

LOUIS ALTHUSSER was born in Algeria in 1918 and died in France in 1990. He taught philosophy for many years at the *École Normale Supérieure* in Paris and was a leading intellectual in the French Communist Party. His books include *For Marx: Reading Capital* (with Étienne Balibar); *On Ideology: Politics and History: Montesquieu, Rousseau, Marx, Machiavelli and Uexküll*; *The Spectre of Hegel*.

On the Reading of Capital

Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses

LOUIS ALTHUSSER

PREFACE BY E. BALIBAR

INTRODUCTION

TRANSLATED BY

V
London

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Foreword: *Althusser and the Ideological State Apparatuses* by *François Introduction: An Introduction to Reading* by Jacques Bidet

Editorial Note by Jacques Bidet
Translator's Note by G. M. Goswami

To My Readers

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2. What is a Mode of Production?
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FORE

Althusser and State Ap

Etienne

Jacques Dider and the Presses Universitaires
an additional translation to the second co-
livre Sur la reproduction, which they had
been steady demand for the book. I am so
am very happy that they have accepted, but
and that was absolutely not, because it
been published, albeit not in French. It is
lay's Hebrew translation of the chapter for
I do not wish to multiply it. The reason I
mentions that I myself have about the com-
most striking part of which is, like it or
Althusser's' even as I was doing my best
of the text's composition and partial pub-
closely associated with him. I also talked
Althusser with a colleague whose view on
of production' of the visual arts) holds an
'the p', and whose fight for justice in the
the state of Israel, is in my view quite ac-
produced in a very different context that is
to people here and in other places, even
political essence is, I think, a fairly less

1. *ib. Revue Reading*, 2013.

2. See my entry for *Althusser*, *The C-*
Books, 2018; see *Z. Suro*, *Polemics and*
with Bruno Mendeloni Editions, 2018; and
 [Walter D. Dussanier], written when I was
<http://cah/blog/althusser-alice>.

In the present brief preface, I do not want to make a detailed commentary on Althusser's text about Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), now translated into Hebrew for the first time. In response to a request from Ariella Azoulay, whom I very warmly thank for soliciting a contribution from me and then waiting patiently for it, I would simply like to offer a few remarks about the text's status and the conditions under which it was produced.

I believe it can be said that this text has become, and will remain, one of its author's major works. It is one of those that serve as a reference point when it is a question of characterizing his thought: one mobilizing for that the term of his 'personal signature' and is immediately recognizable as his (here, 'Ideological State Apparatuses' and 'Ideological Interpellation', elsewhere, 'the epistemological break', 'symptomatic reading', and so on); finally, one that contemporary philosophy in the structuralist or post-structuralist line continues to work on.³ Yet its status – even when it is considered in the context of a fragmentary, unfinished and largely posthumous text – is a together paradoxical.

To begin with, which text are we talking about? Given the mediations of its release and re-release, it is impossible to assign it a unique identity today or to trace its boundaries with certainty. On the contrary: we have to recall its history and inscribe it in various, partially competing ensembles so as to understand how it is that the commentaries it has elicited, which today accompany it or prescribe the way it is read, can be so divergent. The text translated into Hebrew comprises Chapter 12, titled 'On Ideology', of the posthumous volume that Jacques Bidet edited and issued in 1995, five years after Althusser's death. This is a reasonable choice, since it gives the reader access to a version, both coherent and complete, of Althusser's autonomous discussion of – specifically, ideology. Yet it was not at all in this form that the text was initially released before being reprinted, translated into various languages, and read and discussed. The first edition, which initially appeared as a contribution to the journal *La Pensée* (no. 13, June 1970) and then as a chapter in the book *Positions* (Paris, Éditions Sociales, 1976), under the title 'Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d'État (Notes pour une recherche)', was both longer, inasmuch as it preceded the theory of the 'mechanism of ideology' with an argument about 'the reproduction of the conditions of production', and, at the same time, an abridged version of its own argument. It was presented as 'made up of two extracts from an ongoing study' that were

being submitted to others for discussion, never finished and was not part of the debate occasioned by the extracts of a number of briefs to countries, that still will continue to refer to this 'histo- something' about the circumstances of

Jacques Bidet, in his critical annotations, then exist two versions of the 'conjecture' from which these extracts were first, approximately 150 pages long. The second, some 200 pages long, is first. The 1970 *Peusee* piece, made by A. production of the 'Conditions of Superstructure', Chapter 6 ('The State of the Relations of Production') and Bidet translates, 'somewhere between the cuts, condensations and additions possible if we do not explain what a montage rather than a text that was not, unfinishable

To explain that, we have to go back (which the psychiatrists called a 'break up with the political situation') to the time of the 'events' that Althusser called 'ideological revolt of the masses of 1968 he found himself', doubtless not by accident where he was undergoing treatment. In treatment, he was cut off from his followers, after taking the measure of the situation and political atmosphere in order to interpret their meaning in the context with a number of his friends and students, more or less active part in the movement, contribution of his own to a work of 'criticisms of Marxist theory bearing on

3. See, for example, Judith Bidet, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, New York, Routledge, 1997.

4. Louis Althusser, 'A propos de Louis Bataillon', no. 145, June 1969. See also Althusser, which Merleau-Ponty published in *Letter to Edouard*, 1964. These letters were not part of the same work.

superstructure'. A group to which I, too, belonged (along with Pierre Macherey, Roger Establet, Christian Baudelot, and Michel Tor) had, sitting out from notes and public interventions from the preceding period, undertaken to produce a collective work (according to the plan, it was to be voluminous) on the theory of the school system in capitalist society (the capitalist 'mode of production'). In particular, we had decided to use a terminology that included the notions of 'scholastic form' (patterned after 'commodity form' in the first part of *Capital*) and 'scholastic apparatus' (patterned after 'state apparatus' in Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* and his other 'political works'). It was agreed that these two elaborations (Luis and Althusser's) would be confronted. A common doctrine was supposed to emerge from the confrontation. It was our sense that we comprised something like an original school of thought within 'Western' Marxism. The strikes and the mass social movements of 1968 and the following months had spread the idea on the Marxist Left that we were entering a new revolutionary cycle that could bring on fundamental changes. When compared with the classical models, however, a certain number of differences leap to the eye. (They put 'orthodox' Marxists such as Althusser, concerned of the primacy of his struggle and the politically organized workers' movement, in a ticklish situation.) Not only were the 1968 struggles a lot going the countries of the 'socialist camp' and the 'capitalist camp' alike, from China through Czechoslovakia, France, Germany and Italy to Poland, from the United States to Brazil; they also assigned or, at least, seemed to assign, a leading role to 'new social movements' (including the student movement in (even secondary school students had mobilized), in relation with the overt crisis of major 'authoritarian' institutions such as the schools and the family. From his first widely debated essays on,⁵ Althusser had attached great importance to developing the 'Marxist' theory of ideology or even producing a theory from scratch, with a view to reforming or reconstructing historical materialism. This, to be sure, gave him the impression that he could account for the novelty of the political phenomena of his day. At the same time, however, it presented him (and us as well) with a challenge it was not easy to take up in an intellectual environment increasingly strained by the proliferating division in innumerable tendencies of political organizations all claiming to be Marxist, at a time when many 'critical' theorists were increasingly taking their distance from references to Marx.⁶

5. Above all, for *Marx Today*, London, Allen Lane, 1969, (collected essays written from 1951 to 1965 that was first published in book form in French in 1965).

6. Michel Foucault's evolution is typical in this regard. He had brought many to

None of these plans was to be realized, working in a state of great emotional depression; plus, had in a few weeks incomplete, already took the form of working on the schools', which had independently of this, had two preliminary readings of Bourdieu, D. Kshemka. From tables on the primary and secondary and working class children. The question the 'sutures' between the analyses of arrived at, for our part, and the general 'Ideological State Apparatuses' and their relations of production. Despite uncertainties, we were unable to general paralysis. It was exacerbated in the fact that some of us (under Jeanne's communist Marxist Claude Prodratienet), whereas a deemed it necessary to stay (in the Marxist Party). The 'autonomy of theory for his part, some felt, again. This was tensions and, more generally, the because of its attachment to the party master thinker behind the radical left disciples had become dissidents and going on to accuse him of revisionism general weakness of his physical condition.

unequivocally anti-Marxist formulations (e.g. *Secondary Education: The Will to Knowledge*, 1978, as well as the course he gave the series *Lectures at the Collège de France*, 1975-76, and 2003), which do not as a transcript of ideological apparatus). To be, however, the question of Foucault's relation to Marxist relations with Althusser, at once personal detouring this evolution, but certainly helps.

