizations, of legalizations) in the State is also an interval: the Party disappears the moment it actualizes its objective (the voiding of the State).¹⁰²² While it institutionalizes (the consequences of the event), as an interval, it does not institutionalize itself and the State. The event is pregnant with the new. The party could only be a midwife to the birthing of the new. The act of birthing is the institutionalization of the pregnancy's potentialities. With the birth of the new, the midwife is rendered useless and will disappear together with what before was mere potentiality.

There is no other way that the party can condition the State's internal and gradual withering away than through drawing massive strength from the mass movement. In societies where communist parties have already assumed State power, all the more should the party be integrated with the masses. This is the GPCR's greatest lesson. The likes of P'eng, Deng, and Liu maneuvered to dominate the cultural revolution teams and submit the

¹⁰²² As Badiou explains, "an event is an *interval* rather than a term: it establishes itself, in the interventional retroaction, between the empty anonymity bordered on by the site, and the addition of a name." Badiou, *Being and Event*, 206.

latter to the hierarchical structures of party leadership, thereby detaching the party further away from the masses. Detaching the party from the mass movement or dominating them through hierarchical and bureaucratic structures not only widens the gap between the two terms but also obscures the path towards the State's withering away. Mao and the Red Guards struggled to make the movement closer to the party and vice-versa as far as possible *via negativa*, expressed in his command to bombard the party headquarters. Mao was ever conscious of the revolution's ultimate aim, i.e., the withering away of the State.

Because of his bitter experience with the CPSU, Mao was beginning to be aware of the possibility of communist parties turning themselves into bourgeois structures hostile to the interests of the masses. This realization made his resolve to mobilize the masses led by the Red Guards against the party itself. The mobilization of the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution is expressive of Mao's faith in the intellectual youth being a force that could challenge the party and State apparatus. But what is more telling of the Red Guards' composition is the consistency Mao assigned to class and class standpoint. The Red Guards, while intellectuals who enjoyed university education, were specifically composed of the sons and daughters of the poor and middle peasants in the countrysides and the workers in the cities. Mao recognized not in the sons and daughters of the middle class and even party cadres – who earlier was accorded by Liu Shao Chi the privilege of having to go to special schools –but in the sons and daughters of the poor majority the revolutionary determination to challenge State and party power.¹⁰²³ The party was so entrenched in the bureaucratic State apparatus that the latter's withering away became difficult if not impossible. The party became an oxymoron. The mobilization of the Red Guards was directed towards the

¹⁰²³ Gray and Cavendish, *Chinese Communism in Crisis: Maoism and the Cultural Revolution*, 124-126.

ultimate aim of the State's withering away through the strategic outflanking of an entrenched bureaucracy.¹⁰²⁴ As Amin correctly pointed out, "the appeal to mass initiative shook up the bureaucratically centralized system of planning."¹⁰²⁵

The party, as a scission, should move towards its own dialectical resolution. If scission is the form of the party's existence, determination should be its way of being.¹⁰²⁶ In regard to Badiou's notion of scission, the party P is determined by the space of its placement, i.e., the masses M.¹⁰²⁷ In this regard, the indexical instance of the P_M is when it is determined by the masses as its being is integrated with the masses. The party is in contradiction to itself because of its placement within the mass movement. This contradiction is what makes the communist party different from all the other bourgeois and democratic parties.¹⁰²⁸ In the absence of a mass movement, the party either disappears or forcefully institutionalizes itself as a party detached from the mass movement, a misnomer to the great proletarian cause. In today's China, mass movements are rather violently suppressed by no less than the communist party itself. A crackdown is aimed against those workers and students who are raising the banner of Maoism again.¹⁰²⁹

¹⁰²⁴ Ibid., 142.

¹⁰²⁵ Amin, *The Future of Maoism*, 68.

¹⁰²⁶ Badiou discusses that scission is "the form of existence in general" and determination "the unity of the scission." Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, 10.

