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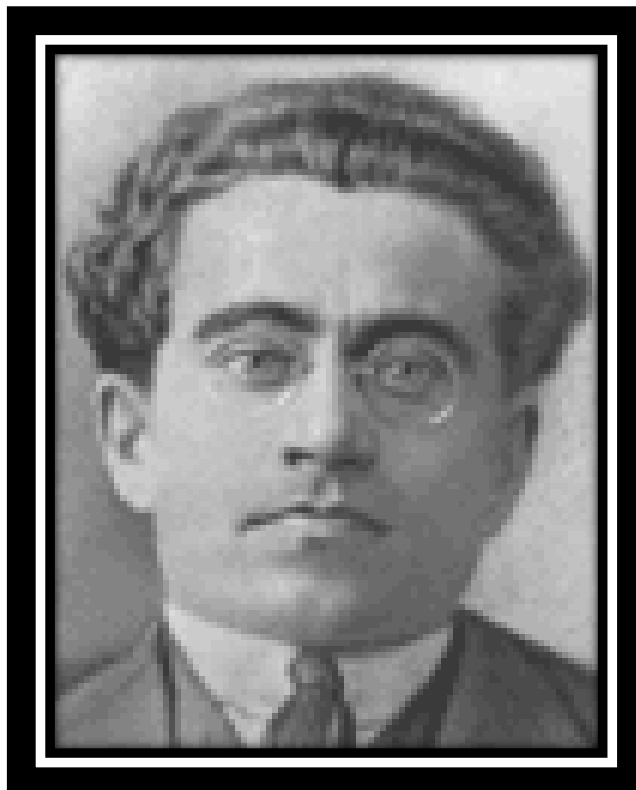
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Cover page and contents, International Gramsci Journal No.3 2011

Abstract

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INTERNATIONAL GRAMSCI JOURNAL



No. 3 March 2011

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The International Gramsci Journal (IGJ) is the electronic journal of the International Gramsci Society. The journal publishes matters of general interest to Gramsci scholars (Gramsci Notes), as well as peer-reviewed scholarly articles about Antonio Gramsci's life and work, the influence of his thinking on social, political, economic and cultural history and the application of his concepts to contemporary life.

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Cover: 1922 photograph of Antonio Gramsci from:
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INTERNATIONAL GRAMSCI JOURNAL

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IGJ Editor's note

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Each edition of IGJ has two parts. The *Gramsci Notes* section publishes short pieces of general interest about Gramscian thought, reproduced with permission from other sources. These are selected by the IGJ editor.

The formal peer-reviewed section of the IGJ publishes academic pieces of preferably 5,000-7,000 words. These papers are peer reviewed by at least two members of the IGJ board, or other expert scholars working in the field.

IGJ is also looking to establish a regular section of book reviews, hopefully from the next edition.

Currently we are publishing about one issue per year but with more submissions and contributions from Gramsci scholars around the world this could increase. Given the linguistic diversity and expertise of our Editorial Board we are looking to receive submissions in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and English.

To submit anything for consideration for publication in IGJ please contact: charlesh@uow.edu.au

HELP

As a new journal IGJ relies on the efforts of a small group of colleagues in Australia, but we aim to be a global journal. To make IGJ work we need your help.

If you have a piece of writing that you think would be suitable for IGJ, or have students who you could encourage to submit to IGJ, we would welcome the opportunity to review and publish new scholarship or shorter pieces in translation.

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Como o IGJ é uma nova revista eletrônica, depende de um pequeno grupo de acadêmicos australianos, embora nosso objetivo seja ter um alcance global. Para dar forma à nossa aspiração, precisamos da sua ajuda.

Se você for professor, ou tiver estudantes talentosos, está desde agora convidado a nos enviar artigos e ensaios, curtos ou longos, que serão examinados para posterior publicação.

AIUTO

Poiche' IGJ è una nuova rivista, essa si appoggia su un piccolo numero di collaboratori in Australia. Si spera però che diventi una rivista di respiro globale. Ma a questo fine, cioè per far sì che IGJ vada in porto, abbiamo bisogno del vostro aiuto.

Se avete uno scritto che pensate faccia al caso di IGJ o avete studenti che vorreste incoraggiare a pubblicare su IGJ, noi accoglieremo ben volentieri: vostre recensioni, nuovi scritti o pezzi più brevi in traduzione.

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Como consecuencia de ser una revista nueva, IGJ depende del esfuerzo de un pequeño grupo de académicos de Australia, aunque nuestro objetivo es llegar a establecer una revista de alcance global. Para realizar este proyecto de IGJ, necesitamos su ayuda.

Si tiene un escrito que crea que sea adecuado para la revista, o tiene estudiantes a los que pueda animar a presentar su trabajo a IGJ, le agradecemos de antemano la oportunidad de revisarlo y publicar nuevos estudios o cortas traducciones.

GRAMSCI NOTES

GRAMSCI NOTES

Gramsci notes is a section of the *International Gramsci Journal* that publishes short pieces of general interest about Gramscian thought, reproduced with permission from other sources. They are selected by the IGJ editor.

NOTAS DE GRAMSCI

Las Notas de Gramsci es una sección de la *International Gramsci Journal* que publica ensayos cortos de interés general sobre el pensamiento gramsciano; son reproducidos con los permisos necesarios de otras fuentes. Son seleccionados por el editor de la IGJ.

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Notas gramscianas é uma seção do *International Gramsci Journal* que publica pequenos textos de interesse geral sobre o pensamento de Gramsci, reproduzidos com permissão das respectivas fontes. Os textos são escolhidos pelo editor do IGJ.

GRAMSCI NOTES

"Gramsci notes" è una sezione dell' *International Gramsci Journal* (IGJ) in cui si pubblicano brevi scritti di interesse generale sul pensiero gramsciano riprodotti col permesso di altre entità dove sono stati precedentemente pubblicati. Essi sono selezionati dal curatore dell'IGJ.

International Gramsci Journal

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2011

Recent publicaitons in English on Gramsci

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Recent publicaitons in English on Gramsci

Abstract

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Recent publications in English on Gramsci

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Below is a list of recent publications on Gramsci that has been compiled by the International Gramsci Society.

It was last updated on February 13, 2011

English

Brookfield, Stephen D., and John D. Holst. *Radicalizing Learning: Adult Education for a Just World*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010.

The book develops a Gramscian perspective on training, globalization, research, and educational program planning.

Bruff, Ian. "Germany's Agenda 2010 reforms: Passive revolution at the crossroads." *Capital & Class* 34.3 (2010): 409-428.

This article examines Germany's Agenda 2010 reforms, passed in 2003, with regard to Antonio Gramsci's discussions of passive revolution. It does so via a consideration of the inherently expansionary nature of passive revolution as a concept, for in its genesis lie both comparative and international dimensions. Nevertheless, one consequence of the realisation of passive revolution's conceptual potential is the need to redefine hegemony as the granting of active consent by the led to the leading—a move I view as untenable. Agenda 2010 is a useful test case, for it can be analysed successfully with regard to either passive revolution or hegemony, although I consider hegemony to be better placed for analysing this period in Germany's contemporary history. I conclude with some suggestions for how to utilise more effectively the concept of passive revolution, and with some reflections on the impact of the current crisis on Germany.

Callinicos, Alex. "The limits of passive revolution." *Capital & Class* 34.3 (2010): 491-507.

This article addresses what it identifies as the over-extension of the concept of passive revolution in recent writing on international political economy. It traces the evolution of the concept in the Prison Notebooks, where it is rooted in Antonio Gramsci's development of the Marxist theory of bourgeois revolutions to account for episodes of what he called 'revolution/restoration' such as the Italian Risorgimento. But, in his attempt to offer a comprehensive alternative to the great liberal philosopher Benedetto Croce, Gramsci extends the concept to cases such as Mussolini's fascism. The core meaning common to these uses is that of socio-political processes in which revolution-inducing strains are at once displaced and at least partially fulfilled. In more recent Marxist work, even this meaning is in danger of being lost. The article concludes by seeking to relocate passive revolution within Gramsci's non-determinist, but still firmly materialist, understanding of Marx's theory

of history.

Davidson, Neil. "Scotland: Birthplace of passive revolution?." *Capital & Class* 34.3 (2010): 343-359.

This article addresses what it identifies as the over-extension of the concept of passive revolution in recent writing on international political economy. It traces the evolution of the concept in the Prison Notebooks, where it is rooted in Antonio Gramsci's development of the Marxist theory of bourgeois revolutions to account for episodes of what he called 'revolution/restoration' such as the Italian Risorgimento. But, in his attempt to offer a comprehensive alternative to the great liberal philosopher Benedetto Croce, Gramsci extends the concept to cases such as Mussolini's fascism. The core meaning common to these uses is that of socio-political processes in which revolution-inducing strains are at once displaced and at least partially fulfilled. In more recent Marxist work, even this meaning is in danger of being lost. The article concludes by seeking to relocate passive revolution within Gramsci's non-determinist, but still firmly materialist, understanding of Marx's theory of history.

Fontana, Benedetto. "Political space and hegemonic power in Gramsci." *Journal of Political Power* 3.3 (2010): 341-363.

Antonio Gramsci's political thought focusses on power, hegemony, and domination. This article attempts to delineate the close and intimate relationship in Gramsci between political power and political space. It argues that political space is a central ingredient in his understanding of hegemony and civil society.

Gencarella, Stephen Olbrys. "Gramsci, Good Sense, and Critical Folklore Studies." *Journal of Folklore Research* 47.3 (2010): 221-252.

This article addresses the scholarly lacunae surrounding Antonio Gramsci's contributions to folklore studies in the English-speaking world. It contends that Gramsci's critique of folklore has often been misunderstood because it has not been read in tandem with his comments on language, common sense, and religion, nor has it been contextualized by his discussions of distinctions among folklore, philosophy, and science. This article provides a close reading of Gramsci's commentaries and draws a brief comparison with the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer in order to adapt these ideas for contemporary research, reclaim folklore's political legitimacy, and promote a critical folklore studies that would overtly address political dilemmas and human suffering.

Gencarella, Stephen Olbrys. "Gramsci, Good Sense, and Critical Folklore Studies: A Critical Reintroduction." *Journal of Folklore Research* 47.3 (2010): 259-264.

This is a reply to a comment made by José E. Limón on the article "Gramsci, Good Sense, and Critical Folklore Studies," published in this issue (*Journal of Folklore Research* 47/3, 2010).

Gray, Kevin. "Labour and the state in China's passive revolution." *Capital & Class* 34.3 (2010): 449-467.

This article begins by engaging with some recent attempts to bring the study of the agency of labour into analyses of global capitalism, and argues that these approaches fail to capture the ways in which labour movements impact upon state strategies and, in turn, how this affects the spatial and temporal nature of global capitalist restructuring. Through adopting Antonio Gramsci's concept of passive revolution, the article shows that whilst China has witnessed a significant degree of spontaneous and unorganised labour unrest, the state has been highly active in seeking to forestall the emergence of a politically conscious organised labour movement in ways that have important implications for the mode of China's insertion into the international division of labour. In accordance with Gramsci's framework, this 'revolution from above' should be understood within the framework and the specificity of the international states system. Labour struggles, class formation and the role

of the state in these processes are conditioned both by geopolitical rivalry and by the demonstrative effects of earlier cases of successful industrialisation, as well as by examples of resultant labour struggles.

Hesketh, Chris. "From passive revolution to silent revolution: Class forces and the production of state, space and scale in modern Mexico." *Capital & Class* 34.3 (2010): 383-407.

This article draws on Antonio Gramsci's key concepts of passive revolution and hegemony to explore how specific scalar and spatial configurations have been historically produced in Mexico, within the conditions of worldwide capitalist development. It argues that passive revolution—understood as the state-led reorganisation of social relations that seeks to maintain or restore class domination—can be seen as a recurring theme of Mexican history in the 20th century. In order to make this case, the author examines the Mexican Revolution and elaborates the case for labelling it as a 'passive revolution'. Following this, the contradictory character of Mexico's development trajectory is explored, and the resulting restructuring of the economy along neoliberal lines is interpreted as a second phase of passive revolution. Through an analysis of changing state formation and the spaces and scales associated with it, the article thereby highlights the key antinomies of capitalist development that have augured the recurrence of passive revolutions.

Holub, Renate. "Towards a Global Space of Democratic Rights: On Benjamin, Gramsci, and Polanyi," in Anca M. Pusca, ed. *Walter Benjamin and the Aesthetics of Change*. Palgrave Mcmillan, UK, 2010. Pp. 1-55.

Ives, Peter, and Rocco Lacorte, eds. *Gramsci, Language, and Translation*. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010). [ISBN: cloth: 9780739118597. paperback: 9780739118603. electronic: 9780739147856].

Abstract: This anthology brings together key articles translated into English for the first time from Italian debates concerning Antonio Gramsci's writings on language and translation as central to his entire social and political thought. It includes recent scholarship by Italian, German and English-speaking scholars providing important contributions to debates concerning culture, language, Marxism, post-Marxism, and identity as well as the many fields in which Gramsci's notion of hegemony has been influential.

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14. Some Notes on Gramsci the Linguist. Tullio De Mauro

15. The Lexicon of Gramsci's Philosophy of Praxis. André Tosel
16. Subalternity and Language: Overcoming the Fragmentation of Common Sense. Marcus E. Green and Peter Ives

Jubas, Kaela. "Reading Antonio Gramsci as a Methodologist." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 9.2 (2010): 224-239.

In this paper, the author connects conceptual and methodological development, typically presented as distinct processes. She argues that these processes are—or should be—underpinned by a common philosophical and theoretical stance. Using Gramsci's *The Prison Notebooks* (1971), usually considered for its theory of social relations, the author outlines the work's epistemological tenets. She then discusses the methodological ramifications of Gramsci's perspective, relating his ideas to contemporary scholarship, especially by those working from feminist, critical race theory, and other critical perspectives. Because social theory and research methodology tend to be discussed as separate spheres and Gramsci's work generally is taken up for its social theory, much of the methodological work reviewed here is not identified as Gramscian. Nonetheless, Gramsci's ideas can have currency especially for qualitative researchers. An important message to take from *The Prison Notebooks* is to consider epistemology, theory, and methodology together rather than sequentially.

Kim, Sook-Jin, and Joel Wainwright. "When seed fails: The contested nature of neoliberalism in South Korea." *Geoforum* 41 (2010): 723–733.

In recent years, many geographers have examined the ways that the production of nature has changed as a result of neoliberal practices. In this paper we examine a conflict in South Korea that started when some Chinese-cabbage seeds were affected by a virus, causing crop failure. This failure came shortly after liberalization in the Korean seed industry led to foreign ownership of the firm that sold the seed. We focus in particular on the farmers' creative political responses – and their subsequent defeat in court. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's insights on politics, science, and law, we examine how the seed failure came to be evaluated through scientific and legal practices. We argue that the adjudication of the truth of the seed failure through science and law reveals how socionatures are contested under prevailing hegemonic conditions. These conditions are both general and specific: although law and science are relatively hegemonic spheres of truth-production in all capitalist societies, the ways that the seeds were disputed and evaluated were distinctly Korean.

Limón, José E. "Breaking with Gramsci: Gencarella on Good Sense and Critical Folklore Studies." *Journal of Folklore Research* 47.3 (2010): 253-257.

A comment on Stephen Olbrys Gencarella's essay "Gramsci, Good Sense, and Critical Folklore Studies," published in this issue (*Journal of Folklore Research* 47/3, 2010).

Mayo, Peter, ed. *Gramsci and Educational Thought*. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). [ISBN: 978-1444333947]

Abstract: *Gramsci and Educational Thought* pays tribute to the educational influence of this great social thinker and political theorist of the twentieth century. Reflecting Gramsci's growing international stature, contributions to this volume are drawn from around the world. Scholars and specialists from Brazil, Canada, Germany, Malta, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States tackle a wide range of issues relating to Gramsci's educational thought. Topics addressed include political education in a political party context, adult education, education and the 'philosophy of praxis', Idealist philosopher Giovanni Gentile and education, Global English, language and education, schooling, feminism, community education, and education and social work.

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4. Introducing Giovanni Gentile, the 'Philosopher of Fascism' (Thomas Clayton, University of Kentucky).
5. Global English, Hegemony and Education: Lessons from Gramsci (Peter Ives, University of Winnipeg).
6. Antonio Gramsci and Feminism: The elusive nature of power (Margaret Ledwith, Cumbria University).
7. Towards a Political Theory of Social Work and Education (Translated by Florian Sichling with editing by Peter Mayo, Uwe Hirschfeld, Protestant University of Applied Science in Social Work, Dresden).
8. Gramscian Thought and Brazilian Education (Rosemary Dore, Federal University of Minas Gerais).

McKay, Ian G. "The Canadian passive revolution, 1840-1950." *Capital & Class* 34.3 (2010): 361-381.

'Passive revolution', understood here as a specific moment of global capitalism, provides an indispensable key to Canadian history, especially that unfolding from the 1840s (when seigneurs, Tories, agrarian radicals and democrats were forcibly unified through a top-down, British-orchestrated administrative revolution) to the 1940s (when plutocrats, Liberals and Conservatives, trade unionists and social democrats were forcibly unified through the imposition of a top-down, Ottawa-orchestrated Fordist compromise). The 'long Confederation' of Canada, from 1841 to 1949, was in Marxist terms a social revolution, entailing the subordination of non-capitalist and proto-capitalist formations, through which northern North America was liberalised; yet this 'active' achievement of a liberal order was also 'passive' insofar as it constituted a strengthening of Britain's imperial power; subdued, transformed and incorporated subaltern movements; and culminated in a new socioeconomic order that integrated Canadian producers into continental and global circuits of capital while denying them any de facto sovereignty over 'their' state.

McKay, Ian G. "Feature review: Our awkward ancestors: Trotsky, Gramsci and the challenge of reconnaissance." [Review of Emanuele Saccarelli *Gramsci and Trotsky in the Shadow of Stalinism: The Political Theory and Practice of Opposition*, Routledge: London, 2008]. *Capital & Class* 34.3 (2010): 509-530.

Morton, Adam David. "The continuum of passive revolution." *Capital & Class* 34.3 (2010): 315-342.

'Some aspects of the Southern question' (1926) established a strain of thought in Antonio Gramsci's questioning of conditions of uneven and combined development in Italy, which encompassed complex relations of class stratification, racial domination, colonial rule, the social function of intellectuals, and how best to mobilise against the bourgeois state. This strain of thought was then extended, in his carceral research, through his sustained and wide-ranging historical sociological focus on passive revolution as a condition of modern state formation. This article sets up the importance of passive revolution as a backdrop to approaching passive revolutions of diverse varieties, which is the subject of this wider special issue, stressing 'approaching' (as transitive verb) in terms of setting about the task of assessing the theoretical import of passive revolution; and 'approaching' (as intransitive verb) in terms of the advance of passive revolutions that are contemporary to us, and those that are in the process of becoming. The continuum of passive revolution is thereby asserted in a historically specific sense, capturing transitions to and transformations of the social relations of capitalist production, rather than as some transhistorical affirmation of intersocietal existence.

Morton, Adam David. 'Reflections on Uneven Development: Mexican Revolution, Primitive Accumulation, Passive Revolution', *Latin American Perspectives*, 37:1 (2010): pp. 7-34.

Raber, Douglas. "Hegemony, Historic Blocs, and Capitalism: Antonio Gramsci in Library and Information Science." *Critical Theory for Library and Information Science: Exploring the Social from Across the Disciplines*. Ed. Gloria J. Leckie, Lisa M. Given, & John E. Buschman. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2010. 143-160.

Rosengarten, Frank. "On Intellectuals, Engaged and Otherwise (With an Afterword on Thomas Mann's Use of Intellectual Reflection in the Novella Mario and the Magician)." *Italian Culture* 28.2 (2010): 157–167.

After a clarification of the word “intellectual,” this essay proceeds to discuss three influential twentieth-century intellectuals: Antonio Gramsci, Edward Said, and Betty Friedan. The works discussed are Gramsci's *The Prison Notebooks*, Said's *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* and *The Question of Palestine*, and Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. The essay ends with an afterword on Thomas Mann's 1929 novella “Mario and the Magician,” with a view to shedding light on why retrospective intellectual commentary is relevant to emotions whose intensity as lived experience seems to lie beyond the purview of such commentary.

