



*Marilyn with Wall*  
Rachel Harrison

# LOGIC OF THE SITE

ALAIN BADIOU

*The Commune Is a Site*

*1. Ontology of the Commune*

Take any world whatsoever. A multiple that is an object of this world—whose elements are indexed by the transcendental of this world—is a site, if it happens to count itself within the referential field of its own indexation. Or again: a site is a multiple that happens to behave in the world with regard to itself as with regard to its elements, in such a way as to be the support of being of its own appearance.

Even if the idea is still obscure, we can begin to see its content: a site is a singularity, because it convokes its being in the appearing of its own multiple composition. It makes itself, in the world, the being-there of its being. Among other consequences, the site gives itself an intensity of existence. A site is a being that happens to exist by itself.

We will ask: can we give a more concrete idea of what a site is? Is there a site?

Let us consider the world “Paris at the end of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.” We are in the month of March 1871. After a semblance of resistance, and shot through with fear of revolutionary and worker Paris, the interim government of bourgeois “Republicans” capitulates to Bismarck’s Prussians. In order to consolidate this political “victory”—very comparable to Petain’s reactionary revenge in 1940 (where preferring an arrangement with the external enemy to exposure to the internal enemy)—it has an assembly with a royalist majority hastily elected by a frightened rural world, an assembly that sits in Bordeaux.

Led by Thiers, the government hopes to take advantage of the circumstances to annihilate the political capacity of the workers. But on the Parisian front, the proletariat is armed in the form of a National Guard, owing to its having been mobilized during the siege on Paris. In theory the Parisian proletariat has many hundreds of cannons at its disposition. The “military” organism of the Parisians is the Central Committee, at which assemble the delegates of the various battalions of the National Guard, battal-

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*Translators' Note: This text is a small extract from Alain Badiou's forthcoming Logiques des mondes (Logics of Worlds, French publication expected in 2006) the much-awaited follow-up to his major work L'être et l'événement (Being and Event, originally published in 1988 and in English translation in 2005). The principal change in perspective between these two works, really the only knowledge needed to follow the argument here, consists in the move from ontology, as the science of being, to logic, redefined as the science of appearing, or of being-there. Thus, whereas in L'être et l'événement, Badiou defines being as a multiple of multiples, so that everything that is must be seen as a pure multiple, in Logiques des mondes he makes the cohesion of appearing, or the there of a world, depend on what he calls its transcendental, that is, the structure of order that measures the identities and differences in this world by assigning varying degrees of greater or lesser intensity to the existence of its objects. The following extract, published here with permission of the author, studies the possibility of real change within a given regime of appearing, with specific references to a well-known sequence in revolutionary politics, namely, the Paris Commune of 1871. The result is a complete rearticulation of the conditions in which a given space can become the site of a radically transformative event.*

ions that are in turn linked to the great working-class *quartiers* of Paris—Montmartre, Belleville, and so forth.

Thus we have a divided world whose logical organization—what in philosophical jargon could be called its transcendental organisation—reconciles intensities of political existence according to two sets of antagonistic criteria. Concerning the representative, electoral, and legal dispositions, one cannot but observe the preeminence of the Assembly of traditionalist Rurals,<sup>1</sup> Thiers's *capitulard* government, and the officers of the regular army, who, having been licked without much of a fight by the Prussian soldiers, dream of doing battle with the Parisian workers. That is where the power is, especially as it is the only power recognized by the occupier. On the side of resistance, political intervention, and French revolutionary history, there is the fecund disorder of Parisian worker organizations, which intermingles with the Central Committee of the twenty quarters, the Federation of Syndicate Chambers, a few members of the International, local military committees. In truth, the historical consistency of this world, which had been separated and disbanded [*délié*] owing to the war, is held together only by the majority conviction that no kind of worker capability for government exists. For the vast majority of people, including often the workers themselves, the politicized workers of Paris are simply incomprehensible. These workers are the inexistent aspect [*l'inexistant propre*] of the term “political capacity” in the uncertain world of the spring of 1871. But for the bourgeoisie they are still too existent, at least physically. The government receives threats from the stock exchange of this sort: “You will never have financial operations if you do not get rid of these reprobates.” First up then, an imperative task, and a seemingly easy one to carry out: disarm the workers and, in particular, recuperate the cannons spread throughout working-class Paris by the military committees of the National Guard. It is this initiative that will make of the term “March 18” (a single day—such as it is exposed in the situation “Paris in spring 1871”) a site, that is, that which *presents itself* in the appearing of a situation.

