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Editorial

The collection of essays *#political* presents our efforts to bring together the writings of some of the distinguished scholars who were part of the Faculty of Media and Communications' international academic network in the last decade. All the scholars featured in this volume whose research is embedded in various fields of studies (media, political, religious, communication or cultural studies, postcolonial studies, sexuality, gender and queer studies, peace and conflict studies, and international relations) have contributed to the ways in which we were able to develop, expand and enrich our academic institution. While a number of authors were part of the FMK Visiting Lecturers Program, others taught at our two International Summer Schools: the Summer School for Sexualities, Cultures and Politics and the Summer School in Comparative Conflict Studies. The overall educational aim of this collection is to destabilize the strict academic disciplinary divisions, and to maintain a strong dedication to reinvestigating and rethinking the potentialities of unlearning, undoing the common notion of political knowledge by imagining possible alternative, paradoxical and even monstrous clusters of thinking on politics and the political.

The title of this collection highlights the notion of the political as being at the heart of our academic work, interests, passions and research practices in the past decade. As a result of that, as we enter the second decade of the Faculty's work we have established the Department for Critical Political Studies, that will offer new and innovative graduate and undergraduate degrees and will engage in local and international scientific research projects, in Serbia, in the region and worldwide.

Accordingly, the title of this publication, *#political*, was created as a curious combination of the "hashtag" symbol and of the concept of

the “political”, within its radical contemporary uses in current theoretical interrogations. The “hashtag” was here employed and estranged from its usual use regarding the microblogging services that provide micro-thematic clusters in social media environment. The “hashtag” symbol in our title stands for the double bind of #clusters, providing both the shared organization of content and joint community of affinities. Given that the “#” symbol is often understood as a bookmark of content and as a dissemination feed, our collection here aims at distinguishing the notion of the “political” as a specific philosophical search engine for innovative thinking practices and for the invention of different communities to come.

Combining rigorous scholarly assessment of the #political, the editors aimed to establish a new and innovative platform to critically rethink the problem of the normative, highly systematized, and normalized notion of political subjectivities that determine the existing imaginaries for social change, as well as to re-negotiate the new political imagination and reshape the definition and scope of the ‘political’. Furthermore, we aspired to re-articulate the concepts of gender, sexuality, race, peace and class, and finally to analyse the impact and potentialities of politics of unlearning/undoing on systemic stability, aggregates of knowledge, institutions, discourses of sameness, and human exceptionalism. The contributors of this volume addressed various and diverse topics of contemporary social and political relevance. Its interdisciplinary qualities make the book relevant for students of political studies, philosophy, cultural studies, literature, and history. With this in mind, the Faculty cherishes a long lasting ambition to open an innovative academic space for various international scholars to enrich the geopolitical diversity in Humanities and Social Sciences. Moreover, this space is envisioned as a new theoretical scene, committed to retune the overburdened academic sensorium to different theoretical accents, resonances, and voices. On the other hand, this publication is devoted to re-articulations of the peculiarities of the contextualised and localised knowledge and experiences, such as post-socialist political theory, Balkan studies, South-East European studies and alike.

The collection #political consists of three thematic blocks devoted to the theoretical rethinking of the relations between the notion of the

political and the politics of resistance, critical political studies, politics of affects and alike. In that view, the thematic blocks are titled accordingly: *#resistancepolitical*, *#affectivepolitical* and *#criticalpolitical*. As a whole, the collection aims to give prominent samples of current interdisciplinary research in the field of critical political studies.

The texts presented in the first thematic block *#resistancepolitical*, offer diverse analysis of ongoing rising forms of resistance and revolt worldwide. The authors probe diverse critical rethinking of the “urban future” and its re-configurations in the notion of “metrozenship” for the critical political transformations (Oren Yiftachel); engage in questioning the destitute scope of crisis management and conflict resolution in Ukraine and Syria, as discussed in the analysis of Russia’s foreign policy and the interventions in both case studies (Maxine David); or examine the protests of the “class of those proletarianized under communicative capitalism (Jodi Dean). Furthermore, the contributions in this thematic block grapple with the possible “relentless transformations” of the disciplined body into the persistent body of resistance to disintegration in order to survive (Kolozova); and with the posthumanistic contemporary turn to nature and “life itself” in recent feminist philosophy (Huffer).

The second thematic block *#affectivepolitical*, points to the ways in which the recent theoretical interest in affects has reshaped the field of political theory by opening it to uncertainties far beyond its dominant paradigms. It pushes the limits of thought towards creating, as Luciana Parisi in her text “Digital Automation and Affect” states “new categories of thought defined not by pre-formed subjects or objects but by contingent encounters”. These uncertainties can be recognized also in the work of Slavčo Dimitrov (rethinking the notions of community and identity and through queer shame), Ann Cvetkovic (how trauma can generate alternative forms of thinking and doing), Braha L. Ettinger (through the notion of *carriance*), Lauren Berlant (thinking the structural, historical, and affective overdeterminations of underperformed emotion), Stanimir Panayotov, (through the notion of receptive solidarity) and Elisabeth von Samsonow (through the notion of the mirror).