7. Althusser in his first autobiographical *Form a Long Time*, in *The Final Years of Louis*, London, Pluto and Windus, 1982), puts a context to his presentation of things, but it is certain that the relation of a working group which, because organizations, had to remain secret (for reasons

worse as the years wore on. The upshot was that all the work all of us had done was broken off and never finished.⁸ Althusser's manuscript *Sur la reproduction* ended up joining a series of other texts in various states of completion that he turned out between 1968 and 1980. These often took the form of 'treatises' or 'popularized' essays written on the model of the classical Marxist introductions to historical materialism he worked on there when his illness was in remission and left them unfinished. Some have now been published in collections of his posthumous works.

In 1970, however, when Althusser returned to active life, friends of his, notably Marie Corbin, editor of the review *Le Peuple*, invited him to share some of his work in progress with the public. It now seemed to Althusser that an elaboration of his views on ideology could spark another round in a discussion that, he hoped, would help him get back to work. This is what motivated the 'montage' of extracts that he published under the title *Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d'État* [Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses]. Desiring was to convert this stopgap solution into something with definitive or, at any rate, long-term status. For it was on the faith of impressions spawned by the conjunction of two fundamentally discontinuous series of arguments – one centred on the question of the 'reproduction of the relations of production', the other on the 'ideological' mechanism of interpellation, recognition and guarantee – that the commentaries, utilizations and critiques were to be based. At the point of epiphanic encounter between the two lay the notion, or emblematic expression, 'ISAs'.⁹

In the original edition (by which I mean the 1970 plan), dotted lines were inserted between the extracts after they had been reworked. These lines, especially those separating two major developments, have taken on

⁸ In the following period, Christian Baudouin and Roger Establet (colleagues) part of the collective manuscript on the schools, completed in a line with their own views, and released it as a book: *L'École capitaliste en France* (Paris, Maspero, 1971). Michel Lott published in contemporary *Le Québec* (the intellectual journal, Paris, Maspéro, 1974).

⁹ This rapid presentation may give the impression that misperceptions in Althusser's work were, and the style was, marked only by intellectual crises and creative impulses. To put things back in perspective, we should point out that, in the same years, Althusser was working on another project, in some sense 'parallel', the very aim of which we now know, but of which most of our colleagues were unaware at the time: a projected book on Machiavelli (and so the origin of the very concept of *Le politique*). See *Machiavelli and Us*, trans. Gregory Elliott, London, Verso, 2009. The issue of Machiavelli has been translated into a number of languages, including Chinese. It was published in France in *Écrits philosophiques* (1975), ed. Étienne Métherton and Olivier Corpet, Paris, Stock/Trédaniel, vol. 2, 1995, and reissued in a paperback edition in 2009 together with two essays by Machiavelli, *Machiavelli et nous*, ed. S. Gallandier, 2009, preface by Étienne Métherton.

an unforeseen function: they were highlighted by one of Althusser's friends, François Métherton, who thus put expressions in play (and in abjection) of very forbidding problems. I have always seen this, precisely, to do with the vicinity of the decisive articulation, just away – which is materialized by the look for the 'solution' to the problem imagined that Althusser himself was mysteriously missing, would not be understood that he was not, in fact, a way to develop and transform the hopes of coming up with one (the known, obviously, and what public shows us today, is the which forms). Essentially, it is a discussion of the notion to 'extract' the 'classical' Marxist

In his discussion of law, Althusser quite close to those of the positive Kantian definition of law and its definition of the 'repressive' nature of itself incapable of guaranteeing the dominant social relations; whereas ideological supplement of effective endeavours to explain (while some how or a can simultaneously their explanation and the necessity of the in Marxist attempts to articulate the 'ing aspect' of Althusser's text is doubtless a discussion of the *différence* in the 'short' temporality, that of the class sphere, with its own stakes, possibility, that of the class struggles with between public and private, until

¹⁰ Étienne Métherton, *Il. Récit d'un Peuple: Méthodes Marxistes*, Vol. 10, No. 5, *Machiavelli et nous*.

¹¹ *Écrits d'Althusser* (his work on the right), knew well Montesquieu and Rousseau in the 'political nature of ideology' (Gouardier).

sketch of a solution, however, merely highlights (by way of the emphases it betrayed in the writing itself) the aporia that Althusser encounters: the 'ideological class struggle' on which the effectivity of the political struggle itself depends, since it prepares the conditions for the political struggle and mobilizes its banners (the 'revolutionary class'), cannot itself be the historical 'last instance' of the political. Its own effectivity is referred back to the epigenetic short circuit of two heterogeneous 'materialities'.¹² This is the *infrastructure* that is determinant in the 'last instance.' Thus the fact that contemporary readers now have access to Althusser's intervening arguments will by no means diminish their perplexity. On the other hand, it will *politicize* their theoretical imaginations by replacing a glaring void with an apparent fullness. That is why, notwithstanding the depressing and over- (in the end – tragic) consequences to which it is due, I consider it an extraordinary 'objective fluke' that Althusser was forced to publish his essay in the form, not of a (pseudo-)unified socio-historical materialism, but rather, as a collage of two heterogeneous propositions 'open' to the unknown.

It remains to ask, before leaving the reader to confront Althusser's words on their own, how we are to think the effects of that heterogeneity today. It seems to me that one can advance two hypotheses here. First, history (political, social, intellectual) has completely shattered the unity, even the problematic unity, of the two discourses that Althusser's 'structural Marxism' sought to combine in such a way that each would help sustain the other; it has relegated them to contexts that hardly communicate now. This is not to say that history thereby flags the absurdity of the attempt: for that attempt has a great deal to teach us about the theoretical demands of its day, and testifies to a remarkable seriousness (or 'sense of responsibility for the consequences of one's discourse') whose lesson has not been lost. Second, the divorce between the contexts in question

¹² The equivalent of the above theory of 'class struggle', in opposition to an 'idealist' theory of ideology as the realm of ideas or rhetoric.

¹³ To be honest, the aporia in question mainly originates one that is central to Marx, especially in the famous Preface to *Contributions to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), with the difference that Marx speaks of the 'encounter' (in the revolutionary conjuncture) of the materiality of the 'productive forces' and the reality of the 'form of social consciousness'. In tracing back the 'form of ideology' (used in a material and – let us stress – not, in any sense, Althusserian) to its origin in this basic 'epistemological difficulty', without really managing to explain how the same 'form' (concept of the 'class struggle') applies from one end of historical reality to the other, De Boer poses the same problem in 'Note on the 1830s', a text he appended in December 1976 to the German and Spanish translations of his essay 'I should return to the "Note"', which Jacques Bidet has included as an appendix to the present volume.

justified, in its fashion, to the extent of the subject and, indissolubly bound together', which, clearly, always has intellectual horizons at the same time.

Althusser's discussions of the 'representation' are based on a concept of 'structure' that is essentially 'functionalist'; he had no charge.¹⁴ But it is a question, rather than a necessity, of a break with the main point of this system's constitutional 'contingency', as Althusser would say. Marx's texts suggest that an extended conception of social 'representation' remains more or less unfinished and that the 'critical' endeavours struggling to bring to light the structure's 'creative' action on its privileged sites and objects of the 'inspiration' is ultra-leftist, in the sense with defining the objective of the party and the 'state apparatus', but reduced to be able to include in it only the 'centralization of ideological practice' (a 'State Ideology' (which, in the sociology in his view). Thus it is as if we accumulate the 'totalitarian' image of the obscure power of the state, in order to get at the possibility of overthrown 'initially', 'the way out'. This also grows out of the 'crystallized' in Althusser's rejection of 'any' and in his insistence on the 'movement' as the whole system's correlative of its interiority or criticality.