Santucci, Antonio A. *Antonio Gramsci*. Translated by Graziella DiMauro and Salvatore Engel-DiMauro. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010). [ISBN: 978-1-58367-210-5]. [\[more info\]](#).

Abstract: This volume provides a complete English translation of Antonio Santucci's *Antonio Gramsci. Guida al pensiero e agli scritti* [Antonio Gramsci: A Guide to His Thought and Writings (Editori Riuniti, 1987)], as well as the first chapter of *Gramsci* ["Fin de Siècle Gramsci" (Newton & Compton, Rome 1996)].

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Simon, Rick. "Passive revolution, perestroika, and the emergence of the new Russia." *Capital & Class* 34.3 (2010): 429-448.

This article makes a distinction between a ‘type I’ passive revolution, which transforms the relations of production, and a ‘type II’ passive revolution, which modifies the existing production relations. It argues that Gorbachev’s aim through perestroika was a type II passive revolution designed to rejuvenate the Soviet economy through further integration into the global capitalist economy. The disruption produced by perestroika laid the foundations, however, for a type I passive revolution by opening the door to the influence of global capitalism, fragmenting the heterogeneous Soviet elite, and enabling an opposition linked to global neoliberalism to utilise the nascent Russian state as a mechanism for advancing systemic transformation. The transition to capitalism has not, however, been a smooth process, but has been characterised by ‘revolution/restoration’: a

ruling bloc of pro-capitalist forces and elements of the former Soviet elite; and a combination of capitalist and Soviet-era production relations.

Wainwright, Joel. "On Gramsci's 'conceptions of the world'." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35.4 (2010): 507-521.

Antonio Gramsci is widely celebrated for his conceptualisation of hegemony. This paper elucidates a related concept that appears frequently in Gramsci's prison notebooks yet has been surprisingly under-emphasised: 'conceptions of the world'. By conceptions of the world, Gramsci refers to things that inform our understanding of the world and our place in it. Each conception of the world is inherently practical and philosophical, relational and political. Gramsci argues that producing a new, effective conception of the world is the key to successfully building communism. It is therefore important to situate this concept in Gramsci's thought. That is the aim of this paper, which elaborates on the implications of 'conception of the world' through a reading of Gramsci's prison notes – particularly his commentaries on humanity and worldliness.

Wainwright, Joel. "Was Gramsci a Marxist?." *Rethinking Marxism* 22.4 (2010): 617-626.

This paper argues that Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony is rooted in Marx's theory of value. Although value theory, and Marx's economic writings more generally, are by no means central themes of the Prison Notebooks, they nevertheless shape Gramsci's theoretical disposition and political analysis in fundamental respects. Thus, Gramsci's critique of economism should be seen as an extension of Marx's critique of political economy.

Zahran, Geraldo, and Leonardo Ramos. "From Hegemony to Soft Power." *Soft Power and US Foreign Policy: Theoretical, Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Edited by Inderjeet Parmar & Michael Cox. Routledge, 2010.

Recent works by Japanese authors

La Città Futura, Tokyo Gramsci Society Bulletin No. 47 (March 2010)

1. Study of Prison Notebooks and Gramsci-Comintern relationship: A reply to criticism by Mr. Tomihisa Suzuki in his recently published book "*Scientific structure of Gramsci's Prison Notebooks*," by Hiroshi Matsuda
2. Contribution from abroad: Gramsci and Civil movement in ROK, by Cha Myong Je (Explanatory Notes by Shigeki Maruyama)
3. Book Review: Nobuyuki Kurosawa, *Lifelong study and association* by Hiromi Fujioka
4. Book Review: Adriano Tilgher, *Homo Faber--History of the concept of Labor in the western civilization*, translated by Koichi Ohara & Keiko Murakami (Social Critique Publisher, Nov.,2009.), by Yoshihumi Morikawa
5. New Publication: Antonio Labriola, *Essays on the Materialist Conception of History*, translated by Koichi Ohara & Minoru Watanabe ("Contemporary" publishing house, Feb., 2010)
6. Publications of Tokyo Gramsci Society

La Città Futura, Tokyo Gramsci Society Bulletin No. 48 (August 2010)

1. Gramsci and Arendt, by Joseph A. Buttigieg
2. For a legislation of Network of Social Services & Undertakings: A task for Japanese subalterns to fulfil as soon as possible, by Hiroyuki Kashii
3. Summary on the 2010 annual assembly of Tokyo Gramsci Society

SPANISH

Rodríguez, Manuel S. Almeida. *Dirigentes Y Dirigidos: Para Leer Los Cuadernos De La Cárcel De Antonio Gramsci*. (Bogotá: Envión Editores, 2010). [ISBN 958994380-2].

Abstract: El presente trabajo intenta proveer una clave interpretativa con la cual abordar el complejo cuerpo de la obra escrita en cárcel por el marxista italiano Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) conocido como los Cuadernos de la cárcel, un inmenso cuerpo teórico-político sumamente fragmentario en la superficie. La elaboración de esta clave interpretativa es a la misma vez necesariamente un recorrido por la rica teoría política de Gramsci. Es decir, los elementos constitutivos de importancia en su teoría política – los leitmotivs de su trabajo maduro – son proyectados de vuelta sobre la materialidad de la escritura carcelaria para proponer un tema común subyacente a lo que es en la superficie una colección cruda de notas y reflexiones. Nunca olvidamos que, como planteara numerosas veces Gramsci en sus Cuadernos, estos textos eran material provisional para ser desarrollado con los recursos apropiados. Por esto, un proyecto humilde como el que se pretende en el presente trabajo es a la vez un necesario diálogo con Gramsci, que intenta trascender lo incompleto, lo inacabado, pero dentro de un marco de sensatez interpretativa.

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Aggiornamento Bibliografia gramsciana Italia (primo semestre 2010)

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Abstract

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a cura di

Alessandro Errico e Michele Filippini

Il presente contributo bibliografico, relativo al primo semestre del 2010, vuole concorrere al periodico aggiornamento della *Bibliografia gramsciana* di John Cammett, Francesco Giasi e Maria Luisa Righi. Si ringraziano Guido Liguori e Luisa Righi per la collaborazione.

Si prega di inviare le segnalazioni di libri, saggi e articoli in lingua italiana a michele.filippini@unibo.it.

I libri su Gramsci sono recensiti nella sezione “Recensioni” di questo sito.

1. Libri e fascicoli di rivista monografici su Gramsci

Aldo Accardo e Gianni Fresu, *Oltre la parentesi. Fascismo e storia d'Italia nell'interpretazione gramsciana*, prefazione di Nicola Tranfaglia, Carocci, 2009, pp. 177.

Giancarlo de Vivo, *Gramsci, Sraffa e la “famigerata lettera” di Grieco*, Aracne, 2009, pp. 16.

Vincenzo Alonzo, *Questione meridionale. Egemonia e fondamentalismo in Gramsci e Said*, Mondostudio, 2010, pp. 300.

Italo Bertelli, *Tutto Gramsci*, Bignami edizioni, 2010, pp. 384.

Contiene testi antologizzati con brevi note introduttive:

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Scritti giovanili e “cronache teatrali”

Le Lettere dal carcere (1926-1937)

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Il materialismo storico e la filosofia di Benedetto Croce

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Il Risorgimento
Note sul Machiavelli, sulla politica e sullo stato moderno
Letteratura e vita nazionale
Passato e presente
Testimonianze critiche
Nota bibliografica

Kate Crehan, *Gramsci cultura e antropologia*, Lecce, Argo, 2010, pp. 240.

Contiene:
Prefazione all'edizione italiana di *Giovanni Piz*
Leggere Gramsci di *Joseph A. Buttigieg*
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Capitolo quarto. Cultura e storia
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Capitolo sesto. Intellettuali e produzione della cultura
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L'egemonia "leggera" e l'egemonia di Gramsci
Rompere la subalternità
Una nota conclusiva
Bibliografia
Indice analitico

Mauro Pala (a cura di), *Americanismi. Sulla ricezione del pensiero di Gramsci negli Stati Uniti*, Cagliari, Cuec, 2010, pp. 196.

Gaspare Polizzi (a cura di), *Tornare a Gramsci. Una cultura per l'Italia*, Avverbi Editore, 2010, pp. 402.

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- Sulla presenza di Machiavelli nei *Quaderni*, di Giulio Ferroni
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3. Testi su Gramsci in opere di Gramsci

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5. Commenti, interventi, interviste, recensioni

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O Estado Novo do PT [Spanish]

Luiz Werneck Vianna

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O Estado Novo do PT [Spanish]

Abstract

A crer nos indicadores dos dois períodos presidenciais de Fernando Henrique, mas, sobretudo, a partir do mandato de Lula, o capitalismo brasileiro encontrou um caminho de expansão e de intensificação da sua experiência. Contudo, tem sido agora que se vê conduzido por um projeto pluriclassista e com a definida intenção de favorecer uma reconciliação política com a história do país, contrariamente à administração anterior, mais homogênea em sua composição de interesses e decididamente refratária ao que entendia ser o legado patrimonial da nossa herança republicana.

O Estado Novo do PT

Luiz Werneck Vianna

(Julho 2007)

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A crer nos indicadores dos dois períodos presidenciais de Fernando Henrique, mas, sobretudo, a partir do mandato de Lula, o capitalismo brasileiro encontrou um caminho de expansão e de intensificação da sua experiência. Contudo, tem sido agora que se vê conduzido por um projeto pluriclassista e com a definida intenção de favorecer **uma reconciliação política com a história do país**, contrariamente à administração anterior, mais homogênea em sua composição de interesses e decididamente refratária ao que entendia ser **o legado patrimonial** da nossa herança republicana.

Com efeito, estão aí, neste governo Lula, guindadas a Ministérios estratégicos, as lideranças das múltiplas frações da burguesia brasileira — a industrial, a comercial, a financeira, a agrária, inclusive os culaques que começaram sua história na pequena e média propriedades, e que, com a cultura da soja, atingiram o reino do grande capital —, lado a lado com o sindicalismo das grandes centrais sindicais e com a representação dos intelectuais do Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra (MST). De outra parte, estão aí **a revalorização da questão nacional**, do Estado como agente indutor do desenvolvimento, o tema do planejamento na economia, a retomada do papel político da representação funcional, da qual é ícone institucional a criação do Conselho de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social (CDES).

Se, antes, a ruptura com o passado fazia parte de um bordão comum ao PSDB e ao PT — o fim da Era Vargas —, sob o governo Lula, que converteu Celso Furtado em um dos seus principais ícones, e em que ressoam linguagens e temas do chamado período nacional-desenvolvimentista em personagens destacados da sua administração, como José de Alencar, Dilma Rousseff e Luciano Coutinho, todos em posições-chave, menos que de ruptura o passado é mais objeto de negociação. Assim, o governo que, no seu cerne, representa as forças expansivas no mercado, naturalmente avessas à primazia do público, em especial no que se refere à dimensão da economia — marca da tradição republicana brasileira —, adquire, com sua interpelação positiva do passado, uma certa autonomia quanto a elas, das quais não provém e não lhe asseguram escoras políticas e sociais confiáveis. Pois, para um governo originário da esquerda, a autonomia diante do núcleo duro das elites políticas e sociais que nele se acham presentes, respaldadas pelas poderosas agências da sociedade civil a elas vinculadas, somente pode existir, se o Estado traz para si grupos de interesses com outra orientação.

A composição pluriclassista do governo se traduz, portanto, em uma forma de Estado de compromisso, abrigando forças sociais contraditórias entre si — em boa parte estranhas ou independentes dos partidos políticos —, cujas pretensões

são arbitradas no seu interior, e decididas, em última instância, pelo chefe do poder executivo. Capitalistas do agronegócio, MST, empresários e sindicalistas, portadores de concepções e interesses opostos em disputas abertas na sociedade civil, encontram no Estado, onde todos se fazem representar, um outro lugar para a expressão do seu dissídio. Longe do caso clássico em que o Estado, diante da abdicação política das classes dominantes, se erige em “patrão” delas para melhor realizar os seus interesses, a forma particular desse Estado de compromisso se exprime na criação, no interior das suas agências, de um *parlamento* paralelo onde classes, frações de classes, segmentos sociais têm voz e oportunidade no processo de deliberação das políticas que diretamente os afetam. Nesse *parlamento*, delibera-se sobre políticas e se decide sobre sua execução. À falta de consenso, o presidente arbitra e decide.

Contorna-se, pois, o parlamento real e o sistema de partidos na composição dos interesses em litígio, que somente irão examinar da sua conveniência, em fase legislativa, quando couber. Com essa operação, a formação da vontade na esfera pública não tem como conhecer, salvo por meios indiretos, a opinião que se forma na sociedade civil, e as decisões tendem a se conformar por razões tecnocráticas. A criação do Conselho de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social, agência criada nos começos do primeiro mandato, no curso do qual não desempenhou papel relevante, mas que, agora, parece destinada a cumprir de fato as funções de câmara corporativa a mediar as relações entre o Estado e a sociedade civil organizada, reforça ainda mais as possibilidades de ultrapassagem da representação política. A afirmação da representação funcional como forma de articulação de interesses, sob a arbitragem do Estado, é mais um indicador da intenção de se despolitizar a resolução dos conflitos em favor da negociação entre grupos de interesses.

Com esse movimento, o Estado avoca a sociedade civil para si, inclusive movimentos sociais como os de gênero e os de etnias. Tudo que é vivo gira e gravita em torno dele. Boa parte das Organizações Não-Governamentais (ONGs) são dele dependentes e sequer lhe escapam os setores excluídos, difusamente distribuídos no território do país, os quais incorpora por meio de programas de assistência social, como o bolsa-família, com o que se mantém capilarmente articulado à sua sociedade.

O governo, que acolhe representantes das principais corporações da sociedade civil, ainda se vincula formalmente a elas pelo CDES. A representação funcional lhe é, pois, constitutiva. A ela se agregam, nos postos de comando na máquina governamental, os quadros extraídos da representação política. Contudo, uma vez que, pela lógica vigente de presidencialismo de coalizão, a formação de uma vontade majoritária no Congresso é dependente da partilha entre os aliados de posições ministeriais, os partidos políticos no governo passam a viver uma dinâmica que afrouxa seus nexos orgânicos com a sociedade civil, distantes das demandas que nela se originam. Tornam-se partidos de Estado, gravitando em torno dele e contando com seus recursos de poder para sua reprodução nas competições eleitorais.

A dupla representação — a política e a funcional —, operando ambas à base de movimentos de cooptação realizados pelo Executivo, não somente amplia a autonomia do governo quanto às partes heterogêneas que o compõem, ademais

reforçada por sua capacidade constitucional de legislar por meio de medidas provisórias, como cria condições para o seu insulamento político quanto à esfera pública. As múltiplas correias de transmissão entre Estado e sociedade funcionam em um único sentido: de cima para baixo. Nesse ambiente fechado à circulação da política, a sua prática se limita ao exercício solitário do vértice do presidencialismo de coalizão, o chefe do Estado.

Tal couraça de que se reveste o Executivo se acha qualificada pelos notórios avanços da centralização administrativa nos marcos institucionais do país, em que pese a Carta de 1988, de espírito federativo e descentralizador. Com razão, a bibliografia brasileira, desde o publicista Tavares Bastos no Império, associa a opção pela centralização administrativa à natureza autoritária do nosso sistema político, justificada à época pela necessidade de preservar a unidade nacional, tida como ameaçada pelos impulsos separatistas do poder local no período da Regência. Essa associação foi confirmada pelos dois longos períodos ditatoriais do regime republicano — o de 1937-45 e o de 1964-85 —, que, em nome da busca dos fins da modernização econômica, extremaram a centralização administrativa e a prevalência da União sobre a Federação. A reação ao autoritarismo político, que culminou com a democratização do país, atualizou as demandas pela descentralização e pela afirmação do poder local, que se fizeram presentes, como é sabido, no texto constitucional de 1988.

Desde aí se vem confirmando o diagnóstico clássico de que a centralização administrativa também pode ser filha da democracia. As crescentes demandas por políticas públicas orientadas por critérios de justiça social, como as da agenda da saúde, educação e segurança, têm conduzido, na busca da eficácia e da racionalização das suas ações, à centralização do seu planejamento e ao controle da sua execução. De outra parte, a política tributária, nessa última década, tem privilegiado a União sobre a Federação, sobretudo os estados, que, em nome da racionalização, foram obstados de emitir dívidas, privatizados os seus antigos e poderosos bancos, e a Polícia Federal cada vez mais se comporta como a suprema guardiã de todo o aparato civil de segurança. Centralização que, nessa estrita dimensão, ainda se reforça com a recente criação de uma força de segurança nacional, subordinada ao Ministério da Justiça e com sede operacional na Capital Federal.

Registro forte a confirmar a intensidade e a abrangência do atual processo de centralização está indicado na criação do Conselho Nacional de Justiça, presidido pelo presidente do Supremo Tribunal Federal, assim elevado à posição, até então desconhecida entre nós, de vértice do Poder Judiciário, destinando-se esse Conselho, dotado do poder de estabelecer sanções sobre tribunais e juízes, federais e estaduais, ao controle da administração do sistema da Justiça. Na mesma direção, consagrou-se, com a introdução da súmula com efeito vinculante, o princípio da primazia das decisões dos vértices do Poder Judiciário sobre os juízes singulares, em sua maioria, originários das justiças estaduais. A ação do Ministério Público participa do mesmo movimento, em especial no controle que exerce, pela via das ações diretas de inconstitucionalidade, sobre as leis estaduais.

Tem-se daí que o novo curso da centralização, ao contrário de períodos anteriores, está associado à crescente democratização social e às necessidades de racionalização da administração, inclusive a do Judiciário e do sistema de

segurança pública, que dela derivam. Mas esse movimento — por sua própria natureza — atua de cima para baixo, prescinde da participação dos cidadãos, uma vez que decorre da ação das elites ilustradas, selecionadas à margem dos interesses sistêmicos e das corporações que os representam, elites que encontram no governo a oportunidade de realização das suas agendas de democratização social, móvel normativo que presidiu sua formação nos movimentos de resistência ao regime militar. Se o Estado pretendeu, nos idos do Estado Novo, sob a iniciativa das suas elites intelectuais, como Gustavo Capanema, Francisco Campos, Agamenon Magalhães, entre tantos, ser mais *moderno* que sua sociedade, as elites desse novo Estado, que toma corpo com a vitória do PT, pretendem que ele se torne mais *justo* que ela.

Sob essa formatação, em que elites dirigentes de corporações integram o comando da política econômica, em que as centrais sindicais tomam assento no governo, em que se valoriza a representação funcional — caso conspícuo o ministro do Trabalho, alçado a essa posição na condição de presidente da CUT —, em que se faz uso instrumental das instituições da democracia representativa, em que se reforçam os meios da centralização administrativa, e, sobretudo, em que se quer apresentar o Estado como agência não só mais moderna que sua sociedade, como também mais *justa* que ela, o que se tem é uma grossa linha de continuidade com a política da tradição brasileira. Aí, os ecos da Era Vargas e do Estado Novo, decerto que ajustados à nova circunstância da democracia brasileira. Também aí um presidente da República carismático, acima das classes e dos seus interesses imediatos, cujos antagonismos harmoniza, detendo sobre eles poder de arbitragem, cada vez mais apartidário, único ponto de equilíbrio em um sistema de governo que encontrou sua forma de ser na reunião de contrários, e em que somente ele merece a confiança da população.

Nada, portanto, do discurso dos tempos de origem e de confirmação do PT como partido relevante na cena contemporânea. Elo perdido a sistemática denúncia do populismo e das alianças políticas entre partidos representativos de trabalhadores com os de outra extração, assim como desvanecidos os outrora fortes vínculos com a obra de interpretação do país que se aplicava em assinalar a necessidade de uma ruptura com aquela tradição — Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda, Florestan Fernandes e Raymundo Faoro eram, então, as principais referências.

