Regulating Resistance:
The ideological control of the protests in Gothenburg 2001
Don’t tell me peace has broken out.
Berthold Brecht

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INTRODUCTION

Democracy as we know it is a contradiction. On the one hand, we have the individual, whose freedom of thought and expression must be guaranteed. On the other hand, we have the democratic state, whose existence is essential for that guarantee. The state—throughout history an opponent and threat to liberty and autonomy within its borders—has now become crucial for the protection of liberty and freedom. This delicate and contradictory fact was also recognized in early thoughts on liberal democracy. As argued by David Held in *Models of Democracy*, Hobbes for example saw democracy challenged with “[a] need to establish both the liberty of the individual and […] power for the state to guarantee social and political order” (Held 77). Also a liberal like Hobbes thus realized the necessity of a strong state, although it meant that “the capacity of citizens for independent action […] was compromised radically” (Held 78).

On the other hand, the liberties that a modern democracy establishes lead to a possibility to openly criticize and question the democratic rule. We have thus an opposite contradiction as well; democratic rights can lead to the destabilization of the democratic state. Because of this constant exposure to competing ideas, beliefs and practices, the state rule in a democracy must always be aware and susceptible to political and cultural opposition.

Demonstrations are one of the strongest and direct practices of political rights within a democracy. It is therefore an event where the state is exposed and its rule at times questioned. It should therefore naturally lie in the interests of a state to tone down the radical nature of a demonstration. My focus for this essay is to see how the state works towards moderating the opposition expressed in such a precarious moment as that of a demonstration. What are the state forces involved and how do they work in order to ensure that the democratic rights in a democracy do not threaten the state rule?

Besides the question of state governance, there is a further contradiction in a democratic state: between the principles of a democracy and reality. The ideals of liberty and equality in a
democracy are questionable, because they have to operate in conditions of actual inequality. According to Dahl (1985),

[o]wnership and control contribute to the creation of great differences among citizens in wealth, income, status, skills, information, control over information and propaganda, access to political leaders, and [...] differences like these help in turn to generate significant inequalities among citizens in their capacities and opportunities for participating as political equals in governing the state (Dahl qtd in Held 214, original emphasis).

The degree of political equality in the democratic process is thus shaped by the social and economic conditions within a state. Moreover and paradoxically enough, the state does not try to eliminate this inequality, but rather depends upon it. Claus Offe argues that the wealth accumulated by private ownership makes up the foundation of state finances through taxations, and “[t]he state, thus, has a general ‘interest’ in facilitating process of capital accumulation” (qtd in Held 222). Louis Althusser argues similarly that the state works towards “the reproduction of the conditions of production” (1483), and we can thus distinguish a relation between a democracy and its dependency upon capitalism. Hence, we can argue that the control of resistance not only protects the state rule, but indirectly the capital interests by which it is dependent. Capitalism can thus be an undemocratic system in this sense.

A capitalist interest however can never be an acceptable state practice. A democracy of liberty and equality should not facilitate for the creation of inequalities. The state must thus “preserve belief in itself as the impartial arbiter of class interest, thereby legitimating its power” (Offe qtd in Held 223). This is where Althusser’s notion of state ideology comes in. Through the ruling ideology, together with the monopoly of violence, the state secures reproduction of the conditions of production, without the citizens losing faith in democracy.

According to the political theorist Noam Chomsky, democratic states cannot like totalitarian states rule simply by force and must therefore control “not only what people do, but also what they think” (Chomsky qtd in Rai 46). Althusser argues similarly in “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” that repression alone cannot secure reproduction of the cond-
itions of the state. State ideology must work alongside state violence. For Althusser, an idea or thought becomes ideological when connected to an established practice. Ideology for Althusser is extremely broad, implicit and absolute; it exists in all structures, representations, myths, images, and it always seeks the maintenance of the ruling class in society.

In a democracy, demonstrations can be seen as an established practice, in fact one of its pillars. Also in a demonstration therefore, the state can secure reproduction and control conduct through its ideology. Because a demonstration has such a fundamental place within a democracy, it becomes ruled by the rituals and practices that the state ideology defines. My take on demonstrations in this analysis is thus that their meaning—the political message they want to display—is always at risk of being controlled and re-defined by the hegemonic power that the state represents. In Althusser’s theory, the process he calls interpellation performs this control while similarly guaranteeing the citizens that their freedom is unconditional.

From the analysis of the demonstrations around the EU-summit in Gothenburg, June 2001, this essay argues that the repressive and ideological apparatuses of the Swedish state tried to control the political resistance expressed by the many organizations, political parties and grassroots networks in the demonstrations. As the hegemonic power strives to control the political expression, the demonstration as a medium of that expression turns ideological—it becomes what Dick Hebdige in “From Culture to Hegemony” calls “an ideological space, which does not seem at all ‘ideological’” (2455). Through interpellation, the state ideology can thus incorporate resistance through the provision of a space where political freedom and democracy seem unconditional.

In Gothenburg, the state control took its form spatially in terms of a closed down street or square; repressively through lines of observing policemen; legally through laws of demonstrations; and ideologically through media coverage. This analysis shows furthermore that whenever political resistance was expressed outside of the state sanctioned spaces, the
repressive state intervened to stop that expression by authority or direct force. Repressive acts were also motivated at a subsequent stage by the ideological apparatuses, hence the interplay of state apparatuses that is central in Althusser’s discussion on ideology and the state.

This essay thus focuses on state behavior around the demonstrations in Gothenburg 2001. I have chosen to use Erik Wijk’s documentary-book Göteborgs-kravallerna och Processerna (2002) for the analysis. Being a book that puts emphasis on original comments and statements by witnesses, it has an advantageous first-hand focus which leaves a door open for your own interpretations. Wijk’s book does however investigate the demonstrations in Gothenburg from a critical point of view towards the state and its apparatuses. The choice of statements leans rather heavily towards the demonstrators, although Wijk has included reports by three police agencies. Yet, Wijk’s sympathy is clearly put on the political opposition that went out in the streets to protest. Together with my choice of critical theories, Wijk’s empirical account of the actual resistance should therefore make up a coherent source for a critique of the capitalist state and its conditions of democracy—from a Marxist perspective.

