

International Gramsci Journal

Volume 4

Issue 3 *Collective Will, Self-Consciousness,
Constitution of the Subject – in theory, and in
practice; Architecture, Professions and
Hegemony / Reviews*

Article 1

2021

Cover page

Derek Boothman

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Recommended Citation

Boothman, Derek, Cover page, *International Gramsci Journal*, 4(3), 2021.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol4/iss3/1>

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Cover page

Abstract

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Keywords

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INTERNATIONAL GRAMSCI JOURNAL

No. 15, Vol. 4, Issue 3 (Second Series / Seconda Serie) Winter / Inverno 2021

COLLECTIVE WILL, SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, CONSTITUTION OF THE SUBJECT – IN THEORY, AND IN PRACTICE; ARCHITECTURE, PROFESSIONS AND HEGEMONY / REVIEWS



Poster for presentation of *Gramsci en México*, México, May 2021 (see Article 8), reproduced with thanks to the artist and to the *Asociación Gramsci México*.

ISSN: 1836-6554

INTERNATIONAL GRAMSCI SOCIETY

International Gramsci Journal

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Hegemony / Reviews*

Article 2

2021

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Derek Boothman

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Recommended Citation

Boothman, Derek, Table of contents, *International Gramsci Journal*, 4(3), 2021.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol4/iss3/2>

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Editorial

Derek Boothman

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Recommended Citation

Boothman, Derek, Editorial, *International Gramsci Journal*, 4(3), 2021, 1-2.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol4/iss3/3>

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Editorial

Abstract

This is an abstract of the Editorial of IGJ 15, Winter 2021.

Keywords

Editorial

Editorial

The formation of a collective will and collective consciousness from ‘molecular’ processes is largely under-considered, although present, sometimes implicitly, in several parts of the *Prison Notebooks*. Collective will and its associated consciousness is a key theme running through much of Part I of the current issue of the *IGJ*.

We begin the issue with an article in Spanish by a leading Latin American authority on Gramsci, Massimo Modonesi. He extends his previous work (published in Spanish, Italian and English) on subalternity (in its various shapes), antagonism and autonomy by here introducing the Gramscian notion of hegemony into the logic and sequence of political subjectivation. In addition he argues that Gramsci offers a key for putting to the test Marx’s theorizations about the processes of this self-same subjectivation, and hence collective action and social movements.

In the second of the contributions in Part I in Spanish, Caio Gontijo identifies a ‘non-fortuitous intertwining between Gramsci and Hegel’, not in this case relating to their different concepts of historicism, but of Hegel’s notion of self-consciousness within a social totality, linked to the notion in Gramsci of ‘common sense’. At the same time, moving from the Gramscian critique of common sense one reaches, in Hegelian terms, the ‘other’, connected with the master-slave relation whose reinterpretation plays such an important role in the development of Marxist analysis.

The Gramscian theme of collective consciousness and will is complemented by an English translation of the *Dizionario gramsciano* entry ‘Collective Will’ by the late Carlos Nelson Coutinho, one of Latin America’s leading Gramscian scholars and left militants. Using the first section of *Notebook 13* (on Machiavelli) Coutinho links the formation of a collective will to the existence and action of a new ‘modern Prince’. The same passage also brings in the ‘ironic corrosiveness’ needed to destroy the charismatic nature (cf. Gontijo’s use of ‘corrosive ridicule’) of the great leaders of reaction or restoration.

Piermarco Piu’s meticulously researched English-language article makes extensive use of contemporary newspaper articles of the ‘Red Biennium’ – the two ‘red years’ 1919-20 of the factory occupations in Turin – to analyse where, what and how ideas circulated among militants. This circulation at the various levels of the movement

contributed to producing a collective will and consciousness, though the question remaining unresolved, as he notes, was that of overcoming the leaders-led division. Piu draws on often anonymous articles by the protagonists who, somewhat contrary to 'left legend', were not limited to the *Ordine Nuovo* group and its followers in the factories, nor even to the general revolutionary tendency.

Little attention has been devoted to Gramsci's comments on the ideological and hegemonic side of architectural design. Michael Baines, trained as a lawyer, examines the play of geopolitical and inter-State power relations at the Hague-based International Criminal Court, ICC), and the relations of hegemony (and in some aspects domination) implicit not just in the choice of the Court's legal officers but in the architecture of the Court buildings and their surroundings, a reflection of 'global northern aesthetic norms'. The contribution ends by suggesting adaptations to be worked towards in order to put an end to the present Eurocentric and domination by rich countries over the administration of international justice.

The first contribution in Part II of this issue is partly a review, partly the revised form of a book presentation. Rhina Roux deals with the volume *Gramsci en México*, edited jointly by Diana Fuentes and, again, Massimo Modonesi. The article goes wider than the title, however, in bringing in the internationally-known names of many leaders important for the construction of the left in other parts of Latin America: Aricó, Mariátegui, Portantiero to name but a few.

We follow this with Miguel Mellino's review (Italian and English versions) of the volume of the *Proceedings* of the 2018 seminar of the Italian section of the *International Gramsci Society* on 'Gramsci and populism'. Mellino spares no targets in countering what he judges an overly negative stance of many of the volume's authors regarding the analysis of the people and the need for a left populism, as developed by the Argentine-Belgian partnership of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. Last, also in Italian and English, is Alessio Panichi's review of recent books by two of Italy's senior Gramsci scholars, Giuseppe Vacca and Michele Ciliberto. In the two collections of essays, in both cases written over several years, the former concentrates on Gramsci's elaboration of the 'philosophy of praxis', and the latter on how his reading of Italian history and national traditions formed an organic link with the philosophy of praxis and informed the notions and categories developed in the *Notebooks*.

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Article 4

2021

Gramsci teórico de la subjetivación política. La tríada subalternidad-autonomía-hegemonía

Massimo Modonesi

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Recommended Citation

Modonesi, Massimo, Gramsci teórico de la subjetivación política. La tríada subalternidad-autonomía-hegemonía, *International Gramsci Journal*, 4(3), 2021, 3-21.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol4/iss3/4>

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Gramsci teórico de la subjetivación política. La tríada subalternidad-autonomía-hegemonía

Abstract

Es necesario recuperar y reconfigurar una teoría marxista de la acción política, fundamentada en una conceptualización de la subjetivación política que gire en torno al principio del antagonismo y que se desarrolle en una teorización sobre los movimientos sociopolíticos. En aras de contribuir a la ampliación y renovación de este horizonte, propuse analizar los procesos de subjetivación política como secuencias de combinaciones desiguales de experiencias y prácticas de subalternidad, antagonismo y autonomía, entendidas como correlatos subjetivos de la clásica tripartición marxista analítica entre dominación, conflicto y emancipación (bibliografía: Modonesi, 2010). En este artículo continúo en esta dirección a través de dos movimientos teóricos simultáneos. En el primero, introduzco la coordenada gramsciana de hegemonía dentro de la lógica y secuencia de subjetivación política. En la segunda, argumento que la obra de Gramsci contiene los fundamentos, es decir, las coordenadas básicas, a partir de las cuales podemos y debemos contrastar las teorizaciones marxistas sobre los procesos de subjetivación política y, por tanto, de acción colectiva y de movimientos sociales.

Keywords

Gramsci, hegemonía, subalternità, autonomía, política, subjetivación política

Gramsci teórico de la subjetivación política. La tríada subalternidad-autonomía-hegemonía*

Massimo Modonesi

He sostenido y argumentado anteriormente que es necesario y posible recuperar y reconfigurar una teoría marxista de la acción política, anclada en una conceptualización de la subjetivación política que gire en torno al principio de antagonismo y que derive en una teorización sobre los movimientos sociopolíticos. Esto implica reconocer los aciertos y los alcances así los vacíos y los límites del marxismo, delimitar un perímetro y una agenda propios, a partir de la cual establecer una diferenciación crítica de las teorías dominantes y, al mismo tiempo, un terreno de diálogo y de incorporación de algunos de sus elementos teóricos e instrumentales compatibles (Modonesi, 2018). Este perímetro debería girar no tanto en adecuar las hipótesis y traducir el léxico marxista al canon sociológico dominante sino en reformular la originalidad crítica del concepto de lucha de clases y de todas sus implicaciones y derivaciones teóricas y analíticas (Modonesi-Vela-Vignau, 2015). Esto implica, en primera instancia, asumir que las luchas son de clase y que las clases luchan, es decir que existen campos de clase donde surgen y se forjan subjetividades y actores y que los movimientos sociales son, como lo sugirió Colin Barker, «mediaciones de la lucha de clases» (Barker, 2013, p. 47).¹ En aras de contribuir a la ampliación y renovación de este horizonte, he propuesto analizar a los procesos de subjetivación política como secuencias de combinaciones desiguales de experiencias y prácticas de subalternidad, antagonismo y autonomía, entendidos como correlatos subjetivos de la tripartición analítica clásica del marxismo entre dominación, conflicto y emancipación (Modonesi, 2014).

* Este texto es un producto parcial del proyecto UNAM-PAPIIT 301619 *Fundamentos de una teoría gramsciana de la subjetivación política*. Agradezco el apoyo recibido además por el programa PASPA de la DGAPA de la UNAM.

¹ En este sentido comparto las preocupación general de Adrián Piva y su rescate, en clave de teorización de la acción colectiva, de la noción de origen obrerista de composición y descomposición de clase (Piva, 2020).

En este artículo me propongo avanzar en este camino a partir de dos movimientos teóricos simultáneos. En el primero pretendo introducir la coordenada gramsciana de la hegemonía en la lógica y la secuencia de la subjetivación política. En el segundo, sostendré que en la obra de Gramsci se hallan los fundamentos, es decir las coordenadas básicas, a partir de los cuales se pueden y deben teorizaciones marxistas sobre los procesos de subjetivación política y, por lo tanto, de la acción colectiva y los movimientos sociales.

I. De la noción de hegemonía que Gramsci enriqueció y complejizó en sus *Cuadernos de la Cárcel* podemos distinguir, siguiendo a Christine Buci-Glucksmann, dos caras: «un análisis de la hegemonía en términos de constitución de clase» y «un análisis de la hegemonía en términos de Estado» (Buci-Glucksmann, 1978, p. 18). En un sentido similar, Nicos Poulantzas diferenciaba la hegemonía a partir de su origen proletaria o burguesa: «dos ámbitos que se presentan, pese a sus relaciones, como diferenciados: el de la función política objetiva y de la estrategia de proletariado —lo que plantea el problema de sus relaciones con el concepto de «dictadura del proletariado»- y en el de las estructuras del estado capitalista y de la constitución política de las clases dominantes en la sociedad moderna» (Poulantzas, 1969, p. 43).

Si bien estas formas de la hegemonía están estrechamente articuladas, los estudios gramscianos contemporáneos y los usos más difusos del concepto, salvo contadas excepciones, operan un recorte y se orientan a concebir a la hegemonía estrictamente como forma y como lógica de la dominación, olvidando o relegando en un segundo plano sus implicaciones en los procesos de subjetivación política de las clases.

Pareciera evidente que la reflexión de Gramsci en los *Cuadernos de la Cárcel* gira alrededor de la cuestión del sujeto político² ya que teoriza formas y dinámicas de subjetivación política y propone una filosofía de la praxis que implica la construcción de sujetos que actúan políticamente en función de una voluntad colectiva que se realizan plenamente en el despliegue hegemónico de un *príncipe*

² Aunque exista una interesante veta sobre el sujeto individual y su vínculo con lo social que pasa, en particular, por las reflexiones de Gramsci sobre la educación (Meta, 2019). Sobre la cuestión de la subjetividad individual, en relación con la subalternidad y la hegemonía ver también un artículo de Kylie Smith (2010).

moderno, el partido entendido como «intelectual colectivo», para usar la eficaz paráfrasis de Togliatti de 1958 (Togliatti, 2001, p. 255). Una reflexión, la de Gramsci, en donde la praxis se desarrolla por medio de interacciones conflictuales y consensuales, enmarcadas en circunstancias históricas y sociales determinadas, entre actores y sujetos políticos que nombra de forma diversa: principalmente clases y grupos subalternos³ pero también multitudes, masas, pueblo, productores, trabajadores, intelectuales, partidos, burocracias, jefes, figuras carismáticas (césares), hombre colectivo, hombre de masa etc.

Al mismo tiempo, eso que parece obvio no es convencionalmente aceptado, siendo que esta dimensión clásica y central del pensamiento gramsciano ha sido relevada y subrayada solo de forma intermitente y esporádica, sin haber sido colocada en el centro de una sistemática y continuada línea de investigación. En efecto, repasando el largo y extenso debate sobre su obra que se tuvo lugar en Italia desde los años 50 que reconstruye Liguori en su *Gramsci conteso*, la cuestión de la subjetividad política ocupa un lugar central solo en los abordajes más próximos a la dimensión política como, por ejemplo en la lectura de Togliatti y de los intelectuales más internos al Partido Comunista Italiano (PCI) en los años 50-60, en relación con la temática del partido y de la clase susceptibles de ejercer una hegemonía o, en el trasfondo del debate entre historicismo y estructuralismo, en autores como Luciano Gruppi, Nicola Badaloni, Biagio De Giovanni, Giuseppe Vacca o Valentino Gerratana (Liguori, 2012). Estas perspectivas, vertidas en las revistas de área PCI, dicho sea de paso, inspirarán a Ernesto Laclau la acepción subjetivista de hegemonía que desarrolla en su teorización e influenciaron, gracias a la difusión impulsada por José Aricó, el perfil de los gramscianismos latinoamericanos, tendencialmente más propensos a reconocer la centralidad de la cuestión de la lucha y el sujeto político.

³ En los primeros dos *Cuadernos*, Gramsci usa las nociones de *clases productivas, populares* o *trabajadoras* y sólo hasta el C3§14, escrito en 1930, introduce la de *clases subalternas*, sin dejar de usar con frecuencia la de *clases populares* y esporádicamente *clases instrumentales, inferiores, productoras, fundamentales, subordinadas, trabajadoras, pobres, obreras* y hasta *económicamente atrasadas y políticamente incapaces* (C19§5). Por otra parte, respecto a las clases dominantes, usa también las fórmulas de *clases dirigentes, altas, superiores, hegemónica, burguesa*, pero también, más esporádicamente, expresiones como *clase intelectual, clase culta, clase política* y *clase revolucionaria*.

Y, en efecto, una definición particularmente sugerente en este sentido, la proporciona Portantiero en un texto -colocado en antítesis a la provocación de Laclau en el coloquio de Morelia en 1980- en el cual propone la noción de «acción hegemónica» entendida como «constelación de prácticas políticas y culturales desplegada por una clase fundamental, a través de la cual logra articular bajo su dirección a otros grupos sociales mediante la construcción de una voluntad colectiva que, sacrificándolos parcialmente, traduce sus intereses corporativos en universales» (Portantiero, 1985, p. 282). Para Portantiero la teoría de la hegemonía implicaba una teoría de la organización, de la constitución de las clases como voluntades políticas colectivas.

La hegemonía es el proceso a través del cual una clase se produce a sí misma como sujeto histórico. Es una construcción social y como tal se expresa en multiplicidad de organizaciones y de prácticas por las que una clase fundamental al reconstruir su unidad como sujeto político es capaz de dirigir al pueblo-nación. Es el resultado de una tensión permanente entre movimientos políticos y movimientos sociales en el interior de una conflictualidad que jamás debiera clausurarse (Portantiero, 1985, p. 299).

Este proceso se daba, según Portantiero, en el cruce entre el Estado y la sociedad civil, y en esta última se gestaba la presencia subordinada, pero «no silenciosa ni invisible» de las clases subalternas y sus «impulsos contrahegemónicos» para trasladarse al plano estatal, a un Estado como punto de equilibrio: «Que sintetiza la dominación al procesar simultáneamente la prevalencia de los intereses de las clases dominantes y el compromiso con intereses emergentes de las clases dominadas» (Portantiero, 1985, p. 283).

Sin embargo, salvo esta excepción -por lo demás aislada ya que se trata de un artículo que no encuentra eco y sistematización en la obra del propio Portantiero- de las principales corrientes contemporáneas que desarrollaron y difundieron la noción de hegemonía en el mundo,⁴ ninguna reúne tres criterios fundamentales: haber colocado el primer plano la cuestión de la

⁴ Según Frosini y Cospito, quienes coordinan un seminario internacional sobre el concepto de hegemonía que ha venido desarrollándose en los últimos años: a) la francesa ('60-'70), L. Althusser, N. Poulantzas e M. Foucault; b) la inglesa ('60-'70), R. Williams e S. Hall; c) la argentino-mexicana ('70), J. C. Portantiero, J. Aricó, R. Zavaleta, E. Laclau; d) la hindú ('80), de los *subaltern studies*; e) la norte-americana ('80-'90), la escuela neo-gramsciana estudio de las relaciones internacionales.

subjetivación política, mantenerse en el perímetro de la elaboración gramsciana y lograr proyectarla/actualizarla de forma consistente. La mayor parte de los autores no puso el acento en la subjetivación sino en el asujetamiento, es decir sobre la eficacia de la dominación, mientras quienes lo hicieron dejaron a Gramsci en el camino y, finalmente, los pocos que se dedicaron a seguir la senda gramsciana del estudio de los procesos de subjetivación política, no lograron, a mi parecer, producir resultados teóricamente robustos y, por lo tanto, influyentes y duraderos.

La temática de origen bolchevique y leninista (Di Biagio, 2008) que Gramsci teorizó, desarrollándola y complejizándola, es decir la cuestión de la hegemonía como parte integrante y culminante de la constitución del sujeto socio-político -como expansión o dilatación subjetiva- fue tendencialmente desplazada hacia el terreno de análisis de la dominación, del ejercicio del poder por parte de las clases dominantes y, por lo tanto, del análisis y la comprensión del Estado, en el sentido integral que le otorgó el marxista italiano.

II. Esto no quiere decir que no haya un reconocimiento, en tiempos recientes, de la importancia, de por sí difícilmente negable, de la cuestión subjetiva en la elaboración del concepto de hegemonía en Gramsci. En el universo de los gramsciólogos italianos, además de Giuseppe Vacca y Roberto Finelli, quienes venían señalando este aspecto desde tiempo atrás, en los últimos años, autores como Di Meo, Ciavolella, Cospito y Frosini ofrecieron contribuciones importantes.⁵

Roberto Finelli sostuvo explícitamente que para Gramsci es la hegemonía, más que la economía, a determinar el conjunto del devenir histórico, marcado por «el hacerse y deshacerse de sujetos colectivos, ligados por la capacidad o menos de dirigir socialmente y políticamente, además de a sí mismos, la mayoría de las clases y grupos de un determinado conjunto histórico-social» (Finelli, 2012, p. 322).

Vacca, recuperando y *aggiornando* la perspectiva togliattiana, reiteró recientemente la idea que la filosofía de la praxis de Gramsci debe entenderse como «una teoría de la constitución de los sujetos» (Vacca, 1991 y 2017b, p. 185). Aunque no desarrolle ni sustente este planteamiento en relación con el archipiélago de conceptos y

⁵ También cabe señalar, por la temática, los textos incluidos en Liguori (2019).

problemas anexos y conexos, tiene un fuerte valor por la influencia del autor en el contexto de los estudios gramscianos.

También notable es la contribución de Di Meo sobre el concepto de catarsis porque evidencia una lectura del «proceso que se juega en el crecimiento o menos de las subjetividades sociales; sobre su condición de mayor o menor acentuada actividad o pasividad al interior del mismo; proceso no unívoco, ni unidireccional, echo de muchos y diversos estadios, en el cual el conflicto entre múltiples opciones está siempre presente» (Di Meo, 2016, p. 58). La catarsis operaría, según la lectura de Di Meo, como pasaje de la estructura a la superestructura, de la necesidad a la libertad, donde libertad significa:

la posibilidad de generar -por parte de un determinado sujeto social fundamental- todos los instrumentos necesarios para ponerse a si mismo como protagonista autónomo de la historia, es decir en poder colocar el problema de su propia hegemonía, a partir de un inicial «espíritu de escisión» (Di Meo, 2016, p. 59).

Otra aportación notable es la de Riccardo Ciavolella quien recupera el debate antropológico -en particular la obra de Ernesto De Martino en Italia- y de la historia social y abre una línea de reflexión que conecta y problematiza, en clave de subjetivación política, subalternidad y hegemonía (Ciavolella, 2019 y 2020).

Entre los autores más centrados en la reconstrucción filológica del pensamiento de Gramsci, la cuestión aflora de manera más problemática. Giuseppe Cospito, en un texto en donde rastrea las variaciones en los usos de la noción de hegemonía en los *Cuadernos*, tratando fundamentalmente de argumentar el desperfilamiento de la perspectiva clasista en Gramsci, termina por reconocer el carácter subjetivo de la lucha hegemónica como cuando, por ejemplo, resalta la reescritura del C9§124 en C23§6 (Gramsci, 1975, p. 1189 e 2192), donde «Gramsci definirá esa “seguridad en si mismo” del nuevo grupo social como “actitud hegemónica”, para reafirmar como la autoconsciencia (colectiva, además de individual) represente el primo paso en la vía de la afirmación de la hegemonía» (Cospito, 2016).

Por su parte, Fabio Frosini volvió sobre la cuestión central colocada por Gerratana en los años 70 de la diferencia entre hegemonía proletaria y burguesa (Gerratana, 1997, p. 122-127) para sostener cierta equivalencia y un vínculo dialéctico entre ambas

(Frosini, 2020, p. 283). Al mismo tiempo, en un texto anterior, Frosini había sostenido que la forma de la hegemonía “jacobina” – que evoca el tránsito de los subalternos hacia la autonomía como antesala para emprender la disputa hegemónica, señalado oportunamente por Baratta (2007)- es superada por Gramsci a partir de las consideraciones sobre la revolución pasiva, en la dilatación de la noción de hegemonía como «dialéctica de inclusión y control» e «unidad entre gobernados y gobernantes» (Frosini, 2016). En este sentido, más allá de quienes ejerzan la hegemonía, ésta se realiza como dirección/dominación más que como proceso de subjetivación.

En el mundo anglosajón, respecto de la cuestión del vínculo /contraste entre una perspectiva marxista sobre la acción colectiva y las sociologías de los movimientos sociales, ecos de Gramsci han ido apareciendo con siempre mayor frecuencia pero de forma esporádica, inorgánica y, generalmente, como aplicaciones de algunos conceptos a ámbitos específicos.⁶ La recuperación más consistente y relevante se encuentra en un libro colectivo sobre marxismo y movimientos sociales, único en su género, en el cual aparecen abundantes referencias a Gramsci (Barker-Cox-Krinsky-Nilsen, 2013). Sin embargo, las referencias se limitan a aspectos puntuales de su pensamiento y no se reconoce en su obra una teorización sobre la subjetivación política susceptible de vertebrar una perspectiva marxista sobre la acción colectiva y la movilización socio-política.⁷ En particular se pone el acento en el concepto de «conciencia contradictoria» de las clases populares/subalternas (Barker, 2013), del sentido común/buen sentido (Cox, 2013), sobre el papel de los intelectuales orgánicos (Humphrys, 2013). Y, paradójicamente la noción de hegemonía es invocada para entender los «movimientos sociales de arriba» y no para los de abajo (Cox y Nilsen, 2013).