Se, no começo da sua trajetória, o PT se apresentava como portador da proposta de um novo começo para história do país, na pretensão de conformá-la a partir de baixo em torno dos interesses e valores dos trabalhadores — a *parte* recriando uma nova *totalidade* à sua imagem e semelhança —, a reconciliação com ela, levada a efeito pelo partido às vésperas de assumir o poder, conduziu-o aos **trilhos comuns da política brasileira**. A *totalidade* adquire precedência sobre os interesses das *partes*, ponto enunciado claramente pelo próprio presidente da República, nos seus primeiros dias de governo, em marcante discurso às lideranças sindicais, quando reclamou delas que, em suas reivindicações, levassem em conta o interesse nacional. Nessa chave, conceitua-se o próprio desenvolvimento do capitalismo no país e sua inscrição no chamado processo de globalização como processos a serem subsumidos ao interesse nacional, cuja representação tem sede no seu Estado. De fato, para uma orientação desse tipo, o melhor repertório se encontra em nossa tradição republicana.

Mas essa opção não foi feita a frio. O programa do PT era, com suas variações, o de uma esquerda brasileira clássica, e, como tal, se orientava no sentido de preconizar reformas estruturais que permitissem dirigir os rumos da economia para as necessidades da sua população e favorecer um desenvolvimento auto-sustentado das forças produtivas nacionais. Ainda no período eleitoral, a reação a esse programa veio sob a forma de uma rebelião do mercado, de que o descontrole no preço do dólar foi apenas um indicador. Nesse sentido, tentar realizá-lo, depois de oito anos de governo FHC, que não só levara o país a debelar a crônica inflação brasileira e rebaixara dramaticamente, sob consenso geral das elites econômicas, a presença do Estado na economia, em clara inclinação favorável às forças de mercado, continha *in nuce* as possibilidades de se inscrever o país na lógica das revoluções.

A opção do governo recém-eleito, como se sabe, foi a de ceder à contingência, abdicar do seu programa e das veleidades revolucionárias de amplos setores do seu partido e de se pôr em linha de continuidade com a política econômico-financeira do governo anterior. **A inovação viria da política.** Em primeiro lugar, instituindo o Estado como um lugar de condomínio aberto a todas as classes e principais grupos de interesses. Em segundo, pela recusa a um modelo de simplificação do Estado, que preponderava no governo anterior, o que importou uma aproximação, mais clara à medida que o governo aprofundava sua experiência, com temas da agenda da tradição republicana — o nacional-desenvolvimentismo de Dilma Rousseff e de Luciano Coutinho, por exemplo — e com seu estilo de fazer política.

O caráter do governo como condomínio entre contrários encontra sua expressão paradigmática nas relações entre o capitalismo agrário e os trabalhadores do campo, aí incluído o MST, ambos ocupando, pelas suas representações, posições fortes na Administração. Os duros e constantes conflitos que os envolvem, no terreno da sociedade civil, em torno de questões que vão da propriedade da terra ao uso de transgênicos na agricultura, não têm impedido a permanência dos seus representantes no governo. Prevalece a política, salvo em matérias tópicas, de procurar conciliar pragmaticamente as controvérsias que os opõem, legitimando, ao menos no plano simbólico — isso mais no caso do MST —, a validade das suas pretensões. A mesma relação, com idênticas conseqüências, se reitera no caso das lideranças empresariais e sindicais com assento em ministérios, em litígio aberto na sociedade civil no que se refere a questões previdenciárias, da legislação trabalhista e da sindical.

Esse Estado não quer se apresentar como o lugar da representação de um interesse em detrimento de outro, mas de todos os interesses. Essa a razão de fundo por que o governo evita a fórmula de poder decisionista e também se abstém de propor mudanças legislativas em matérias estratégicas, como a tributária, a da reforma política e a da legislação sindical e trabalhista, que, com sua carga potencialmente conflitiva, poderiam ameaçar a unidade de contrários que intenta administrar. Pragmático, desde a primeira vitória eleitoral, negocia e compõe com os interesses heterogêneos que convoca para seu interior, manobra com que se evadiu do caminho de rupturas continuadas aberto à sua frente.

A forma benigna com que a esquerda chegou ao poder — a via eleitoral — não tinha como escamotear, até com independência da consciência dos atores sobre

sua circunstância, de que se estava no limiar de uma revolução. Começadas as grandes mudanças estruturais, seguir-se-ia o momento da mobilização popular e da sua contínua intensificação. Nesse contexto hipotético, o front dos conflitos agrários, sem dúvida, comporia o cenário mais dramático para o seu desdobramento. A rigor, as forças da *antítese* não quiseram assumir os riscos da sua vitória, reencontrando-se com o adversário que acabaram de derrotar. São as forças da *antítese* que se apropriam do programa das forças da *tese*, contra as quais tinham construído sua identidade. Não havia contradição a ser superada. A dialética sem síntese da tradição política brasileira, mais uma vez, restaura o seu andamento.

Invertem-se, porém, os termos da **revolução passiva** clássica: é o elemento de extração jacobina quem, no governo, aciona os freios a fim de deter o movimento das forças da revolução, decapita o seu antagonista, comprometendo-se a realizar, sob seu controle, o programa dele, e coopta muitos dos seus quadros, aos quais destina a direção dos rumos sistêmicos em matéria econômico-financeira. Mas será dele o controle da máquina governamental e o comando sobre as *transformações moleculares* constitutivas à fórmula do conservar-mudando, direcionadas, fundamentalmente, para a área das políticas públicas aplicadas ao social. Decididamente, o desenlace de 2002 não foi o de uma contra-revolução.

Os setores subalternos não são mobilizados, e se fazem objetos passivos das políticas públicas, que, em muitos casos, incorporam à malha governamental lideranças de movimentos sociais, apartando-as de suas bases. Os partidos de esquerda e os movimentos sociais institucionalizados, quase todos presentes no governo, retidos nessas suas posições, aderem ao andamento passivo e se deixam estatizar, abdicando de apresentarem rumos alternativos para o desenvolvimento, demonstrando, nessa dimensão, anuência tácita com a herança recebida dos neoliberais da administração econômica do governo FHC. O ator definha, e os *protagonistas são, por assim dizer, os fatos*.

Mas a inversão da lógica da revolução passiva não obedece à mesma pauta da sua forma canônica. Nessa sua forma bizarra, não são as forças da conservação que se encontram na posição de mando político legítimo, não contando, pois, com plenos recursos para administrarem a fórmula do conservar-mudando. Exemplar disso o fato de que a agenda de reformas — a tributária, a da previdência e a da legislação sindical e trabalhista —, que essas forças compreendem como necessárias à estabilização e ao aprofundamento do capitalismo brasileiro, não venha encontrando passagem para sua implementação, barradas, ao menos até agora, pela ação combinada dos movimentos sociais com a sua representação no governo.

Assim, mesmo sob o império dos *fatos*, persistem papéis para um ator que, presente na coalizão governamental, invista na *mudança*, em particular na ação de resistência a políticas públicas que lhe sejam adversas e na democratização da dimensão do social, desde que não atinja a região estratégica do mundo sistêmico, blindado às intervenções originárias de territórios estranhos aos seus. Eventualmente, e na margem, pode-se mais *mudar* que *conservar*. Com os antagonismos sociais importados da sociedade para o seu interior, o Estado de compromisso que procura equilibrá-los é um lugar de permanente tensão, cuja coesão depende unicamente do prestígio popular do seu chefe. Daí que,

contraditoriamente, a política em curso, cujo programa parece limitar-se à adaptação à sua circunstância, dependa tanto da intervenção carismática do ator, que é, afinal, o cimento dessa, além de bizarra, frágil construção.

A sua fragilidade conspira contra a sua permanência. Cada classe, fração de classe ou grupamento de interesse, nesses cinco anos de governo em condomínio, aprendeu, por lição vivida, nos seus litígios no interior da máquina governamental, que a melhor forma de vencer — ou de não perder tudo — está em sua capacidade de arregimentar forças na sociedade civil. Tal arregimentação, por sua vez, repercute no interior do governo e dificulta o processo de composição dos interesses contraditórios em que se acha empenhado permanentemente. A esquerda tem como alvo principal a administração do Banco Central, caixa-preta da política econômico-financeira do país, a direita encontrou o seu na presença do PMDB na coalizão política que sustenta o governo, sem a qual ele perde força no Congresso e na sociedade.

E mais, a construção tem prazo de validade: o fim do mandato presidencial em 2010. Os antagonismos, à medida que essa data já se põe no horizonte, começam a procurar formas próprias de expressão, em um cenário com partidos em ruínas e instituições políticas, como o Parlamento, desacreditadas pela população. Tal tendência, ameaça virtual ao estado novo do PT, deverá se confirmar quando as campanhas eleitorais — a primeira, em 2008 — vierem a reanimar a agenda contenciosa das reformas institucionais (a da previdência à frente). Mas já se faz sentir, entre tantos sinais, no mundo sindical, com o anúncio de rompimento do PCdoB, um partido integrante do governo, com a CUT, em nome de uma ação sindical mais reivindicadora, e, no mundo agrário, com a contestação do MST à política do agronegócio do etanol.

De qualquer sorte, da perspectiva de hoje, já visível o marco de 2010, não se pode deixar de cogitar sobre as possibilidades de que o condomínio pluriclassista que nos governa venha a encontrar crescentes dificuldades para sua reprodução, em particular quando se tornar inevitável, na hora da sucessão presidencial, a perda da ação carismática do seu principal fiador e artífice. Na eventualidade, no contexto de uma sociedade civil desorganizada, em particular nos seus setores subalternos, e do atual desprestígio de nossas instituições democráticas, a política pode se tornar um lugar vazio, nostálgico do seu homem providencial, ou vulnerável à emergência eleitoral da direita, brandindo seu programa de reformas institucionais, entre as quais a de simplificar ao máximo o papel do Estado, a ser denunciado como agência patrimonial, fonte originária da corrupção no país. Impedir isso é a tarefa atual da esquerda. Mas ela somente reunirá credenciais para tanto, se, rompendo com o estatuto condominial vigente, for capaz de reanimar seus partidos, aí compreendido o PT, e de estabelecer vínculos concretos com os movimentos sociais, sempre na defesa da sua autonomia, em torno de suas reivindicações. E, sem preconceitos, favorecer alianças, nas eleições e fora delas, com todos os partidos, associações e personalidades de adesão democrática, em favor de um programa centrado no objetivo de destravar os entraves ao crescimento econômico e de promover a justiça social.

Rio, 10 de julho de 2007.

2011

The articles by Gramsci published in English in International Press Correspondence

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The articles by Gramsci published in English in International Press Correspondence

Abstract

The articles included here represent most of what Gramsci published in the Comintern journal International Press Correspondence, under his own name or one of his pseudonyms of the period, G. (sometimes Giovanni) Masci. 1 In much of this period Inprecorr was coming out more or less twice a week, with articles from all parts of the world, including from Russia, with articles written by the various Party and Union leaders. Even during the period of great polemics which basically started just before Lenin's death and carried on over the whole of this period, the Inprecorr in its various languages of publication, carried articles giving all points of view written by all the participants in the controversies. This was true both of the Russian communists, so the Trotsky controversy was given full airing from both sides, and of those involved in other debates outside Russia. In Italy, for example, it was not only the extreme left of Amadeo Bordiga that was present in the Party, and that found space in the pages of Inprecorr, but also the right of Angelo Tasca – one of the Turin Ordine Nuovo group and, up to near the end of Gramsci's stay in Moscow, one who had the ear of the Comintern leadership. And another on the right was Antonio Graziadei, an economist judged to hold a "revisionist" stance, whose views were expressed fully both in Inprecorr and in book International Press Correspondence came out regularly in Russian, French, German and English (with the abbreviation Inprecorr), and sometimes, it seems, also in a Spanish edition. The period of the articles published here ranges from 1922, up through Gramsci's half-year stay in Vienna (December 1923 to May 1924), and on to the last period when, after his election as a parliamentary deputy, he was able to return to Italy on the basis of parliamentary immunity. With his new status as a deputy he could in theory evade the warrant that had been put out for his arrest in February 1923.

The articles by Gramsci published in English in *International Press Correspondence*

Introduced by Derek Boothman

The articles included here represent most of what Gramsci published in the Comintern journal *International Press Correspondence*, under his own name or one of his pseudonyms of the period, G. (sometimes Giovanni) Masci.¹ *International Press Correspondence* came out regularly in Russian, French, German and English (with the abbreviation *Inprecorr*), and sometimes, it seems, also in a Spanish edition. The period of the articles published here ranges from 1922, up through Gramsci's half-year stay in Vienna (December 1923 to May 1924), and on to the last period when, after his election as a parliamentary deputy, he was able to return to Italy on the basis of parliamentary immunity. With his new status as a deputy he could in theory evade the warrant that had been put out for his arrest in February 1923.

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¹ This pseudonym is seen here, for example, in the list of contributors on the title page of the 4 January 1924 issue, but not the article itself, where his name is wrongly given as "J. Masci".

form (referred to by Gramsci in the last of the pieces here) and rebutted by other, non-Italian Marxist economists, again in *Inprecorr*.

The pages of the journal with Gramsci's articles have been scanned into a computer and adjusted to give an image which is a close approximation to but, for various reasons, not absolutely exact image of the original page; parts of other articles on the same pages as those of Gramsci, have here been deleted. Taking his articles in order, the first – published in *Inprecorr*, it seems, on 19 April 1922 – deals with the Genoa conference that tried to introduce some order into the capitalist economies and establish, through the Soviet foreign minister Chicherin, a relationship with the young Soviet Union. In this article, as in the later one on “Italy and Yugoslavia”, there is a mention of “Fiume”, the city known in most places outside Italy as “Rijeka” (both words meaning “river”) and situated along the Dalmatian coast in current day Croatia. Soon after writing this article on the Genoa Conference, at the end of May Gramsci left for Moscow, arriving there on 3 June 1922, and very shortly afterwards was admitted to a sanatorium at Serebryanyi Bor (Silver Wood), now a suburb of Moscow but then somewhat outside the city, with what turned out to be a total nervous breakdown. This meant he was out of circulation for most things except for very urgent party business, usually meaning letters drafted by another comrade and co-signed by him, until the autumn of that year, when he was well enough to attend the IV Congress of the Comintern (5 November–5 December 1922). In this period in the sanatorium one of the other patients was Evgeniya Schucht, a communist whose Party membership had been sponsored by Lenin, a long-standing family friend, and through Evgeniya, he met her sister Jul'ka who became Gramsci's wife and mother of his two children; another sister, Tatiana, was to become his main physical and psychological support in prison.

Gramsci came back into circulation just in time for the IV Congress, and was well enough to write the article published in *Inprecorr* as “The Mussolini Government”. This however does not get quite as far as the title suggests, stopping instead at the discussion of the previous, and last, non-fascist government for the next two decades, that of Luigi Facta. Giovanni Giolitti was, as usual in that period, the dominant figure behind the scenes attempting – but not very successfully – to control the course of events, and he is here the main target of Gramsci's criticisms

of the “liberal” forces. The article breaks off rather suddenly before arriving at the point of the formation of the Mussolini Government announced in the title. It may be that this is indeed the end of the article, but it may also be for example that a page went missing from the article consigned by Gramsci to the editors of *Inprecorr*. Certainly the French version of the article in *La Correspondance Internationale*, on which Quentin Hoare's translation was based (*Selections from Political Writings (1921-1926)*, Lawrence and Wishart: London, 1978: 129-31) breaks off at the same point before getting to the formation of the Mussolini government after the March on Rome in October 1922 and the King's nomination of Mussolini as prime minister on 31 October 1922. The text of the article printed in the English language edition of *Inprecorr*, and translated at the time from Gramsci's Italian, naturally is different in its wording but not its meaning, from the Hoare translation. Here as elsewhere, the translation, or perhaps the type-setting, shows signs of being rather hurried and there are more mistakes than usual in typing, or in the transliteration of names, the correct forms being “Giolitti”, “Turati” and “Fasci di Combattimento”.

The “Letter from Italy” printed in the opening number (3 January 1924) of Volume 4 of *Inprecorr* which bears the by-line “G. Masci (Rome)”, maybe in order to confuse the fascist secret police, but modern readers should not be confused since, first, this is indeed Gramsci and, second, he was in Vienna. The article is of interest perhaps most of all for its attempt to sketch out a class analysis of the social power base of fascism, though marred by an temporary over-optimism about the supposed short-lived nature of fascist trade unionism. One can probably get as good a description of the challenge made to these unions by the communist forces on the left, since in its very first period fascism, or parts of it, did certainly find itself in a rather rocky position.

Almost immediately after this “Letter from Italy” we find another article, this time on the Yugoslav question, which he had been following, and on which there is a very interesting and important letter, to be published in the forthcoming edition of his pre-prison letters. Gramsci's stay in Moscow had in fact been prolonged slightly, to the beginning of December 1923, i.e. beyond what had been foreseen, to allow him to attend the Comintern conference on the Balkans. And in the fourth number of *Inprecorr* (24 January) of 1924, there is an article of his headed

“Italy and Yugoslavia”. Then, while still in Vienna partially directing Italian Party operations from relatively close to Italy and hoping to be able to return there, *Inprecorr* published another article of his, this time about the elections held at the start of April 1924. Again the by-line “G. Masci (Rome)” should not deceive. This article was written and published only a few days after the elections and it is apparent from what he writes that not all the results had been confirmed, since the list formed by the Communist Party and allies actually obtained two more seats (nineteen) than he here seems to think (seventeen). The maximalists obtained 22 deputies, as said in the article, and the reformists 24. Amendola’s list in the South got seven deputies and the “constitutional opposition” as a whole 14 (see Paolo Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano, Vol. 1: Da Bordiga a Gramsci*, Einaudi, Turin, 1967: 340). In the case of this article more than in others, however, the binding of the journal is so tight that some words and figures in the margin are difficult and even impossible to decipher. Where possible we have filled in the incomplete words with additions in square brackets.

As we know Gramsci was elected as a parliamentary deputy at the April elections. And later that year, in August 1924, after a hard-fought battle in the Italian Party, the new Central Committee that emerged after the V Congress of the Comintern, nominated him General Secretary.² It is then not surprising that the chronologically last article published here is of a rather different nature from the 1922 to 1924 ones. It is in fact a report to the Italian Party Central Committee and in effect begins to sketch out the line that was to form at least one of the main planks of the platform approved by the III Congress of the Party, held illegally in the French city of Lyon the following January. Here the copy of the *Inprecorr* article is good, key names and terms are highlighted in bold type; any imperfection (e.g. “cation” for “caution” are due to the typing or typesetting of the original). Gramsci’s theses (political report) to the III Italian Party Congress and his assessment of the Congress itself are available in English in the Hoare volume referred to above, but preparation of an English version of the entire set of the five theses of the majority, representing Gramsci’s full position at that time, is underway in a volume to be edited, annotated and introduced by Adam David Morton and the current author, *A Grand and Terrible World*:

² These events will be reconstructed in the English pre-prison letters volume, where newly found documentary evidence will also be provided about his assumption of the general secretaryship.

Gramsci's Pre-prison Letters. In the summer of 1925, however, we see Gramsci at work on the so-called “Bolshevization” of the Party, but a Bolshevization that for him meant collaboration of everyone, irrespective of their particular political position, in the leadership of the Party, with all contributing to the formation of policy and then being bound by a collectively arrived at decision. Indeed he expresses the hope in this article that “we”, meaning the Party majority “shall arrive at an understanding with Bordiga”, who had, together with Bukharin, been offered joint vice-presidency of the International, but turned it down. This view of Gramsci's of what constituted Bolshevization and the relation between majorities and minorities was, in the international communist movement, more observed in the breach than in the observance and leads on to the disagreement he expressed with the Russian Party the year afterwards, but that issue will be dealt with afresh in the forthcoming volume.

The English-language articles presented in this number of the *IGJ* are based on microfiche and paper copies of *Inprecorr* consulted mainly at the Marx Memorial Library and at the European University Institute in Fiesole, just outside Florence in central Italy, and the author wishes to thank the librarians and staff of both places. Pretty well all collections of *Inprecorr* seem incomplete, with numbers missing, so there is certainly at least one other article on “The Vatican and Italy” printed at the time in an English translation which up to now has “escaped”. This is one that is available in other languages, including a retranslation into Italian, a process which is also the case with other articles here that one can see in an Italian version. The translation process leads of course to inaccuracies, whether translation was done at the time or decades later. A note of caution should therefore be introduced when one reads the articles here. And a further note of caution should be added since, in the absence of the originals in Italian, and knowing the editorial practices of many journals – including *Inprecorr* – some changes from Gramsci's originals might have been introduced. It is known that yet another article by Gramsci appeared in another Comintern journal in the first half of the 1920s, dealing with the situation in the “red two years” in Turin. Republication of this, the longest article that he wrote before the famous essay on the Southern question, is being delayed in the hope of being able to compare it with the original handwritten manuscript, which has

only just come to light as a result of archival research by the present author, by Adam David Morton and by Emilia Kosterina.

