

*International Gramsci Society*

*Newsletter*

*April 1995*

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*Editor: Joseph A. Buttigieg*

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## Editorial

This issue of the *IGS Newsletter*, like the last one, has taken longer to produce than was originally anticipated. At the same time, however, we are pleased that we have once again been able to assemble a considerable body of materials for this issue. We hope that its size and the quantity of information it contains will make up for the inordinate delay.

It has also proven much too difficult to produce an Italian as well as an English edition of the *Newsletter*. In this issue an item of special interest to Italian readers has been written and published in Italian. This practice will probably be repeated in future issues—in other words, materials written in either language will be published together in the same issue.

As has been pointed out in previous editorials, the quality and quantity of the contents of the *Newsletter* depend almost entirely on the contributions (in the form of articles, news items, pedagogical materials, etc.) sent to us by IGS members. For this reason, we encourage everyone to send us information about their activities, and especially to mail us copies of books and articles they have published on topics related to Gramsci's life and thought. The section "Gramsci Bibliography: Recent Publications" could not have been compiled without the cooperation of those who took the initiative to send us copies of their books and articles. It will be especially helpful if copies of articles were accompanied by brief abstracts describing their contents. Readers of the *Newsletter* are also strongly encouraged to send suggestions on topics they wish to see addressed in future issues.

Those members who have access to electronic mail may also contact us via computer at the following e-mail address: Joseph.A.Buttigieg.1@nd.edu

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# The ‘Turn to Gramsci’ in Adult Education

## A Review of the English-Language Literature

by

**Peter Mayo**

(University of Malta)

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This article will focus on the importance being attached to Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) in a section of the published literature, in English, on adult education. It is mainly that section of the literature which deals with radical adult education. Writers pertaining to this particular school of adult education see potential in Gramsci’s writings and actions primarily because the Italian theorist himself regarded forms of adult education as having an important role to play in a ‘war of position’ intended to confront, surround and eventually supersede the bourgeois state.

These writers derive inspiration from Gramsci’s own writings concerning the Factory Council Movement, conceived as a politically educative movement, and those other writings, by the Italian theorist, which emphasise the need to generate institutions and associations of proletarian culture. Furthermore, they also stress his role as a committed adult educator, and here one should mention his involvement in workers education circles, including the *Club Vita Morale*, and in the setting up of an Institute of Proletarian Culture, the PCI’s correspondence school and the *scuola dei confinati* (school for prisoners) at Ustica. Gramsci must have regarded radical adult education agencies as capable of playing an important part in that process of wide ranging social organisation and cultural influence which is carried out across the entire complex of ‘civil society’ and which is intended to challenge and provide an alternative to capitalist social relations of production. Gramsci has shown how these relations are sustained and their contradictions concealed by congenial ideas and practices in most spheres of social life, including the most intimate ones.

Because of its flexibility and its potential to be carried out apart from the state and dominant institutions (often in clandestine settings), possibly within the context of a larger movement striving for social change, adult education constitutes an excellent means of developing views that challenge hegemonic ideas and practices and of unveiling the underlying contradictions within the dominant ideology. It also must have appeared to Gramsci and his followers to constitute an important terrain wherein a social group aspiring

to power can generate some of the ideas which can lead to the creation of an historic bloc . It constitutes an important terrain wherein a lot of the “intense labour of criticism”, which, according to Gramsci, must precede a revolution, can take place.

Gramsci’s work is often referred to in English language books that contribute to the radical debate on adult education. In a study (or, more precisely, a collation of studies) on nonformal education in Latin America, Carlos Alberto Torres (1990) devotes an entire section to Gramsci’s theory of the State as part of the framework for analysis in this book. In another book dealing with the same topic, Thomas J. La Belle (1986) states emphatically that Gramsci is the most cited Marxist theorist in the area of popular education . He then goes on to demonstrate the relevance of Gramsci’s ideas, concerning the organisation of workers through the Factory Councils, to the task of organising the masses through popular education (185). Frank Youngman (1986), stresses the importance of research into Gramsci’s educational activities in Turin. He argues that research into these activities would be useful for the development of a socialist theory of adult education (233, 234).

The potential in Gramsci’s writings is explored not only in connection with socialism, but also in connection with activities relating to various social movements. In a much cited work, Jane L. Thompson (1983) refers to Gramsci in the course of her review of continuing education provision and the effect of such provision on women. She argues:

There is one small light amidst the general gloom, however, which, if we are to accept Gramsci’s optimism, can be a focus for development. Gramsci was convinced that despite the all pervasive power of ruling groups, which he called hegemony, education has an important part to play in challenging its ubiquity - especially adult education, which he regarded as political education. Gramsci’s analysis was formulated in the context of factory councils and working class industrial struggles, but the same conviction that education has the potential to affect political consciousness holds good. For women the opportunity of education can be enormously significant (97).

These are a few examples of works, within the radical debate on adult education, in which Gramsci and his ideas are taken up. However, it would be most useful, at this stage, to turn to works which deal at length with Gramsci’s ideas and their relevance to adult education. One of the earliest articles, in this respect, is probably that by Tom Lovett (1978) who dwells on community education among the working class in Northern Ireland and who argues, in this article, that progressive adult education should be developed in the context of social movements of workers (Jackson, 1981, 81). Harold Entwistle (1979) makes one of the first major contributions in the English Language. His contribution is a chapter in a well researched book, which draws on a variety of primary and secondary sources in Italian, that

stirred controversy for its interpretation of Gramsci's view of schooling. It argues that Gramsci advocated a conservative schooling for a radical politics, a view which is shared by others, notably the Brazilian philosopher, Dermeval Saviani (cf. Da Silva & McLaren, 1993) and, among recent writers on the issue, Guy B. Senese (1991). Entwistle's interpretation of Gramsci led to a number of reactions in education journals, especially those expressed by Henry Giroux, Douglas Holly and Quintin Hoare in a review symposium, centering around the book, published in a 1980 issue of the *British Journal of Sociology of Education* (307-325). It also led to reactions in the literature on adult education, notably a couple of articles in the widely circulated *Convergence*, the journal of the International Council for Adult Education (cf. Alden, 1981; Jackson, 1981). The chapter on adult education, in Entwistle's book, directly follows the controversial section on schooling wherein the author stresses that Gramsci insisted on a school curriculum which emphasised rigour and 'disinterested' knowledge, highlighting in the process the virtues of the classical curriculum. The imparting of knowledge and the creation of educational experiences intimately tied to political and class struggle was, according to Entwistle's interpretation of Gramsci's work, to be the domain of politically committed adult education. This therefore constitutes a section on its own, in the book, a section which deals with Gramsci's writings on political education, the formation of intellectuals (on this issue and its relevance to adult education, see Hommen, 1986), culture, the factory councils and technical and vocational education.

While Entwistle's chapter is the first lengthy study on the subject in English, Timothy Ireland's monograph (1987), in the well known University of Manchester monograph series, is the first full scale publication entirely devoted to the relevance of Gramsci's ideas to adult education. It deals specifically with the influence of Antonio Gramsci on popular education in Brazil. He carries out his study at a delicate moment in Brazilian history as the former Portuguese colony embarked on a period of transition from authoritarian (military) to civilian rule. One of the many points he makes in this monograph is the fragmented nature of the popular education movement. It lacks a 'Modern Prince', a unifying organisation. He asks the following questions:

Can we assume that a multiplicity of unconnected efforts will eventually, through a kind of 'snowball' effect, contribute to strong and representative working class organisations capable of uniting in a new historic bloc those forces struggling for a transformation of society? Or is the kind of strong revolutionary working class party which Gramsci envisaged central to this process of canalising the struggle and destroying narrow sectarian interests? Is there any one party capable of such a task - the Workers' Party, the Brazilian Communist Party, the Communist Party of Brazil, etc. - or is the

multiplicity of sectarian parties of the Left evidence that such a party remains to be created? (66, 67).

He returns to these questions in the concluding part of the monograph.

Ireland's thorough investigation of the Gramscian influence on Brazilian popular education, an influence which extends to popular education throughout Latin America, would be very useful reading for anyone embarking on a project comparing or synthesising the work of Gramsci and Freire, the latter being the one important adult educator in relation to whose work Gramsci is often analysed (Allman, 1988; Ransome, 1992: 183-185; Leonard, 1993; Coben, 1992; Mayo, 1994, 1994a, 1994b). Freire himself draws on Gramsci in his works and we come across a sustained discussion on the Italian theorist and his influence on Latin American intellectuals in his 'talking book' with the Chilean, Antonio Faundez (1989). The Gramscian influence in this book could be felt in the discussion on the role of intellectuals as mediators between party and masses, the need to convert "common sense" to "good sense"(made in the context of a discussion on popular culture) and the concept of "national popular".

As regards published work which attempts to draw the ideas of Gramsci and Freire together, in relation to adult education, I would mention my own and Paula Allman's (1988) chapter in a volume edited by Tom Lovett. The works by Ransome (1992) and Leonard (1993) do not deal specifically with adult education. One of my pieces (Mayo, 1994a) explores elements for a synthesis of Gramsci's and Freire's ideas relevant to radical adult education. Another (Mayo, 1994b), extracted from my Ph.D. thesis (Mayo, 1994), underlines what I perceive as their limitations which, I feel, need to be recognised before one incorporates their ideas into a contemporary project of radical adult education. In her chapter, Allman draws on the ideas of Gramsci and Freire, alongside those of Illich, in the context of a sustained discussion on ideology. This is an issue with which she and participants in a diploma course, that she coordinated at the University of Nottingham, had to contend as they sought signposts for a socialist approach to adult education. Allman sees adult education as part of the "prefigurative work" which, Gramsci insisted, had to precede every revolution. The task he set himself, and presumably the task to be faced in a process of adult education inspired by Gramsci, involves a dialectical engagement with the "material conditions present at the time of analysis, i.e. an insistence on conceptualising the dialectic movement of material and social forces"(105). This involves an analysis of the material expressions of ideology as present in our relations and practices. Freire's dialogical process of conscientisation would serve as a most appropriate pedagogical vehicle for such transformative learning to take place.

In another paper, dealing specifically with the relevance of Gramsci's writing and action to radical workers' education, W. John Morgan (1987) provides a comprehensive account of Gramsci's life and central ideas, notably those of Hegemony and the State, Intellectuals and the role of the Party. He underlines their relevance to counter hegemonic adult education practice. Morgan highlights aspects of Gramsci's own involvement in adult education, with particular emphasis on the Factory Council Movement and the prison school created at Ustica. In his discussion on the issue of Intellectuals, Morgan, citing Entwistle, underlines Gramsci's belief that the proletariat is very slow at producing its stratum of organic intellectuals, the reasons for which lie "in the lack of resources and opportunity available to the working class" (p. 303). He argues that the proletariat has few institutions of its own and that education, religion, leisure, etc. are often in the hands of the dominant class—i.e., "segments" of the latter's hegemonic control. In his view, "adult education presents an opportunity to break through this mesh and explains why Gramsci insisted on the conscious, active, educational intervention of the workers' party" (303).