Chapter 1 introduces the ideas on ideology and the state by Louis Althusser: the main theoretical frame. In chapter 2, I will motivate my thesis from theory and an overview of the Gothenburg demonstrations. Chapter 3 to 5 will then move us into the actual events as told by Wijk. The analysis of the event takes place in a chronological order, that is: the role of various state actors in locating political resistance to the ideologically controlled space of the sanctioned demonstrations before (ch.3), during (ch.4) and after (ch.5) the event. A final note: all translated quotes (from Swedish literature) are collected in their original form in the endnotes (1, 2, 3 etc.).
1.1 The (Repressive) State and the ISAs

To secure re-production next to production, the capitalist society exercises ruling through repressive and ideological control, i.e. by force and ideology. Althusser thus distinguishes between two sides of the state: the (Repressive) State Apparatus and the Ideological State Apparatuses (the ISAs). The former includes central state organs that operate mainly by violence and direct enforcement, such as the Government, the Court system, the Police and the Military. The (Repressive) State is moreover a singular and central entity that works in what is regarded the public sphere. It has in short the character of what classic Marxism applies to the State (Althusser 1487).

The ISAs on the other hand exist in the private sphere of the citizens. They constitute any institution in society, such as churches, schools, media, political democracy and unions. Different from the (Repressive) State, the ISAs thus function in multiplicity, from a web of different actors. Yet, the apparent multiplicity of the Ideological State Apparatuses should not obscure the fact that they act in harmony with each other and the (Repressive) State, for their common denominator is the ideology by which they discipline and control the citizens of the state. As Althusser holds, “[i]f the ISAs ‘function’ massively and predominantly by ideology, what unifies their diversity is precisely this functioning, insofar as the ideology […] is always in fact unified” (Althusser 1490-91).

Thus, we can argue from Althusser’s argument that the different schools, mass media, literature and art, and the democratic political system all uphold a certain ideological worldview, on which the state relies for its existence. The ISAs secure the reproduction of conditions for production through education and discipline of the citizens: “[the] subjection to the ruling ideology” (Althusser 1485). Yet, here we can also launch a critique against the absolutism and unity that Althusser applies to state ideology. To distinguish one single state ideology, by which every apparatus functions, is highly improbable. In Gothenburg, the media
coverage for example has shifted towards critique of the repressive state. Moreover, the media as such includes a number of different opinions like those between newspapers—even within newspapers—that do not follow the practices of the state (Häggqvist 124).

The division between a repressive apparatus and an ideological apparatus (or several ones) is fundamental for the progression of a democratic state in particular. As civil and political rights eliminate the possibility of rule by force exclusively, rule by ideology becomes crucial. Or more accurate: the rule by force and ideology. For as Althusser states, “the double ‘functioning’ (predominantly, secondarily) by repression and by ideology […] makes it clear that very subtle explicit or tacit combinations may be woven from the interplay of the (Repressive) State Apparatus and the Ideological State Apparatuses” (Althusser 1490). In other words, ideology sanctions the existence of repression, and repression creates a platform for ideology to exist. It is this cooperation within the state that is visible in an analysis of state practices around the demonstrations of Gothenburg 2001.

1.2 Ideas, practices and ideology

Althusser’s notion of ideology is extremely broad, implicit and absolute; it exists in language and all structures, representations, myths, images, and it always seeks the maintenance of the ruling class in society. Ideology in Althusserian sense is therefore not a structure that hides reality like in the classic Marxist idea of “the false consciousness”, but rather a system that represents an imaginary reality; it “represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (Althusser 1498). Ideology does not then represent the real world, but rules our perception of reality. This is a huge difference, and helps to explain the power that the ruling ideology has on our thoughts.

Ideology for Althusser is also material; “[it] exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices” (Althusser 1500). By this, Althusser means that a belief or idea at an individual level, in the mind and consciousness of a person, results in the exercise of a practice. Human
ideas are thus turned into actions: “you act according to your free will.” Ideology in fact assumes that “[one] must act according to his [sic] ideas” (Althusser 1501), in order to make meaning. Idea and action are thus naturally accompanied in ideology.

So when an idea takes form in a practice, it becomes ruled by ideology. In a subsequent order, the action of a certain idea is connected with wider and wider systems of thought, to end up in ideology. According to Althusser, “his [sic] ideas are his material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus from which derive the ideas of that subject” (Althusser 1502). The result becomes that human ideas, choice and free will cannot exist outside of ideology; they dissolve into it. Individuals believe in freedom for example. Their free will however becomes part of ideology when connected to a practice. Believing in freedom, they will probably act so that freedom for them and others is maximized, for example respect laws that are created to ensure freedom (Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité) and not to be deprived of their freedom for breaking them. The paradox becomes that these persons believes in freedom but are not free. Rather, they are subjected to the ideology of freedom through acceptance of rule and order.

This thesis also helps us to explain the functioning of the ISAs. From the example above, we see how “the legal ISA” (Althusser 1489), i.e. the Law, gulps a belief in freedom into its own ideology. In the analysis of the state around the demonstrations in Wijk’s account, I will argue that a similar pattern occurs. For a demonstration becomes ruled by ideological apparatuses; laws and rules for the appropriate conduct; the appeal needed to perform a manifestation (so that the repressive and ideological state can prepare themselves); the democratic arena (parliamentary politics for a more civilized ventilation of resistance); trade union negotiations (when in relation to an unfolding strike); and the press (to perform a
surveillance of protesters through film and snapshots) are a couple examples of ISAs that with ideological practices try to, if not stop, then at least control the conduct of a demonstration.