The translation service at the Comintern was exceptionally advanced for its time, and indeed in the Archives one sees notes asking, for example, for documents to be translated at great speed so that the Comintern leadership had a reliable version in their hands within a couple of days. The translators were obviously working under great pressure and with great efficiency. What one does notice however is often a somewhat stilted nature to the translation itself, with literal reproductions of the style, wording and at times grammatical structures of the original language, understandable given the situation in which the translators were working. We have not changed these aspects of the translated articles, nor the typing or type-setting mistakes as regards spelling and punctuation.

We should here like to thank Daniele Negretti for invaluable help in producing as good a copy as could be hoped for with present computer technology; without his help this contribution to the *IGJ* would indeed have been far more laborious.

The articles are presented below in chronological order. Approximate dates are given where possible:

- The Genoa Conference and Italy, *Inprecorr* Vol. 2, No. 28, p. 211, (19 April 1922).
- The Mussolini government, *Inprecorr* Vol. 3, No. 102, p. 824.
- Fascism: Letter from Italy, *Inprecorr* Vol. 4, No. 1. (3 January 1924).
- Italy and Yugoslavia, *Inprecorr* Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 25-26. (24 January 1924).
- Election Results in Italy, *Inprecorr* Vol. 4, No. 25, p. 231.
- The situation in the Communist party of Italy, *Inprecorr* Vol. 5, No. 60, pp. 835-6.

lations with Russia. This led him to take the initiative in Cannes for the convocation of the Genoa Conference.

The foreign policy of Benito Mussolini, the leader of the Fascists is in complete agreement with that of Nitti, the representative of Big Business and high finance. These circles are interested in the coal district on the Black Sea. This explains why they display a very sympathetic attitude towards an international financial consortium for the capitalistic exploitation of Soviet Russia's resources. They thus hope at the same time to do good business and to obtain their own sphere of influence on the Black Sea.

All the vacillations of Italian foreign policy are caused by the intensification of the class war and the consequent disintegration of the social forces. It is thus necessary to give an exposition of the Italian situation, in order to illuminate the reactions in foreign policy which are therewith connected.

The trend to the left of the People's Party and the fact that several of its most prominent leaders, such as Deputy Meda, have expressed themselves in favor of this new political tendency have led to a split within the military caste, a large number of whose members are Catholics.

However, for the great majority of these groups the Conference has only this significance: the reintroduction of Germany into European economy. That also explains why circles are now supporting the Genoa Conference, who at first bitterly fought it and even employed it as a pretext for the overthrow of the Bonomi Cabinet. Among these latter the most prominent are the supporters of Gioiotti, the Fascists and the Nationalists.

The Genoa Conference and Italy.

by Antonio Gramsci (Turin).

**One problem dominates Italian foreign policy: the establishment of Italian supremacy in the Adriatic and the annexation of Fiume and Dalmatia to Italy. The question now arises: What is the attitude of Germany and Russia to this foreign policy?

Before the war Yugoslavia was predominantly influenced by powerful Russia. Even to-day its existence is very closely connected with the fate of Russia, of course not so very much in connection with the form of government of the latter, i. e., not whether Russia has a feudal, bourgeois or proletarian government, but rather because it is the natural ally of the Slavic population in the Balkans. When Russia is weak, Yugoslavia is weak and this weakness permits Italy to extend its imperialism to the Balkans. This is furthermore the form of nationalistic propaganda in Italy, which at the same time is the immediate expression of the policy of the agrarian large landowners and the military caste.

Russia is a most serious competitor of Italian agriculture. Before the war Italy imported 1,600,000 tons of grain from Russia, and the great land owners were protected by the state by the imposition of an import duty to the extent of 3.75 lire per hundredweight. It is thus very natural that an impoverished, ruined Russia is in their eyes much more desirable than an economically efficient Russia which would be able to export its grain surplus.

In Italy the industrial workers are only-third of the entire working class. The other two-thirds are agricultural workers or peasants. Even the Italian Socialist Party was at the beginning more a peasants' than a workers' party. This also in part explains its divergences from a proletarian standpoint and its vacillating policy. The new attitude of the People's Party, the party of the Catholic peasants, has thus also obtained very great importance for Parliamentary politics as well as for Italian foreign policy.

As the civil war, which the large landowners deliberately commenced in order to carry on a large-scale offensive against the Catholic peasantry, spread and grew in intensity, the People's Party turned more and more to the left and the reaction of this changer in its attitude was very soon evident in Italian foreign policy. Premier Bonomi, who was in very large degree influenced by the People's Party, changed his attitude towards Russia and showed a certain inclination towards the reestablishment of re-

Italian General Staff, came into force precisely on August 2nd 1914. This general committed suicide during the period of Italian neutrality. As soon as the Crown began to favor the new pro-Entente policy, Giolitti was forcibly put aside by the new leading groups, the representatives of the heavy industry, the big agrarians and of the General Staff, which even went so far as to conspire to assassinate him.

The new political forces, which made their appearance after the armistice, had already consolidated themselves during the war. The peasants formed themselves into three powerful organizations—the Socialist Party, the People's Party (Catholic) and the ex-soldiers' associations. The Socialist Party organized more than a million agricultural laborers and small farmers in Central and Northern Italy. The people's party grouped around itself as many small landed proprietors and middle peasants in the same districts. The ex-soldiers' associations established themselves especially in southern Italy in the more backward regions which had no political traditions. The struggle against the big landowners soon grew in intensity throughout Italy. The estates were invaded and the landowners were compelled to emigrate to the chief towns of the agrarian districts—Bologna, Florence, Bari, Naples. Since 1919 they began to organize their citizens' battalions in order to struggle against the "tyranny of the peasants" in the rural districts. What was needed most in this great upheaval of the rural working classes was a clear and precise watchword, a uniform, firm and determined policy and a concrete political program.

The Socialist Party should have dominated the situation, but the People's Party outstripped it. Sixty per cent of the membership of the Socialist Party were peasants. Of the 156 socialist members of parliament, 110 were elected by the rural districts. Four-fifths of the co-operatives with socialist management were agricultural co-operatives. The Socialist Party reflected the chaos reigning in the minds of the rural population in connection with the program and ideology of the party. Its activity consisted in nothing but maximalist declamations, noisy declarations in parliament and a flourish of trumpets. All the attempts from within the Socialist Party to make working class questions and proletarian ideology predominate, were combatted by the most dishonest means. Thus during the session of the National Socialist Council, held in Milan in April 1920, Serrati went so far as to say that the general strike which had broken out at that period in Piedmont and which was supported by all the workers, had been artificially stimulated by irresponsible agents of the Moscow government.

In March 1920, the possessing classes began to organize the counter-offensive. On March 7th, the first national conference of Italian manufacturers was convened in Milan which established the General Confederation of Italian Industries. During this Conference a precise and complete plan of united capitalist action was elaborated, in which everything was foreseen, from the disciplined and methodical organization of the manufacturing and commercial class down to the minute study of all the means and weapons of struggle against the workers' trade unions, and even down to the political rehabilitation of Giovanni Giolitti.

In the beginning of April, the new organization already obtained its first political success: the Socialist Party condemned, as anarchical and irresponsible, the great Piedmont strike in defence of the workshop committees and for the workers' control of industry. This party threatened to dissolve the Turin Section which has conducted the strike. On June 15th, Giovanni Giolitti formed his Cabinet by compromising with the agrarians and the General Staff, represented by Bonomi, Minister of War. There then began a feverish counter-revolutionary organizational work owing to the fear of the seizure of the workshops and factories by the workers, which was even expected by the reformist leaders who met at the conference of the Federation of Metal Workers which was held in Genoa in June of last year. In July, the Ministry for War, headed by Bonomi began to demobilize about 60 000 officers in the following manner: the officers were demobilized, retaining $\frac{2}{3}$ of their pay. Most of them were sent to the most important political centres with the understanding that they would join the "Fascisti di Combattimento". Hitherto the latter had been a small organization of socialist, anarchist, syndicalist and republican elements favouring the participation of Italy in the war on the side of the Entente. The Giolitti government made enormous efforts to bring about a rapprochement between the Confederation of Industries and the Agrarian Associations, especially in Central and Northern Italy. It is at this period that the first armed Fascist detachments made their appearance, and that the first terrorist acts were committed. The seizure of the factories by the metal workers took place at a time when all this work was only in its preparatory stage. The Giolitti government was compelled to adopt a conciliatory attitude and to have recourse to homeopathic treatment rather than to surgical operations.

The Mussolini Government

By Gramsci.

The factors of the Italian crisis, which was lately settled in a rather violent manner by the Fascist Party assuming power, may be briefly summed up as follows.

The Italian bourgeoisie has succeeded in organizing its State not so much by its own intrinsic strength, as by the fact that its victory over the feudal and semi-feudal classes was favored by a series of circumstances of an international character (the policy of Napoleon III in 1852—1860, the Austro-Prussian War in 1866, the French defeat at Sedan, and the subsequent development of the German Empire). Thus the Italian bourgeois State developed differently and more slowly than many others. The Italian regime was purely constitutional. On the eve of the war the division of power had not yet taken place, the parliamentary prerogatives were very limited and there were no great political parliamentary parties. At that time the Italian bourgeoisie had to defend the unity and integrity of the State against the repeated attacks of the reactionary forces, which were chiefly represented by an alliance of the great landowners with the Vatican. The big industrial and commercial bourgeoisie, led by Giolitti, endeavoured to meet the situation by an alliance between all the urban classes, with the class of the agricultural laborers (the first proposal of collaboration with the government was made to Turati in the early part of the century.) This could not however be termed a step forward in the development of the constitutional State towards parliamentary democracy. This was rather in the nature of urgent concessions made by a paternal government to the working masses organized in trade unions and agricultural co-operatives.

The world war destroyed all these attempts. Giolitti, in agreement with the Crown, had pledged himself in 1912 to act in conjunction with Germany in the 1914 war (the military convention signed in Berlin in 1912 by General Pollio, chief of the

FASCISM

Letter from Italy.

By G. Masci (Rome).

At the Conference held on the 19th December under the direct auspices and in the presence of the Prime Minister Mussolini, between the leaders of Italian industry and the principal leaders of the Fascist Trade Unions, the complete failure of the program and the practice of Fascism in the spheres of Trade Unionism had to be recognized.

The feverish attempts made by Fascism, before and after having obtained power, in order to create a trade union movement which would be at its service, are well known. It is also known, how these attempts, while succeeding to a rather considerable degree in the agrarian field, have failed almost completely in the industrial sphere. It was easy for the Fascists, in view of the life and working conditions of the poor peasants, and of the rural workers dispersed in a great number of villages with feeble ties between the Trade Unions, to destroy the Socialist organizations of the land workers and to force the rural masses by means of physical terror and of the economic boycott, to enter into their corporations. It was otherwise in the industrial sphere, except with the railway employees, amongst whom much can be obtained by state coercion and by the ever threatening menace of discharge, and also with the dockers who had already their strictly guild-like organization determined by the conditions in the traffic at the Italian ports which is developing very spasmodically, in relation to the preponderance of exports and imports and to the seasonal activities for grain, coals and coffee.

In the large industrial towns, the Fascists only succeeded in gathering inconsiderable groups, consisting nearly everywhere of unemployed and of criminal elements, who, by means of the Fascist party ticket obtain impunity for sabotage, theft in workshops and personal violence against foremen. And yet it was necessary for Fascist politics to win the masses at any price.

The Fascist Government can only maintain power for any time so far as it renders life impossible to other organizations which are not Fascist. Mussolini bases his power on large strata of the petty bourgeoisie, which (since they have no function in the productive life and hence do not feel the antagonisms and the contradictions resulting from it), in fact believe the class struggle to be a diabolical invention of the socialists and communists. The entire so-called hierarchic conception of Fascism is dependent upon that fact. It is indispensable for this conception that no independent organization of a typical class character exist and that the modern social life be organized in a series of petty corporations subject to and controlled by the Fascist elite, being the concentrated expression of all the prejudices and utopian visions of the petty bourgeoisie. Hence the necessity for Integral Trade Unionism, which is a revised conception of the Christian democratic Trade Unionism, substituting the defunct nation for the religious idea.

This program was resolutely opposed by the industrialists, who refused to enter the Fascist corporations, viz. to allow themselves to be controlled by Rossoni and his like. The Fascists, some months ago, in face of the repulses by the industrialists, began a demagogic fight, which went so far as to their announcing and propagating in great style a general strike of the metallurgical and textile workers. The campaign against the industrialists culminated immediately after the visit paid by Mussolini to the Fiat works of Turin on the anniversary of the Fascist "March on Rome". The workers of the Fiat, six or seven thousand of whom had been gathered in the courtyard of the factory in order to hear a speech by Mussolini, received the leader of the Fascists in a hostile manner. The Fascists accused the Turin industrialists of having fostered the anti-Fascist spirit of the masses, of preferring to treat with reformist organizations instead of with Fascist ones, of discharging from the Works the Fascist workers, thus preventing the development of the Corporations and so on; they went so far as to attack personally in a coffee-house the chief of the Fiat, Senator Giovanni Agnelli. The situation became very serious for the industrialists as well as for the Government. The Communist Trade Unions Committee intervened in the agitation, inviting the working masses to take part in the struggle against the industrialists in order to enlarge the movement, even though the struggle had been engaged in by the Fascists. The agitation was stifled by the central leaders of

the Fascists, and the Conference held on the 19th of December was convened. In the speech Mussolini delivered there, he recognized, that it is impossible to organize worker and industrialists in one and the same trade union. Integral Trade Unionism, according to Mussolini may be applied, only in the sphere of agrarian production. The Fascists have to respect the organizational independence of the industrialists and have to work only in order to avoid the outbreak of class conflicts. The meaning of these words is clear. The Fascists abandon even the keeping up of the appearance, not only of a struggle against the industrialists, but also of any attempt to equilibrate, under their arbitrary control, the interests of the classes and they have only the confessed task of organizing the workers in order to surrender them to the capitalists bound hand and foot. This is the beginning of the end of the Fascist Trade Unionism. Immediately after the Conference, many land owners protested loudly against the discriminating treatment shown by Fascism to industry and to agriculture. They denounced the violence which they said the Fascist Trade Union Organizers exercised to the detriment of the owners' interests, by compelling them to respect labour contracts which of course they declare to be absurd and opposed to the interests of the nation, and they claim to be allowed to reconstitute the General Confederation of Agriculture which had been absorbed by the Fascist corporations. At Parma the agrarians have placed themselves in direct opposition to Fascism provoking a whole series of incidents and conflicts. At Reggio Emilia, the deputy Cerrini, former Under-Secretary of State to the Government of Mussolini, has been expelled from the Fasci and leads a raging campaign in favour of the organizational independence of the land owners.

It is to be remarked how great a success was obtained by the tactics applied by our Party, in order to unmask before the masses the Fascist Trade Unions Leaders who had raised such a hub hub against the industrialists. It is true, these tactics procured to the Fascists the satisfaction of having meetings attended by many thousands of workers, but they led also to forcing the Fascists to the wall, to causing them to cut their words and to discrediting them even in the eyes of the most backward portion of the working masses. If these tactics were generalized and also extended to the agrarian field, it would be possible to accelerate in a high degree the disintegration of Fascism and hence the reorganization of the revolutionary forces. But against this there are the reformist socialists as well as the maximalist socialists who still have control over the Trade Union Centrals and of the only periodicals of a proletarian character till published in Italy. Thus they demonstrate yet once more that they do not really intend to fight against Fascism. It is true, they risk much if they want to attack Fascism in order to contend with it, within its own Trade Unions or in the agitations sometimes got up by it, for control and leadership of the masses entering the movement. On the other hand, it is certain that large strata, not only of rural workers, but also of factory workers who have no other chance of fighting against the bourgeoisie are drawn to these agitations by the Fascist demagoguery, hoping thus to wring something from their employers. The intransigence shown by the reformist and maximalist gentry, is in fact no intransigence against Fascism, but against the poorest and most backward portion of the workers. Moreover, it is never true to itself and makes many concessions to the Fascist who are governing.

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POLITICS

Italy and Yugoslavia.

By G. Masci (Rome).

The conclusion of the agreement between Italy and Yugoslavia, which liquidates the question of Fiume and opens up a new period in the history of the relations between both countries, has its origin particularly in the following three series of facts:

1. The approaching commencement of the election campaign in Italy. The Fascist government wants to deprive the constitutional opposition of one of the most important causes of its success and of its development among the bourgeoisie: the complete failure of the Fascist foreign policy, which had isolated Italy in Europe.

2. The coming to power in Greece of the government of Venizelos. The government of Mussolini had to convince itself, that it could not do two jobs at the same time. Venizelos is the politician who, since the discussion of Versailles up to the present time, has contributed most of all to thwart and to destroy the expansionist plans of Italian imperialism. In the conflict with Yugoslavia, Italy was hampered by the treaties; in the conflict with Greece, however, the treaties are in favour of Italy, and in the agreement recently concluded, it is directly affirmed, that Italy and Yugoslavia pledge themselves to maintain the "Status quo" established by the treaties. Closely connected with this is the policy of France towards the Little Entente, which would have become an immediate danger for Italy, if the conflict for Fiume had become intensified, as seemed probable until very recent time.

3. The new plan of foreign policy, which until 1922 had been a personal one of Mussolini's, now becomes the official government policy. With this plan are connected the agreement between Italy and Spain; the policy of approachment to the Soviet-Union; the conflict between Italy, feebly aided by Spain, on the one hand and England and France on the other, regarding the Tangier question. A prelude to all this had been the Italo-Greek conflict and the landing of Italian troops at Corfu,

a measure which was in no way warranted by the murder of General Tellini, but was probably only part of a larger concerted plan.

It has always been the personal conviction of Mussolini (and in this Mussolini approached more to the policy of the "Corriere della Sera", of the "Stampa" and the adherents of Nitti, than to great majority of the Fascists, and in particular of the nationalists who had subsequently entered the Fascist party), that Italy must not remain hypnotised regarding the question of Fiume and of Dalmatia, which rendered the creation of military security in the Adriatic impossible, but that she must obtain this security by means of concessions to Yugoslavia and must acquire the liberty of movement necessary for a large-scale action in the Mediterranean, especially in its eastern part.

The question of Dalmatia was already practically liquidated from the moment, when the triumph of the reactionary parties in Yugoslavia and the suppression of the peasants' movement assured the Italian proprietors of the Dalmatian great landed estates, that their rights were not to be curtailed in favour of the Croat peasants. In Dalmatia there prevails a state of affairs similar to that in the Baltic countries and in Galicia, i. e. a difference of nationality between the landowners who inhabit the towns, and the mass of peasants who cultivate the soil. In the first King's speech delivered at Belgrade after the return of the dynasty, it was announced that the Italian owners of the great landed estates of Dalmatia were to be expropriated, that the Croat peasants were to be freed from all feudal bonds and were to be granted portions of land. The situation has since entirely changed. Already in the last year the Italian troops evacuated the occupied zones of Dalmatia, and nothing of a disastrous nature for the owners has taken place. The newspaper campaign, fostered by the agrarians, has completely ceased, and the recent treaty has settled the question once for all.

The further development of the new Italian foreign policy will furnish an answer to the questions being raised at present by a portion of the press: Is the Italian-Yugoslavian agreement directed more against France than against England? An objective examination of the situation and an acquaintance with the opinions expressed by Mussolini during his career as a

fascist journalist, justifies us in predicting that, substantially, Italian foreign policy will become more anti-English though preserving the appearance of the character of impartiality between France and England. The fact must not be overlooked, that the Fascist Party, as a petty bourgeois nationalist mass, exerts a continual pressure on the government. The Fascisti would like to initiate a direct policy of complete independence from the hegemonic Powers which are at present contending against one another for world dominion. But it is clear that the economic weakness of Italy compels a compromise between the making of mere affirmations for the purpose of internal propaganda on the one hand and the real policy on the other. And therefore the adventurous and bluffing character of Fascist foreign policy still continues.