⁶ En este género, destaca un texto de Jean-Pierre Reed el cual, aun cuando no pretenda teorizar, se restrinja al tema de los subalternos y no aborde directamente la cuestión de la acción colectiva y los movimientos sociales, tiene la virtud de reconocer explícitamente el aporte de Gramsci sobre la temática de la subjetividad política (Reed, 2013).

⁷ Prueba de ello, es que el trabajo que más sistemáticamente se propone recuperar la obra de Gramsci lo hace a nivel filosófico que no se relaciona directa y explícitamente con la acción colectiva y los movimientos sociales. Krinsky resalta tres aspectos claves del marxismo: 1) la totalidad dialéctica; 2) la contradicción; 3) la inmanencia; 4) la coherencia; y, 5) la praxis (Krinsky, 2013).

Todas estas contribuciones enriquecen el debate y colocan cuestiones y perspectivas de gran relieve, pero no alcanzan a revertir la tendencia dominante y volver a situar en el centro de los estudios gramscianos el vínculo entre hegemonía y subjetivación política y, menos aún, a reconocer y resaltar los nexos entre subalternidad, autonomía y hegemonía.

III. ¿Por qué esta pendiente tan relevante ha sido y está siendo descuidada? Varias hipótesis pueden barajarse. Es posible que la tendencia a contraponer el subjetivismo voluntarista del Gramsci consiliarista al de los *Cuadernos* para exaltar el segundo llevó a minimizar la dimensión subjetiva en las reflexiones carcelarias. O por ser considerada menos original teóricamente o simplemente demasiado clásicamente marxista. O como reflejo del predominio de lecturas estructuralistas de Gramsci. O por la fragmentación temática propia de los estudios gramscianos. O por haber sido sumergida esta cuestión por otras aportaciones gramscianas igualmente centrales y consideradas más originales sobre el Estado, la ideología, la cultura. O por una espasmódica búsqueda de novedad, de acercamientos originales al estudio de la obra del marxista sardo. Un olvido que pudo ser producido por lo que, en pedagogía, se llama aprendizaje interferente, es decir por elementos que sobrevivieron y obstruyeron la visibilidad y la valorización de esta dimensión central.

En todo caso no se trata de un olvido o una interferencia de menor importancia ya que lo que se pone en segundo plano, no casualmente, es la base más política, marxista y leninista, de la cuestión de la subjetividad, el aspecto más espinoso de la crisis del marxismo de los años 70-80: la hipótesis del sujeto histórico, de la lucha de clase, de la lucha como acción y del sujeto que lucha. A la luz de la derrota histórica del movimiento comunista en todas sus expresiones y corrientes, en paralelo con el inicio de la mundialización de Gramsci y de la propagación de las lecturas culturalistas de Gramsci, el deslizamiento de los temas de la subjetivación a los del asujetamiento es una señal de un cambio de época, marcado tanto por la derrota como también por la ausencia - sobre todo en Italia- de nuevas coyunturas propicias, de momentos de agudización de conflictualidad que auspiciaran emergencias subjetivas políticamente fuertes, desafíos prácticos que invocaran y

despertaran cuestiones teóricas. También por este anclaje histórico político de la teoría y en particular de las reflexiones gramscianas, el escenario ibero-americano resultó más propicio, en las últimas décadas, para que se retomaran en esta clave las intuiciones de Gramsci.

Por otro lado, incluso en contextos menos favorables, las escasas lecturas recientes de los *Cuadernos* centradas en la subjetivación política tienden a bifurcarse entre acercamientos que podemos definir subalternistas y hegemonistas, perspectivas esencialistas, cuyo peso interpretativo se inclina hacia un lado u el otro de la ecuación gramsciana, soluciones que desplazan y descentran respectivamente hacia abajo o hacia arriba la cuestión del sujeto, como -para poner ejemplos colocados en los extremos- el subalternismo poscolonialista y el hegemonismo laclausiano o populista de izquierda. Una divergencia que no respeta la lógica del pensamiento de Gramsci quien desarrollaba la idea marxiana de un sujeto socio-político que se coloca sincrónicamente, así como se constituye y se desarrolla diacrónicamente, adentro, contra y más allá del capital y el Estado que le corresponde, es decir al interior pero potencialmente más allá de la relación de explotación y de dominio. En términos gramscianos, un sujeto no solo subalterno sino tendencial y potencialmente autónomo y hegemónico.

En esta óptica, partiendo de una intuición de Baratta (2007), he insistido que, entre subalternidad y hegemonía, polos del proceso de subjetivación política sugerido por Gramsci, media la autonomía, un concepto que si bien usa poco -y puede que por ello no aparece en el diccionario gramsciano (Liguori y Voza, 2009) - no deja de ser crucial en la famosa nota del C3 después retomada en el C25⁸, además de ser, más allá del nombre, una problemática de peso ya que, en el fondo, no es otra cosa que una noción equivalente a la de independencia de clase que es la piedra miliar de la cuestión subjetiva marxista, de Marx en adelante, pasando obviamente por el otro gran interlocutor de Gramsci, es decir Lenin. Un pasaje

⁸ En síntesis: 1. Su «formación objetiva» en el mundo de la producción (...) «su origen en grupos sociales preexistentes»; 2. «Su adhesión activa o pasiva a las formaciones políticas dominantes» en las cuales intentan influir; 3. «El nacimiento de partidos nuevos de los grupos dominantes para mantener el consenso y el control de los grupos subalternos»; 4. «Las formaciones propias de los grupos subalternos para reivindicaciones de carácter restringido y parcial»; 5. «Las nuevas formaciones que afirman la autonomía de los grupos subalternos pero en los viejos cuadros»; 6. «Las formaciones que afirman la autonomía integral, etcétera» (Gramsci, 1981, C25§5, v6, 182; Gramsci, 1975, p. 2288).

fundamental, aquello sobre las fases por la cuales los subalternos se vuelven autónomos, en donde la autonomía es más que la simple premisa o bisagra que abre la posibilidad hegemónica, la coronación del príncipe que sanciona una lograda plena soberanía subjetiva, el protagonismo histórico y, por lo tanto, la definitiva salida de la subalternidad (Modonesi, 2018a y 2018b).

IV. Antes de volver sobre el concepto de hegemonía, sobrevuelo rápidamente -a modo de inventario- algunos pasajes del arco formado por los dos conceptos fundamentales que aparecen enunciados como tales, subalternidad y hegemonía, auténticos polos de la dialéctica subjetiva gramsciana, y aquello de autonomía, que media y sirve de puente, operando como bisagra, cumpliendo un papel teórico -y obviamente práctico- de gran relevancia, aun cuando nominalmente tenga menos visibilidad y pueda resultar menos original respecto al debate marxista en el que se inserta la contribución de Gramsci.

El itinerario, tanto histórico-político como teórico, parte de la base subalterna de todo proceso de subjetivación política. En efecto, de la conceptualización y caracterización de la condición subalterna arranca el hilo rojo que leva de la pasividad a la actividad o activación, a la praxis, a la que corresponde en los *Cuadernos* las nociones más concretas de «acción política» o «acción colectiva», expresiones que Gramsci usa con cierta frecuencia -más la primera que la segunda- como cuando afirma que la acción política tiende precisamente a hacer salir a las grandes multitudes de la pasividad” (C7§6, v3, p. 148; Gramsci, 1975, p. 857).

Un recorrido que podemos leer como de experiencia subalterna, caracterizada por la espontaneidad, el «subversivismo esporádico e inorgánico» (C8§25, v3, p. 231; Gramsci, 1975, p. 957), la defensa activa, en donde interviene una tendencia a la activación subjetiva que es impulsada por el «espíritu de escisión», el corte, el desgarrar, el momento de ruptura que antecede y permite la sutura interior, la construcción autónoma que pasa por dinámicas de «progresiva autoconsciencia», «comprensión crítica di si mismos» (C11§12, v4, p. 253; Gramsci, 1975, p. 1385), molecularmente pero también por medio de saltos, de catarsis, avanza hacia la formación de una voluntad colectiva, la “consciencia exacta de su propia personalidad histórica” (C3§46, v2, p. 48; Gramsci, 1975, p. 323), a través de la

intervención de intelectuales orgánicos que orquestan y conectan una concepción del mundo, que contienen el sentido común. Concretamente se plasma en la iniciativa histórica, en el sujeto colectivo, en el príncipe moderno, un partido en el sentido *histórico* y no *efímero* –según la distinción de Marx en una carta a Freiligrath de 1860⁹, una organizada voluntad colectiva nacional popular que, por medio de una guerra de posición se propone expugnar las trincheras de la sociedad civil, promover una reforma moral e intelectual, ser dirigente y dominante, construir y ejercer hegemonía.

Escribe Gramsci en este sentido que las clases subalternas pueden y deben «ser dominantes, desarrollarse más allá de la fase económico-corporativa para elevarse a la fase de la hegemonía ético-política en la sociedad civil y dominante en el Estado» (C13§18, v5, p. 41; Gramsci, 1975, p. 1589).

Una secuencia que tiende a la agregación y a la organicidad, a hacer bloque, que comporta relaciones dialécticas y no mecánicas, pasajes cuantitativos y cualitativos, saltos pero también y sobre todo transformaciones moleculares, según una lógica y, por lo tanto, una inteligibilidad del proceso de subjetivación política.

En este contexto, el concepto de hegemonía aparece más como factor de subjetivación que de asujetamiento, es decir hegemonía hacia los aliados antes que hacia los adversarios.¹⁰

Esta distinción no es simplemente una secuencia a lo largo de una línea homogénea pero comporta dos planos, distintos aunque articulados y entonces no tiene que ser perdida de vista por una lectura desde arriba de la hegemonía -sin que esto impida reconocer el valor de la expansión del concepto operada por Gramsci, su novedad en el debate marxista de la época y su relevancia actual.

Al mismo tiempo, también desde el punto de vista ampliado y alargado, la noción de hegemonía no excluye la cuestión subjetiva, la tensión pasividad-activación. En efecto, la otra vertiente de la

⁹ Citada en Maximilien Rubel, *Remarques sur le concept de parti prolétarien chez Marx*, «Revue française de sociologie», 2(3), Juillet – Septembre., 1961, p. 173.

¹⁰ «El estudio del desarrollo de estas fuerzas innovadoras desde grupos subalternos a grupos dirigentes y dominantes debe por lo tanto buscar e identificar las fases a través de las cuales han adquirido la autonomía con respecto a los enemigos que había que abatir y la adhesión de los grupos que las ayudaron activa o pasivamente, en cuanto todo este proceso era necesario históricamente para que se unificasen en Estado. El grado de conciencia histórico-política al que habían llegado progresivamente estas fuerzas innovadoras en las diversas fases se mide precisamente con estas dos medidas y no sólo con el de su alejamiento de las fuerzas anteriormente dominantes» (C25§5, v6, p. 183; Gramsci, 1975, p. 2289).

hegemonía, la que expresan las clases dominantes no es solo la culminación de su propia trayectoria de subjetivación al «convertirse en Estado» (C25§5, v6, p. 182; Gramsci, 1975, p. 2288) sino que además, en la tensión entre dominación y emancipación, resulta, en el análisis gramsciano, antitético, es decir de-subjetivante, subalternizante, propio de las voluntades y las prácticas de asujetamiento. Me refiero en particular a toda la galaxia de cuestiones que giran alrededor del concepto de revolución pasiva (Modonesi, 2020). En este sentido hegemonía es, en abstracto, afirmación paulatina de un sujeto dominante y dirigente y, por otra parte, a nivel histórico político, afirmación de la burguesía, negación y/o reconocimiento subordinado de las clases subalternas y, finalmente, en un sentido proyectual, hipotético, su posible tránsito, vía autonomía y hegemonía hacia su emancipación y la disolución de toda dominación coercitiva. Porque la hegemonía no puede, en un pensamiento emancipatorio como el marxista y el gramsciano, quedarse relegada a un mera instrumentalidad, ser herramienta de poder sin otra finalidad que su reproducción en el terreno de las relaciones de dominación.

✓. En esta óptica, es necesario, en mi opinión, colocar en el centro una perspectiva gramsciana de la autonomía y la emancipación que ha sido desplazada por las opuestas derivas del subalternismo y el hegemonismo, respectivamente por el estudio de los subalternos en cuanto víctimas, siempre derrotados, siempre marginales o de la hegemonía como ejercicio de la dominación, desde arriba, en donde, de forma simétrica, los subalternos se quedan como tales o son substituidos por otros, igualmente subordinados y oprimidos.

La pendiente subjetiva del concepto de hegemonía, estrechamente ligada, entrecruzada a los de subalternidad y de autonomía permite, a mi parecer, captar plenamente los matices, las distinciones y las discordancias propias del proceso, los pasajes y las condensaciones a las que aludía esquemáticamente antes. Explorando en particular las tensiones en cada uno de los pasajes, la construcción del sujeto hegemónico atravesada por implicaciones y contradicciones derivadas de la condición subalterna, del ejercicio de márgenes de autonomía y del conseguimiento progresivo de la autonomía integral.

La autonomía debe entonces ser considerada como una cuestión mucho más substancial y decisiva que un simple pasaje instrumental hacia la hegemonía. La hegemonía hacia los aliados es un primer prolongamiento subjetivo, todavía más acá del proceso de subjetivación, de la constitución del sujeto político, separable solo metodológicamente del más allá respecto de los adversario, la hegemonía verdadera, a la que corresponde el ya mencionado alargamiento gramsciano del concepto.

El primer nivel de articulación y expansión hegemónica es entonces parte integrante de la construcción del sujeto político, de la incorporación de aliados como dilatación o ensanchamiento del sujeto, mientras que, en relación a los adversarios, es parte de una relación de dominación, de contraposición, aun permeada por el consenso. Aplicando el criterio gramsciano, antes de la conquista del poder del Estado debe sedimentarse una subjetividad capaz de expresarse en la sociedad civil, un poder encarnado subjetivamente y no por aparatos de Estado, un contrapoder que en América Latina ha sido a menudo llamado poder popular. Un recortarse subjetivamente al interior de la relación de dominación antes o mientras se cose y descose el tejido nacional y popular en clave de alternativa hegemónica. Lo cual obviamente no encuentra correspondencia en la estrategia laclausiana de articulación transversal o desde arriba o con el culto del acontecimiento que, en nuestros días, propicia precipitaciones y atajos populistas, a los cuales haré brevemente referencia al final de este texto.

El horizonte interior de la hegemonía, visto desde el más acá subjetivo, se relaciona con la autonomía y se convierte en una ecuación que podemos formular, en términos gramscianos, como autonomía + hegemonía, es decir autonomía acorazada de consenso.

La extensión de la hegemonía entonces no solo presupone la existencia de un sujeto sino, como decía anteriormente, su coronación principesca en el plano de la dirección y el dominio, la prolongación de una dilatación subjetiva que tiende potencialmente a abarcar a la sociedad en su conjunto.

Respecto de la subalternidad, además de otras cuestiones anexas sobre las cuales no me detengo por razones de tiempo, la cuestión central es que, como decía anteriormente, la subalternidad es efectivamente un punto de partida pero también un huella que no

desaparece y, por ende, la historia de las clases subalternas no es solo retrospectiva, sino que sigue y se trenza con las formas de autonomía y hegemonía. Es decir, así como la espontaneidad no se disuelve en la dirección consciente, la subalternidad no se disuelve en la autonomía y en la hegemonía. Rastrear su persistencia y sus formas disímbolas permite reconocer las inercias, las incrustaciones y las contradicciones que persisten, en la subjetividad, en las autonomías parciales, combinaciones desiguales que hay que descifrar caso por caso, que se arrastran y anidan en las subjetividades que se presumen plenamente autónomas y aspiran a la hegemonía.

Otro problema candente se pone respecto a la democracia, a la distinción-unificación entre gobernados y gobernantes en el seno de la hegemonía pero también de un proceso de subjetivación expansivo que comporta alianzas, articulaciones y ejercicio en la dirección y entonces relaciones de fuerza internas y lógicas de subordinación, de consenso y de coerción que subsisten y son entonces constitutivas del proceso y del sujeto que le corresponde.

Valentino Gerratana advertía, en un coloquio en la escuela comunista de Frattocchie en 1977, sobre un cambio de signo necesario en relación con las fuerzas sociales que aspiran a la hegemonía y, por lo tanto, una clase o un partido que, apuntando a la emancipación, no puede ni debe generar «un consenso traducible en delegación, un consenso de aliados subalternos» (Gerratana, 1977, p. 50). Entonces la hegemonía no solo como forma instrumental, táctica, sino como contenido y prefiguración estratégica que en el pensamiento de Gramsci pasa, en gran medida, por el tipo de subjetivación política que deriva de una relación pedagógica que tiende a la autoeducación.

Aflora aquí la cuestión de la doble acepción de las clases y grupos subalternos que aparece en los *Cuadernos*, y que bien relevaban antes Baratta (2007) y después Liguori (2015), aquella que podemos llamar topográfica en la cual son subalternos tanto los grupos sociales marginales -a los márgenes de la historia- como, por lo menos temporalmente, clases y grupos fundamentales que tienden o pueden volverse autónomos.

Si la autonomía es premisa de la hegemonía debe haber un alto grado de correspondencia, es decir una relación de prefiguración,

entre las formas y las prácticas de la autonomía y aquellas de la hegemonía.¹¹

VI. Concluyendo, una lectura conceptual de los *Cuadernos* de la Cárcel permite reconocer y establecer coordenadas para entender a los procesos de subjetivación política a partir de secuencias y combinaciones desiguales de elementos de subalternidad, autonomía y hegemonía. A lo cual hay que agregar el ineludible principio antagonista -de la lucha, de las experiencias de confrontación directa y de insubordinación- que en Gramsci es más implícito porque omnipresente como lucha de clase que explícitamente abordado y teorizado de forma sistemático u original. Estas coordenadas operan como estrellas polares respecto de una constelación conceptual que las acompaña y complementa, constituyen un punto de partida, un fundamento, para la formulación de una perspectiva marxista, o neomarxista si se prefiere, que de alcance y profundidad analítica al principio de la lucha de clases, de la lucha como expresión esencial de la acción política y de las clases como forma cardinal del sujeto y de las combinaciones particulares que se producen concretamente.¹²

Así que, de la mano del principio antagonista, el arsenal conceptual con el que cuenta el marxismo para entender y explicar los fenómenos de la acción colectiva y de los movimientos sociales, se enriquece de un enfoque específico de origen gramsciano, que presta particular atención a la formas del sujeto y de la acción política, que resalta su configuración ideológica y cultural, que reconoce y descifra las ambigüedades y las contradicciones del sujeto asujeto (subalterno), tendencialmente pasivo -pero que emprende su proceso de subjetivación, activándose- que subraya la necesidad de un salto -de conciencia y de organización hacia la

¹¹ Emerge en este plano eminentemente democrático también el tema anexo del pluralismo. Como lo releva con precisión Liguori, la cuestión fue colocada al interior de los estudios gramscianos en el 76-77 y marca un pasaje de época, en respuesta a solicitudes liberales. Sin embargo, hay que reconocer que ya desde la década anterior Pietro Ingrao -en un texto del 64, después publicado en *Masas y poder* del 77- reflexionaba sobre la hegemonía en clave pluralista de forma original, *Un primo dibattito sul pluralismo politico* en Ingrao (2015).

¹² La cuestión clasista. Lo cual contrasta con los enfoques dominantes si consideramos representativo el hecho que Hetland y Goodwin encontraron que en las revistas «Mobilization» y «Social Movement Studies» en un periodo respectivamente de 12 años (183 artículos) y 6 años (71 artículos), las palabras “conflicto de clase” y “lucha de clases” no aparecen en ningún título o resumen, (Hetland y Goodwin, 2013).

independencia (autonomía)- y que coloca el tema de la expansión del sujeto en movimiento, de las convergencias, las alianzas a través del instrumento del consenso y de la articulación subjetiva (hegemonía). A lo largo de esta trayectoria se diseña no solamente la potencial configuración de una subjetividad política autónoma con vocación hegemónica, sino un proyecto emancipatorio que prefigura a la sociedad emancipada.

La contribución de Gramsci puede entonces verse como parte o como punto de partida, según se prefiera, de un específico enfoque marxista de análisis de los procesos de subjetivación política y, por lo tanto, de la acción colectiva y de los movimientos sociales. Un enfoque crítico diferenciado de las principales teorías existentes con las cuales, eventual y puntualmente, puede establecer puntos de contacto y de diálogo.

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International Gramsci Journal

Volume 4

Issue 3 *Collective Will, Self-Consciousness,
Constitution of the Subject – in theory, and in
practice; Architecture, Professions and
Hegemony / Reviews*

Article 5

2021

Autoconciencia y sentido común

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Recommended Citation

Gontijo, Caio, Autoconciencia y sentido común, *International Gramsci Journal*, 4(3), 2021, 22-39.
Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol4/iss3/5>

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Autoconciencia y sentido común

Abstract

En este texto, tratamos de partir de la discusión sobre autoconciencia en Hegel para llegar al concepto de sentido común en Gramsci. Para ello, en un primer apartado, denominado Auto-conciencia, analizamos gran parte del Capítulo IV de la Fenomenología del espíritu junto a otros autores que comentaron o interpretaron esta misma discusión. En el segundo apartado, denominado Sentido común, lo comentamos desde los Cuadernos de la cárcel de Gramsci, y también proponemos una discusión sobre sus negaciones y algunas de sus implicaciones, como la dimensión de lo ridículo corrosivo. Argumentamos que el sentido común mezcla diversos elementos contrastantes en una proporción variable. Es, en una totalidad social, la autoconciencia momentáneamente imperante. Cuando la voluntad de superarlo se traduce en acción política con la intuición militante de que es suficiente criticarlo, uno se aleja del sentido común, se convierte en un 'otro'. Esto se debe a que en la búsqueda de un criterio para la crítica del sentido común se recurre intuitivamente al sentido común mismo. Pero, concretamente, se recurre a un lugar particular dentro de él, inhóspito. Lo que 'no' es el sentido común, lo que se presenta como su inmediata negación, está marcado por él con el signo negativo de lo ridículo corrosivo. Así, a través de la corrosión de su desviación, el sentido común mantiene su unidad consigo mismo. En conclusión, proponemos una breve síntesis para explicitar a los argumentos que ya se han desarrollado a lo largo del texto y hacemos algunas consideraciones sobre la disputa por los consensos sociales en la actualidad.