¹⁰²⁷ See Ibid.

¹⁰²⁸ As Badiou argued, "it is the contradiction that commands difference, and not the other way around." Ibid.

¹⁰²⁹ Yuan Yang, "Inside China's Crackdown on Young Marxists," *Financial Times*, 14 February 2019, retrieved from <https://www.ft.com/content/fd087484-2f23-11e9-8744-e7016697f225>; 09 June 2019. Today's Communist Party of China has become, aside from being integrated with the bourgeoisies, a party of top-ranking college students. As it is already detached from the masses, it draws most of its membership from university students who excelled in their academics but are "obedient to institutional rules and decisions." Guihua Xie and Yangyang Zhang, "Seeking out the Party: A Study of the Communist Party of China's Membership Recruitment among College Students," *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 3 (1), (2017): 98-99. In

In scission, the party is in contradiction to itself. It is both a centralizing political agency that consolidates the gains of the revolution and a democratizing process that allows the collective participation of the masses. In other words, while it is a party in its traditional sense (like some bourgeois or democratic parties), it is also determined by the democratic processes of the masses. Its determination is by way of it being integrated with and determined by the masses. This is why for Mao the organizational principle of the new democratic state is “democratic centralism” because it is democratic and centralized at the same time, i.e., democratic under a central leadership and centralized on the basis of mass democracy.¹⁰³⁰ The party’s democratic centralism necessitates that it both engages the State (to centralize the revolutionary gains) and integrates with the mass movement (to democratize the economic and political processes). A case for example is during the implementation of the co-operative transformation of the agriculture in China. On the one hand, Mao was wary that the party leadership was already lagging behind the peasants’ demand for such a transformation as hundreds of thousands of co-operatives across China had already been established by peasants as well as some party elements. Some cadres were hesitant of such a transformation as they deemed it dangerous, a threat that would eventually break the worker-peasant alliance. But this view clearly disregarded the actual conditions of the vast number of poor peasants in China then who were left by the emerging capitalist relations in the countryside pushed by the rich and middle peasants. As Mao explained, only by carrying forward socialist industrialization and transformation can the worker-

2000, the same party has thoroughly revised its recruitment focus to knowledgeable and technologically literate college students as they are the most important representatives of advanced productive forces. Ibid., 101. As mass movements are suppressed and the mass line is wanting, the Communist Party of China today has been transformed into a technocracy of experts.

¹⁰³⁰ There are the people’s congresses that shape major policies and elect government leaders in various levels. Ibid, 230.

alliance be really strengthened. These cadres, alienated from the actual conditions and uninformed with the democratic consensus of the poor peasants, ultimately produced erroneous ideas and leadership. On the other hand, the socialist transformation should not be left to the spontaneous creativity of the masses. On the contrary, comprehensive planning and effective leadership should characterize the lowest to the highest governmental organs.¹⁰³¹ Leadership must be improved but in such a way that it both considers democracy and centralism, i.e., the democratic interests of the masses institutionalized through a central leadership. But this type of leadership could only be learned by directly participating in the struggle (for socialist transformation in agriculture, for example). As Mao contended, the remolding of both cadres and peasants will take course in the struggles they themselves are bitterly facing. He further argued that they should “go into action... learn and become more competent as they go along.”¹⁰³²

The party’s being as a scission is the sole basis for it and the State to disappear into the void. This is why Mao argued that “proletarian political parties and the dictatorship of the proletariat will be destroyed in the future.”¹⁰³³ The mass movement that determines the party’s determination becomes the third term that will condition the resolution of the party-state contradiction. Without the mass movement and the party solidly linked with it, the State and the classes will simply be. The party can only be the vanishing cause of

¹⁰³¹ Mao Zedong, “On the Co-operative Transformation of Agriculture,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. 4, 122. On the experience of the co-operative transformation in China, see *Ibid.*, 104-126. Also, see John Gurley, “Rural Development in China 1949-72, and the Lessons to be Learned from it,” *World Development* 3 (7-8), (July-August 1975): 460-466.