More precisely, March 18 is the first day of the event calling itself the Paris Commune, that is, the exercise of power by Socialist or Republican political militants and organizations of armed workers in Paris from March 18 to May 28, 1871. The balance sheet of this sequence is the massacre of many tens of thousands of “rebels” by the troops of the Thiers government and the reactionary Assembly.

What is, exactly, in terms of its manifest content, this beginning called March 18? Our answer is: the appearing of a worker-being—to this very day a social symptom, a brute force of uprisings and a theoretical threat—in the space of governmental and political capacity.

And what happens? Thiers orders General Aurelles de Paladine to retrieve the cannons held by the National Guard. Close to three in the morning a coup is made by some select detachments. A complete success, so it seems. On the walls an announcement by Thiers and his ministers is to be read; it bears the paradoxes of a split transcendental evaluation: “Let the good citizens separate from the bad; let them aid the public force.” Nevertheless, by eleven in the morning the coup has totally failed. The soldiers have been encircled by hundreds of ordinary women, backed up by anonymous workers and members of the National Guard acting on their own behalf. Many of the soldiers fraternize. The cannons are taken back. General Aurelles de Paladine goes crazy, seeing in it the great red peril: “The Government calls upon you to defend your homes, your families, your property. Some misguided men, obeying only some secret leaders, turn

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1. The Assembly of “Rurals” is the nickname of the National Assembly of 1871, which met in Bordeaux and was largely made up of reactionary monarchists: provincial landlords, officials, rentiers and traders “elected” in rural districts. There were about 430 monarchists among the Assembly of 630 deputies.

the cannons kept back from the Prussians against Paris.” According to him, it is a matter of “putting an end to the insurrectional Committee, whose members represent only Communist doctrines, and who would pillage Paris and bury France.” All to no avail. Despite being without veritable direction the rebellion extends, occupying the whole city. The armed workers organizations make use of the caserns, public buildings, and finally the Hôtel-de-Ville, which, under a red flag, will be the site and the symbol of the new power. Theirs saves himself, escaping via a hidden staircase. The minister Jules Favre jumps out a window. The whole governmental apparatus disappears and installs itself at Versailles. Paris is delivered to the insurrection.

March 18 is a site because, apart from whatever else appears here under the ambiguous transcendental of the world “Paris in spring 1871,” it appears as the striking, and totally unforeseeable, beginning of a rupture (true, still without concept) with even that which has been the norm for its appearing. Note that “March 18” is the title of a chapter of the magnificent *History of the Paris Commune of 1871* published by the militant Lissagaray in 1876. This chapter is of course about the “women of March 18,” the “people of March 18,” which attests to the inclusion of “March 18” (now a predicate) for the purpose of evaluating whatever might result from the turns of events comprising this day. Lissagaray sees clearly that, under the sign of an eruption of being, the fortuities of March 18 have organized an immanent overturning of the laws of appearing. Indeed, that the working people of Paris were able to overcome the dispersion of their political framework, and thwart a specific governmental act executed with force (the seizure of the cannons), has resulted in the imperative appearing of an unknown capacity, of an unprecedented power. That is how “March 18” comes to appear under the injunction of being as an element of the situation that it is.

In fact, from the point of view of regulated appearing, the possibility of a popular and worker governmental power purely and simply does not exist. And not even for the militant workers themselves, who speak the vocabulary of the “Republic” indistinctly. On the evening of March 18, the members of the Central Committee of the National Guard—the only effective authority of the city whose legal tutors have absconded—remain more or less convinced they should not be sitting at the Hôtel-de-Ville, reiterating that they “do not have a mandate for government.” This amounts to saying, in accordance with our conception of it, that they balk at breaking with “the left.” It is only with the sword of the circumstances hanging over their heads that they end up, as Édouard Moreau—a perfect nobody—will dictate to them the morning of March 19, by deciding to “proceed to elections, to provide for the public services, and to protect the town from a surprise.” With this act *nolens volens*, and counter to all allegiances with the parliamentary left, they directly constitute themselves as a political authority. This doing, “March 18” gets included as the beginning of that authority, an authority in the effects of March 18.

It is essential to understand that March 18 is a site because it imposes itself on all the elements that participate in its existence as that which, contrary to the indistinct content of worker-being, “forcibly” calls for an entirely new transcendental evaluation of the intensity of worker-being. The site “March 18,” this empirical “March 18” in which is dealt out the impossible possibility of worker existence, is, thought as such, a subversion of the rules of political appearing (of the logic of power) by means of its own active support.