This is the way the Althusserian notion of ideology works: to govern ideas through their automatic ties to the ruling order when put in practice. If the hegemonic power rules out the possibility of political meaning outside of state controlled demonstrations, resistance will have to take place within an ideological space, defined by the state and its material rituals. Ideology in Althusser’s terms is thus closely related to *discourse*, in the sense that they are both constructed worldviews, outside of which meaning is rendered impossible due to the solidity and power of that worldview. Moreover, since the state sanctions political opposition within a demonstration, the demonstration as such becomes a confirmation of the state and its liberal democratic ideology rather than a critique against it. Through the process of interpellation—explained below—the belief that an individual has in freedom and democracy remains intact, because it can be expressed in a demonstration. Yet, that individual is not free but subjected to the state and its ideological structures.

1.3. Interpellation

So ideology absorbs ideas into practices and state apparatuses, without sacrificing the illusion of freedom and democracy. A second way for ideology to secure compliance is to “’recruit’ subjects among the individuals” (Althusser 1504). In short, interpellation is when ideology “hails” individuals and turns them into subjects. First, the ideology interpellates human beings into subjects through any of its apparatuses. It then “subjects the subjects to the Subject” (Althusser 1507), i.e. directs the subjects to the core of the ideology. Third and most important, the Subject allows a place for the subjects to recognize themselves and *freely* find their part in the whole. This recognition in the ideological Subject, like the Self recognizes itself in Lacan’s mirror image, will make the subjects part of something they believe in. By finding the place assigned for themselves in ideology, the subjects uphold ideological
structures, support the “mirror-structure of ideology” (Althusser 1507) and even go so far as to police other subjects to follow them. Finally, the subject is “guarantee[d] that this really concerns them and Him” (Althusser 1507) and because of that will be saved. Recognition and salvation are thus what make the individual freely choose their submission to the ruling ideology.

Chapter 2 – Gothenburg 2001 and the control of protests

Between 14-16 June 2001, Gothenburg hosted the EU-US summit and the European Council. On the agenda of the political elite was the climate issue, sustainable development and the enlargement of the EU. As with earlier summits in Seattle, Nice and Prague, the meeting in Gothenburg was followed by protests around the city. Global organizations, like Attac, Ya Basta!/The White Overalls, and two networks; Göteborgsaktionen and Nätverket Göteborg, including more than a hundred political, alter-globalists, and anti-EU groups, had long before the summit planned and organized a number of large demonstrations.

This analysis however do not go further into what issues those demonstrations above addressed, but rather what possibilities they had to express their political ideas. To what extent could the peaceful demonstrations take place as anti-, or opposite, state rule and government, when they occurred under the authorization and control by the same state? In other words, how far does democracy reach? Or more interesting: how far is democracy allowed to reach? We can look at media coverage as an example. According to researcher Olle Findahl, the Gothenburg demonstrations were reported through a “filter of violence”, similar to those from the demonstrations against the WTO in Seattle, which “highlighted the violence […] and failed to explain why 50 000 people demonstrated” (Findahl 10). If we see the media in Althusserian terms as part of the ISAs, this misrepresentation of the demonstrators has the effect to depoliticize the resistance expressed in the demonstrations.
The media becomes one way for the state to control to what extent political expression in protests—liberal democracy in its very essence—can reach the political agenda.

2.1 The official demonstrations, 14-16 June 2001

Before moving into further state responses to the Gothenburg protests, I need to introduce the setting for my analysis. The city of Gothenburg was during the EU-summit a divided city. On one hand, Svenska Mässan—the Swedish Exhibition Center—was the place for the political meetings and blocked from public access. On the other hand, several sites for the large demonstrations were also more or less closed for public use and traffic. Thursday 14 June was the main demonstration against Bush on Götaplatsen. Friday 15 June saw first one demonstration by Göteborgsaktionen at 9:00 on Götaplatsen and the “Sweden out of EU” rally at 18:00 at Järntorget. Finally on Saturday 16 June, Göteborgsaktionen held a march in Slottsskogen. These demonstrations were all organized beforehand and approved by the police. The routes that the marches would take were all discussed and planned between the organizers and the police, before any permission was granted (Länspolisen in Wijk 425).

2.2 The control of resistance: repression and discursive practices

These official demonstrations constituted the space allowed for political resistance on the streets during the EU-summit. These spaces were controlled by force through the policemen; spatially through the blocking of normal public activity at the sites; and ideologically by the legal ISA and the media. My argument is that the Swedish repressive and ideological state intended to keep political expression within these spaces. Before we move into how this was done, there is a need to flip the coin, because there is another side to it. Presence of repressive force is needed to make sure that those opinions in a demonstration can be expressed without obstruction from a third part. As told in a police report, the central area known as Heden in Gothenburg was not suitable for a rally, for being “a too large, open place for the police with
few resources to protect the demonstrators from possible attacks from counter-demo-

onstrators”³ (Länspolisen in Wijk 426). In this sense, the police can be seen as needed for the
exercise of democracy. Indeed, liberal democracy might have to face the fact that “the
government exists to safeguard the rights and liberties of the citizens” (Held 81). Likewise,
there is always a concern for the safety of public in general, since such an explicit political
display as protests might provoke anger and violence.

And these are all fair motivations to control a demonstration to the extent that was done
in Gothenburg. My aim however is to look at the outcomes of such a rigorous state involve-
ment. Because a democracy recognizes the demonstration within its ideology and by its state
apparatuses, the democratic state has also the potential to exercise power over the expression
within a demonstration. Again, Althusserian meaning of ideology is that it is material, i.e.
“[it] exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices” (Althusser 1500). Protests become
targets of ideological control, due to their location within the demonstration.