Keywords

Autoconciencia, sentido común, ridículo corrosivo, Hegel, Gramsci, filosofía política

Autoconciencia y sentido común

Caio Gontijo

Introducción

Antes de hablar de la ‘autoconciencia’, en la *Fenomenología del espíritu*, G. W. Hegel discute la ‘conciencia’ y la certeza de que ella tiene algo *otro* en relación con ella, algo marcado por la inmediatez sensible de un simple *esto*. La *experiencia* la lleva al punto de tener su objeto como movimiento propio o infinito. Su objeto no es, a priori, sino que se vuelve a medida que pasa de un objeto de la certidumbre sensible (o certeza sensible) a la percepción y al entendimiento. Sin embargo, este es el camino que también hace la conciencia misma, que, con él, establece una profunda dialéctica. A medida que lo recorre, hace explícito lo que había en ella solo implícitamente, es decir, que ella sea, también, autoconciencia.

Es a partir de este punto que comienza nuestra discusión. Aquí proponemos una aproximación teórica de lo que se llama ‘sentido común’ y cómo lo entendió Gramsci. El filósofo sardo tiene un universo de categorías necesariamente interrelacionadas, de modo que cuando hablamos de sentido común, por supuesto, también hablamos de la hegemonía alrededor de la cual orbita el sentido común. Cuando hablamos de hegemonía, presumiblemente también hablamos de una sociedad civil compleja, “occidental”, compuesta por fuerzas sociales en disputa por consensos, en relación con las cuales nos pareció útil, al final, hacer algunas consideraciones sobre su configuración actual.

Aprovechemos para aclarar algunos aspectos formales del texto. Para reducir el tamaño de la cita recurrente al Capítulo IV de la *Fenomenología*, daremos únicamente el número correspondiente al párrafo, precedido del signo “§”. Esto también se justifica porque estudiamos todo el tiempo la edición brasileña de Editora Vozes, traducida al portugués brasileño por Paulo Meneses (1992), cuya numeración de párrafos es idéntica a la utilizada por los comentaristas e intérpretes que leímos, pero que difiere un poco de la en español que tenemos, de Ediciones FCE ESPAÑA, S. A., traducción de Wenceslao Roces (1966), que solo utilizamos para algunas citas directas, aunque renunciando a su numeración.

También aclaramos que las citas de Gramsci, como de costumbre, también están numeradas: el número que procede de la letra “Q” (*Quaderno*) designa el cuaderno, y el signo “§” designa la nota.

Autoconciencia

Kojève entiende desde Hegel que el hombre es autoconciencia (1980, p. 3). Pero, antes de eso, se volvió consciente desde el momento en que dijo “yo”. Comprender el origen del hombre es comprender el origen del “yo” dicho. Es a través del *deseo* de este yo que se forma y se revela a sí mismo y a los otros. Es un “yo” esencialmente diferente y opuesto al “no-yo”, precisamente porque es un yo del deseo. El deseo lo pone en movimiento y, por tanto, lo impulsa a la *acción*. Esto lo satisface por la *negación* del objeto en relación con el cual se pone: por su destrucción o transformación. La acción es, por tanto, negativa a una ‘realidad objetiva’, lo que resulta en una ‘realidad subjetiva’. El yo del deseo no era nada ‘antes’ de recibir un contenido positivo a través de una acción negativa hacia el no-yo con el fin de satisfacerse a sí mismo. Por tanto, el contenido positivo del yo, constituido por la negación, es función del contenido positivo del no-yo negado.

Pero si el movimiento de esa conciencia cesa allí, tendrá la misma naturaleza cosificada (en el mejor de los casos, animalizada), por lo tanto, que las cosas que niega. Allí no habría una verdadera autoconciencia y tampoco habría ningún ‘hombre’. Es decir, sería solo una autoconciencia que sabe de sí misma como algo solo, sería la tautología sin movimiento del “yo soy yo” (§167). Para que haya autoconciencia, el deseo debe dirigirse a un objeto ‘no-natural’, para Kojève, debe dirigirse al propio deseo (1980, p. 5): deseo de deseo. Pues el deseo es una revelación de la ausencia de realidad, a diferencia de la cosa deseada, que sigue siendo cosa estática e igual a sí misma.

Deseo dirigido a otro deseo (y viceversa); que, entonces, lo negará con la acción que lo satisface, pudiendo crear un nuevo “yo”, esencialmente diferente a su anterior versión cosificada o animal. No será, por tanto, un yo estático, idéntico a sí mismo, sino un devenir (convertirse deseablemente en aquello que, evidentemente, todavía no es). Tenemos aquí una forma de ser que, en lo más universal, afirma la unidad de espacio y tiempo.

Solo el último yo es, para sí y para los demás, la verdadera autoconciencia. Kojève (1980, p. 6) propone que, si la realidad humana es una realidad social, entonces la sociedad es humana como un conjunto de deseos que se desean como tales. Pero observa, en esta dinámica, una especie de escasez (introduciendo la noción de valor a los deseos) que resulta lógica de la superposición de todos estos deseos de ser deseados. Por tanto, existe una situación conflictiva, necesariamente asimétrica, en la que sólo uno de los (inicialmente dos) lados de esta ‘ecuación’ tendrá el ‘valor’ de su deseo *reconocido* por el otro. Es una *lucha a vida o muerte* por reconocimiento.

Así planteada la situación en Hegel (§187), los dos oponentes entran en una lucha por reconocimiento que, aunque tiende a la muerte, necesita (para que un lado reconozca al otro) que ambos sigan vivos, con un claro vencedor y un claro perdedor quien le otorgará reconocimiento tras experimentar la proximidad a la muerte, a la que el vencedor se mostró indiferente.

Houlgate (2013, p. 90) propone comprender la autoconciencia, en tono de recapitulación, en tres momentos (de los que ella misma se vuelve consciente a medida se mueve a través de ellos):

Primero, la autoconciencia, como reminiscencia de la conciencia que le presupone, a pesar de haberse constituido simultáneamente y junto con ella, es un “yo” puro (tautología sin movimiento). En el segundo momento, la autoconciencia es deseo, lo que le da movimiento cuando se afirma a sí mismo a expensas de la negación de otros no-yoes (cosas). En el tercer momento, la autoconciencia es relación con otra autoconciencia (duplicación necesaria de la autoconciencia), donde comenzamos a ver la presencia del espíritu (*Geist*) en la unidad de todas estas autoconciencias *en* relación, es decir, “Yo que es Nosotros, y Nosotros que es yo” (§177).

Pero como hemos visto, este último momento no está exento de conflictos, por lo que Hegel (§189) utiliza la relación entre amo y esclavo como imagen de su dialéctica. En ella, amo y esclavo se conforman como tales en el resultado de la lucha a la muerte por reconocimiento (en Kojève, una lucha por puro *prestigio*). El esclavo, subordinado al amo, le otorga reconocimiento después de haber visto la muerte de cerca y valora la libertad humana que ve en él, precisamente porque no la encuentra en sí mismo, sino en su otro. El amo, sin embargo, evidentemente no reconocerá a este otro que

lo reconoce y sobre el que ha triunfado y, por lo tanto, se encuentra en un callejón casi sin salida.

Mientras el amo obliga al esclavo a trabajar y producir lo que el amo destruirá en su momento de consumo (creyendo también que allí su libertad, es decir, para negar), el esclavo sabe lo que es ser libre, sabe que no lo es, y puede querer volverse.

Al principio, el esclavo se convirtió en esclavo postrándose ante su *naturaleza* más inmediata, el instinto de preservación de su vida. A diferencia del amo, el esclavo experimentó y conoció su incapacidad de negar a la vida y las cosas (naturaleza) por la destrucción; pero las niega parcialmente, transformándolas con su trabajo forzado. Ahora, él trabaja la naturaleza y terminó dominándola. Para Kojève (1980, p. 25), por tanto, es el trabajo el que forma o educa al ser humano más allá de la cosa o de lo animal, haciéndole consciente de su realidad, haciéndole “espíritu encarnado”, parte del mundo histórico.

Tenemos, inicialmente, la situación en la que el amo se aprovecha de su sentido de libertad ilimitada, de su no-limitación por la naturaleza o la vida: es libre para negar, libre para no ser esto o aquello. Es decir, ser ‘pura negatividad’, por lo tanto, ser nada en particular. De hecho, si todavía Kojève tiene razón en que la historia humana es, después de todo, la historia de la dialéctica entre amo y esclavo (1980, p. 9), incluso hoy se puede ver en quienes niegan las cosas destruyéndolas en el momento del consumo. Una negatividad total reflejada, por ejemplo, en una estética mostrada con orgullo en las redes sociales en la que la ‘libertad’ (‘soy libre’) aparece como lema, eslogan.

Es, de hecho, algo mucho más sutil que el mero despliegue de una vida de consumo ostentoso. Pero una satisfacción disfrazada de ‘simple’: un simple día en la playa, estar satisfecho con la simple presencia de amigos (aunque, implícitamente, se perciba por la calidad de la imagen la cámara utilizada en la fotografía, las hermosas ropas, los gastos implícitos de viaje, alojamiento etc., que no es nada ‘simple’).

El amo está en condiciones de negar a las cosas, la vida y la naturaleza con su destructivo acto de consumo, por supuesto, pero también las niega pretendiendo renunciar a ellas, *como si* renunciara a sí mismo. El compromiso con las cosas y asuntos relacionados con la vida es, para él, de un ‘materialismo’ demasiado vil (contrario a su

supuesta espiritualidad), sólo tratado con la inmediatez de quien tiene algún apego a las cosas, la vida, la naturaleza – es decir, precisamente el esclavo. El hedonismo implícito de la satisfacción ‘simple’, disfrazado de espiritualidad y expuesto con orgullo como estética en las redes sociales, es la presentación actual del amo (por cierto, bastante *astuta*).

Sin embargo, la situación se complica aún más en Hegel. Tanto Kojève (1980, p. 29-30) como Houlgate (2013, p. 98) atribuyen al breve vistazo que el esclavo había tenido de su muerte (en el momento de la ‘lucha’) un miedo profundamente sentido y la conciencia de su insignificancia, de ser ‘nada’. La característica de ser ‘nada en particular’, por tanto, no es exclusiva del amo, sino también común al esclavo. Sin embargo, de manera diferente, el esclavo se vuelve retraído y callado al respecto.

Finalmente, el esclavo se ve a sí mismo positiva y objetivamente en el producto de su trabajo. De la combinación de su trabajo con su miedo a la muerte, el esclavo llega a la conclusión de que es esencialmente ‘libre’, a pesar de su condición de servidumbre.

El amo, a diferencia del esclavo, no tiene la misma positividad y objetividad en la experiencia de su libertad. El esclavo, sin embargo, es consciente de ser un ‘puro yo’, al igual que el amo, aunque lo ha incorporado por el miedo a la muerte. Como el esclavo se ve a sí mismo implícitamente en el objeto de su trabajo, la autoconciencia se ve a sí misma y, por lo tanto, *para nosotros*, escribe Hegel, los dos deben ser iguales (§197). En este punto, sin embargo, esta conciencia de esa identidad se convierte en explícita, es decir, también para él. De hecho, en este punto, él (esclavo) deja de ser exactamente él mismo y se convierte en una nueva forma de autoconciencia que Hegel describe como estoica, es decir, *estoicismo*. Esta nueva forma, señala Houlgate (2013, p. 103), no más significa una relación entre una autoconciencia y otra (como amo y esclavo), sino entre ella y las cosas.

En las cosas ve su propia sustancia. Es exactamente en el *pensamiento* que esta identidad está contenida. Entiende que un objeto (las cosas) está estructurado por *conceptos* que, (para el pensamiento) constituyen los objetos mismos. Y de ello resulta lógico que el pensamiento mismo sabe que está también estructurado por conceptos. En el estoicismo ocurre, por tanto, algo curioso: a diferencia de esa conciencia que representa las cosas

como ‘otras’ en relación con ella, el pensamiento, que las entiende sólo por conceptos, asume que tienen la misma forma que él mismo. En el pensamiento, por tanto, hay una completa coincidencia entre la autoconciencia y el objeto.

Por tanto, el pensamiento estoico nos recuerda una posible variación de *intelectuales*. Como es lógico, aquellos que equiparan conceptos y cosas – y evidentemente, también, ellos mismos y sus pensamientos. Pero antes de introducir adecuadamente esta nueva noción, específicamente gramsciana, sepamos que se refiere no solo a un ‘profesional del intelecto’, sino a un tipo más reciente, que se mueve entre el ‘pensamiento’ y la política, ejerciendo su influencia en la sociedad civil desde lugares privilegiados como la ultracomunicación de los canales de televisión, internet, redes sociales etc.

El pensamiento que encontramos en este punto, como lo señala Houlgate (2013, p. 105), continúa regido por el mismo principio que regía la autoconciencia a lo largo del *Capítulo IV*; es decir, que la conciencia es, para sí misma, la verdad (§166). A diferencia de la relación entre amo y esclavo, el pensamiento se mira a sí mismo en la búsqueda de sus conceptos como la verdad del objeto. Sin embargo, al mismo tiempo que lo hace, el pensamiento niega al objeto, porque al dirigirse a sí mismo (como pura universalidad), le da la espalda por completo. Se vuelve indiferente a la existencia natural (§200), se satisface con una libertad interior, independientemente de la condición de amo o esclavo, es decir, se *hace* estoicismo.

Bajo el estoicismo y su pensamiento, por lo tanto, el mundo se concibe como un ‘sistema de pensamiento’ – y este es un momento necesario e importante de la conciencia. El contenido (abstracto) que el pensamiento adquiere así “determina”, conceptualmente, a las cosas que él encuentra en el mundo. Pero lo hace *como si* no tuviera su origen en el pensamiento mismo; y *como si* fuera, de hecho, efecto de un elemento extraño al pensamiento pero que este lleva consigo (§200). Así, el estoicismo se ‘perpleja’ cuando se le exige un ‘criterio de verdad’ para el pensamiento mismo. La respuesta correspondiente implica evocar algún sentido de ‘razonabilidad’, ‘sabiduría’ o ‘virtud’; todas estas generalidades que, sin embargo, para Hegel, pronto se vuelven “tediosas” (hoy en día,

la tediosa respuesta puede contemplar los más abstractos sentimentalismos, clichés y juegos de palabras).

Lo curioso, sin embargo, es que este criterio, por tedioso que sea, es el del lugar común¹, es decir, vendrá inevitablemente de alguna parte del *sentido común*. El estoico, por tanto, no niega prácticamente a las cosas, destruyéndolas o transformándolas, sino sólo en el pensamiento.

La genialidad de la *Fenomenología*, sin embargo, consiste en hacer explícito lo que ya está implícito en cada uno de los momentos del mismo proceso dialéctico por el que pasa la conciencia. Viéndose tan definitivamente en el objeto y siendo consciente de ello, el pensamiento estoico no debería permitir que nada más se escape de esta relación y quede fuera de ella. Su negación a las cosas, por lo tanto, aún no es completa y nunca lo será mientras ese elemento extraño del pensamiento permanezca ileso. Esta negación, sólo implícita, se hace explícita en otra forma de pensamiento que finalmente propone negar a las cosas de manera absoluta. Esta forma de autoconciencia, en Hegel, toma el nombre de *escepticismo*.

Para el escéptico, absolutamente todo debe ser negado. En esto se acerca a la figura del amo, en su capacidad ilimitada de negar a las cosas; por lo tanto, es un ‘puro yo’. Pero a diferencia de él, aunque todavía similarmente al estoico, no las niega destruyéndolas, sino solo en el pensamiento, atribuyéndolas ninguna realidad externa al pensamiento. Ahora, sin embargo, a diferencia del estoicismo, el escepticismo sabe que su negación es tan grande que también lo abarca a sí mismo, a su autoconciencia, a su ‘puro yo’. Se niega al pensamiento mismo y, con él, cualquier reminiscencia o residuo, ya sea un elemento extraño o los ‘criterios’ de sentido común.

El mundo de los conceptos y su contenido abstracto quedan superados y, como tal, el escepticismo admite ser una conciencia empírica y que, sin embargo, se guía por lo que no tiene realidad para ella (§205). Con esto, sin embargo, el pensamiento escéptico vuelve a la pura libertad de negar, se convierte en una conciencia universal e idéntica a sí misma.

Esta libertad, sin embargo, no significa un mero retorno al ‘puro yo’, como puro pensamiento. Pero el escepticismo es una autoconciencia doblemente contradictoria, ya que es, para Hegel:

¹ Para el propio Marx, en los *Grundrisse*: “Nada hay más insulso que el *locus communis* puesto a fantasear.” (Marx, 2015, p. 28).

“conciencia que, de una parte, se libera y es inmutable e idéntica a sí misma y que, de otra parte, es la conciencia de una confusión y una inversión absolutas – y que es así la conciencia de su propia contradicción”. (1966, p. 79) (§205). Ahí radica su satisfacción, en una especie de celebración de su contradicción, que, sin embargo, no se ve perjudicada por la crítica de Hegel, en lo que él comenta irónicamente con relación al escepticismo:

Si se le indica la igualdad, ella indica la desigualdad; y cuando se le pone delante esta desigualdad, que acaba de proclamarse, ella pasa a la indicación de la igualdad; su charla es, en realidad, una disputa entre muchachos testarudos, uno de los cuales dice A cuando el otro dice B y B si aquél dice A y que, contradiciéndose cada uno de ellos consigo mismo, se dan la satisfacción de permanecer en contradicción el uno con el otro. (Hegel, 1966, p. 79) (§205).

El escepticismo une en sí mismo, y sabe que lo hace, dos cualidades opuestas. Porque es mutable e inmutable, su conciencia tiene una experiencia internamente contradictoria (§206). Pero mientras salta de un extremo a otro de las contradicciones, todavía no está explícito en él que, de hecho, estén en unidad. Aquí, sin embargo, donde Hegel continúa aún más en este ya extenso proceso de la conciencia (en este caso, hacia una nueva forma: la *conciencia desventurada*), nos detenemos aquí, habiendo concluido la presentación de lo que es importante para nuestra particular discusión.

Sin embargo, algo se quedó implícito y solo se sugirió parcialmente, aquí y allá, a lo largo de nuestra discusión. Es decir, discutamos ahora explícitamente lo que ya hemos comenzado a introducir, sugiriendo la necesidad de un diálogo con Gramsci, a partir de la mención a los intelectuales y, lo que es más relevante, del ‘sentido común’.

Sentido Común

Brauer (2014) también observa desde Hegel que la conciencia necesita establecer un *criterio* para la distinción entre verdadero y falso. Sin embargo, Brauer recuerda que la “experiencia de la conciencia” implica una crítica inmanente de las *teorías implícitas* en lo que la conciencia tiene como ese criterio (lo que daría lugar a su revisión sin, sin embargo, modificación de su ‘estructura interna’; el paso de la conciencia la autoconciencia sólo implicaría un cambio

en lo que la conciencia ‘declara’, dice Brauer, en su interior como verdadero).

Hay teorías implícitas, es decir, hay filosofías implícitas en el criterio mismo que el pensamiento se impone a sí mismo para la distinción entre verdadero y falso. Volviendo a la discusión que habíamos introducido anteriormente, veamos cómo lo ve Gramsci y cómo podemos desarrollarlo:

Cada estrato social posee su “sentido común” que en el fondo es la concepción de la vida y la moral más difundida. Cada corriente filosófica deja una sedimentación de “sentido común”: es éste el documento de su realidad histórica. El sentido común no es algo rígido e inmóvil, sino que se transforma continuamente, enriqueciéndose con nociones científicas y opiniones filosóficas introducidas en las costumbres. El “sentido común” es el folklore de la “filosofía” y constituye el punto medio entre el “folklore” auténtico (tal como es entendido) y la filosofía, la ciencia, la economía de los científicos. El “sentido común” crea el futuro folklore, o sea una fase más o menos rígida de un cierto tiempo y lugar. (Gramsci, 1981, Q1§65, p. 140; Gramsci, 1975, p. 76).

Brauer (2014) enumera algunos sentidos de la noción de autoconciencia. Entre ellos, cabe destacar su observación de que la “experiencia” transforma a las teorías implícitas o explícitas que dan como resultado la imagen (reflejada) que la autoconciencia hace de sí misma y les atribuye certeza. En este punto, sin embargo, Brauer deja claro que esta transformación no se debe a una introspección de la autoconciencia, sino, precisamente, a la *acción*, y ese sería el aspecto novedoso de Hegel. Por ello, Brauer llega a afirmar que “En efecto, el pasaje de la conciencia a la autoconciencia es la transición de la conciencia teórica a la conciencia práctica.” (2014, p. 93). El ser humano, es decir, la autoconciencia, es pensante y activo.

Brauer señala a partir de esta situación que la discusión de la autoconciencia, en Hegel, establece, por tanto, una “ineludible relación” entre subjetividad e intersubjetividad. El reconocimiento mismo, débito de la lucha que lo generó, tiene al otro como una especie de objeto-espejo intersubjetivo.

En una primera aproximación, el sentido común también es un objeto reflexivo; inevitablemente intersubjetivo. Cuando el sentido común se ve en el espejo, naturalmente, se ve invertido en una imagen que al mismo tiempo es y no es idéntica a sí mismo. Esta visión le resulta cómica; y en el sentido común reflejado también ve

su sentido del humor. En la lucha a la muerte por el reconocimiento, el esclavo, al ver su absoluta negatividad, tuvo miedo de la muerte. Pero el sentido común, al ver lo que le parecía como su negativo, lo encontró cómico.

El sentido común no simplemente ‘corresponde’ a la conciencia del esclavo o del amo, sino que los mezcla en una proporción variable a lo largo de la historia. También mezcla heterogéneamente estoicismo y escepticismo (y posiblemente otras formas). No es la misma conciencia común a todos o algo así como la media aritmética de todos ellas. Es, en una totalidad social, la conciencia imperante, aunque variable, manifestada en un determinado lugar y en un determinado momento de la historia concreta; es decir, en el espacio-tiempo (por tanto, debe haber traducibilidad entre el sentido común y el espíritu mismo).

Como particularidad, volvamos nuestra mirada al sentido común a partir de sus elementos constitutivos que ‘comienzan’ en el estoicismo. Como ya hemos sugerido, el *criterio* estoico para su verdad vendrá inevitablemente de alguna parte del sentido común. Variando en intensidad mientras que la unidad bajo análisis varía (ciertamente casi todo el ‘mundo cristiano’, para dar un ejemplo), cuantos más clichés religiosos, más llenan el sentido común.

Como señaló Hegel, lo que estaba implícito en el estoicismo se hace explícito en la conciencia desventurada, es decir, más allá de los límites del pensamiento, se *siente*. La devoción es el movimiento *par excellence* del intento del ‘sentimiento’ de unirnos a lo Inmutable. Este último, que así nos habría dado las cosas del mundo como un regalo, es agradecido por esta forma de conciencia. Esta gratitud significa renunciar a uno mismo, negarse a sí mismo hasta el *ascetismo*. Todo esto también está contenido en el sentido común, así como todavía hay quienes hoy, no sin una motivación comprensible, incluso renuncian a la propia *voluntad*, para que puedan entrar en el reino de esta conciencia y, al afirmar a ambos como idénticos, afirman: ‘hágase Tu voluntad’.