A year later, another paper on Gramsci appeared in the same journal. For the most part, the author, Paul F. Armstrong (1988), dwells on some of the most popular concepts in Gramsci's and Marxian thought, namely the relationship between the dominant ideas and the ruling class, the non deterministic relationship between base and superstructure, Hegemony, the production of consciousness and Praxis. The last section deals specifically with Gramsci and the education of adults. The main point is that Gramsci conceived of adult education "as a significant vehicle" in the process of challenging the "dominant hegemony"(158) and as the means of enabling intellectuals to remain organic to the working class. Since he had little faith in traditional adult education institutions, such as the popular universities, Gramsci primarily conceived of adult education, in this context, as "informal political education, which happened in the community and in the work place, especially in factory councils" (158). In this respect, the chapters, 'Political Education and Common Sense', in Adamson (1980), 'Political Consciousness: education and the intellectuals', in Ransome (1992), and Federico Mancini's (1973) discussion paper on the Factory Councils become important reading material for anyone interested in this aspect of Gramsci's contribution to adult education theory.

The issue of "Adult Political Education" is also taken up by Diana Coben (1994) in the context of a very recently published discussion on Antonio Gramsci and Adult Education. It constitutes the penultimate section of a paper in which Coben, quoting Gramsci at source, outlines some of his major concepts, notably those of an "educative politics", Hegemony and the Intellectuals. She provides a condensed account of Gramsci's own involvement as an adult educator and starts off the section on Adult Political Education with A. Green's



description of Gramsci as a “tireless popular educator”. In this section, she highlights Gramsci’s well known critique of the kind of education for the working class provided by the popular universities. She also highlights Gramsci’s view that, in adult political education, carried out within the context of a revolutionary movement, the task is to facilitate the process whereby learners move from ‘common sense’ to ‘good sense’. This paper contains edited extracts from her Ph.D. thesis (Coben, 1992) which will be published in abridged form by Garland Publ., New York, and which, judging from the title, looks like being a valuable addition to the published literature on Gramsci and adult education.

A quite recent paper on Gramsci to appear in an adult education journal is that by Ursula Apitzsch (1993) from the University of Frankfurt. The focus, in this paper, is on Gramsci’s writings on migration and the issue of the South. She regards these writings as very relevant to the current debate on multiculturalism in as much as Gramsci:

. . . views emigration and immigration processes as social phenomena of one and the same Italian society; . . . thinks from the perspective of those countries from which there is high migration, bearing in mind the spread of Italian labour over the whole world; . . . wants to see the culturally particular, in its marginalised and folklorised form, defended as ‘collective memory’ and integrated into a new, modern form of civil society (*civiltà*) (137, 138).

Apitzsch argues the point stressed time and again in the critical literature on multiculturalism, namely that as long as the population of wealthy industrial countries is underclassed by immigrants, the promotion of cultural identity serves the purpose of subordination under the dominant culture. Multiculturalism becomes the means whereby the dominant culture is set up as the invisible norm defined in relation to the marginalised ‘other’. And Gramsci’s writings on the idea of ‘subaltern social strata’ and his critiques of totalising terms like ‘national culture’ would be relevant to a critical consideration of this issue in that they remind us of the contexts which bind the ‘many cultures’, in a given national society, to the country’s structures of domination.

Though interesting and topical, this article has one shortcoming. There is no specific reference to adult education. At no stage does the author draw out the implications for radical adult education practice in areas where the issue of multiculturalism has to be confronted, notably language classes for immigrants or community development projects among specific ethnic groups.

Apitzsch’s article does emphasise, however, the relevance of Gramscian scholarship to some of the most pertinent issues of this day and age. Together with numerous other writings, which relate his ideas to a variety of struggles for social change, this article shows that Gramsci’s ideas can be taken up in non reductionist, non class essentialist ways. The

majority of the articles cited here, however, do stress the social class factor in the struggle for social change. The excesses of some of the contemporary postmodern literature, which invokes the Sardinian, while considering class politics as *passè*, have not, as yet, contaminated most of the writings, in English, on Gramsci and adult education. In these writings, class politics, the central feature of Gramsci's work, remains firmly in the foreground.

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## *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*

### A Review

by

**Benedetto Fontana**

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Antonio Gramsci. *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Ed. and trans. Derek Boothman. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

At first sight, it would seem that this is not a time at all receptive to works on the Left and most certainly to works on Marxism as a serious political and moral conception of the world. Indeed, it might even be said that Marx's paean in the *Manifesto* to the hegemony of the bourgeoisie is finally and truly justified: the world has only now become entirely bourgeois. And as capital has become global and universal, the various groups, nations, and religions that together make up humanity are becoming ever more parochial, fragmented, and particularistic. At any rate, a post-modern cornucopia of centrifugal tendencies and divisions.

It is therefore refreshing--certainly, to paraphrase Gramsci, a testimony to the optimism of the will in the face of the unrelenting pessimism and bleakness reality presents to the intellect--to see the publication of the work of a thinker whose main life's work was to uncover within a fragmented reality the material and cultural forces that would lead to the formation of a new, more universal socio-political order.

The work under review, a volume of selected translations from Antonio Gramsci's *Quaderni del carcere*, is a welcome and useful addition to the growing body of Gramsci's writings in English. As such, it is a critical selection of Gramsci's writings which completes and adds to the Hoare and Nowell-Smith edition of *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, as well as complementing the notes on culture and literature presented in the Forgas and Nowell-Smith *Selections from Cultural Writings*.

In addition, this collection makes a significant and necessary contribution to English scholarship on Gramsci because it presents topics, ideas, and themes that other previous anthologies either did not include, or else gave them too little space. In this regard, Boothman has performed a valuable service to all who are concerned with questions regarding the relationships between politics, ideology, language, economy, and hegemony. The collection, therefore, will be useful to a wide audience (both scholars and informed readers), ranging from historians to philosophers to political scientists to literary theorists and critics.

The translation is organized into various main topics not emphasized by earlier collections. However, the over-riding theme which provides both continuity and direction is hegemony--its emergence, construction, development, and transformation--and its relation to ideology in its many different levels.

Thus, for example, the topic of the opening chapter is religion, which, to Gramsci, is the most prevalent and popular form of ideology. This section is especially good on the relation between religion and politics, devoting much space, naturally, to the Catholic Church, but also including interesting and perceptive notes on non-Christian, non-Western religions. This first chapter on religion is important, both for the subtlety of Gramsci's critical analysis of religion as a vehicle for the hegemonic construction of a socio-political order, as well as for his sensitive understanding of the religious and spiritual needs expressed by ordinary people around the world. In a post-Cold War world where established, secular ideologies seem to be crumbling and disintegrating, and where religious ideologies and sentiments are ascendant both in "modern" Western societies and in more "traditional," non-Western areas of the world, Gramsci's notes on religion, as presented and translated by Boothman, provide an indispensable grammar for the analysis of religious movements.

Another important factor in the construction of hegemony is education, and this volume provides many notes in which Gramsci expressed his views on this topic, especially on questions dealing with the internal dynamics of the educational process, from elementary school to university. Here again, Gramsci's thoughts are not merely theoretically interesting, but are also alive with contemporary problems and issues concerning schools and education. These notes make clear Gramsci's belief in the intimate connection between education and hegemony, education and politics.

The notes on economics happily fill a long-standing vacuum in the English presentation of Gramsci's writings, and they go a long way in showing Gramsci's ideas on the relation between economics, science, and philosophy. What these notes do is relate economics to the general theme of hegemony. The conventional view of Gramsci presents him as a thinker who emphasizes culture and politics--as a theorist of the superstructure. Yet Boothman's translation shows the importance to Gramsci of economic and structural questions. Indeed, Gramsci's formulation and elaboration of ideas such as civil society and hegemony, as well as his notion of science and ideology, are intimately related to his understanding of economic and structural elements. As Gramsci notes in Notebook 13 on Machiavelli, "if hegemony is ethico-political, it cannot but also be economic." In addition, some notes are especially noteworthy when placed in the context of today's divisions between North and South, and Atlantic and Pacific economic zones.

Most interesting and compelling are the collection's notes on science, philosophy, and Croce. These are crucial to the understanding of Gramsci's theoretical project and methodological perspective without which it would be difficult to follow his critique of contemporary thought as well as his analysis of hegemony and the role ideology plays in history and in politics. The significance of these notes to students and scholars delving into the genesis and formation of Gramsci's major ideas cannot be overemphasized. They established the philosophical and theoretical structure for Gramsci's conception of hegemony and its relation to various levels and aspects of history and culture. His notes on Croce (and, to a lesser extent, Gentile) are crucial: they demonstrate Gramsci's critical and philosophical relationship to Italy's most important cultural force (Crocean and Gentilian thought), and his adaptation (or "retranslation") of this force in ways (political, philosophical, theoretical) that would rejuvenate Marxism as an ideology and as a political movement.

Finally, the translation is introduced by Boothman with an enlightening and lively essay which locates Gramsci's ideas within their historical and intellectual context. Moreover, Boothman provides copious and informative notes helpful to both scholars and general readers.

To sum up: this work is an important contribution to the ongoing project of making Gramsci available to an English speaking public, and I am sure it will be welcomed by English-speaking scholars and readers of various intellectual and cultural interests.

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## Update on the State of the *Bibliografia gramsciana*

by

John M. Cammett

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In the first issue of the *IGS Newsletter* (March, 1992), I described the nature and extent of the first published volume of the *Bibliografia gramsciana* (Rome: Ed. Riuniti, 1991. Pp. xxiii-457). I also indicated the availability of a substantial supplement to that volume. In the second issue of the *Newsletter* (March, 1993), I asserted that I had just completed the first "official" supplement to the *Bibliografia gramsciana*.

I can now report that I was much too optimistic! We soon discovered that many publications, both in Italy and in other countries had not yet been included. The co-editor of volume two is Anna Luisa Righi of the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci in Rome. Through her we were able to obtain invaluable aid from other Gramsci Institutes in Italy, especially those in Turin and Bologna. I found access to several new data bases, and we had new and invaluable assistance from a number of scholars and activists in various countries. Satoe Kawakami, to name an extraordinary example, added literally hundreds of titles to our list of Japanese writings and made dozens of corrections to those we already had.

In any case, volume two has now been completed and will be published in June of 1995. The work contains about 3400 entries including a few publications in four languages (Albanian, Korean, Norwegian, and Sardinian) not included in the *Bibliografia gramsciana*. About 46% of the entries, surprisingly enough, consist of publications which appeared within the years comprised in the original *Bibliografia gramsciana* (1922-1988), but were not therein included.

The total number of entries for both the *Bibliografia gramsciana* and volume two is now more than 10,400 represented by 33 different languages. The quantitative changes in the numbers of *publications per year* remains proportionately similar to the figures given in the introduction of 1991. Only about 16% of the total number of entries appeared before 1966. Also, when the more recent statistics are considered, the "breakthroughs" in numbers of 1965-69 and of 1975-79 remain as before: In 1965-69 there were a total of 957 publications as compared to 331 in the earlier 5-year period; again in 1975-79 there were 2104 as compared to 1058 in 1970-74. After a decrease in the early 1980s, the number of records published per year has remained rather constant (i.e., at about the same level as that of 1975-79).

With regard to the languages of the collection, those in Italian have fallen slightly from 62% to 58.8% (about 6100 in number), while those in other languages now amount to 41.2% (or about 4300). English remains the most frequent of the other languages with 11.8% (ca. 1200 entries) followed by French, Spanish, German, Japanese and Russian (from 5% o 3% respectively).