¹⁰³² *Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁰³³ Mao Zedong, “On the Ten Great Relationships,” in *Mao Zedong Talks to the People*, 75.

communism. So long as it is, communism is not. In the party's and the state's voiding, communism will be founded.

A Truth in Scission

As was already emphasized, Badiou has a rather slippery relationship with Maoism, especially with its vanguardist tradition. This relationship is characterized by both agreements and disagreements. On the one hand, Badiou remains in agreement with this tradition especially with his unwavering struggle against capitalism, bourgeois democracy, and the postmodern ideology with which contemporary democratic (bourgeois) materialism locates its support.¹⁰³⁴ And especially with Mao, Badiou saw in his contributions a “left” critique of the immobile and statist socialism of Stalin.¹⁰³⁵ It is as if Badiou saw in Mao's works a rejuvenating source and inspiration for the struggle not only against capital but also against those who proclaimed Marxism in words but imperialism in deeds, i.e., against the revisionists. In this regard, Maoism is a living reminder that the tragedy of the past world historical revolutions was a tragedy instigated by revisionism. In Badiou's own words, “to the Maoists against the revisionists.”¹⁰³⁶

On the other hand, Badiou is also the name of a rupture against Maoism itself especially that the latter, unlike Badiou, still returned and preserved the category of the party even after the GPCR.¹⁰³⁷ The party for Mao was still the locus of emancipatory politics and

¹⁰³⁴ Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 2.

¹⁰³⁵ Alain Badiou, “An Infinite Leader: A Dialogue Between a Chinese Philosopher and a French Philosopher,” *Leap*, 13, December 2014, retrieved from <http://www.leapleap.com/2015/03/creative-nonfiction-a-lecture-performance-by-alain-badiou/>.

¹⁰³⁶ Alain Badiou, “An Essential Philosophical Thesis: It is Right to Rebel Against Reactionaries,” *Positions*, 13 (3) (2005): 677.

¹⁰³⁷ Mao Zedong, “Summary of Chairman Mao's Talks with Responsible Comrades at Various Places During his Provincial Tour,” in *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, 299.

this belief is anchored on Mao's unwavering trust not with the party itself but with the mass movement in confrontation with the party nomenclature. After all, it was Mao who developed the category of the mass line and applied it, as best as he could, throughout the process of the GPCR. Badiou only sees in this returning to and preservation of the party as leading to the same failure it suffered after the second sequence of the communist hypothesis.

This relationship of agreement and disagreement from within Badiou's politics in relation to Maoism is one which spring from his own novel system. Mathematics guided him towards a wholly novel direction, towards a truth of politics after the GPCR. Yet truth, for Badiou, "only exists in a process of scission," scission against itself as a theory and against practice.¹⁰³⁸ This is why, for him, reason is contradiction and its rightness is tested only through its opposite, practice. This whole process of scission is encapsulated by the Maoist summary of Marxism, "it is right to rebel against reactionaries."¹⁰³⁹ The apparent contradictions in Badiou's theory could only be resolved from within practice itself. But one is not granted the liberty of any practice. Echoing Mao, Badiou insisted that only the "rebellion against reactionaries" internally anchors revolutionary theory (to practice). Out from this resolution in actual revolution, the awaited third sequence of the hypothesis, will a new theory, still in scission, emerge.

The slippery relationship between Badiou and Maoism raises the question whether he is a Maoist. Badiou would consciously distance his idea of communism with what Marxism developed (especially with the latter's insurrectionary politics). In several

¹⁰³⁸ Alain Badiou, "An Essential Philosophical Thesis: It Is Right to Rebel against Reactionaries," *Positions* 13 (3) (2005): 677.