Esta última conciencia, necesariamente, no puede ser entendida por el estoicismo. Al negar a las cosas en el pensamiento, el estoicismo, como gran parte de los ‘profesionales del intelecto’ (que, con sus teorías, afirman: “el sentido común está equivocado, yo estoy correcto”), no percibe retirar su criterio del mismo sentido común (sin antes, al menos, considerar volverse escéptico). No

entiende porque saca su criterio de un lugar ‘específico’ del sentido común, el lugar exacto donde él mismo está, redundantemente, y que el sentido común le reservaba, pero no sin antes salar el suelo para poder señalar a los potenciales desviados cómo la vida ‘fuera’ de sí es infértil.

Si quiere dejar el sentido común, se le cobrará que déjelo ‘por completo’ y conviértase en escéptico, así como incluso la crítica más trivial a la totalidad social actual se *corroe* insistentemente acusando al crítico de hipocresía por aprovecharse de esta misma totalidad para, muchas veces, simplemente sobrevivir.

Es decir, si bien es, en realidad, algo ‘soso’ el *locus communis*, sucede que su falsa negación es aún más tediosa cuando toma la forma de estoicismo o escepticismo, como señala Hegel. El sentido común está siempre ‘por debajo’ de quien se pone (es decir, pone su voluntad y, fundamentalmente, su *pensamiento*) ‘por encima’ de él. El sentido común no se ve afectado por esto. Pero cuando esta voluntad de superarlo se traduce en *acción* política con la intuición militante de que es suficiente criticarlo, uno se aleja del sentido común, se convierte en un *otro*, y se exilia en un lugar especial reservado para los desviados. Gramsci lo nota en la discusión sobre la “realidad del mundo exterior”, cuya verdad atestigua y se adhiere el sentido común. El que intenta negarla es él mismo *prácticamente* negado y condenado al ridículo corrosivo:

El público popular no cree ni siquiera que se pueda plantear semejante problema, de si el mundo externo, existe objetivamente. Basta enunciar así el problema para sentir un irrefrenable y pantagruélico estallido de hilaridad. El público “cree” que el mundo externo es objetivamente real, pero aquí nace precisamente la cuestión: ¿cuál es el origen de esta “creencia” y qué valor crítico tiene “objetivamente”? De hecho esta creencia es de origen religioso, aunque quien participe de ella sea religiosamente indiferente. Puesto que todas las religiones han enseñado y enseñan que el mundo, la naturaleza, el universo ha sido creado por dios antes de la creación del hombre y por lo tanto el hombre ha encontrado el mundo ya listo y acabado, catalogado y definido de una vez por todas, esta creencia se ha convertido en un dato férreo del sentido común y vive con la misma solidez aunque el sentimiento religioso se haya apagado o adormecido. He ahí entonces que basarse en esta experiencia del sentido común para destruir con la “comicidad” la concepción subjetivista, tiene un significado más bien “reaccionario”, de retorno implícito al sentimiento religioso; en efecto, los escritores o los oradores católicos recurren al mismo medio para obtener el mismo efecto de ridículo corrosivo. (Gramsci, 1986, Q11§17, p. 273-274; Gramsci, 1975, p. 1411-1412).

Lo que ‘no’ es el sentido común, lo que se presenta como su aparente negación, está marcado por él con el signo negativo de lo ridículo corrosivo (Gontijo y Ramos, 2021). Hegel observó en la inmediatez del “yo soy yo” una tautología sin movimiento. En el sentido común, que también quiere ser idéntico a sí mismo y negar lo que no es él con lo ridículo corrosivo, sin embargo, hay movimiento. Esto, el sentido común no lo sabe (pero aún lo hace, es decir, hay *acción*) sino implícitamente, al observar las sucesiones generacionales en la familia, los conflictos de costumbres entre ellas, etc., como si solo tuvieran que ver con la vida natural, la realidad del mundo exterior natural, y de ella fuera un simple hecho. Lo ridículo corrosivo mantiene la “unidad de la autoconciencia consigo misma”.

Pero esto, por supuesto, no significa que no haya posibles cambios en el sentido común. Gramsci deja en claro que siempre está en movimiento. Mucho menos significa, aunque no cumple con muchas de las *voluntades* militantes, que el sentido común es en sí mismo algo que podemos valorar vulgarmente como bueno o malo en sí mismo. La ‘gente común’, *sencilla*, de la que también formamos parte, no es intrínsecamente ni héroes o santos, ni monstruos o bestias. La potencia de ser o no ser reside en la ‘gente común’ y, ciertamente, también reside en el sentido común.

Contraria a esta percepción, mismo que no lo sepa, surge una variación del pensamiento estoico, que fetichiza al sentido común, proyecta en él todo su ‘sistema de pensamiento’ como si fuera un bello sistema homeostático de sabidurías del propio sentido común. Lo trata con el respeto exagerado que pronto se desliza hacia la incómoda condescendencia que le quita a la ‘gente común’ toda su acción, mala o buena, toda su humanidad; y no se sienten avergonzados cuando dicen que saben muy bien “lo que la gente común quiere”.

Esta tendencia opera actualmente en la vida política, *reivindicando* el campo de la ‘izquierda’ política, heredera de todos los que también estuvieron allí, desde comunistas, socialistas, desarrollistas, socialdemócratas, populistas latinoamericanos, etc. *Sin embargo*, estos últimos, previos a una serie de cambios sociales, políticos, económicos e incluso culturales que se iniciaron entre las décadas de 1960 y 1980, precisamente *buscaban al sentido común* como punto de partida. Lo incorporaban para llevarlo a un punto de llegada *otro*,

y no al revés, es decir, partir de ese lugar imaginado, fruto de la libertad estoica de pensamiento, para creer que llegaron, con él, a la ‘gente común’.

Por un lado, estas voluntades militantes a la izquierda (en sus diversas variaciones: en el mundo euroatlántico, una ‘nueva’ izquierda liberal; en América Latina una izquierda romántica erróneamente llamada populista) pueden verse frustradas por la marcha demasiado lenta del sentido común hacia sus fines. Estas agrupaciones, en las últimas décadas, se han limitado a hacer llamados morales por una mayor justicia social cuando estaban en la oposición y, cuando estaban en el poder, en ausencia de un proyecto mínimo, terminaron adhiriendo a las mismas ideas y prácticas que sus oponentes. Sin embargo, sus ideas y acciones resultaron contrarias a lo que deseaban que fueran sus fines.

Por otro lado, contrariamente a lo que la frustración nos lleva a pensar, tampoco la aparente inercia del sentido común significa un movimiento en la dirección opuesta, de algún tipo de ultraconservadurismo popularmente arraigado (como el reciente surgimiento de la extrema derecha en el mundo euroatlántico y latinoamericano). Gramsci observa, en el fascismo hegeliano de Gentile, una concepción ahistórica de la ‘naturaleza humana’ y de supuesta “verdad del sentido común”, como si en el sentido común existiera un sólo sentido común, eterno e inmutable (Gramsci, 1975, Q8§175, p. 1047)².

Gramsci critica a Gentile por caer en una interpretación excesivamente abstracta de Hegel, amputando su parte más realista e historicista, manteniendo solo un ‘pseudohistoricismo’ mecanicista, cercano al evolucionismo vulgar, que elimina la *acción* por completo (Gramsci, 1975, Q10§41x, p. 1317). El sentido común conoce implícitamente a su acción, la sospecha. Por eso Gramsci se da cuenta de que la interpretación fascista de Gentile también: “es toda ella contraria al sentido común, bien sea que se entienda por éste la filosofía ingenua del pueblo, que detesta

² Esta crítica de la filosofía de Gentile también tiene sentido para el contenido ideológico promovido por el gurú intelectual del bolsonarismo, Olavo de Carvalho, un “místico” de *Tarifa*, astrólogo, creyente en su intuición trascendente y “ex-marxista”. Su teoría también es casi totalmente contraria al sentido común, aunque hay puntos de contacto, en los que su tesis sobre el “marxismo cultural” suena como música a los oídos de quienes desean creer que los cambios de comportamiento de las generaciones más jóvenes se deben a un “intervención” maliciosa y no a la totalidad misma en la que se encuentran.

cualquier forma de idealismo subjetivista, bien sea que se entienda como buen sentido, como actitud de desprecio por las cosas abstrusas, los artificios, las oscuridades de ciertas exposiciones científicas y filosóficas.” (Gramsci, 1986, Q11§13, p. 264; Gramsci, 1975, p. 1399).

Conclusión

Nuestra discusión, hasta ahora, puede haber dado la impresión de que el sentido común es casi inmutable o que hay pocas posibilidades de afectar su lento movimiento. Dijimos que sus aparentes negaciones, especialmente las intelectualizadas y redundantes en el mundo del pensamiento, son solo una especie de simulacro ‘intuitivo’ de lo que es su negación, a pesar de ser parte del mismo sentido común, y por eso son ellas mismas, en hecho, fácilmente negadas.

Como si el sentido común creara en sí mismo un lugar reservado al voluntarismo ingenuo, que sólo pretende expulsar de sí mismo para reproducirse, su verdadera negación no es evidente a los ojos, es decir, como una acción ‘intuitiva’ (así como no es suficiente reivindicarse revolucionario para serlo).

El sentido común y lo ridículo corrosivo nos llevan a otra discusión, que resulta de la dialéctica entre ambos y, por tanto, presenta un carácter de necesidad. Se trata de la *razón*, que ahora también debe pasar de lo implícito a lo explícito. Álvaro Vieira Pinto (1961, p. 22) atribuye a Hegel la consideración de que el contenido de la razón, en cada época, se sintetiza en un concepto presentado por un determinado sistema; pero esto presupone, ante el terreno específico de la ‘filosofía’, la *totalidad* de los actos y manifestaciones del espíritu.

Así, Vieira Pinto observa que el proceso de la razón no se encuentra solo en los conceptos de la filosofía, sino que: “Está en el concepto de filosofía como su flor suprema, dice Hegel. Cada filosofía refleja el espíritu de la época y, más que eso, el pueblo en que surge esta filosofía.” (1961, p. 22, traducción propia).

Aquí, donde este “reflejo” no tiende a la pasividad (como si fuera literal), refleja movimiento, por eso él mismo *crea* el futuro y *crea*, por así decirlo, el propio ‘pueblo’. La elección por la noción de ‘pueblo’ no es una casualidad, ya que también hay un entrelazamiento no fortuito entre Gramsci y Hegel en la elección

del término “astucia” (o su variación “ardid” en la literatura en español; aunque la misma palabra en portugués se mantiene para los dos: “astúcia”; y también en inglés “cunning”) como el mejor nombre para atribuir a algunos de los momentos en el proceso de ese mismo pueblo y que presupone acción, por tanto, *libertad* en un sentido particular.

Sería relevante un estudio que los analizara más profundamente sobre ese punto específico. Nos parece que en Gramsci se habla de “astucia de la naturaleza”³, cuyo término atribuye a Vico, para el curioso movimiento en el que se tiene una ‘ida al pueblo’ (‘retornar’ a las provincias, exaltar a las jerarquías y tradiciones populares; la sabiduría del pueblo, en nuestro caso hoy, principalmente los pueblos originarios etc.) de los filósofos realistas franceses, a finales del siglo XIX, tras la derrota de la *Primavera de los pueblos* de 1848, como un movimiento que quiere tender a una finalidad, pero que acaba involuntariamente afirmando su contrario. En Hegel, se habla del “ardid de la razón”⁴, en sus *Lecciones sobre la filosofía de la historia universal*, como el proceso por el cual la idea se desgasta en lo más

³ “La tesis de Consiglio (más o menos explícita y consciente) es la siguiente: frente al crecimiento del poder político y social del proletariado y su ideología, algunos sectores de la intelectualidad francesa reaccionan a través de estos movimientos de “ida al pueblo”. La aproximación al pueblo significaría, pues, retomar el pensamiento burgués, que no quiere perder su hegemonía sobre las clases populares y que para ejercerla mejor incorpora una parte de la ideología proletaria. Sería un retorno a formas “democráticas” más substanciales que el “democratismo” formal y corriente. Habría que ver también si un fenómeno de este género es significativo e importante desde el punto de vista histórico, si representa una fase necesaria de transición, si es un episodio de la “educación popular” indirecta. Sería interesante una lista de “tendencias populistas” y un análisis de cada una de ellas: se podría “descubrir” un ejemplo de aquello que Vico denominaba “astucias de la naturaleza”, es decir, un impulso social que tiende hacia un fin y realiza su contrario” (Gramsci, 2014, Q6§168, p. 202, traducción propia; Gramsci, 1975, p. 821).

⁴ “El interés particular de la pasión es, por tanto, inseparable de la realización de lo universal; pues lo universal resulta de lo particular y determinado, y de su negación. Lo particular tiene su interés propio en la historia universal; es algo finito y como tal debe sucumbir. Los fines particulares se combaten uno a otro y una parte de ellos sucumbe. Pero precisamente con la lucha, con la ruina de lo particular se produce lo universal. Este no perece. La idea universal no se entrega a la oposición y a la lucha, no se expone al peligro; permanece intangible e ilesa, en el fondo, y envía lo particular de la pasión a que en la lucha reciba los golpes. Se puede llamar a esto *el ardid de la razón*; la razón hace que las pasiones obren por ella y que aquello mediante lo cual la razón llega a la existencia, se pierda y sufra daño. Pues el fenómeno tiene una parte nula y otra parte afirmativa. Lo particular es la mayoría de las veces harto mezquino, frente a lo universal. Los individuos son sacrificados y abandonados. La idea no paga por sí el tributo de la existencia y de la caducidad; págalo con las pasiones de los individuos. César hubo de realizar lo necesario, el derrocamiento de la podrida libertad. Pereció en esta lucha; pero lo necesario subsistió: la libertad sucumbió, conforme a la idea, bajo los sucesos externos.” (Hegel, 2016, p. 46).

particular, se deforma, se cambia de ropa, incluso parece corromperse, sin embargo, esto es precisamente para que pueda realizarse como universal.

En un salto algo apresurado por las limitaciones del espacio, solo observo que éste debe ser el astuto movimiento de la filosofía (implícita) que “refleja el espíritu de *nuestro* tiempo”. Ni siempre afirma ser heredera del liberalismo, y aún menos que se ‘desvió’ de él. Pero ‘astutamente’, la totalidad que ella misma conformó pretende expulsar algo que no es ella como su negación, sólo para negarlo más fácilmente y sabotear la voluntad de los desviados. Es decir, estoicos y escépticos, mezclados en esta otra categoría de ‘intelectuales’, de los cuales representan una gran parte, aunque no el todo, se presentan hoy así como los franceses que describía Gramsci.

Si bien quieren negar algo, lo reafirman en todo momento con críticas estériles, a veces demasiado sentimentales, y otras demasiado ‘conceptuales’ (ininteligibles al sentido común) al *neoliberalismo*, que se regocija cuando se vulgariza su crítica y luego la destruye con lo ridículo corrosivo. Entonces, ¿cómo se parece lo que *no* se presenta como lo contrario del sentido común? No es sorprendente que se parezca al sentido común mismo, aunque no lo es.

Debido a que está tan orgánicamente conectado con él, sus palabras e ‘ideas’ dan la impresión al ‘pueblo’ de que se trata de algo que *él mismo* ya había pensado, aunque todavía no lo había formalizado y exteriorizado de manera coherente. Es decir, en esta manifestación real, se presenta al llamado ‘pueblo’ como una especie de ‘coincidencia’. No simplemente “refleja” un contenido sustancial preexistente a él, a saber, la supuesta ‘voluntad del pueblo’, sino que esta misma es *creada* (es decir, en una reversión retroactiva), mientras que el pueblo mismo también se recrea como un sujeto político unido, desde un ‘desorden’ de tendencias inconsistentes y solo aparentemente contrastantes.

El sentido común se confunde profundamente cuando ocurre esto, que es su *verdadera* negación. No sabe cómo etiquetarlo, cómo ofenderlo, cómo condenarlo a la corrosión ridícula. De ahí que, para él, la negación de este desarrollo deba pasar rápidamente de lo cómico a lo trágico, en un acto desesperado. De lo contrario, se

encuentra revolucionariamente transformado o destruido, dando paso a otro que lo ha *superado*.

La confusión, de hecho, parece ser necesaria para las sociedades de tipo “occidental”, como señaló Gramsci, que tienen una sociedad civil compleja y un predominio del consenso sobre la coerción, o de la hegemonía civil sobre las posibilidades de una irrupción frontal hacia el poder. Por ello, a menudo existen cesarismos progresivos (es decir, implícitamente progresivos, ya que para confirmarlo Gramsci recomienda la mediación intelectual del análisis del peso relativo de sus elementos de conservación y transformación) capaces de llevar a cabo transformaciones de mucho mayor alcance que las fuerzas que inmediatamente se presentan como más de izquierda o revolucionarias.

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International Gramsci Journal

Volume 4

Issue 3 *Collective Will, Self-Consciousness,
Constitution of the Subject – in theory, and in
practice; Architecture, Professions and
Hegemony / Reviews*

Article 6

2021

The 'Intense Ideological Activity' of the 1919-20 Turin Factory Council Movement

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Recommended Citation

Piu, Piermarco, The 'Intense Ideological Activity' of the 1919-20 Turin Factory Council
Movement, *International Gramsci Journal*, 4(3), 2021, 40-85.
Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol4/iss3/6>

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The 'Intense Ideological Activity' of the 1919-20 Turin Factory Council Movement

Abstract

The article focuses on the activity of Gramsci, the Ordine Nuovo group and the communist vanguard in the Turin Factory Council movement throughout the 'Red Biennium' (1919-1920) and during the occupation of the Italian factories (September 1920). This movement questioned the owners' power in the factory, with the occupation in Turin characterized by the workers collectively managing the plants without the owners. From this perspective, the Turin Factory Council movement and the local occupation represented one of the most advanced political and organizational developments of the Italian working class in the twentieth century. By applying 'the molecular' in directions that Gramsci would have found interesting, this article addresses how ideas and images of the Factory Councils circulated 'molecularly' within the Turin working class movement. This helps understand how the circulation affected the 'spontaneous' establishment of a 'productive network' of Councils during the Turin occupation. The 'molecular' focus shows that the Turin movement raised - without solving - one question of democratic relevance: how to overcome the division between leaders and led. By discussing this issue from a historiographical perspective, this article intervenes in the debates about September 1920 and the Red Biennium, asking to what extent the ideological work of Gramsci and the Ordine Nuovo group throughout 1919-1920 directed the spontaneous practices of the Turin workers during the occupation. Moreover, it sheds light on the emancipatory politics of 1919-1920, questioning whether the leaders-led distance was overcome in the production and circulation of conciliar ideas and images. Secondly, from a theoretical perspective, the molecular approach and the question of democracy are used to explore the theoretical and political lexicon of the Prison Note-books - particularly hegemony and the direction of spontaneity. The article discusses the molecular functioning of these two issues, arguing that an emancipatory hegemony cannot rely solely on the direction of spontaneity to address the leaders-led division. As such, the intellectuals and subalterns' coproduction of theoretical perspectives emerges as one of the political and practical challenges for an emancipatory hegemony, particularly during the Red Biennium.

Keywords

Factory Councils, Red Biennium, L'Ordine Nuovo, molecular, hegemony, spontaneity and direction

The ‘Intense Ideological Activity’ of the 1919-20 Turin Factory Council Movement

Piermarco Piu

I. Introduction

In his *Prison Notebooks*, Antonio Gramsci argued that any enquiry into the ways in which a ‘collective will’ is formed requires analysing its *molecular* phases (Gramsci, 1975, Q8§195, pp. 1057-8). Eleonora Forenza (2009, p. 551) has observed that ‘molecular’, in this usage, is a metaphor for a method that understands the processes of collective will organization in its *historically absolute dimension*. In particular, this interrogation requires

an extremely minute [...] process of exhaustive, capillary analysis. The documentation [...] consists of an enormous number of books, pamphlets, news-paper and journal articles, conversations and oral debates [...]; in their gigantic ensemble, they represent the intense activity [*lavorio*] that gives birth to a collective will with a certain degree of homogeneity [...] which is necessary and sufficient to generate an action that is coordinated and simultaneous in the time and geographical space in which the historical event takes place (Gramsci, 1975, Q8§195, p. 1058; 2007, p. 346).

In the same note Gramsci argues that this ‘molecular analysis’ should be applied to the study of a particular form of collective will – that is, the political party (Ibid.)

As will become clear, these observations can be applied fruitfully beyond their original context, in directions that Gramsci did not explicitly contemplate but would probably have found interesting because, in the ‘spirit’ of the *Prison Notebooks*, they represent ‘an effort of theoretical in-depth analysis of his whole experience’ (Gerratana in Gramsci, 1975, p. XVIII). As such, ‘the molecular’ as a historical method can be used to analyse an episode of Gramsci’s political activity and, more generally, the Italian workers’ movements: it approaches the problem of how ‘an intense

(ideological) activity’ can ‘give birth to a collective will’ in the light of the ‘spontaneous’ creation of a system of Councils in Turin during the occupation of the factories (September 1920). A brief moment in the story of Factory Council movement¹ during the Red Biennium 1919-20 is under the spotlight here, with the focus on the activity of Gramsci, the *Ordine Nuovo* group,² the Turin vanguard and the Turin working class.

In other words, the account considers the different roles that these actors played in the ‘molecular circulation’ of a number of ideas and images throughout 1919-20 – particularly, the theories and imaginaries related to the conciliar organization of an industrial city. This will allow for an assessment of the impact that this circulation, as a form of ‘intense ideological activity’, had on the creation of the Turin system of Councils in September 1920, as a

¹ The Factory Councils (*Consigli di Fabbrica*) present an Italian example of a wider group of socialist – although not necessarily communist – mobilizations that took place at the beginning of the twentieth century, including the British Shop Stewards, the German *Arbeiterräte*, the Russian *soviets*, the Hungarian Republic of Councils, etc. These mobilizations created specific forms of worker’s institutions – that is, the Workers’ Councils. These were created around geographical units or factories placed under the direct economic control of the workers to bring about the workers’ self-government of economy and society. Although these mobilizations were all inspired by the Russian *soviets*, each had its own particular unfolding. The development of the Factory Councils resulted from the political activity of the Italian workers’ movement in the metallurgical factories during 1919, later spreading into other industries. Significantly, the metallurgical factories were also the context where the ‘old’ workers’ institutions (i.e. the Internal Commissions) developed at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Factory Councils were therefore inspired by the Russian *soviets*, but they were based on the Internal Commissions. In this respect, the Factory Councils can be considered the highest political achievement of 15 years of struggle within the Italian metallurgical factories, particularly those of Turin. At the same time, the Factory Councils can also be considered one of the most significant outcomes of the Red Biennium (1919-20), since they played a central role in the Occupation of the Factories in September 1920. See in this respect Battini (1988, p. 193), Clark (1977, pp. 1-2), Sbarberi (1986, pp. 31-2) and Spriano (1964, p. 99 and, in English, 1975, p. 84; 1971, pp. 52, 69-70). For a general discussion of the Workers’ Councils at the beginning of the twentieth century, see Corvisieri (1970). For a discussion on the Internal Commissions, see, e.g., Clark (1977, pp. 36-45) and Spriano (1971, pp. 46-9; 1972, pp. 120-5, 162-71, 173-6, 349-50).

