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## Obituary for John Cammett: Organic Intellectual

Alastair Davidson

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## Obituary for John Cammett: Organic Intellectual

### Abstract

John Cammett, died on July 30, 2008. Internationally known as a pioneering scholar of Antonio Gramsci, he studied the impact of Gramsci on the Italian communist movement, which became the most significant aspect of his life's work.

## Obituary for John Cammett: Organic intellectual

By Alastair Davidson

When I first met John Cammett, he had been living with serious health problems for years and miraculously survived a dramatic crisis. Yet he remained a big, bluff, smiling man of extraordinarily kindness and generosity. Little identified him as the “father” of Gramsci studies in North America and beyond. With his recent death, a generation of *gramscisti* is also disappearing.

John began his working life as an auto worker and a unionist. He also became a communist at a time when that meant persecution by the US state and social ostracism. Had he remained a union worker, he would have won our esteem like many others who worked for a socialist world in quasi-anonymity and great self-sacrifice; already, he would have deserved the description of organic intellectual, an organiser of the working class. But he merits it doubly because he struggled into an academy when the witch hunt for leftists allowed little space for critical views in the Cold War US. He was lucky to be supported and encouraged by Shephard Clough, one of the US’ foremost liberal economic historians of Italy, impressed by the brilliant young leftist.

In the 1950s and ’60s, US ignorance of modern Italy was almost as shocking as that of the British, and fear of a communist revolution prompted US Ambassador to Italy, Claire Booth Luce, to fund conservative and neo-fascist parties to keep communists out of government. John arrived in Italy as the Italian Communist Party began an agonising reassessment of its “Leninism” and Antonio Gramsci’s work became the chapbook of a new generation of communists.

It was this knowledge that John publicised in North America, although still obliged to publish under a pseudonym. Out of it came his *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism* (1967), the book that really brought Gramsci to English-speaking leftists despite earlier, valuable, but mostly forgotten work by Louis Marks and Carl Marzani. John’s book was quickly followed by work on Gramsci by others. Nevertheless, he was first to propose the Italian theorist as a fruitful guide to action.

As the title of his book revealed, John saw Gramsci as a political leader and a communist, belonging to a leftist patrimony whose insights were born through struggle and suffering. It would be many years before the “everybody’s Gramsci”, already decried in 1969 by the Italian extreme left, would include not only rightwingers and cultural studies theorists, but also become a PhD industry.

We should never forget the Gramsci that John emphasised: a man whose interest lay in organising the working class, in the factory councils, in the education of the educators, indeed, as a Gramsci who could, on this level, be considered as close to Mao. Had John not proposed the “militant” Gramsci to us, the latter would not have become the inspiration he was to the English-speaking left of the 1970s, to the student revolution. It is presently not vogueish to make that reading of Gramsci, although the new wave of works critical of cultural studies and postmodern readings tends to indicate the strongly “class” oriented themes in Gramsci’s work, even in the *Notebooks*. Given his origins and his politics, John never forgot that a fruitful

theory comes, as Gramsci said in a famous letter about the councils, by constantly remaining in contact with the masses. On this count, too, John should be remembered as an organic intellectual, perhaps not a sort of “lay pope”, but high up there in his writing about the themes of creating “good sense” out of common sense.

The later part of his career, after 1989, was devoted to the meticulous and exhaustive Gramsci bibliography which now lists on-line 17,000 books and articles on or by Gramsci in 40 languages. John was quick to realise the organising capacity of the new cyber technology, how it allows intellectual work to reach great numbers of people. His bibliographic interests were foreshadowed in his magnificent personal library, which we can only hope will be preserved. On this count, he again deserves to be numbered among the organic intellectuals of the global age.

None of these signal contributions can be understood without remembering his abiding love of Italy and his long association with its revolutionary left—he was stalwart of Italian studies in the USA, opening up and making John Jay College, CUNY, famous for its liberal Italian studies and critical approach to scholarship, like the Rutgers University that once sheltered much of the US left. As dean of John Jay College, John was memorable and when he went to the seminars of the Italian Studies Center at Columbia, his alma mater, they waited for this sage of few words to speak.

John Cammett set leftwing scholars an example of courage, generosity and probity that we should remember in this age without ideals. I like to think it was because he was and remained a man of the left.

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## Gramsci, Class and Post-Marxism

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## Gramsci, Class and Post-Marxism

### Abstract

Often Gramsci is presented in the social sciences, particularly by post-Marxists, as a precursor of and justification for abandoning the concept of class. This is incorrect. This article outlines Gramsci's ideas of class, class composition, formation and alliance which Gramsci based on a detailed, accurate reconnaissance of the Italy of his time.

## GRAMSCI, CLASS AND POST-MARXISM

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While Gramsci was without doubt a revolutionary Marxist at least since 1920 and at the time of his imprisonment at the end of 1926, Ernesto Laclau and others have claimed that because of fascism's victory, Gramsci fundamentally rethought his ideas in writing the *Prison Notebooks* (Poynting, 1995: 181). Laclau and other post-Marxists almost exclusively rely on the *Notebooks* for their understanding of Gramsci even though most of the concepts central to the *Notebooks* are in his pre-prison writings (Bellamy, 1994: x). Germino and Fennema (1998: 183) can find “no justification for the all too common practice of largely ignoring the pre-prison notebooks”. The prison writings have an “organic continuity with the political universe within which Gramsci had operated prior to his arrest” (Hoare and Nowell Smith, 1971/1999, SPN: 91), and Alastair Davidson (1977: 162, 246) is certain that Gramsci himself “makes clear that his overall view had not changed since 1916, except in details” and that “on the eve of his imprisonment Gramsci maintained much the same view of Marxism as he always had”. There had, he added, “certainly been no stupendous rupture in Gramsci's intellectual development since 1919–20”. In Derek Boothman's (2005: 4; 1995/1999 FSPN: 36–37) view, too, there is “nothing in the *Notebooks* to indicate that he changed his opinion on these pre-prison stances [on religion], the last of which was written just six months before his arrest”. And according to Germino and Fennema (1998: 192), “It is clear from the Vienna letters that Gramsci had already worked out in 1924 what in his *Prison Notebooks* he was to call his theory of hegemony and the conquest of civil society through the ‘war of position’”.

The strict limit imposed by the prison authorities on the number of books, including notebooks, that Gramsci could have in his cell at one time, meant that his considerations on a particular subject were often written in whatever notebook was to hand (Boothman, 1995/1999 FSPN: 30, 31). The post-Marxists, Stuart Hall (1991/1999a: 8) in particular, found that this “fragmentary nature of his writings was

a positive advantage”. Problems (or advantages) posed by this “scattering” of work were compounded by the fact that Gramsci was anxious to avoid the attention of the prison censor who would effectively terminate his work. Thus Gramsci refers to the Communist Party as the “Modern Prince”, “modern Jacobins”, “the elite”, and to its press as “a group which wants to spread an integral conception of the world”, a “unitary cultural organism” and a “homogeneous cultural centre”. Historical materialism usually appears as “mat. stor.”, Marxist economics as “critical economy”. He wrote Marx as “M.” or C. M. (Carlo Marx) and Marx and Engels as the “founders of the philosophy of praxis” (Boothman, 1995/1999, FSPN: 23; Hoare and Nowell Smith, 1971/1999, SPN: 16, 313, 314; Forgacs and Nowell Smith, 1985/1999, SCW: 647–648).

Not surprisingly, this had led to some misapprehensions. Boothman (1995/1999, FSPN: 25; 2006: 1) has noted the misunderstanding that by “historical bloc” Gramsci meant a bloc of social alliances, and that “hegemony” is “often employed in senses that are often considered Gramscian but not always consonant with him”. The same is true of class, but even more so, in the sense that some claim that in the *Notebooks*, Gramsci had ignored or superseded class altogether. After his transfer to the prison clinic in 1933, Gramsci began to recopy, reorder and rework his notebooks, removing any of the remaining dangerous words like class. Classes became “social groups” and class struggle, “the struggle of groups” (Boothman, 1995/1999 FSPN: 28; Hoare and Nowell Smith, 1971/1999, SPN: 16, 817 fn. 100).

There is, notes Davidson (1977: 243) “naturally a dialectical relation between how [Gramsci] felt and what he wrote”. Certainly, Gramsci’s experience of class was diverse and direct, and its hidden and not so hidden injuries were profound and personal. The relationship between autobiography and sociological analysis for him was “intimate and complex” (Hoare and Nowell Smith, 1971/1999, SPN: 163–164). The petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the proletariat were not distant and abstract categories. His grandfather was a colonel in the *Carabinieri*. His father, Francesco, was a registrar, disgraced and imprisoned. His father’s dishonour forced his mother Giuseppina, the daughter of a local inspector of tax, out of the petty bourgeoisie and



into the impoverished working class. She had to sell the family assets, to take in a boarder and to work at home as a seamstress. She became deeply religious. As a boy, Gramsci shared the social values and morality of the peasantry among whom he grew up and at whose hands he suffered dreadfully. As Bellamy (1994 : xi) notes, he “appreciated at first hand the narrow-mindedness that sometimes characterizes folk cultures”. He engaged in full-time wage labour as boy to support his family at the expense of his schooling and his health. As a young man, he obtained socialist literature from his militant brother Gennaro, a white-collar worker employed as a cashier in an ice factory, and he learned about Marxist theory from his teachers at the University of Turin where he studied on a scholarship for poor Sardinians. Coming face-to-face with and living among the militant workers of Turin, changed his life forever but did not erase his past, the effects of which were imprinted on his body (Davidson, 1977: 13–14, 15–16, 26, 27, 39, 42; Hoare and Nowell Smith 1971/1999, SPN: 24, 25, 27; Hoare 1977/1999, SPW 1910–1920: 13).

### **Gramsci and the Post-Marxists**

Benedetto Croce, who declared Marxism to be dead in Italy after he had left it in 1900, was described by Eric Hobsbawm (1987: 286) as “the first post-Marxist” (Hoare and Nowell Smith 1971/1999, SPN: 29). One hundred years later, post-Marxism had established itself theoretically, more recently drawing heavily upon post-modernism (Simm, 2000: 1, 3). Ironically, given Gramsci’s careful critique of Croce in his tenth *Prison Notebook*, many of those who currently espouse post-Marxism think themselves indebted to Gramsci’s work, particularly to his considerations on hegemony. Chantal Mouffe in *Gramsci and Marxist Theory* (1979: 201), remarks on the “convergence” of Foucault and Derrida with Gramsci. She claims that Gramsci was the only theorist of the Third International who pointed to a break with economism, “reductionism” and “epiphenomenalism” (Mouffe, 1979: 169–70).

For Laclau and Mouffe (1981: 20, 21) then, Gramsci created “the possibility of conceiving political subjects as being different from, and much broader than classes,

and as being constituted through a multitude of democratic contradictions”. “New political subjects” appear who “cannot be located at the level of the relations of production” including “women, students, young people, racial, sexual and regional minorities, as well as the various anti-institutional and ecological struggles”. Roger Simon in *Gramsci’s Political Thought* (1991/1999: 80) agrees. For him, too, struggles emerge from the different ways people are grouped together “by sex, race, generation, local community, region, nation and so on”.

Simon was the editor at Lawrence and Wishart responsible from the beginning for the selection and publication of Gramsci’s political writings in English (Hoare 1977/1991, SPW 1910–1920: 21). David Forgacs (1989: 82–84) shows how Laclau and Mouffe’s work coloured Simon’s (1991/1999) interpretation of Gramsci which influenced “developments of Gramscianism within and around” the Communist Party in Britain. (Soon after, similar tendencies emerged in the Communist Party in Australia). He traces how Laclau and Mouffe contributed theoretically to Stuart Hall’s work, as does Peter Osborne (Poynting, 1995: 40 fn.14). Their effect on Hall was his abandonment of “the erroneous idea of necessary or given class interests” and the identification, apparently by Gramsci in the *Notebooks*, of new and proliferating points of social antagonism and sites of power (Hall, 1991/1999b: 138, 139). Gramsci is, for Hall (1991/1999b: 131, 144), “riveted to the notion of difference” with the possibility for social change provided by “popular energies of very different movements”, by “a variety of popular forces”. Thus Gramsci’s “pluri-centered conception of power” and his understanding of hegemony “force us to reconceptualize the nature of class and social forces” (Hall 1991/1999a: 9).

Earlier, Laclau had begun his project in *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (1977) by diminishing the causal power of class and less than a decade later, it had disappeared almost altogether from his analyses (Poynting, 1995: 54). In rejecting the salience of class, the social relations of production, Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 4; 1987) declared themselves “without apologies” to have gone beyond historical materialism to post-Marxism. For them, and for other post-Marxists, class is “dead” (Zavarzadeh, 1995: 42). A “narrow classist mentality” constitutes “a barrier to

significant social change” and Gramsci’s conception of hegemony, which “transcends class alliance”, is invoked as proof that politics of class are inadequate in the task of social transformation (Sears and Mooers, 1995: 231; Simm, 2000: 17). Subsequently, Ruccio (2006: 6) has remarked how, in much “progressive” thought, references to class have virtually disappeared. Often Gramsci is presented in the social sciences as a precursor of and justification for this apparent fatality (Morera, 1990: 29–30).

In this article, I show how this is simply incorrect, by outlining Gramsci’s theory of class, class composition, class formation and class alliance based on his own “detailed, accurate reconnaissance of the social classes and forces present in the society of his time” (Boothman, 1995/1999 FSPN: 72).

### **Capitalism and the Propertied Classes**

Gramsci worked within and developed Marx’s analysis of the structure and dynamics of capitalism while remaining critical of the economics of Adam Smith, David Ricardo and the marginalists, and of the crude materialism of Bukharin and Plekanov. His Marxism, always situational and historical, did not assume an abstract universal “economic man” (Rupert, 2005) because for Gramsci “production is the source of all social life” and human labour was the foundational concept of his work (Gramsci, 15/3/1924, SPW 1921–1926: 296; Boothman, 1995/1999, FSPN: 55). While writing in prison, he reflected that “one must take as one’s starting point the labour of all working people to arrive at definitions both of their role in economic production and of the abstract, scientific concept of value and surplus value” for “the unitary centre is value” (Gramsci, FSPN: 52; Bieler and Morton, 2003). The capitalist “appropriates the product of human labour” and “unpaid labour goes to increase capital” for working people are forced to let themselves be expropriated of their unpaid labour (Gramsci, 27/12/1919, 26/3/1920, 8/5/1920, IWC: 21, 30, 31). In “the search for the substance of history, the process of identifying that substance within the system and relations of production and exchange”, he discovered that society is divided into two main classes. And while “the play of the class struggle” is

complex, classes, nonetheless, have “permanent interests” (Gramsci, 3/7/1920, IWC: 26; 4/5/1918, Bellamy 1994: 56; 24/3/1921, 31/8/1921, 30/10/1922, *Lyons Theses* 1/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 72, 116, 132, 516).

It soon became clear to Gramsci that one of these two main classes was, in fact, two classes, for there were in Italy not one, but two “propertied classes”—the capitalists and the landowners (Gramsci, 24/3/1921, 21/4/1921, 15/1/1922, SPW 1921–1926: 72, 77, 133). These classes “own the means of production and exchange”, “possess the instruments of production” and have “a certain awareness—even if confused and fragmentary” of their “power and mission”. Their capacity to “organize, coldly, objectively”, meant that by the World War I, “60 per cent of labour-produced wealth was in the hands of this tiny minority and the State” (Gramsci, *Our Marx*, 4/5/1918, Bellamy 1994: 56; 27/12/1919, IWC: 21; 6–13/12/1919, SPW 1910–1920: 200).

Gramsci learned too, that sometimes there is conflict between the propertied classes. The industrial capitalists and the landowners disagreed sharply over tariffs (Gramsci, 24/3/1921, 2–3/3/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 70, 547) but they are also connected in a myriad of ways, not least by the “fact that the landowners today own the banks” and by the interests, values and ideas they share (Gramsci, 24/3/1921, SPW 1921–1926: 116).

Relations between these two classes were further strengthened by the emergence of a third propertied class. During the war, labour shortages, the increasing capital intensity of agricultural production and new divisions of land holdings had all facilitated the development of rural capitalists. This new class differed from the old landowning class in that it derived its profit less in the form of ground rent and more in the form of surplus value. Investing in large tracts of land, rural capitalists relied on specialised equipment, scientific technique, fertilisers and wage labour to boost output per hectare, opening the way for the further penetration of finance capital into the countryside (Gramsci, 7/1923; *Lyons Theses* 1/1926; *Some Aspects of the Southern Question*, 10/1926; SPW 1921–1926: 233, 477, 608; Cammett 1967: 179; Togliatti 1935/1976: 125–6).

While the two propertied classes became three, Gramsci became interested in the existence of strata within classes. As well as the land lords, the “*latifundist* barons” and aristocrats of the traditional wealthy land-owning families, there existed, too, within the rural propertied class “the petty and medium landowner who is not a peasant, who does not work the land...but who wants to extract from the little land he has—leased out either for rent or on a simple share-cropping basis—the wherewithal to live fittingly” (Gramsci, 4 & 9/9/1920 SPW 1910–1920: 464, 472; *Some Aspects of the Southern Question*, 10/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 614–15).

Within the urban bourgeoisie, Gramsci was keenly aware not only of conflicts *between* industrial and finance capital, particularly over tariffs (Gramsci 5/6/1920, 13/1/1921, SPW 1910–1920: 359, 516; 15/1/1922 SPW 1921–1926: 133; Q3§160, FSPN: 365), but also of the differences *within* the industrial capitalist class. In January 1926, noting that the Italian bourgeoisie was “organically weaker than in other countries”, Gramsci considered it “necessary to examine attentively the different stratifications of the bourgeois class” (Gramsci, 21–26/1/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 453). In prison, in his seventh notebook, he began working out how to analyse these strata. From the quantitative standpoint, he suggests starting from the number of workers employed in each firm, establishing average figures for each stratum: “from 5 to 50 small industry, from 50 to 100 medium-sized industry, 100 upwards big industry” (Gramsci, Q7§96, FSPN: 468). Qualitatively and more scientifically and precisely, he says, the difference between the strata can be understood by discovering the type of energy and the type of machinery used by businesses (Gramsci, Q7§96, FSPN: 469).

Over nearly two decades, Gramsci’s analysis of the propertied classes had become deeper and subtler. There were strata within the landowning class and within the industrial capitalist class that required identification and analysis. He early understood the shared interests as well as the tensions between these two classes and by 1923 he had recognized the emergence of a new class of rural capitalists whose

role he identified in 1926 in *The Lyons Theses* and *On the Southern Question*, as pivotal to the consolidation of fascism.

### **Masses, Multitudes and Toilers**

Standing against the three propertied classes were the propertyless. In Italy and elsewhere, “great”, “broad” and “popular masses”, “diverse, chaotic multitudes”, the “common people”, were constituted by their subjugation to the laws of capitalism, by their exclusion from the exercise of power and by their propertylessness. Yet they are capable of “rising up” and are “driven to rebel”, the revolutionary process unfolding “subterraneously” in their consciousness. Revolution is produced by “mass action”; by organizing themselves around the industrial and rural proletariat, the popular masses are “capable of carrying out a complete social and political transformation, and giving birth to a proletarian State”, for within their “resurgent movement” exist “the germs of a new order of things” (Gramsci, 5/6/1920, IWC: 6; 29/6/1921, 20/9/1921, 1/11/1924, *Lyons Theses* 1/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 93, 119, 376, 472; Q8§89, FSPN: 398).

Communism is “the spontaneous, historically determined movement of the broad working masses, who want to free themselves from capitalist oppression and exploitation, and to found a society organised in such a way that it is able to guarantee the autonomous and unlimited development of those without property” (Gramsci, 29/6/1921, SPW 1921–1926: 93). But while those without property include the multitudes, “those not tightly bound to productive work” who live in “the limbo of the lumpen-classes”, “social debris and rubbish”, and criminals (Gramsci, 6–13/12/1919, SPW 1910–1920: 200; Q23§14, SCW: 532; *The Study of Philosophy*, SPN: 591, 593), perhaps the bulk of the propertyless were comprised of tens of millions of the “toiling population oppressed and exploited by capitalism”, most of whom were rural (Gramsci, 27/12/1919, IWC: 21; 1 & 15/4/1924, 3/7/1925, 10/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 325, 408, 580). In 1921 in *Parties and Masses*, Gramsci identified in the working population, “three basic classes”, the proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry. About six months later, cognisant of significant

changes in social relations in the countryside (see above and below), he included agricultural workers (Gramsci, 25/9/1921, 6/4/1922, SPW 1921–1926: 123, 189).

Of these toilers, the working class, particularly the industrial proletariat, was the “most politically educated” (Gramsci, 26/3/1920, IWC: 29) and its task was to win the trust of the multitudes to construct a state and organise a government participated in by “all the oppressed and exploited classes”. Critically from the point of view of power and its organisation, within the multitudes there existed by 1926 an urban working class of four million, a rural working class of three-and-a-half million and four million peasants whose class interests were permanent, and an unnumbered petty bourgeoisie of “unhealthy quantity” whose interests vacillated but whose disposition was crucial (Gramsci, 25/9/1921, 30/10/1922, *Lyons Theses* 1/1926, 1/10/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 123, 132, 472, 468–9, 506, 564; *The Modern Prince*, SPN: 366).

Opposing the three propertied classes, then, are the propertyless masses. These are made up, not exclusively but in their majority, by millions of toilers. This working population, predominantly rural, is comprised of four classes: the urban proletariat, the rural working class, the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. But as Gramsci’s concern for the rural areas, particularly for the South, became more articulate, so did his analysis of the peasantry deepen.

### **Peasants and Rural Workers**

In Gramsci’s Italy, “the rural masses [who] make up the majority of the working population” were spread unevenly across the country (Gramsci, 10/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 580–581). The “toiling classes” in the countryside, “those who work the land”, comprise two main types of people, peasants and rural workers whom “we too often confuse” for, in fact, “they are two different classes”. The essential difference is that peasants own property (land and/or means of labour) that they are willing to struggle to defend, while workers, particularly the *braccianti*, do not, but are rather characterised by their landlessness and the sale of their labour power to

the rural bourgeoisie (Gramsci, 6–13/12/1919, SPW 1910–1920: 206; 6/4/1922, *Some Aspects of the Southern Question*, 10/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 185, 608). The “extremely varied conditions of the terrain, and the resulting differences in cultivation and in systems of tenancy” caused a “high degree of differentiation” (Gramsci, *Lyons Theses* 1/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 468–9). Thus the peasantry generally comprises rich peasants who shade into petty landlordism, and middle and poor peasants who live in various relations of exploitation by the big landowners. The main mechanisms of surplus extraction of the former by the latter are ground rent and share-cropping. The middle peasantry generally produce for the market. In this they are unlike the poor peasants (of “particular importance”) made up of small holders who mainly consume what they produce, share-croppers (*mezzadri*), tenant farmers and sub-tenant farmers, husbandmen and herdsmen. These poor peasants endure poverty and prolonged labour with many suffering a “chronic state of malnutrition” (Gramsci, 26/3/1920, IWC: 29; 6/4/1922, 20/11/1922, *Lyons Theses* 1/1926, *Some Aspects of the Southern Question*, 10/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 189, 190, 194, 481, 495–6, 614–15, 616; *State and Civil Society, The Study of Philosophy*, SPN: 453–459, 569; Q3§77, Q6§179, FSPN: 123, 271; Togliatti, 1935/1976 : 125, 132).