¹⁰³⁹ *Ibid.*

accounts, and especially in *The Theory of the Subject*, Badiou seems to be a Maoist. But in his later works, he would also reject one key category of Maoism, i.e., the party. It would be accurate to evaluate him as a neo-Maoist and his contributions neo-Maoism. This means three things. First, Badiou advances the communist idea but not through the Maoist (or even Trotskyite) party. Second, Badiou highlights the role of mass movements structured according to the logic of the GPCR model but without the movement having to positively or negatively confront the State. Third, Badiou asserts the protractedness of a revolutionary duration but without the aspect of a war.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary

This research developed a reformulation of the communist hypothesis. The first chapter discussed the rationale, the theoretical background, and the problem. The rationale briefly explained Badiou's concept of politics and how out from this he reformulated the communist hypothesis. Since his reformulation is supported by a reductionist reading of the party and its politics, the rationale further discussed why Maoism, with its indigenized and mobilizational politics, and the consequent party-masses fusion come out as an alternative way of reformulating the communist hypothesis. The section stressed how through this the reformulation is based on the narrative of success rather than of defeat. The chapter hinted how out from the party-masses fusion, the notion of a party in *scission* provides the basis for a Maoist reformulation of the communist hypothesis.

The second chapter explained Badiou's ontology, emancipatory politics, and his notion of the communist hypothesis. The chapter elaborated how Badiou's ontology is solidly supported by set theory mathematics and how the latter likewise worked well with his ontology. The chapter argued that the affinity between set theory and the discourse of being-qua-being made the former an appropriate language for ontology. The chapter also discussed the category of the State by tracing its theoretical roots in the concept of the metastructure. The elaboration of Badiou's concept of the State helped in the understanding of Badiou's rejection of the party. It was presented that the direction of his ontology led Badiou to an emancipatory politics that regards the State as transcendent (i.e., beyond

classes and party politics) and necessary. The chapter emphasized how the categories that Badiou developed out from his ontology are anchored on *a priori* principles. Such an ontology derived from *a priori* principles led to the concept of necessity and transcendence on the part of the State. However, the chapter stressed that the categories derived from set theory mathematics – categories that support his emancipatory politics – are incompatible with the real and actual socio-historical situation. The chapter provided the case of the historical State where its development invalidated the claim of its necessity (or inevitability).

The chapter also presented Badiou's reformulation of the communist hypothesis. The sub-section on "The Question of a New Politics" clarified that Badiou's reformulation is derived from his insistence on a politics without a party. For Badiou, party politics is either parliamentary or insurrectionary. In either case, politics is fused with the State thus rendering the party inert and incapable of advancing further the revolution.

In the third chapter, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is discussed as a theory of doing, winning, and consolidating the revolution. The chapter traced the development of proletarian theory, from Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and to Mao. The chapter illustrated that the thoughts of Marx and Engels, or what is known today as Marxism, laid the theory of doing the proletarian revolution. Here, the basic principles of political economy, philosophy, and scientific socialism were articulated. The chapter also demonstrated that the thoughts of Lenin and Stalin, or what is known today as Leninism, developed Marxism in the era of imperialism. The chapter showed how Leninism advanced a theory of doing and winning the revolution through the concept of a Leninist vanguard party. The chapter likewise discussed that the system developed by Mao, or what is also called today as Maoism, further raised the

theory of Marxism-Leninism by providing the principles of consolidating the proletarian revolution especially against revisionism.

The chapter explained the five features of Maoism and how through these Maoism attained universality. What the discussion stressed is Mao's commitment for a proletarian seizure of political power through the vanguard leadership of the party of the proletariat strongly immersed and identified with the masses. In other words, unlike Badiou, Mao assigned to the party and the masses the revolutionary role of building socialism towards the ultimate goal of communism. The last section of the chapter discussed how Mao Zedong Thought developed into Maoism. While there was a temporary retreat of the proletarian movement especially after the demise of both the Russian and Chinese socialist experiments, the proletarian movement did not retreat as a whole. There was a segment of that movement that, while critical of the revisionisms of Russia and China, affirmed but also pointed out the limitations of Marxism-Leninism. From the latter's limitations, especially its need to take into account the crucial role of the masses in relation both to the party and the socialist construction in general, developed the principles of Maoism.