As to the thought of its pure being, a site is simply a multiple that happens to be an element of itself. We have just illustrated this by the example of March 18, a complicated set of peripeteia whose result is that “March 18” gets instituted, in the object “March 18,” as the exigency of a new political appearing, as forcing an unheard-of transcendental evaluation of the political scene.

Nevertheless, a site must be thought not simply in terms of the ontological particularity that I have just recognized in it but also according to the logical unfolding of its consequences.

Now, as a figure of the instant, a site appears, only to disappear. Veritable duration, that is, the time a site opens or founds, pertains only to its consequences. The enthusiasm of March 18, 1871, is most certainly founding of the first worker power in history, but when on May 10 the Central Committee proclaims that to save the “revolution of March 18, which it had begun so well,” it would “put an end to controversies, put down the malignants, quell rivalry, ignorance, and incapacity,” its boastful desperation betrays what, by way of a distribution or envelopment of political intensities, had appeared in the city for two months.

That said, what is a consequence? This point is fundamental for the theory of the historical appearing of a politics. Obviously I’ll have to leave out the technical details of that theory here. The simplest thing to do is to fix a value for the relation of consequence between two terms in a situation by the mediation of their degree of existence. If an element *a* of a situation is such that the existence of *a* has a value of *p*, and if the element *b* of the same situation exists to the degree of *q*, then *b* is a consequence of *a* in a measure equal to the dependency of these intensities, or, if you like, their order. If, for example, on the scale measuring the intensities of existence proper to a certain situation, *q* is greatly inferior to *p*, the dependency of *b* to *a* can be validated.

Henceforth we can say that a consequence is a strong or weak relation between existences. The degree to which one thing is the consequence of another is thus never independent of the intensity of existence they have in the situation under consideration. As such, the aforementioned declaration of the Central Committee of May 10, 1871, can be read as a thesis on the consequences. It records:

—The very strong intensity of existence of the day of March 18, 1871, or of that revolution which had “begun so well.”

—The implicitly disastrous degree of existence of political discipline in the worker camp two months later (“bad will,” “rivalry,” “ignorance,” “incapacity”).

—A desire (unfortunately abstract) to bring the value of the consequences of the politics in course level with the power of existence of its disappeared origin.

A site is the appearing/disappearing of a multiple whose paradox is self-belonging. The logic of the site involves the distribution of intensities around the vanished point which the site is. We must therefore begin at the beginning: what is value of existence of the site itself? Then we will continue with what can be inferred as to the consequences.

Nothing in the ontology of the site prescribes its value of existence. Sudden appearance is no more than a barely “perceptible” local apparition (it is pure image since there is no perception here). Or again: its disappearing cannot leave any trace. It is quite possible that, ontologically appointed signs of “true” change (self-belonging and disappearance in the instant), a site is nevertheless, by its existential insignificance, hardly different to the simple continuation of the situation.

On Tuesday May 23, 1871, for example, when nearly all Paris is at the hands of the Versaillaise soldiery, who shoot workers by the thousands on stairs all over the city, and when no military or political direction any longer subsists on the side of the communards, who fight barricade by barricade, the remains of the Central Committee make their last proclamation, which is hastily stuck up on a few walls, and which, as Lissagaray said with a sombre irony, is a “proclamation of victors.” The proclamation demands the conjoint dissolution of the (legal) Assembly of Versailles and the Commune, the retreat of the Parisian army, a provisional government entrusted to the delegates of big cities, and a reciprocal amnesty. How to qualify this sad “Manifesto”? Due to its sheer incongruity, it cannot be reduced to the normality of the situation. Instead, this Manifesto expresses, albeit in a derisory way, the Commune’s self-certitude, its just conviction of having marked a political beginning. It is a document that, though the wind of the barracks will carry it *aux oubliettes*, can be legitimately held for one of the site’s elements. Nevertheless, in the savage dawn of the worker insurrection, its value of existence is very weak. What is in question here is the singular power of the site. Certainly this Central Committee manifesto is ontologically situated in that which holds the eventual syntagm the “Paris Commune” together but, as a sign of decomposition or of powerlessness, it leads the singularity of this syntagm back to the margins of a pure and simple modification, or to its simple mechanical development, and is lacking in veritable creation.

