

### **Plenary Session I Abstracts**

***Democracy and Conflict: A Machiavellian Perspective***

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In this paper, I develop a criticism of Chantal Mouffe's agonistic democracy. Through the reading of some classic authors, including Carl Schmitt, Niccolò Machiavelli and Baruch Spinoza, I will show the importance but also the limits of agonistic theory. In the last part, I offer an alternative reading of Machiavelli's and Spinoza's thought and I contrast Mouffe's agonism with a 'polemical realism' in order to escape the classic opposition between universalism and particularism. I also argue that a constructive dimension of this problem can be found in two concrete hypotheses that are returning to the political scene today, namely the imperative mandate and the sortition or selection by lot. They can potentially embody a realistic and polemical approach to democracy.

**Plenary Session I Abstracts*****The Development of Machiavelli's Althusserian Reading and its Political Significance*****Vittorio Morfino**

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In my lecture, I intend to consider the fundamental features of Machiavelli's Althusserian reading in its historical development, starting from the course of 1962, passing through the courses of 1972-76 published under the title *Machiavelli and Us* and through the writings of 1977-78, ending with the group of writings of the 1980s. The primary aim of my lecture is twofold. Firstly, it rejects any teleological reading that sees in the final writings the truth finally revealed of the path, or, for that matter, as its inversion, that is the path itself as the corruption of an original truth. Secondly, to develop the thesis that Althusser, through the figure of Machiavelli, theoretically reworks his relationship with the Party.