² The *Ordine Nuovo* group grew substantially after the journal was founded in May 1919 (by Gramsci, Angelo Tasca, Umberto Terracini and Palmiro Togliatti). For example, it later included people such as Ottavio Pastore, Alfonso Leonetti, Andrea Viglongo, Pia Carena and Mario Montagnana; for a more comprehensive list see Angelino (2014, pp. 381-3). A detailed account of the history of the journal and the group in the context of the Red Biennium is outside the scope of this work. Accounts are provided by Angelino (2014), Clark (1977), Livorsi (1979), Maione (1975), Mazzacurati (2015; 2016), Spriano (1971) and Williams (1975).

moment of ‘coordinated and simultaneous action in [...] time and geographical space’. Therefore, this analysis addresses the *historically absolute* relation between conciliar ideas/images and their practical implementation.

Thanks to this ‘molecular focus’ on the Factory Council movement in Turin, it is possible to argue that during 1919-20 this movement had to confront what Gramsci (1975, Q15§4, p. 1752; 1971, p. 144) highlights as the first element of politics and political science: the fundamental division between leaders and led. As will become clear, the Turin movement (which in September 1920 was not explicitly directed by Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group, though it bore witness to their ‘molecular’ ideological influence) raised without solving a question that, in Gramsci’s view (1975, Q8§191, p. 1056; 2007, p. 345, or 1971, p. 56 note 5), is of democratic relevance: how to overcome this fundamental division. This question will be explored both from the perspective of historical analysis, as a practical-political issue, and from a theoretical perspective, in relation to the ways in which concepts such as hegemony and the direction of spontaneity are conceptualized in the *Prison Notebooks*. These conceptual reflections can then be used to shed light on the politics of the Red Biennium.

On the one hand, from a perspective of historical analysis, this exploration allows for an illustration of the ways in which the specific modes of molecular circulation of conciliar ideas and images (e.g. workers’ assemblies and debates, factory meetings, informal discussions, proletarian press, interventions from Gramsci, the *Ordine Nuovo* group, the communist vanguard or socialist militants, etc.) became central to fostering the mass participation of the Turin workers across and against persistent hierarchies during the Red Biennium, reducing the distance between leaders and led, particularly in September 1920. However, it is also evident that this distance permeated the specific division of intellectual labour according to which these conciliar ideas and images were produced throughout 1919-20. Was the elaboration of theoretical perspectives on the Councils confined to Gramsci, the *Ordine Nuovo* groups and the communist vanguard? Was a ‘theoretical consciousness’ co-

produced by intellectuals and subalterns? And thus, more generally, to what extent was the divide between them overcome in Turin during the Red Biennium?

In this way, this article contributes to the historiographic and theoretical debates on September 1920 and the Red Biennium in Italy. In their analyses of the Red Biennium, scholars have observed that this period and, particularly, the occupation of the factories, was not a prelude to revolution in Italy (e.g. La Valle, 1976, pp. 138-9; Soave, 1965, pp. 175-7; Spriano, 1964, pp. 162-78; Vallauri, 1971, pp. 427-34). Nevertheless, even the most critical accounts have argued that these events illustrate one of the highest peaks of political maturity for the Italian working class of the twentieth (and twenty-first) centuries. In this context, the Factory Council movement in Turin, and the events related to the local occupation, undoubtedly offer a prime example of advanced political and organizational development. The 'molecular focus' does not aim to discuss the broader political possibilities opened up or foreclosed by the Red Biennium or September 1920,³ neither does it evaluate the effectiveness of its forms of mobilization.⁴ Rather, it explores some aspects of the emancipatory politics of 1919-20, by discussing the extent to which the leaders-led distance was overcome in the production and circulation of conciliar ideas and images.

Moreover, while previous analyses have focussed on the *practical* organization of the system of Councils in Turin during September 1920 (e.g. Alessio, 1920; Borghi, 1921; Clark, 1977, pp. 158-62; Parodi, 1930; Santhià, 1956, pp. 93-125; Spriano, 1964, pp. 69-72 and 148-51 [in English, 1975, pp. 64-6 and 117-20 respectively]), the

³ For example, why was the Turin system of Councils not extended to a national level? What were the implications of the Red Biennium for of the split between the communists and the socialists, and to the subsequent birth of the Communist Party of Italy? To what extent did the 'failed revolution' of 1919-20 pave the way for Fascism? See some considerations in Clark (1977, pp. 210-26), Soave (1965, pp. 180-5) and Spriano (1964, pp. 162-78).

⁴ For example, was the occupation sustainable from an economic and technical-productive point of view? See contrasting perspectives in Borghi (1921) and Camuri (1934, pp. 265-7). Or, was the occupation effective (or potentially so) from a military perspective – i.e. in terms of capacity of attack and defence? Different positions are provided in Bianco (1930, pp. 735-8) and Togliatti in Bosio (1970, pp. 100-01).

theoretical and *imaginative* foundations of this system have not received particular attention. Similarly, many scholars have discussed the historical and political significance along with the development of a *general* theory of the Factory Councils in the work of Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group (e.g. Clark, 1977, pp. 69-174; De Felice, 1971, pp. 271-307; Mazzacurati, 2015; Paggi, 1970, pp. 238-59; Silvestrini, 2012; Spriano, 1971, pp. 76-120). Yet these studies have primarily analysed the ways in which this theory impacted on the *general* unfolding of the Factory Council movement,⁵ and have not considered the influence of this theory on a *specific* episode. From this angle, this article focuses on the *theoretical* and *imaginative* underpinnings of the creation of a system of Councils in September 1920, connecting them with the intellectual atmosphere of the Red Biennium in Turin. From this perspective, the ideological role that Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group played in the occupation of the factories can be clarified to address the interpretative void highlighted by Gianni Bosio, according to whom ‘the reconstruction of the relation between the *Ordine Nuovo* movement and the occupation of the factories is not an easy task’ (Bosio, 1970, p. 13). This focus also sheds light on the organizational dynamics of the occupation, upon which existing literature has not reached consensus,⁶ with scholars, commentators and protagonists of the occupation having put forward different hypo-theses about these dynamics, from emphasizing their spontaneity⁷ to highlighting the

⁵ Nevertheless, these scholars have extensively discussed the historical conditions, sources, debates, people and formal/informal gatherings through which Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group refined and spread their views on the Factory Councils.

⁶ This is related to the objectively difficult endeavour of providing a historical reconstruction of this episode. After all, ‘neither the monographic contributions of the *Ordine Nuovo* journal, the studies on the origin of the Communist Party, the biographic material about the protagonists of the journal and the movement, nor the general historical accounts contain details about these intense weeks’ (Bosio, 1970, p. 14; here and afterwards, unattributed translations are those of the present author).

⁷ See, for example, Bianco in Soave (1965, p. 179), Borghi (1921), Garino and Revelli (2011 [1982], pp. 131-2), Noce in Bermani (1987, p. 142), Parodi (1962, p. 91) and Tasca in Bosio (1970, p. 125).

various ways in which they were affected by different political organizations.⁸

On the other hand, from a theoretical perspective, the molecular approach and the political questions about democracy emerging from the analysis of the Factory Council movement are pertinent to the theoretical and political lexicon of the *Prison Notebooks*, in particular two central issues prompted by or entangled with the experiences of the Red Biennium (e.g. Broccoli, 1972, pp. 41-62; Cospito, 2021, p. 101; Gramsci, 1975, Q1§61, p. 72; 1992, p. 169; Gramsci, 1975, Q3§48, pp. 330-31; 1996, pp. 50-51) the issues being hegemony and the direction of spontaneity. From this standpoint, the theoretical analysis of the ways in which hegemonic relations and the direction of spontaneity work at a molecular level sheds light on how an ‘intense ideological activity’ ‘gave birth’ to the system of Councils in September 1920, and vice versa. Here ‘intense ideological activity’ is understood as a molecular process of knowledge circulation across the cultural hierarchies between Gramsci, the *Ordine Nuovo* group, the communist vanguard and the working masses. While this circulation was clearly integral to the direction of the workers’ spontaneity, it represented a necessary but not sufficient condition for the production of an emancipatory hegemonic relation whereby the division between leaders and led could be overcome. From this stance, one of the political and practical challenges of the Red Biennium and, more generally, of an

⁸ A non-exhaustive taxonomy of these hypotheses includes: accounts that have emphasized the directive role of the Turin branch of the PSI, its ward circles or, more generally, the communist vanguards; see for example, Comollo in Paulesu Quercioli (1977, pp. 52-3), Longo (1974, p. 45), Santhià in Paulesu Quercioli (1977, pp. 98-9), Soave (1965, p. 183) and – at least for the final part of the occupation – Williams (1975, p. 248). At the same time, some commentators and protagonists of the occupation have argued that the occupation was organized independently of the activity of Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group; see for example Clark (1977, pp. 148, 156, 162) and Viglono in Bermani (1987, p. 49). See also Ferri (1957, pp. 465-6) who argues that the Factory Council movement was controlled by the Turin branch of the PSI. Other accounts have emphasized the directive role of FIOM; see for example Carretto and Matta (1970 [1921], p. 450) and Maione (1975, pp. 238, 243). For an account emphasizing the directive role of the Turin Chamber of Labour see Borghi (1921), and for an emphasis on the autonomous direction of the Factory Council movement, see for example Noce in Bermani (1987, p. 142), Pillon (1982, p. 8648) and – at least for the initial part of the occupation – Williams (1975, pp. 246-7).

emancipatory hegemonic relation, is to organize the horizontality of intellectual work within persistent hierarchies.

In this way, this article questions the limits of an emancipatory hegemony that relies solely on the direction of spontaneity to address the fundamental division that determines and haunts politics and political science. Moreover, it highlights the tensions between, on the one hand, hegemony and the direction of spontaneity and, on the other hand, democratic processes, in relation to the events of the Red Biennium. More generally, our discussion provides the first step towards a future reconstruction ‘from below’ of the political and ideological environment in which Gramsci, the *Ordine Nuovo* group, the Turin vanguard and the Turin working class operated during 1919-20. As such, this article considers the sources, the people and the debates that were relevant to the circulation and production of the *specific* theoretical and imaginative foundations of the system of Councils, and that are usually considered secondary in the existing literature. In particular, part of this molecular reconstruction draws on the reports, communiqués, calls and notices published by a range of anonymous militants, mapping the extremely detailed spread of conciliar ideas and images, and suggesting the collective extent of the ‘intense ideological activity’ of the Red Biennium.

Section II addresses the practical organization of the Turin system of Councils, discussing some theoretical elaborations from *L’Ordine Nuovo* that suggest an affinity with this practical organization. Section III will then turn to explore the hypothesis of the molecular influence of these elaborations on the realization of the system of Councils in September 1920. In particular, it illustrates the ways in which the molecular circulation of these elaborations took place across the cultural hierarchies between the communist vanguard and the worker masses during 1919-20. Section IV will then draw on this discussion to evaluate the emancipatory possibilities and the limits of a hegemonic relation where the spontaneity of the led is directed by the leaders. In conclusion it discusses how the intellectuals’ and subalterns’ co-production of theoretical perspectives emerges as one of the political and practical challenges for the Red Biennium as well as for emancipatory hegemony more generally.

II. *A system of Factory Councils: practice and theory*

In September 1920 about half a million workers, mostly metal-workers, occupied factories across Italy (Spriano, 1964, p. 63 [in English, 1975, p. 60]).⁹ In this respect

[t]he distinctive feature of the Turin occupation [...] consisted of an effort to organize a '*system*' for the workers' management of the metallurgical factories to ensure the coordination of production, exchanges of products and the supply of raw materials by creating a specific Committee at the Chamber of Labour,¹⁰ as well as various sub-committees. (Spriano, 1964, p. 69, my emphasis; cf. Spriano, 1975, p. 64).

Along with expelling the owners, the Turin workers set up their own logistics and infrastructures, so as to bring about this workers' management system. A detailed account of the activities, extension and political or practical limits of this system would be outside the scope of this article – particularly because it is interested in the 'intense ideological activity' that gave birth to this system, rather than in its pure realization.¹¹ Suffice it to say, once the occupation had taken place, workers started setting up this system within the metallurgical (engineering) factories – particularly, around the car plants (e.g. the FIAT¹² plants) controlled by the Factory Councils, which regulated the internal activity of each workshop. Production continued during the occupation, despite the absence of the owners.

⁹ A detailed discussion of the occupation of the factories in Italy would be outside the scope of this work. Significantly, the occupation lasted for approximatively one month and did not have any revolutionary outcome. See Bosio (1970, pp. 7-69), Clark (1977, pp. 157-80), Spriano (1964) and Williams (1975, pp. 241-76). On the limits of the occupation and, particularly, the limits of the activity of Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group, see Battini (1978, pp. 362-4), Clark (1977, pp. 210-7), Salvadori (1970, p. 1124), Soave (1965, pp. 180-85) and Spriano (1964, pp. 162-78).

¹⁰ "The Chamber of Labour was an organization modelled on the French *Bourse du Travail*, and designed to unite all members of different Craft Unions, living in a given locality, for common action. It normally acted in conjunction with local Union leaders, and was usually controlled by them" (Clark, 1977, p. 83 note 41).

¹¹ See a more detailed account in Alessio (1920), Borghi (1920; 1921), Clark (1977, pp. 158-62), Spriano (1964, p. 148 and, in English, 1975, pp. 117-8) and Williams (1975, pp. 245-8). For an evaluation of the political limitations see Battini (1978, pp. 362-9) and Soave (1965); for an evaluation of the practical limits see Garino and Revelli (2011 [1982], pp. 135-6).

¹² *Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino*.

For example, ‘the Fiat [Centro] Factory Council appointed special Commissars [...] to maintain transport and to guarantee supplies of raw materials’ (Clark, 1977, p. 158, my parenthesis). Subsequently, the need for raw materials and semi-finished products grew (Montagnana, 1952, p. 139),¹³ and so the system expanded, connecting not only different factories within the same industry (e.g. foundries, machine tools factories, etc.) but also different industries (e.g. tyre factories, chemical and textile works, oxygen factories, etc.), including those not directly ancillary to the metallurgical factories (Borghi, 1921).¹⁴

The creation of the ‘Turin workers’ management system was accompanied by the development of Committees, which reached their final form approximatively in mid-September. These were developed thanks to a (new)¹⁵ Directive Committee ‘consisting of the executive committee of the Chamber of Labour, plus one representative of FIOM¹⁶ [Italian Federation of Metalworkers]’ (Clark 1977, p. 161, my parenthesis). This Directive Committee set up three technical committees – ‘Exchange and Production’, ‘Buying and Selling’ and ‘Voucher, Subsidies and Kitchen’ – which

¹³ As Soave (1965, p. 178) has noted, the real political challenge of the occupation was bypassing the capitalist market and the international network of capitalist relations that encapsulated the supply and selling of products. From this angle, the Turin experiment represented an inchoate attempt to respond to this challenge – at least because, after mid-September, the ‘Exchange and Production’ Committee organized (and centralized) the supply side outside of market relations.

Notably, Williams has argued that “[i]t is an interesting comment on the limitation even of the Turin movement that exchanges between different branches of the same firm did not require Committee authorization, whereas exchanges between different firms did. The pre-existing capitalist structure was thus maintained under workers’ control” (Williams, 1975, p. 246). Nevertheless, Williams’ excerpt refers to the organization of the system of Councils in an earlier stage of the occupation. This organization was questioned by the workers during their assemblies, with workers rather arguing for the creation of workers’ institutions to regulate the exchanges on behalf of the collective, see Anon (1920d). From this angle, the ‘Exchange and Production’ Committee can be considered an outcome of these deliberations – that is, an inchoate attempt to create ‘a central economic Council, which decides the productive and distributive plans and thus succeeds in abolishing capitalist competition’ (Gramsci, 1920b).

¹⁴ In this respect, as Borghi has recalled, ‘even raincoats, umbrella and clothing accessory factories were occupied’ (Borghi, 1921).

¹⁵ This new Committee replaced the initial Directive Committee that was set up by the Turin branch of FIOM at the beginning of the occupation, see Clark (1977, p. 160).

¹⁶ *Federazione Italiana Operai Metallurgici*.

regulated all the activities and relations between different industries and factories (Borghi, 1921). Committees thus coordinated the Factory Councils at the city level (Clark, 1977, p. 162). In particular, the 'Exchange and Production' Committee

regulate[d] the exchanges of raw materials and semi-finished products between different industries, monitoring requests and availabilities, as along with all the actual transfers of material between plants of different industries. The Committee also commanded the collective utilization of the available means of transport and the mobilization of specialized technical personnel (Borghi, 1921).

whereas the 'Buying and Selling' Committee

monitored all the sales and all the purchases, and created a single Cash Office to collect money for the sales and payments involved in the purchase of raw materials that could not be obtained in the occupied plants; [...] it worked as a general accounting office for the whole organization (Ibid.).

In this way the Turin movement established a network of factories organized around the car plants, connecting the activities of the different Factory Councils – a structure that can be called 'a *productive system of Councils*'.

Significantly, this system exceeded the pure logic of industrial production. In fact, it activated further networks of contacts and solidarity which included other sections of the Turin proletariat (e.g. the railway workers),¹⁷ consumers' co-operatives¹⁸ (the Turin Cooperative Alliance, ACT)¹⁹ and the local circles of the PSI, the

¹⁷ 'As lorries commandeered by workers shuttled supplies between the occupied plants [...], the Turin section of the railway union, on 3 September, instructed its men to assist metalworkers in the "liberation" of trucks loaded with fuel and raw material from the depots. The rail men sent them along the tracks and sidings feeding the plants' (Williams, 1975, p. 244).

¹⁸ "Communist kitchens" were set up in the factories, with provisions supplied by the Turin Co-operative Alliance' (Clark, 1977, p. 161); 'during the occupation of the factories [...] the shops of the cooperative Alliance gave the goods on credit to the workers who were occupying [the factories]' (Comollo in Paulesu Quercioli, 1977, p. 52, my parenthesis).

¹⁹ *Alleanza Cooperativa Torinese*. Significantly, the ACT and its activities were an integral part of the daily life of the workers who occupied the factories. Therefore the activation of extended circuits of solidarity should come as no surprise. From this angle, the headquarters of the ACT – along with those of the Chamber of Labour – were located in "[t]he building in corso Siccardi [...]" [which] was not only the place where the economic and political activities of the

Italian Socialist Party.²⁰ In this way, the occupation in Turin ‘widened into a complex, if improvised, local economic system’ (Clark, 1977, p. 162). The situation was ‘moving rapidly towards [an inchoate] [...] urban soviet’ (Williams, 1975, p. 248, my parenthesis). As Gramsci prefigured in the early days of September, ‘today the problem of the constitution of the urban soviet occurs concretely to the working class’ (Gramsci, 1920d).²¹ That is, the organization of the system of occupied factories was extending across the urban territory, including larger and larger portions of the political and social life of the Turin workers.

This illustrates the ‘tendency’ towards the soviet because, firstly,

[f]rom an instrument of economic control, *the council system becomes the base for developing a power that is informed by it [the council system] but also includes the other centres of proletarian organized life.* [...] [T]he “seed” from which might arise a dictatorship of workers and peasants (State of soviets) must be found [...] in the Councils (Silvestrini, 2012, pp. 159-61, my parenthesis and emphasis).²²

The tendency towards the soviet was also illustrated by the composition of the directive and technical Committees, which in mid-September included members who, though not necessarily communist,²³ were part of FIOM and the Turin Chamber of

main people’s organization took place. It was also the fundamental meeting and gathering point in case of assemblies, conferences, theatre plays, carnival balls [...]. In this location [...] there was a workers’ sociability that did not have anything to do with that of the bourgeoisie, which was deployed in the cafes in the city centre or in the theatres. [Workers] went together into [...] the large rooms of the mutual aid associations, bringing food from home, and consumed it at full crowded tables, during dinners that ended with songs and speeches [...]. [T]hese forms of associative life contributed towards elaborating a model of life, behaviour and systems of values that were able to characterise the workers’ urban world” (Castronovo, 1987, pp. 188-9, my parentheses).

²⁰ ‘during the occupation of the factories, the circles bought us food, gave us the necessary information’ (Santhià in Paulesu Quercioli, 1977, p. 99).

²¹ Spriano (1971, p. 121) has argued that this question was not taken any further during September 1920. The present article seeks to demonstrate the opposite point.

²² Guiducci (1977, pp. 192-3) had put forward a similar perspective, arguing that the transition from a system of Councils to the soviets can be understood in terms of the extension of the Council system across the urban territory to include ‘the variegated geography of the proletarian social life’.

²³ As illustrated, the Directive Committee included the Executive Commission of the Chamber of Labour, which consisted of a mix of communist and reformist members, see Ballone and

Labour. This condition resonates with the composition of the soviet, which ‘includes elements deriving not only from Council institutions, but also from “unions, Chambers of Labour and the general Confederation of labour”’ (Silvestrini, 2012, p. 163). Or, at least, it resonates to the extent that it illustrates a *tendency* towards the soviet, rather than its creation, because a soviet ‘is composed by delegates with *proven* revolutionary and *communist faith*’ (ibid., my emphasis).²⁴

What was the role of Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group in this situation? A year before, in 1919, Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group had put forward ideas and images that bore an affinity to the practical realization of the productive system of Councils. As Gramsci wrote in *L’Ordine Nuovo* on 8 November 1919:

[t]he worker can see himself as a producer only if he sees himself as an inseparable part of the whole labour system which is concentrated in the object being manufactured [...]. The worker will see himself as a producer if – after he has become psychologically part of a particular productive process in a particular factory (e.g. in a car plant in Turin) [...] he can now go one stage further and comprehend the whole of the Turin car-manufacturing process. *If he can comprehend Turin as one production unit characterized by the car; see a large part of the general productive activity of Turin as existing and developing simply as a result of the existence and development of the car industry; and so see the workers in these general productive activities as themselves belonging to the car industry*, for the simple reason that they create the necessary and sufficient conditions for that industry’s existence. *Starting off from this original cell, the factory, seen as a unit [...] the worker proceeds to the comprehension of ever vaster units, right up to the level of the nation itself* – which is in its entirety a gigantic apparatus of production, characterized by its exports, by the sum or wealth it exchanges for an equivalent of wealth coming in from every part of the world, from the various other gigantic apparatuses or production into which the world is divided (Gramsci, 1919e, my emphasis).²⁵

Della Valle (1992, p. 72). See also the role of Romita in the ‘Buying and Selling’ Committee later in this article.

²⁴ On the relation between Factory Councils and soviets in Gramsci, see also De Felice (1971, pp. 276-9 and 305-6), Livorsi (1979, p. 404) and Paggi (1970, pp. 240-41).

²⁵ *Syndicalism and the Councils*, now in Gramsci (1977, pp. 110-11, my emphasis).