¹⁴ Similarly in the above mentioned 'Note' discussion of the status of the 'revolutionary state' by virtue of its class base and historical dynamic class 'way out' of the ideological 'allusions to the practice of the Party in the which' had set out in the 'Introduction' and 'war of position'. It affirms, in particular, political logic.

popular masses and the working class. But this merely displaces the problem. And the idea of an organization external to ideological forms of organization, which are obviously apparatus forms in their turn, 'is' will be agreed, quite enigmatic.⁴

The other aspect of Althusser's work on ideology in fact belongs to a completely different context. The idea that ideology has a 'structure' in general is not only not variable to the Marxist tradition, even if Althusser demonstrates its kinship with certain remarks by Marx, particularly in *The German Ideology* (ideology has no history of its own'), which he reads 'symptomatically'. (This simply proves that Marx and Marxism are not the same thing.) That idea in fact refers us to a different concept of 'structure'. In question here, as far as Althusser's own work is concerned, is a series of texts stretching from the 1964 essay 'Freud and Lacan' (republished in *Positions* in 1976) through, notably, two essays collected in *For Marx* ('The "Piccola Teatro": Bertolucci and Brecht' [1962] and 'Marxism and Humanism' [1963]) to the 1976 or 1977 text 'On Marx and Freud' (published in the *Proceedings of the Psychoanalytic Congress of Lille*).⁵ In these writings, Althusser pursues a study of the *imaginaire-essentials* of the *subject* as the fundamental 'ideological effect', or, better, as an *effect of the structure of ideology*. (Obviously, however, there is an element of circularity here, for the effect of the structure of ideology par excellence is, precisely, to constitute 'subjects' – to which we may add that, if the essential goal of the structuralist movement, in which Althusser participated in his way,⁶ was to conceptualize the constitution of the *subject* in place of 'the constitutive subject' of the classic transcendental philosophies, ideology here becomes simply another name for structure.) Althusser develops his study (as appears, in particular, at the moment of the transition from the first to the second and third moments of the 'construction of the subject': having, recognition, guaranteed by working

4. This idea does not differ much from the Leninist idea of a state 'for a nation state' (in *State and Revolution*). In other words, it names the machine that operates or 'produces' it 'before' the seizure of power, and it necessarily constitutes the 'condition'.

5. Louis Althusser, 'Freud and Lacan', in *Reading Capitalism*, ed. Fred Moten and Geoff Milburn, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman, ed. Tompkins Jefferson and Olivier Corpet, New York, Columbia University Press, 1976, pp. 7–32; 'The "Piccola Teatro": Bertolucci and Brecht', in *Notes on a Materialist Theory', in For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster, London, Allen Lane, 1969, pp. 123–52; 'Marxism and Humanism', in *For Marx*, pp. 319–41; 'On Marx and Freud', in *Change in the Subject*, 96, pp. 105–24.

6. For so many others. Althusser moved along a path and later between recognizing the rejection of structuralism, approval and disavowal, his efforts in it. At the same time, or almost all of them, Foucault is the exception, and, at one moment or another, 'I am not a structuralist', or even 'I am anything but a structuralist'.

on theoretical models borrowed from the *Scienze dure* – the general logic guaranteed a critical philosophy of the 'is' (naturally not a 'complete' theory: that is why he thought so?). One may not consider exclusively, but what of problems and concepts in the context itself, in a larger controversy with students (maybe in a seminar) and Althusser basically takes the signifier of monotheism, especially with his dedication ('For your master, Moses'), the New Testament ('Thou art Peter'). Althusser very unconsciously enters into the field of the imaginary and, in order to make it a 'function' (to say, obviously, he implicitly explains which, in the well-known Lacanian explanation of the unconscious, Althusser refuses an identity to the function of an impossible or a trace because it cannot be symbolized itself). What, then, constitutes the *paradoxicality* of the imaginary? The subject, here also, in very enigmatic fashion, he does not pose the question: 'not manage to "go all by herself" or also say that it is a question of the subject's weakness, with respect to the object, the subject has or confers but has often been noted; something of the part here. It has, moreover, often been denied. . . .

I cannot, obviously, pursue any would, if taken any further, so what I prefer to leave the reader with if they were not really posed for the first time back on this presentation of the writings, which I have just attempted that I have voluntarily or involuntarily divorced 'waves' whose combination

varying points let us call it the question of practice, a possible corollary or name for the idea of an 'organization without organization' that would make the revolution conceivable; and also for the idea of a 'counter-interpellation of the subject' capable of manifesting, in the very form of the imaginary, the consistency (or positivity) with which it finds itself in a constitutive relationship onwards. To be honest, this suggestion strikes of the important 'May 68er' I have certainly committed to me, and, as it does no more than name something, it resolves nothing. One can only wish that contemporary readers of Althusser's text, or one or another of its configurations, will find other keys capable of investing it with meaning.

INTRODUCTION

An Invitation to

Jacques

The present volume contains a reproduction of the Relations of Production from which Althusser extracted 'Ideological State Apparatuses', first published in 1977.

Althusser here explains, in systematic and methodical fashion, the conditions for and the revolutionary struggle that concern about ideology and the theoretical framework of his project and the conditions of their object and positions.

This text may seem to be contradictory and aged. It does indeed bear witness to the impossibility of maintaining today, thirty years after it was written, a singular and constant as with a question that is as obvious as ever what conditions are given to the ideals of freedom and people over others endlessly repeated.

At the same time, Althusser's manuscript is, and it is, at the same time, a text. As it unfolds, however, it gradually undergoes conceptual elaboration. Thus it is a political text that bears witness to the social categories for the analysis of 'Ideological State Apparatuses' and

1. Sicard gives the original title of Althusser's text as 'Relations of Production'. When the manuscript was translated into French, it became 'Ideological State Apparatuses'.

POLITICAL TEXT, THEORY (CONT.)

The spirit of May 1968 runs through the entire text, that of a May that was as much the workers' as the students', a May that witnessed the biggest strike in French history. Communist memory was reinvigorated by the prospect of the radical changes that now seemed to be on the agenda. Althusser passionately embraced this moment and assigned it its place in the long-term course of the socialist revolution. His field of vision, in this text, encompasses a century of class struggle by the workers' movement across the face of the earth ('hundreds of thousands of anonymous worker militants'), and so on (p. 133). It also encompasses an indubitable future: 'We are entering an age that will see the triumph of socialism across the globe... the Revolution is already on the agenda. Our hundred years from now, perhaps only fifty years from now, the face of the world will have changed, the Revolution will have divided the day from one end of the earth to the other' (p. 9). Althusser has his eye on 'the many young militants who have fled or will flock' to the political struggle (p. 133). Indirectly, he is addressing them.

This will not fail to surprise readers who know only Althusser's philosophical texts. The essential influence, at the conception of the trade union and political struggle under capitalism, the schema for the conquest of power by the 'proletariat and its allies', and the conception of the consciousness of the proletariat, is a Leninism. 'The Leninism of Marxist Theory' (p. 133). The reference to Leninism finds expression in a return to the vocabulary of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Third International: 'the masses', 'organized in the trade union', must be 'led towards truly revolutionary objectives' by 'the party of the vanguard of the proletariat' (p. 134). Althusser expressly places himself in the line of what he calls the 'classics of Marxism'. 'Here we shall be advancing cautiously on a terrain on which Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao have long since proceeded as, but without systematizing, in theoretical form, the decisive progress that their experiences [expériences, which also means 'experiments'] and procedures implied. Why? Because these experiences and procedures were essentially confined to the realm of political practice' (p. 74). 'Stalin neglected these questions' (p. 92). One rubs one's eyes in disbelief. Stalin's name disappears from the piece published in *La Pensée*. The fact remains that there is something surrealistic in this imaginary repetition of Leninism in an altogether different place and time — in a time, notably, in which the party that Althusser called his was proposing, as if its validity were self-evident, an utterly different strategy, founded on the idea of a

much towards socialism, by way of appropriation of the major means of

Yet the political pathos, and the declarations of fidelity or esteem, should not prevent us from making it clear that it is also the vehicle of importance. That is not to say that this particular vision of history or understanding of the structure and case, whatever we make of the 'epistemology' (p. 7), 'or philosophy' (although what is in question here), Althusser's thought can by no means in the ordinary sense of an 'idea' to be revealed today as an 'idea'.

The great importance of the theory is that Althusser understood traditional theory: the correspondence between production (p. 20, p. 165), or the Marxist Theory or ideology (pp. 155-6). On all these as a whole, Althusser proposes to go (pp. 53-4), a fact he nature 'unstable', 'unstable' (pp. 72-3, p. 166). Behind this is 'unprecedented clarifications', but

it is a question, ultimately, of production description, a theory in the form

FOR A RE-READING OF

The first chapter introduces Althusser that presupposes social conflict, and of philosophy as a sequence of conceptualization of decisive 'political' (p. xxx). It situates Marx's contribution of the 'continent of history' capable of providing a basis for this

The following chapters provide nothing more than a reprise of the presentation of the major categories of historical materialism. Ever

a 'dominant mode of production' (p. 18). In the relationship between the relations of production and the productive forces that comprise the base, the former play the determinant role (Althusser develops this point in Appendix I). In the model as a whole, the base, not the superstructure ('Law, State, Ideologies'), is 'determinant in the last instance' (p. 21).