We could also argue that a demonstration within state sanction is specified according to
a certain discourse. All of a sudden, we come close to Michel Foucault’s History of Sexuality
and how modern science has created subjects of sexuality out of specific sexual behavior. The
way that science has mapped out deviant sexualities and given them “[an] analytical, visible
and permanent reality,” (Foucault 1663) lies close to how ideology in Althusser’s terms
connects ideas or acts to controlled structures. The discourse that emerged created subject-
positions for the sexual deviant, like “the homosexual”, in which individuals could be specifi-
ced and given a predetermined meaning. My analysis will show that subject-positions occurred
also in media depiction of the demonstrators in Gothenburg. In this sense, a demonstration
within state control is subject to specification by state discourse, or ideology if you like, and
someone who demonstrates is therefore attributed certain characteristics by the discourse.
Chapter 3 – State management of protests before the EU-summit

3.1 “Freedom for whom?”: _i_ek and the ideological preparations for the EU-summit

The Swedish constitution lays the ground for our democracy. Civil and political freedom, including the right to “arrange and participate in demonstration in public places,” is stated in Regeringsformen 2 kap 1§. We get back to the paradox of democracy where state rule and the granting of freedom to openly criticize that state rule have to coexist. Recalling the ideas of Lenin, Slavoj _i_ek argues that “there is no pure democracy [and] we should always ask whom a freedom under consideration serves” (_i_ek 543). For freedom in a Leninist sense is twofold. On one hand, formal freedom exists “within the coordinates of the existing power relations,” whereas actual freedom questions those coordinates (_i_ek 544). Can we then maybe see the right to demonstrate as a formal freedom, and only sanctioned to the degree that it exists within the Althusserian state ideology? Maybe the main task for a democratic state is to first realize this division between formal and actual freedom and second to ban the existence, or possibility, of actual freedom in ideological and discursive practices? To make the subjects “work all by themselves” (Althusser 1508)—i.e. citizens who don’t question the coordinates—is done by convincing them of their own freedom. Then, “freedom” and hegemony can work together.

When Gothenburg was going to be in the European spotlight for a couple of days, it was decided that Sweden should put its democratic spirit on display. The government had the ambition to host an open EU-summit, where also the “EU-critics would get to speak by giving them good possibilities to demonstrate and express opinions” (Rikspolisstyrelsen in Wijk 372). The democratic openness would in other words include alternative opinions and protests during the summit. If we take this to the context of interpellation, this provision of political freedom is the guarantee from the Subject to the subjects that they freely can express their ideas and thus find their part in the ideology of liberal democracy. The implementation of this
guarantee has however the condition that it occurs within sanctioned demonstrations, and consequently state ideology and rule.

From _i_ek, we can argue that the state offers a formal freedom: within the space of sanctioned resistance provided in the main demonstrations. _i_ek further notes that resistance always faces the risk of being caught up in ideological structures. When protests against the WTO in Seattle 1999 reached their peak, President Bill Clinton urged the leaders to give the demonstrators a chance to bring forward their politics. “Systemic politics,” _i_ek states, “is always ready to listen to [the activist’s] demands, thus depriving them of their proper political sting” (558). Before the summit in Gothenburg, the politicians used the same tactics as Clinton in Seattle; they persuaded the demonstrators into dialogue. The dialogue with the organizations of the protests was done by the police in relation to the authorization of demonstrations (Länspolisen in Wijk 424), but also by politicians in forming a bridge “[b]etween movements, networks and the government”6 (in Hovrätten 15 January 2002: Wijk 173).

Besides the political ISAs, also media was involved in the management of protesting activist before the actual summit started. In an analysis of the local newspaper Göteborgs-Posten (GP), Patrik Häggqvist writes: “the connection between violence and the summit is made clear”7 (Häggqvist 119). This is for example done through an article which cites a shop-owner who decides to close his store for a couple of days, since he in his own words “[cannot] afford a molotov- cocktail through the window”8 (GP 010611). Another effect of this and similar articles is that they create sympathy not only for the honest entrepreneur who had to close his store, but also for the police in taking all actions to prevent violence from occurring. Gary T. Marx argues that police tactics in democracies follow certain codes. One of them is that “[s]ince police are denied (at least formally) the draconian measures of police in totalitarian states they must work harder to cultivate good will among the public” (Marx 259).
If this is attained, there is a “co-production of order,” in which the “citizens are actively involved in both self-control and the control of others” (Marx 259). Here is an example of Althusser’s *interpellation*; the repressive state involves the public in the maintenance of order, the subjects are directed to the Subject of the democratic State, and through this identification with the Subject, the subjects will consequently work by themselves.

### 3.2 Interpellation and the repressive state at Hvitfeldtska Gymnasiet

Before the summit, the city of Gothenburg had provided accommodation for the activists in schools around the town. One of these schools was Hvitfeldtska Gymnasiet. At an early stage, the police received information that objects and possible weapons (*Rikspolisstyrelsen* in Wijk 375), were being carried into the school. From that intelligence, the prosecutor deemed necessary a house-visitation to be performed the following day. On the morning of Thursday June 14, the police arrived, surrounded the school and imprisoned the people inside with a line of containers. At midnight, the school was emptied and a couple of hundred activists taken into custody (*Rikspolisstyrelsen* in Wijk 377).

The incident at Hvitfeldtska Gymnasiet can be seen as the repressive state attempting to control the circumstances around the demonstrations to come. As Hvitfeldtska accommodated the organization *Ya Basta!/the White Overalls*, known for their peaceful tactics of using their bodies, armed with foam rubber, shields and balloons under their white overalls, in trying to break through police blockades (rpt in Wijk 86-88), the police aimed to confiscate equipment that might be used in such collective actions. The police intervention at Hvitfeldtska can thus be seen as a direct securing of political expression within the main demonstrations. The White Overalls would not be allowed to break the walls of the space of sanctioned resistance.

Now, how did the police perform their operation, and what were the consequences of this action, except that the *White Overalls* were stopped? Witnesses in Wijk’s book state that all of a sudden, hundreds of containers surrounded the school. Riot police lined up next to the
containers and blocked the passage to the restaurant for hours. A police helicopter circled above the yard. Outside the school, “a chain of policemen…[tapped] their nightsticks rhythmically against the shields”9 (Wijk 149). No information was given about the motives for the surrounding. “Of course there is no reason to inform arrangers who interact with hooligans”10 (Wijk 158), the Police Chief Håkan Hjaldung said shortly after. Hungry and confused demonstrators felt panic and fear over the situation. Later at night, negotiations led to some demonstrators leaving the building. A try to break out is repelled by the police, “lashing out wildly with one meter long steel whips”11 (Wijk 135).