POLITICS

The Results of the Elections in Italy.

A First Impression.

By G. Masci (Rome).

All parties declare themselves satisfied with the results of the elections, because all parties up to the eve of the poll had [had] no criterion, not even an approximative one, wherewith to make forecasts, and all of them felt themselves to be crushed by the Fascist terror. This statement typifies the essential feature of the Italian situation which is characterized by the disorganization of the masses, by the impossibility of holding meetings and by the feeble circulation of the papers openly in opposition to Fascism. The first results known up to now (the definite results, owing to the complication of the election law, will only be known by the 14th or 15th April) permit us to draw some very important conclusions which are indispensable for understanding the general orientation of the future political struggle in Italy:

1. The constitutional opposition (Amendola, Bonomi) has known that it has behind it a rapidly disappearing minority of the public opinion. In Italy, even among large strata of the working class, the legend had arisen that the bourgeoisie itself, through its progressive and radical wing, would carry out an "anti-fascist revolution"; the elections have destroyed this legend, [thus] putting before the Turati Reformists in a decisive and emphatic manner the question of abandoning the old political theme of the block with the bourgeois left in favour of the workers' and peasants' block.

2. The working class has revealed resistive forces exceeding [all] expectations. At Milan, the combined votes of the three parties Communist, Maximalist and Reformist, have, in 1924, passed those which the Socialist Party polled in 1919, i.e. in the period of the highest revolutionary development: the [***] 000 votes in 1919 have grown to 66,000 in 1924. The working class has proved in a magnificent manner its historical function [as] champion in this sphere of opposition to Fascism; the results [of] the elections declare that against Fascism no other opposition [is] possible than revolutionary opposition. The Communist Party [is] the sole workers' party which has scored an electoral success: [it] had thirteen deputies in the last legislature, and it now has [seventeen]. The Reformists have sunk from 83 deputies to [24]; the Maximalists from 46 to 22. In the industrial towns (except [Milan] the Communist Party has polled more votes than the maximalists, in some towns, especially in the South of Italy, it [has] polled more votes than the Maximalists and Reformists together. The indication is a clear one: the revolutionary proletariat is reorganizing itself around the Communist Party and abandoning the Maximalist Party which has the majority of its sympathisers among the rural wage-earners.

3. The peasant mass has been disintegrated by Fascism. [It] has in a large part forsaken the banner of the Party of the

Popolari and has formed a whole series of local political groupings which presented themselves at the elections as opposition parties; the Popolari Party from 106 seats has sunk to 39.

The electoral law, supported by the state apparatus and by the Fascist organization, has manufactured a large majority for the government of Mussolini: 4,264,454 votes for the "National list" and 39,080 votes for the Fascist minority list B., with the total of 374 seats out of 535 of which, however, only 260 are officially members of the Fascist Party. To what extent these figures reflect the real state of mind of the population can be judged by the following fact: in all towns with over 75,000 inhabitants (except Bologna), the Nationalist is in an unquestioned minority, as compared with the combined votes of the opposition. The smaller the centers and the more the Fascist pressure is able to control the votes of the individual citizens, the more the voting became plebiscites right up to 100% for the National list and for the list B.

In any case, Fascism has obtained a victory, and the Mussolini government has been strengthened by the elections both as regards at home and abroad, a fact which will have very notable consequences. The new Chamber will assume a true and proper character of a Fascist Constituent Assembly, this means, that it will legalise Fascism by reforming the National Constitution and by formally abolishing the democratic liberties which have ceased to exist in fact. It is therefore not improbable (already an allusion in this regard was contained in the program speech of Amendola) that the democratic opposition will raise the demand for new elections, in order to convoke a true and proper Constituent Assembly with the definite task of revising the Statutes, and by means of this slogan it will again seek to create a good basis for a Left Bloc.

The Communist Party which emerges politically strengthened from the elections, will therefore have a well defined task to fulfil: it must continue and intensify the campaign for the proletarian united front and for the workers' and peasants' government, to this end taking advantage of the parliamentary tribune. The peasants who have been shattered by the elections and who, in their great majority, have been compelled by means of terror to vote for Fascism, will realize more continually that from the present situation, the only way out is by revolutionary means. In the South of Italy, the Fascists have only by means of unheard of acts of violence succeeded in subordinating the peasants masses on the election day, throughout this whole area (which comprises one third of the territory of Italy) the Communist Party formerly had not even one deputy, and now it has three: one in Sicilia, one in Apulia and one in Campania. The economic situation of these populations is a terrible one: emigration has been rendered impossible by the American immigration laws, and the area of land under cultivation has for this harvest been decreased by the great land-owners. The Fascist terror can only for a short time prevent a wave of revolts, as took place in the decades from 1860—1870 and from 1890—1900. The tree Communists elected in the South therefore have historic significance which can surpass all expectations.

The Situation in the Communist Party of Italy.

By Gramsci (Rome).

Comrade Gramsci recently gave a detailed report before the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Italy, on the inner situation in the Italian Party. We give below the most essential parts of this report. Ed.

The conditions under which the CP. of Italy has to fight, are extremely difficult. It has to fight on two fronts against the Fascist terror and against the reformist terror exercised by the trade unions of the *D'Aragona* type. The regime of terror has considerably weakened the powers of the Italian trade unions. The reformist leaders exploit (this state of affairs for their own ends, and undermining the action of the revolutionary minority in the trade unions. The masses are anxious for unity, and to carry on the fight within the "*Confederazione Generale del Lavoro*" (*Federation of Free Trade Unions*). The reformist leaders thus find themselves obliged, to oppose the organisation of the masses. At the last congress of the Trade Union Federation *D'Aragona* proclaimed that the number of members in the Trade Union Federation must not be permitted to exceed one million. This means that the leaders of the free trade unions only want 5.5% out of 15 million Italian workers to be organised. As adherents of the Social Democratic policy of joint action with the bourgeois parties, they do not want to organise the peasantry, since this would weaken the basis of the bourgeois democratic parties.

How is reformism to be combatted and yet a split in the trade union movement to be avoided? We see one possibility only: the **organisation of factory nuclei**. Since the reformists oppose the concentration of revolutionary forces, it is the task of the factory nuclei to gather all the factory workers around the Party, and to strengthen the "Inner Factory Committees" or, where these do not exist, to form Propaganda Committees. These last should be mass organisations adapted to developing the trade union movement, and to participating in the general struggles against capitalism and against the ruling regime.

In this respect the Italian communists are in a much more difficult position than the Russian Bolsheviks before the war, for they have to hold their own simultaneously against Fascist reaction and against reformist reaction. But the more difficult the situation, the firmer must be the establishment of the communist factory nuclei, both with regard to ideology and to organisation.

In these questions there is no disagreement in the standpoints held by the Communist Party of Italy and the Communist International. The Italian Commission of the Enlarged Executive was occupied solely and exclusively with the **inner** Bolshevisation of the Italian Communist Party.

Comrade **Bordiga**, who was called upon to take part in the work of the Enlarged Executive, has declined to do so, although he agreed, at the V. World Congress, to form one of the Executive of the Communist International. His attitude is the more regrettable that in the **Trotsky** question he adopted a standpoint not only acutely antagonistic to that of the Executive, but even antagonistic to that of **Trotsky** himself. It is to be regretted that comrade **Bordiga** would not take part in the discussion on the **Trotsky** question; if he had gone to Moscow for this purpose, he would have had the opportunity of hearing the views and proclamations of the Executive and the opinions of the Parties, and could at the same time have expressed his own views.

The Commission which should have discussed this question with comrade **Bordiga** has continued to pursue the policy which the Party must pursue if the Bolshevik idea is to be helped to victory. It has examined the general conditions ruling in the Communist Party of Italy with reference to the **five fundamental characteristics** demanded by **Lenin** of every really revolutionary Communist Party. These five points are as follows.

1. Every communist must be a Marxist. (Today we say, Marxist-Leninist.)
2. Every communist must take his place in the front ranks of proletarian action.
3. Every communist must abhor mere revolutionary phraseology, he must be at the same time a revolutionary and a real politician.

4. Every communist must submit his will to that of his Party, and judge everything from the standpoint of his Party. (He must be a truly disciplined member of the Party, in the highest sense of the word.)

5. Every communist must be an internationalist.

We may say that the CP. of Italy fulfils the second condition, but none of the other four.

The CP. of Italy lacks a thorough Marxist-Leninist teaching. In this lack we observe the remains of the traditions of the Socialist movement in Italy, which avoided those theoretical discussions which might have aroused the interest of the masses, and contributed to their ideological education. This state of affairs is extremely regrettable, and comrade **Bordiga** contributes to its continuance by confusing the tendency, peculiar to reformists, of substituting general "cultural work" for revolutionary political action, with the endeavours of the Communist Party to so raise the intellectual level of its members that they are able to grasp the immediate and distant goals of the revolutionary movement.

The Party has succeeded in developing a feeling for discipline in its ranks. But a lack of **international spirit** is still observable in its relations to the Communist International. The **Bordiga** group, which thinks to ennoble itself with the designation of "Italian Left" has created a sort of local patriotism inconsistent with the discipline of a world organisation. The situation created by comrade **Bordiga** is similar to that created by comrade **Serrati** after the II. Congress in Moscow, and that situation led to the expulsion of the Maximalists from the Communist International.

The greatest weakness of the Party lies however in its love for the revolutionary phrase so often stigmatised by **Lenin**. If this does not characterise **Bordiga** himself, it characterises the elements grouping themselves around him. The extremism of **Bordiga** is the result of the special conditions of life obtaining among the Italian working class. But the Italian working class forms only a minority of the working population. It is concentrated for the most part to one part of the country. Under these circumstances their Party falls easily under the influence of those middle strata who are capable to a certain extent of steering the workers into a course actually opposed to their interests. On the other hand the situation in the **Socialist Party** up to the time of the **Leghorn Congress** was calculated to develop **Bordiga's** ideology.

Lenin, in his "Infantile Diseases of 'Radicalism' in Communism", defines this situation in the following sentences:

"In a Party where there is a **Turati** and a **Serrati** who does not combat **Turati**, there must inevitably be a **Bordiga** as well."

But it is less naturally inevitable that comrade **Bordiga** should have preserved his ideology in our Communist Party. The struggle against opportunism has rendered **Bordiga** so pessimistic that he is sceptical as to the possibility of saving the proletariat and its Party from the intrusion of petty bourgeois ideology, except by the employment of extremely scottish tactics, which would however contradict the two leading principles of Bolshevism: The unification of the workers with the peasants, and the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolutionary movement.

Are there still other tendencies in the Communist Party of Italy? What is their nature, and what dangers do they represent? An examination into the inner situation in the Party convinces us that it has not yet attained that degree of revolutionary maturity characteristic of a really Bolshevik Party, and that it has not even succeeded as yet in amalgamating into a whole the various groups of which it is composed. The CP. of Italy has been formed out of three groups.

1. **Bordiga's** antiparliamentary fraction (fraction abstaining from voting).

2. The group of the "**Ordine Nuovo**" ("New Order") and of the "**Avanti**" ("Forward") in Turin.

3. The **Gennari-Marabini** group.

Bordiga's fraction was formed as national organisation before the **Leghorn Congress**, but it occupied itself solely with the inner life of the Socialist party, without possessing the political experience imperative for mass action.

The "**Ordine Nuovo**" group formed an actual fraction in the province of **Piedmont**. It developed its action among the masses, and showed itself capable of establishing a close connection between the inner problems of the Party and the demands of the Piedmontese proletariat.

The overwhelming majority of the members of the CP. of Italy are elements which remained in the Communist International after the Leghorn Congress, headed by numerous of the old leading comrades of the Socialist party: **Gennari, Marabini, Bombacci, Misiano, Salvatore, Graziadei etc.**

Without a full comprehension of the various elements composing the CP. of Italy it is impossible to understand either its crises or its present situation.

The situation was made worse last year by the affiliation of the "**Fraction of the III. International**" of the "**Maximalist Party**" to us. This "Fraction of the III. International" formerly carried on bitter personal and sectarian struggles within the Maximalist party, it deals with the fundamental questions of policy and organisation as being of secondary importance.

For instance there is a **Graziadei** question. We have to combat the deviations spread abroad in his last book. It would be wrong to assert that comrade Graziadei is a political danger, and that his revisionist conception of Marxism could generate an ideological current. But his reformism might contribute to strengthen the Right tendencies still concealed in the Party.

The affiliation of the "Fraction of the III. International", which has retained its Maximalist character to a great degree, might even afford the Right tendencies a certain organisatory basis.

It must be granted in general that a **Right** danger is probable in our Party. The masses, disappointed by the failures of the "constitutional opposition" (of the Socialists and bourgeois), have streamed into our Party and strengthened it, but not to the extent to which they have streamed to Fascism, which has succeeded in establishing itself. In this situation a Right wing might easily come into existence — if it does not exist already — which, despairing of being able to overthrow the Fascist regime rapidly enough, adopts a policy of passivity which would make it possible for the bourgeoisie to exploit the proletariat for anti-Fascist election manoeuvres. In any case, the Party must recognise that the Right danger is a probability, and must first meet this danger by ideological influence; later, if necessary, with the aid of disciplinary measures.

The **danger** from the **Right** is merely probable, whilst that from the **Left** is obvious. This Left danger forms an obstacle to the development of the Party. It must therefore be combatted by propaganda and by political action. The action taken by the "**Extrem Left**" threatens the unity of our organisation, for it strives to form a party within the Party, and to replace Party discipline by fraction discipline. We have not the slightest wish to break with comrade Bordiga and those who call themselves his friends. Nor do we seek to alter the fundamentals of the Party as created at the Leghorn Congress and confirmed at the Rome Congress. What we must demand is that our Party does not content itself with a mechanical affiliation to the Communist International, but actually appropriates the principles and discipline of the Comintern. But in actual fact 90 % of our Party members, if not more, have today no knowledge whatever of the methods of organisation upon which our relations to the International are based. We believe that we shall arrive at an understanding with Comrade **Bordiga**, and we trust that he believes this a well, and as desirous of it as we are.

The **CP. of Italy** will hold its **Conference** shortly. In the discussion preceding the Party Conference we shall have to deal with the present political situation and the tasks of the Party in Italy. Since the last parliamentary elections the CP. of Italy has been carrying on energetic political work, participated in by most of its members. Thanks to this work, the Party has tripled its membership. Our Party has shown much energy and realisation of actualities in preaching the problem of revolution in Italy as the problem of the alliance between the workers and the peasantry. In short, the CP. of Italy has become an important factor in the political life of the country.

In the course of the above mentioned work a certain unification of character, a **homogeneity** has been developed within the Party. This homogeneity, one of the most important results of our Bolshevisation, must be firmly and finally established by

our Party Conference. We shall discuss the international situation and the proportions of social forces in Italy, concentrating our efforts upon the two following points: The **development of our Party**, which must be such as to render the Party capable of leading the proletariat to victory (the problem of Bolshevisation); and the political **action** which must be carried on for the purpose of gathering together all anti-capitalist forces and establishing a workers' state. To this end it is necessary to study the conditions in Italy with the utmost exactitude, so that the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry may be established, and the hegemony of the proletariats thus secured.

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Resisting Abstraction: Gramsci's Historiological Method

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This article argues that the writings of Antonio Gramsci should be situated in their rightful social, philosophical, political, in short, 'historical' context. This is particularly true of his prison writing which is a rich resource but one which calls for delicate archaeological handling. It appears that Gramsci's Marxism is unapologetically eclectic but this results in an integrated and surprisingly harmonious theoretical and practical approach to history and society. This can be brought to sharp focus only by close examination of the educational properties of Gramsci's historical environment, the suggestions it makes, the perceptible possibilities it entails, that which blocks or impedes movement and progress, and so on. That is to say, Gramsci was not an abstract thinker. His thinking is grounded in the class war of the Italy of his time and, in turn, this was attuned to the broader struggle against capitalism in and beyond Italy's borders. This is arguably the way Gramsci would prefer to be remembered and indeed the context in which he would perhaps prefer to be utilised today. Reading Gramsci, therefore, requires knowing Gramsci. The problems encountered are an unfortunate consequence of the conditions in which he wrote but they can be overcome if we apply 'Gramsci to Gramsci'.

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Resisting Abstraction: Gramsci's Historiological Method

Nigel Greaves

Introduction

How is Antonio Gramsci remembered today? More to the point, how should he be remembered? By drawing on the insights of Gramsci himself, this article proposes an interpretive stance which might allow for a more sensitive historiological treatment of his intellectual legacy than we have sometimes witnessed in the last few decades. It argues Gramsci's mature writing imparts a method for textual interpretation that allows for the precise location of the meaning and function of his ideas.

Gramsci has attracted intense interest in academia since his Prison Notebooks (*Quaderni*) were first published in English in 1971. Much of the flurry of subsequent literature is a credit-worthy attempt to recover the meaning of his work and its significance in the contemporary world (see Martin, 2002; Morton, 2003). However, others have identified certain ambiguities in order to modify Gramsci to the support of their particular preoccupations and assumptions (i.e., Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). This is problematic on methodological grounds.

Whilst there is some appeal in not 'closing the circle' and leaving Gramsci's work open-ended, any dismissal of the historical context of his intellectual output runs the risk of sacrificing the original author's meaning and intent. There is always an intimate relationship between ideas and extant conditions. Gramsci stressed this repeatedly in his interpretation, for example, of the neo-Hegelian philosopher Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), Machiavelli, Marx and many others. Therefore, why not apply Gramsci to Gramsci? Here, Stuart Hall writes: "[i]t is, after all, Gramsci himself who first taught us how to 'read Gramsci'" (1991:7). Moreover, Hall continues: "[Gramsci] made it possible for us to read Marx again, in a new way" (1991:8). What all this means, though, is open to debate.

For Gramsci, Marxism represents the culmination of a historical struggle for 'self-consciousness' which enables the human mass to understand itself and point out to it what it is capable of becoming. Indeed, Gramsci's work within Marxism is largely a refinement of the assumption that the body of ideas it represents is the philosophy of the proletariat, the advanced historical force. Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) work has moved the debate on, and

once assumed a sort of vanguard trend in Gramscian studies that strips Marxism and indeed Gramsci of all social and historical location. It entails the association of Gramsci's Marxism with the deconstructive epistemology of postmodernism in various ways, bringing forth 'post-Marxism'. This attempt at Kuhnian (Kuhn, 1970) 'paradigm-busting' renders the current condition of the Marxist tradition - to which Gramsci undoubtedly belongs - an exercise in reaction (Daly, 1999:62); Enlightenment metaphysics (Daly, 1994:178); modernist idealism (Docherty, 1996:71); or as Sim, (2000:35) puts it "control freakery". It seems to me that the weak spot in all of this is its inherent a-historicism. Post-Marxism offers no account of history and yet it seeks to experiment with the ideas of a great, if not the greatest, historicist.

Current Uses (and Misuses?) of Gramsci

How is Gramsci remembered today? To a significant extent, the answer merely requires us to observe how Gramsci's ideas are being currently used. Generally speaking, Gramsci was a class agent in the Leninist tradition, and yet much contemporary literature defuses the true character of his radicalism and smoothes his transition into mainstream political science, sociology, and what has become 'cultural studies'.

As Boggs (1984:282-3) anticipated, leftists in academia today seeking to maintain critical bite, but wishing to relinquish the ontological baggage of historical materialism (i.e. Laclau & Mouffe, 1985), have seized on the thrust of Gramsci's anti-economism, albeit without the originator's strict historiological qualifications. The assumption appears to be that Gramsci's work on hegemony alone provides a de-ontological platform for social, political and cultural analysis which can be readily adapted to the current postmodern intellectual turn. This is all very well, as nothing is sacred, but can it be said to properly derive from Gramsci? Gramsci's schema is so loaded with potential it can, it seems, be made to mean anything at all. As David Harris notes, to be Gramscian today could mean to be an advocate of a good many strategies of 'enrichment' of the founder of the school of thought, and yet nothing at all definitive (1992:27). In many ways this is true of Laclau and Mouffe (1985), who invoke the authority of Gramsci in replacing class struggle with a determinant-free, antagonistic politics.