In the fourth chapter, a Maoist reformulation of the communist hypothesis was developed. The chapter started by tracing convergences between Maoism and Badiou's emancipatory politics. The convergences were traced on the issues of locality, subjectivization, and contradiction. Both Maoism and Badiou emphasizes importance of locality. In the case of Maoism, local sites of struggle, which seem to not portray class characters of politics, are given importance. In Badiou's case, eventual ruptures are local, not global, thus tracing an affinity likewise to local sites of struggles. Both Maoism and Badiou treat the problem of subjectivization as an important component in the conduct of an

emancipatory politics. Politics requires the subjective dimension that sustains the needed fidelity to the event (as in the case of Badiou) or the stability of the revolution (as in the case of Mao). The chapter emphasized how both Maoism's and Badiou's concept of dialectics recognize the primacy of division or scission over unity.

The chapter aimed its response to Badiou's reformulation against his reductionist reading of the party, the latter being a party-State fusion. However, the chapter refuted that the party cannot be reduced to its supposed fusion with the State as moments that escape the said fusion were extant during the periods of socialist constructions. The chapter further contended that the said party-State fusion should be considered as something relative rather than absolute. The chapter also discussed the various instances where the non-fusion of the party and the State, or the moments when the party and the mass movement were active and operational. A Maoist reformulation of the communist hypothesis proceeds as a continuity of these moments of successes, i.e., the instances of the party-masses fusion. The chapter pointed that, in response to Badiou's emphasis on the "bad thing of failure," Maoism today proceeds from the theoretical richness of the party-masses fusion in order to gain a "combative excellence of knowledge."¹⁰⁴⁰

In advancing a Maoist reformulation of the communist hypothesis, the party of a new type was problematized and theorized using some of Badiou's and Maoism's conceptual categories. The research argued for the dialectical relationship between the mass movement, the party, and the State. Such a dialectical relationship is determined by indigenized and mobilizational politics where protractedness and mass line are crucial requisites. The chapter underscored how this dialectical relationship is important as it keeps at bay the dangers of the party-State fusion. The dialectical relationship, specifically, defines the party as a

¹⁰⁴⁰ Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 12.

scission. This party, while being a subjective dimension for the State's withering away, is deeply integrated and identified with the masses. The chapter ended with a discussion of the apparent contradictions within Badiou's system. The contradictions are not denied but are rather affirmed in the spirit of what Badiou calls as a truth in scission. And the resolution of these contradictions could only be resolved through action.

Conclusion

While there is today a resurgence of leftist discourse and movements, all these are far from generating revolutionary episodes that resemble the world historic achievements of 20th century socialist revolutions. The Occupy Movements, for example, have spread in more than nine hundred cities the world over and have been participated by hundreds of thousands of protesters. However, while the said movements have in some instances forced a change in policy, like in the case of the free college tuition law of the present administration, the sustainability of the gains is not guaranteed as the same socio-economic and political systems dominate. Budget cuts continue to haunt the State Universities and Colleges. For example, the Php 11.6 billion budget cut in CHED's budget highly compromised the law itself.¹⁰⁴¹ While many scholars have indeed affirmed the need to mobilize the *inexistents* (to use Badiou's terminology) towards the cause of communism, these calls and mobilizations could not really achieve their goals as a strategy is frustratingly missing. The absence of strategy could only be the result of the absence of a solid organization that works as a vanguard for this communist cause.

¹⁰⁴¹ Patricia Ann Roxas, "CHED's 11.6-B Budget Cut may Hurt 2020 Free Tuition, Scholarship Programs," *Inquirer.net*, 04 October 2019; available from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1173528/cheds-p11-6-b-budget-cut-may-hurt-2020-free-tuition-scholarship-programs>; 02 June 2020.