In conclusion, we must comment briefly on the nature of the indices and appendices. The most important, the "Index of Names and Subjects by Number of Entry" (pp. xx-xx) is much more detailed and specific than its counterpart in the *Bibliografia gramsciana*. This, we believe, will greatly enhance the usefulness of the compilation.

There are also several new indices or lists which were not included in the earlier publication. Among them, the "Index of Reviews of Books by and about Gramsci" seems self-explanatory. The "Index of Geographic Places by Name and Entry Number" (pp. xx-xx) refers to countries, regions, and cities where one of two conditions occurred: 1) The entry refers to a geographic entity during a period in which Gramsci lived or therein sojourned; or 2) A concept or "canon of research" derived from Gramsci was applied to the study of the history or nature of that location.

Neither the *Bibliografia gramsciana* nor this supplement include works by Gramsci himself. Yet they both comprise introductions and prefaces by other persons to these works, writings which in themselves are often very important. Our inclusion in this publication of an "Index of Introductions and Prefaces to Gramsci's Works," provides another kind of important information. Since nearly all of Gramsci's writings, whether in Italian or in translation, are accompanied by some kind of introduction, however brief, this list also serves as an index to all known editions of Gramsci throughout the world. Finally, we have the table called "Frequency of Publications by TYPES," useful because it very quickly supplies the reader with an overview of the number and relative importance of the various forms of publications (books, collections, articles, dissertations, pamphlets, reviews, etc.). In the course of the next few months, we intend to publish indices like the ones described above for the *Bibliografia gramsciana* itself as well as a list of errata and other changes.

All members of the International Gramsci Society will be informed as soon as Volume 2 appears. As stated above, I expect to see it in June, 1995.



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## Gramsci Bibliography: Recent Publications

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*During the past year a number of books, collections of essays, and articles on Gramsci have been sent to us or brought to our attention by members of the International Gramsci Society. We are providing here a description of these publications.*

**Antonio Gramsci. *Pre-Prison Writings*. Ed. Richard Bellamy, trans. Virginia Cox. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.**

This volume offers reliable translations (accompanied by a basic but useful critical apparatus) of a rich selection from Gramsci's most important writings stretching from his earliest years of political involvement to the eve of his arrest. It is succinctly described on its back cover as follows: "This collection of Gramsci's pre-prison writings, newly translated and including a number of pieces not previously available in English, covers the whole gamut of his journalistic activity, ranging from general cultural criticism to commentaries on local, national and international events."

The sixty odd pieces chosen for inclusion are chronologically arranged, starting with the controversial 1914 article on "An Active and Functional Neutrality" and ending with the never-completed but best known pre-carceral essay, "Some Aspects of the Southern Question" that was drafted in 1926. The selections are divided into four major sections: "Our Marx" (with essays written between 1914 and 1918), "The New Order" (1919-1920), "Socialism and Fascism" (1921-1922), and "The Construction of the Italian Communist Party" (1923-1926).

In his twenty-page introductory essay, Richard Bellamy provides a historical and political context for reading Gramsci's writings and he offers some interesting views on how best to approach Gramsci's work at the present time. In the opening pages of the introduction Bellamy also makes some remarks on the relation of the pre-prison writings to the *Prison Notebooks*. He writes:

One of the advantages of approaching Gramsci through the pre-prison writings rather than the *Prison Notebooks* is that the original intent and frame of reference of his ideas are harder to avoid. For most of the key concepts of the *Notebooks* can be found in the early texts, as this collection amply demonstrates. In particular, the emphasis on what Gramsci came to call "hegemony" or ideological power, which forms the most distinctive feature of

his Marxism, figures implicitly throughout his analysis of the contemporary Italian State and his views on the organization of the fledgling Communist Party of Italy (PCd'I), as it was then known. Seen within this Italian context, however, such characteristic Gramscian themes as the relative autonomy of political from economic struggle, and the role of will and education in the formation of a revolutionary consciousness, take on a rather different significance from that attributed to them by much of traditional scholarship. Instead of providing the basis for a Marxist strategy suited to advanced capitalism, they can be seen to refer to the rather different problems posed by a somewhat earlier stage of development of the modern nation State.

Bellamy returns to the main thread of this argument in the concluding paragraph of his Introduction:

The prime virtue of this collection, therefore, lies in providing the appropriate practical and theoretical context for understanding [Gramsci's] work. What emerges from these early writings is a Gramsci as much concerned with the creation of a modern nation State as with its overthrow, and who was particularly preoccupied with explaining the peculiarly illiberal and fragile nature of the bourgeois regime in Italy. As Eastern Europe attempts to rebuild itself in the aftermath of the fall of communism, it will be his analysis of peripheral capitalist states rather than his attempts to build a Communist Party that will continue to absorb our attention.

This volume also provides the reader with a set of useful glossaries to aid in the reading of the texts themselves and with bibliographical indications for further study of Gramsci's pre-prison writings.

***Omaggio a Gramsci. Cagliari: Tema, 1994.***

This volume collects the texts of the talks that were given at the conferences and associated events organized by Gramsci Institute of Sardinia that were held at Ghilarza, Ales, Oristano and Cagliari between the 21st and the 23rd of January 1991 to commemorate the centenary of Gramsci's birth. In his introduction Eugenio Orrù describes the various initiatives and provides a general overview of the various issues touched upon by the numerous speakers who participated in these gatherings. The first event took place at Ghilarza and it opened with speeches by Ezio Collu (president of the Oristano province), Antonio Deias (administrator of the "Casa Gramsci" in Ghilarza), Ercole Piacentini (who was in prison with Gramsci at Turi di Bari), and Pier Sandro Scano (vice-president of the regional council). The texts of their talks are reproduced in a section of the volume entitled "Autonomia, egemonia, democrazia"

together with those of Valentino Gerratana, Joseph Buttigieg, David Forgacs, Faysal Darraj, Giggio Baratta, Giomaria Cherchi, and John Cammett. On the morning of 22 January, Gramsci was commemorated at a formal session of the Oristano communal council. The speech delivered by Nino Carrus on that occasion is reproduced in a separate section of this volume. The third section contains the texts of talks delivered at Ales in the afternoon of 22 January; it is entitled “Gramsci Oggi” and contains presentations by Maria Fenu, Emanuele Sanna, Mario Melis, Francisco Fernandez Buey, Francesco Cocco, Antonio Santucci, Johanna Borek, and Gustavo Trombetti. The final section of this volume is entitled “Omaggio a Gramsci” and contains texts by Eugenio Orrù, Giorgio Baratta, Roberto Dal Cortivo, Francesco Floris, Salvatorangelo Mereu, Mario Floris, John Cammett, Francisco Fernandez Buey, Johanna Borek, Umberto Cardia, Giuseppe Fiori, Irina Grigorieva, Girolamo Sotgiu, Nereide Rudas, Tonino Mameli, Paola De Gioannis and Giuseppe Podda—all of whom talked at the final meeting held in Cagliari on 23 January 1991.

**Ursula Apitzsch, ed. *Neurath—Gramsci—Williams: Theorien der Arbeiterkultur und ihre Wirkung*. Hamburg and Berlin: Argument Verlag, 1993.**

The book is described on its back cover as follows:

Dieser Band will dem mittlerweile weitverbreiteten Vorurteil entgegentreten, Arbeitkultur sei nur noch ein historisches Relikt, wo nicht gar Opfer des Individualisierungsschubs der Moderne. Daß dies eine verengende Sichtweise ist, zeigen die Aufsätze über Otto Neurath, den Wiener Kreis und die austromarxistische Kulturdebatte ebenso wie die Beiträge über den englischen Marxisten Raymond Williams, der im deutschsprachigen Raum erst noch entdeckt werden muß. Betrachtungen zu den kulturtheoretischen Implikationen von Gramscis Begriff der “civiltà” vervollständigen den Brückenschlag zwischen Arbeitkultur und Zivilgesellschaft: diese kann ohne jene nicht wirklich produziert und historisch angeeignet werden.

In addition to Ursula Apitzsch’s introduction, “Otto Neurath—Antonio Gramsci—Raymond Williams. Eine verborgene Tradition?”, the volume contains the following essays:

Rainer Hegselmann: “Otto Neurath, der Wiener Kreis und das Projekt einer empiristischen Aufklärung”

Johann Dvorak: “Wissenschaftliche Weltauffassung, Marxismus und Arbeiterbildung im Wien der zwanziger und frühen dreißiger Jahre”

Adolf Brock: “Wege zum ‘Neuen Menschen’. Der Einfluß des Austromarxismus auf deutsche Arbeitkultur und Arbeiterbildung”

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Peter Alheit: “Alltägliche Moderne. Versteckte Wirkungen moderner Arbeitskultur”

**Jorge Gantiva Silva. *Puntos de referencia. Un ensayo sobre Gramsci*. Santafé de Bogotá: Kairós Biblioteca, 1993.**

The following extract from Gantiva Silva’s introduction to his work helps explain the resonance of the title he chose for his volume as well as his approach to the reading and interpretation of Gramsci’s writings:

. . . el título del presente ensayo, *Puntos de referencia* quiere hacer honor a dos características fundamentales de la obra de Gramsci: la primera tiene que ver con el estilo, el tono y el método como fueron escritos los *Quaderni* y las *Lettere*. Con frecuencia, en sus apuntes se refería en términos de “preliminar”, “puntos de referencia”, “crítica”, “ensayo.” Nunca pretendió fundar un sistema y explicó por qué el marxismo aún lo era. De este modo, su obra se constituye en un horizonte abierto, rico en múltiples posibilidades creadoras que José Aricó en *La coda del diablo* tematizó magistralmente. En segunda instancia, la expresión *Puntos de referencia* alude al sentido de la investigación, al modo cómo abordó el estudio de ciertos problemas de la política, de la filosofía y de la cultura que cautivó incluso a una cierta intelectualidad no propiamente marxista. El antidogmatismo es la expresión de la fuerza de su pensamiento. En la investigación moderna se utiliza, por ejemplo, el vocablo “marco de referencia” para establecer el régimen de legalidad conceptual e histórica; Gramsci preferió “puntos de referencia” para indicar una disposición del espíritu teórico; ni siquiera la locución “términos de referencia” tiene el sentido de la idea gramsciana. Aunque sus análisis parten de conceptos problemáticos como el de totalidad, apoyados además en la idea de la *Weltanschauung*, el horizonte siempre fue histórico y plural.

Por eso, quisimos recuperar la expresión *Puntos de referencia* para nuestro ensayo, porque no tenemos la pretensión de abarcar toda la obra de Gramsci, ni sistematizarla, ni agotar la diversidad de su reflexión teórica, ni convertirla en “buena consejera” para tiempos difíciles. Quedan además por tratar espacios significativos de la cultura que Gramsci estudió como el arte, el

lenguaje, el periodismo, la técnica y el mundo del trabajo. La idea es situar algunos “puntos de referencia” que estimulen, por una parte, una aproximación a la reflexión de Gramsci y al pensamiento de la escuela crítica del marxismo, especialmente, Walter Benjamin a quien rendimos homenaje en el doceavo “punto de referencia”; y por otra, se trata de propiciar un ambiente cultural de renovación, búsqueda y creatividad, necesarios en estos tiempos de “desencanto” y confusión.