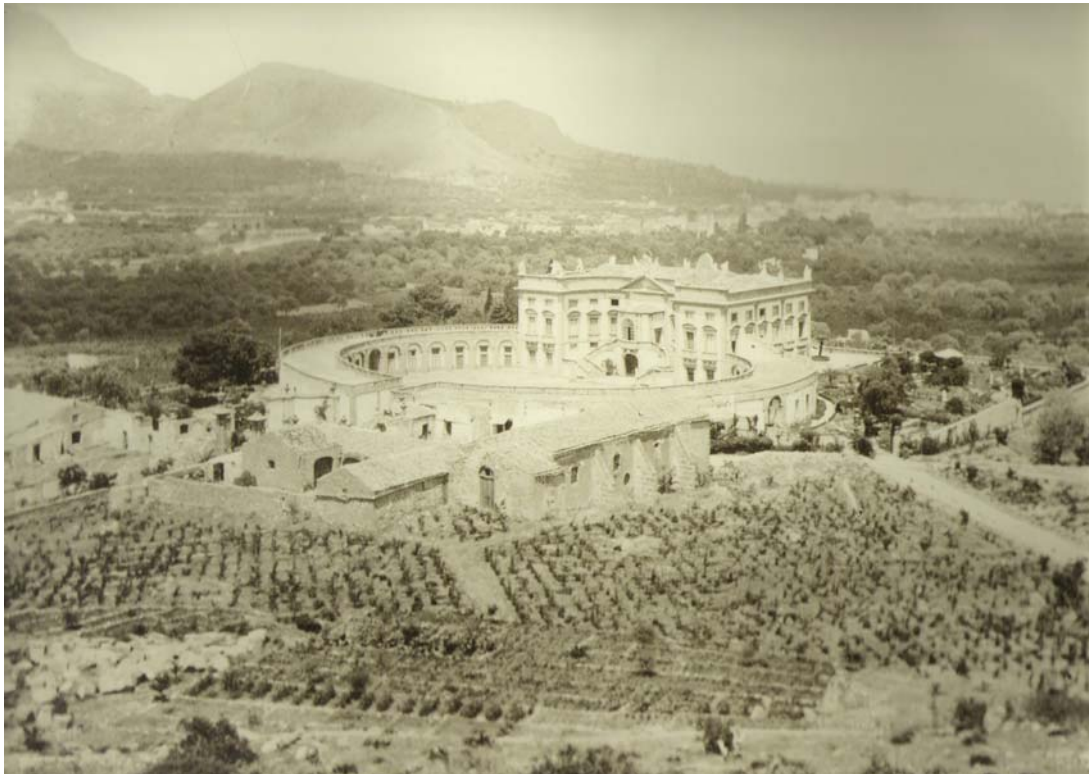
It is this relationship to property, the ownership of objects and/or means of labour, which means that the revolutionary movement of the peasants can only be “resolved in the sphere of property rights” (rather than in the abolition of property rights), and thus:

...the principle remains firm that the working class must be the one to lead the revolutionary movement, but that the peasants too must take part in this movement, since only with the help of the workers will they be able to free themselves from the exploitation of the big landowners; while on the other hand, without the consent or at least neutrality of the peasants in the struggle against capitalism, the workers will not be able to accomplish the communist revolution (Gramsci, 6/4/1922, SPW 1921–1926: 190).

In the task of winning the peasantry, the industrial proletariat had an ally, the rural working class, who almost matched them in size and in some places, even



outnumbered the peasantry (Gramsci, 6/4/1922, SPW 1921–1926: 186). Between 1900 and 1910 there was a phase of intense agrarian concentration and, along with the newly forming rural bourgeoisie, the rural proletariat grew rapidly, by as much as 50 per cent, as share croppers and tenant farmers were proletarianised. The post-war depression did its part, too, wiping out large numbers of small rural firms and proletarianising elements of the rural petty bourgeoisie (Gramsci, 18/10/1923, *Lyons Theses* 1/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 238, 471, 475; Hoare and Nowell Smith 1971/1999, SPN: 48). In Gramsci’s view, the burgeoning rural proletariat was the “vehicle for the proletariat’s influence over the peasantry” and he was heartened by the creation in 1924 of “farm councils” modelled on the *Ordine Nuovo*-influenced Turin factory councils (Gramsci, 21–26/1/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 460, 461; Boothman, 1995/1999 FSPN: 40).



**Villa Valguarnera, Bagheria, 1934**

The landowners sought to prevent the consolidation of the rural working population into a single class and worked to bring about a stratum of privileged sharecroppers who would be their allies (Gramsci, *On Italian History*, SPN: 241). But above all, particularly in the South, the peasant was:

...bound to the big landowner through the mediation of the intellectual, and so did peasant movements always end up by finding themselves a place in the ordinary articulations of the State apparatus—communes, provinces, Chamber of Deputies. This process takes place through the composition and decomposition of local parties, whose personnel is made up of intellectuals, but which are controlled by the big landowners and their agents. (Gramsci, *Some Aspects of the Southern Question*, 10/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 616).

The peasantry, characterised by “an extremely rich tradition of organization”, have “always succeeded in making their specific mass weight felt very keenly in national political life” because the “organizational apparatus of the Church” has “specialized in propaganda and in the organization of the peasants in a way which has no equal in other countries”. This mediation and organization, widespread in the mainland South and in Sicily, created “a monstrous agrarian bloc” whose “single aim is to preserve the status quo” (Gramsci, *Some Aspects of the Southern Question*, 10/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 617; 10/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 580–581).

In identifying the points of tension among the rural population, Gramsci relied upon the form of exploitation they suffered (rent in money or kind, or wage labour) and the ownership or non-ownership of productive resources (land and means of labour). However, as he understood, reality is too complex to suggest that there is always a neat fit between the antagonistic classes—landlords and peasants; capitalists and rural workers. Certainly, large landowners employed wage labour and rural capitalists dealt with the peasantry, for the peasantry and rural workers themselves were not always discrete classes. Poor peasants engaged in wage labour on a casual or seasonal basis and every rural worker’s family sought to produce its own subsistence. And while the differentiation between the peasant strata was real enough, a fall in prices, bad harvests, a rise in the cost of living, or rent rises could quickly reduce a middle peasant to a poor one. What increasingly fascinated Gramsci was how this shifting and tumultuous array of social relations, this “monstrous agrarian bloc”, remained intact for so long. He found a good part of the answer to this question in his analysis of the petty bourgeoisie and the intellectuals.

## **Intermediate Classes, the Petty Bourgeoisie and the Intellectuals**

Gramsci notes that in “peripheral states” like Italy where the proletariat is numerically small and unevenly dispersed and the state is undeveloped, there exists “a broad stratum of intermediate classes”, which, as we have seen, includes in the countryside wealthy and middle peasants, and in the cities a middle bourgeoisie and small and medium industrialists. But also included are the numerous petty bourgeoisie many of whom share a mentality with the other intermediate classes and who are “fairly extensive” in town and country, making up “the only class” that is “territorially” national (Gramsci, 6–13/12/1919, SPW 1910–1920: 199, 200; *The Intellectuals*, SPN: 144; 25/10/1921, 1/9/1924, 3/7/1925, *Lyons Theses* 1/1926, 2–3/8/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 124, 353, 413, 468–9, 554).

In the cities and larger towns, the petty bourgeoisie included artisans (the self-employed trades and those employing not more than five workers), industrial small owners, shopkeepers, merchants, professionals (e.g. lawyers, accountants, doctors, priests), middle managers, lower ranking army officers whose numbers grew rapidly during the war, middle-ranking public servants, political professionals, and officials of large trade unions and co-operative societies who emerged from the working class (Gramsci, 27/12/1919, IWC: 21; 5/11/1920, SPW 1910–1920: 472; 15/1/1922, *Lyons Theses* 1/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 127, 468–9; Q7§96, FSPN: 468–469; Fiori, 1973: 256; Davidson, 1977: 249–250).

In the countryside, where the land of the small landowners and middle peasantry is broken up through the generations until it vanishes altogether, those not keen on manual labour became petty bourgeois: minor municipal officials, notaries, clerks, usurers, messengers and teachers (Gramsci, *State and Civil Society*, SPN: 551–553). Particularly important in the countryside are the clergy who “must always be taken into account in analysing the composition of the ruling and possessing classes”. In the South, the priests are rentiers and usurers, as well as the organic intellectuals of the feudal aristocrats and their descendents, the rural propertied classes (Gramsci, 6–

13/12/1919, SPW 1910–1920: 238; *Some Aspects of the Southern Question*, 10/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 615; Q3§77, FSPN, 1995/1999: 123; Simon, 1991/1999: 106).

In both the cities and the countryside, the petty bourgeoisie form the majority of the traditional and organic intellectuals (Gramsci, Q24§2, SCW: 686). Simon (1991/1999: 109) lists the organic intellectuals as: managers, engineers, technicians, politicians, prominent writers and academics, broadcasters, journalists, civil servants, officers of the armed forces, judges and magistrates. It is these people, along with the priests above all, who produce the ideas, values and beliefs that consolidate the rural social formation:

The petty bourgeoisie and the intellectuals, through the position which they occupy in society and through their way of life, are naturally led to deny the class struggle and are thus condemned to understand nothing of the development of either world history or the national history which forms a part of the world system (Gramsci, 19/10/1920, SPW 1910–1920: 492).

They “make news, not history”. Apart from their significance in the manufacture of consensus and commonsense, it was the petty bourgeoisie, especially in the country areas, which provided the forces for fascism, and while elements of the petty bourgeoisie were anti-fascist, the Southern petty bourgeoisie went over *en masse* to fascism providing “the troops” for the fascists, and the urban petty bourgeoisie “allied itself with the landowners and broke the peasant organisations on their behalf” (Gramsci, 24/3/1921, 25/9/1921, 24/11/1925, 24/ 2/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 71, 127, 425, 539; *The Modern Prince*, SPN: 366). In fact:

...the characteristic feature of fascism consists in the fact that it has succeeded in creating a mass organization of the petty bourgeoisie. It is the first time in history that this has happened. The originality of fascism consists in having found the right form of organization for a social class which has always been incapable of having any cohesion or unitary ideology (Gramsci, 1/9/1924, SPW 1921–1926: 359)

Gramsci considered the petty bourgeoisie to be important because of their relative size, their national dispersion, their strong sense of their own detachment from the class relations and as the social basis of both organic and traditional intellectuals who were particularly crucial in cementing the rural population. Failure to take them seriously as a winnable class, and indeed, at times, open hostility to them, as Gramsci ruefully admitted, cost the Party and the anti-capitalist forces dear. In the end, their weight proved decisive in the balance of the social forces.

### **The Working Class**

A worker is a person “totally without property”, “condemned to have no property” and “never likely to anyway”. Under capitalism, people are valued only as owners of commodities and workers are forced to become traders in their only property—their labour power and professional skills (Gramsci, 11/10/1919, 8/5/1920, IWC: 11, 35–36, 31/1/1921, SPW 1921–1926: 46, 28/2/1920 & 6/3/1920, SPW 1910–1920: 244). Workers are those employed in factories such as manual workers, clerical workers and technicians, as well as servants, coachmen, tram-drivers, railwaymen, waiters, road-sweepers, private employees, clerks, intellectual workers, farmhands, hodmen, cab-drivers and others, who together make up “the whole working class” (Gramsci, 8/11/1919, SPW 1910–1920: 110; 12/4/1921, *Some Aspects of the Southern Question*, 10/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 75, 611).

Workers acquire the means to live only by entering into a relationship with capitalists in which they are obliged to produce more than they will consume and give up the difference. A necessary condition of workers’ existence is a relationship to another who appropriates part of their labour or product. Class is not the only form of oppression, or necessarily the most frequent, violent or constant form of social conflict. But it is the only constantly recurring conflictual social relationship that emerges from the social organisation of production itself and which creates the very conditions of human life.

The intrinsic power of the working class is that it is “indispensable” and “irreplaceable” and the “most important factor of production” (Gramsci, 5/6/1920, IWC: 8; 13/1/1921, SPW 1921–1926: 47). “Capable and conscious elements” of the working class are “aware of their own value and importance—which cannot be eliminated—in the world of production” (Gramsci, 18/10/1923, SPW 1921–1926: 242). That the working class is the only source of surplus value means that it is the only class “essentially and permanently revolutionary”, “the only class capable of reorganising production and therefore all the social relations which depend on the relations of production” (Gramsci, 26/4/1921, 25/10/1921, SPW 1921–1926: 83, 124).

Within the working class, the industrial proletariat is hugely important, for “in the factory, the working class becomes a determinate ‘instrument of production’ in a determinate organic system”. Capitalists, who desperately want to destroy all forms of organisation of the working class, cannot (Gramsci, 5/6/1920, IWC: 7; 18/10/1923, SPW 1921–1926: 241), for the factory, which they created:

...naturally organises the workers, groups them, puts them into contact with one another...The worker is thus naturally strong inside the factory; he is concentrated and organised inside the factory. He is, however, isolated, dispersed, weak outside the factory (Gramsci, 18/10/1923, SPW 1921–1926: 240)

But the working class is far from united in its ability to take advantage of such “natural” fault lines. It contains “most advanced”, “less advanced”, “backward and benighted” layers. There are, too, manual, semi-skilled and skilled strata. All sorts of “hierarchical relations and degrees of indispensability” in occupation and skill lead to friction and competition between different categories of workers and even to the formation of a labour aristocracy “with its appendages of trade-union bureaucracy and the social-democratic groups” and the possibility of co-option (Gramsci, 24/11/1925, 21–26/1/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 77, 431; Q7§96, FSPN: 469; 14/2/1920, SPW 1910–1920: 238; Hoare and Nowell Smith 1971/1999, SPN: 89). In the face of this variation within the most powerful and best organised popular class,

Gramsci thought long and hard about where classes come from and how they become conscious of themselves as active and determining forces.

### **Class Formation**

There was, Gramsci thought, a “continuous process of disintegration and reintegration, decomposition and recomposition” of strata and classes in the Italian population. New classes and strata develop out of existing classes. Powerful elements of the capitalist class were constituted out of the old feudal aristocracy. The rural bourgeoisie grew mainly out of the upper stratum of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie, and it in turn created a type of petty bourgeoisie different to that produced by the urban bourgeoisie. The urban bourgeoisie itself grows by assimilating new elements from other classes (Gramsci, *The Intellectuals, State and Civil Society*, SPN: 144, 529, 546).

Class, then, is above all relational. “Man is aristocratic in so far as man is a serf”. There is never one class. The rural bourgeoisie emerging during the war by its expropriation of land from the middle peasantry effected the latter’s proletarianisation (Gramsci, *The Study of Philosophy*, SPN: 675; Togliatti, 1935/1976: 119–120). The actions of one class, the rural bourgeoisie, led to the partial decomposition of another, the middle peasantry, and the development of a third, the rural proletariat. Class is a relation and classes shape each other.

The state—and through it political parties—is active in class formation, too, often through the imposition of duties, tariffs and taxes. Since 1887, protectionist policies that favoured the growing industry of the north, meant that peasants were no longer able to export their produce, while at the same time forced to buy Italian manufactures rather than the cheaper goods made in more industrialised countries (Hoare and Nowell Smith, 1971/1999, SPN: 26). The immiserated peasantry and the bankrupted rural petty bourgeoisie were the raw material for the new industrial proletariat. The Italian state’s policy of entente in WWI led to the spectacular and rapid development of the iron, steel, coal, shipping, cotton, wool and vehicle

industries which sucked up “elements...originating from the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie” who formed “the great bulk of the industrial proletariat”. FIAT’s capital increased tenfold during the war and its workforce grew from 4,000 to 20,000 (Gramsci, *Lyons Theses* 1/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 464; Hoare and Nowell Smith, 1971/1999, SPN: 33; Hoare, 1977/1991, SPW 1910–1920: 11). For Gramsci, there is no doubt that the industrial proletariat is at the heart of the revolutionary enterprise. But like himself, it was mostly new to the city and to industrial discipline. How could it shape its own future and that of the multitudes of which it is part?

### **Class Consciousness, Class Alliances and the Communist Party**

Gramsci wrote at length, in *The Modern Prince* (SPN, especially 405–406), on the different levels of collective political consciousness that classes possess. The most elementary, the economic-corporate level, is a “guild” or “craft” mentality whereby a “tradesman feels obliged to stand by another tradesman, a manufacturer by another manufacturer...in other words, the members of the professional group are conscious of its unity and homogeneity, and of the need to organise it”, but not outside it. The next level is consciousness of class beyond trade, craft, profession, occupation; a sense of the “solidarity of interests among all the members of a social class” and the struggle to advance the class’s interests “within the existing fundamental structures”. The third level is “that in which one becomes aware that one’s own corporate interests, in their present and future development, transcend the corporate limits of the purely economic class, and can and must become the interests of other subordinate groups too”.

The relative smallness of the industrial proletariat and its location predominantly in the north-west, made it necessary, Gramsci thought, for the urban proletariat to build alliances with the other toiling classes, the rural proletariat, the medium and small peasantry and the rural and urban petty-bourgeoisie. “The only way these other classes will ever emancipate themselves is to enter into a close alliance with the



working class, and to hold by this alliance through even the harshest sufferings and the cruellest trials”.

Only this alliance could break apart the alliance of the propertied classes, the northern industrialists, the rural capitalists and the southern landowners, cemented by the petty bourgeoisie that constituted the backbone of fascist reaction. Building this necessitated the working class winning the support of classes and strata presently swayed by hegemonic ideologies and beliefs, particularly Catholicism. Accomplishing the alliance of all of the toiling population presupposed the destruction of the Vatican’s influence, particularly over the peasants, strong in central and northern Italy and even worse in the South where, Gramsci told a Central Committee meeting of the CP in November 1925, 80 per cent of peasants are controlled by the priests. In order to challenge this authority successfully, the working class must overcome its own narrow “economic-corporate” consciousness and at times act even against its own immediate class interests in favour of those of the popular masses who bear the seeds of the new order (Gramsci, *Lyons Theses* 1/1926, 21–26/1/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 431–432, 484; 13/1/1921, SPW 1910–1920: 517; Forgas and Nowell Smith, SCW: 332; Hoare and Nowell Smith, SPN: 107–108).

The bourgeoisie was winning the class struggle because its allies, whom it controls and leads, help it. While building its own alliance of classes, the proletariat attempts to win away some of the bourgeoisie’s allies, notably the intermediate classes—the petty bourgeoisie, middle peasants, small manufacturers—and at least neutralise them, or better still, mobilize them together with the majority of the working population against capitalism and the State (Gramsci, *Some Aspects of the Southern Question*, 10/1926, 13/10/1926, SPW 1921–1926: 572–3, 598).

But how and by whom is class consciousness developed, good sense created and class alliances made? Without doubt, the direct experience of revolutionary struggle is the best teacher. “The meetings and discussions in preparation for the Factory Councils were worth more for the education of the working class than ten years of

reading pamphlets and articles written by the owners of the genie in the lamp” (Gramsci, 14/2/1920, SPW 1910–1920: 238).

But the rub is always what to do when the times are not revolutionary, and particularly when the working class is in retreat. Gramsci told Mussolini and the Chamber of Deputies in May 1925, “a class cannot remain itself, cannot develop itself to the point of seizing power, unless it possesses a party and an organization which embodies the best, most conscious part of itself” (Gramsci cited in Fiori 1973: 195). Earlier he had written that parties are:

...the reflection and nomenclature of social classes. They arise, develop, decline and renew themselves as the various strata of the social classes locked in struggle undergo shifts in their real historical significance...(Gramsci, 9/9/1920, SPW 1910–1920: 463).

But the relationship between party and class is dialectical. “In fact,” he write “if it is true that parties are only the nomenclature for classes, it is also true that parties are not simply a mechanical and passive expression of those classes, but react energetically upon them in order to develop, solidify and universalize them” (Gramsci cited in Camfield 2004/2005: 426).

Parties are the indispensable agents of change. They emerge and develop to “influence the situation at moments which are historically vital for their class”, but the outcome is never predestined for they are not always capable of “adapting themselves to new tasks and to new epochs”. When this occurs, classes detach from them, and they are “no longer recognised by their class (or fraction of a class) as its expression”. Thus was the Popular Party, in a relatively short period of time, the organization of the peasantry; of artisans and small farmers; and of the urban and rural semi-proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie (Gramsci Q24§2, SCW: 686; 28/5/1921, 18–22/6/1923, SPW 1921–1926: 113; *State and Civil Society*, SPN: 224, 450, 452; Cammett, 1967: 192, 193).

The Communist Party is not the party of the multitude, not even of the toiling masses. It is the party of the industrial working class (Gramsci, 3/7/1920, IWC: 25;

Fiori 1973: 198). There are many anti-capitalist elements that are non-proletarian. The Party, however, wrote Gramsci, must be a “part” of the working class. This meant, he said in his report on the Lyons Congress, that the Communist Party was a class party, “not only abstractly” but “physiologically”—the great majority of its members should be proletarians (Gramsci cited in Cammett 1967: 172, 173) for Party members are “the most highly developed form of its consciousness, on condition that they remain with the mass of the class and share its errors, illusions and disappointments” (Gramsci, 18/10/1923, SPW 1921–1926: 239).

But the Party’s reach is much wider than its social base. In fact, the Communist Party provides:

... the links capable of giving the masses a form and physiognomy. The strength and capacity for struggle of the workers for the most part derive from the existence of these links, even if they are not in themselves apparent. What is involved is the possibility of meeting; of discussing; of giving these meetings and discussions some regularity; of choosing leaders through them; of laying the basis for an elementary organic formation, a league, a cooperative or a party section. What is involved is the possibility of giving these organic formations a continuous functionality; of making them into the basic framework for an organized movement (Gramsci, 1/11/1924, SPW 1921–1926: 371–2)

Part of the Party’s task of making links among, and giving form and capacity to the mass of the working people, is to help form alliances of the classes that make them up. This, he reflected in prison, had become an “extremely delicate and difficult operation”. But, he added, if it does not form class alliances, then “the proletariat cannot hope to undertake serious revolutionary action. If one takes account of the particular historical conditions within which the political evolution of the Italian peasantry and petty bourgeoisie must be understood, it is easy to see that any political approach to these strata by the Party must be carefully thought out” (Fiori, 1973: 256).

## **Conclusion**

Class happens when, in order to live, large numbers of people are systematically forced by their lack of access to productive resources to give a substantial part of their life's activity, more than what they need to keep themselves alive, to others, purely because those others control this access. As a necessary condition of survival, people must give up part of their lives simply in order to live. The nature of the compulsion to "give away" years of one's life, and how this arrangement is organised and sustained, is what class is all about. And as Marx noted, the only way to understand this, why and how "surplus labour is pumped out of direct producers", is to have a good, close look at "the empirically given circumstances" that systematically require some people to give to others large parts of their time and effort or the results of them. I have argued in this article that this is exactly what Gramsci did, and that class was not a concept that he used and then abandoned. Rather, it was basic to his whole analysis, unfolding through his life as a revolutionary up until the moment when his intellect could fight no longer.