Only through the vanguard leadership of a party in scission can this cause be realized. Of course, this vanguard leadership mean a lot of things. On the one hand, this means continuing the fundamental tenets of the proletarian science of doing, winning, and consolidating the revolution. On the other hand, this also means rupturing and learning from the actual experiences, both failures and victories, of how past world historic revolutions were done, won, and consolidated. To do, win, and consolidate the revolution necessitates the leadership of a vanguard party.

Recommendation

Due to the limitations and scope of this dissertation, certain areas that need more clarification and discussion have only been touched rather briefly. First, Badiou's idea of communism as a formalization of the real movement is not discussed in the previous chapters. His notion of communism has already been laid out in many of his works, like *Philosophy and the Idea of Communism* and (his hyper-translation of) *Plato's Republic*. His idea of communism needs to be thoroughly interrogated as he would already subscribe to a formalistic and idealistic notion of it, deprived already of how Marx initially conceptualized it, i.e., the movement which abolishes the present state of things.¹⁰⁴² Future research on this regard will perhaps be able to detect a deviation from the fundamental principles of Marxism.

Second, Badiou seems to support his mathematical and theoretical claims by mobilizing the statements of either Marx, Engels, Lenin, or Mao. In this way, he is recognized by many as a genuinely Marxist thinker. However, this current work has identified certain misreadings of Badiou on Marx. And there might still be many other

¹⁰⁴² Badiou and Engelmann, *Philosophy and the Idea of Communism*, 41.

misreadings throughout his work. A careful rereading of Badiou in relation to any of the aforementioned thinkers may help in exposing some of the problematic elements of his philosophy.

Third, there are governments and States today that have, in one way or another, have preserved fidelity to the Marxist cause. An intervention-interpretation to their socio-political and economic situation and experiences within the framework of the party, the State, and the mass movement, could help in validating and/or improving the claims raised in this research. A similar intervention has been made by Bruno Bosteels in the case of Bolivia's experience particularly of the works of its former Vice-President Alvaro Marcelo Garcia Linera.

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- Imbong, Regletto Aldrich. “COVID-19 and Social Inequality: How Poor Filipinos Suffer More During Pandemics.” *International Marxist Humanist Organization Journal*, 31 March 2020. Available from <https://imhojournal.org/articles/covid-19-and-social-inequality-how-poor-filipinos-suffer-more-during-pandemics/>.
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- _____ . “Wanted Philosophers.” Opinion section, *Inquirer.net*. 28 January 2018. Available from <https://opinion.inquirer.net/byline/regletto-aldrich-d-imbong>.
- _____ . “Far Brutal than Marcos.” Opinion section, *Inquirer.net*. 24 November 2017. Available from <https://opinion.inquirer.net/108947/far-brutal-marcos>.

II. Paper Presentations

International

- “Engels in the Era of the Reformulation of the Communist Hypothesis.” Engels” The Timeliness of a Historic Figure, Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Wuppertal, Germany.
- “Neoliberalism and Migration.” Asia Pacific Peace Research Association Conference, Jakarta, Indonesia.
- “From Lenin to Badiou: The Philippine Revolution against Neoliberal Capitalism.”
24th World Congress of Philosophy, China National Convention Center, Beijing, China
13-20 August 2018