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**Ruggero Giacomini, Domenico Losurdo, Michele Martelli, eds. *Gramsci e l'Italia*. Napoli: Edizioni La Città del Sole, 1994.**

This volume comprises the proceedings of the international conference on “Gramsci and Italy” held in Urbino on 24-25 January 1992. The general orientation of the conference and hence of the papers that were delivered at its various sessions is described on the sleeve of the front cover of the volume as follows:

Gramsci diventa militante e dirigente politico e sviluppa la sua riflessione teorica in un periodo di grande crisi: segnata dalla guerra e dal crollo del socialismo internazionale, e poi dagli echi della rivoluzione d'ottobre, dai conflitti del dopoguerra e dall'imporsi del fascismo. Situazione di crisi, di speranze e delusioni, di smarrimento, come quella che viviamo, che

sollecita risposte nuove e forti, sul piano etico, del metodo, dell'analisi e dell'elaborazione.

Oggi e tempo di bilanci critici e di rigore scientifico, senza dimenticare che il confronto sull'interpretazione dell'opera gramsciana è stato da ogni versante e dall'inizio inevitabilmente connesso all'uso politico, alla sua potenzialità e fecondità orientatrici rispetto alla realtà.

La rilettura critica dell'eredità gramsciana in un contesto profondamente mutato è stato il filo conduttore del convegno internazionale di Urbino del 24-25 gennaio 1992, di cui si presentano qui gli atti, che ha riportato l'attenzione sull'intera opera gramsciana e quindi anche sul Gramsci giovane e impegnato contro la guerra e sul dirigente politico comunista, e in cui temi teorici, storici e politici legati alla figura del pensatore sardo, anche tradizionali, sono stati affrontati in un'ottica nuova, di ripensamento e approfondimento.

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**Ignacio Jardón Arango. *Marxismo y filosofía en Gramsci*. Madrid: Editorial Parteluz, 1995.**

This book has a Preface by José Antonio Gimbernat who concludes his remarks with the following general description of the author’s contribution to the study of Gramsci in the context of the present historical conjuncture:

Ignacio Jardón en su libro se ha dedicado a desentrañar las claves fundamentales del pensamiento filosófico de Gramsci, encuadrado en lo que es el breve e intenso itinerario de su vida. Su importancia como destacado activista político orienta en su intención práctica su pensamiento, en la que literalmente le fue la vida, huyendo siempre de recetas y tentaciones pragmatistas. Gramsci es la coherencia de su pasión por transformar políticamente su época, sabedor de que ello nunca es posible sin un importante esfuerzo teórico, que rompe la rigidez de quienes reducen todo su bagaje al determinismo de la historia. Son los hombres de carne y hueso los actores de su propio destino y ello tiene como condición la permanente innovación intelectual y la constante reforma moral. Por todo ello Gramsci no sólo fue un testigo y actor excepcional y admirable de su época; también hoy es un incitador para afrontar las tareas que se plantean a nuestro tiempo. Este nuevo libro sobre Gramsci es una muy estimable obra que nos acerca a su personalidad, a su pensamiento y nos recuerda la vigencia de sus grandes propósitos.

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**Marcia Landy. *Film, Politics, and Gramsci*. With a Foreword by Paul Bové. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.**

In the Preface, Marcia Landy describes the contents of her book briefly and straightforwardly:

I offer this book itself as a critique of traditional thought on history, science, the human sciences, and the role of culture. The discussion addresses poststructuralist positions and theories of postmodernism in the political terms first raised by Gramsci, in his identification of the political, economic, and cultural dimensions of Fordism, and now problematized by the “post-Fordist” concerns raised by Antonio Negri and other critics. The introduction to the work, chapter 1 [“Gramsci, ‘Knowledge Claims and Knowing Subjects’”], surveys the terrain and the key issues that are at stake in current cultural analysis. Chapter 2, “The Gramscian Politics of Culture,” is an overview of Gramsci’s writings on hegemony, history, the state and civil society, intellectuals, common sense as folklore, and popular and mass culture. Chapter 3, “Socialism and/or Democracy: Politics, Culture, and the State,” elaborates on these issues through the writings of recent critics on Gramsci. Chapter 4, “Cultural Politics and Common Sense,” expands on the importance of Gramsci’s conception of common sense as an alternative to prevailing ideology critiques. Chapter 5, “*They Were My Sisters*: Common Sense, World War II, and the Woman’s Film,” tests the efficacy of a commonsense reading in relation to a British film melodrama produced

during World War II. Chapter 6, “Looking Backward: Versions of History and Common Sense in Recent British Cinema,” explores how common sense representations of history and national identity are tied to issues of gender and sexuality. “Language, Folklore, and Politics in the Films of the Taviani Brothers” (chapter 7) looks at the ways in which Gramsci’s writings on language, common sense, and intellectuals provide an understanding of the politics of representation in contemporary Italian cinema. “Postmodernism as Folklore in Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema (chapter 8) examines common-sense representations of science and technology in Hollywood cinema and the efficacy of various discourses of postmodernity. The concluding chapter, “‘Gramsci Beyond Gramsci’ and the Writings of Antonio Negri,” interrogates where and how Gramsci’s writings on culture and politics can be usefully reconciled with current political writings on post-Fordism.

In his Foreword, Paul Bové discusses Landy’s work at considerable length and he emphasizes the significance of her efforts to demonstrate how and in what way Gramsci’s thought is germane to the present time. Among other things he writes,

Marcia Landy updates and contributes to the completion of Gramsci’s project. She limns our past; she traces the formation of various media; she details the modifications necessary to use Gramsci’s terms again in our own time. In so doing, she gives us various maps of our time; of its economic and cultural forces; of its assigned intellectual tasks of production (one should see the bold chapter on the Taviani brothers); and of the various ways in which, as she says in her early pages, cultural analysis can become more than simply another commodified form of intellectual consumption. Just as it would be wrong to read Gramsci as having produced a grand theory of his or any society—that many have done this makes it no less wrong—one would misread Landy hoping to find a global thesis about contemporary culture or its specific forms. It is essential to Gramscian thinking that specificity displaces dogma and that multiple determinations, complexities, and overlapping valences remain the focus of thought. In culture, then, Gramscians find the traces of power and negotiation, the plastic relations not only between dominant and subaltern but the compromises and resistances that define the subaltern in its multidimensional relations. Gender and class, race and ethnicity, as well as place in the chain of value production, access to language and sign systems, the anonymous forces of capital that determine

these in all their relations—all of this and much more make up the nature of economics, culture, and politics as they intersect in postmodernity. Landy's thesis is that Gramscian thought provides the best access to the current moment; it uniquely presents what is in all its complex materiality, and thus supersedes the potential for ineffective abstraction associated with other, less comprehensive, less "worldly" forms of thought.

**Antonio Santucci, ed. *Gramsci in Europa e in America*. With an Introduction by Eric J. Hobsbawm. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1995.**

This volume offers critical assessments by various well-known Gramscian scholars of the history as well as the present status of Gramsci's thought in a number of European and American countries. In his Preface Antonio Santucci calls attention to the differences and the divergencies within the continuing history (or, one had better say, histories) of Gramsci's reception outside Italy that are brought into relief by the diverse contributors to this volume—differences and divergencies that are especially evident in the contrast between Gramsci's "fortunes" in Russia and the United States:

La presente raccolta di saggi non ha . . . un esclusivo intento descrittivo, pur utile a focalizzare dimensioni e caratteri dello sviluppo della critica gramsciana in Europa e in America. Anzi, proprio per questa ragione sono state selezionati quei paesi ove più profonde e vitali sono le radici del dibattito su Gramsci. In essi la fine del comunismo storico ha infatti riproblematizzato ma non interrotto il dialogo con l'autore dei Quaderni del carcere, stimolando nuove analisi e riflessioni. Certamente, il quadro generale che risulta dai contributi di alcuni fra i maggiori specialisti stranieri, non è omogeneo. Gli effetti della svolta del 1989, ovunque avvertiti da seguaci e avversari del pensiero gramsciano, hanno provocato reazioni talvolta opposte. Negli Stati Uniti, la pubblicazione dei *Quaderni* e delle *Lettere* in edizioni critiche ineccepibili e integrali, pare preludere a una definitiva consegna di Gramsci alla "classicità", mentre la inveterata condanna della sua formazione marxista viene ridotta a mero esercizio retorico. Al contrario, in Russia, la sua antica militanza comunista avvalora frettolose identificazioni con il dissolto regime sovietico, fino a scatenare atteggiamenti censori, in una grottesca replica della tradizionale diffidenza nutrita dai vertici burocratici del partito al potere nei confronti della "eresia" gramsciana. Ciascun saggio, oltre che un capitolo di storia delle idee, costituisce quindi un punto di osservazione sul travaglio attuale della sinistra europea e americana.

Santucci also makes some very interesting observations on the passage over time and geographical space from what one might call the “Italian” Gramsci to the “international” Gramsci:

Fuori dai confini nazionali . . . la critica gramsciana attraversa due fasi distinte. Da principio, la figura e l’opera del dirigente comunista sardo sono in prevalenza oggetto di interesse e di studio da parte di un ristretto numero di “italianisti”, specialmente storici e politologi attenti alle vicende dell’Italia contemporanea. In un secondo momento, attraverso l’attività pionieristica di quei gruppi intellettuali, la loro progressiva espansione, la traduzione dei testi nelle principali lingue, il pensiero di Gramsci comincia a permeare il complesso culturale di paesi anche distanti, sia per collocazione geografica che per assetti sociali, condizioni economiche, regimi, tradizioni ideologiche. La interazione delle categorie dei *Quaderni del carcere* con specifiche istanze politiche e teoriche nazionali, produce così “letture” differenziate, avviate perlo più sulla base di comuni riferimenti alle prospettive del movimento operaio e all’elaborazione marxista, ma destinate ad assumere col tempo connotazioni autonome.

*Gramsci in Europa e in America* opens with an introductory essay by Eric J. Hobsbawm who uses the other essays in the volume as a point of departure for some reflections on the reasons why Gramsci’s thought has exercised and continues to exercise such widespread influence—and on the nature of that influence. In Hobsbawm’s view, one main reason for Gramsci’s continuing importance is the light he sheds on politics; and precisely for this reason, Hobsbawm believes, Gramsci’s readers will not be limited to those from the left of the political spectrum:

È comunque probabile che Gramsci continuerà ad essere letto in primo luogo per la luce che i suoi scritti gettano sulla politica, da lui definita un “insieme di canoni pratici di ricerca e di osservazioni particolari utili per risvegliare l’interesse per la realtà effettuale e suscitare intuizioni politiche più rigorose e vigorose.” Non credo che una tale ricerca di “intuizioni” troverà adepti solo a sinistra, anche se per evidenti ragioni è più probabile che siano coloro che condividono gli obiettivi di Gramsci a guardare a lui come a una guida. Come nota Joseph Buttigieg, gli anticomunisti americani ne hanno paura, perchè Gramsci può ancora ispirare la sinistra post-sovietica, al contrario di Lenin, Stalin, Trotskij e Mao. Tuttavia, mentre si può sperare che Gramsci possa essere ancora per la sinistra un punto di riferimento per una politica vincente,

è ormai chiaro che il suo influsso a livello internazionale ha varcato i confini della sinistra, e addirittura la sfera della politica in senso stretto.