Gramsci was not a post-structuralist, not a vulgar materialist, and certainly not a Crocean post-Marxist. He thought and wrote within the revolutionary Marxist tradition and employed its methodology and concepts to elucidate reality and to inform political strategy. In doing so, he thought new thoughts not found in Marx, Lenin, Luxemburg and Labriola. If class is dead, it is not Gramsci who killed it.

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## Contribuciones De Gramsci Al Cambio Social En Chile: De La Declinación De La Ideología Pos Moderna A La Re-Emergencia De La Izquierda

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## Contribuciones De Gramsci Al Cambio Social En Chile: De La Declinación De La Ideología Pos Moderna A La Re-Emergencia De La Izquierda

### Abstract

Este trabajo argumenta que las teorías social demócratas y pos modernas han retardado las posibilidades de cambio social y han sido sustento ideológico del neo liberalismo en Chile. Sin embargo, el aumento de la lucha social muestra una creciente declinación de su influencia social y de su legitimidad política. Constatada esta declinación, el análisis de clases y el concepto de hegemonía de Gramsci que debatieron con el socialismo pos moderno, re-orienta el debate de la izquierda en torno a la lucha social y la construcción de un proyecto de superación del neo liberalismo.

# **Contribuciones De Gramsci Al Cambio Social En Chile: De La Declinación De La Ideología Pos Moderna A La Re-Emergencia De La Izquierda**

**Rene Leal Hurtado, Santiago, Chile**

## **Introducción**

Este artículo es una composición entre dos trabajos y dos tiempos. La primera parte es un trabajo anterior mio (Leal, 2008) al que le he hecho muy pocas modificaciones conservando su espíritu. La segunda surge como necesidad de renovar la primera debido a los evidentes cambios en la influencia teórica en la política y viceversa, junto a la intensa actividad en la lucha social que ocurre hoy, particularmente entre el 2006 y el 2008.

Consecuentemente, debo decir que la teoría y la práctica han experimentado veloces cambios desde la fecha de aquel trabajo y lo que actualmente ocurre en Chile. Sin embargo y bajo esas consideraciones, tampoco es creo yo, pertinente, dejar de lado el debate entre pos modernistas y Marxistas que sin duda han contribuido a la actual situación social que vive Chile. En esto y para comenzar, recurrir a Gramsci es de mucha utilidad.

Lo relevante respecto a Gramsci y su tiempo por un lado, y Chile y su actual contexto por el otro, es que en ambos casos se aprecia un cambio fundamental en el patrón de acumulación y en la articulación hegemónica del capital que tuvieron en sus respectivas épocas un alcance mundial. Lo común en ambos casos es que los cambios en la modalidad hegemónica fueron principalmente resultado de que la contradicción de

clases se expresó en un ascenso en la lucha de clases y por ende, en aguda disputa hegemónica. Lo distinto es que en los tiempos de Gramsci, fue el Keynesianismo el que revitalizó al capitalismo, en cambio ahora ha sido el neo liberalismo el que reprodujo el dominio del capital y consolidó su hegemonía, auxiliado esta vez por teorías pos modernas. Sin embargo, estas últimas parecían estar ya en retirada, lo que se ha manifestado en la multiplicación de la lucha social, el aumento de la influencia del análisis de clases, y la posibilidad cierta de re-construir una izquierda antineoliberal en Chile.

Como actualización de un estudio previo, la crítica a teorías social demócratas-pos modernas que han informado a la coalición de gobierno por casi 20 años fue el meollo del asunto. Las principales teorías que se exploraron en relación a Chile, fueron las teorías de los nuevos movimientos sociales de Alan Touraine; la teoría de Ernesto Laclau y Chantal Mouffe respecto a un concepto de hegemonía distinto al de clases que se remite más bien a un concepto de hegemonía en torno al discurso que evidencia una fuerte base pos moderna. La tercera teoría que ha impactado a la social democracia chilena ha sido la de Anthony Giddens conocida como la “Tercera Vía”, un intento de renovación de la social democracia que se constituiría en dique de contención del neo liberalismo. Estas perspectivas sociales son revisadas a la luz de su impacto en la política chilena, principalmente desde el golpe militar en 1973 y el periodo que va desde el colapso de la URSS hasta hoy día. Por lo tanto no se trata aquí de un análisis extenso y en detalle de cada una de ellas como teorías en sí mismas, estudios que pueden ciertamente ser encontrados en otras partes (Vanderpitte, 1999; Sánchez, 1999; Meiksins Wood, 1999), sino de ver que tienen en común, especialmente respecto al marxismo, y a como han sido volcadas e influido en la política chilena. En consecuencia, se trata de apreciar cual ha sido la naturaleza y magnitud de su impacto en la sociedad chilena. Se argumenta que después de un auge de su impacto en la sociedad y en parte de la izquierda, particularmente en sectores ligados e influidos por el Partido Socialista de Chile (PSCH) después de los 1990s, un evidente debilitamiento de su impacto en el debate y en la sociedad pueden ser verificados. Esta apreciación descansará en el

análisis de clases y en particular, en el legado de Gramsci y el concepto de hegemonía de clases.

Consecuentemente el ensayo mostrara primero la utilidad de identificar importantes similitudes y diferencias entre el contexto del trabajo de Gramsci y el actual contexto. Luego, el cambio en el concepto de hegemonía considerando a Gramsci, por un lado, y a Laclau y Mouffe por el otro, es planteado.

En tercer lugar, se argumenta la necesidad de establecer una necesaria distinción entre capitalismo y modernidad, que revelaría la distorsión creada al homologarlos, lo que habría generado una brecha a través de la cual dicha equivalencia constituiría uno de los puntos de partida del pensamiento pos moderno en los estudios sociales. Seguiría de aquí que el pos modernismo acompañaría a procesos de cambios en los ámbitos económicos, culturales, ideológicos y políticos. Se destacan por cierto las transformaciones en los sistemas productivos como los que se definen bajo el concepto de pos fordismo, donde asoman la flexibilidad y la intensidad laboral que marcan las relaciones laborales resultantes del proceso de desregulación del trabajo. El pos modernismo convive también con modalidades de consumo guiadas principalmente por una pauta hedonista de el (Moulian 1998). Los pos modernos se mueven como peces en las aguas de la globalización de la economía y el mercado, donde el libre flujo del capital se constituye en el principal protagonista de la dinámica de este inconmensurable firmamento global con sus subsidiarios locales que abren sus compuertas a inversionistas privados que toman lo que el estado supuestamente administraba ineficiente y burocráticamente, grandes empresas y servicios. La seguridad social se reduce a su expresión mínima y el estado abandona lo que era una de sus principales razones de ser, su rol social, la negación misma de su origen y de lo que lo constituye como tal.

Esta idea de inmensidad, de veloces intercambios, de lo intenso de la producción y el consumo donde se reduce lo público y se expande lo privado, sería consistente con un

tiempo distinto al que interpretaban las mega teorías de la modernidad, cuyo tinglado era la producción standard y de masas, la sociedad alineada en clases en pugna, a la de un mundo desconectado y de predominancia del estado nación y sus procesos internos. Por cierto que esos cambios han ocurrido, hay nuevas modalidades de producción, de consumo, de cultura, hay fragmentación social dentro de desarrollos globales, un mundo mas interconectado también gracias a los flujos de información y el desarrollo científico técnico. Que duda cabe. Pero ¿constituyen estos cambios la superación de las relaciones capitalistas de producción, de la desaparición de clases sociales y de la contradicción entre los polos capital y trabajo? Es en esto entonces donde colabora el pos modernismo. Desde la homologación entre modernidad y capitalismo se plantea como una categoría superior que ha llegado a ser justificación ideológica de algo que si es novedoso, una modalidad de concentración de capital y acumulación de la riqueza a nivel planetario, el neo liberalismo, en sus dimensiones ideológicas, económicas, culturales y políticas.

Bien, atendido ese aspecto del pos modernismo que surgiría de un cambio dramático pero que en definitiva no sería tal y que en cambio si encubriría una nueva modalidad del predominio del capital, recapitulemos en la línea argumentativa de este ensayo.

Se plantea en cuarto lugar entonces, revisar las teorías social demócratas y pos modernas mencionadas mas arriba, las que son confrontadas con estudios ubicados en los confines del materialismo histórico, como son los de Gramsci, Meiksins Wood, Boron y Larrain, entre otros. Subsecuentemente y contrario a lo que la neo social democracia planteaba, el idilio entre ella y el neo liberalismo es revelado. Seguido a ello, una reflexión acerca de las lecciones que la izquierda marxista debiera aprender del debate y la experiencia en Europa del Este; de cómo este debate y practica política ha contribuido a la supervivencia de organizaciones y políticas clasistas que, en la presente coyuntura, pueden perfilarse como alternativa de poder al neo liberalismo que ha tenido su representación política en dos fracciones políticas de la clase dominante, la que se nutre de las relaciones y cultura feudales por mas de cuatro siglos y que luego se

transforma, sin perder ingredientes de esta herencia de servilismo, en la burguesía chilena que sustenta a la dictadura y que luego reconstituye las relaciones capitalistas en la modalidad neo liberal. La otra vertiente de la clase dominante surge del racionalismo económico de los 1980s y de la renovación de la social democracia, principalmente inspirada por teorías pos modernas que abandonan el análisis de clases, el materialismo histórico como herramienta útil de análisis y transformación social. Ambas fracciones, incluida la que ha gobernado por 18 años, la “Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia”, y la “Alianza por Chile”, son hegemonizadas por la ideología neo liberal y el pensamiento pos moderno ha contribuido a reproducir esta hegemonía. Pero como la dinámica contradictoria del capital y el trabajo aun no abandonan nuestra sociedad, los porfiados hechos manifestados en creciente organización y lucha social, muestran la declinación de la influencia pos modernista en los ámbitos de poder y en la academia. Es por tanto claro que el debate y los esfuerzos de la izquierda deben ser re-orientados.

Por lo tanto, este artículo se re-orienta y concluye que después de un intenso debate con posiciones pos modernas, el esfuerzo principal del análisis de clases debería ser enfocado en la re-articulación de la izquierda neo liberal que debiera apuntar a incrementar la lucha de clases y social por la democratización del país y el reemplazo de la ideología neoliberal expresada en economía, política y cultura. Para avanzar hacia este estadio de superación del neo liberalismo, el ensayo plantea que puntos de ruptura con el neo liberalismo deben ser identificados a través de los cuales pueda cursar la lucha contra hegemónica.

### **De Gramsci a Laclau y Mouffe: De la Hegemonía de Clases a la Hegemonía Discursiva**

Hablar de contribuciones de Gramsci para avanzar hacia un cambio social significativo en Chile dice relación con una contribución hacia la comprensión del curso del proceso de formación y deformación de las relaciones de clases en nuestra sociedad, comprensión que debiera derivar de su aporte al debate marxista actual y al desarrollo



de una contra hegemonía cultural expresada en lucha hacia un cambio social que signifique equidad, justicia social y democratización de la sociedad rompiendo definitivamente con el legado jurídico político dejado por la dictadura, la Constitución de 1980, y la política neo liberal administrada e ideológicamente legitimada por la social democracia pos moderna en el gobierno por ya casi dos décadas.

Recordar el tiempo de elaboración de Gramsci es valioso, esta vez desde un punto de vista de la reflexión acerca del tiempo que le toco vivir y de la contemporaneidad de otras fuentes de pensamiento de su época. En particular me refiero a la atención puesta por Gramsci al pensamiento de Max Weber, quien comenzaba a avizorar la debacle del pensamiento liberal clásico, fundación ideológica del capitalismo temprano y revolucionario para esa época (Portantiero, 1999). Weber (1970) veía la necesidad de reformular conceptos tales como el del estado, el régimen parlamentario, el de burocracia, y de revisar la base teórica fundacional de la vertiente racionalista del liberalismo, esto es, el paso de una racionalidad substancial hacia una de corte mas bien formal, mas tarde interpretada por la Escuela de Frankfurt como “instrumental”. Los medios llegaban a ser el fin, no se arribo a la promesa de progreso en un sentido humano.

Gramsci puso atención entonces a este pensamiento critico surgido desde el seno mismo del liberalismo clásico el cual era síntoma de dos procesos en curso, primero, el paso desde el pensamiento liberal clásico hacia uno de corte mas bien social, en un cuadro en donde al desafío de la revolución socialista se le sumaba el auge del fascismo y la derrota del movimiento revolucionario en Alemania, que no acompañaría a la URSS en su lucha contra el capital en el concierto internacional.

Es en este contexto de producción teórica y debate, de acción política y de transformaciones de las relaciones de poder a nivel internacional, que Gramsci percibe un cambio de proyección en la modalidad de acumulación y de articulación de relaciones de fuerza y de poder que antes y de acuerdo a su especificidad histórica

habían sido concebidas en la idea de “clase contra clase”, entendida tan simple y directamente como su expresión literal lo indicaba, un frente contra otro frente, como en una “guerra de maniobras”. La idea de que esas relaciones estaban siendo articuladas en formas mas complejas con un estado burocratizado de corte racionalista formal, que amplia la separación de la sociedad—llamémosla civil—de la mayoría de las estructuras y relaciones de poder, políticas, militares e ideológicas, importantemente culturales diría Gramsci, lo lleva a delinear la idea de una forma de hacer política de clases pero en este nuevo escenario, el de “guerra de posiciones”, la que no niega la pertinencia de la de maniobras, claves en su pensamiento político que se alimentan y recíprocamente son fecundadas por el concepto de hegemonía.

Gramsci entendió por hegemonía lo que nosotros pudimos presenciar antes de la “rebelión pingüina”, la gran movilización de estudiantes secundarios del año 2006. Hegemonía sería de acuerdo a Gramsci, “dirección política y dirección cultural (además de los fines económicos y políticos, la unidad intelectual y moral)” (Gramsci citado en Portantiero, 1999: 52). Por lo tanto, una de las utilidades primordiales del pensamiento Gramsciano para nuestros tiempos es recuperar el concepto de hegemonía acuñado por el y el de guerra de posiciones del cual se entiende no que el poder se “toma”, que ocurre en un “asalto al poder” que concebiría el cambio revolucionario desde la mera manifestación en la superficie del conflicto de clases y del momento en que este físicamente ocurre, sino Gramsci aconseja atender a la idea de “asedio del poder” y del subsecuente proceso de conquista del poder en sus dimensiones—relacionadas, entreveradas, estructurales—de agencias de cambio, de necesarias modificaciones institucionales y culturales de los aparatos y dispositivos hegemónicos que impiden el cambio social revolucionario.

Si bien Gramsci sugirió poner atención a las instituciones (sindicatos, partidos, organizaciones sociales y sectoriales), a través de las cuales la hegemonía debe realizarse como embrión de una nueva vida estatal; y atender también a la organización partidaria y a las formas en que dentro de cada específica situación nacional, los grupos

que intentan representar al proletariado deben articular su dirección sobre el resto de las clases subalternas, Gramsci advierte que la guerra de posiciones, la conquista de la hegemonía no es un esquema abstracto que sigue el orden citado mas arriba pues para el la guerra de posiciones, la conquista de la hegemonía no es un esquema abstracto sino que el concepto de hegemonía es aquel donde se anudan las exigencias del carácter nacional.

Para los Marxistas entonces no basta con una formulación de estrategia internacional sino que es necesario pensar para cada sociedad, para cada nación, cuales son sus características como sistema hegemónico. La revolución socialista es internacional por su objetivo final, el punto de partida es nacional, es producto de la *voluntad colectiva nacional y popular*, de una identidad social que es de clase pero que es nacional también, que es de genero, que es cultural. La formación del “Bloque Popular Nacional” debiera ser entendido a partir de estas reflexiones y son de enorme utilidad para comprender el Chile de hoy y perspectivar caminos de construcción contra hegemónica.

A partir de esto, es necesario revisar otras interpretaciones y apreciar cuanto reafirman o se alejan principalmente de este concepto de hegemonía Gramsciano, como la de Ernesto Laclau y Chantal Mouffe (1985), que partiendo de Gramsci, redefinen el concepto de hegemonía y de estrategia socialista, la que mostraremos, ha tenido lamentables consecuencias sociales y políticas. Laclau et Al, si bien valoran el concepto de hegemonía gramsciano, lo deconstruyen a partir de la afirmación de que no es posible entender hegemonía como dependiente de una fundación ontologica, esto es, que los dos principios del orden social, la unicidad del principio unificante y su necesario carácter de clase, no son el resultado contingente de lucha hegemónica, sino el marco estructural necesario dentro del cual cada lucha hegemónica ocurre.

Dice Laclau et Al que si bien para Gramsci los diversos elementos sociales tienen una identidad meramente relacional, lograda a través de prácticas articuladoras, siempre estará ahí un principio unificante en cada formación hegemónica, y este solo puede ser

una clase fundamental (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 69). Gramsci de esta forma sigue siendo un marxista apegado a la noción de clase, de clase hegemónica y sujeto histórico, y debe verse como un aporte a la lucha política la idea de articulación de sujetos e instituciones y de formación de una voluntad popular nacional con fuerte base cultural.

Según Laclau, había que apartarse de esta concepción que seguía teniendo visos de ortodoxia. Esta teoría que plantearía una estrategia socialista basada en la articulación de hegemonías discursivas parciales, sin anclaje de clases, informaría en Europa y en Chile, a la que yo llamo la neo social democracia que es parte constituyente del andamiaje hegemónico presente hoy en Chile.

Vamos entonces al primer paralelo, en retrospectiva con respecto a Gramsci y su tiempo, pero principalmente respecto a nuestra actual situación en Chile, sus similitudes y diferencias en torno a la formación hegemónica y también, como esta reformulación de Laclau de la noción de hegemonía le permite a él reclamar su compromiso socialista y de izquierda, pero ahora sin el concepto de clases como nudo central de su teoría.

Respecto a Gramsci y nosotros, en ambos casos ocurrió un cambio fundamental en el patrón de acumulación y en la articulación hegemónica del capital a nivel mundial, pero su naturaleza es distinta dada la diferencia de las circunstancias históricas. Pero un hecho es digno de mencionar, los cambios en la modalidad hegemónica fueron principalmente resultado de que la contradicción de clases se expresó en un ascenso en la lucha de clases y por ende, en disputa hegemónica. El Keynesianismo revitalizó al capitalismo así como ahora el neo liberalismo reprodujo el dominio del capital y consolidó su hegemonía, especialmente en el caso de Chile.

Observemos primero que ocurrió fundamentalmente durante los últimos decenios en Chile. La lucha de clases expresada en un conflicto violento de clase contra clase en aguda pugna en 1973 llevó a una modificación profunda de la articulación de la hegemonía capitalista y de interrupción de la construcción del movimiento contra

hegemónico, la cual derivó en una transformación de las relaciones de clases, *permitiendo un cambio de la modalidad de acumulación y del control ideológico cultural conocido hoy como neo liberalismo*. Las políticas de subsidio a la demanda, de welfare state que emergen del modelo Keynesiano, formas determinantes de la reproducción de la hegemonía del capital desde los 30 a los 70s en occidente, no fueron las mismas que recompusieron las relaciones de clases en Chile y en el mundo a favor del capital. Esta vez la reproducción de la hegemonía del capital resultó de la imposición de una concepción de democracia liberal basada en el pensamiento de Hayek que la entiende a partir de la preponderancia de tres principios: el individualismo; la estabilidad social o paz interna y el libre movimiento del mercado o catalaxia (Larrain, 2005).

El neo liberalismo nos ha llevado a una concepción de progreso más bien técnico, pragmático, burócrata racionalista, de búsqueda desenfadada de rentabilidad, del crecimiento económico como fin absoluto, del monopolio comunicacional más abrumador de los últimos tiempos, donde se conjugan la propiedad de los medios de comunicación por parte del gran capital y el avance de las tecnologías de la información. La meta de un progreso humano, sostenible e integral ha quedado postergada. Individualismo, consumismo, temor por lo hecho por la dictadura, deslegitimación de las teorías marxistas o distorsión de ellas, han llevado a una pérdida más que relativa de la capacidad de negociar nuestras vidas y muestran una hegemonía abrumadora del capital en la sociedad, por lo menos hasta el año 2006. Por lo tanto, el concepto de hegemonía de clases Gramsci y la necesidad de articular un bloque histórico nacional, cultural y popular en términos de desarrollar una guerra de posiciones contra hegemónica, dada la complejidad de la formación actual, estaría plenamente vigente. ¿Por qué abandonarla ahora por teorías pos modernas que niegan los fundamentos de la filosofía de la praxis a partir de la veneración de la contingencia y el discurso por sobre lo que nos enseña la historia? Ya no importaría el contexto, todo sería pura contingencia.

## **¿Capitalismo igual Modernidad? Emergencia del Pos Modernismo y la Neo Social Democracia**

Las tres teorías sociales que desde los setentas han centralmente informado a la nueva social democracia mundial, y chilena en particular, han llegado a ser principales en el cuerpo doctrinario de una fracción de la clase dominante que ha llegado a ser hegemónica en esa clase, la neo social democracia; este derrotero teórico desde Touraine (1981) y su teoría de los “Nuevos movimientos sociales”; de Ernesto Laclau y Chantal Mouffe (1985) y su teoría pos moderna de la hegemonía del discurso; y la última versión Bersteiniana de Giddens (1998) en su popular “Tercera Vía”, le han quitado el piso a los intentos doctrinarios y programáticos de la derecha tradicional y conservadora. En una palabra, estas teorías, una tras otra, han llegado a ser una ideología coherente y útil al neo liberalismo, han renovado la ideología de la clase dominante y ejerce hegemonía no solo en esa clase, sino en toda la sociedad. Como diría Marx (1977), es la nueva burguesía y su discurso ideológico de turno que retrata al mundo a su imagen y semejanza.

Las negativas consecuencias sociales, humanas del concepto de hegemonía acunado por sectores del socialismo pos moderno, como lo llamo Altamirano, herederos de Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Katherine Gibson y Julie Graham, son hoy mas evidentes que nunca y sin duda que están en la base de la crisis programática, política y ética de la alianza de gobierno. Por lo tanto, no pueden estar ausentes de la discusión que sigue.

El camino desde el concepto Gramsciano de hegemonía a una noción renovada de ella caratulada como hegemonía del discurso, que articularía sitios de lucha de acuerdo a los discursos que surjan para la construcción de una estrategia socialista hacia una democracia radical, como diría Laclau, ha llevado, contrario a lo que sus creadores pensaron, a constituir esta teoría en un dispositivo ideológico sostenedor del neo liberalismo. Primero, el pos modernismo, al criticar a una modernidad instrumental anacrónica, se valida a si misma como alternativa teórica. El problema es que por criticar a una “perversa modernidad que lo corrompe todo”, no toca un pelo a los

dueños del capital. Como dice Ellen Meiksins, la “fusión del capitalismo con la modernidad tiene el efecto de ocultar la especificidad del capitalismo, si no es que este desde el punto de vista conceptual desaparece por completo” (Meiksins Wood, 1999: 261).