Gramsci's current usage is not entirely heterodox. He undoubtedly shares with the Cultural Studies fraternity, and indeed the early Frankfurt School, concern for the role of the cultural and ideological dimensions of social life in moulding consensus, and that society has to be viewed therefore in Hegelian terms as a 'divided unity'. Indeed, this is the underlying assumption of Stuart Hall's activity at the University of Birmingham. Yet, as Dworkin points out, cultural studies has tended to analyse the question, and to see the potential for creating subversive identities, increasingly from the subjective and secondary perspective of

products and consumerism, not production itself (1997:5-6). Harris puts it wryly: “[w]e have heard a good deal about the proletarian shopper” (1992:205).

In a sense, with the demand for Marxists to think creatively, Gramsci’s current popularity in the academy is a consequence of his bid to upgrade Marxism for the twentieth century. No less a figure than Althusser says that Gramsci provides “completely original... insights into the problem... of the superstructures” (Althusser, 1965:114). This is amplified by a number of seasoned contemporary scholars (Buci-Glucksmann, 1982; Showstack Sassoon, 1980; Dimitrakos, 1986; Anderson, 1976; Femia, 1975:45; Hoffman, 1984; Mercer, 1980; Bobbio, 1979; etc). At bottom, Gramsci’s great feat was to adapt Marx and Engels to the Hegelian concept of civil society and the role of ideas in securing the state such that ideas were to receive dialectical parity with economics. However, Texier reminds us that this certainly does not mean that Gramsci takes us back to the Hegelian ‘man standing on his head’ and a “disembodied” conception of human creativity (1979:60).

It should be acknowledged, however, that a consequence of Gramsci’s elevation of subjective factors to dialectical parity with infrastructures is debate concerning his epistemic trajectory. This coincides today with the supposed arrival of a postmodern condition. Indeed, based on the textual flavour of his prison writing it has been said that Gramsci is a precursor of the postmodern turn (Landry, 2000:145; Smart, 1986:161). Of course, the would-be postmodernisation of Gramsci represents an outgrowth of his ideas on ideology and the construction of identity, which is at least in part open to the contingency of political organisation, rather than the spontaneous product of the ‘relations of production’ we find in Marx’s 1859 Preface to *A Critique of Political Economy*.

Gramsci rejects Croce’s notion that thinking is divided into separate categories of activity (the practical, the aesthetic, and so on) such that it is ultimately possible to formulate an autonomous discursive line of politics. However, whilst politics and economics are ultimately inseparable from the historical totality of social existence, as animated practices engaging social power they do assume significantly different operational characteristics. Gramsci states:

[p]olitics becomes permanent action and gives birth to permanent organisations precisely in so far as it identifies itself with economics. But it is also distinct from it, which is why one may speak separately of economics and politics, and speak of “political passion” as of an immediate impulse to action which is born on the “permanent and organic” terrain of economic life but which transcends it, bringing into play emotions and aspirations in whose incandescent atmosphere even calculations involving the individual human life itself obey different laws from those of individual profit, etc (Gramsci, 1971:139-40).

Yet, at the same time Gramsci wished to avoid dialectical ‘one-sidedness’. Indeed, here Laclau is wrong to suggest that Gramsci “asserted [the] primacy of politics” (Laclau, 1996:62). With probably the revolutionary syndicalist Georges Sorel (1847-1922) in mind,

Gramsci immediately counter-posed the error of economic determinism with its opposite: a tendency to excesses of voluntaristic “desires and passions” he dubbed “ideologism” (Gramsci, 1971:178-9). For Gramsci, excesses of eco-determinant and politico-voluntarist kinds are equally dialectically inert. Gramsci brings the Cartesian duality (the material and thinking realms of existence) into dialectical reciprocation. He acknowledges that ideology and the knowledge that informs it has no autonomous existence (Morera, 2000:43-5). He saw ideas as material forces in the sense that they become attached to specific social forces pre-formed in the productive world, historically (Gramsci, 1971:165). What Gramsci refers to as history in this regard is “determined social relations”; relations, by virtue of practiced and learned ideological articulations, which become an accurate basis for political action (Gramsci, 1971:133). His point is that social relations are determined economically but not historical outcomes *per se*. It is only when ideas become attached to these social relations that historical movement can occur. In this case, ideas have to refer directly to certain social forces. They must appeal to a ‘being’ already formed or in the process of being formed, historically. In this sense ideas become attached to the conditions, will, aspirations, and so on, which result from the occupation of a certain pre-existing position in the social world. Not surprisingly, we find an insistence on this material grounding in Gramsci’s use of the term ‘hegemony’:

[a]lthough hegemony is ethico-political, it must also be economic, must necessarily be based on the decisive function exercised by the leading group in the decisive nucleus of economic activity (Gramsci, 1971:161).

The key phrase here is: “must necessarily be based”. The task is to bring into dialectical reciprocation ‘being’ and ‘consciousness’. This stems from Gramsci’s recognition that the concept of being refers to socio-historical location – a product of involuntary productive configuration. By contrast, the question of consciousness, or one’s conception of self, is moulded in a contested hegemonic (political) environment that is to some extent voluntary in that persuasion rather than force is the characteristic determinant. Here, of course, Laclau and Mouffe detect a point of entry for their deconstructionist politics.

Gramsci seems at once to be moving in the direction of contingency and yet he remains anchored to the basic assumptions of historical materialism – his ‘in the last instance’ economism. By removing this remaining (and, by Laclau and Mouffe’s account, redundant) economic vestige the hegemonic discourse is now freed of all socio-historical referents and occupies its own wholly autonomous space. Yet, hermeneutically speaking, this re-reading of Gramsci denudes its originator’s notion of hegemony of its historiological orientation. The act of freeing the hegemonic discourse incurs the price of historiological abstraction. In other words, the ultimate means employed by Gramsci to map hegemony is relinquished.

Post-Marxism is thus wholly devoid of a theory of history or indeed any epistemic references employed by Gramsci to render hegemony and its political usage intelligible (Greaves,

2009:38). Laclau and Mouffe effectively strip hegemony of any extra-discursive structural implication; in keeping with the postmodern turn, the discourse is given to refer to nothing outside of itself (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:85). To assume otherwise, of course, would return the authors to the very essentialism they seek to avoid, and indeed to that which Gramsci is criticised for retaining (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:69). Gramsci does provide a nuanced approach to class politics with the concept of 'historical bloc', but he makes no attempt to escape socio-economic class as an ontological referent. For example, Gramsci writes of hegemony as "direction"/"domination" (Gramsci, 1971:12-13). This begs an elementary political question: who is doing the directing/dominating and who is directed/dominated? Again, the answer Gramsci consistently supplies in his prison writing is that for hegemony to be historically significant it must become attached to historically specific 'organic' interests; those corresponding to a historical level of development in socialised production. By way of an example, Gramsci observes the new Fordist techniques of assembly-line production then underway in the US. The significance of this imposition is that it creates an immediate deficit of ideological regulation: since the workers cannot be prevented from thinking, and thus fomenting *ad hoc* feelings of anti-conformist sentiment corresponding, albeit perhaps imprecisely, but corresponding nonetheless, to a perceived reduction in their human status to that of the "trained gorilla" (Gramsci, 1985: 310). This crisis had to be addressed by the owners of this mode of production by promoting Fordism somehow as morally and rationally digestible to the workers, and indeed the entire historical bloc. This is done either directly, or, more likely, indirectly via the cadre of intellectuals acting as appointed 'mediators' for the dominant group (Gramsci, 1971: 12).

The inescapable upshot here is that ideology in the form of hegemony remains class-necessitarian for Gramsci. He rules out hegemony as non-political, spontaneous reflection, but it is nonetheless, like all things political, born out of necessity for direction imposed *de facto* on the historical bloc by the developing impulses of economic life. For Gramsci, hegemony in all its complexity merely represents the political attempt to regulate (and out of necessity continually amend itself) according to the suggestions imposed by the economy. Hegemony becomes the only means to render history intelligible; by the same token history is the only means to render hegemony intelligible:

[The] material forces are the content and ideologies are the form, though this distinction between form and content has purely didactic value, since the material forces would be inconceivable historically without form and the ideologies would be individual fancies without the material forces (Gramsci, 1971:377).

Laclau and Mouffe's work on post-Marxist theory has been useful perhaps in necessitating a reconsideration of who Gramsci was and what he was actually saying, but it remains unclear *who* post-Marxist theory is addressing. Indeed, this is undoubtedly the first question Gramsci would ask of it. For Gramsci, hegemony is free in the moment of its construction but it can only posit itself meaningfully as 'truth' by attachment to the socio-historical reality that firstly

initiates the need for it. If it fails in this regard it is ‘inorganic’ (a-historical) and quickly forgotten:

[i]t is evident that [the superstructure] cannot just happen “arbitrarily”, around any ideology, simply because of the formally constructive will of a personality or a group which puts it forward solely on the basis of its own fanatical philosophical... convictions. Mass adhesion or non-adhesion to an ideology is the real critical test of the rationality and historicity of modes of thinking. Any arbitrary constructions are pretty rapidly eliminated by historical competition, even if sometimes, through a combination of immediately favourable circumstances, they manage to enjoy popularity of a kind; whereas constructions which respond to the demands of a complex organic period of history always impose themselves and prevail in the end (Gramsci, 1971:341).

Roger Simon (1991) brings out another dubious assumption. He locates Gramsci within the revolutionary upheavals of the early twentieth century. However, he then argues that in the aftermath of revolutionary failure in Italy Gramsci recognises that history is “not going that way” (Simon, 1991:115). In other words, Simon assumes that Gramsci concluded that revolution was not going to happen and he thus set out on an alternative course. In short, Simon implies that Gramsci ended his life a non-revolutionary reformist.

In this regard, Simon takes Gramsci’s concept of ‘war of position’ as connoting a strategic political distinction from the ‘war of movement’ of the Russian October Revolution of 1917 (Simon, 1991:18). Gramsci did certainly introduce the concept of ‘war of position’ into the Marxist vocabulary, but Simon is wrong to imply that this led him to advocate a reformist political outlook. On the contrary, as Ernest Mandel states:

there is not the slightest evidence that Gramsci ever abandoned the conception that the socialist revolution implies the destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus (1978:201).

Simon’s point rather typifies not so much the way history has gone, but the recent fate of the Gramscian legacy. A distinct fracture has emerged between Gramsci’s complementary revolutionary strategies – those of wars of ‘position’ and ‘manoeuvre’ – which are taken to mean either ‘reform’ or ‘revolution’. This misreads Gramsci’s argument. The dispute it seems centres on a seeming fetishisation of the war of position tactic. Indeed, how is this fought? Who is doing the fighting?

The war of manoeuvre is the classical Leninist assault and seizure of the instruments of capitalist oppression – the state. In the aftermath of defeats in Italy and other advanced European countries, Gramsci realised that the revolutionary strategy had to include an attack on the consenting (hegemonic) components of state:

The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks: more or less numerous from one State to the next, it goes without saying — but this precisely necessitated an accurate reconnaissance of each individual country (Gramsci, 1971:238).

War of position is aimed at the fortresses and earthworks - an advanced assault on the consent mechanisms of the capitalist state. Naturally, the means by which consent is generated will vary between western states. This is what Gramsci means by his otherwise odd analogy that whilst all water is “H₂O”, there are an infinite variety of “waters” (1995:305).

In the light of revolutionary failure in Italy, Gramsci was brought to a more sophisticated appreciation of how the capitalist actively wins and maintains political power, and this is the basis of his unique contribution to Marxist theory. His insights were intended to better equip the working class in its struggle to alter the course of history. Gramsci sought to elaborate the Marxian problematic of subjective consciousness and its control in revolutionary situations and to include certain social forces not automatically included in the progressive historical thrust, such as the peasantry. However, his was not an argument for consensual reformism in states with reasonably established parliamentary systems; his analysis remains fundamentally class-antagonistic and revolutionary in the full Leninist sense of the term.

In this regard, Gramsci studied Italy’s idiosyncrasies. He found that Italians had not made a nation of themselves as much as an ‘empire’ within state boundaries. He noticed that the Italian capitalist class of the north of the country provided leadership that thrived upon the surreptitious monopolisation of culture in which the south was dismissed as “heathen and primitive” (King, 1987:12). In perpetrating a common conviction that ‘high culture’, in terms of literature and art, and so forth, represented innate national properties, domination was effected by the leading social elements of society toward its masses (Dombroski, 1986:113). The masses themselves remained either non-contributory and ambivalent toward the higher national-cultural mysteries, or became imitative of them. In both cases, the leading group’s hold on culture went unchallenged, particularly by the predominantly agrarian southern mass of Italy. The point here is that cultural domination assumes political form as ‘capital’ once removed (or disguised) from production.

That culture is once removed from economic determination has led to an understandable attraction to the semiotic and linguistic dimensions of Gramsci’s hegemonic theory (Ives, 2004; Holub, 1992). This is, of course, particularly pertinent to the national question in Gramsci’s thinking.

Gramsci addressed the problem of national integration and exposed those features unique to Italy, but offered a theoretical pattern that may be applied elsewhere in corresponding circumstances. Admittedly though, there was little time in his relatively short life to move on from the morass of national questions in which he had become immersed and the development of his internationalism undoubtedly suffered as a result (Harman, 1978:14). For good reasons, therefore, the essential Italian character of Gramsci’s Marxism is

emphasised in Salamini (1981); Cammett (1967); Pozzolini (1970); Boggs (1976 & 1984); Showstack Sassoon (1980); Joll (1977); Bellamy (2002); and Anderson (1976).

Yet, by its nature, much of the work on Gramsci today in the Anglo-Saxon world that is Marxist, non-Marxist or post-Marxist, appears to reject this reading. In one sense, this aspect of current analysis is promising. Marxists need not retreat with Gramsci into specifically national relativity in order to preserve his intellectual character. Gramsci's political imagination was expansionary. One could indeed call it internationalist to a level in which it rivals the position of Trotsky. This was certainly the view of Gramsci contemporary Angelo Tasca (Spriano, 1979:131). Gramsci was outward looking, as his practical activities in trying to balance the needs of the Italian proletariat with that of the Comintern indicate. He argued that:

[e]very relationship of “hegemony” is necessarily an educational relationship and occurs not only within a nation, between the various forces of which the nation is composed, but in the international and world-wide field, between complexes of national and continental civilisations (Gramsci, 1971:350).

Gramsci did not seek to elevate national factors over the greater global designs of communism initiated by Marx. He merely wished to demonstrate the necessity to take into account contradictory national factors and thus to avoid crass generalisations that actually obstructed the global ambitions he otherwise supported.

An Approach to Intellectual Archaeology

EH Carr has written that there is “an unending dialogue between the present and the past... between the historian and his facts” (1961:30). This is true, but how do we locate the facts? How can we be sure we have them?

Clearly under the influence of Gramsci's contemporary Croce, RG Collingwood in *An Autobiography* (1939) argues that the historical actor must be seen as a ‘problem-solver’ and thus, in many respects, the study of history and philosophy correlate (1939:77). The problems preoccupying the thinker condition the thought and the thought reflects an attempt to address the condition. In *The Idea of History* (1946), Collingwood advocates an empathetic approach to the study of history; we must attempt to enter the mind of the historical subject and locate the active contextual factors which caused an author to commit word to paper. In recent times, Quentin Skinner has become the inheritor of this ‘interpretative’ method. In *The Foundation of Modern Political Thought* (1978), Skinner summarises his method as an attempt to interpret the historical text in the context of the “general social and intellectual matrix” at large (1978:x). “I begin”, he says, “by discussing what I judge to be the most relevant characteristics of the societies in and for which they originally wrote” (1978:x-xi). In other words, Skinner argues for a relativistic approach to the historical exercise in which we are warned of the need to suppress our tendencies to

invest texts of the past with claims and assumptions the original author could not foresee from his/her historical standpoint. We must search instead for the prevailing political, social and ideological climate in which the text was produced in order to recover the relationship between historical theory and historical practice (Skinner, 1978:xiii). This compels us to discover why a text was produced in the way it was produced, at whom it was aimed, for what it was intended, and so forth. To Skinner political thought has no innate and timeless quality to it; its historical context provides its only intelligible standpoint.

‘Contextual relativism’ calls, therefore, for the ‘historicisation’ of the subject for the risks are these. Firstly, we are in danger of transmitting to the past something of ourselves and of the present. That is to say, we risk judgement with hindsight and certain developmental advantages the original thinker had no knowledge of and/or could not foresee. Here, methodologically speaking, we might become ‘tourists’ lost without bearings in an unfamiliar location or, worse, insensitive ‘colonials’ seeking some trans-historical exportation of would-be universal mores and understandings. Secondly, we run the risk of wrenching incongruously into the present a portion of the past, putting us in mind of the ‘plundering’ that frequently passed as Egyptology in the nineteenth century and indeed the current ethical debate surrounding the Ancient Greek artefacts, the Elgin Marbles.

However, having insisted on unlimited historical and contextual sensitivity, Skinner at least would be prepared to leave it at that. Yet, what has been largely overlooked it seems is that Gramsci’s pursues this historiological methodology initiated originally by Croce, but, in adapting it to historical materialism, takes us much further than non-Marxist contextualist schools in our understanding of the ‘problems’ philosophy seeks to address.

Gramsci’s notion ‘war of position’ is in effect the barometer of the condition of class war in a given era. It reflects a battle for supremacy fought with hegemonic weaponry. Hegemony at its highest and most coherent form is expressed in philosophy; this then becomes the intellectual armament to establish a way of life conducive to the interests of certain socio-economic classes in a given epoch. Political thought of the past thus becomes an expression of a greater underlying conflict. As Gramsci writes:

[t]he philosophy of an historical epoch is... nothing other than the “history” of that epoch itself, nothing other than the mass of variations that the leading group has succeeded in imposing on preceding reality (1971:345).

Gramsci demands that the exploration of intellectual history takes account of not just its context but, specifically, its ‘hegemonic context’. Thus, ‘truth’ is ‘historical truth’ in the sense that, at any point in time, it reflects a view of the world that has been successfully imposed on society sufficient to hold together the various heterogeneous class elements of a ‘historical bloc’. In other words, class war takes shape in economic life but is expressed in the superstructure. In fact, there are competing superstructures, some more coherent than others, borne on the terrain of differing experiences within the dialectical totality of the historical bloc. A philosophy might be ingenious but it is little more than the theorisation

of extant experience, or that already suggested by life. The great task of a philosophy such as Marxism is to create conditions which will allow it to become critical, then to pass into general hegemonic currency for the whole of society, much, for example, as the ideas of Adam Smith, John Locke and JS Mill have accomplished for western liberal-capitalist culture.

The history of ideas and philosophy in general is now tied by Gramsci to specific historical situations in which there is always an extant struggle to control popular beliefs and to consolidate a culture, not only in legality, but morally and ethically according to class interests. In this way, Gramsci arrives at his assessment mentioned before that “ideas are themselves material forces” (Gramsci, 1971:165).

Hence, for Gramsci, the historical text is related to material forces in that it is essentially a record of the attempt by one group in an economically conflictive society to stamp its values and interests on another by voluntary means. Truth is therefore not eternal but qualified as a practical matter mediated by its dialectical insertion into the living reality of an epoch. The written historical work in itself becomes an indicator of this attempt; an expression of the perceived needs of the social conditions in which it was produced.

Of course, some ideologies reflect meaningful situations whilst others are wholly ephemeral. As discussed above, Gramsci provides the means to determine the difference by locating their socio-historical attachment to ‘organic’ forces, to the concrete needs of competing groups in the historical bloc.

Hence, history does not merely relate to itself such that those who seek to understand it become inevitably caught up in an endless vortex of methodological relativity. The class-relative attribution of hegemony emerges as a historical constant in itself. To Gramsci, history is certainly anything but a random and fathomless succession of accidents and occurrences of local and unconnected determination. As Dimitrakos argues, Gramsci did not give equal weight to all ideologies in their cultural possibilities; class struggle and ideas associated with it were his objective historical points of reference (Dimitrakos, 1986:465). Therefore, any methodological relativism that exists in Gramsci that might allow for his transportation to different historical locations (i.e., the supposed postmodern) is immediately checked by his historicism. In this sense, the organic function of postmodern ideology would need to be located. Again, in this regard, to whom, and for whom, does post-Marxism speak?