The special contribution that this manuscript makes resides, of course, in the argument about 'Ideological State Apparatuses' and 'ideology' developed in Chapters 5 to 12.

Publication of this present volume should offer an occasion to revisit these themes, and also, no doubt, to re-evaluate them. For putting the fragments included in the text published in *La Pensée* back into Althusser's discourse as a whole brings out the close connection between his thesis on ideology (and its materialization in apparatuses) and his conception of the course of modern history. In and of itself, this is a matter of strict logic. A theory of structural reproduction has, as its corollary, a theory of the transformation of the structure: it needs to show the constant conditions in which variation occurs, and eventually puts an end to those constant conditions. Althusser's conception of ongoing variation, like his conception of the transition to socialism, shapes, in its turn, his conception of the conditions for the reproduction of capitalism as well as his idea of the structural constant. Ultimately, it is a question of a single theory, but a theory with double entries: reproduction and revolution. Hence the new light shed by the previously unpublished sections.

It seems to me important to grasp that the pivot of the theoretical dispute is the question of law, the subject of Chapters 5 and 11, and its presumed disappearance, the corollative of the disappearance of commodity relations in the course of the socialist revolution. I would like to suggest that the questions that Althusser has brought out have lost nothing of their contemporary relevance, and have yet to find pertinent answers at the level at which he poses them.

LAW AND THE PREDICTION THAT IT WILL WITHER AWAY

The idea of law, introduced before that of the state, is nevertheless dependent on the theory of the state as an instrument of the dominant class's domination. The state apparatus, far from being 'traversed by the class struggle', as Althusser repeats, an apparatus of domination in its entirety. What holds for the pre-capitalist modes of production holds for capitalism as well: here, too, power is exercised by the dominant class. The struggle of the dominated class has, to be sure, an impact on society. Only the dominant class, however, exercises 'power'. Power is to be

understood — as Althusser was to write — as this class's force over that of the dominated (and itself) and, indeed, the dominant class even *into* it and *is*. Force is the sole "motor" of the transformed power, right, laws and countering domination, is simply radical thesis commanding the process: law is produced by the concrete state machine.

Chapter 5, 'Law', none of which was published in *La Pensée*, makes two points. Althusser first relates it with transformations of production (comprise the law exists only as a function of class (p. 25)). The relations of production are not defined by the mode of ownership, but a modification of legal relations, ownership of the means of production ('appropriation') by freely associated leads Althusser to make a more point which this revolution signifies, simultaneous disappearance of law and the disappearance of the withering away of law can only signify exchanges, exchanges of goods and their replacement by non-commodity.

Here Althusser describes himself associated with the Second and Third International's coherence. To be sure, he rejects an alternative to the market. Rather an external form that appears, needs the masses'; planning is only a 'substitute' (p. 16). He translates 'the Soviets plus elects the planning of the productive account, it seems to me, that the process opens the way, specifically, to applicable to a determination of the 'productivity' (and, itself) constitutes,

1. Louis Althusser, *Marx in His Limits* (1978-1997), trans. G. M. Goshgarian, London,

commodity exchange, a configuration of the relations of production', that is, potentially, of class relations.

Here certain ambiguities of Marx's resurface: they have to do with the relation between the question of law and that of the market. One cannot, Althusser writes (the passage has, admittedly, been misread but that is only further evidence of its author's uncertainty, p. 60 n.3), speak of socialist law, for 'if a law that survives . . . is still bourgeois law, for the only law there is is based on commodity relations and is thus bourgeois law. The socialist mode of production will abolish all law. Marx understood this perfectly' (p. 60 n.3). It seems that Althusser here even goes beyond Marx. For he presents the law as, purely and simply, a condition of domination, inasmuch as it puts class relations into play. Similarly, bourgeois democracy is, in his view, merely 'the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in the form of a parliamentary or presidential democratic apparatus' (p. 106), with the result that 'the essence of class struggle unfolds outside these legal, bourgeois democratic forms' (p. 105).

IDEOLOGY AS APPARATUS AND THE MACHINERY OF THE STATE

A central theme of this text is that the topography, the metatext of base and superstructure, is insufficient and deceptive. For this metaphor suggests that the economic base determines everything else, whereas, in Althusser's view, it is the social relations of production which characterize a mode of production in the last instance; their reproduction is ensured by the ensemble: Repressive State Apparatus plus Ideological State Apparatuses.

The power of the thesis about the Ideological State Apparatuses is due, first of all, to the fact that it flows from an interpretation of society as penetrated or saturated by class relations and subject to a class power that is exercised through the whole set of institutions. This power is not exercised by way of state institutions alone, according to a schema in which those institutions would configure a public sphere that could then be opposed to the private sphere, the place where encounters between private individuals occur. It is exercised quite as fully by private institutions, such as churches, parties, trade unions, the family, private schools, cultural associations, and so on. Althusser's 1971 text made no small contribution to creating a new (and equally) awareness of the fact that the major social institutions are part and parcel of the relations of class domination.

It is well known that Althusser drew part of his inspiration from Gramsci, who uses the term 'civil society' — as opposed to 'political society', that is, the state organs in the strict sense — to designate the whole set of

institutions, private and public, by means of the ruling classes' ideology, their 'view, knowledge, culture and ethics', which provides the terrain on which the power class, the proletariat, is played out, as played out the revolutionary process, conquest of hegemony. Althusser turns by presenting the ensemble of institutional forms in which the bourgeoisie's

Obviously, Althusser is not unaware of the association with bourgeois law and he goes to Kant and Hegel that even find the conspicuous witness to this. Nor is Gramsci's democratic impact on society sufficient to make a public sphere (established institutions). However, it were, and endeavours, to a discussion to affirm a fact that comes into view: the extreme public institutions are the ones that one class subjugates the other and reproduces. This is very close to Heidegger's difference, it is true — that, for Heidegger, the essence of society, putting an end to war, is all, wherever, for Althusser, it is social violence, conceived as the war

Thus we have a text on the subject of another, by way of a mobilization of 'sanctions' these relations (p. 165). The thesis, as Althusser emphasizes in the end of the present volume, is one of the elements of class struggle; the class struggle is the dominant ideology, over the apparatuses is ultimately determined by the class struggle' (p. 223). However, the thesis is confining it to apparatuses that represent a danger that they are

Althusser adds that the law talks to the person, and that, as a general rule, no moral ideology, turns present them that interpellates me — as, precisely, a

INTERPELLATING INTERPELLATION

Althusser significantly subverts the traditional Marxist problematic by reviving his readers to reconsider the classic way of talking about ideology alongside other elements of the superstructure, and by integrating ideology into a state as the State Ideology. The great interest of his analysis resides in the fact that it confers a status of materialist realism and social ontology on ideology, at the same time as it poses it as an 'interpellation' by means of which everyone is summoned and constituted socially as a subject. In other words, he proposes these two theses: 1) ideology does not have 'an ideal, idea dependent, or spiritual existence, but a material one', for 'an ideology always exists in an apparatus' (p. 184), and Ideological State Apparatuses are the site of a 'realisation' of ideology (p. 271); and 2) 'every ideology has the function (which defines it) of "constituting" [concrete individuals as] subjects' (p. 188).

I would here like to suggest, while referring the reader to texts in which I expound my views at greater length,⁵ that this is a theoretical contribution of fundamental importance, even if it calls, as I see it, for an immense conceptual reworking. I would further suggest that Althusser's contribution has to do, very precisely, with the close relationship between the two theses just cited.

The reader will perhaps allow me to prolong Althusser's discourse, subvert it once again, and suggest that it leads somewhere other than to the place to which he would lead us.

For it is not an 'inner voice', the voice of conscience, that interpellates me. It is a public voice. That voice declares that I am a free subject. This discourse is precisely that of the modern constitution, of its necessary preamble, the declaration of the rights of man, which posits that everyone is 'free-and-equal' [libéral], declares that the subject is sovereign and that the sovereign is a subject, and adds that I myself am subject to myself as sovereign. The material existence of this interpellating discourse does not find its measure in the event that, historically, brought it into existence, or in the form in which it finds itself transcribed, or, again, in the form in which it has been provisionally enacted. Its ontological status, in the sense of social being, is defined by the institutional forms that it commands, the practices that are at one with these institutional forms, and, on the one hand, the class struggle that is constitutive of modernity, for which

the declaration of freedom and equality. This reference to interpellation in the class struggle; the class struggle which, as such, should be kept.

Ideology and interpellation are 'inner' interpellations that work. That is, they depart, however, diverse historical diversity of the forms in which subjects must take the 'real' measure of 'modernity'.