The texts in the third and last thematic block *#criticalpolitical*, share uncertainties, paradoxalities and ambiguities in the way of drawing “a path so twisted” (Halberstam quoting Patti Smith) into our dis-

ciplined and disciplinary ways of thinking about politics, but also power or knowledge, relation between pedagogy and sexuality (Halperin), politics and pornography (Passonen), the topic of queer resistance and racism being central to neoliberal global capitalism (Grzanic), queer politics of paradoxes which turns the neoliberal deployment of paradoxes against itself (Engel), or Lee Edelman's text recalling the work of Eva Kosofsky Segwick in challenging the notion of recognition and looking into the ways of living and thinking an unnamed, lived experiment. As such, it is about a method that does not primarily shuttle between closeness and distance, but which rather shows how closeness itself may hold distance through bodily difference and differentiation (Sunden). This thematic block features Gil Anidjar's contribution that deals with the "difficulties involved in thinking destruction (*Destruktion / Zerstörung*), a history of destruction, as well as a de(con)struction of metaphysics", and Boyan Manchev's account on Pandora's myth as a "technical ghost of the future".

The Faculty of Media and Communications has developed a proliferative international cooperation, ranging from scientific research projects to the rich exchange with faculties and universities and international research organizations in Europe and worldwide. Furthermore, from its foundation, the Faculty has cherished and promoted the tradition of academic dialogue on an international level, by organizing open lectures and seminars delivered by eminent representatives of contemporary philosophical, political and economic thought. As a result, the Faculty is now recognized as a site of contemporary and critical educational platforms.

As we look forward to the future academic endeavours at the Faculty of Media and Communications, and as we establish and continue to develop the Department of Critical Political Studies, we will engage with the current challenges and questions ahead in the humanities and social sciences: deconstructing existing metanarratives and opening up the space for multiplicity of voices and histories and for the non-dominant, non-normative, non-canonical (minoritarian) political futures; discovering the material and abstract landscapes of political thinking and political change; reading political theory in light of global economic crisis and crisis in human security; exploring critical approaches to Peace and Conflict Studies that will center around dis-

cussions of post-liberal peace; decolonization of Peace as well as interdisciplinary approaches to the study of post-conflict transformation aiming to engaged with empirical reseach that will center the gaze on the #political #resistancepolitical and additional future hashtags we will position our work within such as #multipleperspectivesandminoritarianthinking, #politicallandscapes, #memoryactivism, etc.

#resistancepolitical

Oren Yiftachel

From 'Gray Space' To Equal 'Metrozenship'? Reflections On Urban Citizenship

“My Home is Shas – their Home is Sudan!” yelled large billboards in Tel Aviv and surrounding cities during Israel’s election campaign of 2013, accompanied by the image of Eli Yishai, Israel’s Interior Minister and Chairman of the ultra-orthodox Shas party (see figure 1). The slogan refers to Yishai’s aggressive campaign over the last two years against the settlement of African refugees and migrants in Israel, and especially in the southern neighborhoods of Tel Aviv--Israel’s main globalizing metropolis.

The heated conflict over labor migrants and refugees in Tel Aviv provides a telling entry point to this epilogue, which seeks to connect the articles presented in this symposium with some thoughts on urban citizenship as reflected in the changing scholarly debate and developments ‘on the ground’.

Typically of a globalizing city, tensions around the influx of migrants, refugees and ‘infiltrators’ have reached new heights in recent times (see the articles by Cohen and Margalit, and by Kosnick²⁰¹⁵ as well as Kemp and Rajjman, 2008), spawning a wave of ‘anti-foreigners’ protest. As part of this campaign in Israel, Yishai, whose family hails from Tunisia, declared: ‘the Africans are Muslims who think this country doesn’t belong to us--to the white man ... I will execute all the tools for evicting foreigners.’¹ Most recently, in August 2013, the Israeli attorney general, Yehuda Weinstein, made a visit to Tel Aviv’s southern neighborhoods, and declared: ‘our policy is to fight against the phenomenon of ‘infiltrators ... we thought we

1 See <http://electronicintifada.net/content/sudanese-face-expulsion-minister-declares-israel-belongs-white-man/11394> (accessed 26 June 2015).

found a solution, but on the ground things look very different ... the country is being taken over'.²

Yishai's and Weinstein's comments were met with rejection, disapproval and disgust from liberal sources. For example, Lawyer Rotem Ilan, who represents the organization 'Israeli Children', which is part of a coalition of organizations attempting to normalize the lives of migrant workers and asylum seekers in Tel Aviv, commented:

I fight against their eviction because the immigrants are not a threat to the state's identity; I fight because Jewish values also include compassion, morality and care for minorities; I fight because Tel Aviv is a place where workers living in the city are treated like human beings, not commodities.³

However, the government's position represented the prevailing sentiments among most Israelis, particularly those residing in southern Tel Aviv. It is ironic that Yishai himself (as Minister of the Interior) was a leading figure in shaping Israel's labor immigration policy. Hence, he was the minister responsible for the influx of foreign labor into Israel and Tel Aviv, while at the same time waging a racist campaign against their presence.⁴

Importantly for this article, the debate over the place of Africans in Israeli society has also exposed a latent conflict between the powerful city of Tel Aviv, which facilitates the provision of several (basic) civil and material rights for labor migrants and refugees, against the state of Israel, which maintains a strict ethnocentric 'Jews only' immigration and citizenship policy.

Yishai's double speech can be attributed to political cynicism, but here I wish to go further and claim that it also highlights a structural transformation framed by three major phenomena. First, a process of gray spacing which is reshaping urban societies and citizenship worldwide; this often results in a process of 'creeping' apartheid. Second, the emergence of urban (metropolitan) regimes as increasingly powerful

2 Yisrael Hayom newspaper (6 August 2013: 7). © 2015 urban research publications limited

3 See <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/382/925.html> (accessed 8 July 2015).

4 'Labor migration' to Israel is distinct from Jewish migration, termed 'return'.