It seems that the tactics here were to show a determined repressive force in front of the demonstrators. Acting on the suspicion of “preparations of…damage and serious assault”12 (Hjaldung in Wijk 124), the fierce measure at Hvitfeldtska succeeded to plant fear among the activists, but also a rage that according to some voices led to the riots the day after on Avenyn. Here is also an example of the state practicing the Althusserian interpellation. The repressive state surrounds the school, even from above through the helicopter. The subjects in the school can thus not escape the hailing from the exhibition of state force that is presented around them. The negotiations—“those who want to leave the school may do so after a body search”13 (Rikspolisstyrelsen rpt in Wijk 376)—can be seen as the police directing “the subjects to the Subject” (Althusser 1507). The Subject in this event is liberal democracy that allows anyone freedom in the exchange for identification and body search. Thus, the ideology of liberal democracy is used here to control the rebellious behavior by the demonstrators. Those who agree to subjection, are given freedom.

Since an idea of liberal democracy is that state intervention and violence is a necessity to guarantee the exercise of political freedom and individual rights, we could also claim that this event led to the opposite. By surrounding Hvitfeldtska Gymnasiet, the police prevented many people from joining the large demonstration against George W. Bush on Thursday
night. Moreover, the action against Hvitfeldtska led to a situation where the activists lost their accommodation and a center for organizations. “They were out to destroy our infrastructure,” Tord Björk from Göteborgsaktionen states and holds that without the action, they would have been able to perform “more politically directed activities”\textsuperscript{14} (Wijk 164). The side of the police seems to confirm this fact, by stating in a report that the action against Hvitfeldtska was beneficial, for it had reduced the capacity among the organizations to perform collective action (rpt in Wijk 434). In light of this statement, it seems that the surrounding and taking of Hvitfeldtska had, if not political motives—the prevention of violence will in any state be a sanctioned reason for state intervention, although a democracy always must recognize what “the classic conflict between efficient fighting of crime and personal integrity”\textsuperscript{15} (Flyghed 59)—then at least, political consequences.

It seems that in a collision between political freedom and the protection of the dominant structures, the latter is preferred even if this involves the repressive state to take actions that by their very nature go against the principles of the democratic state. Perhaps the same contradiction can be seen in the extraordinary measures that democratic states today take against outside threats like terrorism. The end might be to protect the freedom of their societies, but the means in doing so—the restriction of personal integrity and state interference with civil rights—will result in a democracy destroyed not from the outside, but from the inside.

On the other hand, we could also see democracy as a form of rule that will always need outside difference in order to function. Democracy then, just like the child in Jacques Lacan’s \textit{the mirror stage}, would be “objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other” (Lacan 1286). In other words, a democratic state must form its freedom \textit{in relation} to the undemocratic Other: a role played well by terrorism.
Chapter 4 – State management of protests during the EU-summit

By the schoolyard we’re faced with another shock. The dark yard has become a military zone. Barking of dogs and orders fill the air, I hardly realize that I am forced down towards the ground, with the wet and rough asphalt against my face and the hands behind the neck... None of us lying there on the asphalt was allowed to say a word, we couldn’t look up or move. The boots that walked in front of my face made the rules clear for us: “Obey or be punished.”

Elias Granath, student, describes the police raid against Schillerska Gymnasiet, Saturday night, June 16 (SvD 2001-06-22)

4.1 Protests and art: the expression of resistance in the public space

The two following days after the incident at Hvitfeldtska was characterized by large demonstrations, also against the police brutality from the day before. At 09:00 on Friday morning, a peaceful demonstration with various political speakers took place on Götaplatsen. Afterwards, some activists decided to perform a spontaneous rally. The idea was to come as close as possible to Svenska Mässan and the site for the political meetings, but to do so peacefully. An Anti-Capitalist march was initiated and it seemed at first to be non-violent and with the intent to express political views (Wijk 198).

Yet, the Anti-Capitalist march was a direct trespassing of the provided space on Götaplatsen into an open public area where the same potential of regulation did not exist. Police sources talked about “serious threats” (Wijk 397) of an attack against Mässan. Therefore, policemen with dogs and horses suddenly attacked the rally from a side street (Wijk 203). The idea was obviously to split up the demonstration and to prevent a violent situation. Yet, the violence seemed rather to have started with police interference. According to a court ruling, “the rally was peaceful in the beginning [but] riots broke out rather immediately after police intervened” (Göteborgs Tingsrätt, 2002-03-19, case 2 – rpt in Wijk 216). The potential scenario could then have been that the activists broke their confined space on Götaplatsen, went towards Mässan to peacefully manifest their political ideas, the repressive state repelled this act and violence broke out that motivated counter-violence by the police.
If we recall the tenet of liberal democracy—that a state apparatus might be a necessary evil to create a stable climate for individual freedom—we should in Lenin’s spirit ask whose freedom. From the incident with the Anti-Capitalist march, it seems that freedom and safety of the public, the mass of people, motivate state intervention against politically threatening groups. Not only the court, but also several witnesses argue that it was the police that started the riots (Wijk 207). As one witness stated: “they [the police] stepped in against a whole march with more than a thousand demonstrators. It felt like they wanted trouble” (Wijk 209). By provoking violence, the repressive state can discipline political expression outside of approval.

Although violence was a reason to intervene, the police seemed to begin “by hitting the persons who held the banderole” (Wijk 208). Based on this police response to the Anti-Capitalist march, political symbols seem to possess a greater danger to the state than the actual violence itself. Given that this incident is what started the riots on Avenyn, where the main pedestrian street of Gothenburg was smashed to pieces by violent activists, we could at least state that the result of the police interference with the march led to a depoliticization of that march. Political expression and symbols turned to violence, just like the media construction depoliticized the demonstrations before the actual summit took place. Parallels between the police and media—the repressive and ideological state—can be distinguished.