Enfatizar las discontinuidades de las eras (modernas, “pos” de toda laya, etc.), que incluso marxistas como Jameson y Harvey utilizan, lleva mas a confusión que a clarificar lo que hay en el tinglado de la sociedad mundial y local. La sentencia de muerte en contra de una modernidad presentada como fuente de deshumanización, no es entonces una cuestión antojadiza, tiene que ver con el planteamiento de fondo, aquel que dice que se inaugura un nuevo tiempo donde los conceptos, categorías y teorías respecto al “pretérito” tiempo de la modernidad (capitalismo para algunos) termino, se acabo la historia, como pensó también Fukuyama. Con el vuelito entonces de estas premisas, mega teorías como la Marxista dejan de tener validez ya que su sujeto de estudio y transformación ya no es el mismo, lo pos moderno tiene poco que ver con capitalismo, o como este se interpretaba. Esto provoco “una verdadera estampida de especialistas que salieron a recorrer la sociedad civil en busca de nuevos actores sociales” (Boron, 1999), una “plétora de teorías e interpretaciones que difundieron la buena nueva del fin del sujeto histórico, con una placentera mezcla de alivio y satisfacción, celebrando la desaparición de los anejos actores clasistas del capitalismo” (Boron, 1999: 193) . Entre ellos andaban Touraine, Laclau, Mouffe, Lyotard, y los criollos Tironi, Correa, Altamirano y muchos otros herederos de la escuela pos moderna Europea. Incluso, vieron la luz divina que traían los nuevos movimientos sociales expresados en la fuerza motriz del cambio desde las dictadura a la democracia.

Sin embargo, y como bien comenta Boron, la existencia de “nuevos movimientos sociales expresan una realidad distinta, pero no contradictoria, al continuado protagonismo de las clases sociales” (Boron, 1999, 197). De hecho, fueron parte de la misma lucha, pero en un escenario en que

la evidencia demostró que quienes estaban desempeñando los papeles protagónicos de la transición no eran sino los viejos actores clasistas: empresarios, banca extranjera, movimiento obrero. Los movimientos sociales cedieron rápidamente su lugar a los actores colectivos cuyo certificado de defunción había sido extendido prematuramente (Boron, 1999: 197).

En resumen, identificar capitalismo y modernidad, pregonar su muerte e inaugurar un nuevo periodo “pos” que barre con toda teoría y acción en la ya “fallecida” modernidad, ha llevado a un sentido de indeterminación y del reinado de lo efímero que nos impide dar cuenta hasta de lo que somos.

### **El Idilio entre la Ideología Socialista Pos Moderna y la Hegemonía Neo Liberal**

Lo común de estas tres teorías de Laclau, Touraine y Giddens es que ellas, en distinto momentos de las ultimas tres décadas del siglo XX, surgieron como crítica a la ortodoxia Soviética, una crítica justa a la distorsión de los ideales socialistas que alguna vez inspiraron a esa revolución social. En segundo lugar, de la debacle política que estas perspectivas avizoraron, planteamientos de reformulación teórica y deslegitimación de conceptos marxistas le sucedieron. Las tres teorías niegan la centralidad del concepto de hegemonía, de la hegemonía de clases y de ahí, de la necesidad de un sujeto social central e histórico, la clase trabajadora. “Nuevos” reemplazan a los “viejos movimientos sociales”, según Laclau la hegemonía de clases es reemplazada por hegemonías parciales articuladas por y en discursos. Giddens plantea las rectificaciones de arbitrariedades que produce el mercado a través de agentes estatales y privados que promoverían la participación inclusiva, no exclusiva e ideológica. Las teorías “pos”, especialmente la de Laclau y Mouffe y discípulas de ellos como Gibson y Graham (Cox et al., 1999), niegan la unicidad, singularidad y centralidad del capitalismo como sistema y articulan discursos y agentes sociales en coherencia con la naturaleza fragmentada de la sociedad que ellos observan.



Se proclama entonces: abajo la ortodoxia, viva la renovación pos moderna. Como vemos, el contexto Europeo crítico del Marxismo de los sesentas y setentas dio lugar a intentos teóricos como el de Touraine, y que prestigiado como producción intelectual en el contexto europeo, presto luego ciertos argumentos a la teoría hecha carne en la obra *Hegemonía y Estrategia Socialista: Hacia una Política Radical Democrática*, acunada por Ernesto Laclau y Chantal Mouffe (1985), una perspectiva singular entre otros intentos teóricos en muchas áreas del arte y de las ciencias sociales del así llamado “pos modernismo”. Esta teoría se alejaba del concepto marxista de hegemonía definiendo uno nuevo, que sin embargo todavía pretendía oponerse al capitalismo y luchar hacia un socialismo basado en una democracia radical y profunda. Esta perspectiva argumentaba que las hegemonías eran ahora parciales y discursivas, articuladas en torno a sitios específicos de lucha que esos discursos articulaban y situaban.

Seguidores de esta teoría como las autoras Katherine Gibson y Julie Graham (Cox et al., 1999), llegaron a pensar que la hegemonía del capital no existía como totalidad, singularidad y unicidad. Pensaron que la superación de las teorías marxistas y sus alcances respecto al asunto de la hegemonía, presentes en Marx, Lenin y Gramsci, por nombrar algunos sobre salientes en torno al tema dentro de la tradición marxista, se encontraba en barrer con la idea de una contra-hegemonía central dado que no había contexto hegemónico, y mucho menos de que un rol central en esta lucha la asumiera el movimiento de trabajadores. La idea del capitalismo como un sistema sólido y hegemónico debía ser rota en mil pedazos. Esparcido en pedazos el capitalismo, como lo graficaran Gibson y Graham (Cox et al., 1999), la estrategia de esta nueva izquierda era actuar en cada uno de esos pedazos. Así por fin terminaríamos con el capitalismo. La estrategia de lucha contra el capital vista como contra una totalidad, propia de “los viejos movimientos sociales”, había sido errada. Era más fácil de esta otra forma, con un capitalismo fragmentado.

Había entonces que dotar al discurso del patrimonio de la construcción de hegemonía de acuerdo a cada uno de esos “pedazos”, a esos “sitios de lucha” donde se articularía

dicho discurso (así podría surgir el discurso intercultural con especialistas y Mapuches en el tema; así con las mujeres y la píldora del día después; así con los estudiantes y el crédito universitario), cada uno en su nicho construyendo su discurso sin conexión con la realidad exterior, todo con especialistas, consultores y ONGs, virtuosos al momento de construir discursos y cooptar sectores desde lo social. Lo total había que hacerlo parcial; lo fragmentado tenía su propia lógica y solución, no era mas parte del todo. Así movimientos de mujeres, diversidad sexual, de ecologistas, de pobladores, de estudiantes, de obreros, de pueblos originarios eran envueltos en una construcción discursiva propia, independiente y ajena a la de cualquier otro sector social.

Pero los porfiados hechos insisten. Dentro del proceso de formación y deformación de las relaciones de clases durante los últimos treinta años, el re ordenamiento político de clases actual ha dejado en evidencia a los pos modernistas que piensan que las consecuencias sociales de los discursos se pueden explicar por los discursos mismos (Larrain, 2005). El resultado que tenemos hasta hoy es que en la practica, los sujetos, presos dentro de cada discurso, fueron cooptados por instituciones o anulados en su calidad de movimiento social, fragmentados e irrelevantes al momento de hacer política o cuestionar la política.

Podemos por lo tanto decir que después de tres décadas de predominio de esas teorías en la social democracia y en la política en Chile, es claro que la articulación y coordinación entre sectores sociales y movimientos fue muy afectada. Un proceso de despolitización de lo social ha hecho su camino. Esto se debió no solo por el impacto de la crisis del socialismo, que es un factor importante a considerar, sino más bien por que se nos planteo que el poder del capital no era hegemónico, “no era para tanto”. Aparentemente, no había nada en común en los problemas de diversos sectores sociales. No habría fuente común de conflictos identificable. Toda realidad era parcial y se construía en el discurso de hegemonías parciales. Habrán por lo tanto realidades como discursos surjan, hegemonías como discursos fluyan, todo llega a ser puro texto, todo es efímero, es el fin de la historia como manera básica para incluso entender y encontrar

sentido a nuestras vidas. Las mega-teorías habían fallecido, comenzaba el reinado de las hegemonías parciales y discursivas.

Sin embargo y paradójicamente, el tributo a lo efímero y a lo fragmentado ha llegado a convertir a los planteamientos pos modernistas en lo que ellos criticaron y condenaron, una teoría totalizante y dogmática de lo indeterminado, con serias consecuencias en lo social derivadas de su aplicación. Hoy la sociedad chilena es menos participativa, menos politizada y la elite política y económica que la rige esta cada día mas lejos de lo social y mas fuerte en su poder hegemónico. Pero la cuestión es que el discurso dice una cosa, pero la realidad dice otra. Ahí están los porfiados hechos una vez más.

Debemos por lo tanto verificar que solo mirando la realidad social actual, la “hegemonía del discurso” va cayendo en un tremendo desprestigio, en la academia y en la calle, en teoría y practica. Nunca la hegemonía del capital ha sido tan total, abrumadora y singular en Chile como lo sido hasta hoy, y difícilmente podemos encontrar teorías como la pos modernista de Laclau y Mouffe y la de los nuevos movimientos sociales de Touraine, que hayan hecho mas daño al desarrollo de la conciencia social en la gente, que la han dejado a la intemperie, atomizada, sin capacidad de negociar sus propias vidas, como diría Bauman (1997). La desregulación del trabajo y la mercantilización de la educación publica, por tomar como ejemplo dos ejes claves de la integración social en cualquier sociedad moderna, han producido ciertamente como resultado una profunda desintegración y enajenación social de la cual nadie puede enorgullecerse.

La desintegración social a la que contribuye la desregulación laboral y una educación clasista y mercantilizada basada principalmente en el discurso constructivista, es también resultado de la veneración del discurso como constructor de imágenes y hegemonías, lo que ha contribuido a crecientes niveles de atomización, de desintegración social, tal como la ideología neo liberal pretendía. Exclusión y no participación, fragmentación y no solidaridad resultaron de la aplicación de la *tercera*

vía y de las teorías pos modernas como la de Laclau en Chile. Los ideólogos como Altamirano, Lagos, Tironi y Ottone entre otros socialistas de la “armada española y francesa” que importaron a Chile estas perspectivas, han terminado por ser principales sostenedores ideológicos del neo liberalismo al que esperaron resistir. Las teorías pos estructuralistas y pos modernistas han dañado el tejido social y han servido como justificación ideológica a la aplicación de una forma de capitalismo extrema y por tanto profundamente desigual. En definitiva, la neo social democracia provee el libreto ideal para el reinado del mercado neo liberal. Definitivamente, le robaron el guión a la derecha tradicional. Como bien dice Larrain (2005), si no hay historia y todo es pura contingencia, ¿Cómo podemos dar cuenta de lo que somos, incluso individualmente? Lo cierto es que ni todo puede ser reducido solo a la historia, pero mucho menos todo puede ser pura contingencia.

La leve fisura en la hegemonía capitalista hoy se puede explicar desde el desprestigio de estas ideologías que han ayudado a sostener el modelo. Visto dialécticamente, de este proceso de deslegitimación de las estrategias social demócratas, se debería esperar a su vez el surgimiento de una izquierda que a la vez de revelar este fenómeno, debiera perspectivar la politización de lo social y la socialización de lo político y recuperar enseñanzas como las Gramscianas para combatir a los hegemonicos de hoy.

El presente entonces evidencia la necesidad de entender la realidad en su generalidad, totalidad y también en su especificidad. El pos modernismo ha llegado a ser una mega teoría totalitaria de lo indeterminado, funcional y cómplice del orden “caótico del mercado”. El poder hegemónico neo liberal no ha sido parcial ni discursivo, ha sido concreto y totalizante, mas aun, globalizante a nivel planetario.

### **Lecciones para los Marxistas**

Lo cierto es que a pesar de los embates desde todos los sectores y la auto-critica desde dentro también, los marxistas han sacado lecciones de todo esto. Han aprendido que las

clases son relaciones que se forman y deforman en el devenir histórico y que están en permanente contradicción; que la fijación exclusiva y obsesiva en la vertical y artificial figura de la base y super estructura debiera dar lugar, como planteara Rey (citado en Larrain, 1986), a una idea de articulación de modos de producción en la formación social en las que no solo cuenta la base económica y la superestructura ideológica sino también se debe verificar que en el proceso colisionan junto a ellas relaciones de genero, políticas, económicas, ideológicas, de raza y muchas otras, lo que ocasiona que las cosas cambien, muten, perduren algunas y otras adopten otras fisonomías.

Esta idea de articulación, presente también en la sociología política de Gramsci, ayuda a entender por que el marxismo hoy debiera reconocer la pertinencia del sentido de determinación por sobre el de determinismo. Hay más de un resultado de cambio social posible en los procesos de articulación de las relaciones sociales de producción. Pero las relaciones estructurales y sus manifestaciones contingentes no producen cambios por si mismas, sino es con el concurso de los agentes sociales capaces o no, en ciertas circunstancias históricas, de llevar el proceso hacia un cambio trascendente en la formación social. Debemos sepultar entonces el concepto de determinismo y reafirmar el de determinación, entendiendo muy básicamente que no todo es tan efímero y relativo como el pos modernismo plantea y que la historia no es tan lineal y evolutiva, esto es, teleologica como alguna vez algunos marxistas pensaron y creyeron en la tan mentada “inevitabilidad”. Al menos hoy estamos ciertos que tenemos un mínimo sentido de lo que son nuestras vidas, que constituyen historia y no meros discursos, y que a través de esa historia podemos cambiar las condiciones de existencia. Tal posibilidad esta ahí, es en este terreno de posibilidades donde se da el juego por el cambio social.

Es también de prístina ignorancia deslegitimar al marxismo por la formulación política del partido único y de la dictadura del proletariado, postulados que correspondieron a ciertos episodios históricos pero que no se pueden recrear mecánicamente y como condición *sine qua non* en otras condiciones sociales y políticas. Estos derroteros

correspondieron a una interpretación hacia la práctica de políticos revolucionarios ante un contexto específico e históricamente determinado, no es base filosófica de la teoría marxista como un todo.

Por otro lado, sin duda que también hemos aprendido que el carácter patriarcal de las relaciones de género son reproducidas por relaciones de clase y viceversa y que estas también se transmiten a través de las clases y capas sociales y que penetran toda la división del trabajo, dividiendo en términos patriarcales al sistema de educación, a la industria y al movimiento sindical como un todo. Todo esto ha creado la imagen de que el machismo es parte de nuestra cultura, de que “somos así”. De la misma forma como se aplica ese esencialismo cultural a las relaciones de género, otros de derecha han promovido que la desigualdad es propia de nuestra naturaleza humana imperfecta. Si se quiere saber más de esto, no hay más que leer a Bobbio (ver Leal, 2005). Estas dos furibundas sentencias de género y clase necesitan por tanto ser contestadas si realmente se piensa que ser marxista y de izquierda es proponerse un cambio hacia la justicia social.

Dentro de ese cuadro, el incipiente auge que experimenta el marxismo en el mundo, especialmente en América Latina, es un dato importante del actual momento político. Pero debemos precisar que la relevancia y legitimidad de la teoría marxista no ha sido algo que solo le debemos a esta coyuntura. La premisa marxista de que teoría y práctica están en íntima relación dialéctica quedó paradójicamente demostrada desde el colapso mismo del socialismo Soviético. Aprendimos de la teoría y de la historia que una práctica errada deslegitima a la teoría, como sucedió después del colapso de Europa del Este. Pero el fracaso del socialismo Europeo no significó la negación de la tradición teórica marxista. Una teoría que es capaz de reconocer las tremendas aberraciones de una práctica y es capaz de combatir el dogma que fue su causa y efecto, puede todavía crear nuevas propuestas teóricas y por ende, nuevas prácticas. Una práctica social nueva partirá, y ya está haciendo su camino desde una comprensión sensata y actual del neo liberalismo en Chile. Esto es entender como la filosofía es expresión de la sociedad,

como reacciona sobre ella, y que la medida en la cual reacciona, es como señala Gramsci, precisamente la medida de su alcance histórico, de no ser “elucubración” individual, sino “hecho histórico” (Portantiero,1999: 275). He aquí la diferencia fundamental y de calidad entre el marxismo y las teorías que lo desafiaron.

De lo que se trata ahora es de mirar y reflexionar acerca de como la construcción contra hegemónica puede hacer camino y ser hecho histórico. La creciente deslegitimación del régimen político excluyente, evidencia de una democracia coja, tutelada, restringida, en definitiva, de una democracia a la medida de una economía neo liberal y, los crecientes índices de desigualdad y desintegración social, han desatado una creciente movilización social y no han hecho sino mostrar los primeros síntomas de una crisis de legitimidad de la autoridad política, de la institucionalidad heredada por Pinochet, la clase dominante y su sumisión a los Estados Unidos de America (USA), al FMI y al banco mundial y a las transnacionales que se articulan a través de ellos. Por lo tanto, descubierto el velo con el cual neo liberales y pos modernistas intentaron reproducir su hegemonía, es imperativo que dos procesos puedan darse a la vez, estos son, la articulación de la izquierda anti - neo liberal como instrumento de cambio social y la identificación de los puntos de ruptura de la hegemonía neo liberal.

### **Contra hegemonía: Lucha Social, Construcción de la Izquierda Anti -Neo-Liberal e Identificación de Puntos de Ruptura Hegemónica.**

#### **2006–08: Estudiantes y Trabajadores en la Activación de la Lucha Social**

El ejemplo de los estudiantes secundarios en la calle ha significado el mas certero golpe a la creencia que el apoliticismo había llegado a ser una principal característica de los chilenos, que la apatía de los jóvenes era evidente pues no quieren votar. De hecho eso ha sido así. Para las elecciones municipales de octubre del 2008 se estima un padrón electoral de 8.100.000 personal inscritas, de las cuales, si se considera, como plantea el director del servicio electoral (SERVEL) Juan Ignacio García (2008), “que el segmento juvenil esta entre 18 y 29 años, ese grupo representa un poco mas de 7 u 8 % (del total

de inscritos)”. Visto esto desde el punto de vista de los jóvenes que no están inscritos, el SERVEL (2008) indica que serian “mas de tres millones de jóvenes [los que] están en edad de participar, pero no lo hacen”.

Pero una cosa es que los jóvenes no crean en el sistema binominal de elecciones y otra muy distinta es que no les interese lo que pasa, que no les interese la política, la participación social y el cambio social. La emergencia en las calles de los “pingüinos” (estudiantes secundarios llamados así por su uniforme) en abril del 2006 fue la muestra más elocuente de ello.

Las movilizaciones de los estudiantes secundarios se extendieron desde el 26 de abril al 7 de junio del 2006 en lo que se conoció como la “Revolución de los Pingüinos”, “la primera gran movilización del siglo XXI en Chile”, “el primer movimiento social del siglo XXI” (Gutiérrez Portillo y Caviedes, 2006: 1). Fueron entre “600 mil y 1 millón los estudiantes movilizadas (Gutiérrez Montillo et al., 2006), apoyados por profesores y padres en lo que significó un terremoto político en Chile por el cual renuncia el ministro de educación Martín Zúñiga. Fue un movimiento *in crescendo*. Veamos lo que relata García Huidobro (2007: 2) solo respecto a lo que ocurría a fines de mayo:

...mas de 250 establecimientos educacionales secundarios paralizados (la mayoría municipales, pero también alrededor de 50 particulares-subvencionados y 50 pagados); a ello se sumaron establecimientos de educación superior, estatales y privados. El paro fue masivo: la prensa hablo de 600.000 participantes y otro medio los estimo en un millón; es la mayor paralización de los últimos 16 años. Pese a que los dirigentes estudiantiles llamaron constantemente a realizar solo manifestaciones pacificas, hubo brotes de violencia en los que se contabilizaron 725 personas detenidas y 26 heridos.

Los estudiantes habían ya el 2005 hecho llegar ciertas demandas a las autoridades, sin respuesta a ellas. La lucha comenzó entonces demandando que la prueba de ingreso a la universidad (PSU) fuera gratis y que el pase escolar se usara mas de dos veces por día (García Huidobro, 2007: 1). Sin embargo, con el correr de las movilizaciones, el



movimiento incremento sus demandas a áreas mucho mas políticas que reivindicativas en el ámbito de la educación, e incluso mas allá, por el impacto y alcance social y político que ellas tuvieron. Los estudiantes amplían sus demandas el 19 de mayo exigiendo el fin de la municipalización de la educación y el retorno de su administración al ministerio, al estado central. Pero fueron mas lejos, llamaron derechamente a reformar la educación estructuralmente, demandando terminar con la Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Enseñanza (LOCE) promulgada por Pinochet el día anterior a que dejara el gobierno (García Huidobro, 2007: 2).

Pero la LOCE no se puede cambiar así como así pues es ley orgánica y necesita de un *quórum* de más de 2/3 de las cámaras del Congreso para ser modificada. Y la trampita sigue pues el Congreso es elegido a través de un sistema binominal refrendado en la fraudulenta Constitución Política de 1980 que institucionalizo la dictadura de Pinochet. Esto es, el sistema garantiza una presencia del bloque de Derecha de tal manera que una ley orgánica como esta no se puede modificar.

Los estudiantes secundarios, a los que se sumaron los universitarios y profesores, llegaron a entender que sin un cambio de fondo no se superaría la crisis de la educación. No hay cambio real sin tocar la institucionalidad heredada de la dictadura que consagra un régimen político excluyente y sirve de aval de las políticas neo liberales que, en el caso de la educación, han afectado estructuralmente la educación publica y modificado el status valórico de la educación como “derecho” en educación como “mercancía”, causa y efecto de la transformación del estado docente en uno subsidiario, sin cambios. Este fue entonces un movimiento social surgido desde una crisis del sistema educacional pero que expreso graves desigualdades y contradicciones de clase, expresadas tan simple pero profundamente por el estudiante del Liceo de Aplicación que dice “lucho por el pase escolar por que no hay plata en la casa” (Entrevista, 26 de mayo, 2008). Aquí se sintetiza la dialéctica entre la demanda específica y la general, de clase.

Es por lo tanto evidente el carácter político y de clase del movimiento en tanto desafía la modalidad neo liberal de acumulación capitalista desde el sector de la educación pero que articula dialécticamente demandas específicas con generales de toda la población que llevo a sentirse identificada con la causa de los pingüinos.