I would argue that Gramsci’s *Quaderni* writing ought to be approached in this general vein; since it cannot be claimed that the author was unaware of the precise historical function for which they were intended. There are other specific issues to be addressed in Gramsci’s mature work, but this tends to support the overall point.

Reading the *Quaderni* – Expediency, Cryptology, Continuity

At least some of the ongoing ambiguity surrounding Gramsci results from his prison writing which, following its publication in Italian in 1951, is often read as ‘text’ and not ‘history’. Subsequently, in 1971, the original Italian version of the *Quaderni del carcere* was selected, edited and translated into English by Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, as *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. I have encountered no direct criticism of this work. It was sensitively and intelligently undertaken, and the editors made no attempt to make light of the now notorious problems they encountered in attempting to set the notes in order and minimise the losses incurred in translation. Although inevitably ‘selective’, the finished work does appear both thorough and punctilious – note, for example, the copious editorial footnotes. Mention should be made also of Hoare’s very helpful Introduction.

At the time of writing, three volumes of a proposed five volume full English translation of the prison notebooks, in sequence, is underway by Gramsci scholar, Joseph A. Buttigieg (1992, 1996, 2007). These contain rich and detailed background notes on European and Italian intellectual cultural and political milieu in which Gramsci was writing while in prison. If anything these notes are more comprehensive than the 1971 *Selections* and the reader glimpses the evolution of Gramsci’s overall schema with some early notes being revisited in later notebooks. Similarly, Derek Boothman (1995) has edited and translated a fresh selection of the *Quaderni* from the originals held in the specially dedicated *Il Fondazione Istituto di Gramsci* (Gramsci Institute) in Rome. Boothman’s selection has, for example, provided even greater insights into Gramsci’s intellectual relationship with Croce, and translation of material new to English readers is very much to be welcomed, but the benefits for Gramscian discussion may take some time to mature.

It nonetheless remains the case that to the Anglo-Saxon world, at least, the edited English version of the *Notebooks* has come to represent something of a definitive manual of Gramsci’s thought. Yet despite the best efforts of Hoare and Nowell Smith, the *Notebooks* remain wayward and fragmentary, understandably so; they were certainly never intended for publishing as they are. Indeed, in this regard, an almost anticipatory Gramsci issues a caution. When reading the historical text:

[a] distinction should... be made within the work of the thinker under consideration between those works which he has carried through to the end and published himself or those which remain unpublished, because incomplete, and those which were published by a friend or disciple, but not without revisions, rewritings, cuts, etc., or in other words not without the active intervention of a publisher or editor. It is clear that the content of posthumous works has to be taken with great discretion and caution, because it cannot be considered definitive but only as material still being elaborated and still provisional. One should not exclude the possibility that these works, particularly if they have been a long time in the making and if the author never decided to finish them, might have been repudiated or deemed unsatisfactory in whole or in part by the author (Gramsci, 1971:384).

From the outset, then, it is perhaps arguable that current disputes concerning the meaning of Gramsci's prison writing can be attributed in part to the fact that its author was not at the same time its editor. At a minimum, the posthumous collation of fragmented notes is not automatically conducive to a tightly argued, rigorous and integrated argument in which the author's thought can be easily tracked thematically. Verdicchio seems to be correct in stating:

Gramsci's work does not represent a theoretical body, but presents a theoretical stance that, by not delineating or centering itself as a proponent of a strong "theory", leaves its readers the possibility of interpretation and expansion. Of course, this also leaves room for what may be called "misunderstanding" (1995:173).

However, he continues:

... as a whole the Gramscian corpus is an intricate set of details in which every fragment participates, thereby resulting in much less ambiguity than one might expect (1995:173).

I take this to be correct, but Verdicchio might have expanded his point. We could argue that what he calls the 'Gramscian corpus' must include his (Gramsci's) earlier, pre-prison writing. This tells us of the importance of his historical conditions and its impact on his thinking, his major theoretical preoccupations, his politics and so forth. A mental picture of Gramsci the theoretical and practical man does not form so readily on the sole basis of the *Quaderni* writings for they were never intended to be definitive.

Gramsci's early writing is important because, through it, we can observe the events, preoccupations and theoretical struggles he tries to resolve later in prison. It provides also an invaluable insight into his intellectual character, often stated in uncompromising and unrestrained language and style (see Passolini, 1982:180-5). There is far less attention to actual 'will' in the prison writings and much more of an elaboration of the difficulties standing in opposition to it as, generally speaking, a drier philosophical and theoretical undertaking. Indeed, Femia has argued that the early and later Gramsci are distinguishable (1998:82). It is true, for example, that Gramsci becomes more interested in Machiavelli in prison and that he never writes about factory councils again. However, there is no suggestion that the overall character of the *Quaderni* is dislocated from class struggle.

On encountering the *Quaderni*, it is immediately apparent that there is a remarkable change of style in Gramsci's writing when compared to the firebrand syntax of *L'Ordine Nuovo* period of the early 1920s. The most obvious explanation for this is expediency. In prison, Gramsci employs benign language in order that he might continue his important work unhindered and avoid being denied certain reading and writing materials. Apparently, the prison-censor was uninitiated in 'Gramscian studies' and not surprisingly easily outwitted. For much of it, Gramsci manages to make his writings appear as an exercise in philosophical

navel-gazing, that is, when they were clearly designed to enable the workers' struggle in Italy to continue with updated theoretical weaponry.

Indeed, considering the pamphleteering style of Gramsci's early political writing, it is immediately apparent that nowhere in the prison notebooks does he sound explicitly like the communist revolutionary he was. Here we might offer a rather crude but effective illustration. In his *Lyons Theses*, written for the *Partito Comunista d'Italia* (PCd'I) congress of 1926, Gramsci writes:

[t]he transformation of the communist parties, in which the vanguard of the working class is assembled, into Bolshevik parties can be considered at the present moment as the fundamental task of the Communist International. This task must be related to the historical development of the international workers' movement, and in particular to the struggle which has taken place within it between Marxism and the currents which represented a deviation from the principles and practice of the revolutionary class struggle (1978:340).

Many words used above were never penned by Gramsci after imprisonment in 1928, were routinely encoded thereafter and disguised, although, to the educated eye, in fairly blatant cryptography to deceive the prison censor. Had such a paragraph as that above occurred in the *Notebooks*, one might venture, it would have appeared something like the following: [t]he transformation of the nomenclature for the working mass, in which the vanguard of the mass itself is assembled, into Jacobinist tendencies can be considered at the present moment as the fundamental task of the international Modern Prince (Comintern). This task must be related to the historical development of the larger mass movement, and in particular to the struggle that has taken place within it between the Philosophy of Praxis and the currents that represented a deviation from the principles and practice of the historically imminent movement. However, the radical polemicism remains if the historical and thematic context of Gramsci's sentences and subject matter of the *Quaderni* are understood.

Whilst Gramsci's *Quaderni* are a profoundly intellectually rewarding experience to read, no one can claim that they are immediately accessible. They are often so steeped in the history and historical context of contemporary Italy that in the absence of knowledge of his pre-prison writing, his political activism and practical conditions, one would find one's self lost in what amounts to an 'unfamiliar city' without a map. Here the only way to navigate would be to observe how the 'streets' of his often baffling array of ideas relate to one another. This would be a mammoth and doubtless less than successful exercise without some prior guidance. Much of Gramsci's later work on intellectuals and hegemony, for example, relates to his observations of Italy's national revolution and national characteristics, Lenin's achievements in Russia, experiments with factory councils and worker democracy, the role of the Communist Party, and the rise of fascism. Again, even with Buttigieg's efforts, it does not make for the most accessible reading.

Leo Strauss, in *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (1952) argues that political philosophers of the past often wrote against the backdrop of persecution and fear. This makes it necessary, so to speak, to read between the lines. Gramsci's *Quaderni* certainly necessitate similar treatment. They are shot through with curious sounding aphorisms, cryptology and historically qualified and extremely loaded phrases, often rendering the texts a distinctly obscure and deeply academic appearance.

Hence, there are serious methodological preconditions for reading Gramsci's mature writing. Verdicchio's point above that the fragments of Gramsci's ideas participate in the whole is an extremely sagacious one. The ideas of the *Quaderni* inter-lock. They are nothing like the 'pick-and-mix' they might appear to be such that the various ideas can be lifted and abstracted in isolation, as tempting as this might be. Gramsci's ideas are connected by myriad fibres, "as with spaghetti, the attempt to lift bite-sizes from the plate often results in lifting too much to manage or nothing at all" (Greaves, 2005:4). For example, when he refers to the political party as the 'nomenclature of a class', as he often does, one is immediately ushered into accepting an enormous range of practical and philosophical assumptions. Moreover, that the Italian Communist Party might be dubbed the 'Modern Prince' embodies a quite distinctive interpretation of Machiavelli's original *Prince* that requires us to acknowledge his understanding of Machiavelli's historio-hegemonic function.

Of course, the necessity for all this subterfuge and disguise and the fact that Gramsci was not able to present his work as a finished article must have been borne with extreme frustration by a man who, more than most, understood the unquestionable need for direct communication between workers and intellectuals, or what amounts to his perceived need to get his work into popular circulation. Gramsci understood the need to conceive of the workers' movement as an organic body. In this regard it was necessary to establish a dialogue between the sensual experience of modern capitalist practices and the theoretical elements necessary to articulate it. In this respect, in anticipation of a communist uprising, the Italian fascist regime was well advised to gao! Gramsci, although ironically it would require his work in gao! to reveal why exactly this was. Removing Gramsci and his fellow 'thinking' elements from the political scene effectively decapitated the Italian workers' movement. And, thus, by accident or design the scene was set for Gramsci's prison writing to become subsequently adopted and interpreted by the academy, that is, rather than the people for whom it was originally designed and intended – the Italian working classes.

One can only lament the inherent loss of historical grounding this ironic historical twist has entailed for much subsequent evaluation of the *Quaderni*. If we imagine the Gramsci of the prison years in isolation of the rest of his life, then the *Quaderni* writings would need to be taken as an example of miraculous, super-human abstraction. Yet, it is significant that Gramsci himself never accorded this miracle to any of the historical thinkers he most admired – i.e., Machiavelli, Marx and Lenin. As has been said, for Gramsci, all great political

thought is essentially an expression of a war of position for intellectual supremacy, but this is always rooted in class struggle and the attempt to establish a way of life on behalf of identifiable social forces. This is true of Gramsci also. That is to say, Gramsci's ideas have no independent existence. They refer continually to the reality of social existence already constructed outside of the text itself.

Of course, for Gramsci, what was unique about Marx was that this struggle had finally reached the level of 'self-consciousness'. Thought had finally reached the stage where it not only addressed a historical situation, it was aware of itself as a product of it, and thus what it was doing or seeking to do on the ground, in 'concrete', as Gramsci was fond of saying.

It therefore must be insisted that Gramsci be read in the same way. There is no other means to effectively map the *Quaderni*. Gramsci's generic philosophical framework had to have been in place, if not necessarily formulated in detail, before he was cut-off from his historical grounding and imprisoned. This was necessary because it allowed him to apply his own conception of the function of philosophy to operate in terms and conditions he understood. In fact, his principal theoretical and strategic conceptions actually germinated in the class struggle of the 1920s and came to fruition in his prison notes. Many notable Gramsci experts concur on this point. For example, Joll (1977:105) states that in prison Gramsci was engaged in "analysing the past"; there was "no stupendous rupture in Gramsci's intellectual development since 1919-20" (Davidson, 1977:242); and Hoare writes:

[e]ven some of the most important theoretical formulations of the Prison *Notebooks* were essentially elaborations of conclusions he had reached in the period of his active involvement in the class struggle (Introduction to Gramsci, 1978:xxiii).

Conclusion

We ought to be recalling Antonio Gramsci's work with the same consciousness as Gramsci. Gramsci was acutely aware of the role of ideas in society and thus his ideas were 'self-conscious', or aware of the specific historical terrain that produced them and indeed the terrain into which they were to be inserted as dialectical weapons. That is to say, Gramsci's ideas were historiological. They were addressed to a specific target audience at a particular time with a precise purpose in mind. In fact, Gramsci's prison writing was a continuation of class warfare as 'war of position', an attack on the consent mechanisms of capitalist oppression. It is Machiavellian in the sense that it reveals to his audience the techniques used in the same way that Machiavelli revealed how the Medici family held on to power in Florence. The war of position tactic actually provides Gramsci's life with intellectual continuity and political consistency; even if the nature of the struggle was perceived to have changed, struggle between classes was what it was.

If this is accepted then we are compelled to read Gramsci with an interpretive strategy that acknowledges the hegemonic conditions in which the writing was undertaken (the economic, political, social and cultural); we may then question whether what we are doing with Gramsci is appropriate, responsible and thus useful. Contemporary writers should be wary of dislocating Gramsci from context. Ideas are material forces; they speak to and for groups of people whose existence and identity are already formed, but through adoption of the right description of that identity the determinant levers of history can be controlled. This was always Gramsci's intention – the complete humanisation of history by virtue of our understanding of what history actually is.

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The Centrality of the State in Neoliberal Times

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The Centrality of the State in Neoliberal Times

Abstract

One of the greatest myths being propagated in this contemporary neoliberal scenario is that the nation state is no longer the main force in this period characterized by the intensification of globalization. Deregulation was brought in by governments to expedite the process where various forms of provision, private and formerly public, were left to the market. And yet the credit crunch starkly laid bare the folly of this conviction as new forms of regulation are being put in place with the state, the national state, intervening to bail out banks and other institutions in this situation. I consider this an opportune moment to look at the function of the state and assess its role within the contemporary scenario of 'hegemonic globalization', to adopt the term used by the Portuguese sociologist, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (de Sousa Santos in Dale and Robertson, 2004: 151), and its underlying ideology, neoliberalism. I will look at different theoretical insights and then end this excursus with a discussion of Gramsci's conceptualization of the state and its implications for present day politics.

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The Centrality of the State in Neoliberal Times

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The Centrality of the State in Neoliberal Times: Gramsci and beyond

Peter Mayo

One of the greatest myths being propagated in this contemporary neoliberal scenario is that the nation state is no longer the main force in this period characterized by the intensification of globalization. Deregulation was brought in by governments to expedite the process where various forms of provision, private and formerly public, were left to the market. And yet the credit crunch starkly laid bare the folly of this conviction as new forms of regulation are being put in place with the state, the national state, intervening to bail out banks and other institutions in this situation. I consider this an opportune moment to look at the function of the state and assess its role within the contemporary scenario of 'hegemonic globalization', to adopt the term used by the Portuguese sociologist, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (de Sousa Santos in Dale and Robertson, 2004: 151), and its underlying ideology, neoliberalism. I will look at different theoretical insights and then end this excursus with a discussion of Gramsci's conceptualization of the state and its implications for present day politics.

'The state' is one of the most elusive concepts in social and political theory and major writers often demonstrate this by using the term differently, Gramsci being no exception. I would refer here to that expansive conception of the state, emphasized by Marx, that of an ensemble of legitimized social relations in capitalist society, the sort of conception which cautions us to avoid what Phil Corrigan (1990) calls 'thingification'— a reification of the state. The level of social inequality varies from state to state. State formation varies from country to country within capitalism, as illustrated by Corrigan and Sayer (1985) with regard to England, Green (1990) with regard to England, France, Prussia and the USA, Marx and Engels' writings on England and France, and Gramsci's observations on England, France, Italy and Germany. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who once engaged the Marxist tradition, is on record as having referred to the state, in a context of dependent/peripheral capitalism, as a 'pact of domination' to underline the power dynamics that characterize the ensemble of unequal social relations involved (Cardoso in Morrow and Torres, 1985: 350), that is, a platform that enables disparate elements to operate with some coherence in relation to political and economic ends, and strategic visions of power. There are, of course, different conceptions of the state and I intend to take a closer look at some of these theories.

It is common knowledge that the most traditional, legalistic-structural, conceptualization of the state is that of a large entity comprising its legislative, executive and judicial powers. This 'separation of powers' thesis can be attributed to the French philosopher of the Enlightenment, Baron de

Montesquieu in his study of England and the British constitutional system. The liberal democratic state is said to refer to a set of institutions that include the government, the military, the judiciary and representative assemblies including provincial, municipal and other forms of government (see Pannu, 1988: 233), such as the communes in Italy. However later theories would underline the complexities surrounding the state and the agencies with and through which it operates.

While the state is conventionally also regarded as the mechanism for regulating and arbitrating between the different interest groups within society (Poggi, 2006), several authors writing mainly from a Marxist perspective emphasise its role in serving the interests of the ruling capitalist class. It does so by reproducing the social and cultural conditions for a dominant class to reproduce itself. This is the classic Marxist position which lends itself to different nuanced interpretations. These interpretations and analyses should certainly be much more nuanced than the much quoted line from the *Communist Manifesto*, namely that “the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.” (Marx and Engels, 1998: 5), and indeed they are in Marx and Engels own philosophical work (see, for instance, *Contributions to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, or *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*). When taken at face value, this is the sort of assertion that lends itself to instrumental conceptions of the relationship between state and capitalist class. It seems to allow, however, for more loosely coupled configurations than Cardoso’s notion of ‘pact’ which accords the state a more deterministic weight. It is the more nuanced conceptions that are of interest to me in this article.

Ralph Miliband (1969) famously argued that the state agencies are characterized by the disproportionate presence of civil servants and other senior administrators of capitalist class background. For the most part, the state acts in the interest of the capitalist class but there are moments when it can extricate itself from this hold during, for instance, times of national crises; it can also intervene to sacrifice short term ruling class interests for long term ruling class gains (Held, 2006: 174). The state, through its institutions or what Althusser calls apparatuses, provides the conditions for the accumulation of capital. Education and training, therefore, have an important role to play here, more so at the present time, when education for the economy, more precisely lifelong learning for the economy, is said to perform a crucial role in attracting and maintaining investment.

In the post war (WWII) period, a welfarist notion of state provision, underpinned by a Keynesian social and economic policy framework was provided (Pannu, 1988: 234) as part of ‘the new deal’ seen by many as a concession by capital to labour. It was however seen within labour politics as very much the result of the struggle for better living conditions by the working class and its representatives, thus underlining an element of reciprocity here. Much of what passed for social programmes had a welfarist ring to it,¹ including education for employment and education conceived of within the traditional parameters of social work. It very much suited a sociological framework, known as structural functionalism, within which the modern state provides the mechanisms,

¹ That is, it is very much tied to the notion of the welfare state.

including, for example, ‘second chance’ education, and education combined with social work, as in Germany (see Hirschfeld, 2010), to enable those who fall by the wayside to reconnect with the system or, better still, be integrated into the system. Orthodox Marxists and radical leftists exposed this as a palliative that served to maintain the status quo rather than to provide the means for such programmes to contribute towards social transformation. Others such as the then Stanford University researchers, Martin Carnoy and Henry Levin (1985), drawing on the work of James O’Connor (in Pannu, 1988: 233) and Claus Offe (1984) among others, emphasized the dual role of the state. On the one hand it had to tend to the basic function of ensuring the conditions and mechanisms necessary for the accumulation of capital and, on the other, to legitimize itself democratically by listening to and acting upon the voices emerging from different social sectors (see also, Held, 2006). As Raj Pannu argues (1988:233), drawing on O’Connor, “the State must try to perform two basic but often contradictory functions: (a) to foster capital accumulation and (b) to foster social harmony and consensus.” This allowed possibilities for people to operate tactically within the system in a ‘cat and mouse’ game to channel funds into social programs meant to transform situations in different aspects of life. This approach was given importance in both ‘minority’ and ‘majority’ world contexts (alternative and more encompassing terminology with respect to those of ‘first’ and ‘third’ world contexts). This is especially so in revolutionary contexts such as that in Nicaragua between 1979 and 1990. In this Central-American state, the much-publicized revolutionary adult literacy campaign known as the *Cruzada* (the Nicaraguan literacy crusade), now celebrating its 30th anniversary (at the time of writing), served to legitimize the revolution and keep the revolutionary momentum going. More recently, we witnessed another revolutionary literacy effort in Venezuela which, according to UNESCO’s special envoy, María Luisa Jáuregui, “is the first and only country to meet the commitments adopted by the region’s governments in 2002 in Havana to drastically reduce illiteracy” (Marquez, 2005). The state kept the Bolivarian revolutionary momentum going by teaching one and a half million people to read and write through the support of another revolutionary state, Cuba, who had Venezuelan literacy tutors trained in the ‘Yo si Puedo’ pedagogical method created by Cuban educator Leonela Realy (Marquez, 2005). With regard to Nicaragua, however, Martin Carnoy and Carlos Alberto Torres (1990) indicated that the state’s efforts in the literacy and popular education fields had to be reconciled with the more technical-rational demands of the economic system which was crucial to Nicaragua’s economic development. One wonders whether this applies also to Venezuela today. One million of the newly literate adults in Venezuela were meant to complete the sixth grade of primary school by late 2006 (Marquez, 2005), part of an attempt to usher in, through formal education, the hitherto disenfranchised into the economic and political system which the Chavez government is seeking to change through his declared attempt at transforming the capitalist state (Cole, 2011).²

² For a recent op-ed piece regarding reforms in higher education in Venezuela see Cole and Motta (2011). As with revolutionary Nicaragua (‘turning Nicaragua into one big school’), Chavez-governed Venezuela is referred to as the ‘giant school.’