Local

- “Forging a Just and Lasting Peace in the Philippines”
39th PHAVISMINDA Conference, Visayas State University, Bayabay City, Leyte
22-24 May 2018
- “Living (with an Idea) in the time of Social Media and Fake News: Emancipatory Politics and Critical Media”
1st Kritike Conference, University of Santo Tomas, Manila
1-2 December 2017
- “On Thinking what cannot be Thought”
2017 National Conference of Philosophy, St. Louis University, Baguio City
6-8 April 2017
- “Badiou’s Emancipation Politics and Religion: The CNL’s Struggle for National Liberation and Democracy as a Fidelity to an Event”
2nd Joint Conference of the Philosophical Association of the Philippines (PAP) and the PHAVISMINDA, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan
20-22 May 2016
- “The Philosophy of the Masses: The Contemporary Role and Mission of Philosophy”
28th PHAVISMINDA Conference, Saint Vincent Ferrer Seminary, Jaro, Iloilo City
21-23 May 2015
- “Philosophy, Pedagogy and the K12: Suturing the Pedagogical With the Political”
37th PHAVISMINDA Conference, University of San Carlos, Cebu City
22-24 May 2014
- “Critical Pedagogy and the Philippine Struggle for Pedagogical and Social Change”
USC 4th Graduate Forum, University of San Carlos, Cebu City
22 February 2014
- “The First Quarter Storm of 1970: Activism in the Light of Alain Badiou’s Politics of Emancipation”

USC 3rd Graduate Forum, University of San Carlos, Cebu City
February 2013

- “Neoliberalism and the Filipino Teacher: Shaking the System for a Genuine Democracy”
35th PHAVISMINDA Conference, Xavier University – Ateneo de Cagayan, Cagayan de Oro
24-26 May 2012
- “Philippine Education and Democratic Governance”
USC 2nd Graduate Conference, University of San Carlos, Cebu City
February 2012
- “The Free Person: A Ricoeurian Concept of Freedom”
34th PHAVISMINDA Conference, Arevalo District, Iloilo City
27-29 May 2011

III. Work Experience

- Assistant Professor of Philosophy
University of the Philippines Cebu
2014-present
- Instructor of Social Sciences
University of Cebu
2013-2014
- Instructor of Social Sciences
Asian College of Technology
2010-2012

IV. Educational Background

- Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy
University of San Carlos, Cebu City
2014-2020
- Master of Arts major in Philosophy
University of San Carlos, Cebu City
2010-2014
- Bachelor of Arts major in Philosophy
University of San Carlos, Cebu City
2005-2010
- High School Diploma
Saint Alphonsus Catholic School, Lapu-Lapu City
2000-2004
- Elementary Diploma
Lapu-Lapu City Central Elementary Schools, Lapu-Lapu City
1994-2000

V. Resource Speaker

- Crisis and Fascism
Congress of Teachers and Educators for Nationalism and Democracy
19 September 2020
- Fascism in the Time of Pandemic
Philippine Political Science Association
28 August 2020
- Principles of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
Task Force for Indigenous People's Rights
15 February 2019
- Train Law: Poverty, Exclusion, and Despair (Reactor)
University of the Philippines Cebu
8 February 2019
- "Martial Law then, MindaNow: The Church People in the Time of Terror"
Sacred Heart School – Ateneo de Cebu
28 September 2018
- "Philosophy and Education: Formulating the Challenge to Filipino Educators"
Negros Island State University (Bais City Campus II)
8 September 2018
- "The History, Updates, and Challenges of the GRP-NDFP Peace Talks"
Seminario Mayor de San Carlos, Mabolo, Cebu City
1 September 2018
- "October Revolution Centennial Celebration"
Plaza Independencia
19 October 2017
- "Seeking Peace and Pursuing it"
St. Theresa's College Cebu
2 August 2017
- "Social and Economic Reform Forum"
University of Cebu Lapu-Lapu and Mandaue
10 March 2017
- "Forum on Peace"
University of Cebu Main Campus
2 March 2017
- "Forum on Peace"
San Isidro Labrador Parish, San Fernando, Cebu
28 October 2016
- "Leadership Training Seminar"
Nuestra Senora de Regla Parish National Shrine"
28 August 2016
- "Forum on Peace: History, Updates, and Prospects of the GPH-NDFP Peace Negotiations"
University of Cebu Main Campus
25 August 2016