Pero la cosa no quedo ahí. El 2007 y 2008, después de la formación de la comisión convocada por la Presidenta Michelle Bachelet, encabezada por Juan Eduardo García Huidobro, surge un proyecto de reforma que no alcanza acuerdos entre todos los sectores. La municipalización y la privatización (especialmente lo que se refiere al lucro que llena los bolsillos de los sostenedores o propietarios de los colegios particulares subvencionados), no se modificaron. Estudiantes y el Colegio de Profesores (gremio para unos, o sindicato para otros) se retiraron del consejo asesor. Luego, este mismo informe seria modificado por un acuerdo político entre la alianza de derecha y la de gobierno, conocida como la Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia que finalmente llevo al Congreso para reemplazar a la LOCE. Esta reforma de ley se conoce como Ley General de Enseñanza (LGE) la cual reproduce el sello neo liberal de la educación, según estudiantes y profesores (Gajardo, 2008). Mas luchas han ocurrido desde entonces. Hoy en el año 2008, protestas semanales se sucedieron una tras otra entre marzo y junio. Aun la ley nueva no se aprueba. Lo cierto es que ella no generara consenso ni paz social sino movilizaciones indefinidas, en lo que respecta a profesores y estudiantes que siguen levantando la bandera de la educación publica.

Este sector social, especialmente en el los pingüinos, han sido sin duda los que abrieron la puerta a la acción social, mostró que era necesario luchar, que así se consiguen cambios, que unidad en la diversidad, decisión y pluralismo tras una reivindicación sentida, son elementos que contribuyen al cambio social y la justicia social. Así también lo entendieron los trabajadores del sub contrato y tomaron la antorcha de la acción social. Otro agujero comienza a agrandar entonces la grieta de la hegemonía neo liberal en Chile.

### **Sub-Contrato: de la Apática Precariedad Laboral a la Abierta Lucha de Clases**

Desde el 2007 se ha incrementado el conflicto entre el capital y el trabajo en Chile. Su mayor expresión ha sido la lucha del sub-contrato en la gran minería del cobre. Principal ingreso y sostén de la economía chilena. Cerca de 18 mil trabajadores reclamaron “a igual trabajo, igual salario”, como señalara el dirigente Cristian Cuevas en entrevista televisiva. Cumpliendo una misma función, este sector precarizado producto de la desregulación laboral, ganaba menos que los trabajadores de planta y tenía obviamente menos derechos laborales. La Presidenta Bachelet ofreció 450 mil pesos al mes, pero después de 33 días de huelga, la oferta fue rechazada por la Confederación de Trabajadores Contratistas (CTC) que lidera Cristian Cuevas y que agrupa alrededor de 12 mil trabajadores.

Finalmente se lograron acuerdos económicos pero lo realmente significativo fue que de hecho la empresa madre CODELCO tuvo que negociar con los trabajadores liderados por Cuevas, terminando con el distanciamiento respecto a la empresa madre y con la interferencia de las empresas contratistas que a través de esta modalidad de relación laboral “han cometido todo tipo de abusos” (Vega en ICAL, 2007: 2). La ley laboral que consagra y provoca estos abusos había mantenido alejada a la empresa madre de toda responsabilidad social y laboral con estos trabajadores (ibid: 1). Eso se rompió y se abrió un escenario en el cobre y otros sectores donde este tipo de negociación se reprodujo con bastante éxito para los trabajadores.

Un análisis inmediato del fenómeno muestra que se produjo una tensión entre la flexibilidad que caracterizaría al sub contrato y la permanencia considerable en el tiempo de trabajadores en esa modalidad. Se suponía que la flexibilidad e intensidad laboral eran parte de sistemas de trabajo temporal mas o menos breves, donde el cambio y la movilidad de empleados era permanente, lo que a su vez ayuda a la patronal a atomizar y desintegrar la organización obrera. En el caso de CODELCO, inmensa empresa estatal del cobre, había trabajadores que estaban en esta situación injusta por

más de dos años. Por ahí detono entonces el conflicto. Por ahí salto la liebre, en la permanencia en el tiempo de un sector que se suponía debía ser móvil, flexibilizado que se miraba en los de planta y veía como la diferencia los convertía en mano de obra de segunda clase. Los trabajadores de empresas contratistas comenzaron a reconocerse como parte de la empresa madre, no de la intermediaria. Pero ellos eran los hijos despreciados, los hijastros, los “huachos” del cobre.

Así comienza a operar un cambio en la formación de clases, en la dinámica de la conflictiva relación entre capital y trabajo. El polo del trabajo se activó y produjo inmediatamente modificaciones en dicha relación de clases. El movimiento obrero comienza a retomar su fuerza que la historia del siglo XX testimonia y que tras ella logro nada menos que un gobierno popular con Salvador Allende a la cabeza. Los mineros paralizaron los minerales, cortaron caminos, tomaron sitios de trabajo, marcharon hacia las ciudades, desarrollaron formas de lucha violentas y no-violentas. Finalmente le doblaron la mano a la empresa y a la injusta ley laboral heredada de la dictadura, como lo hicieron los pingüinos con la ley LOCE en la educación.

Algo muy parecido ocurrió en el sector forestal y en el de la industria del salmón (otros dos sectores claves del modelo exportador chileno). Los trabajadores de las celulosas convocaron a más de 8.000 trabajadores, cuyos representantes presentaron un petitorio de 23 puntos de los cuales siete están referidos a beneficios económicos y el resto a mejorías en las condiciones de trabajo (El Mostrador, 26 abril 2007).

La lucha fue ardua contra el trabajo precario la contaminación del medio ambiente cobro una víctima fatal entre los trabajadores (El Mostrador, 26 abril 2007). Cientos de trabajadores y sus familias se sumaron a las marchas y diversas movilizaciones en pos de mejorar las condiciones laborales y de vida de todos ellos. En el sector salmonero la precariedad no se le va en saga a los otros sectores como el forestal:

Campeones en precariedad son las salmoneras Marine Harvest y Pesquera San Jorge. Acreditar judicialmente su responsabilidad en accidentes laborales ha sido imposible para

los familiares de una decena de víctimas. Marine Harvest enfrenta una demanda por el cuasidelito de homicidio de Javier Velásquez, de 24 años. Falleció mientras desarrollaba faenas en una zona donde transitaban grúas (El Mostrador, 26 abril 2007).

Otros conflictos han surgido o se prolongan el 2008, como el de los deudores habitacionales, el de los trabajadores de la salud, de correos de Chile, de los empleados públicos, de sectores productivos diversos como el de la industria de confites CALAF, en huelga en Septiembre del 2008. En Santiago, si el trabajo es precario, la calidad de vida decrece también producto del fracaso del sistema de transporte público conocido como “Transantiago”. La empresa estatal “Metro” de trenes urbanos ha tenido que soportar su pesada carga, resultante de la ineficiencia de un sistema orientado a un fin público pero pensada e implementada con diversos empresarios privados que definitivamente “no han dado el ancho”. El Metro nos llama a gritos la atención diciéndonos que la eficiencia y calidad de servicios no es patrimonio de la actividad privada. Por otro lado, a este cuadro de variada e intensa movilización social, se debe sumar la permanente lucha del pueblo *Mapuche* por su tierra y a la actitud represiva del estado chileno con ellos.

El síntoma es el mismo en todas partes, y la evidencia muestra que el origen radicaría en la aplicación de un modelo neo liberal tan radical que solo pudo resultar de la imposibilidad de oposición a el bajo Pinochet. Para muestra, un botón: “Según la Dirección del Trabajo (2004) un 50,5% de las empresas externaliza parte de su producción, y un 20,7% sub contrata la realización de su principal actividad económica” (Vega en ICAL, 2007: 3). En síntesis, y sin ser la intención de este articulo hacer un detallado relato de cada uno de estos movimientos, sino mas bien mostrar la activación de la lucha social en Chile en los dos últimos años, va quedando claro que, como el volcán Chaiten en el sur de Chile, la contradicción capital trabajo ha entrado nuevamente en erupción.

Junto con el interés de mostrar la actividad del movimiento obrero el último tiempo, es útil reparar en la crisis energética que atraviesa el país y que también refleja la rigidez del modelo neo liberal respecto, en este caso, a las relaciones internacionales. La huelga nacional de los camioneros fue reveladora en este aspecto. La cuestión de la energía es y será un problema grave para Chile. Sin embargo la política neo liberal de Chile en el plano internacional que privilegia la entrega de su tierra a transnacionales, a la inversión extranjera y a la exportación de materias primas sin valor agregado a países llamados “desarrollados”, le impide mirar al vecindario latino americano para solucionar sus problemas energéticos. Privilegiar tratados de libre comercio (TLC) con USA, con la Comunidad Económica Europea (CEE), APEC, China, India, excluiría a Chile de la posibilidad de diseñar una estrategia latino americana, mas aun cuando la mayoría de estos países han desafiado al neo liberalismo y privilegian políticas de integración regional.

Pero Chile “no esta ni ahí” con el vecindario, y en este hay gas, petróleo, manos amigas que estrechar. Lo que el dogma neo liberal no deja ver es que más allá de diferencias ideológicas, las relaciones internacionales deberían tener como una de sus principales metas beneficiar el interés nacional, en este caso, en relación a la energía. He aquí otro foco de conflicto para el hasta hace poco incólume e incuestionable modelo de desarrollo neo liberal.

Resumiendo, en la educación, el sector minero, forestal, de la industria del salmón, del transporte de carga, en la administración pública, en el sistema de salud, como en muchos otros, se puede reflexionar al menos en torno a tres cosas. Primero, que los estudiantes dieron el ejemplo y detonaron la lucha social la cual se legitimo como vía para cambios en la actual situación del país. La despolitización de lo social a lo que contribuyeron los acuerdos marcos y la aceptaron por parte del centro político (léase pos modernistas y neo liberales) de la institucionalidad Pinochetista, llego a ser cosa del pasado. No fue un discurso parcial el de los pingüinos, sino una practica concreta que activo otros sectores contra un sistema hegemónico que esta muy lejos de ser parcial y

discursivo sino mas bien muy totalizante. A los estudiantes los siguieron los trabajadores, especialmente del cobre, sector estratégico para Chile. Y ellos dieron otra lección. Si es posible reformas al sub-contrato en el cobre y pasar por sobre las reglas de negociación que impone la ley laboral, ¿Por qué no en otro lugar? Ciertamente se lo preguntaron muchos en una situación similar de precariedad de sueldos y condiciones laborales como en las celulosas y en las balsas salmoneras. Se aprecia por lo tanto un cambio en las relaciones de clases gestado por la activación del polo del trabajo de la contradicción que ha remecido al capital.

Esto nos lleva a un segundo aspecto que revela la actual situación. Los conflictos son indicativos de que es posible desafiar y ganar, de que la concentración de la riqueza y la acumulación extrema del capital ya están haciendo estragos de tal magnitud que ni la desintegración social estimulada por la ruptura de puentes de integración social debido, en el caso del trabajo, a la desregulación laboral y en el de la educación, a la destrucción de la educación pública, puede reproducirse. Tampoco en lo ideológico y cultural el despertar de las conciencias—de las más jóvenes sobre todo—fue impedido por los voceros pos modernos de lo efímero, indeterminado y fragmentado del firmamento de las infinitas hegemonías discursivas, iracundos ellos en la veneración de la pura contingencia. El contexto que abruma a jóvenes y trabajadores es respuesta suficiente a tales elucubraciones. Tampoco las políticas asistencialistas focalizadas que anulan la capacidad de participación social (Gutiérrez en Radio Nuevo Mundo, 9 de Septiembre, 2008), reflejo de la receta renovadora de Giddens, han frenado la marcha de sujetos por el cambio social. Por ultimo, ni la imposición de una pauta cultural hedonista de consumo (Moulian, 1998) ni el bombardeo manipulador de los medios de comunicación han podido enajenar todas las conciencias y reproducir practicas limitadas. A pesar de todo ello hay una rearticulación del movimiento social, de su organización y de aquí, de la izquierda.

Pero también es cierto que este es solo el comienzo del camino y este es cuesta arriba. No todas las conciencias fueron enajenadas, pero muchas de ellas si. De hecho, el

personaje hedonista, machista, individualista, competitivo que elude su responsabilidad social es en el que descansa esta clase de hegemonía cultural que ha forjado el neo liberalismo en Chile. Por que el neo liberalismo es más que una economía, es ideología, es neo liberalismo cultural también, como diría Boron. He aquí el tercer aspecto que se debería abordar, el desarrollo de la conciencia, de buscar relacionar estructuras sociales y agentes de cambio, esto es, articular la izquierda, de ahí sus tareas futuras y sus desafíos en la construcción de un bloque nacional por los cambios.

### **La Izquierda y sus Desafíos**

Esta nueva izquierda cuenta ya con tres partidos legales—Partido Comunista (PC), Partido Humanista (PH), Partido Izquierda Cristiana (IC)—que junto a otros grupos y movimientos conforman una alianza anti-neo liberal que espera alcanzar al menos el 10 por ciento de los votos a nivel nacional en las elecciones municipales de octubre del 2008. A su vez, la izquierda que se articula, ha pactado con el centro (en el poder por 18 años ya) un “pacto por omisión” en comunas donde antes ganó la Derecha. Este acuerdo debiera disminuir la votación de la Derecha y la elección constituirse en un escenario de movilización y lucha contra la exclusión (Carmona, entrevista 2 de septiembre, 2008).

Pero este tercer aspecto demanda la articulación de la izquierda y tiene por delante tareas como levantar una alternativa de sociedad y de gobierno, lo que pasa por luchar contra la exclusión y a su paso, minar la hegemonía de los sectores neo liberales/pos modernistas del centro político a través, entre otras formas, del pacto por omisión. Todo esto no es ni mas ni menos que la construcción de contra-hegemonía cultural, como diría Gramsci.

El desarrollo de un bloque nacional que en este nuevo referente político tiene uno de sus forjadores, también tiene en sus manos una enseñanza muy grande. Esta enseñanza viene de las luchas anti-dictatoriales, de la rebelión popular contra el tirano, pero también de las luchas actuales de estudiantes y trabajadores, principalmente. El pueblo



chileno ha mostrado y demostrado estos últimos dos años que el modelo neo liberal no es incuestionable. De hecho ya ha sido cuestionado. Se ha roto en alguna medida su hegemonía cultural y se aprecia que se avanza, en unos sectores más que en otros, hacia una ruptura epistemológica, a que la gente llegue a tener una nueva concepción del mundo, una conciencia social de su realidad local y global. Ha aumentado en alguna medida el grado de conciencia de que esta no es la mejor forma de vivir la vida, de que contrastan agudamente las noticias y la realidad diaria de la gente. Que el monopolio de las comunicaciones es parte de lo mismo y juega en función de producir consentimiento, como lo entendiera Gramsci, pero que cada día es más desafiado, como se aprecia con la actitud de la gente con los periodistas de los medios oficiales en la calle, por ejemplo.

Todo esto podría llevarnos a decir que si bien se ha avanzado en la germinación de una contra-cultura hegemónica, queda mucho camino por delante. Es posible sin embargo detectar hoy lo siguiente. Las luchas en el sector educacional y el laboral muestran que hay un agotamiento del modelo neo liberal y que la contradicción capital trabajo se ha activado y hay claramente un punto de inflexión respecto a como la relación capital trabajo se articulaba hasta el año 2006.

Segundo, que a la institucionalidad heredada por la dictadura también se le ha sentado en el banquillo de los acusados, partiendo por la demanda concreta del fin a la exclusión en el Parlamento que debiera llevar al cuestionamiento de toda la institucionalidad autoritaria exigiendo su derogación a través de un referéndum, por ejemplo, aun que este no sea vinculante. Su repercusión política debiera llevar a otro paso en el camino por la democratización profunda de la sociedad. Entonces, este cuestionamiento al régimen político debiera significar un nuevo estadio de la situación, el de una crisis de legitimidad de la autoridad política, fenómeno que en parte se expresa en la gran ausencia juvenil en las urnas contrastada con su gran presencia en la calle.

## **Conclusión**

Recapitulando y a modo de conclusión, después de la declinación de la influencia de la ideología pos moderna y teorías social demócratas que informaron al gobierno pasado de la Concertación y, el ascenso de la lucha social y política en Chile y la rearticulación de la izquierda, es plausible plantear que ya hay nodos o puntos de ruptura en el modelo hegemónico neo liberal donde se están situando los actores sociales contra-hegemonicos. Es desde estos puntos desde donde se pueden generar amplios movimientos anti-neo liberales que dejen expuesta la necesidad de modificar el actual modelo de dominación y su sustentación institucional, en la cual ya cursa una crisis de legitimidad, como se comento antes. Esos puntos de ruptura se constituyen en verdaderos sitios o espacios de disputa hegemónica de clases que se vinculan unos a otros y son los que revisamos mas arriba: la educación, el trabajo, la energía, el régimen político excluyente binominal, el carácter mono-cultural y patriarcal de estado, y el monopolio de los medios de comunicación y su función ideológica, entre los principales. Debería ser en ellos que el movimiento sindical y otros movimientos sociales crezcan y se legitimen aumentando su membresía e influencia social. La izquierda debiera ayudar en esta tarea haciendo camino a través de la organización desde la base, de la movilización sectorial y nacional; a través la contra-cultura, de la unidad de los mas amplios sectores contra el neo liberalismo y de la generación de un proyecto democrático de país que se constituya en la carta de navegación del bloque popular nacional, tarea titánica de hoy y mañana, pero tremendamente necesaria.

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## Antonio Gramsci and Fund of Knowledge: Organic Ethnographers of Knowledge in Workers' Centres

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## Antonio Gramsci and Fund of Knowledge: Organic Ethnographers of Knowledge in Workers' Centres

### Abstract

Participants of workers' centres, led by organic ethnographers of knowledge, will be engaged in a critique of spontaneous funds of knowledge and the development of judgment criteria to guide workers from Gramsci's conception of common sense to good sense in the discovery of knowledge through praxis.

# **ANTONIO GRAMSCI AND FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE: ORGANIC ETHNOGRAPHERS OF KNOWLEDGE IN WORKERS' CENTRES.**

**Joseph P. Zanoni**

## **Introduction**

Transnational migrants are seeking work on a mass scale in the contemporary global economy. In the US, the state sanctions the legal migration of some migrants who have documentation of their special skills, which are rewarded with high pay in the labour market. Suarez-Orozco (2001) describes these migrants as being at the top of an hour-glass shape distribution of new arrivals. At the bottom of the hour-glass are the mass of workers with general skills who seek a foothold in the economy by doing whatever work they can for pay. These migrants fit Antonio Gramsci's description of subaltern (Green, 2002), since employers of the dominant social group—mostly small business and home owners—may marginalize them in order to extract their labour (Valenzuela and Theodore, 2006). Post-Fordist colonial capitalism presents this contradiction: immigrants arriving to work have considerable physical mobility yet, due to their exploitation, must struggle for agency, power and social mobility. A central goal of curricula for new adult immigrants is to develop their capacity for reflective praxis in order to enhance their solidarity, organizing and sustainability in a new environment. Curriculum inquiry based on Gramsci's critical perspective can advance this emergent subaltern need.



“Funds of knowledge” (Gonzalez et al., 1995) developed by subaltern migrants reflect good sense but also common sense. Promotion of subaltern common sense, however, may constrain their agency, with consequent effects on praxis and power. A reading of Gramsci compels a critique of common sense developed through spontaneous funds of knowledge by organic intellectual immigrants. In the US there is a ready supply of migrant Latina/o workers who are suspended between expectations that they work hard and their disposability because of their “illegality” as citizens (De Genova, 2005). Challenging hegemonic characterizations of Latino immigrants as homogenous and without skills (Jimenez et al., 1999), educational scholars working in literacy have developed approaches that they describe as “funds of knowledge”, which emphasize the creation of social knowledge through meaning-making networks, cultural practices and activity.

A critical assumption in our work is that educational institutions have stripped away the view of working-class minority students as emerging from households rich in social and intellectual resources. Rather than focusing on the knowledge these students bring to school and using it as a foundation for learning, the emphasis has been on what these students lack in terms of the forms of language and knowledge sanctioned by the schools (Gonzalez et al., 1995: 445).

Their curriculum inquiry approach to confronting this deficit discourse begins with the community, specifically households, initiating a dialogic process of uncovering funds of knowledge and applying these funds to classroom teaching for immigrant children. Themes reflected in a funds of knowledge approach include: *confianza* or mutual trust (Gonzalez and Moll, 2002), flexibility, “thick” or multistranded-ness (Moll et al., 1992), and zones of comfort for experimental learning (Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg, 1992). A funds of knowledge approach employs culturally relevant social processes to enhance the work and life trajectories of educational participants. Newly arrived subaltern adults

stand to benefit from this approach given its emphasis on a critique of knowledge-creation by participants.

I seek to contrast Gramsci's epistemology with the position of culture in funds of knowledge ethnography and examine the role of organic intellectuals in this (Notebook 4, Note 49, in Buttigieg, 1996). Both spontaneity and judgment are social phenomena that figure strongly in Gramsci's world view; these qualities need to be interrogated for their application in a funds of knowledge approach and as capacities in the organization of curriculum. My goal is to promote a conversation between scholars of Gramsci, adult literacy and participants in workers' centres through participatory action research, in order to consider how Gramsci's philosophy of praxis and the creation of hegemony may inspire a model of adult, informal learning, critical curriculum (Schubert, 1996) that would influence the development of funds of knowledge in participants and result in social change. I first describe the manifestation of funds of knowledge in workers' centres, then how Gramsci's thought affects this process by proposing ways in which organic intellectuals in the workers' centres may act as ethnographers of knowledge.

### **Workers' Centres as Sites of Cultural Development and Critical Capacity**

Workers' centres—community-based organizations created and led by immigrant workers—are a social formation of the masses to organize migrants for economic stability and social justice (Fine, 2005). Through their efforts to resist accommodation to the dominant economic hegemony, these centres play a role, along with social movement organizations, in the creation of what Gramsci described as an historical bloc for social change. Workers' centres reflect a social history of organizing in specific communities and foster subaltern leaders who take up roles in agency, discourse and reflective praxis.

The need is pressing. Subaltern migrants suffer health inequities stemming from their racial and ethnic status (Krieger and Davey Smith, 2004; Krieger et al., 2005; Murray,

2003). Worse, the work that Latina/o workers do in the United States often results in death (Zanoni, 2006). Currently we are conducting a pilot project to see how an informal learning session called a “charla”, also described as a chat or conversation, led by Francisco Montalvo, Jr., a native Spanish-speaking labour faculty member and worker leaders, may use problem-solving to promote discussion, reflection and action to prevent injury and illness at work.

I argue that Gonzalez and Moll’s concept of funds of knowledge in workers’ centres is a powerful approach that encourages the on-going discovery of cultural practices in US Latina/os when inspired by the critical pedagogy of Antonio Gramsci. The funds of knowledge approach was originally presented as an inquiry method for study groups, led by university researchers, for teachers of immigrant Latina/o children to explore household funds of knowledge and to create curriculum for students with this knowledge. To apply this approach to immigrant adults in the community, I focus on a critique of spontaneous funds of knowledge, and the potential of the workers’ centres to replicate or re-establish the social networks/funds of knowledge of migrating Latina/os.