In this excerpt, the idea of ‘the worker as a producer’²⁶ is supported by other ideas and images, like ‘*Turin as one production unit characterized by the car*’. Significantly, these ideas and images are integral to the ways in which the conciliar conception of an industrial city – particularly, Turin – is presented in the contributions that appeared in *L’Ordine Nuovo* or were written by members of the group.²⁷ In fact, in this and other²⁸ excerpts Turin is represented as an ‘inherently industrial and proletarian city’, where the urban space is adapted to productive needs (Olmo, 1998, p. 18), the social characteristics of which are strongly affected by industry – particularly,

²⁶ The theoretical, historical and political relevance of this excerpt will not be discussed here. Suffice it to say that the ‘worker as the producer’ can be connected to Gramsci’s remarks about the ‘collective worker’ in the *Prison Notebooks*, see for example Gramsci (1975, Q9§67, pp. 1137-8; in English 1971, p. 202) and Iacono (1976). Moreover, the creation of a productive system of Councils represented an inchoate form of worker’s control over production – that is, a necessary step towards the construction of a proletarian political power (a Workers’ State). See for example De Felice (1971, pp. 291-311) and Salvadori (1970).

²⁷ Notably, these images and ideas were not only held by the communists in Turin, but also in other intellectual groups (e.g. liberals such as Luigi Einaudi) and have also impacted on post-WWII historiography, e.g. Spriano (1972). For a more general discussion, see Maione (1975, pp. 335-9), Musso (1998) and Olmo (1998).

²⁸ See, for example: ‘overall, Turin is like one big single factory, whose main productivity is provided by the motor car industry’ (Gramsci [?], Romita [??] et al. 1919). The ‘[?]’ is attributed by Mazzacurati (2015, p. 406 note 43), while the present article attributes this quote to Gramsci and (at least) Romita, because they were both part of the Executive Commission of the local PSI branch at that time: see Anon (1919c) and Anon (1920a).

‘Turin [...] is the industrial city, the proletarian city, *par excellence* [...]. Turin is like one great factory: its working population conforms to a single pattern, being powerfully unified by industrial production’ (Gramsci 1920a, now in Gramsci, 1977, p. 151 and 1987, p. 387).

‘The city [of Turin] was and still is shaped as a matter of course around a single industry that “controls” all the city’s movements and regulates its outlets. Turin is the *motor car* city’ (Gramsci, 1920c, now in Gramsci, 1977, p. 296 and 1987, p. 625).

‘Turin is a city [...] given over almost exclusively to industrial production. [...] The production apparatus in Turin is strongly centralized and unified. The engineering industry [...] dominates the entire industrial field. [...] Engineering production in Turin is entirely given over to the car’ (Gramsci, 2017 [1920], pp. 41-2). This excerpt is part of an article that Gramsci sent to the Comintern journal *Communist International*, and which was published in November 1920. It appeared with some modifications in *L’Ordine Nuovo* in March 1921; for a detailed discussion of this article, see Silvestrini (2017).

See also Terracini’s comment on the development of the Factory Councils in Italy, published in the *Italian Socialist Almanac* (*Almanacco Socialista Italiano*) in 1920: “[i]n Turin, the great mass of the workers who lived and worked in the *factories, vast as cities*, [...] changed as long as the working process to which they were attached changed’ (Terracini, 1970 [1920], p. 139, my emphasis). Significantly, Terracini’s contribution was published before September 1920.

the car industry (Musso, 1998, p. 38). At the same time, the conception of an industrial city is strongly affected by a conciliar imaginary that understands its organization as a system of interconnected factories.²⁹ In this way, Turin is conceived of as a connected system of interdependent factories that are organized around the car industry – that is, a *model* of a productive system of Councils.

This model performs a descriptive and political function. On the one hand, it describes the organization of Turin as an industrial city, thus providing an empirical understanding of the social world.³⁰ The ‘factual’ aspect of this model can be illustrated by what the Executive Commission of the Turin branch of the PSI (which included Gramsci)³¹ stated in December 1919:

[o]verall, Turin is like one big single factory, whose main production is determined by the motor car industry. The working mass is strongly unified by this powerful formation of the productive system; strongly unified as a bloc that is organized and disciplined by the Chamber of Labour (Gramsci [?], Romita [??] et al., 1919).

On the other hand, the ‘Turin model’ performed a political function, because it helped the Turin workers to organize their mobilization during the occupation, thereby actualizing the political

²⁹ See for example: ‘the big industrial city [...] can only live thanks to the superior relations that connect one factory to the other’ (Leonetti, 1920).

‘Every factory that has become [...] a complete centre of communal life must develop relationships with other similar organizations’ (Togliatti, 1919).

‘A factory is united to the other factories and the whole economic life of the place with a thousand relations. It depends [...] on the factories that elaborate its raw materials and on the factories that are provided with raw materials by this factory, it also depends on all the factories in the same branch and on the economic regime of the country’ (Radek, 1919).

³⁰ However, this description is not necessarily accurate. In this respect, scholars have questioned the overarching importance that the car industry might have had to the city of Turin and, more generally, the stereotypical representation of the city that concealed a greater social complexity. In particular they have contested the idea that the city was organized around the car plants, following the ‘canonical’ model of industrialization – that is, Manchester. See for example De Felice (1971, p. 307), Musso (1998, pp. 37, 39, 42-3), Olmo (1998, pp. 13-18) and Ottaviano (1988, pp. 204-6). See a different position in Clark (1977, p. 59), who implicitly agreed with the accuracy of these descriptions. Similarly, Castronovo (1987, p. 176) compared the organization of Turin to the industrial polarization of Manchester. For the political limits of these description see Maione (1975, p. 339).

³¹ See Anon (1919c) and Anon (1920a).

aim of the Factory Council movement. That is, as will become clear, the ‘Turin model’ impacted on the organization of the productive system of Councils, informing the practices of the Turin workers during September 1920 in their attempt to take control of production and running the factories without the owners.³²

In this way, Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group – and, more questionably, the Turin working class³³ – produced a ‘revolutionary “sociology”’ that,

[f]rom the direct study of the organizational forms of production one can derive the constitutive elements for a new vision of the forms and nature of the revolutionary process (Paggi, 1970, p. 222; my emphasis).

That is, the image of an ‘industrial and proletarian Turin’ became a description of the productive organization that was needed to support the political mobilization of the Turin working class.

At the same time, this image is entangled in the idea of the Factory Councils as developed by *L’Ordine Nuovo*, since their ‘inquiry into this organizational form often ended up by fusing and intertwining with the description and analysis of the concrete social situation of the city of Turin’ (Paggi, 1970, p. 259). *L’Ordine Nuovo*’s inquiry into the Factory Councils was in turn grounded on the concrete experiences, knowledge and political perspectives of the Turin workers. In particular, Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group were interested in the workers’ thoughts about their lives and the struggles in the factories, about the ways in which factories operated and were organized, and about the political function of the workers’ institutions within the factories – that is, the Internal Commissions (e.g. Bermani, 1980/1981, pp. 15-17; Bianco in Paulesu Quercioli, 1977, p. 30; Frongia in Bermani, 1987, p. 121; Garino in Bermani, 1987, p. 91; Noce in Bermani, 1987, p. 139; Santhià 1956, p. 62, 164-7; Viglongo in Bermani, 1987, p. 41). Therefore, the ‘revolutionary sociology’ of Gramsci and the *Ordine*

³² On the question of the occupation of the factories and the workers’ control, see for example De Felice (1971, pp. 291-311) and Salvadori (1970, p. 1112-4).

³³ See Section IV.

Nuovo group – particularly, their ‘Turin model’ – “translate[d]” the elements of historical life into theoretical language’ (Gramsci, 1975, Q3§48, p. 332 and 1996, p. 52; see also Paggi, 1970, p. 260).³⁴

So far, the above discussion has merely suggested an affinity between theory and practice – that is, between the ‘model’ of a system of Councils and its concrete realization. Crucially, this article will demonstrate this affinity through employing a molecular approach. In fact, the idea of a ‘translation into theory’ – as it holds for the ‘Turin model’ – is a conceptual shortcut. That is, it stands in for a variety of imaginative and theoretical products that resulted from the ‘intense ideological activity’ of Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group, collectively organized through conversations, oral debates, pamphlets and newspapers during 1919-20. This ‘theory’ – or this ‘model’ – became a shared form of knowledge, circulating among interconnected political subjects (i.e. the metallurgical union, the workers’ movement, the PSI) and across socio-political stratifications (i.e. the vanguard intellectuals, the leaders, the militants and the working mass). In the end, this affected the realization of a system of Councils in September 1920.

III. The occupation of the factories and the molecular circulation of a ‘model’ for a system of Councils

How did the ‘Turin model’ become a shared form of knowledge? How did this shared knowledge impact on the creation of the worker’s management system in September 1920?³⁵ The point is to understand to what extent Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group

³⁴ Significantly, Maione (1975, pp. 22-4 and 38) has questioned the extent to which the *Ordine Nuovo* group succeeded in interpreting the workers’ exigencies and thereby effectively ‘translating’ the elements of their historical life. For a critique of Maione’s position, see for example De Felice (1971, pp. 360-4) and Varni (1974, pp. 94-7).

³⁵ This is at odds with those scholars who have argued that, in Gramsci’s work, the productive system of Councils was only a theoretical sketch devoid of any practical application, see for example De Felice (1971, pp. 305-7) and, implicitly, Mazzacurati (2016, p. 89). On the contrary, this article agrees with Paggi’s observations (1970, pp. 258-9), according to which the Factory Councils were the *concrete* form of a political process, rather than an abstract hypothesis. Moreover, it further develops these observations by considering the productive system of Councils as the historical expression of concrete social, political and ideological processes, rather than merely as an abstract hypothesis without historical application.

ideologically ‘directed’ the practices of the Turin workers. In this respect, the present Section will explore the hypothesis of a ‘molecular’ – though not necessarily immediate – influence of the ‘Turin model’ on the realization of a productive system of Councils. Moreover, it will illustrate the specifically molecular circulation of ideas through ‘hierarchies of culture’ which ‘reinforced’ the *loose relationships* between the model and the concrete organization of the productive system of Councils.

During September 1920, in fact, the productive system of Councils was realized to a large extent independently of the actual intervention of Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group – in other words, they did not direct its creation and coordination. Instead, the productive system of Councils resulted from the complex political and organizational dynamics initiated between the Turin branch of FIOM and the local Chamber of Labour, with the further intervention from the local branch of the PSI.³⁶ And while many of the people who were part of these institutions were either close or belonged to *L’Ordine Nuovo*, this fact cannot account for the development of these dynamics. Although the local branch of FIOM was practically controlled by the Factory Council movement,³⁷ which was conceivably very close to the *Ordine Nuovo* group,³⁸ the situation at the Chamber of Labour was a different matter. The composition of the Executive Commission presented a balance between communist and reformist members: the majority was communist, whereas the secretary – Luigi Chignoli – and the minority were reformists (Ballone and Della Valle, 1992, pp. 71-2; Spriano, 1971, pp. 107-8, note 5, and 118, note 2).

³⁶ For a detailed account of these dynamics see for example Borghi (1921) and Williams (1975, pp. 245-50).

³⁷ See for example Garino in Bermani (1987, pp. 91-2), Garino and Revelli (2011 [1982], pp. 101-2), Montagnana (1952, p. 118), Pillon (1982, p. 8643) and Spriano (1971, pp. 82 and p. 108, note 1).

³⁸ See for example Garino in Bermani (1987, p. 87), Santhià (1956, pp. 164-8) and Spriano (1971, p. 49). Spriano (1971, p. 57 note 2) also noted the close collaboration between the Turin branch of FIOM and the *Ordine Nuovo* group. Nevertheless, the extent to which the Factory Council movement was influenced or controlled by the *Ordine Nuovo* group – at least during spring/summer 1920 – is a matter of debate: see for example Clark (1977, pp. 136-8), Maione (1975, pp. 38-9, and p. 86 note 73) and Viglono in Bermani (1987, pp. 49-50).

Moreover, during the first days of the occupation, a number of Factory Councils ‘spontaneously’ established connections between different plants of the same factory, as well as among different factories – i.e. for the exchange of products and supply of raw materials. For example, the Factory Council of the Moncenisio Works coordinated the exchange of materials between the two plants of Condove and Turin (Anon., 1920b; Anon., 1920c). Moreover, it established a connection with the Factory Council of the Garavini Company, in order to receive raw materials (Anon., 1920b). Notably, these connections were autonomously established prior to 5 September 1920 – the ‘Red Sunday’ – when Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group held their first meetings at the occupied factories. As mentioned, a central organ that coordinated the different factories, and thereby different Factory Councils, was gradually set up only during mid-September.

Nevertheless, the creation and coordination of a productive system of Councils can be traced back to the conciliar ideas and imaginaries presented by Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group. From this angle, dispersed elements of ‘ideological direction’ can explain the ‘spontaneity’ of a social practice. That is, the realization of an inchoate system of Councils was influenced by the intellectual production of Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group during 1919-20.³⁹ This influence must not be understood as the mechanical application of theoretical-imaginative resources to social reality. Rather, this influence should be considered part of the ‘intense ideological activity’ through which (cf. Q8§195, cited at the start of this article), a collective will ‘generated an action that was coordinated and simultaneous in time and geographical space’.⁴⁰

³⁹ This is at odds with Boggs’ contention that ‘[t]he factory councils that actually appeared in Piedmont during the *Ordine Nuovo* years *never* approximated the theoretical prescription formulated by Gramsci’ (Boggs, 1974, p. 180, my emphasis).

⁴⁰ This is not to overlook the role that an organizational structure plays in the ‘generation’ of coordinated activity. Ideas do not spread by themselves; rather their diffusion requires an apparatus. However, an analysis of the organization and diffusion of ideas (and practices) should consider *how* these ideas (and practices) are spread through the apparatus, what tactics or strategies of diffusion are involved, etc., because the same apparatus can spread ideas in different ways.

In this respect, the practical realization of the productive system of Councils conceivably includes traces of the ideological influence of Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group. On the eve of the occupation of the factories (28 August 1920), Gramsci wrote:

The system of Councils [...] can only be represented *by transferring the complex of industrial relations* that link one job crew to another, one shop to another in a factory, *onto the level of an entire industrial zone* (Gramsci, 1920c, my emphasis).⁴¹

The idea of interlinking an entire industrial zone so that it functions like one large entity resonated in a report published in the Piedmontese edition of *Avanti!* (the PSI newspaper) a few days later, during the occupation of the factories (8 September 1920). In particular, the report asserted that ‘the factories of the Turin workers have become like one single factory’ (Anon., 1920e). This excerpt implies that ‘the complex of industrial relations’ in a factory has been transferred onto the ‘city as one production unit’. This suggests that the image of ‘Turin, one single factory’ – which is integral to the ‘Turin model’ and thus part of the ideological debate before September 1920 – circulated from theory (August 28) to reality (September 8).

The ideological influence of this model on the practical realization of the system of Councils can be illustrated from another perspective: that of specific people who participated in the elaboration of conciliar ideas and imaginaries, and whose role ‘on the ground’ was fundamental during September 1920. For example, Giuseppe Romita⁴² was central to the organization of the productive system of Councils, because he was appointed to the coordination of the ‘Buying and Selling Committee’ (Anon., 1920f). Therefore, he likely contributed to ‘transferring the complex of industrial relations’ from the factories to the ‘city as one production unit’, because he

⁴¹ *On the L'Ordine Nuovo Programme*, now in Gramsci (1977, p. 295, my emphasis).

⁴² Although he was a member of the PSI, Romita was neither a communist nor necessarily aligned with Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group: see Andreucci and Detti (1978a, pp. 375-80) and Williams (1975, pp. 247-8). Significantly, his political activity was characterized by a long-standing collaboration with the Turin cooperative movement, see for example Anon (1919b) and Anon (1920g).

centralized the internal necessities of different individual factories⁴³ at the city level, into the productive system of Councils. At the same time, like Gramsci, he was a member of the Executive Committee of the Turin branch of the PSI from September 1919 to February 1920 (Anon., 1919c; Anon., 1920a). He therefore played a role in the elaboration and circulation of the image of ‘Turin, one single factory’. As previously noted, during December 1919 the Turin Executive Commission of the PSI published a call that stated:

Overall, Turin is like one big single factory, whose main productivity is provided by the motor car industry (Gramsci [?], Romita [??] et al., 1919).

Another significant episode involves Giovanni Parodi.⁴⁴ Parodi was a metallurgical worker, a member of the Turin Executive Commission of the PSI between February and August 1920 (Ferri, 1958, p. 260) and, above all, the secretary of the Factory Council / Internal Commission⁴⁵ at the Fiat Centro (Spriano, 1964, p. 67) – that is, the factory that would become the model and inspiration for the entire occupation (Montagnana, 1952, p. 143). In particular, the episode concerns the exchange of know-how and material between the Fiat Centro and the Lancia factories. In Parodi’s words:

with the aim of simplifying the working process, the Workshop [Factory] Council deliberated over sending a Commission of Technicians to the Lancia Automobile Factory, in order to share the secrets [of the working process] of different factories. [...] The Internal Commission of Lancia was immediately in harmony with the Internal Commission of the Fiat Centro. [...] A cordial

⁴³ i.e. the purchase and supply of raw materials.

⁴⁴ See his short biography in Andreucci and Detti (1978a, pp. 54-6).

⁴⁵ Strictly speaking, the Fiat Centro did not have a Factory Council, rather an Internal Commission which was elected by the Committee of the Workshop Delegates of the Fiat Centro; see for example Parodi, Aprà, Bordigari et al. (1920). Nevertheless, Parodi (1930) used ‘Internal Commission’, ‘Factory Council’, ‘Workers’ Factory Committee’ and ‘Workshop Council’ interchangeably. The present article moreover considers Factory Councils and Internal Commissions as equivalent, because it does not differentiate between the contribution of Internal Commissions or Factory Councils during the occupation. Furthermore, as Musso has noted, during the Red Biennium ‘the denomination and distinction between the two organs [Internal Commission and Factory Council] are sometimes very uncertain and the labour disputes were determined by the real competencies of the internal representatives rather than by the form of the representative organ’ (Musso, 1980, p. 197).

exchange of assistance thus started, not only in terms of sharing working secrets, but also [...] [in terms of] the exchange of specialized workforce, raw materials, handmade products, accessories and other things (Parodi, 1930, p. 646, my parenthesis).

Interestingly, the ‘Turin model’ had already circulated at the Lancia factory – particularly, in the form of ideas and images of ‘conciliar interconnections’. In September 1919, the day after Gramsci discussed the Factory Councils organization with the workers of that factory,⁴⁶ the Lancia Internal Commission (and soon-to-be Factory Council) held a meeting with the workers, addressing the ‘connection of the Factory Councils into higher units right up to the national Council’ (Anon., 1919e). In this respect, the Lancia workers were conceivably invited to adopt a ‘producer psychology’, and to ‘start off from the factory, and include vaster units, right up to the level of the nation’. In turn, the collaboration with the Factory Council of the Fiat Centro suggests that the discussions at the meeting in 1919 resulted in a practical implementation.

The situation is similar for the Factory Council of the Fiat Centro. Available documentation suggests on the one hand that Parodi was central to creating concrete ‘conciliar interconnections’ in September 1920. On the other hand, in the years prior to this, he was also involved in the elaboration of conciliar ideas and images that crystallized in the ‘Turin model’. As Maurizio Garino⁴⁷ – one of the protagonists of the Turin Factory Council movement – has recalled:

Gramsci created a Committee for the Study of the Factory Councils. Already at the end of 1918, beginning of 1919. There was me [Garino], Ferrero, Montagnana, Parodi, Viglongo. [...] We set up the Factory Councils from there (Garino and Revelli, 2011 [1982], pp. 92-3, my parenthesis).⁴⁸

In this respect,

⁴⁶ ‘Tonight [...] the workers of the Lancia Works are convening [...] to discuss the nomination of the Workshop Delegates. Comrade Gramsci will intervene’ (Anon., 1919d).

⁴⁷ See a short biography in Andreucci and Detti (1975b, pp. 439-41).

⁴⁸ See also Garino in Paulesu Quercioli (1977, pp. 64-6).

on a theoretical level [...] in that Committee for the Study of the Councils [...] we elaborated the system of Councils by taking inspiration from the soviet [...]. We elaborated the construction of this system in Turin (pp. 103-4).

Garino does not elaborate further on the ways in which the Committee's theory of a (Turin) system of Councils was inspired by 'the soviet'. In this respect, Karl Radek's observations on the 'objective' organization underpinning the soviet – which were published in *L'Ordine Nuovo* at the end of 1919 – can conceivably fill this interpretative void:

[a] factory is united to the other factories and the whole economic life of the place with a thousand relations. It depends [...] on the factories that elaborate its raw materials and from the factories that this factory provides raw materials to; it also depends on all the factories in the same branch and on the economic regime of the country (Radek, 1919).

Notably, Radek's words also shed light on what Parodi – along with the Executive Commission of the Fiat Centro Factory Council – wrote in *L'Ordine Nuovo* in March 1920 :

the Workshop Council, [its] forces and [its] activities [...] must converge towards the construction of a system of local soviets. [...] The ways in which *different factories proceed in mutual agreement* is a source of cohesion and proletarian order for the Councils, which are the fundamental elements on which the structure of the local soviet must be based (Parodi, Aprà, Bordigari et al., 1920, my emphasis).

In this way, Parodi not only contributed to the *practical* implementation of a productive system of Councils that connected some Turin factories during the occupation, but, along with Gramsci, also provided its theoretical basis by contributing to the ideas and images of a Turin system of Councils that understood its organization in terms of a network of interconnected factories.

These 'molecular supports' help in assessing the ideological influence that Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group held over the concrete realization of a productive system of Councils. And yet, they do not account for the initial 'spontaneous' dimension of the work-

ers' management system. In fact, during 1920 *L'Ordine Nuovo* lost its 'ideological grip' over the Turin workers' movement, with Gramsci at times quite isolated from the other members of the group (Clark, 1977, pp. 91-3, 94-5, 110, 132, 136, 138, 140-46, 148, 156, 162; Spriano, 1971, p. 115). It appears then that the links between the 'Turin model' and its 'practical realization' are quite loose.

Nevertheless, these loose links do not necessarily undermine the hypothesis of ideological influence. The question of *hierarchies of culture* is significant in this respect. Even though this expression was not developed during the Red Biennium,⁴⁹ it nevertheless took on a particular meaning during summer of 1919:

it is necessary to foster the formation of hierarchies of culture, the formation of an aristocracy of vanguard communists. [...] They will [...] be appointed with the task of popularizing revolutionary concepts, developing them among the local masses by adapting these concepts to the different psychologies (Gramsci, 1919a).⁵⁰

In this respect, 'hierarchies of culture' encompass the ideological and social functions of the Communist vanguard intellectuals, leaders and militants vis-a-vis the working mass.⁵¹ This implies that

in every factory, the most advanced elements ([...] the members and the supporters of the Party) start with the movement. They must be the first to assemble and prepare the work; they must call for a factory meeting, and they must explain the basic concepts underpinning the new form of Internal Commission to the masses (Gramsci [?], 1919b).⁵²

It appears that this way of organizing the circulation of knowledge was quite effective. Looking back at the gatherings and assemblies of summer in autumn 1919, Gramsci noted that:

⁴⁹ In this respect, Gramsci had already introduced the question of the 'spiritual hierarchies', see Manacorda (1970, pp. 33, 45).