- “3rd Leadership Training Seminar with the theme ‘Carolinian Leaders: Strengthening Character through Environmental Involvement’
27 August 2016
University of San Carlos – North Campus
- “The Filipino Youth and the Struggle for Social Change
Cebu Normal University
13 February 2016
- “Climate Change Impacts and Community-based Disaster Management”
IFI Church, Paypay, Daanbantayan, Cebu
5 November 2015
- “Theories and Ethics in Research”
Cebu Normal University
21 March 2015
- “Environmental Awareness Seminar”
University of Cebu Lapu-Lapu and Mandaue
21 September 2013

VI. Seminars/Trainings/Conferences Attended

- Learning to be Human: 24th World Congress of Philosophy
China National Convention Center, Beijing, China
13-20 August 2018
- 1st Kritike Conference in Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy
University of Santo Tomas
1-2 December 2017
- Training Workshop on the Civilian Ceasefire Monitoring
Maryridge Retreat Center, Iruhin West, Tagaytay City
28-30 November 2017
- GE Faculty Seminary-Workshop
Cebu Parklane Hotel
9 October 2017
- The Sociology of Justice: PSS Annual National Conference
University of the Philippines Cebu
6-7 October 2017
- 5th Virginia Jayme Lecture Forum: Reinventing the Subject: de Certeau’s Engagement with Foucault
University of San Carlos
25 August 2017
- UP Cebu General Education Workshop
Cebu Parklane Hotel
17 August 2017
- Research and Policy Manuscripts Workshop
Montebello Villa Hotel, Banilad, Cebu City
20-22 June 2017
- 2017 National Philosophy Conference

Saint Louis University, Baguio City
6-8 April 2017

- Democracy and Sovereignty: 2016 PAP-PHAVISMINDA Joint Conference
Puerto Princesa, Palawan
20-22 May 2016
- General Education Workshop
Harolds Hotel, Gorordo Ave., Lahug, Cebu City
16-17 July 2015
- 4th Ecumenical Church Leaders Summit on Peace
Betania Retreat House, Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City
27-29 June 2015
- Role and Mission of Philosophy in the Philippines Today
Saint Vincent Ferrer Seminary, Jaro, Iloilo City
21-23 May 2015
- Dreamwork” Gestalt-facilitation
City Sports Club, Cebu Business Park, Cebu City
11-13 April 2015
- Seminar on Outcomes-based Education and 21st Century Learning
AS Lobby, UP Cebu
4-5 September 2014
- Enhancing English Competence
Asian College of Technology
May 16-18, 2012
- Syllabus Development
Asian College of Technology
April 2012
- Upgrading Teaching Competence for Empowered Learning
Asian College of Technology
October 28, 2011
- Assessing Learning: What Counts?
Asian College of Technology
July 15, 2011
- Teaching for Understanding and Transfer
Asian College of Technology
June 9, 10 and 15, 2011
- Academics in Classroom Theatricality
Asian College of Technology
May 2011
- Seminar on “Migration and Human Trafficking”
Bogor, Indonesia
29 May – 9 June 2008

VII. Administrative Position

- Coordinator, National Service Training Program
University of the Philippines Cebu

Second semester of AY 2014-2015 – Second semester of AY 2015-2016

VIII. Affiliations

- Vice-President for the Visayas, Philosophical Association of the Visayas and Mindanao (2019-present)
- President, All UP Academic Employees Union, Cebu Chapter (2019-present)
- Member, Philosophical Association of the Philippines (2016-2018)
- Member, Philosophical Association of Northern Luzon (2017-2018)
- Member, Philippine Philosophical Research Society (2014-2015)
- Member, Philosophical Association of the Visayas and Mindanao (2011-present)
- Core Group Member, Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform (2018-present)
- Board Secretary, Archdiocesan Commission on Social Advocacies (2016-present)
- Spokesperson, Promotion of Church People's Response, Cebu (2017-present)