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Editorial

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Editorial

Abstract

This is the Abstract of the Editorial of IGJ 18

Keywords

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Editorial

Derek Boothman

This number of the IGJ consists of just two, longer-than-usual, meticulously researched and interrelated articles, dealing with under-explored aspects of Gramsci's prison experience. The two main people involved with Gramsci in these articles are also the subject of the *Gramsci Dictionary* entries and the cover page. They are Piero Sraffa and Gramsci's sister-in-law Tat'jana (Tanja) Schucht, the latter considered from different angles in the article and her dictionary entry. To preserve homogeneity, we hold over reviews and one other article to the next number of the journal.

The first of the two articles, in Italian, is devoted to the role played by Tanja in the half year after Gramsci's trial and sentencing. The author, Joseph Francese, uses relevant extracts from, and comments on, letters dating to this six-month period, referring where necessary to letters written both before and afterwards. The material analysed consists not only of Gramsci's prison letters, but also of Tanja's rarely consulted letters: to Antonio's family in Sardinia, to his brother Carlo, to Piero Sraffa, and also to her own family in Moscow. By juxtaposing her letters with Antonio's prison letters, Francese brings out many hitherto neglected facets of the relation between the two of them, showing that there were often reasons behind their at times mutual incomprehensions, reasons by no means always due, as Gramsci often thought, to faults or mistaken decisions of Tanja's. Special attention is paid to how the two address each other, in particular at the start of each letter, and to changes in modes of address within the letters, through which we see how the two related to each other in degrees of closeness and, at times, emotional distance. Heeding this, author takes special care to use the forms of the names as they actually appear in the various exchanges of letters, a rule not always observed in editions of the *Lettere dal carcere* before Francesco Giasi's 2020 definitive edition.

The second of our two articles, this time in English by Nerio Naldi, deals with the various passages and destinations of the notebooks and also the numbers of the notebooks themselves, the subject of misunderstanding and also of some polemic directed

against the post-war PCI. The transfers of the notebooks in Italy – from the prison in Turi to the two prison-approved clinics, first Formia and then Rome – hence to be smuggled out after Gramsci's death to the Soviet Embassy and from there to Moscow, had sometimes to take place surreptitiously. The diplomatic mail had its part to play, too, for transferring them to Moscow and then, after the war, back to Italy. The article again figures Tanja, while a role, even more essential than in the first article, is played by Piero Sraffa. As with the first contribution, a certain amount is reconstructed by the authors on the basis of logical links in the chronology of events, including in Naldi's article, in the numbering and numbers themselves of the notebooks; in both contributions inference is used only where strictly necessary. Some of the eyewitness evidence regarding shifts and shipments of the notebooks was, of necessity, provided by the participants several years after the events; the inevitable shortcomings in memory are subject to scrutiny. The well-known conversation between Nilde Iotti and Raffaele Mattioli, the anti-fascist President of the Commercial Bank, which apparently mentioned storage of the notebooks in the bank's vaults, is also subject to the author's critical analysis.

Finally, to return to the form of names: problems of transcription and textual discrepancies are apparent rather than real. In Naldi's article, and with English-language articles in general, including the dictionary entries – and different from the names as actually written at the time in the letters – we are using current recommendations of the International Organization for Standards (ISO) for name transcription from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet. Exceptions will be made for historically accepted forms for names of people and organizations, and the family name Schucht itself (i.e. not the ISO Šuxt), Hence 'Tatiana' and 'Tania' (in the Italian texts) become 'Tat'jana' and 'Tanja' and, and the Italianized 'Giulia' becomes 'Julija', while their elder sister has her correct name 'Evgenija' rather than – the again Italianized equivalent – 'Eugenia', while her 'pet' family name 'Genia' is transcribed 'Ženija', its sound in the original. The ISO forms are thus closer to the diminutive and familiar names of the bearers as used especially in Tanja's letters to her family in Russia (cf. Francese's article) and are useful for identifying the sisters.