This leads us into another parallel: that between expression through demonstrations and through art. According to W. J. T. Mitchell, “art that enters the public sphere is liable to be received as a provocation to or an act of violence” (881) which in terms may lead to the state intervening against the display of that art. If we see a demonstration as political expression within its sanctioned space, we could see that art has the same kind of boundaries for its expression: the exhibition site. Outside of this space, the image becomes much more controversial. Why? Because the public space, in contrast to the private space in a demonstration
or an exhibition hall, cannot be ruled by ideological practices or controlled through specification by discourse, since “the ideal of the classic public sphere is that it includes everyone” (Mitchell 886). Again, the democratic state stumbles and falls upon its own ethos; a public space of Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité would not allow an explicit state domination. Freedom of thought must somewhere coexist with state rule.

For discursive practices to exercise power over a situation or object, it must specify that situation or object. As noted by Stuart Hall, a sheep seizes to be a sheep when it is a work of art (Hall S 46). If political expression in a demonstration can be compared to expressions of art in an exhibition site, it is the location within those boundaries that creates meaning. Just like a sheep turns into art when it is placed within an exhibition, the meaning of political expression in an ideologically controlled demonstration turns from real to symbolic. It becomes like a work of art: a representation of something.

4.2 State threats and subject-positioning: Järntorget and Schillerska Gymnasiet

The repressive state obviously functions by violence. With this said, we should not think that direct violence is the only functioning however. As a protest meeting gathered many people on Järntorget, Saturday night, the police arrived and blocked the scene. With no disturbance among the demonstrators, the police could control the situation without employing direct force. Threats of force were enough. One witness writes afterwards in Aftonbladet: “Again rushing, roaring policemen. Batting their shields. One of the policemen nodded at me and shouted ‘we will knock that one’s head down’”21 (Aftonbladet 2001-06-21). As the state according to Max Weber can be seen as “an organization of authority, whose order continually is guaranteed by threats of, or the use of, violence”22 (Månson 107), we should see the repressive state not only as operating by force, but also threats of force, which in my opinion belongs to ideology. It is only when the threat of force is not enough to secure reproduction that force is actually used. In that regard, I do not agree with Althusser’s opinion that “the
(Repressive) State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly by repression” (Althusser 1490). Ideology in terms of implied force takes up a central place also in the repressive functioning of the police and the army, at least in Gothenburg 2001.

Sometimes however, direct violence is considered necessary. When a German terrorist was looked for in Schillerska Gymnasiet, chief Håkan Hjaldung chose to employ Nationella Insatsstyrkan (Swedish special elite force). Witnesses from inside the school stated after in the newspapers their surprise with encountering an anti-terrorist force storming the school. Reports about people in under-wear being forced down on the ground outside the school, threatened with automatic guns and insulted (Wijk 285-9). The German terrorist is not found, but what is interesting is that the word terrorist still fluctuates around the operation. Several policemen shouted “terrorists!” to the demonstrators and Hjaldung stated to Expressen that “We were in a hurry, therefore things got a little dramatic. But they who were there had chosen to be there with the terrorists” (2001-06-18). By constructing these subject-positions in discourse, the idea that the repressive state is needed to protect a liberal society can be emphasized. The activists become the “terrorist Other” of the democratic police, and the repressive state can, not only fight in Lacan’s sense “the always-threatening return of fragmentation” (Hall D 83), but also justify any repressive act to keep up democracy from a terrorist threat. In the next chapter, an analysis of the media coverage of Gothenburg 2001 shows the same pattern.

**Chapter 5 – State management of protests after the EU-summit**

When the EU-summit ended on Sunday, June 17, Sweden was in chock after the violence in the streets. The state ideology had therefore to be restored and liberal democracy to get back its trustworthiness. Any recollections of a police state had to be forgotten, or at least excused.
This is where we turn to the media and the courts and their management of the aftermaths to the most violent scenarios ever in Swedish modern times.

In addition, the “formal freedom” (_i_ek) of democracy had to be reinforced; that is, any expression of politics that occurred outside of the provided space during the weekend should either be portrayed as violent, unimportant or apolitical. Since “no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses” (Althusser 1491 –orig. emphasis), we shall recall the idea that ideology and force work together in securing reproduction of a state. Just like before the summit took place, the ISAs played an important role also in the aftermath in the portrayal of the summit. I will outline three ISAs of importance here: the media, the political ISA and the court—all working “behind a ‘shield’ provided by the repressive State” (Althusser 1492).

5.1 Media responses: the construction of “the people” and a depoliticization of protests

The incidents in Gothenburg naturally aroused many feelings and extensive media coverage. In a study of Göteborgs-Posten between June 11 and 18, Patrik Häggqvist argues that some trends can be found, which point towards interplay between the police and the media. One of them is a persistence to use the police as the main source for the articles. Secondly, the police is often portrayed as consisting of individual policemen, to highlight “an understanding [for mistakes] since they too are human and not free from feelings or weariness” (Häggqvist 125). The picture of a cruel repressive state from the riots on the streets is thus toned down in the articles of GP. As the days go by, this leaning towards sympathy for the policemen is reinforced. After the tumult on the streets on Friday, GP writes: “War scene. The masked tail of the morning demonstration started the riots” (2001-06-16). Häggqvist notes that GP does not put much investigation into the situation in general or what might have caused the riots. Instead, the “explanation is rather found in the group qualities [of the activists]” (Häggqvist 124). Here is thus how a dominant discourse works: the specification of a demonstrator to
subject-positions like terrorists is a move which makes possible his or her nature to be “the root of all his [sic] actions” (Foucault 1663). The subject in ideological structures is always exposed to specification and thereby, a process of discipline and control.