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Una ricezione difficile (1945-1959) - L'introduzione-denegazione di Althusser: un confronto d'alto livello ma senza seguito apparente (1959-1966) - La Gramsci-Renaissance. Gli equivoci dell'egemonia (1966-1977) - Il secondo confronto con Althusser: partito, stato, ideologia - Dalla cancellazione all decostruzione (1977-1993)

Francisco Fernández Buey: In Spagna

Si ha ragione per averla avuta? - Censura selettiva - Crisi del marxismo, "moda Gramsci" e insuccesso editoriale - Sacristán su Gramsci - Revisione anti-ideologica - Tragedia e empatia - 1977: Gramsci nelle grandi città industriali - Gramsci nelle riviste teoriche - Gramsci nel dibattito sindacale - Cambio di marcia: Gramsci nelle università - Scienza e etica - Ragioni della ragione e ragioni del cuore - Domande per avviarsi a concludere - Gramsci per le giovani generazioni

David Forgacs: In Gran Bretagna

Irina Grigor'eva: In Russia

## II. Gramsci in America

Joseph Buttigieg: Negli Stati Uniti. 1

Frank Rosengarten: Negli Stati Uniti. 2

Carlos Nelso Coutinho: In Brasile

Oswaldo Fernández Díaz: In America Latina

Quel che potè essere un preambulo - Il momento di Agosti - Gramsci in Cile - José Aricó e le iniziative messicane - Il convegno nel 1987 in Cile - Gramsci nel documento di Santa Fe - Quel che non può essere un conclusione

### **Giuseppe Vacca. *Togliatti sconosciuto*. Rome: I Libri dell'Unità, 1994.**

This book (published as a supplement of *L'Unità* of 31 August 1994) brings together revised versions of number of previously published articles most of which deal directly with some aspect or other of Palmiro Togliatti's personal, political and intellectual relationship with Antonio Gramsci.

Table of contents:

#### I. Gramsci 1926-1937: la linea d'ombra nei rapporti con il Comintern e il partito

- Il fallimento dei primi tentativi di liberazione
- Gramsci non sospettava di Togliatti e non aveva rotto con lui nel '26
- Giulia sotto la sorveglianza dell'NKVD
- Liberarsi e combattere per la politica della Costituente
- Dopo la morte di Gramsci Tania ne difende la politica
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- III. Alle scaturigini della svolta di Salerno
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  - Racconto del colloquio fra Giovambattista Montini e Eugenio Reale
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  - Notizie sulla preparazione delle *Lettere* e incunaboli della prima edizione dei *Quaderni*
  - Il problema delle censure e delle inerzie
  - La lunga vigilia della prima edizione dei *Quaderni*
- VII. Gramsci e Croce in Inghilterra
- VIII. Il dissenso sul "Rapporto segreto." Una lettera inedita di Krusciov a Togliatti
  - La lettera di Krusciov
- IX. L'interpretazione di Gramsci prima e dopo il '56

**A Special issue on "Ethik und Staat: Zivilgesellschaft." *Das Argument* 206 (July-October 1994).**

This special issue of the German review *Das Argument* is devoted entirely to essays and book-reviews that discuss different aspects of civil society from a multiplicity of perspectives. The entire issue deserves the attention of everyone interested in Gramsci's political thought wherein the concept of civil society occupies an especially prominent place. Furthermore, the first section of this book-length special issue focuses specifically on Gramsci's theory of civil society. The section is entitled "Gramsci und die Theorie der Zivilgesellschaft" and consists of the following essays:

Peter Jehle: "Hegemonietheoretische Defizite der Zivilgesellschaftsdebatte. Zur Kritik an Kebir und der Habermasschule"

Joseph A. Buttigieg: "Gramscis Zivilgesellschaft und die *civil-society*-Debatte"

Giorgio Baratta: “Volk, Nation, Zivilgesellschaft, Massen im Denken Gramscis”

Dick Boer: “Die Bedeutung Gramscis für eine Linke ohne Hegemonie”

Wolfgang Fritz Haug: “Gibt es totale ‘hegemoniale Ohnmacht’?”

**Some recent essays on Gramsci** that have been brought to our attention:

Marcia Landy: “‘Gramsci Beyond Gramsci’: The Writings of Toni Negri” in *boundary 2*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Spring 1994), pp. 63-97.

Joseph A. Buttigieg: “Philology and Politics: Returning to the Text of Antonio Gramsci’s Prison Notebooks” in *boundary 2*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Spring 1994), pp. 98-138.

Terry Cochran: “Culture in Its Sociohistorical Dimension” *boundary 2*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Spring 1994), pp. 139-178.

Ignacio Jardón Araugo: “Gramsci: Filosofía de la praxis e ideología” in *Papeles*, II, 2 (1994), pp.67-74.

Dario Ragazzini: “Il rapporto con Gramsci” in *Lucio Lombardo Radice tra educazione e politica*, a cura di Lino Rossi (Ferrara: Corso Editore, 1993), pp. 117-145.

Alberto Burgio: “Complessità, contraddizione e dialettica. Sull’analisi del fascismo nei *Quaderni del carcere*” in *L’impegno della ragione. Per Emilio Agazzi* (Ed. Unicopli, 1994), pp. 37-76.

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## Gramsci at the New York Marxist School

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*In July 1994 the New York Marxist School held an eight-day intensive study course on Marxism. The eighth and final session of the course was conducted by Frank Rosengarten and was entirely devoted to the topic "Gramsci's Contributions to Marxist Theory." In October-November 1994 Frank Rosengarten also offered a course of six seminar sessions on Gramsci at the New York Marxist School. Rosengarten kindly provided us with a brief account of his experience of leading the seminars on Gramsci last autumn, as well as a description—in the form of rather detailed notes—of the topics and texts that were discussed in the final session of the week-long intensive study course on Marxism.*

### On Educating the Educator

In the process of teaching a six-session course on Gramsci at the New York Marxist School—on successive Thursday evenings, 6 to 8 p.m., from October 6 to November 10, 1994—I had one of the richest intellectual and political experiences of my life.

The sixteen students enrolled in the course came from a variety of backgrounds, and had diverse interests, which made the exchange of ideas in class lively and controversial. The group ranged in age from nineteen to eighty-five, and included the following occupations: a book publishing editor; an instructor of Italian at CUNY; a public school English teacher; a political science student at Columbia University; a Chinese-American student at Hunter College; a Black professor of sociology at CUNY; a South African graduate student enrolled at the New School of Social Research; a child psychiatrist; a former member of the CPUSA and the American Labor Party, and a specialist in American and English literature; a retired New York City science teacher; a Palestinian Israeli citizen; and a Marxist scholar and writer.

The students all had some familiarity with Gramsci's writings, but much more significant was the fact that almost all of them viewed their study of Gramsci as part of their political education and as a source of ideas and perspective that would be useful to them in their lives as activists committed to socialist democracy. For example, the Italian instructor was engaged in "cultural struggle" aimed at "awakening an historical and social consciousness in my students." The professor of sociology was striving to establish connections between what he saw as the relevant features of the Black nationalist movement with Marxist social and economic theory. The psychiatrist was interested in seeing whether there were aspects of Gramsci's cultural criticism that might assist him in his analysis of *The Bell Curve*. The South



African graduate student, who has had several years of experience working in his country as a student activist of the ANC, wanted to deepen his understanding of the transition underway in South Africa by studying relevant sections of the Hoare and Nowell-Smith edition of *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. The retired science teacher was interested in knowing whether Gramsci could help her see connections between science and politics, especially as this issue affected the women's movement. She was sharply critical of Gramsci's "sexism" and made all of us see how this sexism was built into some of the very language and imagery used by Gramsci. There is much more I could say about the students, but that would require space that is not available here.

I organized the course around two basic themes: main elements of the philosophy of praxis, and Gramsci's interrelated theories of hegemony and intellectuals. I asked the students to write short summaries of their readings for class discussion, and also to report on individual readings of book chapters or essays written by such people as Cornel West, Alvin Gouldner, Edward Said, Perry Anderson, Anne Showstack Sassoon, etc. In the opening session, I made an attempt to acquaint the students with certain "preliminary considerations" such as the Marxist political culture within which Gramsci's political education took place, Gramsci's intellectual indebtedness to his Italian forebears (Machiavelli, Vico, De Sanctis, Labriola, Croce), and the changing "situations" and "projects" that conditioned Gramsci's world view both before and after his imprisonment. I think that this introductory session was helpful in orienting some of the students not yet exposed to these important determinants of Gramsci's thought and action.

As far as my own education is concerned, in addition to learning a great deal from my students, who were certainly better versed than I in many domains, I think that the most important aspect of the course was my increasingly strong sense that the fundamental *filo conduttore* of the *Prison Notebooks* is the philosophy of praxis, in the sense that for Gramsci Marxism as an integral *philosophy* of life was still in an early phase of its development and needed the kind of refinement and elaboration that he himself was attempting to accomplish in his prison writings. It seems to me that it was precisely this elaboration that gives Gramsci's thought its distinctive character and a kind of thematic unity that is not undermined by the well known diffuse and "open" character of his reflections in the Notebooks. Of the various books that I read on Gramsci as a theorist of Marxism, I found Jacques Texier's *Gramsci* (Editions Seghers, 1966) to be very useful. But it was mainly in the course of my own close reading of the pages in the Notebooks I had assigned to the students that opened my eyes to the absolute centrality of Gramsci's philosophy of praxis to virtually everything he had to say on politics, philosophy, history, literature, folklore and other topics. This may be quite obvious to readers of this Newsletter but I have to say that it was an exciting discovery for me.

In February and March of 1995, Benedetto Fontana, author of *Hegemony and Power: On the Relation between Gramsci and Machiavelli* (University of Minnesota Press, 1993), taught another six-week course on Gramsci at the Marxist School. The title of his course: "Gramsci's politics." No doubt Fontana will provide a summary of his teaching (and learning) experience for the next *IGS Newsletter*.

Frank Rosengarten

### **New York Marxist School: Intensive Study of Marxism, 17-24 July, 1994**

July 24: **Gramsci's Contributions to Marxism**, led by Frank Rosengarten:

- A. Summary of Gramsci's life, 1891-1937, and some remarks on how and why his particular "situation" and "project" were influenced by historical events from 1917 to 1926.
- B. The Italian sources of Gramsci's Marxism:
  1. Niccolò Machiavelli: on will and "virtue", the theory of the political party as the "modern prince"; the leaders and the led; theorization of the origins and character of the modern state; the relationship between theory and practice: Machiavelli as "the Italian Luther," as revolutionary.
  2. Giambattista Vico and the "humanization" of history.
  3. Antonio Labriola and "critical communism": the essays on the materialist conception of history and the "philosophy of praxis"; belief that Marxism had to be completed, that it was still in its early phase of development; rejection of dogmatism and omniscience; belief that *Capital* was crucial to understanding of modern world; insisted that there are no preordained, "providential" outcomes in historical process.
  4. Francesco De Sanctis on the interrelatedness of literature with the history and spiritual life (in Hegelian sense) of a national society.
  5. Benedetto Croce's "philosophy of the spirit" and the responsibilities of the modern intellectual. Croce's spiritual historicism. In some respects, Gramsci stands in the same relation to Croce as Marx did to Hegel.
- C. A brief look at four writings by the "young Gramsci": "Socialism and Culture," 1916; "The Revolution against *Capital*," 1917; "Our Marx," 1918; and "Worker's Democracy," 1919.
- D. Gramsci in the history of "western Marxism," as seen by Perry Anderson in *Considerations on Western Marxism* and by Martin Jay in *Marxism and Totality*.