Funds of knowledge were first described in Latino immigrant communities that developed over generations in the US. Workers’ centres are a contemporary movement in areas where new immigrants live and seek work; the centres play a role in uncovering and creating social networks of migrants from diverse locations who share compatible cultural perspectives, repertoires of practice (Gutierrez and Rogoff, 2003) and literacies. Instead of focusing on the child as part of a dense social community engaged in school learning, I propose that the Latina/o peer leader and educator serves as an organic intellectual who utilizes and creates funds of knowledge to critique social conditions and to create social change through informal learning (Livingstone, 2001). This Gramscian critical pedagogy curriculum model proposes that organic intellectuals work to criticize the conception of the world in which they participate, form good sense from common sense and create persuasive discourse through the praxis of workers at the centres (Zanoni, 2006).

Describing the links and relationships here between Gramsci’s view of adult learning and a funds of knowledge perspective shows how *confianza* or mutual trust is created and maintained, how praxis is the basis of funds of knowledge in action and how literacies (Hornberger, 2004) are formed as tools for social development. Participatory action research is a practical meaning-making approach; it honours the role that participant thought and action play in creating knowledge which, through reflection and display by researchers, reaches wider communities of interest. Gramsci’s epistemology may be most directly stated as the philosophy of praxis, the recursive thought and action utilized in this research design. The workers’ centre is the locus with the potential, through learning and inquiry, to synthesize funds of knowledge with a Gramscian commitment to criticizing spontaneous funds of knowledge. This process, promoted by intentional curriculum, seeks to affect worker decision-making about health and safety, to create contracts and codes of conduct for relations with individual employers, and to create public policy for the community or state (Table 1 below).

**Table 1: Interaction between Gramsci, Funds of Knowledge and Workers’ Centres**

	<b>Funds of Knowledge</b>	<b>Workers’ Centres</b>	<b>Antonio Gramsci</b>
Unit	Child’s Household	Workers’ Social network	Mass-subaltern
Inquiry	Study groups	Participatory Action Research	Critique Conception Common/Good sense
Reflection	Teachers	Worker Leaders	Organic Intellectual
Impact	School curriculum	Agency Social/market policy	Thought and action (praxis)

### **Funds of Knowledge**

Luis Moll and colleagues created an approach to curriculum development which they called “funds of knowledge”. Coming from Latina/o culture themselves, they created

their educational inquiry inspired by the socio-historical approach of Lev Vygotsky (Trueba, 1999). Opposing the hegemonic and colonial view that Latina/os offer few skills, knowledge or capacities beyond physical labour, they sought to describe and understand how knowledge is historically and socially created and used by Latina/o culture. I would describe their project as participatory action research in that they asked teachers to conduct this inquiry into households in order then to use the knowledge to create curriculum (Foley, Levinson and Hurtig, 2000–01; Gonzalez et al., 1995). While the work was originally done in Arizona, the funds of knowledge project inspired a women’s oral history inquiry into the funds of knowledge of a Puerto Rican family to inspire curriculum development (Olmedo, 1997), and a curriculum design project with middle school students and teachers in Australia (Hattam, 2007) which adapted key elements of the approach.

As described in recent work, elements of a funds of knowledge approach include: 1) the household as the primary unit of analysis, 2) teachers developing a strong relationship with families, 3) ethnographic methods of inquiry and 4) school and university partnerships to reflect and create programs. I deconstruct these elements of funds of knowledge to show that recognizing and utilizing spontaneous knowledge can be enhanced by Gramsci’s call for critique of subaltern conceptions of the world rooted in common sense.

The household as the primary unit of analysis and the process of developing strong relationships with families may be merged into the first key element of the funds of knowledge approach. For Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg (1992: 326) households express a unique learning environment that supports the skill and knowledge acquisition of children:

A major characteristic of the transmission of funds of knowledge is that multiple household domains provide children with a zone of comfort that is familiar yet experimental, where error is not dealt with punitively and where self-esteem is not endangered.

In their Redesigning Pedagogies in the North (RPiN) project, Robert Hattam and his colleagues (see <http://www.unisa.edu.au/hawkeinstitute/cslplc/rpin/default.asp>) extend their inquiry into what they describe as the “lifeworld” of students, taking their primary unit as the student, his or her household relationships and significant relationships outside the family and household. Regarding workers’ centres, a similar elasticity of definition is in order to consider the lifeworld or household of the adult immigrant, consisting of close family if nearby, but also other personal relationships that may be useful, important and part of a mutual exchange. In Chicago, as elsewhere in the US, many Mexican immigrants have organized home-town associations which provide tangible links with households and families in Mexico. It may be useful to explore how these associations function in terms of reciprocal relations and the development of social networks for workers in the US, and in generating meaning to support migration and transition, such as the symbolic nationalism described by Pallares (2005). Often the associations develop construction and social projects in the home-town in Mexico. While there is potential for solidarity, there may also be divisions along class or legal status lines among participants.

In a practical sense, workers’ centres may foster the development of new funds of knowledge that immigrant workers can use for their survival and growth in the US. Curriculum inquiry should consider how knowledge is created and used by new immigrants, and for those who settle and establish themselves in a particular community. Olmedo (1997: 570) supports this idea when she states that, “[w]hen families and communities are removed from their geographic roots, as is the case in migration experiences, members are challenged to expand the funds of knowledge so that they are functional in the new environment”. A Gramscian viewpoint sees household knowledge as one foundation of common sense that also contributes to the development of culture (Allman, 2002; Coben, 2002; Crehan, 2002). Gramsci recognized the importance of culture as an extension of household common sense creating a subaltern conception of the world. He sought to harness the potential of critique in the world of expression at

large in the development of good sense but also in the conversations workers had at home or with their friends. The result of this critique of culture is the recognition of the individual and groups' historical value (Gramsci in Hoare and Mathews, 1997).

Ethnographic methods of inquiry must be challenged in the face of the post-colonial criticism that colonizers often conducted immersion inquiry in order better to subjugate indigenous people. Responding to this problem, De Genova (2005: 24) presents a useful dialogic approach to ethnographic research and methods in his work with migrants in Chicago:

Thus understood, intersubjective dialogue directed toward an interrogation of the wider sociopolitical world potentially enables an ethnographic account to emerge from the critically engaged collaboration of people who are becoming conscious, together, of their own roles in the production and reproduction of their social realities and the making of their own histories.

Moll and his colleagues' intention is to treat Latina/o households and networks as autonomous, integral and powerful. One essential aspect of the ethnographic approach is the trust or *confianza* that many researchers describe as necessary and generative of the inquiry. Trust is important because communication in relationships and the authentic disclosure of viewpoints and practices often only happen when participants have confidence that the researcher will honour, represent and use their relationship and the knowledge created through it with respect. Organic intellectuals hold the trust of their comrades. This trust may be the defining bond that maintains the social relation when the tension and friction necessarily created by critique threatens to end the process of developing good sense leading to praxis.

*Confianza* is also the defining concept of the funds of knowledge approach. Gonzalez and colleagues (1995: 447; also see Moll et al., 1992) state:

A key characteristic of these exchanges is their reciprocity. As Velez-Ibanez (1988) has observed, reciprocity represents an “attempt to establish a social relationship on an enduring basis. Whether symmetrical or asymmetrical, the exchange expresses and symbolizes human social interdependence” (p. 142). That is, reciprocal practices establish serious obligations based on the assumption of *confianza* (mutual trust), which is reestablished or confirmed with each exchange, and they lead to the development of long-term relationships.

Olmedo (1997) describes *confianza* in terms of the development of *la sociedad* with the Puerto Rican families she studied; *la sociedad* was a type of mutual aid/credit association that served practical material needs by lending money to its members, but also expressed personal and social relationships between them and their families. This reciprocity and *confianza* reverberates with Gramsci’s insights into the process of organic intellectuals feeling, understanding and knowing in their effort to educate, lead and direct praxis.

A Gramscian view supports the need for ethnography among workers’ centre participants in researchers’ tasks of uncovering and developing organic relations with workers. Ursula Apitzsch (2002: 303) wrote about multicultural communities to emphasize how often immigrant positions are created in response to the dominant hegemony and its view and use of the migrants in that society:

On the contrary, it must mean learning how people in a certain determined social and historical context develop their culture in a double dialogue with “the other” and with their own tradition, and in this way construct their culture for themselves, involving “the other” in this process at the same time. Only in this way—reconstructing the self-reflexivity on any culture in modern societies—does one get to learn what it means to transform, reform and thus develop one’s own culture.

Gramsci’s attitude to the meaning-making of workers is centred on how they participate in their conception of the world, and how social hegemony creates both this conception and the parameters of their participation. I argue that his interpretation is required to



lead research participants to critique and challenge both the spontaneous nature of knowledge created in the social network, and how they see themselves, their world and their possibilities for action.

Participatory, critical ethnographic inquiry with the goal of mutual education of all participants reverberates with Gramsci's conception of organic intellectuals. In educational inquiry, Enrique Trueba engaged Latina/os in critical relationship and his approach is contrasted with that of John Ogbu who theorized the status of "involuntary" minorities (Foley, 2005). Trueba is concerned with the impact of dominance on the lives and learning of Latina/o students and their families. He encouraged teachers to reflect on their "ideological clarity" in order to critique and address the hegemonic assumptions they may make when preparing for and teaching Latina/o children (Exposito and Favela, 2003). Describing the critical ethnography that he proposes, Trueba (1999: 129) states:

They become "critical" only when their goal, ultimate purpose, direction, and expected outcomes are the praxis of the ethnographer, that is, a praxis of equity, a commitment for life to pursue equity and to struggle for the liberation of all humankind through ethnographic research.

Anderson (1989) begins and Foley (2002) continues the conversation about critical ethnography in education that is central to the funds of knowledge approach. The validity of analysis and findings of openly ideological ethnographic inquiry, including Gramsci's perspective, has been challenged, but practitioners may use activities such as triangulation or a focus on the catalytic character of the praxis to address this concern (Lather, 1986). One starting point is to understand that research participants' views are formed through the working of social hegemony (acknowledging Gramsci's thesis) and that critical self-reflexivity should then be a central objective of the work. Anderson (1989: 255) says:

Reflexivity in critical ethnography, then, involves a dialectical process among (a) the researcher's constructs, (b) the informant's commonsense constructions, (c) the research data, (d) the researcher's ideological biases, and (e) the structural and historical forces that informed the social construction under study.

Anderson describes a conversation in the field of critical ethnography as encouraging a holistic view in the interpretation of inquiry and increasing the involvement of participants by creating narratives and promoting collaboration with them. Foley (2002) presents reflexivity as a complex and nuanced process in critical ethnography. Describing himself as motivated by the social justice struggle of the 1960s in the US, Foley recounts how many Marxist theorists, including Gramsci, created the theoretical foundations of critical ethnography as they learned to practice it.

The ethnographic concept of reflexivity parallels Gramsci's concern for spontaneous knowledge stratifying and fossilizing historically-derived common sense. While the need for validation promotes self-reflection, Gramsci's need for critique drives the challenge of spontaneous knowledge. Critical ethnography is founded on a perspective of social justice; who better than organic intellectual ethnographers of knowledge to lead critical praxis? Critical ethnography is a means of thought and reflection for organic intellectuals in workers' centres.

Autoethnography is presented through the interpretive lens of autobiography by foregrounding the researcher's personal history and experience related to the phenomenon. Intertextuality is presented as the postmodern analysis of text and discourse, where the reader is meant to synthesis the meaning of the inquiry by sensing multiple voices, images and concepts. Foley shows that creating and merging strands of reflexivity in critical ethnography is evident in the work of mature practitioners. The distinction for Gramsci is that self-reflection must affect the social group and direct agency.

The element of school and university partnerships in funds of knowledge may be related to the process of developing partnership such as participatory action research between participants of workers' centres and researchers. For Gramsci, the interaction is framed by the development of organic intellectuals who participate and are challenged through the process of reflecting on and interpreting the inquiry. Gramsci's definition of knowledge through praxis is a primary focus. In terms of the outcomes of inquiry, Patti Later (1986) proposed a standard of catalytic validity: Ideological qualitative research may be evaluated by judging how well the inquiry stimulates or catalyses the experience of participants to reach the knowledge or goals that they seek. Taking on the spontaneous common sense of workers' centre members is one of the tasks necessary to disrupting ossified world views and promoting reflective action. Funds of knowledge applied to workers' centres may be useful if the inquiry achieves or enhances the capacity and development of the worker-participants in ways that generate meaning in the shifts, positions and discipline required to move towards social justice.

### **Antonio Gramsci and Funds of Knowledge**

Gramsci's epistemology relates to the connection between who has knowledge, its social creation and how it will be used. To begin, Gramsci creates a strong connection in the interaction between intellectuals, the masses, and their shared thoughts and feelings. This connection is the trust that enables the knowledge to lead the intellectuals and masses to action. In Notebook 4, note 33, in the passage discussing the move from *knowing* to *understanding* to *feeling*, he states:

The popular element "feels" but does not understand or know. The intellectual element "knows" but does not understand and, above all, does not feel...The error of the intellectual consists in believing that one can *know* without understanding and, above all, without feeling, or being impassioned: in other words, that the intellectual can be an intellectual if he is distinct and detached from the people. One cannot make history-politics without passion, that is, without being emotionally tied to the people, without feeling the rudimentary passions of the people, understanding them, and hence explaining [and

justifying] them in the specific historical situation and linking them dialectically to the laws of history, that is, to a scientifically elaborated superior conception of the world: namely, “knowledge” (Gramsci in Buttigieg, 1996: 173).

In this note, Gramsci describes how the masses and intellectuals experience life and produce knowledge together. Feeling and thinking are linked, and an intellectual not organic to a community must experience the feelings of the masses in order to create knowledge with them. This knowledge is related not to disciplines or professions but specifically to the place of the masses in history and the struggle for socialism. Intellectuals emerge from the masses and show their organic relation to the masses by directly experiencing and knowing their feelings and passions. Gramsci describes their passions as rudimentary, defined as at root or at the base, not as a lower level of sophistication. For Gramsci, knowledge has a purpose and the role of the intellectual is to form and reflect this purpose to the masses through action. The organic intellectual understands the passion that motivates an action and offers the masses recursive reflection based on a recognition of compassion, consequence and experience; the goal is to critique common sense based on spontaneity.

In contrast to this, let us consider Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg’s (1992: 314) definition of funds of knowledge as developed by Moll and colleagues:

The best way to explain what we mean by funds of knowledge is to relate them to Wolf’s (1966) discussion of household economy. Wolf distinguishes several funds that households must juggle: caloric funds, funds of rent, replacement funds, ceremonial funds, social funds. Entailed in these are wider sets of activities requiring specific strategic bodies of essential information that households need to maintain their well-being. If we define such funds as those bodies of knowledge of strategic importance to households, then we may ask such pertinent questions as How were such assemblages historically formed? How variable are they? How are they transformed as they move from one context to another? How are they learned and transmitted? How are they socially distributed?

Emphasis may be placed on the strategic importance of the funds and the consideration that, beyond the economic and survival motivations for participants, historical relationships and analysis may feature in the funds' development. Moll et al. (1992: 133) state: "We use the term 'funds of knowledge' to refer to these historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being". While emphasizing the instrumental value of the funds by noting the historic and cultural basis of the knowledge, we have a link to Gramsci's conception and an opening for the application to curriculum of community change if the household looks beyond its primary needs. Household knowledge undergoes a process of critique based on what the group decides to pass on and what to ignore. Gramsci's critique of spontaneous common sense fits well here with the distinction that his organic intellectual would seek to develop knowledge that challenges the social and material order of dominance.

Benedetto Fontana (2000: 306), reflected on this same note and states: "The merely abstract knowledge of the intellectual becomes life and politics when linked to the experiential and passionate feelings of the people. At the same time, the feeling-passion of the people acquires the character of knowledge". Fontana emphasizes that the synthesis of social locations and domains of experience is an important relationship that Gramsci highlights and which encourages our pursuit of curriculum based on funds of knowledge. Angelo Broccoli (1972) describes this process as connective tissue for the dialectical work that must be undertaken as part of establishing this knowledge. This process makes communication possible between diverse groups struggling for knowledge, reflecting Apitzsch's thesis.

This link between knowing, understanding and feeling is the essential emotional bond in the social group that holds workers together even when their common sense conceptions of the world are being challenged or shattered. Trust, *confianza*, keeps them connected during the times of tension and anger when new ideas can emerge, take shape and be tested through praxis.

Gramsci valued culture and an understanding of how hegemony relates to cultural development and social change. He describes culture in two quotes from Notebook 1, note 43, “Types of periodicals”:

Therefore, the premise of “an organic diffusion from a homogeneous centre of a homogeneous way of thinking and acting” is not sufficient. The same ray of light passes through different prisms and yields different refractions of light: in order to have the same refraction, one must make a whole series of adjustments to the individual prisms. Patient and systematic “repetition” is the fundamental methodological principle. But not a mechanical, material repetition: the adaptation of each basic concept to diverse peculiarities, presenting and re-presenting it in all its positive aspects and in its traditional negations, always ordering each partial aspect in the totality. Finding the real identity underneath the apparent differentiation and contradiction and finding the substantial diversity underneath the apparent identity is the most essential quality of the critic of ideas and of the historian of social development. The educational-formative work that a homogeneous cultural centre performs, the elaboration of a critical consciousness that it promotes and favors on a particular historical base which contains the material premises for this elaboration, cannot be limited to the simple theoretical enunciation of “clear” methodological principles: that would be a pure “enlightenment” action. The work required is complex and must be articulated and graduated: there has to be a combination of deduction and induction, identification and distinction, positive demonstration and the destruction of the old. Not in the abstract but concretely: on the basis of the real (Gramsci in Buttigieg, 1992: 128).

The image of prisms is engaging particularly because of their light, beauty, but also in their ability to focus light’s energy in order to create heat and fire. Gramsci talks about the role of the intellectual and also the function of the “homogeneous centre”, which in our case stands for the workers’ centre. Gramsci is saying that organic intellectuals work to organize and order the experiences of the masses in concrete and real ways, not mechanically but through their profound local experience and knowledge. This discipline and support for critical thinking and reflection may offer the space needed for immigrant workers to pause and reflect in solidarity as they confront the overwhelming

force of the dominant hegemony in an effort to destroy certain concepts and create new ones in the harsh realities of the competitive marketplace.

A little later, in that same Notebook 1, note 43, Gramsci writes:

By intellectuals, one must understand not [only] those ranks commonly referred to by this terms, but generally the whole social mass that exercises an organizational function in the broad sense whether it be in the field of production, or culture, or political administration: they correspond to the non commissioned and junior officers in the army (and also to some field officers excluding the general staff in the narrowest sense of the term). To analyze the social functions of the intellectuals, one must investigate and examine their psychological attitude toward the broad classes which they bring into contact in various fields: do they have a “paternalistic” attitude toward manual workers? or do they “believe” that they are an organic expression of them? do they have a “servile” attitude toward the ruling classes or do they believe that they themselves are leaders, an integral part of the ruling classes (Gramsci in Buttigieg, 1992: 133).

Here Gramsci again addresses the affective domain and states that intellectuals are leaders of the culture. Intellectuals are an organic expression of the masses and should see themselves and act as leaders in the cultural organization of workers’ centres. Members of the workers’ centres see themselves as belonging to the same class in their efforts to find work, and their struggles for just treatment at work and to resist racism and exploitation brought about by their subaltern condition.

In his pre-prison essay, “Socialism and Culture”, Gramsci defines culture in this way:

Culture is something quite different. It is organization, discipline of one’s inner self, a coming to terms with one’s own personality; it is the attainment of a higher awareness with the aid of which one succeeds in understanding one’s own historical value, one’s own function in life, one’s own rights and obligations (Gramsci, 1977: 11).

While divergent from most ethnographers' view of culture, we can see here Gramsci's focus on personal mental development for the purpose of understanding and acting on one's place in history. In the following paragraphs he continues by saying:

Consciousness of a self which is opposed to others, which is differentiated and, once having set itself a goal, can judge facts and events other than in themselves or for themselves but also in so far as they tend to drive history forward or backward. 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. In other words, we must form some idea of nature and its laws in order to come to know the laws governing the mind. And we must learn all of this without losing sight of the ultimate aim: to know oneself better through others and to know others better through oneself (Gramsci, 1977: 13).

Here, Gramsci says that understanding culture begins with knowing ourselves and others in a dialogic process. We cannot hope to understand and affect workplace injury and illness prevention unless we understand the history of the meaning of health and safety for the diverse participants of workers' centres, and struggle with organic intellectual leaders to form this recognition and propose ideals that will lead and guide participants to new action and knowledge. Worker leaders may not hope to organize workers' centre participants without listening to them and understanding their struggles to establish themselves in a new community, and how they see the world, their work and their range of choices in considering action.

“Spontaneity” was an important concern for Gramsci, particularly in the context of the humanistic educational philosophy promoted in Italy by Fascist education minister Giovanni Gentile, who adopted the views of Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce. Gramsci critiqued spontaneity and the assumptions underlying its deployment related to the individual and action; it is useful for us to consider spontaneity as a rationale for



romantic conceptions of developing funds of knowledge. For me, it seems useful to analyse and critique funds of knowledge in the light of what Gramsci says about spontaneity. In Notebook 3, note 48, “Past and present”, he states:

In this regard, a fundamental theoretical question arises: can modern theory be in opposition to the “spontaneous” sentiments of the masses? (“Spontaneous” in the sense that they are not due to the systematic educational activity of an already conscious leadership but have been formed through everyday experience in the light of “common sense,” that is, the traditional popular conception of the world: what is very tritely called “instinct,” which is itself a rudimentary and basic historical acquisition.) (Gramsci in Buttigieg, 1996: 48).

It is clear that the subaltern person develops a conception of the world and that the resulting funds of knowledge are the goal of inquiry for teachers and school staff working with Latina/o students. By highlighting the process of the spontaneous emergence, Gramsci directs us to challenge the sanctity of this origin of knowledge, and to be clear about critiquing the social dialogue that results in the valuing, use and development of this knowledge into something that is passed on in the social group to become a fund.

Taken at face value, funds of knowledge, according to Gramsci, must be criticized because they are fundamentally based on common sense. We may judge their formation as reflecting the level of consciousness of the leaders and their functional social utility. Funds need not be unitary, exclusive and mutually exclusive; they should be interrogated and evaluated according to their use and the nature of the educational process in which they were learned.

Gramsci offers an image of spontaneity in Notebook 1, note 123, “Search the exact historical organ...”: “‘Spontaneity’ is one of these involutions: one almost imagines that a child’s brain is like a ball of thread which the teacher helps to unwind” (Gramsci in Buttigieg, 1992: 211). He asks us to consider how natural or already present this knowledge is, or to ask if it simply appeared. Earlier in Notebook 3, Note 48, he states:

This element of “spontaneity” was not neglected, much less disdained: it was *educated*, it was given a direction, it was cleansed of everything extraneous that could contaminate it, in order to unify it by means of modern theory but in a living, historically effective manner (Gramsci in Buttigieg, 1996: 50, emphasis in original).