Similar to the articles before the summit, Jesper Enbom argues that the citizens and particularly the shop-owners are portrayed “exclusively as victims, economically as well as emotionally” (114). Again, sympathy for the repressive state and the need to respond against the violent activists is developed. A process of interpellation directs and involves the readers in a liberal ideology of everyone’s freedom, here with a capitalist twist: the right to property and freedom. The construction of “the people” (Enbom 112) makes the subjects “work all by themselves” (Althusser 1508) because by being addressed in articles around the demonstrations, they get involve in it too. Enbom looks at several examples where the citizens of Gothenburg are portrayed as a coherent mass of people against the demonstrators. In DN 2001-06-18: “The citizens of Gothenburg recapture their city;” and in GP 2001-06-17: “The citizens of Gothenburg love their police after this. They have protected us against stone-throwing hooligans.” The interpellation process in these articles constructs the Self of the public, or the citizens of Gothenburg, in connection to the ideological Subject, but also in relation to the undemocratic and violent activist Other.

In GP the violent activist “is an actor who gets much attention” (Häggqvist 126). More importantly, a filter of violence reduces demonstrations to apolitical and unimportant events. Political expression outside of the sanctioned demonstrations is being seen through this filter and the participants of such protests are “considered non-existent, or at least uninteresting” (Häggqvist 126). At times when violence cannot justify intervention against unauthorized political expression, the law is applied. Police interference with the peaceful protest meeting on Järntorget is consequently motivated in GP as follows: “The police broke up illegal demonstration on Järntorget” (010617 – my emphasis). Also here then, it seems like the
space of allowed resistance is held up by newspapers like GP. Within this ideology, political views are only taken seriously when uttered inside the provided space: a *formal* freedom of expression. Therefore we can see a clear interplay between the repressive and the ideological apparatuses. The police work in the streets to maintain protests within a certain confined area is carried on by the media in an ideological struggle to perform the same thing.

**5.2 Politics and justice: the legal ISA’s**

Also the court decisions have had the effect to punish political expression that occurred outside of sanction. Consequently, political ideas, thoughts or utterances seem to have made a change for the person convicted with “våldsamt upplopp” (*violent uprising*). Wijk notes that out of 15 people convicted with the same crime, 4 persons are considered apolitical and have received sentences from 8 to 10 months. The remaining 11, whose political activity is noted, have been sentenced from 16 to 21 months in jail (Wijk 691). In a comparison between two persons convicted with the same crime, A and B, this tendency is even clearer. A has acted violently, thrown rocks and hit a police horse, handed out stones and agitated others, whereas B has thrown a tree branch, but not hit anyone or agitated anyone else. A is regarded apolitical and sentenced to 9 months; B has clear political views and is sentenced to 24 months and 10 years of deportation (Wijk 692). Thus the degree of violence seems not, at least in this case, to be as important for the Court than the actual political view of the person.

It seems thus that political freedom is not without conditions in the Swedish democracy. Ideology attempts to restrict that freedom, either through the provision of spaces for resistance or in the punishment of those who does not respect these spaces. Wijk points out: “[t]his movement—[who] the convicted in Gothenburg in some sense represent—constitutes a real threat to the established political and economical power, nationally and internationally […] Hence, the severe sentences”¹³³ (Wijk 695). For a democracy to secure the reproduction of free subjects, demonstrations must occur, but their political significance must be suppressed.
CONCLUSION

This essay rests on skepticism towards democracy. “The great thing about democracy is that it gives every voter a chance to do something stupid,” American journalist Art Spander has said. Whether in voting or other forms of freedom, a democratic rule seems to offer to the people no more than the choice between A and B. My aim has been to show that freedom and choice are always in danger when they become ideals of domination. In the interaction with state apparatuses, freedom looses its meaning and becomes rather an affirmation of the subjection that is performed—by the people, for the people. The absolutism of ideology, which Althusser accounts for in “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”, puts political resistance and the questioning of dominant structures outside of meaning. This is what I have tried to shown from my analysis of state responses to the demonstrations in Gothenburg 2001.

My argument and thesis have been that the repressive and ideological state apparatuses before, during and after the protests in Gothenburg actually worked towards the restriction of political expression. This was done by providing a location for such expression: the sanctioned demonstration. As the democratic state by its very nature must acknowledge civil and political rights, it chooses to do so within a space it can control with repression and ideology. The demonstrations in Gothenburg took place under the umbrella of the democratic state, but their openness and political message were heavily restricted as lines of policemen, media coverage and court decisions worked together in the control of the freedom expressed.

From Louis Althusser’s theories of the state, I first argued how free will becomes ideologically controlled when connected to a state defined practice. The form of a demonstration in a democracy will therefore make the content ideologically controlled. By participating in the state sanctioned demonstrations in Gothenburg, the protester would according to this logic rather confirm than contest the liberal, democratic state ideology and its structures. Secondly,
I took the notion of interpellation to argue for how the provision of one kind of freedom, by _i_ek described as formal freedom, is enough to guarantee the human beings of their free will. From a psychoanalytical perspective, ideology constructs the Self of the subjects and promises them that their participation within its structures will lead to their salvation. In the participation of a demonstration, the subjects have chosen their subjection to the ideology of democracy—because they believe in it. The process of interpellation is a common thread all along this essay, functioning to confine the political meaning to the provided space only. Both the police and the media do this by constructing the people as coherent as possible, involve them in the state practices and the negative consequences of the non-sanctioned protests, and then finally direct them away from these protests and to the ideology of the state.

If a formal freedom of democracy only allows the choice between A and B, the question becomes if the choice of any other letter at all is possible. If that choice must be either state domination or anarchy, Marxist theory seems to argue for the latter, “that of the destruction of the State” (Althusser 1488). It seems thus that the only way to break out of state ideology is a destruction of the state and its apparatuses. Since Althusser states: “there is no practice except by and in ideology” (Althusser 1502), we should perhaps investigate the possibilities for any actual freedom, any true democracy or any “outside of” the ideological space. We should also ask in that case if the state would have to worry about where or how resistance takes place.