E. Analysis of some passages from the Hoare and Nowell-Smith edition of *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* that highlight Gramsci's ideas in the realms of philosophy, politics and culture, and that illustrate his contributions to Marxism:

1. the theory of hegemony and 2) theory of intellectuals (pp. 57-58 on the history of "the Italian revolution"; pp. 12-13 on role of intellectuals in formation of hegemony, and expanded conception of intellectuals; pp. 333 and pp. 365-66 on Lenin and hegemony, and on relationship between Marx and Lenin; p. 404 on need to "develop all the superstructures in state phase of hegemony if one is not to risk dissolution of the state"—note relevance of this passage for recent events in Soviet Union and eastern Europe). See also Frank Rosengarten's edition of the *Letters from Prison*, vol. II, pp. 66-7 on hegemony.
3. relationship between intellectuals and "nation-people", p. 418
4. a strategy for socialist struggle in the West: on wars of maneuver and wars of position (pp. 432-33 on difference between wars on politico-military front, and war on the ideological front; pp. 237-38 on the nature of civil society in Russia and the West, and politics of the United Front.)
5. Renewal and refinement of Marxism as the "philosophy of praxis", as unity of theory and practice:
  - a. The critical notes on Bukharin's *Theory of Historical Materialism: A Popular Manual*: (p. 379, Gramsci's repudiation of Bukharin's tendency to reduce Marxism to status of positive science, to a crude sociological scientism; p. 426 on "vulgar evolutionism" at root of Bukharin's Marxism; p. 428 on relationship between philosophy of praxis and history; p. 431 on teaching of dialectics; p. 435 on philosophy of praxis as "integral and original philosophy opening a new phase of history"; p. 435 philosophy of praxis transcends, but retains vital elements of, traditional idealism and traditional materialism; p. 437 on Bukharin's tendency to replace the historical dialectic with mechanical causation).
  - b. Characteristic features of philosophy of praxis, and present state of Marxism, as seen by Gramsci (p. 332 attitude towards "common sense"; pp. 334 and 336 rejection of "residues of mechanicism" present in "recent developments of philosophy of praxis"; p. 352 on "man" as series of active relationships; p. 395 on philosophy of praxis as "modern popular reformation" with its roots in a cultural past; pp. 405-406 philosophy of praxis is not eternal and absolute; p. 408 on "error"—note what Gramsci had to say about Achille Loria, "Cuvier's

little bone," and the importance of "philology" to the philosophy of praxis, as analyzed by Joseph Buttigieg).

**Selected passages by and about Gramsci, for intensive study course, July 24, 1994:**

1. From *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, "The Modern Prince: Brief Notes on Machiavelli's Politics," pp. 126-27:

.in a dramatic movement of great effect, the elements of passion and of myth which occur throughout the book are drawn together and brought to life in the conclusion, in the invocation of a prince who "really exists". Throughout the book, Machiavelli discusses what the Prince must be like if he is to lead a people to found a new State; the argument is developed with rigorous logic, and with scientific detachment. In the conclusion, Machiavelli merges with the people, becomes the people; not, however, some "generic" people, but the people whom he, Machiavelli, has convinced by the preceding argument--the people whose consciousness and whose expression he becomes and feels himself to be, with whom he feels identified. The entire "logical" argument now appears as nothing other than auto-reflection on the part of the people--an inner reasoning worked out in the popular consciousness, whose conclusion is a cry of passionate urgency. The passion, from discussion of itself, becomes once again "emotion," fever, fanatical desire for action. This is why the epilogue of *The Prince* is not something extrinsic, tacked on, rhetorical, but has to be understood as a necessary element of the work--indeed as the element which gives the entire work its true color, and makes it a kind of "political manifesto."

And p. 185:

the most important observation to be made about any concrete analysis of the relations of force is the following: that such analyses cannot and must not be ends in themselves (unless the intention is merely to write a chapter of past history), but acquire significance only if they serve to justify a particular practical activity, or initiative of will.

2. From Benedetto Fontana, *Hegemony and Power* (1994), pp. 39 and 41:

*For Gramsci:* In the same way that the Reformation engendered a broad national-popular movement resulting from the innovating and mass-

mobilizing activities of the new religious teachers, so too the philosophy of praxis is to initiate a moral and intellectual reform of modern bourgeois society by means of the dialectical and active relation between the popular masses and the democratic philosopher.

*For Croce:* Luther and the Reformation represent the death and sterility of philosophy, in the same way that Marx and the workers' movement marked the decline and corruption of philosophy.

3. From "Socialism and Culture" (1916):

To know oneself means to be oneself, to be master of oneself, to distinguish oneself, to free oneself from a state of chaos, to exist as an element of order--but of one's own order and one's own discipline in striving for an ideal. And we cannot be successful in this unless we also know others, their history, the successive efforts they have made to be what they are, to create the civilization they have created and which we seek to replace with our own.

4. From Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism*, pp. 75-6:

Western Marxism. . . was progressively inhibited from theoretical confrontation of major economic or political problems, from the 1920s onwards. . . The result was that Western Marxism as a whole, when it proceeded beyond questions of method to matters of substance, came to concentrate overwhelmingly on study of *superstructures*. . . In other words, it was not the State or Law which provided the typical objects of its research. It was culture that held the central focus of its attention.

Above all, within the realm of culture itself, it was *Art* that engaged the major intellectual energies and gifts of Western Marxism.

Anderson sees Gramsci as an exception to the above—p. 45: “[Gramsci] alone [among the leading figures of Western Marxism] embodied in his person a revolutionary unity of theory and practice, of the type that had defined the classical heritage.”

5. From *Letters from Prison*, vol. II, letter of September 7, 1931 to his sister-in-law Tania Schucht:

The research I have done on the intellectuals is very broad and in fact I don't think that there are any books on this subject in Italy. Certainly there exists a great deal of scholarly material, but it is scattered in an infinite number of reviews and local historical archives. At any rate, I greatly amplify the idea of

what an intellectual is and do not confine myself to the current notion that refers only to the preeminent intellectuals. My study also leads to certain definitions of the concept of the State that is usually understood as a political Society (or dictatorship, or coercive apparatus meant to hold the popular mass in accordance with the type of production and economy at a given moment) and not as a balance between the political Society and the civil Society (or the hegemony of a social group over the entire national society, exercised through the so-called private organizations, such as the Church, the unions, the schools etc.), and it is within the civil society that the intellectuals operate (Benedetto Croce, for example, is a sort of lay pope and he is a very effective instrument of hegemony even if from time to time he comes into conflict with this or that government, etc.).

6. From *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, on "State and Civil Society," pp. 237-38:

It seems to me that Ilich [Lenin] understood that a change was necessary from the war of maneuver applied victoriously in the East in 1917, to a war of position which was the only form possible in the West--where, as Krasnov observes, armies could rapidly accumulate endless quantities of munitions, and where the social structures were of themselves still capable of becoming heavily-armed fortifications. This is what the formula of the "United Front" seems to me to mean, and it corresponds to the conception of a single front for the Entente under the sole command of Foch.

Ilich, however, did not have time to expand his formula—though it should be borne in mind that he could only have expanded it theoretically, whereas the fundamental task was a national one; that is to say, it required a reconnaissance of the terrain and identification of the elements of trench and fortress represented by the elements of civil society, etc. In Russia the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relation between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks: more or less numerous from one State to the next, it goes without saying--but this precisely necessitated an accurate reconnaissance of each individual country.

7. From *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, "Problems of Marxism," p. 435:

The true fundamental function and significance of the dialectic can only be grasped if the philosophy of praxis is conceived as an integral and original philosophy which opens up a new phase of history and a new phase in the development of world thought. It does this to the extent that it goes beyond both traditional idealism and traditional materialism, philosophies which are expressions of past societies, while retaining their vital elements. If the philosophy of praxis is not considered except in subordination to another philosophy, then it is impossible to grasp the new dialectic, through which the transcending of old philosophies is effected and expressed.

F. R.

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# **Common Sense, Transformation, and Elites**

by

**Francesco Paolo Colucci**

(Università degli Studi di Milano)

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*The last issue of the IGS Newsletter contained a brief report on the International Symposium "Praxis, senso comune, egemonia: la psicologia dei problemi complessi / Praxis, Common Sense, Hegemony: The Psychology of Complex Social Problems." The symposium, held in Bologna in December 1991, was organized by the Istituto Gramsci of Emilia Romagna in collaboration with the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme of Paris. The principal organizer of the symposium, Professor Francesco Paolo Colucci of the Institute of Psychology of the School of Medicine at the University of Milan, has written a long and detailed critical analysis of the papers that were presented at the various sessions of the symposium. In order to provide our readers with a general idea of the main issues that were discussed at the symposium, we are reproducing the introduction and parts of the conclusion of the English version of Professor Colucci's comprehensive account and critical assessment of the papers that were presented in Bologna. We also take this opportunity to thank Professor Colucci for providing us with detailed information concerning this symposium.*

## **Introduction**

In this essay I undertake a critical analysis of the international symposium "Praxis, Common Sense, Hegemony: the Psychology of Complex Social Problems" (held in Bologna in December 1991), and attempt to highlight certain questions that may serve as hypotheses for future research. In four general sessions, the symposium looked at several interconnected themes in psychology related to the central concepts in Antonio Gramsci's thought: "praxis" or human activity; "common sense" relating to social representations and everyday knowledge; "hegemony" and how it manifests itself in politics and organizations and, consequently, the question of elites or active minorities; the "formation of man" and his psychological development seen in their relation with society. A key role is played by common sense, which links the various themes together and whose external relevance has also been underlined by recent political events. Common sense—the product of an active process of communication and co-operation while at the same time a directing activity—is the main



object of hegemony, the aim of which is its preservation or transformation as well as the formation of man and his psychological development.

The work of the symposium centred on an analysis of Gramscian thought which stressed its relevance for several important current themes in social psychology and led to the formulation of some working hypothesis. One of these is that, given the importance Gramsci attaches to individual and collective subjectivity and the way he treats the relationship between the individual, society and history in his writings, reference to Gramsci may be useful for the kind of psychology that focuses attention on the *process* of interaction between the individual and society, as proposed for example by Moscovici in the introduction to his 1984 handbook. It may also, as a result of the significant openness of Gramscian Marxism towards other intellectual traditions, give rise to a debate that has so far essentially failed to materialise, despite common themes and agreement on important points, between two different theoretical approaches in current psychology: social cognitive psychology, which has developed in Europe in the last two decades from the research of scholars like Tajfel, von Cranach, Doise and Moscovici, and activity theory, which is now being developed with a more broadly-based approach by the cultural-historical school of Vygotsky, Leontyev and Luria and the Berlin school of critical psychology founded by Klaus Holzkamp. Furthermore, since activity theory is, like Gramscian thought, organically related to Marxism, it was the intention of the symposium to invite psychologists not to eschew debate with Marxism in the wake of recent fashions and events.

In other words, it would be useful for the kind of psychology considered here to overcome internal barriers within an open debate that seizes on possible points of agreement without falling into eclecticism and, at the same time, acquire a truly interdisciplinary perspective. It is for this reason also important, contrary to normal practice, to take note of the work of scholars outside the discipline but who have made an essential contribution to common fundamental themes. In the field of political or, more generally, social philosophical thought, Gramsci is an emblematic and particularly important figure, though not the only one, as was emphasised also at this symposium through significant reference to other *outsiders*.