As human interpellation, it merely poses a promise that everyone makes of us makes her own: insofar as she is a subject, nothing more, for a part.

The fact that this part is not responsible for the contract theorists of 'real' interpellation, of this failure of 'free-and-equal' is translated into itself in the form of the market, 'a virtue of their ownership of the means of production' (to quote present themselves on the market, an injunction to conform to the social order to the legal forms that rule it, the practices that they call for.

The promise, however, commands subject as free, as a partner in the process. It is an injunction to obey the rules of the market; but it is, in fact, the market-based order is, precisely, the lies, in contradictory fashion, of the social order and are therefore yet 'bivalent' interpellation that is worked in the image of their freedom, since, verily, 1917, have the speech of freedom, as soon as it is contractual and the social rationality towards the other term, which truth discovered at last, but which, with risk of translation into the terms of and planned reason, with other effects

5 Jacques Bidet, *Tâches posées*, Paris, PUF, 1999; *Explication et construction de Capital*, Paris, PUF, 2000; *L'Économie*, Paris, PUF, 2011.

The grand forms of the 'class' relation in the modern age – of the class relation which, as Althusser clearly shows, constitutes the law, which does not talk about it, its very object, of the last instance – can therefore only be interpreted – if we set out from interpretation. A merely human interpellation, and thus a part of what, in the motivational forms in which it is cast, a social-ontological status comparable to that of the class relations in which it is transformed into its opposite).

A strange paradox: today, one cannot talk about exploitation or mass poverty, the enslavement of the peripheral zones, or the extermination of peoples, without setting out from what claims to be the interior lines of freedom and equality. It should be noted that that is precisely what Marx does in *Capital*, which begins – not to didactic ends, but in conformity with a requirement for 'thinking' the modern world – by positing the Form of commodity exchange, in which individuals recognize one another as free-and-equal.

That, however, means that they are also not subjected to that order. That is why this seeming 'paradox' is also the one form in which the perspective of emancipation remains open – yawning, unattainable – that of the realization of the promise.

Editorial

Jacques

1) The manuscript 'On the Reproduction' is the one from which the notes together make up his famous *Essays on Ideology* (first released in June 1971, pp. 5–38). The text that Althusser is to be titled 'What is Marxist-Leninism?' changed to 'On the Superstructure' in the series called 'Théorie' published by François Maspero. The change in title of the project changed as it proceeded to develop a theory of the reproduction

2) There exist two successive versions consulted at the Institut Mémoires de la Sorbonne à Blanche Herbe, just a 50-page typed text dated March 1971. The French edition, bears a set of corrections largely of the first typescript by about completely rewritten. Althusser did not. Down to Chapter 6, he incorporated between the lines of a photocopy of pages. He then introduced an addendum 'Remarks on the Political and Social Formation'. For the next chapter section, which replaced Sections 1 and 2 of the manuscript was not substantial. Chapter 7, we have of course changed 8 on Chapters 8, 9, 10 and 11, of Althusser left it have been renamed

* Note: (1) - 2017 second edition of *Essays on Ideology* (I suggest a later version of 2011 of Althusser's thesis about 'interpellation' in a book in progress *Althusser at Foucault, Foucault at Althusser, interpellation of ideology*).

Plainly, Althusser never made all the revisions to the manuscript that he originally intended to. However, aside from indispensable emendations of obvious grammatical mistakes, missing words, and incorrect textual references (of all of which there are, to be honest, quite a few), we have scrupulously respected his text, retaining even the imperfections due to the fact that it was left unfinished.¹ We have also respected the text's graphic particularities, notably the abundant recourse to capitalization, which, as a rule, sets off terms used in a technical sense.²

3) The piece that Althusser published in *La Pense* lies somewhere between the two manuscript versions, with a partially overlapping with the second version. It does not incorporate all the modifications made to the second manuscript version, which would thus appear to have been revised after the *Pensée* piece appeared. On the other hand, it is marked by stylistic improvements, significant omissions (of historical references and political allusions), and, above all, modifications of which there is no trace in the manuscript, notably to Section 3 of Chapter 6 and Sections 1 and 7 of Chapter 12.

The most important point, however, and the justification for the present publication, is the fragmentary nature of the *Pensée* piece in comparison with the text from which it was extracted, which comprises the immediate context for interpreting it. The extract Althusser published in 1970 reproduces only Chapters 5, 1, and 9 of the manuscript in their entirety, and parts of only two more, Chapters 6 and 12. Thus it leaves out the section here entitled 'To My Readers', in which he explicitly states his aims; Chapter 1, about philosophy; Chapter 2, which discusses the concept of the mode of production; Chapters 3 and 11, on law; Chapters 7 and 8, which take up the question of proletarian trade unions and parties as Ideological State Apparatuses; Chapter 10, on reproduction and revolution; and parts of Chapter 6 (Sections 1 and 2) and Chapter 12 (Section 3) which have to do with ideology and ideological apparatuses.

6) It should be noted that the projected book's second volume, which Althusser announces on the very first page of his note, 'To My Readers,' and again at the end of the manuscript, remained a project; it was never written.

5) The present volume, for which we are grateful to the publisher, contains the second version of the text and includes sometimes lengthy footnotes that were included in the *Pensée* publication, as well as an appendix proper. The volume also includes 'Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)', a 'Note on the ISAs', in which Althusser discusses the *Pensée* piece. Dates: December 1970, French in the 1995 first edition of *Sur la philosophie* issued in German and Spanish editions, Peter Schödtler, in *Ideologie und Ideologien* (Berlin, VSA, 1977, pp. 154–73), *Esprit*, Barcelona, LAIA, 1978).

6) Althusser's manuscript may be proof of the turbulence of the period, likewise marked by the turbulence of the day. There is, first, 'Weepant', an interview that he gave in 1969; second, 'How to Read Marx's "Capital" on 27 March 1969; this is an extract from a book entitled 'A Revolutionary Science: Class Struggle', dated January 1970, in a volume by Maria Himmeler's *Los conceptos de Althusser* (Mexico City and Buenos Aires, Siglo Veintiuno, 1970), translated in *Paris*, Editions Sociales.

7) It should also be pointed out that Althusser worked closely with a group of graduates of the Sorbonne in Paris, notably Étienne Balibar, Pierre Macherey, and Roger Establet. They were part of the French school system (in which Balibar remained at several points in the manuscript) and their conclusions he reached in this text, which is the form of propositions, represented, their research. That research was scrupulous.

1. [TN: For a list of the major manuscript errors in the second French edition, see the *Texts* section of the *Introduction* in *Essays on Ideology*, Verso Books.]

2. [TN: In the present translation, capitalization has been standardized.]

3. [TN: English translation of these texts are *Learn and Unlearn* and *On Ideology*, London, NLG, 1969, pp. 202–5, and the *Essays* (pp. 12–13).]



of which there exist very substantial drafts by, notably, Étienne Balibar and Pierre Machirey, that are available at the IMEC. The group eventually disintegrated and the projected book was never finished. However, Christian Baudélet and Roger Estabro's *L'École négative en France*, published in 1971, materialized in the context of this collective endeavour: e.g. Althusser attentively followed the writing of the planned book and contemplated contributing a preface to it.

The subject of 'reproduction' was, at the time, at the centre of debates in the critical sociology of Marxist inspiration. In the 1960s, Althusser had invited Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, who published *La Reproduction* in 1971, to participate in seminars at the Ecole normale supérieure. Their approach was thus familiar to his students and collaborators, who envisaged, precisely, working out an alternative formulation in phase with the Althusserian problematic.

The work of other writers with whom Althusser kept up a correspondence (see his letters of the period, also available at the IMEC) likewise belongs in this context. Their names appear in *Sur la reproduction*. Let us single out those of Laurent Tarray, Nuno Pólandras and Charles Bettelheim.

8) I thank François Boddaert and Olivier Corpet, the head of the IMEC, who authorized publication of this manuscript by the Presses Universitaires de France in the series *Arts et Métiers – Confrontation*.

My special thanks go to François Mathéon, responsible for the Fonds Louis Althusser and the editor of Althusser's *Œuvres philosophiques et politiques* (Stock/IMEC, 1994), who attentively followed my work and provided me very helpful advice.

I also thank Serge Delasse, who vigilantly deconstructed Althusser's manuscripts and prepared them for publication.