I believe here is the right moment to make a distinction: preferably between ideology as a notion in Althusser’s theories of the state, and the Gramscian term hegemony. Ideology is, as argued earlier, a system of representation which is inevitable, absolute and implied in any sign. It is “profoundly unconscious…[and exists] above all as structures ” (Althusser from For Marx, qtd in Hebdige 2453). There seems thus to be no way out of ideology. This however, does not mean that the state is untouchable or in full command of ideology as a whole. Rather, it is the ruling ideology that the state enforces through its apparatuses. This
specific, shall we say, governing fraction within ideology as a whole lies closer to Gramsci’s term hegemony. It is thus the hegemony over political meaning that the state imposes.

If ideology is the arena where the game of meaning and domination takes place, it is an absolute requirement that the state hegemony is strong enough to be the main actor within that arena. Therefore, “the dominant classes [must] ‘succeed in framing all competing definitions within their range’” (Hebdige 2455). Thus, challenges within the struggle for meaning in the ideological arena must be adopted by the hegemonic power. This task is exactly what a state sanctioned demonstration does. The state makes sure that

…”subordinate groups are, if not controlled, then at least contained within an ideological space which does not seem at all ‘ideological’: which appears instead to be permanent and ‘natural’, to lie outside history, to be beyond particular interest (Hebdige 2455).

The demonstration becomes the ideological space, which appears to exist without restrictions, with the democratic rights and freedom of expression. Although ideology always will follow any practice, also protests outside of state sanction, the fact that the state must exercise dominance over meaning also motivates the need for an ideologically controlled space. As hegemony in Gramsci’s own words is a “moving equilibrium” (qtd in Hebdige 2455), the state must always work towards maintaining dominance within ideology. Yet, because hegemony never can be fixed in nature, we can also see the adoption of challenging political and social beliefs by the hegemonic power as the potential for change. For the state ideology to keep its rule, a compromise to include different opinions becomes a necessity. Change must therefore take place within ideology; meaning must be created “in the dialogue between two or more speakers” (Hall S 235). In relation to Mikhail Bakthin’s study of language, we might state that signs become meaningful when they are put in a compromise between the hegemonic power and the cultural opposition. Political opposition then, might have to take place within, and not outside of, ideology,
The ideological space seems thus to play a two-fold role. It guarantees an intact state domination by incorporating opposition within its ideology, while at the same time facing the necessary evil of changing the meaning and approach to that opposition. One example is of course the paradox of democracy, where a democratic state must incorporate resistance into its own dogmas. The state power thus uses its command over the state apparatuses to direct resistance into the dominant ideology, through the provision of the ideological space in a state sanctioned demonstration. The risk that a negligence of political resistance constitutes is that competing systems of representation might arise. In short, the hegemonic rule within ideology must always take that risk in account—and therefore embrace any opposition to its dominant structures through the provision and sanction of that opposition.

Bakhtin’s *dialogic* meaning system however can never be a give and take on an equal level. As the ideological state has a power over meaning, the activists in Gothenburg would rather have to accept being defined by the state ideology. They would have to acquire as much meaning as is possible within ideology; they would have to find their subject-positions.

Therefore, they can only continue to express and propagate for their ideas, opinions and thoughts in the demonstrations that are provided. My analysis of Gothenburg 2001 shows that any other form of expression is stopped by the state ideology and repression. Social, cultural and political resistance, it seems, will have to take place within a state monitored demonstration: an ideological space of sanctioned resistance, which at its very best becomes a site for the struggle of meaning—albeit in an environment of intense state presence.
Works Cited


"inte bara vad folk gör, utan också vad de tänker"

"lyfte fram våldet…och slutligen misslyckades med att förklara varför 50 000 människor protesterade"

"en alltför stor öppen plats för att polisen med begränsade resurser skulle kunna skydda demonstranterna från eventuella angrepp av motdemonstranter"

"anordna och delta in demonstration på allmän plats"

"EU-kritikerna skulle få komma till tals genom att beredas goda möjligheter att demonstrera och uttrycka åsikter"

"Mellan rörelser, nätverk och regeringen"

"Sambandet mellan våld och toppmötet blir tydligt"

"har inte råd med en molotovcocktail genom fönstret"

"kravalltrustade poliser som i kedja tägade…medan de taktfullt slog sina batonger mot sköldarna"

"Självlivligt finns det ingen anledning att informera arrangörer som umgås med ligister"

"red in och slog vilt omkring sig med meterlånga stålpiskor"

"förberedelse av…skadogjörelse och grov misshandel"

"de som vill får lämna skolan efter det att man har gått med på att låta sig kroppvisiteras"

"De var ute efter att slå sönder vår infrastruktur…mer politiskt styrda verksamheter"

"den klassiska konflikten mellan effektiv brottsbekämpning och personlig integritet"


"allvarliga hot"

"Även om tåget till en början var fredligt utbröt kravaller tämligen omgående efter polisens ingripande"

"De ingrep mot helt demonstrationståg med flera 1000 demonstranter. Det kändes som att polisen ville ha bråk"

"började slå de personer som höll i banderollen"

"Återigen framrusande vrålande poliser. Slående på sina sköldar. En av poliserna nickade åt mig och skrek att den där ska vi slå in skallen på"

"en auktoritetsorganisation, vars ordning kontinuerligt garanteras genom hot om eller användning av våld"

"Det var bråttom, därför blev det lite dramatiskt. Men de som var där hade ju valt att vara där tillsammans med terroristerna"

"en förståelse eftersom de också är mänskliga och därigenom inte befriade från känslor och trötthet"

"Krigsskådeplats. Den maskerade svansen på förmiddagen demonstration startade kravallerna"

"förklaringen står att finna i gruppens egenskaper"

"uteslutande som offer, såväl ekonomiskt som känslomässigt"

"Göteborgarna återtar sin stad"

"Göteborgarna älskar sina poliser efter detta. De har skyddat oss mot kullerstenskastande ligister"

"är de en aktör som får mycket uppmärksamhet"

"obefintliga, eller åtminstone ointressanta"

"Polisen avbröt olaglig demonstration på Järntorget"

"Denna rörelse – som de dömda I Göteborg I de flesta på något sätt representerar – utgör ett verkligt hot för den etablerade politiska och ekonomiska makten, nationellt och globalt. De är inte extremister. Därav de stränga domarna"