It is by becoming receptive to these debates and perspectives that psychology will be more able to make a contribution to those "complex social problems" hinted at in the symposium's title and related to the themes discussed. These problems concern, first of all, large-scale migrations and the ever worsening forms of ethnic divisions and racial hatred; the question of young people and their increasingly destructive and self-destructive behaviour, which are taking on different forms than in the past; and the inadequacies of the education system in anticipating and facing the transformations in progress, the failure of political parties and the apparently irreversible crisis affecting the traditional productive organizations

like the factory, all of the latter being institutions with a direct or, more or less, mediated formative function. It should also be pointed out in this respect that it was not the symposium's intention to offer diagnoses or solutions; its main focus was on the theoretical questions that psychology must take up if it wants to conduct fruitful research into these kinds of social problems. And it is precisely the increasingly frequent attention paid to them by psychologists that has put the spotlight on the inadequacy of theories and methods.

A further aspect that needs to be underlined is that the symposium was not on Gramsci's thought but on some themes dealt with by Gramsci and important for current psychology. (The relationship between Gramsci's ideas, already of interest to pedagogists and sociologists for some time, was considered for the first time at this symposium.) Gramsci's role here is as a thought-provoking catalyst, but neither a fortuitous nor a contingent one, also because of what was said above about the importance for psychology of its relationship with outsiders. What is important above all, however, is that the symposium accepted Moscovici's invitation to overcome the taboo of never speaking ill of the dead, and in particular with regard to Gramsci, who has always been—especially in Italy—the object of panegyrics aiming to use him for the most varied ends. After all, it is criticism which demonstrates the vitality of ideas. In this light, the criticisms directed at Gramsci—as part of a discourse that nonetheless identifies various interesting aspects of his work—particularly in the papers of Serge Moscovici (*Maison des Sciences de l'Homme*, Paris) and Georg Rückriem (*Hochschule der Künste*, Berlin),<sup>1</sup> have the merit, independently of how debatable they may be, of posing with extreme clarity questions not only on Gramsci but also on the themes dealt with at the symposium:

- The relationship between subject, understood as both a biological and a psychical unit, and society and the very definition of "social" in psychology;
- The transformations in activities, common sense and social representations;
- The question of hegemony and elites.

These are closely interconnected questions cutting across the various papers, which can serve as a guiding thread for a critical analysis of the symposium; thus, hegemony may be a factor of transformation or preservation, and the relation between individual subject and society encompasses that between individual (the leader) elites and masses.

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1. Moscovici, for instance, notes that Gramsci has been the only Marxist to pose the problem of common sense, without reducing it to the question of ideology, also in connection with the transformation of Marxism itself from a scientific theory to a shared mass culture. Rückriem maintains that it is possible and useful to take the Gramscian category of praxis or activity, and therefore the formative function attributed by Gramsci to the organization of work in the modern big factory, as the starting point for an explanation of subjectivity.

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### **A first stage**

In order to draw up a balance sheet of the symposium we need to see to what extent and which ways the various papers and the debate developed the working hypothesis put forward at the start. In raising questions and producing comparisons of considerable relevance, Gramsci's thought also gives rise to numerous references to other outsiders. For example, Willem Doise (University of Geneva) refers to Durkheim and Cattaneo, Bernd Fichtner (University of Siegen) to von Humboldt, Martin Hildebrand-Nilshon (Freie Universität of Berlin) to Ariés, etc. But it is Uwe Flick (Technische Universität of Berlin), more than anyone else, who bases his paper on the importance that the reference both to the new common sense treated by Gramsci and to Ludwig Fleck and Alfred Schutz—two thinkers usually neglected, if not totally ignored, by psychologists—can have at present for the study of social representations and common sense or, as he prefers to define it, “everyday knowledge”. . . .

As regards further possible contributions to psychology, the themes mentioned here and developed in an original way by Gramsci refer directly to thinkers like Weber and Pareto, as Walter Tega (University of Bologna) reminds us. On the other hand, it is the social sciences, including psychology, which are carrying out the most advanced research into these themes and categories that have also been analysed by American neocontractualism and are considered from a different perspective and no longer presented on an ideological or properly Gramscian level. Rita Medici (University of Bologna) appropriately calls attention to the relation between Gramsci, in particular his theory of collective will, and the classical thinkers of political philosophy like Hobbes.

The reference to thinkers like Gramsci, Cattaneo, von Humboldt, Fleck, Pareto, etc., and the relations between their thought and psychology make the difficulties and obstacles, which are not only physical barriers and divisions, preventing communication and discussion between the different theoretical perspectives appear even more bogus and sterile. Moreover, such “barriers” never existed for psychologists like Vygotsky, Leontyev, and Luria. As Boris Velichovsky (Moscow State University) points out in the symposium's concluding paper, the cultural-historical school founded by them has been characterized from the beginning by a wide range of reference . . . that has made it “cosmopolitan”; and at its very roots go back not only to Marx but also to Spinoza, Francis Bacon, and Saint Augustine.

. . .

Certain divisions or the splendid isolation of schools like critical psychology now appear even more anachronistic following the disappearance of long-standing ideological or theoretical certainties. This passage from certainties and fixed points to doubts and problem-posing openings is underscored, for example, by the question posed by Rückriem in the conclusion of his paper and by others in the discussions: Can the concept of activity, which plays a fundamental role in Gramsci as well as in the cultural-historical school, still provide today the foundation for a science of man that aims to tackle the problems of contemporary society? In other words, the concept of activity, which is productive if referred to single organizations . . . raises a series of doubts if referred to society as a whole. This situation, according to Rückriem, originates in the crisis that is currently affecting our traditional views of the world and scientific conceptions, considered universally valid from the Enlightenment on, which in referring to activity or praxis are emphasized by the Marxist conception of progress and, consequently, by Gramsci's thought and the cultural-historical school. The focal point of the question, then, is that "not only is it (the principle of activity) charged with the destruction of outer nature in the name of ruling over nature, but also the destruction of inner nature, the suppression of the senses, of the body and sexuality." The concept of activity, therefore, requires overcoming the limits, present in its leading theorists like Leontyev, that are once again connected with an unsatisfactory integration of the individual and supra-individual levels.

. . .

On the other front, the divisions or the persistence of illusory barriers may be due to a kind of anti-Marxist prejudice but still refer to a relationship between psychology and Marxism. At present, any consideration of Marxism may be rejected by a generalized dismissive attitude that holds it to be obsolete and anachronistic. At the other extreme, there is at times the manifestation of an equally uncritical revanchism which refuses to acknowledge that in Marxism and every Marxist thinker, including Gramsci, there must be something wrong, as certain historical events show and have also unequivocally shown in the past. Then there is the risk of seeing Marxism as an undifferentiated monolithic whole, as Moscovici does in this symposium when he lumps Lenin and Gramsci together with extreme indifference. The reverse risk is to view Marxism as such a generic label that the same term means such diverse things that a comparison between authors like, for example, Gramsci and Leontyev is not methodologically feasible. Approaches of this kind prevent any relationship between the human sciences and Marxism from being considered. Marxism is, however, an external system of thought that can still constitute an important source for contemporary psychology. This may be even more the case now than in the past, since the fall of the communist regimes in the eastern Europe could help make the criticism of and general attitude towards Marxism,

and in particular the principles that inspire it, less rigid and freer from, for instance, political conditioning: in one word, more creative.

*A full version of Francesco Paolo Colucci's critical discussion of the symposium can be found in each of the following publications: "International Symposium 'Praxis, Common Sense, Hegemony: The Psychology of Complex Social Problems,' Bologna, December 1991" in Revista de Psicologia Social, IX, 1 (1994), pp. 95-107; "Common Sense, Transformation and Elites" in Multidisciplinary Newsletter for Activity Theory, 15/16 (1994), pp. 45-52; and "Il pensiero di Gramsci e la psicologia oggi" in Psicologia e Società. Rivista di Psicologia Sociale, XX, 1-2 (1993), pp. 95-129.*

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## Miscellaneous

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Carmel Borg, a Ph.D. candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education—University of Toronto, has just completed his doctoral thesis which is entitled *Hegemony as Educational Practice: Catholicism, Traditionalism and the Fate of the Progressive Historical Bloc in Malta - A Gramscian Analysis*. He has kindly provided us with the following abstract:

Borrowing from Antonio Gramsci's historical analysis of the "Religious Question" in Italy, this thesis sets out to illustrate how the Catholic Church in Malta, as a key player in the traditional historical bloc, defended its dominant status in colonial and post-colonial Malta. Chapter 1 deals with some of the major personalities and literary sources that may have influenced Gramsci in his critique of religion. The second chapter expounds on the concepts developed by the Sardinian in his analysis of Christianity and the exploits of the Catholic church in Italy. Chapter 3 shifts the analysis to Catholic Malta. It attempts to illustrate how the traditional historical bloc reproduced its hegemony by perpetuating a proto-capitalist economic structure, by ensuring a heavy presence in local politics, and by resisting the politics of 'cultural invasion', launched by the colonial power towards the end of the 19th century. This chapter also illustrates how the colonial power, in the opening decades of the present century, was ready to compromise with the traditional bloc in order to eliminate the rising radical voice. The fourth chapter shows how the traditional forces regrouped to silence the reform-oriented, Malta Labour Party (MLP), after the Second World War. This chapter focuses on the anxiety experienced by the Catholic church as the MLP struggled for integration with Britain (1955-58), as independence became inevitable (1958-64), and as the MLP pursued its modernizing project (1971-1987). Chapter 5 deals with the issue of education and hegemony in Malta, in the context of the conservative restoration of 1987. By illustrating how the Catholic hegemonic discourse is produced and reproduced through the state school system, this chapter suggests that institutions of civil society such as schools, rather than being neutral social arenas, constitute sites of contestation where different discourses struggle for hegemony. The concluding chapter discusses the concept of education as counter-hegemonic discourse, following Gramsci's belief that

political conquest is preceded by the 'diffusion of a new culture' among the masses.

\*

Giovanni Boninelli who last year obtained his degree in philosophy from the University of Urbino wrote a thesis on Gramsci's treatment of folklore. The thesis is entitled *Alcuni temi folclorici nell'opera di Antonio Gramsci* and it comprises the following chapters: "Sardegna e mondo popolare"; "Religione popolare"; "Proverbi e modi di dire"; "Narrazioni e storie"; "Canti popolari e della protesta sociale"; "Giochi e giocattoli, divertimenti e sport"; and "Teatro popolare, Teatro dialettale." The thesis also has an appendix that consists in an anthology of Gramsci's writings that pertain to the main issues discussed in the various chapters.

\*

Hiromi Fujioka has published an article, in Japanese, on "Gramsci and Anarchism (1919-1920) in *The Hitotsubashi Review*, III, 2 (February 1994).

Mr. Fujioka has also informed us that the Tokyo Gramsci Society (which was founded in March 1993) is preparing a translation into Japanese of *The Antonio Gramsci Reader. Selected Writings: 1916-1935*, edited by David Forgacs. The translation is expected to be published in 1995.