Translator

G. M. G.

The present book contains translations of Jacques Bidet assembled, edited and translated by G. M. G. in *Sur la reproduction* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2011). It also contains a translation of an earlier edition of *Sur la reproduction*, reproduced in a second edition, as well as a translation of a preface written in French and Hebrew as the preface to a Hebrew edition of *Sur la reproduction* (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2003) of an earlier edition published in *La Pensée* in 1970. Althusser's *Essays on Ideology* (London: New Left Books, 1971) and *Essays on Ideology* (London: Verso, 1994) are also translated in the present book as well. The 1976 *Notes on Peter Schöller's 1977 German translation of Althusser's 'The German Economy and Society'*, vol. 1, is translated into an essay by Mike Gars, located at the beginning of the 'Notes'.

Balibar's Preface, Bidet's Introduction and the 'Introduction' to the 'Essays on Ideology' are here published in English for the first time.

My translation is based on the French edition, which I have compared through the Institut Mémoires de l'édition contemporaine (la Blanche Herbe, near Caen).

Ernest Otto Wul's German translation and his notes to it (*Über die Reproduktion*, 2 vols., Hamburg, VSA, 2011: 12).

At the publisher's request, Althusser's idiosyncratic capitalization and italification have been standardized throughout. Specifically, Althusser, like many French writers, tends to capitalize only the first word in a compound term used in a technical sense, but sometimes capitalizes both (or all three: *Appareil théologique d'État*). I have capitalized every word in such terms of the author's own coinage, even when Althusser capitalizes only one. Thus *Appareil d'État* becomes 'Repressive State Apparatus'. I have not capitalized other terms, such as Productive Forces or State, that Althusser generally tends to capitalize.

Levy's English translation of 'Note on the ISAs' was based on Schirmer's German translation. I have made a new, rather different, translation of the 'Note' based on the French. There are also disparities between Ben Brewster's elegant and, with rare exceptions, accurate English translation of the 'ISAs Essay' and my translation of the corresponding passages in Althusser's manuscript. Some of them reflect differences between the 1970 *La Praxé* text and the hastily composed manuscript. Others are due to choices for which I bear the sole responsibility.

To My I

I would like to call readers' attention to what may, in many respects, surprise and delight them.

1) This short book is the first volume of two volumes. Volume 1 is about the theory of production. Volume 2 will be about the theory of social formations.

For reasons of theoretical and political necessity, we have decided to publish the present volume in a certain way, in a form that is different from the original (a liminal chapter on philosophy). While the original has not been improvised, I have had to improvise very quickly so that the text could be published.

I thought it might be useful to recall the initial theory concerning the nature of the system of production and ideologization. Above all, it seems to me that what sort of system ensures the reproduction of production – production being not capitalist exploitation, since, under conditions of commodity production, the law of value of consumer goods obeys the law of capitalist exploitation.

A full discussion would consider 1) the nature of the forces and 2) the reproduction of the system.

Since Marx discusses the reproduction of the system in *Capital Volume 1* (the theory of value) and *Capital Volume 2* (the theory of production), I have treated this question in a way that I have discussed in the introduction. I have let us important pointers on this subject.

The system that ensures the reproduction of production is the system of state apparatuses.

ideological apparatuses. That explains the title of Volume 1: *The Reproduction of the Relations of Production* (exploitation, repression, ideology).

As the reader will see, I have taken the considerable risk of putting forward theses on these two points which, while they are in perfect conformity with the theory and practice of the Marxist-Leninist workers' movement, had not yet been stated in systematic theoretical form. Thus I have sketched a theory of what I call the *Ideological State Apparatuses* and also of the functioning of *ideology in general*.

Since the analyses in Volume 1 depend, in certain cases, on principles to be worked out in Volume 2, I ask readers to grant me a kind of theoretical and political credit.¹ I shall try to honour the obligation thus incurred in Volume 2, in which I shall broach the problems of the *class struggle in capitalist social formations*.

2) The present volume, Volume 1, begins with a chapter that will seem surprising: it is about the 'nature' of philosophy. It will seem the most surprising notion, after marking off the terrain with a few signposts, I leave the question of philosophy in abeyance and make a very long detour in order to discuss the question of the reproduction of the capitalist relations of production.

Why have I begun with this first chapter on philosophy when I could simply have begun with Chapter 2, on the mode of production? I do so for reasons that are very important both theoretically and politically. They will appear at the end of Volume 2, when we will be in a position to answer the questions: 'What is Marxist-Leninist philosophy?' 'In what does its originality consist?' 'Why is it a revolutionary weapon?'

The present account of the reproduction of capitalist relations of production has not been placed under the aegis of the question of philosophy simply to facilitate the exposition. The fact is that we cannot say what Marxist-Leninist philosophy is without making the long detour through Volume 1 (*Reproduction of the Relations of Production*) and Volume 2 (*The Class Struggle*).

But why foreground the question of Marxist-Leninist philosophy in this way, as well as the logically prior question of philosophy *tout court* (Volume 1, Chapter 1)?

1. [IN: Everywhere. Always. refers to the line about 18 "The reproduction of the Relations of Production".]

2. [IN: Footnote worked out in the manuscript: "use deliberately (using, for the time being, the term, "Marxist-Leninist philosophy", shall propose you in a more accurate term at the end of the present essay.)"

I have not chosen to proceed in this speaking, a philosopher — that is, because about a subject I knew a little about 'wages' I have done so in political and Marxist. Here are these reasons, in brief.

Everything that falls within the public (and especially, in this volume, the relations of production) depends on a was only able to found on the basis of a philosophy of dialectical materialism — out and also prove, on the basis of a philosophy. It is, consequently, impossible — showed that — to grasp an, *a fortiori*, experience on a single, limited point, without in the realm of theory. The chapter philosophy is to represent, in theory, a specific task of Marxist philosophy — proletarian class position.

Whence the primordial importance development of Marxist theory, of what is, the proletarian class viewpoint. Volume 2 that the role of Marxist-Leninist (or the development of Marxist science concrete situations' (Lenin) which does but that it is also vital for the political practice.

If this is so, it is no wonder that we 'What is philosophy?' or that our second definition of the revolutionary nature of philosophy and its role in scientific practice have reached that point, we will understand in a concrete sense, a revolutionary weapon.

17

While my comrades' comrades, I (at the outset, who I have just said about the philosophy in scientific practice (above by Marx, but in the other sciences as practice of the class struggle, an object against it, even from / Marxist's critics have long since said and written

Marxist-Leninist philosophy, called, in the classical tradition, dialectical materialism. For everyone knows that there are many celebrated texts on this philosophy founded by Marx and his successors. For example, the *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845) and the afterword to the second German edition of *Capital* (1873); for example, Engels' *Anti-Dühring* (1877) and *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1888); for example, Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1908) and *Philosophical Notebooks* (1914-15); for example, Stalin's essay 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism' (1938); for example, Mao's *On Practice* and *On Contradiction* (1937), and *Wen. Da. Come. Ideo. Come. Front.* (1963).

Why, under these circumstances, should we raise the question of Marxist-Leninist philosophy again?

1) Let us say, in order to take stock of things, but also in order to seek out certain crucially important points, while throwing the political and theoretical character of our class practice in philosophy into sharper relief.

2) We cannot, however, stick to the still speculative/expository standpoint. It is not just a question of making the reader (see and understand) the specificity and novelty of our philosophy. It will also be a question, from now on, of putting this philosophy to work in a practical way — in short, of 'putting it to work' on scientific problems.

It will appear in short order, beginning with our simple analysis of the unity comprised by a mode of production (the unity between productive forces/relations of production) but also in all that follows, that we are absolutely incapable of clearly perceiving these scientific questions and thus advancing the state of our knowledge unless we bring our philosophy directly into play.

That is why we affirm — first of all the historical, theoretical and practical reasons just stated — that the time is ripe and that the moment is propitious, at least in our country, for taking critical stock of the state of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, demonstrating its revolutionary nature, refining certain aspects of it, and 'putting it to work' without delay on various scientific problems, some of which have a direct bearing on the class struggle today.

1. The time is ripe because we need to take stock of things and are capable of taking stock of things.

We have learned a great many new things since Marx and Engels and even since Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. Today, we have at our disposal the extraordinary experiences of the Soviet Revolution and the Chinese Revolution; the lessons offered by the various forms of the

consolidation of socialism and their application to the working-class struggles against the bourgeoisie and the popular mass struggles as well; the vicissitudes of the 'Third World' and the victorious struggle against French imperialism; the struggle of Black Americans, etc.

We have not only this experience at our disposal, we also have Lenin told us twenty times over that we should analyze the causes of a failure or a victory more in search of a lesson than a victory, since *the lesson is the thing*. This holds a fortiori.

When we consider the lessons that the popular masses under the Communist Party have learned from the reasons for its failure in the 1920s, the masses' invention of the Soviet Union in 1917, and the failure of this 'dress rehearsal', we can only say that we will draw from all the important failures and victories we now have to learn what we are living through today?