On this point, let’s cite the terrible passage dedicated to the Commune’s last moments by Julien Gracq in *Lettrines*. In 1981, I inserted this extract in the preface to my *Théorie du sujet* so as to indicate that all my philosophical efforts went to contribute, however slightly, to our (we, the inheritors of the Cultural Revolution and May ’68) never becoming “*marchands de bons de harengs*.”

Gracq had been rereading the third volume of the autobiography of communist leader Jules Vallès titled *L’insurgé*. Here is a fragment of his commentary:

*Marx was indulgent of the leadership of the Commune, whose shortcomings he had perfectly seen. The revolution also had its Trochu and its Gamelin. Vallès’s frankness consternates, and might cause one to take horror at that proclamatory leadership, those chand`vins revolutionaries, on whom the barricaders of Belleville spat as they passed by during the last days of the blood-soaked week. There is no excuse to lead the good fight when one leads it so lightly.*

*A kind of atrocious nausea arises while following the Ubuesque masquerade, the pathetic disorder, of the last pages, wherein the unfortunate Commune delegate—no longer daring to show his sash which he clasped under his arms in a newspaper—a sort of quartier incompetent, of petroleur Charlot leaping between shell blasts, incapable of doing anything at all, treated harshly by the rebels who bear their teeth, wanders like a lost dog from one barricade to another distributing in disorderly fashion coupons for fish, bullets, and fire, and imploring the spiteful crowd—which was hard on his heels because of the fix into which he had plunged it—pitifully, lamentably, “Leave me alone, I ask you. I need to think alone.”*

*In his exile as a courageous incompetent, he must have sometimes awoken at night, still hearing the voices of all the same series of people who were to be massacred in a few minutes, and who cried so furiously at him from the barricade: “Where are the orders? Where is the plan?”* [Gracq 205–06; see also Badiou 14–15]



So that this kind of disaster doesn't arise, it would be necessary that the force of existence in the appearing of the site compensate for its evanescence. Only a site whose value of existence is maximal has the capacity for an event [*est en puissance d'événement*]. Certainly this was the case on March 18, 1871, when, women at the front, the working people of Paris forbade the army from disarming the National Guard. But it is no longer the case concerning the Commune's political direction as of the end of April.

We will call a site whose intensity of existence is not maximal a *fact*.

We will call a site whose intensity of existence is maximal a *singularity*.

You will notice that the repressive force of the Versaillese is accompanied by a propaganda that systematically desingularizes the Commune, presenting it as a monstrous set of facts to be (forcibly) returned to the normal order of things. This results in some extraordinary statements, like the one that appeared in the conservative journal *Le Siècle* on May 21, 1871, right in the middle of the massacre of workers: "The social difficulties have been resolved or are in the process of being resolved." It could not have been better put. It is true that as of March 21, only three days after the insurrection, Jules Favre was prone to declaring that Paris was at the mercy "a handful of villains, holding above the rights of the Assembly I don't know what kind of rapacious and bloody ideal." In the appearing of a situation strategic and tactical choices oscillate between fact and singularity because it is, as always, a question of relating to a logical order of circumstances.

If a world finally comes to be situated—from the advening of a site in it—and is disposed between singularity and fact, then it is to the network of consequences that it the decision falls.

### *March 18 and Its Consequences* *Logic of the Commune, 2*

A singularity diverges further from simple continuity than a fact because it is attached to an intensity of maximal existence. If we are now compelled to distinguish between weak and strong singularities, it is with a view to establishing the relations of consequence woven by an evanescent site with the elements of the situation that presented it in the world.

To be brief, we shall say that *existing* maximally for the time of its appearing/disappearing accords a site the power [*puissance*] of a singularity. But that *making exist* maximally is all the strength of that singularity.

For a strong singularity we shall reserve the name of event.

A few remarks are in order about the predicative distinction strength/weakness as it applies to singularities (that is, to sites whose transcendental intensity of existence is maximal).