\*

André Tosel, who edited the volume *Modernité de Gramsci?* (Paris, 1992), presented a paper, "Religion et/ou hérésie de la liberté. Le débat entre Croce et Gramsci sur 'l'histoire de l'Europe'" at a conference on "L'Europe Aujourd'hui" held in Poitiers in December 1993. He also gave a paper on "Vico et Gramsci sur la langue comme technique civile" at the Colloque Vico Aujourd'hui held at the Université de Montpellier III in March 1994.

\*

E. San Juan Jr., has published three new books in last couple of years. In *Racial Formations / Critical Formations : Articulations of Power in Ethnic and Racial Studies in the United States* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1993), and in *From the Masses to the Masses: Third World Literature and Revolution* (Minneapolis: MEP Publications, 1994), he employs Gramsci's concepts of "hegemony" and the "national-popular." The concept of hegemony is as also at the center of E. San Juan Jr.'s other recent book, *Hegemony and Transgression: Essays in Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994)—in the first section of this volume, E. San Juan Jr. discusses the relations between theory and practice in the work of a number of important critics and theoreticians, including Bakhtin, Lukacs, Brecht, Benjamin and Gramsci.

\*

Héctor Melendez, whose recently published book *Gramsci en la De Diego* is described in another section of this Newsletter, has sent us the following information about aspects of his work that are of interest to members of the IGS: “I have discussed and applied Gramsci’s ideas to present multi-cultural settings, to socio-political analyses, and to national-popular movements in the Caribbean and Latin America. My dissertation in politics (University of York, England, 1987) is entitled *Antonio Gramsci’s Concept of Hegemony*. My Ph.D. thesis in Cultural Studies (University of Birmingham, 1993) is titled *The Popular as Political Subject: The Impact of Latin America and the Caribbean on Socialism and the National Idea* and has as a central thread of the discussion the Gramscian notion of the national-popular.”

\*

The Italian Studies Advisory Council of the City University of New York, in cooperation with the CUNY Graduate School, the College of Staten Island, Brooklyn College, and the Italian American Writers Association organized a public presentation of Benedetto Fontana’s book *Hegemony and Power: On the Relation Between Gramsci and Machiavelli* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993). The public session was held at the CUNY Graduate Center on 26 April 1994 and was moderated by Robert Viscusi (Chair, Italian Studies Advisory Council, CUNY). The discussants included Kate Crehan (Professor of Anthropology at the New School for Social Research), Robert Dombroski (Distinguished Professor of Italian, CUNY) and Peter Caravetta (Professor of Italian, Queens College, CUNY and editor of *Differentia*).

\*

Oswaldo Fernández Díaz who has written extensively on Gramsci has recently published a new book: *Mariátegui, o la experiencia del otro* (Lima: Empresa Amauta, 1944).



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***Leggere Gramsci, leggere la realtà***  
**idee ipotesi per la costituzione della sezione italiana della**  
**International Gramsci Society**

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È possibile una ripresa di studi gramsciani in Italia?

La pubblicazione degli *Scritti di economia politica*, a cura di F. Consiglio e F. Frosini (introd. di G. Lunghini), Bollati, 1994 e dell'annunciata nuova edizione dei testi sulla *Questione meridionale* a cura di F. Biscione; di *Gramsci e l'Italia*, a cura di R. Giacomini, D. Losurdo e M. Martelli, La città del sole 1994, di *Gramsci in Europa e in America* con introduz. di E. Hobsbawm a cura di A. Santucci, Laterza 1995; la pubblicazione a giorni di *Gramsci e il progresso intellettuale di massa*, a cura di G. Baratta e A. Catone, Unicopli 1995 e dell'imminente *Aggiornamento alla Bibliografia gramsciana*, a cura di J. Cammett e M. L. Righi, la preparazione da parte di Aldo Natoli dell'epistolario A. Gramsci - T. Schucht e da parte di F. Consiglio e F. Frosini di una ampia antologia su *Filosofia-politica-economia* dai *Quaderni*, sono dati di rilievo.

Nei prossimi mesi sono annunciate alcune manifestazioni culturali a Siena, Milano, Roma, Pesaro, Fermignano nel corso delle quali il tema del *progresso intellettuale di massa*, che dà titolo alla miscellanea delle edizioni Unicopli (e riprende alcuni motivi dell'omonimo convegno urbinato del 1987) viene illustrato e attualizzato attraverso un intervento intermediale: la proiezione di *New York e il mistero di Napoli. Viaggio nel mondo di Gramsci raccontato da Dario Fo*, prodotto da "Le Rose e i Quaderni", 1993. Dario Fo, che ha presentato recentemente il video presso la Biblioteca comunale di Arezzo, parteciperà a una o due delle manifestazioni in programma. Vengono invitati studiosi, politici, critici noti, ma da tempo assenti, come del resto tutta la cultura italiana, dall'impegno per Gramsci.

A Bari, a Roma, a Fano, probabilmente in altre città, si sono costituiti e operano pubblicamente o anche 'silenziosamente' gruppi di studio composti sia da giovani che da più anziani, con il fine preciso di leggere Gramsci e in particolare i *Quaderni del carcere*, sulla base dell'edizione critica gerratianiana.

Ancora Gramsci? Sì, perché i suoi *Quaderni* sono tuttora un oggetto sconosciuto; perché nell'epoca dell'egemonia delle immagini televisivi, insieme alle *Lettere*, agli *Scritti giovanili*, alla cronaca della sua vita personale e politica, essi manifestano una feschazza insolita; perché, se la sinistra è stata di nuovo rovinosamente sconfitta, ciò è dipeso anche dal fatto che essa di nuovo pare non aver "ancora trovato dei mezzi di espressione adeguati e propri", come scriveva

Antonio a Giulia nel 1929 a proposito della "nostra formazione mentale moderna"; perché giunti alla fine di questo secolo, ci troviamo oggi in più virulente presenza di alcuni grossi nodi e problemi aperti e lasciati irrisolti dal suo inizio; e quindi perché Gramsci . . .

*Leggere Gramsci* oggi non è facile. Non esistono in commercio edizioni valide dei testi ad uso ad es. scolastico e universitario. La vecchia edizione togliattiana è ormai inutilizzabile. L'edizione critica dei Quaderni—nonostante la straordinaria forza che emana dal flusso e riflusso delle Note e Appunti—non è facilmente accessibile a un più largo pubblico. Eppure questa necessaria opera di "traduzione" deve trovare la luce, possibilmente in tempi brevi. Lavorare in questa direzione può diventare un lavoro affascinante; anche perché la lingua di Gramsci "se si prescinde dalla grammatica"—come egli diceva a proposito della lingua in generale—appare "un sistema di immagini": di immagini-idee, capaci di stimolare insieme (quel che oggi appare sempre più arduo, sempre più desueto) la forza dell'astrazione e l'immaginazione critica.

Per imparare a *leggere la realtà* anche attraverso Gramsci, occorre in primo luogo lavorare per rendere godibile la sua opera al nuovo pubblico di oggi, che non lo conosce; ma occorre anche inventare modi "adeguati e propri" di studiare i suoi testi, così come il nesso tra la sua opera scritta e quella vissuta, tra il suo passato e il nostro presente.

Da dove cominciare? Ad esempio da questo pensiero: "La grammatica storica, non può non essere 'comparativa': espressione che, analizzata a fondo, indica la intima coscienza che il fatto linguistico, come ogni altro fatto storico, non può avere confini nazionali strettamente definiti, ma che la storia è sempre 'storia mondiale' e che le storie particolari vivono solo nel quadro della storia mondiale" (quaderno 29, §2, 1935).

(a cura di Giorgio Baratta, 21. 3. 1995)

## **New book on politics and culture in Puerto Rico**

*The following book notice/advertisement was sent to the IGS Newsletter by the publisher: Ediciones La Sierra, Apartado 23007, Estación UPR. Rio Piedras; Puerto Rico 00931.*

The Puerto Rican publishing group Ediciones La Sierra announces the book, *Gramsci en la De Diego; tres ensayos sobre cultura nacional, posmodernidad e ideología*, by Héctor Meléndez (i.e., Gramsci on De Diego Street—a name borne by various streets in the metropolitan zone of San Juan). The book, which is written in Spanish, comprises three essays on national culture, postmodernity and ideology, and will be useful for courses on politics, culture, sociology, history and Puerto Rican Studies. It discusses present problems and debates in combination with theoretical reflections. The price is \$8.95.

A contribution to the social, political and cultural debates of present-day Puerto Rico, the book may spark healthy controversy on themes such as Puerto Rican nationhood, ecology, Afro-Caribbean identity, unity of the Caribbean countries and prospects of social change.

The book takes its name from the Italian marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), who enriched socialist theory with questions like popular culture, how the State and nations are formed, the organization of identities and culture, the relations between classes and ideology, cosmopolitan cultures, the relation between the public and the private, and the role of the intellectuals. *Gramsci en la De Diego* applies Gramsci's ideas to the present context of Puerto Rico, a modernized, urbanized and subordinate Caribbean country, which maintains a special relation with both the US and Latin America.

One of the essays of the book, titled "Por qué Puerto Rico es latinoamericano" (Why Puerto Rico is Latin American) puts forward the argument that more than a geographic region, Latin America is a social region that has been historically subordinated. At the same time, however, it is a modern region, and this combination is what defines it. Latin America speaks many languages and tongues and it is also present in North America, the essay maintains. Puerto Rico is a Latin American country for its subordinate condition and no juridical decree on its status in itself will change that, Meléndez argues. The Latin American-subordinate character of Puerto Rico is manifested in the latter's specific popular cultures, seen for example in the effects on the present of slave and peasant cultures of the past, and in local forms of speech.

Another essay, on a possible "national-popular bloc" of alliances, analyzes different fragments with which modern Puerto Rican culture and identity have been built-up. Meléndez stresses the hegemony of American and Hispanicist discourses upon specifically Caribbean features of the people. While discussing the notion of popular culture as a wide

zone where numerous identities coexist, often escaping from the dominant norms, the essay uses and criticises concepts such as class, ethnicity, gender, nation and development. Cultural plurality among the people could be a new potency to assist an alternative political and economic strategy. The present model of industrialization and urbanization by means of foreign capital being worn out, a new political leadership--from the popular classes--is needed, putting forward for instance the ecological question and the possibilities of a Caribbean confederation.

The third essay approaches the end-of-the-century sensitivity manifested in certain intellectual strata, often called postmodern. Meléndez critically discusses the concept of postmodernity pointing at European culture and its present crisis. "Postmodernity", he argues, is a pretext that allows one to appreciate the technological, social and cultural changes of late 20th century. Intellectuals and culture reorganize themselves according to new relations of power and to US hegemony upon global culture. But a new project of the left, the essay says, should transcend the politically conservative effects of the "postmodern party". This is the first essay about postmodernism published in a book in Puerto Rico.

Meléndez teaches politics and sociology at the University of Puerto Rico and the Interamerican University. He was born in Río Piedras in 1953, and has been a long-time journalist in Puerto Rico and later on a university teacher in the Island and in New York. He has studied in Puerto Rico and Europe and recently finished a Doctorate in Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, England. Other books by Meléndez include *El fracaso del proyecto PSP de la pequeña burguesía* (Edil, San Juan, 1984); *Impacto súbito y otros relatos* (La Sierra, 1985); and *Regreso de la esperanza y otras historias* (La Sierra, 1988).

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