Consider Gramsci’s distinction between the spontaneous and the educated: There is an ironic tension in what Gonzalez et al. are after in funds of knowledge; they seek authentic traditional experience considered deficit by an educational system that values dominant forms of knowledge and seeks to inculcate dominant values that reproduce the material exploitation of subaltern Latina/os. Having established the need for critique, I believe that Gramsci also shows us how the organic intellectual can lead a social group through the development of praxis for good sense. Gramsci does not support this subjugation but asks if this traditional knowledge is inherently valuable, or is it just spontaneous without being critical? As part of an intellectual conversation, I propose that we recognize and consider gradations, disruptions or discontinuities in the practice of funds of knowledge based on critical consciousness.

Gramsci describes the standards and criteria of judgment useful for creating curriculum responsive to needs of workers’ centre participants for social change. He talks about how generations educate and what is needed to pass on the torch of leadership. In Notebook 1, note 123, Gramsci continues, after presenting his ball of thread image, to say:

In reality, every generation educates, that is, it forms the new generation, and education is a struggle against the instincts linked to rudimentary biological functions, a struggle against nature, to dominate it and to create the man who is “in touch” with his times. It is forgotten that from the time he starts “to see and to touch,” perhaps a few days after birth, the child accumulates sensations and images which multiply themselves and become complex with the acquisition of language. “Spontaneity,” if analyzed, becomes increasingly problematical. Furthermore, “school,” that is direct educational activity, is only a fraction of the life of a student who comes into contact with both human society and the *societas rerum*, and from

these “extra-scholastic” sources develops standards of judgment of far greater importance than is commonly believed (Gramsci in Buttigieg, 1992: 211).

Thus Gramsci describes how personal household knowledge develops and is affected, first by the families’ social needs and then by the dominant educational system. Generations that develop funds of knowledge are intimately connected to children and families; the funds provide them with not only support but also standards of judgment as a way to continue and enhance their lives. This process exists, too, for those who are not part of school but go on to develop their own curriculum of life (Schubert, 1986), often through the “school of hard knocks.” Olmedo (1999) also initiated and supported such a process with Latinas who were constructing oral histories and narratives. They made choices and reflected on their lives based on what they believed would have value and relevance for the next generations. Gramsci’s reflection on standards of judgment relates to how we criticize the very conception of the world that the family provides, an aspect of critical pedagogy (Schubert, 1996).

Indexing Gramsci’s voice, educators such as Entwistle argue that Gramsci promotes conservative values in schooling by emphasizing discipline, rigour and organization, which are supposed to be conservative values and world views. Focusing on standards does not mean seeking a resonance with projects such as No Child Left Behind in the US. From Gramsci’s perspective, there is a political agenda towards which praxis may be directed and leaders may need to respond to efforts related to political action. Gramsci was intent on social revolution resulting from the formation of the historical bloc (Borg, Buttigieg and Mayo, 2002), that is, coalitions of groups and organizations that will ultimately bring about social justice. This process is in no way related to the reproduction of disparity that is the hallmark of conservative approaches to education.

In Notebook 4, note 18, “The technique of thinking”, Gramsci describes his vision:

I think that I have noted elsewhere the importance of the *techniques* of thinking in the construction of a pedagogical program; 4 here, again, one cannot make a comparison between the technique of thinking and the old rhetorics...The technique of thought will certainly not produce a great philosophy, but it will provide a criteria of judgment, and it will correct the deformities of the modes of thinking of common sense. It would be interesting to compare the *technique* of common sense –i.e. of the philosophy of the man on the street—with the technique of the most advanced modern thought (Gramsci in Buttigieg, 1996: 160, emphasis in original).

Gramsci makes this point very clearly: developing criteria of judgment is essential in the process of moving from common sense to good sense and, in the same way, critiquing funds of knowledge. He offers a starting point for curriculum inquiry, synthesizing his critical approach with the ethnographic funds of knowledge approach for the use of leadership development in workers' centres.

### **Gramsci-Inspired Organic Ethnographers of Knowledge**

The funds of knowledge approach inspired by Gramsci challenges us to create inquiry that develops the capacity of participants to be critically reflective about their cultural practices and possibilities for praxis. An organic ethnography of knowledge represents the synthesis of these perspectives and is explored here utilizing a curriculum development matrix based on William Pinar's *currere* (1994) and William Doll's (1993) postmodern proposal. The model critical curriculum inspired by Gramsci for peer educators is described at three levels: the personal, the commune and "collective man", representing curriculum spaces organized around Gramscian themes that function interactively (Zanoni, 2006). Learning activities can be planned for each level. Curriculum participants reflect various knowledge and skills with these themes, and while they may lead at some moments, in others they may be questioning, learning or challenging

## Knowledge

Gramsci values knowledge, which he equates with the facility to understand the history of subaltern domination. Knowledge is not neutral or universal but socially constructed for specific purposes—in Gramsci’s view, for the critical development and praxis of organic subaltern intellectuals. Buttigieg (1994: 130) comments on Gramsci’s approach to knowledge:

Gramsci’s originality manifests itself best in his inquiry, in this antidogmatic critical procedures, in the flexibility of his theoretical reflections, in his detailed attention to the historical specificity and the material particularity of every phenomenon he analyzes, and, above all, in the way in which in this work the pursuit of knowledge and the political struggle for social transformation converge into a single praxis. These Gramscian traits can be brought into relief and their significance assessed only through careful, patient analyses of the integral text of the prison notebooks.

Salamini (1974: 374) emphasizes Gramsci’s use of knowledge:

To speak of *social origin* of knowledge is simply making an empirical observation; in contrast, *social determination* of knowledge implies a critical posture toward it. More specifically, the social origin of knowledge emphasizes the relationship between knowledge and the totality of the social structure—presupposedly homogeneous—without any consideration of class structure and class conflict; social determination of knowledge emphasizes the relationship of knowledge and class structure, thus ultimately debunking its ideological pretensions and relativizing the validity of science and objectivity (emphasis in original).

Along with Gramsci, I clarify this distinction through curriculum to enhance the critical capacities of organic ethnographers of knowledge to create and communicate their experience.

Gramsci is prescient in acknowledging the core premise of the funds of knowledge approach when he states that every generation educates its young and this process is, at first, a struggle against the rudimentary biological forces in humans, then is carried to the socially constructed level of the conception of the world. In Gramsci's view, one important starting point for the organic intellectuals is a critical approach to the rudimentary, instinctual, common sense or traditional concept of the world.

At the personal space of the proposed curriculum matrix, Pinar's *currere* focuses on the progressive/regressive process of reflection on learning in life with questions such as: what learning do I need? How will this learning propel my life in the future? How have the learning experiences in my life brought me to the place I am today? Doll's postmodern perspective presents the idea of rigour in curriculum inquiry that Gramsci valued in his high expectations of the organic intellectual and conscious leader. A Gramscian organic ethnography of knowledge expands the family-household unit of analysis to include the worker in transnational spaces. This unit is constructed around the close relationships the workers have or will develop through social interaction, the family living with them in their current home, and their family or social network of origin in the place they were born or have lived—all based on the development of strong, reciprocal contacts. The workers participating in curriculum activities create maps of these social networks and identify the funds of knowledge that exist in these relationships.

### **Culture and Spontaneity**

Developing reflective ethnography skills in participants is another curriculum objective. This will provide curriculum participants with the necessary tools to criticize the

traditional conception of the world that they have grown up with and which circulates in their social networks. One essential task of the funds of knowledge approach is to challenge the binary of dominant culture/subaltern culture that Gonzalez and his colleagues initially presented. It is well recognized that that in the US the dominant culture subjugates newly arrived Latina/os. However, listening to Gramsci, one should not accept a subaltern cultural perspective at face value as authentic, true and outside the workings of hegemony. The subaltern culture, too, must be examined and criticized in order to discover which values are mere reactions to dominant hegemony and which might propel group agency, fostering good sense and enabling social change. Gonzalez and Moll (2002) share insights into the potential of this ethnographic process with their example of the teacher study groups they led during their inquiry; in these groups, participants talked about their relationships with families, how to make meaning of the interactions, and their roles in the process of analysing and creating knowledge.

The concept of culture has been elaborated and well defined in recent educational inquiries by Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) and Gutierrez and Correa-Chavez (2006). Their contribution is to criticize a hegemonic view of monolithic subaltern culture and to discuss the concept of people's participation in cultural practices that are local, specific, hybrid and based on history (Gutierrez and Correa-Chavez, 2006). They recognize the social dynamic of milieu addressed in the funds of knowledge approach and are careful to challenge interpretations that over-generalize predictions of individuals' behaviour based on participant observation in immigrant communities.

Their challenge to dominant scientific methods that essentialize immigrant characteristics is to develop a viewpoint and methods that can recognize a balance and dialogue between individuals, their identities and practices, and the culture in which they participate that reflects struggle and solidarity. Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003: 22) state:

A cultural-historical approach assumes that individual development and disposition must be understood in (not separate from) cultural and historical context. In other words, we talk about patterns of people's approaches to given situations without reducing the explanation to a claim that they do what they do *because* they are migrant farm workers or English-language learners. We attend to individuals' linguistic and cultural-historical repertoires as well as to their contributions to practices that connect with other activities in which they commonly engage (emphasis in original).

Repertoires of practice for immigrant workers participating in workers' centres would also include developing skills as organic ethnographers of knowledge and describing, as Gramsci proposes, the extent to which the individuals explore and adopt this approach in their organizing work and how they would criticize spontaneity. Gonzalez and Moll (2002) reinforce this point by focusing, theoretically and methodologically, on understanding how research participants use their resources, particularly funds of knowledge, to form and sustain their lives.

Gramsci's repeated use of the term "rudimentary" bears examination; meanings of rudimentary include initial, elementary, primitive, embryonic, vestigial or incipient. Gramsci chose not to judge biological instincts or conceptions of the world as inherently flawed and useless, but rather as a starting point for an organic ethnography of knowledge that would lead to higher and more refined praxis. Here, his vision of the organic intellectual seeking the good sense identity lying beneath apparent diversion and seeing substantial diversity below the surface of unity is a fruitful pursuit in reflexive thinking.

The level of the commune follows in the curriculum matrix, where Pinar's *currere* proposes the analytical process, while Doll's postmodern perspective suggests relations and recursion. Gramsci leads our thinking in describing the importance of the process of moving in directions of feeling, understanding and knowing for organic ethnographers



of knowledge. Gramsci highlights the synthesis of the affective and cognitive domains in an iterative process between organic ethnographers and their participants. For Gonzalez et al., the essential and perhaps defining feature of social networks as a conduit of knowledge is *confianza* or mutual trust, which is the emotional current surrounding the praxis of reciprocity. *Confianza* is simultaneously the entry into and result of the functioning of these networks, and Gramsci's insight resonates harmoniously with their inquiry.

Here, organic ethnographers of knowledge would propose and debate together their critical analysis of the functioning of their social networks of reciprocity in order to propose new actions in the forging of a new path as a social group. Leaders of workers' centres describe the process of creating group norms of behaviour in neighbourhoods where day-labourers gather to seek work. Their presence, as workers legitimately seeking work and offering valuable service to the community while upholding these norms, challenges stereotypical representations of workers as drunken and dirty "illegals" by dominant group residents and neighbours. They would benefit from examining Apitzsch's (2002; also Mayo, 1995) description of subaltern culture in multicultural settings as a double mirror reflecting their cultural practices developing in response to the pressure of hegemonic formation. Analysis, recursion and relations may be promoted through curriculum activities that feature Gramsci's consideration of deduction and induction, identification and distinction, destruction of the old along with positive demonstration. Curriculum questions may include: how have I identified with our cultural practices and where has this identification brought us? How might I consider my distinction from the cultural practices and what use might distinction be in enhancing the power and knowledge of our social network?

## **Judgment**

At the level of "collective man", Gramsci proposes the importance of criteria of judgment and standards of judgment as a means by which to criticize and recreate the

distorted thought processes associated with common sense, most particularly the subaltern concept of the world formed through the deficit views ascribed to workers by the dominant culture. Gramsci does not tell us what these criteria or standards of judgment are, but a starting point would surely be a deconstruction and recognition of the subjugated knowledges (Foucault, 2003) learned by the curriculum participants as their history. Gonzalez and colleagues (1995: 469) add this reflection:

The dialogue of the ethnographic interview can provide a foundation for the development of critical consciousness. The discourse that the interview sparks highlights the theoretical assertion that knowledge is not found but constructed, and that it is constructed in and through discourse.

Buttigieg (1986: 15) also links Gramsci and Foucault when he states, “[f]urthermore, the politics of Gramsci’s work, in effect, rearranges the traditional relationship between scholarship—i.e. the system for the production of knowledge—and ‘truth’ in a manner that directly threatens what Foucault calls the regime of truth”.

Gramsci, at the most inclusive level, demands consideration of history-politics and organic ethnographers of knowledge should strive to provide systematic education through conscious leadership. This consciousness education directs, cleanses, unifies and is historically-effective. Organic ethnographers of knowledge may consider their definitions and actions in terms of the concepts that Gramsci presents as part of a dialogic review of their impact and effectiveness.

Pinar’s *currere* proposes synthesis in this space and Doll’s postmodern perspective suggests richness. Organic ethnographers of knowledge are supported in partnerships with researchers and organizations to promote the skills and capacities of immigrant adult learners. This space offers the possibility of expressing Lather’s (1986) concept of catalytic validity, where openly ideological inquiry is valid in the way that it promotes the reflection, development and self-identified goals of organic ethnographers of

knowledge. Gramsci offers a recursive insight in asking these intellectuals to interrogate their attitude to their role and function. Acknowledging their organizational function, he asks them to consider whether they are truly organic, or paternalistic in their approach to the commune? Do they truly lead, or are they servile? This process seems to return to the personal but may also present an opening for the development of new leaders, new organic ethnographers of knowledge, to begin their reflective inquiry and for a shift to the new generation, interrogating the ever-changing relations, *confianza* and reciprocity expressed in response to the global economy.

## **Conclusion**

Health and safety problem-solving at work is one literacy that is crucial for the survival and progress of immigrant Latina/o and low-wage workers in the United States. All skills and knowledge operate in a framework of workers' conceptions of the world, based mostly on culturally-grounded common sense. Leaders in curriculum, advocating an ethnographic approach to subaltern Latina/o families and their education, use discovery and awareness of culturally-based funds of knowledge as a basis for learning. Gramsci's challenge to this approach with Latina/o adults shows that however valuable these funds of knowledge are, they developed spontaneously and still must be critiqued by organic intellectuals for their elements of common sense that may constrain the agency and praxis of educational participants.

Gramsci's perspective applied to funds of knowledge created in workers' centres is an inspiration to design participatory action research for organic ethnographers of knowledge in these sites of mass migrant formation. The issue of health and safety at work has unique attributes in that related social discourses (Ives, 2004) may address survival, disposability, worker's identity, investments in the future, fairness and an appeal to social justice that may develop persuasive hegemonic circulation.

Participants in workers' centres, led by organic ethnographers of knowledge, will be engaged in a critique of spontaneous funds of knowledge and the development of judgment criteria to guide workers from Gramsci's conception of common sense to good sense in the discovery of agency and the creation of knowledge through praxis. Researchers participating in this process will guide and document a discussion of the triangulation of Gramsci's view of adult learning, repertoires of cultural practices manifested in funds of knowledge, and the value of health and safety as a hegemonic discourse.

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## Security Intelligence and Left Intellectuals: Australia, 1970

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## Security Intelligence and Left Intellectuals: Australia, 1970

### Abstract

In 1970 the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) identified the ideas of Antonio Gramsci as one of the root causes of dissent, opposition and cultural ferment. This document is an example of ASIO's concern about Marxist intellectuals and their Gramscian links.

# **SECURITY INTELLIGENCE AND LEFT INTELLECTUALS: AUSTRALIA, 1970.**

## **Rowan Cahill**

The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) was established in 1949 following Cold War pressure from the USA and UK. Modelled on Britain's MI5, its roots were in the intelligence community that developed in Australia from World War 1 onwards, in particular the trenchantly anti-communist military intelligence sector. During Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War (1962–72), universities became centres of opposition to the war and to the selective system of conscription introduced in 1964 to facilitate Australian military deployments in Southeast Asia. Ideologically in favour of the war, broadly suspicious of or hostile towards any challenge to conventional conservative politics and culture, ASIO responded, targeting dissident students and academics (for details, see Cain, 1994, 1983; McKnight, 1994; Capp, 1993).

On university campuses students and academics variously campaigned, organised, mobilised protestors and engaged in intellectual activity (research, addressing meetings and teach-ins, writing, publishing) that challenged the Australian government's justification of the war and conscription. In the process, radical scholarship burgeoned as analysis of the war, its origins and rationale, led to wider social and political critique. So for example, a Socialist Scholars' Conference at Sydney University in May 1970 drew between 300 and 400 participants for each of four days (21–24 May). As an ASIO report of the event noted, 85 per cent of

participants appeared to be academics or students; there were also a small number of trade unionists, recognised “principally because of their conservative dress and neat appearance” (ASIO, 1970a).

ASIO responded to the challenge (or threat, from their point of view): students and academics were recruited as informants; and break-ins, telephone-taps, postal intercepts and surveillance were used to collect raw intelligence data. Reports and briefing papers were produced; apart from their internal and official use, these were also selectively released to right-wing politicians and journalists, and to anti-communist organisations such as B.A. Santamaria’s National Civic Council and the Congress for Cultural Freedom. According to the ASIO world-view, the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) was at the root of the dissent, opposition and cultural ferment (see Cain, 1994: 200–04; McKnight 1994: 227–41).

The document reproduced below was created by ASIO in March 1970 (ASIO, 1970b). It has come into the public domain with the passing of the mandatory 30-year withholding period pertaining to official documents. Deletions in the text were variously made by ASIO under the exemption categories described by Section 33 of the Commonwealth of Australia Archives Act (1983) (for explanation of permitted deletions, see Fact Sheet 52); capitalisation of names replicates the original. The document is of interest as an example of a security organisation’s concern, in the context of a democracy, about Marxist intellectuals, and also for its Gramscian link. The literary style and mannerisms of the document suggest that the author had an academic background, or was, at the time, an academic.

“Communist Party of Australia Interest in Marxist Academics” reflects a number of ASIO concerns about Vietnam War-era dissent, opposition and the attendant cultural ferment. An ASIO view was that Australia was headed for “internal war”. According to this view, orthodox Australian communism was wedded to an insurrection or coup d’etat; however, among Vietnam-era leftists were those who sought nothing less than the complete restructuring of society through the use of urban guerrilla warfare. In developing this understanding ASIO tended “to accept at

face value” some of the Left’s “wilder fantasies”. Another ASIO fear was that international Trotskyists and anarchists would push the politics of the Australian left further to the left, so that revolutionary politics would become part of mainstream political discourse. Also alarming for ASIO was that the CPA was changing, transforming ideologically from its traditional authoritarianism and conservatism, and weakening its links with the Soviet Union. Of particular concern was that the party was endeavouring to act in a broad-left way, building relationships with other people and organisations, seeking what ASIO described as “great” and “fundamental” social change (McKnight, 1994: 232–4).

Of the eight “socialist academics” referred to in the first paragraph of the document, only Davidson, O’Neill, Playford and Wertheim were academics at the time; the younger group (Cahill, Kirsner, Laver, Osmond) comprised activists who had been prominent in the radical student movement during the 1960s (see Armstrong 2001; Gordon, 1970). What linked all those named was their involvement in radical intellectual debate and political views that had not precluded them from working with elements within the CPA. Cahill, Davidson, Kirsner and O’Neill had been members of the Editorial Board of the CPA journal *Australian Left Review* (ALR) since 1969. Playford was a significant contributor to the journal and acted as a “silent”, unacknowledged, advisor. Both Davidson (1969) and Playford (1962) had undertaken major scholarly studies of the CPA.

ALR commenced publication as a bi-monthly in 1966; it aimed at a broad audience. Editorially “no subject or line of thought (was) regarded as beyond the pale, whether or not it was in accordance with the ‘Party line’ or the prevailing theoretical orthodoxy” (Aarons 1993: 156). Between 1967 and 1968, it published a series of articles by Alastair Davidson under the title “Gramsci’s Marxism”; in 1968 these formed the basis of his pioneering study *Antonio Gramsci: The Man, His Ideas*.

The ASIO document refers to Eric Aarons and Bernie Taft; both were key members of the ALR editorial board and leading forces for change in the CPA, particularly as intellectuals influenced by developments in European Marxist thought. (Both

Aarons and Taft later wrote accounts of their lives within the CPA; see Aarons, 1993; Taft, 1994). During 1967, ALR published in book form the research report of the team headed by Radovan Richta that had helped to shape the short-lived “human face” socialism of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, extinguished by the Soviet invasion of August 1968 (Richta, 1967). The document also refers to Robin Blackburn and Roger Garaudy; both of whom visited Australia during 1970 for public and private meetings, courtesy of ALR. Professor Garaudy was under surveillance by ASIO during his week-long visit during which he mainly addressed academic audiences on topics relating to contemporary Marxist philosophy (see ASIO, 1970c; Garaudy, 1976).

In the final paragraph, the document author discusses developing tensions and conflicts within the CPA. The observations were prescient. In 1971 the CPA split and the pro-Soviet interests formed the Socialist Party of Australia.

By 1991, declining membership levels and finances, and philosophical changes within the Party, had led to the CPA winding itself up; and in 1996 the Socialist Party of Australia renamed itself the Communist Party of Australia.

## **Document**

SECRET

AUSTRALIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION [sic]

No. 2/70

13th March, 1970

### COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA INTEREST IN MARXIST ACADEMICS

The Communist Party of Australia (CPA) has, for some years, pursued a policy of drawing certain socialist academics closer to its fold. The personalities involved include John PLAYFORD, Alastair DAVIDSON and Douglas KIRSNER of Melbourne; Dan O’NEILL, Peter WERTHEIM and Brian LAVER of Brisbane; and Rowan CAHILL and Warren OSMOND of Sydney. The private ideologies of these people centre on differing schools of thought, some drawing inspiration from GRAMSCI or MARCUSE, some from



TROTSKY. Without exception, however, their views are Marxist, explicitly revolutionary, and to the left of those espoused by the CPA.

Fundamentally, these academics are not as issue-oriented as the Party, and tend more to relate specific points of grievance to their relatively systematic personal ideologies. On the whole, their emotional commitment to a Marxist (usually not Marxist-Leninist) world-view, and their inclination away from democratic centralism and towards a seemingly anarchic individualism, substantially reduces their effectiveness as a potential revolutionary force, and, paradoxically, reinforces their ultimate dependence on what they doubtless regard as the “reformist” CPA, with its useful organisational apparatus.

Thus, the Party’s relationship with these academics plays a dual role: firstly, it allows the CPA to tap the intellectual resources of these persons, and thereby to gain, not only a broader view of the common, basic ideology, Marxism, but also a channel of influence into the Universities, which are seen as the breeding-grounds of future social leaders, and (what will be equally important for the Party if the influence of the academics takes stronger hold) the political “Red bases”, the points from which “the revolution” will be exported into society; secondly, the relationship gives the academics the benefit of the Party’s organisational capabilities (including finance, space in Party publications, and (the faintest pretence of) a mass base). [sic]

With its present dearth of intellectual Party members, the CPA can ill afford to lose the goodwill of these academics, and therefore accepts a certain amount of criticism from them. From one point of view, the essence of the relationship is that the academics are long on critique and short on prescription, while the Party seems to have the opposite tendency.