Can it really be so propitious? Should it not, rather, guide, nourish and support that the Marxist workers' movement?

2. We also think that the moment is propitious because of the state of Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

The moment is propitious because Marxist-Leninist philosophy will not be able to fulfill its ideological and political functions in the crisis that we are currently living through. The crisis that we are living through should not be a crisis that is not important.

Let there be no mistake: we are living through an unprecedented crisis into which contradictions and its victims are being

3. The present crisis is characterized by 1) the Twentieth Congress and its consequences, and 2) the solution of the crisis into question; and 2) the solution of the crisis into question; and 2) the solution of the crisis into question.

plunged, in order to conclude that it will not survive it. We are entering an age that will see the triumph of socialism across the globe. We need only take note of the irresistible course of popular struggles in order to conclude that in a relatively near future, despite all the possible twists and turns, the very serious crisis of the international communist movement included, *the revolution is already on the agenda*. One hundred years from now, perhaps only fifty years from now, the face of the world will have changed: the revolution will have carried the day from one end of the earth to the other.

That is why it is urgent to provide all those who are finding their way to communism – and more and more people are, especially among young men and women in the factories, the fields and the schools – with the means they need to arm themselves with Marxist-Leninist theory and the experience of the class struggle. The philosophy of Marxism-Leninism is one of these means, for it is a revolutionary philosophy: it is the only revolutionary philosophy.

To put it very simply, taking stock of the current state of Marxist-Leninist philosophy means understanding clearly, and as profoundly as possible, what this philosophy is, how it produces its effects, and how it must be utilized so as to serve, in Marx's phrase, not to 'interpret the world' but to 'change' it.

Taking stock of the current state of Marxist-Leninist philosophy also means recalling, in order to explain and understand that philosophy, the basic acquisitions of the new science founded by Marx, historical materialism, without which Marxist-Leninist philosophy would not exist. Again, it means recalling that if Marx had not adopted a proletarian (dialectical-materialist) class position in philosophy, the science that he learned, historical materialism, would not exist. It follows that we have to 'put this philosophy to work' in order to refine and advance the state of our knowledge in Marxist science, so that we can more lucidly analyze the current concrete situation.

To make our exposé clearer, let us indicate the structure of what follows.

To grasp the sense in which Marxist-Leninist philosophy is revolutionary, we have to know what distinguishes it from earlier philosophies. In order to be able to make this distinction, we have first to know what philosophy in general is. Hence the order of our enquiries. First question: What is philosophy? Second question: What is Marxist-Leninist philosophy?

It appears at a glance that it is imperative to ask these two questions in the order just indicated. Yet they do not define the structure of our study.

Why not? Because, as we shall see in the second question – What is Marxist-Leninist philosophy? – in making every day during this is, we see the basic results of the Marxist-Leninist philosophy in general.

As a matter of fact, contrary to what Marxist philosophers spontaneously reply, we do not fall under the general philosophy. If we do, this would mean philosophy.

This is what philosophy in the history, constantly, with a few exceptions, mentally idealist, for to maintain that right of philosophy and philosophy are being used, that it is Self-Knowledge, whether it uses this term overtly (as shall be seen, without saying so (as a few rare exceptions).

Thus it is no wonder that, if we study philosophy that does not merely repeat philosophy, hence, not scientific, but objective knowledge of philosophy, then philosophy itself, namely, the scientific capacity of providing us with philosophy in general that we are looking for, refine some of these principles and, in some cases, to the extent that we have.

As will appear, that science and that depend on the unprecedented discovery of a new 'continent', the continent of the general history of this scientific materialism.

That is why we shall have to make the results we need, produced by historical materialism, a scientific definition of philosophy.

In the last analysis, this long study, here, in the order in which

Chapter 1: What is Philosophy?

Chapter 2: What is a Mode of Production?

Chapter 3: The Reproduction of the Mode of Production

Chapter 4: Base and Superstructure

Chapter 2: Law
Chapter 6: The State and its Apparatus
Chapter 7: The Political and Associative Ideological State Apparatus
Chapter 8: The Reproduction of the Relations of Production
Chapter 9: The Reproduction of the Relations of Production and Revolution
Chapter 10: Law as an Ideological State Apparatus
Chapter 11: Ideology in General

I wish to warn readers from the outset, *scholarly*, as it were, in order to avoid all misunderstanding, all confusion, and all unfounded criticism, that the order of exposition I have adopted has a serious drawback, together with other orders of exposition can overcome. It is that the present volume, proposes to discuss, above all, the mode of functioning of the superstructure (the state, the state apparatuses), as reproduction of the relations of production. It is, however, impossible to talk about the state, law, and ideology without bringing class struggle into play. Proper logic would therefore seem to indicate that I should have adopted the opposite order of exposition, and begun by talking about the class struggle before talking about the state, law and ideology. The latter order of exposition, however, would have run into the same difficulty the other way around: for it is impossible to talk about class and class struggle without first talking about the state, law and ideology. Thus we are caught in a circle, since we would have to talk about *everything at once*. The reason is quite simple: in reality, all the things that we would like to discuss go hand in hand, and all depend, albeit in a very precise way, on each other. They pay no mind at all to their complex functioning and the distractions we must make to understand them; a fortiori, they are oblivious to the order of exposition we have to adopt to explain how they work.

Since the essence of what I have to say, to the extent that it involves new theoretical refinements of certain limited points, bears on the superstructure, it is legitimate, because one must choose in any case, to choose the order of exposition that offers as many theoretical and pedagogical advantages as possible. For, as readers will eventually see, we also have

4. [EN: Althusser incorporated into the second draft of his manuscript the basis for the present edition; the chapter 10 has here become Chapter 7 (11 of 'Remarks on the Political and Associative Ideological State Apparatus' of the French Capitalist Social Formation). What is identified in the present list has here become Chapter 9, and so on. Chapter 12, here Chapter 11, was ultimately given the following title: 'Further Remarks on Law and its Reality: the Legal Ideological State Apparatus'; Chapter 11, here Chapter 12, was renamed 'On Ideology' and the title of Chapter 8 was corrected.]

means of principle for thinking chosen in this regard.

The class struggle will therefore come very early – point in our analysis of effects that remain unintelligible even outside the objects we analyze, we are unable – for good reason – to believe that we shall constantly have first having provided a thorough

It is the more important, its struggle infinitely exceeds the effect of the objects analyzed by *Historical I*. We so as to forestall criticisms based on our order of exposition. Had we begun by talking about the class struggle (about the state), just as many will do in the other direction. On this point, indulgence, but, simply, for their inability to discuss everything at the same time with a modicum of order and clarity.

Two final remarks: we shall do our best to make it as precise as possible. We must, however, warn our readers that, on our subject, we shall sometimes be complex and difficult. In sustained study of our explanations has to do with the philosophy, law, and apparatuses. Finally, we ask readers to take care in asking that it do the impossible (for an investigation). While it is a reflection, it obviously cannot, we then end, of course, error that all certain indulgence for the one who, however, we ask for the assistance of them on condition, of course, argued and backed up with evidence, and down without reasons to justify it.

One last warning: if I may put it here should be taken, on any ground Marx demanded that his readers for all readers, whenever the nature

What Is Philosophy?

1. COMMON-SENSE PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHY

Everyone thinks she knows, spontaneously, what philosophy is. Yet philosophy is also supposed to be a mysterious activity that is difficult and beyond the reach of ordinary men's. How is this contradiction to be explained?

Let us look a little more closely at its two terms.

Everyone thinks she knows, spontaneously, what philosophy is, on the basis of a conviction that all people are, more or less, *philosophical*, even when they are not aware of it (like Monsieur Jourdain, who uttered prose without being aware of it).

This is the thesis defended by the great Italian Marxist theoretician Gramsci (*everybody is a philosopher*). And Gramsci provides interesting details. He observes that, in everyday language, the expression 'to take things philosophically' designates an attitude that itself involves a certain conception of philosophy, bound up with the idea of *rational necessity*. Someone who, confronted with a painful occurrence, 'takes things philosophically' is someone who takes a step back, gets the better of her immediate reaction, and conducts herself in a rational way: she understands the event affecting her and acknowledges its *necessity*.

Of course, says Gramsci, there can be a streak of passivity in this attitude ('to be a philosopher' is 'to cultivate your own garden' or 'mind your own business' or 'see only what suits you'). In short, 'to be a philosopher' is also, most of the time, to resign oneself to necessity and withdraw into this resignation, into one's private life, one's inner life, one's day-to-day affairs, while waiting for 'the dust to settle'. Gramsci does not deny this. But he insists on the fact that such passivity contains, paradoxically, the acknowledgement of a certain order of things, one that is necessary and comprehensible.