⁵⁰ See a similar emphasis on 'conscientization' in the assemblies in Gramsci (1919d).

⁵¹ Compare this to the emphasis on the Workshop Delegates 'as conscious workers [who] will undoubtedly win authority over the masses' (Gramsci et al., 1919, my parenthesis), now in Gramsci (1977, p. 115, my parenthesis). For a general discussion on the 'hierarchies of culture', see for example Manacorda (1970, pp. 43-6).

⁵² The attribution to Gramsci is by Mazzacurati (2015, p. 402, note 8).

listeners immediately demonstrated that they mastered the central idea, because they inferred the consequences as well as the precise practical inferences that were relevant to their own factory with its particular mechanisms of production (Gramsci, 1919c).

To what extent could this form of organization convey the theories and imaginaries of the Councils? And to what extent did these theories and imaginaries become a form of shared knowledge, thus influencing the realization of the productive system of Councils on a mass level? These ‘revolutionary concepts across hierarchies of culture’ were disseminated during the expansion of the Council movement in Turin (July–December 1919).⁵³ Interestingly, during this time the theory of the Factory Councils and thus the ‘Turin model’ were developed within and beyond *L’Ordine Nuovo*, which refined their theoretical, imaginative and practical aspects.⁵⁴ Moreover, the ‘Turin model’ was also spreading along with the ‘revolutionary concepts’. As already illustrated the idea of ‘Turin as one production unit characterized by the car’ appeared in the 8 November 1919 issue of *L’Ordine Nuovo*, in an article entitled *Syndicalism and the Councils*. At the same time, conciliar images were repeated within theoretical remarks about the system of Councils. In fact, this system represents the social leadership of all the workers,

as realized in *organs of production* (work-crew, workshop, factory, union of the factories in a given industry, *union of the productive enterprises in a city*, [...] a province, a region, the nation, the world) (Gramsci et al., 1919, my emphasis).⁵⁵

This excerpt, which includes the image of the ‘unification of the factories at the city level’, is part of the ‘Declaration of Principles’ in the *Programme of the Workshop Delegates* – that is, the political manifesto of the Factory Councils. This *Programme* was written by a ‘Committee for the Study of the Programme of the Workshop

⁵³ For a more detailed account, see for example Clark (1977, pp. 79-88), Mazzacurati (2015) and Williams (1975, pp. 94-136).

⁵⁴ A number of suggestions are in Mazzacurati (2015, pp. 349, 351-2, 357-8, 362, 369, 370-1).

⁵⁵ Now in Gramsci (1977, p. 116, my emphasis).

Delegates⁵⁶ at the end of October 1919 (Anon., 1919f). Gramsci was not part of the Committee, although he took part in collaborations with it.⁵⁷ At the same time, the Committee comprised members of the Internal Commissions, some of whom were close to *L'Ordine Nuovo*.⁵⁸ From this angle, as Gramsci notes,

the project [...] for the programme to be undertaken was studied and prepared by the workers themselves in factory meetings, under the guidance and leadership of the communist elements (Gramsci, 2017 [1920], p. 49).

On 1 November 1919 the assembly of the Turin branch of FIOM (which represented 16,000 members) voted in favour of adopting this 'Declaration', thus committing to extend the already-existing Factory Councils. The majority of workers were thus persuaded by the metalworkers' vanguard, who supported the Council movement and were aligned with *L'Ordine Nuovo*. Significantly, this 'Declaration' was not only discussed in front of the workers, who gathered at the *Teatro Torinese* that day; it was also circulated from one worker to another prior to the opening of the assembly (Anon., 1919g; Spriano, 1971, p. 82 note 1). Then it was further circulated in the following weeks, in the 8 November issue of *L'Ordine Nuovo*, and its later reprints. In this way, in less than a month, about 10,000 copies of the *Programme* were spread across the Turin factories (Anon., 1919h), to the point that in the end there

⁵⁶ Notably, Mazzacurati (2015, pp. 379 and 405 note 32) has confused this 'Committee for the Study of the Programme of the Workshop Delegates' with the 'Committee for the Study of the Factory Councils'. However, the former was a provisional Committee created at the end of October 1919, see also Clark (1977, p. 84 note 43), whereas the latter was created at the end of 1918-beginning of 1919, as illustrated in Garino and Revelli (2011 [1980], pp. 92-3).

⁵⁷ In this respect, the existing literature has discussed the 'Gramscian style and spirit' of the *Programme*, see Williams (1975, pp. 123, 132-3), or has directly attributed the *Programme* to Gramsci, see for example Gramsci (1987, p. 311).

⁵⁸ In particular, Giovanni Boero and Enea Matta: see Anon (1919f). On their relation to *L'Ordine Nuovo*, see respectively Andreucci and Detti (1975a, pp. 332-3; 1977, pp. 369-70). Another member of the Committee was Felice Bordigari, who was part of the Executive Commission of the Fiat Centro Factory Council and, along with Parodi, contributed to the circulation of the 'Turin model', see Parodi, Aprà, Bordigari et al. (1920).

were only a few hundred left.⁵⁹ Notably, the 8 November issue of *L'Ordine Nuovo* and its reprints included *Syndicalism and the Councils*, which formulated the image of 'Turin as one production unit characterized by the car' – that is the idea of Turin as a model for a productive system of Councils.

Crucially, this shows the magnitude as well as the extreme detail with which images and theories about the productive system of Councils circulated across 'hierarchies of culture'. In particular, this episode explains the ways in which ideas and images were organized by interconnected political subjects and circulated across a stratification of 'hierarchies of culture' through informal discussions and, on a mass level, through the dense network of proletarian press distribution in Turin. More generally, the argument in this Section has provided a glimpse of the above-cited 'enormous number of books, pamphlets, newspaper and journal articles, conversations and oral debates' that are needed to 'generate an action that is coordinated and simultaneous in the time and space' (therefore emphasizing the importance of molecular processes of collective will organization in its *historically absolute dimension*).

IV. The articulation between hegemony and the direction of spontaneity: the molecular circulation of knowledge and the question of emancipation

So far, this article has approached the 'intense ideological activity' that 'gave birth' to the Turin system of Councils in terms of molecular processes of knowledge circulation across hierarchies of culture. Significantly, these discussions can be used to explore the theoretical and political lexicon of the *Prison Notebooks*, particularly addressing the emancipatory stakes implicit in the articulation between hegemony and the direction of spontaneity – that is, the division between leaders and led, and the strategies to overcome it within a context of persistent hierarchies. At the same time, a conceptual exploration of this articulation from a molecular perspective also provides a theoretical framework for historical analysis. This

⁵⁹ On 22 November 1919, in fact, a brief sentence at the bottom of the last page of *L'Ordine Nuovo* states: 'A few hundred copies of the past 8 November issue are still left in our office'.

framework highlights some aspects of the emancipatory politics of the Red Biennium, and points to its limits – particularly, the ways in which persistent hierarchies in the Turin context hindered processes aimed at healing the leaders-led fracture.

Scholars who have discussed the pedagogy-hegemony relation in the *Prison Notebooks*⁶⁰ have observed that Gramsci relates the disparity between leaders (intellectuals) and masses (subalterns) to their respective degree of critical awareness – that is, to the *different cultural levels* existing between them (Baldacci, 2016, p. 146; 2017, p. 33; Urbani, 1967, p. 27). This is why the question of ‘hierarchies of culture’ can be considered central. As discussed in Section III, the purpose – and the necessity – of these cultural hierarchies is directly related to the social and ideological function of the vanguard communists, who, on the basis of what workers thought about their lives and struggles in the factory, ‘popularise[d] the revolutionary concepts, [...] [and] develop[ed] them among the local masses’ (Gramsci, 1919a, my parenthesis).

Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group thus viewed these hierarchies as inevitable but also functional to the objectives of the workers’ movements – although only temporarily. In this way,

it is the pursuit of a “*single cultural environment*” [...] that [...] is revealed in Gramsci’s commitment. *L’Ordine Nuovo* and the experience of the Councils represent the greatest moment of tension around this problem (Broccoli, 1972, p. 45, my emphasis).⁶¹

From this stance the creation of this

‘single cultural environment’ [...] will be possible to the extent that the masses-intellectuals dialectic relation will be able to express the translation of political claims into theoretical language. That language is intended to flow within the masses, thus becoming good sense and universal conception (Broccoli, 1972, p. 4).

⁶⁰ The overlap between pedagogy and hegemony in Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks* has been extensively discussed by Gramsci scholars, see for example Baldacci (2016; 2017), Baratta (2007, pp. 195-209), Borg, Buttigieg and Mayo (2002), Broccoli (1972), Buttigieg (2005), Mayo (2014), Manacorda (1970) and Urbani (1967).

⁶¹ See also Broccoli (1972, p. 54-6).

The ‘popularization of revolutionary concepts through hierarchies of culture’ thus represents one way in which ‘a theoretical language that interprets the political experience of the masses flows within the masses’, thereby creating a ‘single cultural environment’. In this way, following his experience with the Factory Councils, Gramsci became aware that cultural hierarchies must be levelled, in order to ‘create the conditions in which the division [between leaders and led] is no longer necessary’ (Gramsci, 1975, Q15§4, p. 1752; 1971, p. 144). Crucially, establishing a hegemonic relation between these groups appears as the only possible way of levelling hierarchies, thus creating a ‘single cultural environment’. In other words, hegemony might work towards forms of social emancipation that challenge the fracture between intellectuals and subalterns – however this is only possible under one specific condition. That is,

only the connection between the hegemonic relationship with the *philosophy of praxis* can start this developmental dynamic. This is because this philosophy is intrinsically connected with a project of emancipation of the subaltern social groups, and it aims to go beyond the division between leaders and led (Baldacci, 2016, p. 157).

Assuming that the philosophy of praxis is the unification of theory and practice (Frosini, 2009), a ‘project of emancipation of the subaltern social groups’ thus has a theoretical and practical character. At the same time, the philosophy of praxis ‘translates the elements of the (subalterns’) historical life into theory’, guiding political activity within a (subaltern) context.⁶² From this perspective, in this ‘emancipatory project’ the theories formulated by intellectuals are inspired and indeed *developed within* subaltern contexts as well as *from* the experiences and knowledge of subaltern groups. That is, theory accounts for the concrete conditions of subaltern contexts, thus providing an empirical understanding of these social contexts. Moreover the empirical understanding of

⁶² See a general discussion in Green (2002, pp. 8, 19-20).

these contexts is directly related to the formulation of political strategies whose aim is to transform these contexts.

In this way, the combination of theory and practice results in a conception of the world that offers a *wider understanding of the material environment*. From this angle, the ideological and social function of the intellectual boils down to the ideological direction of spontaneous philosophies – that is, spontaneous conceptions of the world.⁶³ Indeed, as Nicola Badaloni has argued, in the *Prison Notebooks*

spontaneity is a set of daily experiences that are already guided [*illuminato* in the original Italian] and unified by a traditional philosophy; the “conscious direction” is the substitution of this spontaneous philosophy with a more articulated and unifying one which springs from a *comprehensive vision of the material environment* where that so-called spontaneity is located (Badaloni, 1973, p. 84, my parenthesis and emphasis).

Moreover, considering that “‘pure’ spontaneity does not exist in history’ (Gramsci, 1975, Q3§48, p. 328; 1996, p. 48), the whole cultural and social life of subaltern groups is organized around a particular balance between spontaneity and direction which characterises the sources of meaning of their experiences as well as the criteria that inform their actions. In other words, the sense of their experiences and the guide to their actions is directly linked to a particular ‘philosophy’ that, as Cirese (1982 [1976], p. 238) has noted, is at the same time adherent to their social condition. In particular, this ‘spontaneous’ philosophy is never fully spontaneous, and thus it is a worldview that provides at least some (local) awareness of the surrounding environment.

Significantly, this balance between spontaneity and direction has political implications:⁶⁴ it is indicative of a more or less developed

⁶³ For the equivalence between a ‘spontaneous philosophy’ and a ‘spontaneous conception of the world’ see Cirese (1982 [1976], p. 240) and Gramsci (1975, Q11§12, p. 1375; 1971, p. 323).

⁶⁴ Notably, the *Letters from Prison* (1994) further discuss spontaneity, although from a pedagogical perspective. In particular, Gramsci considers the contrast between spontaneity and authoritarianism in the education of children, see for example Manacorda (1976, pp. 78-80, 88-9, 91, 95, 114, 116, 119, 139, 148-9, 174-5, 241) and Massucco Costa (1958, pp. 200-01).

political consciousness.⁶⁵ As Gramsci has argued ‘spontaneity is [...] characteristic of the “history of subaltern classes” and, especially, of the most marginal and peripheral elements of these classes’ (Gramsci, 1975, Q3§48, p. 328; 1996, p. 49). In particular, spontaneity is the earliest moment of their political consciousness (Del Roio, 2009b, p. 795) – that is, the germinal form of their organized ‘collective will’ (Nardone, 1971, p. 58). Spontaneity is thus an aspect of those uprisings, mobilizations, social movements, and so on, that are not (or not completely) organized in a coherent, planned and centralized way. From this stance, spontaneity points to socio-political phenomena that are not (fully) influenced and informed by pre-existing theoretical elaborations (Del Roio, 2009a, p. 794). Conversely, ‘direction’ is a specific mode of exerting power that is characterized by consent and thus hegemony, and that commands ‘spontaneous’ socio-political phenomena (Filippini, 2009, pp. 219-20). At the same time, it is also one way of providing these spontaneous phenomena with a ‘theoretical consciousness’ (Badaloni, 1973, p. 83).

The ideological direction of spontaneous conceptions of the world thus implies the provision of a ‘theoretical consciousness’ to the experiences of subaltern groups as well as to the criteria that inform their action. This is by no means the erasure of spontaneity. As Gramsci argued in his evaluation of the Red Biennium,

[in] the Turin movement [...] [the] element of ‘spontaneity’ was not neglected, much less disdained: it was *educated*, it was given a direction, it was cleansed of everything extraneous that could contaminate it, in order to unify it [*renderlo omogeneo* in the original Italian] by means of modern theory but in a living, historically effective manner (Gramsci 1975, Q3§48, p. 330; 1996, p. 50, my parenthesis).

⁶⁵ From this angle, Gramsci’s discussions have critically re-adapted Lenin’s reflections on spontaneity and consciousness in *What Is To Be Done?* (1905). Lenin’s reflections were in turn part of a broader debate involving many other Marxist intellectuals at the beginning of the twentieth century (e.g. Luxemburg, Sorel, Bernstein, etc.) which focused on the interplay between historical necessity and historical contingency in the transition from capitalism to socialism. For a discussion on Gramsci’s interpretation of Lenin and the broader debate among the Marxist intellectuals, see for example Badaloni (1973, pp. 75-82) and Liguori (2011, pp. 60-61).

From this viewpoint, the direction of the intellectual produces an ‘effective’ homogenization between ‘spontaneous’ philosophies and more organized forms of culture. The result is the creation of a ‘single cultural environment’ where the distance between leaders (intellectuals) and led (subalterns) is potentially overcome.

Therefore, hegemonic projects for the emancipation of subaltern groups have two distinctive features. Firstly, they have an intrinsic *theoretical and practical* character. Secondly, they imply a dialectic between *spontaneity* and *direction* that *homogenizes* spontaneous and ‘theoretically conscious’ conceptions of the world. These emancipatory projects thus spring from *the concrete experiences of subaltern groups*, and they are integral to the creation of a *single cultural environment*. In other words, political projects that are rooted in subaltern socio-cultural contexts, and which direct the spontaneity of subaltern groups, can potentially transform ‘hierarchies of culture’ into a ‘single cultural environment’, thus developing an emancipatory hegemonic relation where the distance between leaders and led is (potentially) overcome. From this stance, as the case of the Factory Council movement in Turin illustrates, *processes of the molecular circulation of knowledge* are central to understanding this aspect of social emancipation.

In fact, as already illustrated, Gramsci, the *Ordine Nuovo* group and, more generally, the Turin vanguard intervened in the assemblies and mobilizations of the Turin workers. In particular, they sought to ‘popularise revolutionary concepts’ among the workers – a form of intervention that is integral to the creation of a ‘single cultural environment’⁶⁶ as well as to the realization of the system of Councils during the occupation of the factories. Crucially, this ‘popularization of revolutionary concepts’ is also understood in terms of the molecular circulation of conciliar ideas and images across hierarchies of culture. Therefore, the ways in which knowledge circulated across hierarchies of culture during the Red

⁶⁶ As illustrated, the ‘popularization of revolutionary concepts’ represents one way in which ‘a theoretical language flows within the masses’, thus contributing towards creating a ‘single cultural environment’, see Broccoli (1975, p. 4).

Biennium were a determining factor for the mass organizational activity of the workers in September 1920, when the ‘Turin model’ was implemented. From this perspective, the horizontality of practices was a result of processes of knowledge circulation that fostered mass mobilization across hierarchies, particularly in the first days of the occupation.⁶⁷ This conceivably ‘favor[ed] the molecular transition from the groups that are led to the leading group’ (Gramsci, 1975, Q8§191, p. 1056; 2007, p. 345, my parenthesis), contributing to the emancipatory objective in which the fracture between leaders and led can be healed.⁶⁸

But what are the political limits of hegemonic projects of emancipation? In particular, what are the political limits of Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group’s political activities during the Red Biennium? The way in which Gramsci understands the question of hierarchies is particularly significant in this respect. As Solinas (2017, pp. 335-7) has argued, this question is implicit and nevertheless very important in Gramsci’s work and political experiences. Here,

[t]he organic unity of classes, the concentration in a collective, active and directive subject who gathers the latent movements of the will and expresses them. This is the ground where hierarchies (positively) emerge, as an organic element of a plurality becoming one. [...] The most developed hierarchy represents something like the voluntary self-disciplining that the class ‘gives’ to itself, and it is made of an organic relationship between whole and parts, between direction and the organism that expresses this direction (Solinas, 2017, pp. 338-9).

Hierarchies are therefore central to the organization of the workers within a political subject and to their strategies of emancipation. In particular, as Revelli (1988, pp. 114-8, 120-21) and Sbarberi (1988, pp. 17-18) have noted, the integration of individuals within a functional hierarchy is central to the abolition of the

⁶⁷ In this respect, Paggi’s considerations on the Factory Councils can be extended to the system of Councils: ‘[t]he council is [...] an attempt to provide a tool that is adequate to mass action’ (Paggi, 1970, p. 255). On the mass character of the occupation, see also Soave (1965, p. 175)

⁶⁸ As Galli has argued ‘the generalized participation, the mass participation, in the collective organization of production, under the perspective of the complete overcoming of the relation between leaders and led [...] is at the centre of the Council experience’ (Galli, 1970, p. 206).

leaders-led division. In this way, equality is subsumed to the more compelling question of order.⁶⁹ This relation between equality and order is not only an aspect of Gramsci's theoretical writings, but is also implicit in the experience of the Factory Councils:

the factory council [...] presents [...] a body that is conciliated and homogeneous in its internal composition. It traces the productive units of the factory (the work-crew, the workshop, the whole factory), with *an organization that is not of an egalitarian type*, rather it is highly diversified, because *it brings about a "hierarchy of competences and powers"* that encompasses rank-and-file, "N.C.O's", "officer corps" and "general staff" (Sbarberi, 1986, p. 32, my emphasis).⁷⁰

In particular, the Factory Councils assume the capitalist division of labour in the factory as 'objective' and 'natural', so that 'old' hierarchies are not disrupted (Tomasetta, 1971, p. 222). That is, the 'old' hierarchies are re-considered or, better, re-purposed to serve the objective of effective emancipation (Ciliberto, 2020 [1989], p. 130). At the same time though, assuming this division of labour and hierarchies, along with their projection at the city level or, more generally, at the level of society, is highly problematic. As Revelli has pointed out,

in this context [of society organized as a factory], the concept of equality is rendered completely devoid of meaning, and is replaced by the alternative concept of solidarity. In a universe dominated by the variety of functionally hierarchical roles [...] people can only be united – not equal (Revelli, 1988, p. 121, my parenthesis).

This article is not in complete agreement with Revelli's idea of an equality completely stripped of meaning, which is perhaps too extreme. In fact, the experience of the Factory Councils represented an attempt to create a 'single cultural environment' whereby the distance between leaders and led was overcome. At the same time, the aporia remains: an equality that is subordinated to hierarchies

⁶⁹ On the centrality of the question of order in Gramsci's early work see also Ciliberto (2020 [1989], pp. 117-38).

⁷⁰ See also Sbarberi (1998, p. 55).

remains only a partial equality (Sbarberi, 1988, p. 18). In fact, spontaneity in the Turin assemblies and mobilizations was organized through cultural hierarchies – that is, according to the ideological direction of a political vanguard. As mentioned, the creation and management of the Factory Councils resulted from the mass organizational activity of the workers, which was in turn ideologically directed by Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group during the Red Biennium. That is, horizontal practices resulted from a political process of knowledge circulation epitomized by the assemblies and mobilizations of 1919-20, fostering the practical participation of workers across persistent hierarchies. Nevertheless, the political perspective that emerged from these assemblies and mobilizations was not necessarily the result of a *collective elaboration*. In other words, it was not necessarily elaborated outside of the circles of the *Ordine Nuovo* group, and thus of the Turin vanguard. As Garino has recalled:

those of the *Ordine Nuovo* were a group of intellectuals, although they came among us workers to see the concrete problems. [...] Firstly they thoroughly inquired about the concreteness of each problem. And who did they ask information from? Not the managers, no, rather the workers, those who had calluses on their hands (Garino in Bermani, 1987, p. 91).

More generally, the communist vanguard in Turin gathered and developed the workers' information, opinions, perspectives and proposals into encompassing intellectual frameworks that provided the workers with a comprehensive understanding of the material environment. That is, the communist vanguard produced a theoretical consciousness out of the concrete experiences and knowledge of the workers, thus developing the workers' critical awareness such as to 'favor the [molecular] transition from the groups that are led to the leading group' (Gramsci, 1975 and 2007, Q8§191; loc. cit.: 'molecular' added above the line by Gramsci). But still, the workers were predominantly a source of information, with the ideas and images that underpinned the theory of the Councils, and likely the 'Turin model', elaborated within *L'Ordine Nuovo*. In this sense, the underpinnings of the theory were predominately developed by

Gramsci and the other editors (or, if anything, by the vanguard of the Turin workers, as Parodi's case has illustrated).⁷¹

This is further confirmed by other protagonists of the Turin Factory Council movement, such as Battista Santhià:⁷²

Gramsci and Togliatti [...] [w]anted the workers of the different factories to inform them about the different types of works in progress, the tools for the plants, the general organization of production [...]. The outcome of this work soon appeared in the first issue of the *Ordine Nuovo* when the journal discussed the problem of the development of the internal commissions [...] to reach the factory councils (Santhià, 1956, pp. 62-3, my parenthesis).