It is for these reasons the Party is beginning to take considerable pains to ensure a continuation of the relationship, and the latest manifestation of this concern has been the recent decision by Eric AARONS and Bernard TAFT to invite Roger GARAUDY to visit Australia. GARAUDY, a leading Marxist theoretician (particularly in the Christian-Marxist “dialogue” field), was excluded from the Politburo of the Communist Party of France in February, 1970, because of his public condemnations of Soviet actions in Czechoslovakia.

[.....] plans to visit Australia in August-September 1970. In addition [.....] Ernest FISCHER and Franz MAREK, two important “independently minded” Austrian Marxists, [.....].

[.....] Perry ANDERSON, an acquaintance of Robin BLACKBURN’s [.....] ANDERSON was, in 1969, the editor of the British periodical “New Left Review” (Trotskyist-oriented). It is planned to raise \$1000 to cover ANDERSON’s travelling expenses, of which [.....] has already indicated that he can raise \$200.

The CPA leadership (operating primarily through TAFT and Eric AARONS) probably sees several dividends accruing to the Party from these visits. Firstly, it is hoped that the presence in Australia of Marxist intellectuals who agree

with the pro-Czech stand of the CPA leadership will help to draw support away from the pro-Soviet group within the Party. The sense of international isolation which many Party members undoubtedly feel may be sensibly diminished by the knowledge that they enjoy a measure of overseas support from outstanding individual Communists. Secondly, the CPA's "coalition of the left" policy (of which the cementing of friendly relationships with radical and revolutionary socialist theoreticians in the universities is becoming the focal point) may receive a fillip from the prestige of people who may be seen as international advocates of "left co-operation" (with reference particularly to BLACKBURN and ANDERSON). In connection with the "coalition of the left", CPA cultivation of Australian Trotskyists may be advanced through Party sponsorship of overseas intellectuals possessing Trotskyist inclinations.

From the Party's point of view, Australia is currently suffering from a severe shortage of Marxist philosophers, and consequently there is a low level of dialogue among Marxists themselves, and between Marxists and others. The position in Australia is therefore in marked contrast to Europe, from which all the visitors, so far, are to come. The Party (and its academic sympathisers) will no doubt be hoping that the visitors will have the effect of improving the current position in Australia by their example – by their prominence in the field and by the experience they have in dialogue.

The CPA, however, may soon find itself having to strike a firm balance between two sections in the Party – the "liberals", much of the youth, and the strongest advocates of co-operation with Trotskyists etc. on the one hand, and pro-Soviet members and the trade union base of the Party, on the other. While the overseas visitors may attract support for the leadership, they may also aggravate the tensions and strains already evident in the Party by further alienating members of the second category. The problem of balancing the claims of these two groups will probably be an important question in the affairs of the CPA for several years to come.

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January 2008

## Hegemony and Education. Gramsci, Post-Marxism and Radical Democracy Revisited (Review)

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## Hegemony and Education. Gramsci, Post-Marxism and Radical Democracy Revisited (Review)

### Abstract

Review of Hegemony and Education. Gramsci, Post-Marxism and Radical Democracy Revisited Deb J. Hill, Lexington Books, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc, Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth, 2007.

***Hegemony and Education. Gramsci, Post-Marxism and Radical Democracy Revisited.* Deb J. Hill, Lexington Books, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc, Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth, 2007**

**Reviewed by Mike Donaldson, Sociology, University of Wollongong.**

Deb Hill proficiently and persuasively engages with the principal exponents of post-Marxism through a careful consideration of Antonio Gramsci's early works and his *Prison Notebooks*. She does this to defend socialism against claims that it should reconstitute itself as a radical form of democracy, or disappear.

Hill identifies the key attitudes of the post-Marxists as expressed over more than 20 years in the writings of Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Sue Golding, Colin Mercer, Glynn Daly, Anna Marie Smith, Norberto Bobbio and Jacob Torfing. They developed post-Marxism because they have discovered in "tired" and "antiquated" Marxism, a "fundamentalism" that must be eradicated using the tools of post-structuralism, the later Wittgenstein and post-Heideggerian hermeneutics. "Traditional" socialist theory is "closed" and "claustrophobic" and commits against diversity and difference a symbolic violence that can best be combated by the development of an "anti-essentialist stand" which is the *sine qua non* of a new vision for and of the left. The concept of "collectivity", too, must be rejected. Social unity is unsustainable, illusory and antithetical to real democracy. Not surprisingly, then, post-Marxists deny the salience of classes as key historical and political forces acting through their political parties and other organisations. The task of revolution is superseded by the political project of "radicalizing" the modern democratic tradition, of developing a rapprochement with key liberal ideas that moves beyond both socialism and liberalism toward a "Third Way".

Having identified post-Marxism's key contentions, Hill commences her defence of socialist theory by clearly and systematically restating Gramsci's "overarching objective". This was no less than the development of humankind's self-creative

capacity to build a qualitatively richer human culture and fuller human relationships against a capitalism engineered into everyday patterns of living, thinking, talking and feeling. Even after the destruction of the Italian left and the triumph of fascism, the *only* way that Gramsci could see this happening, was through the sustained efforts of the history- and culture-making proletariat to produce its own new and expansive hegemony.

Among many other things, this required the proletariat to replace its predominantly alienated personality with a socialised and liberated psyche, with an active class-consciousness subversive of existing values, understandings and practices. This would contain an integral vision of life and its own philosophy and morality.

According to Gramsci, the “initial act of liberation” to achieve this socialist hegemony was for socialists to associate with like-minded individuals in an organisation that in order to be revolutionary, would be moral, encouraging a liberty of the mind, a capacity for tolerance, self-discipline and a disregard for self-interest. This association would promote study and research and logical thought sensitive to the non-rational and aesthetic dimensions of knowing. It would build solidarity, democracy and reciprocity in a collectivity that could only be as strong and effective as the character and practices of its individual members because the proletariat’s new progressive hegemony was not a project of the future, but was how it lived now. For Gramsci, human agency and self-capability was *the* central feature of this new form of political party, this new “collective will” in which everyone actively participates intellectually and organisationally. The quality of the relationships within the party would determine the worth of the socialism that it would help to construct.

Arrayed against the counter-capitalist movement were the extensive and powerful civic, political and economic organisations of the bourgeoisie, a reality that the post-Marxists largely ignore. To defeat them, the proletariat, through an “interior revolution”, develops new ways of thinking to create a communist movement, and Hill brilliantly expresses what Gramsci thought this new way of thinking involved.



In a nutshell, because the concerted application of voluntary effort on the physical world reveals the future, “new thinking” requires, as its starting point, involvement in human sensuous activity, in an open-ended, first-hand critical engagement with the concrete. It would accentuate human agency, subjectivity, in its interaction with the objective historical and political situation, considering its effects critically and analytically. And yet, this dialectical approach is synthesising, drawing together disparate and discrete elements, seeing their organic interconnectedness and relatedness within the social totality. In this process, new thinking restores the balance of head and heart, mind and emotion, feeling and judgement. Revolutionaries, becoming critics and activists simultaneously, learn to reflect critically on their personal and social realities, recognising that their selves and their thinking are part of the problem.

With clarity and insight, Hill rigorously applies the elements of Gramsci’s new thinking, as briefly summarised here, to the post-Marxists themselves. She finds that their thinking does not measure up at all. She explains that the key concepts that post-Marxists use, such as “positionality”, “inclusion” and “incommensurability”, lack explanatory ability and represent “a naïve under-theorisation of the nature of power and...the abandonment of the concept of hegemony”. However, Hill freely admits that the post-Marxists sometimes get some of it right, but when they do she convincingly shows how Gramsci expressed it more clearly, without abandoning Marxism.

If the post-Marxists have any credibility in any sort of left in any country, it is largely because of their regular invocation of the name of Antonio Gramsci, a profound and highly respected thinker undeniably of the left but definitely neither reformist nor Stalinist. Hill reminds us of Joseph Buttigieg’s comment over a decade ago that there is “a certain discomfort on the part of the [post-Marxist] authors with the fact that Gramsci was a Marxist; a certain anxiety (although not always explicit) to show that the best elements of Gramsci’s thought are those that can be collocated within the ambit of currently fashionable ‘post’-discourses: post-structuralism, post-Marxism, post-modernism”. What Hill’s careful scholarship reveals beyond any

doubt, is that post-Marxism is not “based on”, “inspired by” or “in the tradition of” Gramsci, as the post-Marxists claim, but that it is thoroughly and fundamentally anti-Gramscian.

Hill concludes by pointing out that the post-Marxists’ understanding of Marxism itself is “alarmingly facile and shallow”, presenting “an extraordinarily simplistic and pernicious picture of Marxism”. But in the end, it does not really matter what the post-Marxists have said about Marxism. As Hill reminds us, Gramsci was very clear that the test of a theory is in its effects on the historical and concrete world, and he strongly insisted that ideas that bear only a “theoretical relationship” to the concrete are “illusory”. In more than 20 years, post-Marxism has existed almost entirely in a few university departments largely in the metropolises of the northern hemisphere, and it can claim Tony Blair as its finest fruit. Post-structuralism and post-modernism, no longer in fashion, have run their course. For all the good reasons that Deb Hill has carefully explored in her book, post-Marxism is expiring along with them.

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## Del Gobierno del Pueblo a la Rebelión Popular: Historia del Partido Comunista 1970–1990 (Review)

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## Del Gobierno del Pueblo a la Rebelión Popular: Historia del Partido Comunista 1970–1990 (Review)

### Abstract

Review of Del Gobierno del Pueblo a la Rebelión Popular: Historia del Partido Comunista 1970–1990. Francisco Herreros, Editorial Siglo xxi, Santiago, Chile, 2005.

***Del Gobierno del Pueblo a la Rebelión Popular: Historia del Partido Comunista 1970–1990.* Francisco Herreros, Editorial Siglo xxi, Santiago, Chile, 2005.**

**Reviewed by Rene Leal Hurtado, SIT, Santiago.**

En su recorrido por dos décadas, 1970–1990, este trabajo revisa la historia del Partido Comunista de Chile (PCCH) como parte del proceso de cambios en las relaciones de clase y las subsecuentes transformaciones políticas que reproducen una hegemonía neo liberal que perdura hasta hoy, esto es, mas allá del espacio de tiempo que este trabajo considera.

Al revisar este trabajo, se debiera señalar primero que el libro de Francisco Herreros tiene varios meritos. Primero, es la historia del Partido Comunista de Chile inserta en un periodo histórico dramático de la historia de Chile. Herreros muestra la participación del PCCH construyendo el camino chileno hacia el socialismo, vía *sui generis* hasta entonces, situando al lector en ese transito histórico en una forma viva, en la perspectiva y la magnitud de la tarea que se proponía la Unidad Popular (alianza de Izquierda encabezada por Salvador Allende que gana el gobierno en 1970). Luego, ocurrido el golpe de estado apoyado—como demuestra Herreros—por la administración norteamericana, la CIA y la burguesía chilena, el trabajo es agudo en develar la política de sobrevivencia y resistencia del PCCH a niveles “épicas”, lucha que dialécticamente transforma tal resistencia en ofensiva revolucionaria para recuperar la democracia en el país junto a otros diversos actores sociales y políticos que aspiraban a recuperar la democracia.

Junto con ello, hay otros aspectos mas que se deberían destacar respecto a como Herreros ve, desde esta “crónica histórica” que usa principalmente las herramientas metodologicas de la investigación periodística, estos 20 años del PCCH. En primer lugar se deben considerar las dimensiones ético-valóricas de su lucha, esto es, de su dignidad y responsabilidad ante el pueblo. Aquí el lector podrá encontrar un emocionante relato

acerca de la defensa de la vida en el país, y la defensa del partido ante el intento de Pinochet de aniquilarlo, especialmente entre 1976 y 1978, lo que dejó saldos de horror con direcciones políticas desaparecidas, cientos de dirigentes y militantes asesinados y torturados. Todo esto parte de la horrorosa y generalizada violación sistemática de los derechos humanos bajo un estado terrorista que incluyó desapariciones de personas, fusilamientos sin juicio previo, detenciones ilegales, campos de concentración y exterminio, tortura y exilio para más de un millón de personas.

Herreros refleja esta pesadilla de casi dos décadas y su libro se convierte así en un testimonio de aquella época y en un verdadero homenaje a las víctimas y a los que resistieron luchando contra la dictadura. Pero obviamente esta parte de la historia debía estar relacionada con las causas de tanto horror. Esta perspectiva de la vida, sobrevivencia y resistencia del PCCH va acompañada por el estudio del proceso de discusión en el partido respecto a la derrota y a lo que venía por delante, que hacer para recuperar la democracia y avanzar nuevamente hacia una perspectiva de cambio social profundo.

He aquí la ligazón entre dos situaciones y por ende, dos concepciones de la línea política del PCCH atendiendo tanto a lo que pasó como a los desafíos que se presentaban ante una dictadura cruel y la reconstrucción del capitalismo en Chile bajo la modalidad neo liberal de acumulación de capital y concentración de riqueza. El pasaje entre “el gobierno del pueblo” y “la rebelión popular” es así conectado y minuciosamente disectado. La política de la Rebelión Popular (PRP) se convierte así en la estrategia del PCCH que atendiendo a lo ocurrido entre 1970 y 1973 plantea los caminos político-militares para terminar con la dictadura.

Pasar a la ofensiva significó recoger largas horas de discusión en un proceso de crítica y auto-crítica interna que, junto y principalmente a la lucha en el interior del país, fueron la base de la PRP. Esta discusión y auto-crítica son relatadas y analizadas por Herreros quien desde el drama de la derrota política y militar, hace posible la comprensión del desarrollo de la política de la Rebelión Popular (PRP) de masas en términos de dos

aspectos principales: en primer lugar, de la concepción de la historia de Chile y de sus Fuerzas Armadas (FF AA). En segundo lugar, en relación a la formación de estas en el marco de la guerra fría bajo la doctrina de la seguridad nacional y la articulación entre los intereses norteamericanos y la burguesía criolla para provocar una ofensiva contra-revolucionaria armada. Ambos elementos, la historia de Chile y de su burguesía, y la de las FF AA influidas por las políticas del Pentágono después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, constituyeron un combustible capaz de generar desde las llamas a un personaje como Pinochet, y revelar el conflicto agudo de clases a quienes, como Allende y la dirigencia del PCCH hasta 1973, confiaron en la historia democrática del país y en la constitucionalidad de las FF AA. Pero más allá de los duros momentos de esta discusión, este trabajo intenta mostrar primero el valor de los comunistas en darla y de ahí integrar a su política elementos ausentes o relativamente ausentes en su política, como fue el elemento militar y dentro de esto, su visión de la doctrina que nutre a las FF AA.

Junto con esto cabe destacar otro aspecto del proceso de continuidad y cambio, de ajuste de la política y vida del PCCH a un nuevo escenario. Este ángulo tiene que ver con cambios en la identidad y cultura del partido. El duro aprendizaje de los comunistas, un aprendizaje desde el dolor y los efectos de la reacción de la clase dominante, moldea a un militante distinto, no mejor ni peor que el anterior, sino distinto como distinta eran las condiciones sociales y políticas en las que se vivía.

Herreros habla primero del militante que construía el socialismo hasta 1973, se podría decir, en un estadio de avance contra-hegemónico, de construcción de sueños en la vida de la Izquierda. Ese militante da paso durante la dictadura al “combatiente revolucionario”, al de los dientes apretados de la clandestinidad, de las acciones audaces, de la mirada cómplice en la propaganda o la acción militar en la calle, del combatiente de la resistencia, el sujeto militante de la política de Rebelión Popular. Herreros no los contrapone a ambos sujetos pues esto se entendería como asumir dos partidos distintos, dos visiones totalmente opuestas. Sin duda que esto puede ser interpretado así. Pero eso respondería a una visión esencialista más que marxista. Herreros, al parecer en total conciencia del hecho, rechaza una visión etapista y cortada entre periodos históricos que

deforman la historia y su característica dialéctica, lo que a su vez llevaría a visiones en oposición dentro de un mismo partido que no ayudarían a su unidad y necesaria supervivencia, esta vez no desde la tortura sino desde la ideología.

Junto con esto, el no ver estos sujetos militantes en oposición, muestra una concepción de identidad por diferenciación, no por oposición. Esto es, una visión mas apegada a una perspectiva de construcción histórica de identidad cultural y política que rechaza, como diría Larrain, una concepción esencialista de la identidad, que entiende la identidad como congelada en el tiempo, como no afectada por el devenir histórico. Este aspecto del cambio en el PCCH y esta interpretación, significa asumir el cambio cultural e identitario de los comunistas dentro de la perspectiva del materialismo histórico, de procesos de clases que se relacionan, que se forman y deforman, lo que incluye también y centralmente su fisonomía cultural. La condición de comunistas no ha cambiado, pero los cambios en las relaciones de clases y del régimen político implicaron cambios en la cultura y la política que esculpen sujetos sociales distintos, militantes distintos ante estímulos, relaciones, luchas y escenarios nuevos.

Pero junto con eso, se debe constatar que el libro no elude presentar las diferencias dentro del PCCH que existieron en el proceso de cambios desde una política desde el gobierno a una política de resistencia a una dictadura. Ni elude presentar el debate y la crisis cuando un frente del partido, como lo fue el Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez (FPMR), clave en la implementación de la política militar y referente popular desde 1983 hasta fines de la dictadura, deja al partido y hacen su propio camino. Expresión de visiones opuestas respecto al carácter del partido y su política ya presentes a fines de los 1970s, luego, diferencias respecto a la forma de implementación de la lucha armada dentro de la PRP, a que significaba “sublevación” respecto a “insurrección” nacional, llevaron a una crisis que si bien no dividió al partido, le afecto subjetivamente.

Sin embargo, si uno sigue el relato y el análisis del autor, puede darse cuenta que el PCCH podía sobrevivir a esa crisis si sobrevivió a la mas terrible, la de la derrota y el intento de exterminio en los 1970s y también a los intentos por renovarlo desde el Euro



comunismo y la social democracia pos moderna. Como me lo comentara alguna vez Lautaro Carmona, Secretario General del partido, esa si fue una crisis, pero no solo de dimensiones políticas e ideológicas, sino sobre todo humanas. La voluntad por superar diferencias en consideración de la necesaria unidad del partido y de comprender que al partido y su política se le debe entender en un proceso de continuidad y cambio no exento de errores, permite no solo que el partido sobreviva, sino que, por ejemplo, no reniegue de su lealtad hacia Allende ni a la contribución de la PRP al fin de la dictadura.

Contrario a todo eclecticismo, la historia entendida como la interacción de relaciones sociales no lineales, no teleológicas ni deterministas, sino a procesos conteniendo elementos del pasado y otros adquiridos, puede sintetizar lo anterior y lo actual y en ese movimiento rearticular la lucha por cambios democráticos y hacia la justicia social manteniendo la relevancia y la contribución de un partido como el PCCH.

Hasta aquí, es claro que lo que se trata de mostrar es que este trabajo es una apreciable contribución a los estudios de ciencias políticas y de sociología en tanto revisa acontecimientos trascendentes para la teoría y practica política en las ultimas dos décadas de la guerra fría, donde Chile fue auscultado por el mundo no solo por el intento de llevar adelante la “Vía Chilena al Socialismo”, sino por la brutal dictadura que la sucedió y la radical implementación del modelo neo liberal que haría mas tarde su camino en el mundo partiendo por la experiencia pionera desde este rincón del mundo.

Pero Herreros no se queda solo en el estudio de la superestructura político-ideológica ni en el relato histórico sin considerar los aspectos materiales de la dinámica histórica. El autor entiende esto como vinculado, como causa y efecto de las transformaciones en la formación de clases. Herreros hace un interesante análisis del proceso de transformación de las relaciones capitalistas en Chile, del cambio económico, ideológico-cultural y político que implica el neoliberalismo que traen Hayek y Friedman a estas tierras. En este sentido, el trabajo al respecto de Tomas Moulian (“Chile Actual, Anatomía de un Mito”), fue una gran contribución para la discusión que Herreros presenta en este libro. El autor habla del “ladrillazo neoliberal” que no muchos se esperaban. Privatizaciones,

desregulación laboral y liberalización del mercado interno abren la economía chilena al mercado mundial de par en par y barren con el proyecto de sustitución de importaciones o “desarrollista” que caracterizó la economía chilena por casi 35 años. Pero peor aun, terminan abruptamente con el programa de transformaciones sociales impulsado por la Unidad Popular, muy bien presentado por Herreros aquí. El capítulo 2 es rico en información y análisis de este proceso de recomposición del capitalismo en Chile.

Pero junto considerar las fortalezas de este libro, es necesario puntualizar ciertos aspectos que no están o que hacen, en alguna medida, incompleto algunos análisis aquí expuestos.

Primero que nada, es necesario señalar que no existe un relato exhaustivo a la crítica desde militantes del partido que sufrían el exilio en Europa respecto al carácter de clases del partido y a su concepción marxista de las relaciones capitalistas. Los intentos de división del partido por parte de estos sectores no son estudiados exhaustivamente tampoco. Ni es examinado en profundidad el aporte de estos ex militantes comunistas a la formación de la actual alianza de gobierno y al soporte ideológico que el carácter pos moderno de su pensamiento brindaron a la unidad del centro político con el Partido Socialista y otros derivados también de la izquierda que excluyeron a los comunistas. Mas aun, esos ex-comunistas contribuyeron con su experiencia Europea pos moderna a la salida pactada, negociada y derechamente subordinada a la dictadura que tiene aun cautelada políticamente a la democracia chilena y dominada por la ideología neo liberal.

Además, debe plantearse que si bien se conectan procesos de base y superestructura en el análisis de estos 20 años, la crisis del socialismo de los 1990s enseñó que la articulación de las relaciones de clases involucran mucho mas que estas dos categorías mas bien abstractas si no se les aprecia en directa vinculación con otras relaciones como las de genero y de raza. El grado de aprendizaje del partido en esta dirección no es mostrado. Esto se refleja también en la ausencia del análisis de la correlación entre capitalismo y patriarcado y como esta se reproduce a través de las clases, incluidos el partido y el movimiento sindical.

En el plano de las formas, el libro tiene algunas incorrecciones respecto a su compaginación expresada fundamentalmente entre el Índice y las paginas correspondientes a cada capítulo. También el color negro de su portada no habría sido el mejor considerando el espíritu del trabajo de Herreros.

Finalmente y a pesar de esas consideraciones, este libro es altamente recomendable de leer y estudiar. Arrinconado por la prensa y la política oficial dominante y excluyente, carente de financiamiento por algún tiempo, el trabajo de Herreros se abre camino valientemente como una de las pocas luces del pensamiento crítico político en el firmamento de la dominación comunicacional y cultural heredados de la dictadura. Como el PCCH, el libro sobrevive y se abre camino para contar la historia ausente en el mundo educacional y académico chileno.