Now, it is clear that, in the order of work of a truth's appearing, the Paris Commune, crushed in blood in two months, is nonetheless much more significant than September 4, 1870, the date when the political regime of the Second Empire collapsed and the Third Republic—which lasted seventy years—began. That in no way depends on the actors: on September 4 too, it was working people who, under a red flag, invaded the place of the Hôtel-de-Ville and, as Lissagaray recounted so well, brought on a collapse of the officials: "Important dignitaries, fat functionaries, ferocious Mamelukes, imperious ministers, solemn chamberlains, moustached generals, shake pitifully on September 4, like a bunch of weak hams." On the one hand, then, an insurrection that founds no duration; on the other, a day that changes the State. September 4, however, will be confiscated by bourgeois politicians primarily concerned to reestablish the or-

der of property. Whereas the Commune, Lenin's ideal referent, will inspire a century of revolutionary thought, thus meriting the famous evaluation Marx gave of it prior to its bloody end:

*The Commune was [. . .] the initiation of the Social Revolution of the 19th century. Whatever therefore its fate at Paris, it will make le tour du monde. It was at once acclaimed by the working class of Europe and the United States as the magic word of delivery.* [3: 173]

Let's posit then that September 4 is a weak singularity, because it is aligned on the general development of European states in their convergence toward the parliamentary form. Moreover, let's say that the Commune is a strong singularity because it proposes to thought a rule of emancipation, and is relayed—perhaps against the grain—by October 1917 and, more precisely, by the summer of 1967 in China and May '68 in France. What counts here is not only the exceptional intensity of sudden appearing of singularities (i.e. the fact that it is a matter of a violent and creative episode in the domain of appearing) but also what of uncertain and glorious consequences an evanescent emergence makes available to lived time.

Beginnings will be measured by the rebeginnings they authorize. Whether an aleatory adjunction to the world merits being taken—beyond continuities and facts—not simply for a singularity but for an event depends on that which perseveres of it—of its intensity—outside of itself.

*The Commune Is an Event*  
*Logic of the Commune, 3*

Everything depends, therefore, on the consequences. And notice that there is no stronger a transcendental consequence than that of making something appear in a world which had not existed in it before. Thus it is with the day March 18, 1871, when a collection of unknown workers are put at the center of political heat, workers who were unknown even to specialists of the revolution—those old surviving “quarante-huitards”—who had unfortunately encumbered the Commune with their inefficient logomachy. Let's return to March 19 and to the first of the declarations by the Central Committee, the only directly accountable organism from the March 18 insurrection: “Let Paris and France put together the bases of an acclaimed Republic with all its consequences, the only government that will close forever the era of invasion and civil wars.” Who signs this unprecedented political decision? Twenty people, three-quarters of whom are proletarians whom only the circumstances constitute and identify. Right on cue with the well-worn theme of “foreign agents,” the governmental *Officiel* self-assuredly asked: “Who are the members of the Committee? Are they communists, Bonapartists, or Prussians?” In reality they were the inexistent workers of the day before, brought into a provisionally maximal political existence as a consequence of the event.

Therefore, we will recognize a strong singularity by its having for a situation the consequence of making an inexistent term exist in it.

In more abstract fashion, we will posit the following definition: *given a site (a multiple affected with self-belonging) which is a singularity (its intensity of existence, as instantaneous and as “evanescent” as it may be, is nevertheless maximal), we will say that this site is a strong singularity, or an event, if, in consequence of the (maximal) intensity of the site, something whose value of existence was null in the situation takes on a positive value of existence.*



Thus, all we are saying is that an event *has, as a maximally true consequence of its (maximal) intensity of existence, the existence of an inexistent*.

This evidently implies a violent paradox. Because if an implication is maximally true and so too is its antecedent, then its consequence must also be; we have thus come to a seemingly untenable conclusion, whereby under the effect of an event the inexistent aspect of a site exists absolutely.

And indeed: the unknown members of the Central Committee, who were politically inexistent in the world of the previous day, come to exist absolutely the same day as their apparition. The Parisian people obey their proclamations, encourage them to occupy the public buildings and turn out for the elections they organize.

The paradox can be analysed in three points. First, the principle of this overturning of worldly appearing from inexistence to absolute existence is a vanishing principle. This existential transfiguration consumes all the event's power. As eventual multiplicity, March 18, 1871, has not the least stability.

Next, if the inexistent aspect of a site must fight for maximal intensity, in the order of appearing, it is only inasmuch as from then on it has taken the place of that which has disappeared; its maximality is the subsisting mark of the event itself in the world. The trace [*tracé*] or the statement in the world of the evanescent event is its "eternal" existence. The proclamations of the Commune, the first worker power in universal history, compose an historical existent whose absoluteness manifests the arrival in the world of a wholly new ordering of worldly appearing, a mutation of its logic. The existence of the inexistent aspect is that by which, in the domain of appearing, the subversion of worldly appearing by subjacent be-ing is played out. It is the logical marking of a paradox of being. An onto-logical chimera.