As far as a more capitalist orientation is concerned, however, the relationship between economic requirements and the state has always been complex. Roger Dale (1982: 134) argued persuasively in the early 1980s that state policies do not translate into practice in the manner they are intended for a variety of reasons, foremost among which being that “the State is not a monolith; there are differences within and between its various apparatuses in their prioritizing of demands made on them and in their ability to meet those demands.” As with all bureaucratic agencies, the state agencies meant to execute these policies generate their own rules and *modus operandi*, as Max Weber’s own theories of bureaucracy have shown. Policy agendas are mediated by groups who differ on their tactics. Anyone who has worked in a Ministry or department of education or social policy can testify to this. Dale (1982) mentions numerous other obstacles and, among other things, cites Offe in stating that, to retain control deriving from political power and legitimacy, state agencies can block the “purpose of use value production,” that complements capital accumulation, by bowing to pressure and claims emanating from “party competition and political conflict” that do not result from the process of accumulation itself (Offe in Dale, 1982 : 135). The process of policy implementation is not as smooth as the ruling class and policy makers (who also follow their own set of procedures) would intend it to be, and this apart from the subversive roles that agents, within a non monolithic system, such as critical educators or say critical health or social workers, have played in pushing actual provision in a certain direction. The state itself could be stratified, that is to say, those involved in the making of policy and those involved in the policy implementation, can have distinct social class locations. This is one of the contradictions faced by the capitalist state which relies on personnel who belong to the same stratified economic system it supports within a particular mode of production, thus rendering the process of sustaining and implementing policies throughout most difficult.

Neoliberalism

While much of what has been attributed to bureaucracy and the state still holds, things have changed considerably in recent years. With the onset of neoliberalism, and therefore the ideology of the marketplace, the social democratic arm of the state, as presented by Carnoy and Levin (1985), seems to have been withdrawn. The state has lost its welfarist function as it plays a crucial role in terms of providing a regulatory framework for the operation of the market; as does such a supranational state as the European Union, incidentally (Dale, 2008).

The neoliberal state has a set of important roles to play. It provides the infrastructure for the mobility of capital, and this includes investment in Human Resource Development as well as the promotion of an ‘employability- oriented’ Lifelong Learning policy, with the onus often placed on the individual or group, often at considerable expense. We witness a curtailment of social oriented programs in favour of a market oriented notion of economic viability also characterized by public financing of private needs. Public funds are channeled into areas of educational and other activities that generate profits in the private sector. Furthermore, attempts are being made all over the world

to leave as little as possible to the vagaries mentioned by Dale in his 1982 paper, a point he himself recognized as far back as that year when he referred to the onset of standardization, league tables, classifications and, I would add, more recently, harmonization. This is to render agencies of the state, or those that work in tandem with the state through a loose network (a process of governance rather than government), more accountable, more subject to surveillance and ultimately more rationalized. And, as indicated at the outset, the state, in certain contexts, depending on its strength, can have no qualms about its role in bailing out the banks and other institutions of capital when there is a crisis. This very much depends on the kind of power the particular state wields.

As the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire put it so clearly years before the recent 'credit crunch' (he died in 1997):

Fatalism is only understood by power and by the dominant classes when it interests them. If there is hunger, unemployment, lack of housing, health and schools, they proclaim that this is a universal trend and so be it! But when the stock market falls in a country far away and we have to tighten up our belts, or if a private national bank has internal problems due to the inability of its directors or owners, the State immediately intervenes to "save them". In this case, the 'natural', 'inexorable', is simply put aside. (Freire, in Nita Freire interviewed in Borg and Mayo, 2007: 3)

The state is very much present in many ways, a point that needs to be kept in mind when discussing any other form of programme carrying the agenda of corporate business. The idea of the state playing a secondary role in the present intensification of globalization (capitalism has since its inception been globalizing) is very much a neoliberal myth. As Corrigan, Ramsay and Sayer (1980: 8-9) underlined three decades ago, "State formations are *national* states since capitalism as a global system involves national organization to secure the *internationalization* of its production relations."³

The state organizes, regulates, 'educates' (the ethical state), creates and sustains markets, provides surveillance, evaluates ('the evaluator state' as Pablo Gentili (2008) calls it), legitimates, forges networks, and represses. One should underscore the role of the repressive factor as manifest by the state during this period, one of Macchiavelli's twin heads of the Centaur (coercion and consent). The state also provides a policing force for those who can easily be regarded as the victims of neoliberal policies as well as related 'structural adjustment programmes' in the majority world. These victims include blacks, latino/as and those regarded by Zygmunt Bauman (2006) as the 'waste disposal' sector of society. Imprisonment rates have risen in the US which has witnessed the emergence of the 'carceral state' (Giroux, 2004). The prison metaphor can be applied on a larger scale, and in a different manner, to the situation of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa knocking at the gates of 'Fortress Europe' and who are contained in veritable prisons referred to as detention centres. The

³ For a compelling argument regarding the importance of the state within present day capitalism, see Ellen Meiksins Wood (2003). She argues early in the introduction that: "The argument here is not that of capital in conditions of 'globalization' has escaped the control of the state and made the territorial state increasingly irrelevant. On the contrary, my argument is that the state is more essential than ever to capital, even, or especially, in its global form. The political form of globalization is not a global state but a system of multiple states, and the new imperialism takes its specific shape from the complex and contradictory relationship between capital's expansive economic power and the more limited reach of the extra-economic force that sustains it." (Meiksins Wood, 2003, pp. 5-6.)

same applies to latinos/as attempting to cross *la frontera*, in this context. In the Europe case, it is the fortress itself which serves as the prison gate, closing in on itself almost as a besieged state. The carceral function of the state with its manifestly repressive orientation, but not without its dose of ideological support (or moral regulation, as Foucault would put it), takes us back to the writings of one of the major theorists on education and the state, the structuralist Marxist philosopher, Louis Althusser.

At a more general level we have had Althusser pointing to the existence of the state, within a capitalist economy, having two important apparatuses serving the interest of capital; the repressive state apparatuses (RSA) and the ideological state apparatuses (ISA). He however provides the important caveat that there is no 100% purely ideological state apparatus and no 100% purely repressive state apparatus, the difference being one of degree. Althusser referred to the school as being the most important ISA. However I feel that, had he been writing today, he would have probably referred to the media, or what he then termed the communications ISA, as the most important ISA, one that necessitates an effort in the area of critical media literacy (Kellner and Share, 2009). Douglas Kellner (2005) wrote about ‘media spectacles’⁴ which have come to dominate news coverage and deviate public attention from substantial public issues. Media politics play a crucial role in advancing foreign policy agendas and militarism. Recall that, echoing Gramsci’s writings on hegemony, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky had much earlier illustrated the way the ‘propaganda model’ relies on the media to manufacture consent for policies in the public mind (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). Kellner, for his part, argues that political forces such as Al Qaeda and the Bush administration construct or, in the latter case, have developed media spectacles to advance their politics. This theme has also been broached by Henry A. Giroux (2006) among others. These writings highlight the link between the state and the corporate media during the period of US Republican government under George W. Bush. In this regard, therefore, critical media literacy becomes an important feature of a critical engagement within either the interstices of state involvement or social movements. In the latter case, they take on the form of alternative media circulated via YouTube, Twitter and a variety of websites. These have a role to play in public pedagogy in this day and age. Electronic networking has opened up a variety of spaces in this regard. More than this, however, critical media literacy provides an important and vast dimension to the meaning of critical literacy: reading not only the word but also the world, in Paulo Freire’s terms, and I would add, reading the construction of the world.

Althusser correctly points to there being no 100% ISA. Education has always had a very strong repressive function, more so today. Witness the US High School model with armed security guards making their presence felt in a heavy handed manner (Giroux, 2009). And yet it would be no stretch to argue that the apparent violence perpetrated is itself symbolic because it signals to the students

⁴ Shades of Guy Debord’s (1967) *La Société du spectacle* with its Marxist theses representing the shift from being to having to representing oneself (thesis 17), with images mediating social relationships among people (thesis 4). See translation: <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/debord/1.htm> Accessed 17 January 2011. See also Debord, 1994.

something about their identities, perhaps that of potential criminals who could eventually be incarcerated, a signal that is very much in keeping with the function of an ISA.

It is Althusser's conceptions regarding state apparatuses that lead me to 'revisit' the work of Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci is probably one of the most cited 20th century writers with regard to the state and what is fashionably called 'civil society,' although he does not view the latter the way it is conventionally being used today, as the third sector between the state and industry. His relevance is still underlined today despite the fact that much of his analysis focuses on Italy and the rest of the world until the first part of the previous century. Gramsci argued that, in terms of the way power operated and was consolidated, in Western capitalist social formations, one has to look at the relationship between the state and civil society, the term he used to refer to the network of cultural and ideological institutions that prop up the state. In short, the state cannot be attacked and conquered frontally. There is a long process of transformation to be had which involves work among these institutions that surround and prop up the state. This is what he calls a war of position as opposed to a frontal attack or '*guerra manovrata*' (war of manoeuvre).

Gramsci argued that, in terms of the way power operated and was consolidated, there was a great difference between the situation in predominantly feudal pre-1917 Russia, the site of the first socialist revolution, and that obtaining in Western capitalist social formations, although he has been subject to criticism here as Eric Hobsbawm (1987) remarks. In Russia, the locus of power rested with the state army and police. The country was virtually held together by force. Gramsci therefore considered it possible for a revolutionary group to wrest power from the grasp of the Tsar and the aristocracy by means of a frontal attack. However, a 'war of manoeuvre' the term Gramsci used to describe the tactic of engaging in this frontal attack, was not regarded by the Italian theorist as likely to prove effective in Western capitalist social formations. In these formations, the state is propped up by a network of cultural and ideological institutions that Gramsci referred to as 'civil society' (see Buttigieg, 1995).

In Gramsci's view, the institutions of civil society function behind the state as a "powerful system of fortresses and earthworks" that assert themselves whenever the state "tremble[s]" (Gramsci, 1971: 238). Civil society, as used by Gramsci, is therefore not conceived of primarily as an arena of popular oppositional politics. On the contrary, it is conceived of as a domain comprising institutions which serve as sources of ideological influence as well as sources of repression. For example, the press is a form of 'public pedagogy', a vehicle for ideological influence (providing the illusion of freedom of expression) and contestation (once again, none of these institutions are monolithic, as stressed by Gramsci) but which can also serve as a means of repression: Who gets aired and who is silenced? What gets edited out and what is included? Who is hounded? Whose character is assassinated? Civil society also contains spaces, often within the ideological institutions themselves, where these arrangements can be contested and renegotiated (Hall, 1996: 424).

Education, the state and hegemony

Gramsci attributed great importance, in this regard, to education conceived of in its largest context and not simply confined to institutions such as schools and universities, even though these two play their part. For Gramsci, it is partly in this sphere that the prefigurative (anticipatory) work (Allman, 2010) for a transformation of power must take place. Of course, the process of ideological influence cannot be completed, according to Gramsci, prior to the conquest of the state. As Jorge Larraín explains, “class consciousness cannot be completely modified until the mode of life of the class itself is modified, which entails that the proletariat has become the ruling class” (Larraín, 1983: 82). In Gramsci’s own words, expressed in his tract *‘Necessita` di Una Preparazione Ideologica di Massa’* (Necessity for the Ideological Preparation of the Masses), the working class can become the ruling class through “possession of the apparatus of production and exchange and state power.” (Author’s translation from Gramsci, 1997: 161).

This having been said, there is important prefigurative work that, according to Gramsci, involves working both within and outside existing systems and apparatuses to provide the basis for an “intellectual and moral reform” (Gramsci, 1971: 132). This work occurs primarily in the context of social relations, which, according to Gramsci, are established through the process of hegemony. Gramsci follows Marx in holding a very expansive non reified notion of the state, emphasizing its *relational* aspect and, one can add, its being firmly positioned within the cultural politics of power configurations. This is very much evident in his major contribution to workers’ education (Mayo, 1999), namely his Factory Council Theory, and the notion of hegemony itself which is also conceived of as relational and as standing for a wide-ranging, all pervasive set of pedagogical relationships.

Hegemony, an ancient Greek word, is described by Livingstone (1976: 235) as a “social condition in which all aspects of social reality are dominated by or supportive of a single class” or group. Hegemony thus incorporates not only processes of ideological influence and contestation but, as Raymond Williams (1976: 205) argues, a “whole body of practices and expectations”.

Gramsci (1971: 350) regarded every hegemonic relationship as an ‘educational’ one, hence education in its broadest context is central to the working of hegemony itself (Borg, Buttigieg and Mayo, 2002: 3). Hegemony, therefore, entails the education of individuals and groups in order to secure consent to the dominant group’s agenda (Buttigieg, 2002). Engagement in a war of position to transform the state similarly involves educational work throughout civil society to challenge existing relations of hegemony.⁵ For Gramsci, ‘intellectuals’ are key agents in this war of position, this ‘trench’ warfare

⁵ According to the Gramscian conception, ‘civil society’ constitutes the terrain in which most of the present ideological influence and consensus building takes place. Global civil society is therefore the terrain wherein a lot of the global influence, via global cable networks, information technology etc. occurs. Once again, however, it creates spaces for renegotiation in that it offers the means for progressive groups, located in various parts of the globe, to connect electronically or otherwise. This is what is referred to as ‘globalisation from below’ (Marshall, 1997) or what Boaventura

(Gramsci, 1971: 243). And we can include, in this context, critical educators and other social justice oriented cultural workers. Gramsci did not use the term ‘intellectual’ in its elitist sense; rather, Gramsci saw intellectuals as people who influence consent through their activities. The ‘organic intellectuals’ which Gramsci writes about are cultural or educational workers in that they are “experts in legitimation” (Merrington, 1977: 153). They can be organic to a dominant class or social grouping or to a subaltern class or grouping seeking to transform relations of hegemony. In the latter case, their ‘intellectual’ activities take a variety of forms, including that of working within the state and other capitalist-oriented institutions, or to use the one-time popular British phrase, working “in and against the state” (possibly also because of what Eric Olin Wright calls their ‘contradictory class location’) and other dominant institutions (see London and Edinburgh Weekend Return Group, 1980).

Despite a very strong difference in its underlying politics, Gramsci’s theorization of the state seems to have affinities with some of the modern managerial technical-rational conceptions of the state regarding policy formulation and action. The state and its agencies are nowadays said to work not alone but within a loose network of agencies – governance rather than government in what is presented as a ‘heterarchy’ of relations (Ball, 2010) and therefore what Martin Carnoy and Manuel Castells call the ‘network state’ (Carnoy and Castells, 2001). A Gramscian perspective would nevertheless underline that, despite appearing *prima facie* to be heterarchical, such relations under capitalism are, in actual fact, hierarchical and less democratic than they might appear to be. This certainly applies to relations between state and NGOs or labour unions characterized by the ever-present threat of cooptation, often within a corporatist framework (Panich, 1976; Offe 1985 in terms of disorganized capitalism).⁶ On the other hand, one encounters situations when NGOs, especially those based in the west, are powerful enough to have leverage over certain states. Structured partnerships between state and business as well as between ‘public’ and ‘private’ tend to emphasize the link between the state and the imperatives of capital accumulation. For Gramsci, the agencies, constituting bourgeois civil society (*burgherliche gesellschaft*), buttressed the state and, while Gramsci focused primarily on the ideological institutions in this network, one must also mention the point made by Nicos Poulantzas (1978) when underlining that the state also engages in economic activities which are not left totally in the hands of private industry. Poulantzas stated that, under monopoly capitalism, the difference between politics, ideology and the economy is not clear. It is blurred. The state enters directly into the sphere of production as a result of the crises of capitalist production itself (Poulantzas in Carnoy, 1982: 97). One might argue that this point has relevance to

de Sousa Santos calls ‘counter-hegemonic globalization,’ counter-hegemonic being a term which Gramsci never uses probably not to demarcate a binary opposition. Hegemony is characterised by a process of negotiation and renegotiation. Information Technology is a double-edged sword in that it is an important instrument of capitalism but can also offer alternative possibilities in the fostering of international alliances some of which can, in the long term, develop into a firmly entrenched social or historical bloc.

⁶ These organisations establish formal and informal links, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary, with key agents of the state in return for the advancement of their corporate interests (see Held, 2006:172).

the situation today.⁷ In the first place, industry often collaborates in policy formulation in tandem or in a loose network with the state just like NGOs or labour unions do. Nowhere is the role of the state as economic player more evident than in higher education (see Giroux and Searls Giroux, 2004), an area which, though traditionally vaunting relative autonomy as most education institutions do, constitutes an important domain of hegemonic struggle. The division between public and private in this sector is increasingly blurred. So-called ‘public universities’ are exhorted to provide services governed by the market and which have a strong commercial basis. Furthermore the state engages actively through direct and indirect means, and, in certain places, through a series of incentives or ‘goal cushions’ (see Darmanin, 2009), to create a Higher education competitive market as part of the ‘competition’ state (Jessop, 2002). Jane Mulderrig (2008: 168), drawing on Jessop, states that the competition state was already conceived of in the 1980s with, for instance, OECD documents “on the importance of structural competitiveness for government policy.” Here the focus is “on securing the economic and extra-economic conditions for international competitiveness” in a globalising knowledge based economy (Fairclough and Wodak, 2008: 112).

⁷ One requires a word of caution here. States differ among themselves in their internal coherence, given their historical and other contextual specificities. It would be dangerous to infer that all states are equally positioned in terms of their power to intervene in the economic sphere, especially when one takes into account their own differential location within the global market system. Thanks again to Professor André Elias Mazawi for this point.

Conclusion

The above discussion vindicates Gramsci's position regarding relations between different institutions and agencies constituting what he calls 'civil society' and the capitalist state. The state regulates these agencies by working in tandem with them. It is certainly no neutral arbiter of different interests, even though it appears to be so, as it also engages in structured partnerships⁸ with industry to secure the right basis for the accumulation of global capital. In this regard one can argue that the state is propped up not only by the ideological institutions of what Gramsci calls 'civil society' but by industry itself (of which it is part), while it sustains both (propping both the 'civil society' institutions and industry) in a reciprocal manner to ensure the right conditions, including the cultural conditions, for the accumulation of capital. All this goes to show that the state, the nation state, is an active player and has not receded into the background within the context of hegemonic globalization. On the contrary, in its repressive, ideological and commercial forms, the state remains central to the neoliberal project.

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⁸ Let us take higher education as an example, to extend the discussion around the example provided in this section. In 2008, the first European Forum on cooperation between Higher Education (HE) and the Business Community took place (CEC, 2008). The communication on the modernization of universities and HE institutes underlines the importance of a "structured partnership with the business community" (CEC, 2006a, 6). It is intended to create opportunities for the sharing of research results, intellectual property rights, patents and licences and allow for placements of students and researchers in business, with a view to improving the students' career prospects. It is also meant to create a better fit between HE outputs and job requirements. It also can help convey, according to the communication, a stronger sense of 'entrepreneurship' to enable persons to contribute effectively to a competitive economic environment (CEC, 2006a; CEC, 2006b; EC, 2006).

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