At the same time, however, as an idea of what philosophy is in the popular idea in the stock figure of the philosopher, he dwells on its abstraction and walks in Greece, as there are today, 'the heaven of stars instead of the earth', which he 'proposes to make fun of'. On the one hand, it represents an irreconcilable affectionate or bitter settling of accounts; on the other hand, it contains the acknowledgment of a discipline that is beyond the reach of common people, while being, as a result, a serious risk.

Gramsci takes the first term of the contradiction seriously, but not the second. But it is not good enough to say only what suits us. We have to take the contradiction of philosophy into account. In everyday expression, to take things philosophically is *resignation* to necessity, to wait 'for things to settle down' or 'for the dust to settle', says Plato. 'Rational necessity' thus takes a back seat to nothing else (we may not know the truth, but we are not *resigned*). That is, it may be a bit unusual in the case. This remark is crucial.

It is crucial, first of all, because *philosophy = resignation*. One cannot dispute itself, as it were, an idea. Indeed, we shall be showing that, for Gramsci, the forms of resignation or, to be more precise, of the 'ruling class' (Marx) and thus of philosophy are:

It is crucial, secondly, because it is a tension between two altogether different attitudes. On the one hand, the passive, resigned 'to take things philosophically' while 'waiting for the dust to settle' (we shall call this 'passive philosophy'). On the other hand, there is the active attitude that seeks to change the order of the world because it is not what it should be, either in order to know it or in order to live it ('philosophy' *Philosophy* that is to say, *philosophy*). Take, for example, a Stoic philosopher.

that he artfully adapts to the order of the world, and this rational order is, for him, rational because he shows it through the exercise of reason. Take, for example, the communist philosopher (she is a 'philosopher' to the extent that she imitates in order to hasten the advent of socialism, the historical necessity of which she has understood (by means of scientific reason)). We shall say that all the adepts of Stoicism and all communist militants are, in this respect, philosophers in the second, strong sense of the word. They 'take things philosophically', if you like, in their case, however, this expression has to do with knowledge of the rational necessity of the course of the world or evolution of history. Of course, there is a big difference between the adept of Stoicism and the communist militant, but, for the moment, it does not interest us. We shall discuss it in due course.

What is essential, for the moment, is to see clearly that the common-sense philosophy to which the everyday expression refers should not be confused with Philosophy in the strong sense, the philosophy 'observed' by *philosophos* (Plato . . . the Stoics and so on, Marx, Lenin), which may or may not disseminate or, rather, be disseminated among the broad mass of the people. When, today, we encounter philosophical elements in the popular conceptions of the masses, we have to take this dissemination into account. Unless we do, we may mistake Philosophical elements in the strong sense that have been 'injected' (Lenin, Mao) into the masses as a result of the union of Marxist theory and the workers' movement for spontaneous mass consciousness.

A) Moreover, the popular conception of Philosophy, when it ironically shows us the philosopher with his head 'in the clouds,' explicitly recognizes that philosophy can be something altogether different from common-sense 'philosophy'. This irony, which is a sending of accounts, indulgent, satirical, or scornful, with spontaneous Philosophy, incapable of concerning itself with down-to-earth problems, also contains its 'grain of truth' (Lenin): namely, that the true philosopher 'circulates' in a 'world different' from that of spontaneous popular consciousness. (Let us call it, provisionally, the world of 'ideas'.) The philosopher 'knows' and says certain things that ordinary people do not know, he has to negotiate the difficult roads of abstraction in order to attain this 'other knowledge', which is not immediately given to everyone. In this sense, one can no longer say that everyone is spontaneously a philosopher, unless one plays on the sense of the word 'philosophic', the way Gramsci does – unless one confuses common-sense philosophy with Philosophy tout court.

This brings us back to our question: What is philosophy? But, at the same time, we can now see that our first question is pregnant with another: What is common-sense philosophy?

To answer this two-part question, we shall return to the analysis of these in roughly 150000 words. We shall return to the analysis of these in roughly 150000 words. We shall return to the analysis of these in roughly 150000 words. Only after we have done this can we come back to our questions.

II. PHILOSOPHY HAS

Let us begin with a simple observation. Philosophy seems always to exist. Philosophy seems always to exist.

Everyone knows how far in height and in points and that the state has been observed to exist only in and

We shall make a return of the very complicated. We shall say that Philosophy is observed to exist in societies

1) social classes (and therefore the

2) science (or one science) exists

Let us be more precise. By scientific feelings (*epistémotés*), which can be Egyptian were familiar with a certain and mathematics' results.

It is a dependent (*idēf*) discipline that demonstrates, for example, the Greeks (or those designated by his religion).

To stick with our observation, that we are right. We can confirm that Philosophy as we know it began in the fifth century (before our era) in the civilized social classes (our first known sciences, mathematics, began condition) shortly before the turn of the times – social classes and mathematics registered in Plato's Philosophy, and of the school in which he taught 'enter here who is not a geometer', 'proportion' (which grounded the words, inequality) to establish a way the convictions of the transition, who are made for work, others who will others who are made to ensure reign over slaves and tradesmen.)



But let us not proceed too quickly. For we can observe another fact as well. Other class societies existed well before fifth century Greece; yet they did not possess the idea of demonstrative science and, plainly, they did not have the idea of Philosophy. Examples: Greece itself prior to the fifth century, the great Near Eastern kingdoms, Egypt, and so on. It would clearly stem that in order for Philosophy to exist, the two conditions that we have mentioned must obtain: the necessary condition (the existence of classes) and the sufficient condition (the existence of a science).

It will be objected that there were men who called themselves 'philosophers' before Plato, such as the Seven Sages, the 'Ionian philosophers', and so on. We shall reply to this objection a little later.

Let us return to the conditions that we have defined and pursue our observations. The intellectual discipline of Philosophy, founded by Plato, did not disappear with his death. It survived him as a discipline and there have always been people to practice it. It is as if it were necessary that Philosophy exist — and not just that it exist, but that it perpetuate itself in linguistic fashion, as if it were *signifying* something essential in its very transformations.

Why did it continue and why was it transformed even as it was perpetuated?

Let us note that it was continued and developed in what we call the 'Western world' (which was relatively isolated from the rest of the world until the advent of colonialism): a world in which classes and the state have continued to exist and in which the sciences have seen great developments, but in which the class struggle has also seen great transformations.

As for Philosophy, what has happened to it? We may observe the following.

III. POLITICAL-SCIENTIFIC CONJUNCTIONS AND PHILOSOPHY

We note that Philosophy, too, has seen major transformations. Aristotle is something other than Plato, Stoicism something other than Aristotle, Descartes something other than St Thomas Aquinas, Kant something other than Descartes, and so on. Did these transformations occur for no reason other than that these great authors were inspired? Or, to put the question another way, why were these authors great authors, whereas a throng of other philosophers, who wrote a host of books, have remained, so to speak, in the shadows, without playing any historical role?

Here, too, we can note certain things. We observe, perhaps to our surprise, that all great transformations in philosophy intervene at moments in history *after* when noteworthy modifications occur in class relations and the state or when major events occur in the history of the sciences:

with the additional stipulation that these events are the major events in the class struggle and the major events in most of the time, to reinforce this, we produce prominent effects in Philosophy.

Let us give a few examples. In what we provided so far, we have to present them, modify it later, when we have other examples.

As for almost all the great authors, we can indeed observe, in the conjuncture, a conjunction of political and scientific transformations of the previous conjuncture.

Political events	Scientific events
Creation of the Macedonian Empire (end of the classical world)	History of a book
Creation of the Christendom, Roman Empire, Roman Law	History of a book
Triumph of the first signs of a revival of Roman Law	Preparation of scientific disciplines
Development of legal mechanisms (relations with the Absolutist Monarchy)	Foundations of physics and chemistry
Rise of the bourgeoisie, French Revolution	New foundations of Newton
Constitutions of the French Revolution, Union of the French, Empire, elimination by Thermidor of Napoleon, Civil Law Code	First reproduction of history
Emergence, growth and first struggles of the socialist movement of the workers' movement	Birth of Marxism
Opposition of the petty bourgeoisie?	Advances and setbacks of mathematics
Crises of Marxism	Development of physics
And so on ...	

1. Once one science (rather than any other) intervenes to influence the period in which the historical events occur, then the latter Philosophy takes as its reference.

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