### *Destruction*

#### *Logic of the Commune, 4*

Last, an inexistent aspect must return within the space in which existence is subsequently maintained. Worldly order is not subverted to the point of being able to require the abolition of a logical law of situations. Every situation has at least one proper inexistent aspect. And if the latter happens to be sublimated into absolute existence, another element of the site must cease to exist, thereby keeping the law intact and ultimately preserving the coherence of appearing.

In 1896, adding another conclusion to his *History of the Commune of 1871*, Lissagaray makes two observations. The first is that the troop of reactionaries and workers' assassins of 1871 is still in place. Parliamentarism obliging, it has even been augmented with "some bourgeois fives who, under the mask of democrat, facilitate its advances." The second is that the people from then on constitutes its own force: "Three times [in 1792, in 1848, and in 1870] the French proletariat made the Republic for others; now it is ripe for its own." Otherwise said, initiated March 18, 1871, the Commune-event did not of course have the consequence of destroying the dominant group and its politicians. But something more important was destroyed: the political subordination of workers and the people. What was destroyed was of the order of subjective incapacity: "Ah!," exclaims Lissagaray, "they are not uncertain of their capacities, these workers of the country and the towns."<sup>2</sup> The absolutisation of worker political existence (the existence of the inexistent), convulsive and crushed, had all the same destroyed the

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2. Lissagaray 470–71. This fragment is not included in Eleanor Marx Aveling's English translation.

necessity of a basic form of subjection: that of a possible proletarian politics to the schemes of (leftist) bourgeois politicians. Like every veritable event, the Commune had not *realized* a possible, it had created one. This possible is simply that of an independent proletarian politics.

That a century later the necessity of subjection to the left has been reconstituted, or rather reinvented under the very name of “democracy,” is yet another story, yet another sequence in the tormented history of truths. It remains that what took the place of the inexistent aspect (worker political capacity), was the destruction of that which legitimated this inexistence (subjective incapacity). At the beginning of the twentieth century, the place of death no longer occupies worker political consciousness, but—even if it did not yet know it—the prejudice as to the natural character of classes, and as to the millenary vocation of proprietors and the wealthy to detain social and state power. The Paris Commune accomplished this destruction for the future, even in the apparent *mise à mort* of its own superexistence [*surexistence*].

Here we have a transcendental maxim: if, in the form of an eventual consequence, what was worth nothing comes to be worth the whole, then an established given within appearance is destroyed. What had sustained the cohesion of a world is struck with nonexistence; such that if the transcendental indexation of beings is the (logical) base of the world, then with good reason it must be said: “the world will change its base.”

When the world is violently enchanted by the absolute consequences of a paradox of being, all appearing must, when threatened with the local destruction of a customary evaluation, reconstitute a different distribution of what exists and what does not.

Under the eruption being exerts on its own appearing, nothing can happen to a world except the chance—mingling existence and destruction—of another world.

### Conclusion

I believe this other world resides for us in the Commune, yet altogether elsewhere than in its subsequent existence, which I have called its *first* existence, that is, the Party-State and its social worker referent. Instead, it exists in the observation that a political rupture is always a combination of a subjective capacity and an organization—totally independent of State—of the consequences of that capacity.

It is also important to maintain that such a rupture is always a rupture with the left, in the formal sense I have given to that term. This is also to say that today a rupture is a rupture with the representative form of politics, or, if one wants to go further in the way of founded provocation, a rupture with “democracy.”

The notion that the consequences of a political capacity are obligatorily of the order of power and State administration belongs to the first account of the Commune, not to the one that interests us. Instead, our problem is rather to return—prior to this first account (prior to Lenin, if you will)—to what was alive but defeated in the Commune: to the fact that a politics appears when a *declaration* is at one and the same time a *decision as to the consequences*, and, thus, when a decision is active in the form of a previously unknown collective discipline. Because we must never stop recalling that those who are nothing can only stick to a wager on the consequences of their appearing through the element of a new discipline, a discipline that is a practical discipline of thought. The Party in Lenin’s sense certainly represented the creation of such a discipline, but one ultimately subordinated to constraints of State. Today’s task, being undertaken notably by the Organisation politique,<sup>3</sup> is to support the creation of such a

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3. *The Organisation politique, of which Badiou is one of the founding members, dates in its current form from 1984. It is currently engaged in a series of precise campaigns concerning*

discipline subtracted from the grip of the State, the creation of a thoroughly political discipline.

*Translated by Steve Corcoran with Bruno Bosteels*

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*immigration, housing, and the political status of work and workers. Its views are expressed in La distance politique.*