Although ideas and images were collectively socialized through ideological direction – or, through the ‘popularization of revolutionary concepts’ – theoretical work was arguably the expression of the communist vanguard (see also Bermani, 1980, pp. 15-17; Bianco in Paulesu Quercioli, 1977, pp. 30-31; Garino in Bermani, 1987, p. 91; Leonetti, 1975, pp. 15-16; Noce in Bermani, 1987, p. 139; Santhià, 1956, pp. 164-8; Viglongo in Bermani, 1987, p. 41). During the Red Biennium the fracture between intellectuals and subalterns was therefore overcome at the level of practice, but remained unresolved at the level of the intellectual division of labour.

⁷¹ This does not imply that the rank-and-file workers did not contribute at all to the discussions in *L'Ordine Nuovo* or the Turin workers' movement. In this respect, workers *did* provide contributions, e.g. Anon (1919a) and Jacchia (1919). Nevertheless, their contributions put forward proposals and considerations or flagged up problems that Gramsci, the *Ordine Nuovo* group or the Turin vanguard *later* re-worked in their writings.

From this angle, the workers' contributions inspired the theoretical foundations of the 'Factory Council' idea. For example, they expressed the need to understand the Internal Commissions as the expression of the whole working class: see Anon (1919a). Nevertheless, this 'need for representation' had to be further refined within *L'Ordine Nuovo*, in order to become the fully formed organizational structure of the Factory Council. At the same time, the workers' contributions addressed practical issues in the development of the Factory Councils. For example, the existence of divisions within the workers – i.e. between 'organized' and 'unorganized' workers – highlighted a concrete obstacle in the evolution of the Internal Commissions towards the Factory Councils, see Jacchia (1919). At the same time, this problem had to be addressed from an intellectual perspective within *L'Ordine Nuovo*, prior to becoming a concrete proposal of organization, see Pastore (1919) and Gramsci et al. (1919).

⁷² For a biographical account see Andreucci and Detti (1978b, pp. 504-6).

This is not to undermine the – indeed impressive – political work that Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group did in Turin during 1919-20.⁷³ Nevertheless, this insight is relevant to historical analysis. In particular, it highlights one of the limits of the emancipatory politics of the Red Biennium, showing that as long as the division of intellectual labour remained unquestioned, the distance between leaders and led persisted to a certain extent. Moreover, from a theoretical and conceptual perspective the discussion in this Section informs considerations of emancipatory hegemony in significant ways – particularly, in terms of turning ‘hierarchies of culture’ into a ‘single cultural environment’. As illustrated, the ways in which knowledge circulates is central to this transformation. Crucially though, the emancipatory aim of this transformation – that is, equality between leaders and led – can be pursued on levels beyond that of knowledge circulation. From this angle, *horizontal practices that result from the direction of spontaneity are important, although not sufficient. The political and practical challenge to an emancipatory hegemonic relation is to organise the horizontality of intellectual work within persistent hierarchies.* The challenge is, therefore, to operate within socio-culturally stratified contexts in order to *collectively produce forms of knowledge that do not result from the sole theoretical effort of an intellectual vanguard* (even if it is inspired by the experiences and perspectives – the ‘spontaneous

⁷³ The persistence of the intellectual division of labour might come as a surprise – like a sort of elitist posture in *L'Ordine Nuovo*. Workers were able to have and produce informed positions, after all: illiteracy was a relatively marginal issue in Turin at that time (see Castronovo, 1987, p. 189). Moreover workers were ‘craving’ culture and were increasingly interested in socialist perspectives, see Bermani (1980/1981, p. 12). Nevertheless, the problem is that rank-and-file workers could hardly produce theoretical contributions similar to those of the *Ordine Nuovo* group (who commanded the use of Marxist concepts and Marxist interpretative frameworks). This problem was conceivably due to the pedagogical activity of the ‘Popular Universities’ and the ‘socialism of the professors’, which provided the workers with a culture that was ‘external’ to their own problems – that is, a culture that, albeit vaguely socialist, was still entangled with and subsumed under the bourgeois culture of that time (ibid.). Significantly, it was the activity of *L'Ordine Nuovo* that raised the interest towards the development and diffusion of a ‘workers’ culture’ in the workers’ movement, see Spriano (1971, p. 42). More generally, it was only after the birth of the Communist Party in 1921, and increasingly after World War II, that the workers’ movement began a systematic operation that elevated the political culture of the subaltern masses who, for the first time, learnt how to read a newspaper or to intervene in public discussions, see Liguori (2012, p. 122).

philosophy’ – of subaltern groups). This is the only way in which the fracture between intellectuals and subalterns can be overcome at the level of the intellectual division of labour.

Therefore, the question of co-producing knowledge and, more generally, co-theorization, emerges as a fundamental challenge for the emancipatory politics of the Red Biennium and, more generally, for an emancipatory hegemony that aims to create a ‘single cultural environment’. What is at stake here is not just *the fact* that the intellectuals should/must approach the ‘spontaneous philosophy’ of the subaltern groups. Rather, following Manuela Ausilio’s observations (2019, p. 90), it is *the ways in which* they approach this spontaneous philosophy. The extent to which this challenge can be fruitfully deployed to further our understanding of Gramsci’s political activity and the theoretical and political lexicon of the *Prison Notebooks* is a question that should be pursued in future research – for example, through a reconstruction ‘from below’ of the political and ideological environment where Gramsci, the *Ordine Nuovo* group, the Turin vanguard and the Turin working class operated during 1919-20.

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International Gramsci Journal

Volume 4

Issue 3 *Collective Will, Self-Consciousness,
Constitution of the Subject – in theory, and in
practice; Architecture, Professions and
Hegemony / Reviews*

Article 7

2021

Hegemony through the Architecture of the International Criminal Court

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Recommended Citation

Baines, A. Michael, Hegemony through the Architecture of the International Criminal Court, *International Gramsci Journal*, 4(3), 2021, 86-127.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol4/iss3/7>

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Hegemony through the Architecture of the International Criminal Court

Abstract

This article links the buildings housing the International Criminal Court to the workings of that court by putting the Gramscian concept of hegemony to work. It considers occulted functions of the structure and subconscious aspects of the operations of the court. Gramsci's hegemony is an articulation of a relationship of power between dominant and dominated classes. This relationship is not only one between consenting States and the court, but also between non-ratifying States and the court. It is also the locus of a power struggle between an elite judicial class and the sovereign ratifying States. The physical structure in which this international law is adjudicated and this struggle for power takes place, answers those criteria of hegemony as this article will demonstrate.

Keywords

Hegemony, International Criminal Court, elite, fortress, economy

Hegemony through the Architecture of the International Criminal Court

A. Michael Baines

I. Introduction

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is currently at the apex of International Criminal Law (ICL). The Rome Statute (RS) which created the ICC gave it jurisdiction over three crimes or groups of crimes: war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Although much discussed during the run-up to the Rome Diplomatic Conference at which the RS was completed, the crime of aggression was only covered at the first Review Conference, in Kampala in 2010. This young institution has elicited often contentious academic studies covering all aspects of its difficult and necessary work. The concepts of domination and hegemony have been used in many of these studies even if to mainly criticize the institution. However, the profound meaning of hegemony as developed by Antonio Gramsci has rarely been used; the articulation of a relationship of power between dominant and dominated classes in which a basic criterion is the combination of consent and coercion. This article aims to address this omission principally by considering the architecture of the buildings where the court sits. This not only shows how the ICC has the potential to dominate its creators but it also elucidates how the judges of this court can develop not just the powers of the court but also their own powers as a transnational elite. It is vital to commence filling this lacuna as relations of power at the highest level determine aspects of control and hence democracy.

This article is in four parts, the first of which will consider Gramsci's concept of hegemony and its relevance to the architecture of the ICC. The second part will consider the many tensions which are apparent from the architecture of the building. Tensions are manifestations of power struggles and power struggles manifestations of hegemony. In the third part the intellectuals involved in the operation of the ICC and those who designed its edifice will be considered. The final part will conclude first by

considering how struggles in the judicial complex reflect hegemony and secondly by considering some alternatives.

II. Hegemony

The author's use of the concept of hegemony refers to that used by Gramsci. Hegemony is used in the sense of domination by a class (of individuals or States) of dominated classes (of individuals or States) which is maintained by the preponderant use of one technique. This Gramscian technique (Gramsci, 1975, Q4§38, p. 457; 1996, p. 179) is one of surrendering some peripheral advantages enjoyed by the dominant to the dominated class in order to ensure the latter's continued consent to the prevailing system, with coercion held in reserve. The way Gramsci conceived of hegemony means that consent by the dominated class(es) is a prerequisite to achieving and maintaining hegemony; otherwise, there is domination, exercised through coercion (Ali, 2015, p. 241). This strategy is also used in those situations of political stability which arise when an equilibrium between forces is achieved. Hegemony is then (momentarily) achieved when the dominated and the dominant believe that there is no realistic alternative to the prevalent order and that subject to peripheral changes, it is satisfactory. And so the power of a class is maintained.

In the context of ICL, there are really but two classes,¹ or groups, which can be considered suitable candidates for this hegemonic position. The first is the entire legal apparatus of the ICC as Agents for the founding States of the ICC. Through the consent reached by the Assembly of States Parties (ASP) and its 21-member Bureau, the creators of the ICC dominate ICL and its materialization in any investigation, prosecution, and trial initiated by its Agent, the ICC. The ASP is the management oversight and legislative body of the ICC. The second class is the lawyers of the ICC as they form a transnational class with hegemonic traits. These lawyers are the judges, the prosecutor, the registrar and the defence counsel. The judges are elected by the ASP by means of a political procedure and have a limited period to imprint their vision although their decisions outlast their mandate. Their judicial actions are subject only to

¹ In the text, 'class' will often be used according to the 2015 Oxford English Dictionary definition: 'a system of ordering society whereby people are divided into sets based on perceived social or economic status'.

obtaining the consent of their peers. They have no hierarchical superior of any kind; their decisions are law. In a dynamic, globalized, polyarchic world, it is normal that there should be different hegemonic classes at different levels of activity which furthermore regularly impact on each other as they exercise their respective power. In ICL as being developed by the ICC the diarchy in question – sovereign States assembled in the ASP on the one hand and the lawyers of the ICC on the other hand – the constant flux of power relations is symptomatic of hegemony. ICL as a negotiated position to allow continued rule by an elite is created by the actions of Sovereign States when they negotiate treaties and by lawyers when they argue in court. By obtaining democratic consent to these legal acts hegemonic ICL is therefore the tool created by this consent. The ICC building in the Hague is the physical manifestation of this hegemony. As Adam Morton says ‘The urban form is therefore replete with dominant class rule using abstract space as a mode of organizing the means of production to generate profit’ (Morton, 2018, p. 125). In such a dynamic state, equilibrium requires articulatory counterweights: hegemony calls for its opposite, for resistance. Gramsci did not define this opposition but scattered throughout his writings are innumerable references to struggle and reform, which are needed for an equilibrium to be reached and held.

In the context of the ICC, there are several strata of conflictual opposition (Gramsci, 1975, Q4§38, p. 455; 1996, p. 157). One such stratum encompasses those nations which did not ratify the ICC Statute for reasons founded in power politics or indeed others for religious reasons. The non-ratifying permanent members (PMs) of the UN Security Council (UNSC) have varying and variable reasons for abstaining from the ICC, but the root cause seems to be their adherence to a Westphalian concept of full sovereignty where power politics are a fact of life. These States will counter the growing influence of the ICC in order to protect that sovereignty. The position of the United States is more ambivalent than that of China, Russia, India, and other non-ICC ratifying States. On the one hand its economic and military position is such that it is the dominant party in any power struggle and it does not want to be shackled to an independent judicial power over which it has no control. On the other hand, it feels that it has a unique task in the world, which qualifies it for global leadership. It aspires to being a

role-model for all other sovereign nations, in ICL also. The US Administration and Senate felt that personnel of its armed forces was too much at risk from political prosecutions. One of the main reasons for this was that US armed forces are involved across the globe, including in UN missions. Under President G. W. Bush the USA convinced more than one hundred countries to sign Bilateral Immunity Agreements (BIAs). These BIAs meant that the counterparts to the USA agreed not to surrender US Nationals (and in fact not only members of the armed forces) to the ICC if so required by an ICC warrant. The legality of such agreements is debated when evaluated against the Vienna Convention on the Interpretation of Conventions which requires in its Article 18 that signatories to the Convention should refrain from acts which defeat the object and the purpose of a Treaty. A country ratifying the RS is obligated to accept the courts' judgements, orders and decisions. Being a signatory to both a BIA and the RS would therefore seem contradictory. Although much criticism has been directed at the US, it should be noted that the BIAs are reciprocal.

Many other non-ratifying States (e.g. China) had problems with the independence of the prosecutor from UNSC control. The RS which was negotiated by consensus achieved this independence against strong opposition from some States; eventually the large majority of States which wished to see a court less dependent on the UNSC and very ably supported by the Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole, Mr Philippe Kirsch, achieved a third means for prosecutions to be initiated. Additional to State Party and UNSC referrals, the prosecutor could also initiate *proprio motu* proceedings, albeit subject to confirmation by an ICC judicial decision and subject to the UNSC not suspending such a prosecution for one year. Russia signed but did not ratify, claiming constitutional issues. It later unsigned (after an investigation into matters relating to the Georgia-Russia conflict) and became a critic of the ICC. India was publicly very supportive of the creation of the ICC, but among other objections it found that the extension of the court's jurisdiction *ratione locis* to internal matters was unacceptable. Other non-ratifying countries and their jurists resisted the hegemony of the ICL as propounded. When J. M. Pureza (Pureza, 2005, p. 271) writes '[...] what some countries such as the United States criticize in the ICC Statute is its intention of becoming a sort

of planetary judiciary with effective powers' he reveals a root cause of why – at a different level from that which led to the signing of BIAs – the United States did not ratify the Statute and is considered to be regularly trying to disempower the ICC and so to assert its hegemony, but some would call a domination.

The ICC building in the Hague could not have been built in the shape and size it was, if the United States had been a ratifying and contributing nation. The scale and the architectural splendour would have been totally different: a brief look at the Federal courthouses in Tuscaloosa, in St. Louis and Austin among others suffices to make the point. As it is, the ICC building reflects the neutrality and second-power status of its ratifiers. The ICC complex does not have any recognisably South American, Eastern or African architectural features: it aspired to and achieved neutrality by being a series of contemporary office blocks with traditional global north materials.



Photograph 1, with kind permission of Leo Oorschot, Architect & Researcher

A second stratum comes from both ratifying and non-ratifying States, many from the global south, which opportunistically revolt against the global north orientation of ICL as practiced by the ICC. Such opportunities are rare, principally because many referrals come

from the concerned States, not from the UNSC or the prosecutor's *proprio motu* powers. The actual reasons for originally ratifying even though rarely publicly mentioned or evidenced impede later revolt: these reasons are often based in the desire to avoid reductions in aid-, investment- and trade flows and to maintain cohesion with neighbouring countries or associations of countries. Once political will coalesces around such a revolt it may become a trend and change could go fast. The very existence of the African Court on Human and People Rights (ACHR) as also the Islamic International Court of Justice (IICJ) are prime examples of how the opportunity to trend can remain immanent for some time (see below).

The assumed neutrality of the Hague building allows for inside gardens of the complex to show off tropical plants and exotic growth from the global south. The garden architects had hoped that

seven characteristic courtyards representing the contributing countries, including the Scandinavian patio with pine trees and cones, the African garden with red soil and exciting vegetation, a lush Korean rooftop garden and a Dutch dune landscape ... [would] result [in] a risk-reducing urban landscape and an open forecourt, which instead of barricading ICC behind walls and barbed wire opens the institution up to the public ...



Photograph 2, with kind permission of Royal Mosa, copyright holders

Although a natural and protected dunes landscape surrounds the complex, the gardens are only accessible to people inside the building. The construction costs for the landscaping were €5 million (out of a total expenditure of €200 million).²

When considering the design of the court rooms one has to concede that, in that matter also, no practical effect has been given to those clauses of the ICC Statute which require multiculturalism among its judges. Here, Article 36, 8(a)(i) of the ICC Statute requires ‘representation of the principal legal systems of the world’; or even the Bureau of the ASP only needs such representation to be ‘adequate’ (Article 112, 3(b) of the ICC Statute). Electing judges from different parts of the world does not help to achieve multiculturalism when all the judges have been through the mill of global north academic institutions. The author has considered the *curricula vitae* of 53 judges elected since 2003 and divided them summarily into three groups based on them having spent an important academic time in any one of the three groups. The first comprises Canada, New Zealand, UK and the USA, the second EU countries and the third others. In percentage terms, the first has 45.28% of judges, the second 28.30% and the others 26.42% .

The courtrooms are mirror images of those found in the global north and the antithesis of sharia’ or Gacaca courts in Rwanda.

A final stratum would be formed by the triangular relationship between the UNSC, the General Assembly of the United Nations (GA) and the ICC. There are geopolitical relationships along the three sides of the triangle. First, the UNSC side. Although three Permanent Members have not ratified the RS and therefore neither vote in the ASP meetings nor are compelled to finance the ICC, and the remaining two PMs are second rate powers both in military and economic terms, all five nevertheless may individually block any investigation or prosecution by the ICC (the deferral powers granted by Article 16, RS). This has been used to protect geopolitical situations for example when Russian and China vetoed the referral to the ICC of the situation in Syria. The US abstained at a UNSC vote on a Kenyan request, supported by the African Union (AU), to have the pending case against it deferred, even though

² Cf. the information from SLA, a Danish architectural company, very much devoted to nature, appointed landscape architects for the ICC, to be found on their website at <https://sla.demo.supertusch.com/en/projects/icc-international-criminal-court>.

public statements had indicated that the US Administration was in favour of the ICC taking such action and should therefore have used their veto rather than abstain.³

The second side of the triangle is the relatively new phenomenon of the GA not only diplomatically lobbying the UNSC but slowly building what might become a normative power. The GA created a Human Rights Council (HRC) in 2006 (Bichet and Rutz, 2016). This HRC has installed Commissions whose fact finding reports are acquiring more and more standing and whose language is drifting from concerns on human rights violations to criminal activities which fall under the ICC remit. The GA supports these Commissions and hence exerts pressure on the UNSC. The GA hopes to develop its normative place on the international scene especially when the UNSC remains deadlocked whilst terrible crimes are being committed with little chance of prosecution.

The third side is that where the ICC connects with the UNSC and the GA. Here the judicial-political tightrope which the ICC must follow is most difficult; the prosecutor and the president have to consider geopolitical reality and financial constraints at every step before committing the court to a process which may determine its survival, let alone achieve justice in a specific case. The ICC judges will conduct trials and appeals from a bench where no single person can decide on the fate of the accused and it is the president of the court, elected by the judges (RS, Art 38) who decides which judge will handle which case in which Chamber. However, they can only consider cases which the prosecutor presents. By Statute, judges are intellectuals at the top of their profession. They are of high moral character, impartial, and have strong moral principles. They possess the qualifications required in their respective States for appointment to the highest judicial offices. Upon a single nine-year appointment, the 18 judges achieve diplomatic immunity, high esteem, and financial security for life.

A final stratum of conflictual forces is visibly embodied by the judges of the court and indeed the whole of the ICC, who exert continued pressure to extend their jurisdiction by pushing the boundaries of the ICC Statute. This occult violence is extremely difficult for the ratifying sovereign States to control; common sense

³ 'I urge all of Kenya's leaders, and the people whom they serve, to cooperate fully with the ICC' (Obama, 2010, statement of 15 December).

requires that justice be seen to be done and so it is problematic for governments to be seen attempting to restrain this push by the independent judiciary to extend ICL.

The dominated States develop a consciousness of their situation in the power struggle which takes place in the hegemonic system. Opportunistically African States resist the ICC as a neo-colonial grab for power. This is principally a political move; they can resist completely and individually by withdrawing (Burundi for example, for reasons linked to its internal situation) or partially and collectively (for example African signatory countries of the RS Chad, Egypt, Djibouti, Kenya, and Mali invited the indicted Sudanese President al-Bashir to enter their sovereign territory with total immunity).

In this context it is apposite to mention Article 46 A bis of the Malabo Protocol which grants immunity to 'AU Heads of State or government or anybody acting or entitled to act in such capacity, or other senior state officials based on their functions, during their tenure of office'. But the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) also complained publicly about States resisting investigations or trials. This expression of inferiority is a reflection of the struggle for hegemony; inferiors will resist, propose change and accept compromises. At the end of any struggle over power, the inferior will give in to the dominant power after having gained some advantage. When they have developed enough power, they can even overcome the dominating class; the judges and prosecutor interpreted the ICC Statute in such a way that the Rohingya situation fell under their jurisdiction. Although this may be only one investigation among the sixteen so far initiated by the court, it does show that it has that latent power and will use it. Similarly, a truly operational ACHR operating under the Malabo Protocol would move from being in an inferior position to the ICC to being an alternative of substance.

The Protocol (full name: the 'Malabo Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights') was signed in 2014 in Equatorial Guinea by 15 member States out of the 55 who make up the AU. But as yet, none has ratified the Protocol. The court's jurisdiction extends to the following crimes, according to Article 28(A):

try persons for the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, the crime of unconstitutional change of government, piracy, terrorism, mercenarism, corruption, money laundering, trafficking in persons, trafficking in drugs, trafficking in hazardous wastes, illicit exploitation of natural resources, and the crime of aggression.

During these continuing struggles the dominant class will grant non-essential elements of its hegemony to the inferior class. Similarly, this class is constantly labouring in such a way as to increase its leverage not only over the decisions of the dominant class but also over the ways and means in which it is dominated.

This opportunism manifests itself architecturally; neither the ACHR nor the IICJ have proper, purpose-built courts. Building such courts would be a concrete (!) manifestation of political will and would signal that the ICC's hegemony is physically contested. On the other hand, these States fully realize that by ratifying in sufficient number the treaties which empower the ACHR and the IICJ they would thereby empower judges to consider some of their own sovereign acts (and misdeeds).

Judges by most definitions can be classed as intellectuals. Gramsci's theories on intellectuals have been summarized as follows:

If social classes do not exercise power directly but through political and cultural intermediaries, then the role of these intermediaries – the intellectuals – in maintaining and reproducing a given economic and social order (in the exercise of hegemony), is of decisive importance (Forgacs, 2000, p. 300).

The people who designed the ICC, the architects, are also members of the intellectual class. Gramsci wrote that the 'Intellectuals of the urban type [...] have no autonomous initiative in elaborating plans for construction [...]' (Gramsci, 1975, Q12§1, p. 1520; 1971, p. 14) by which he principally meant that the initiative to construct or not – here in a literal sense – lay in another's power.

As intellectuals lawyers do have autonomy within spheres which are prescribed by others. This is a classical field of struggle between autonomy and heteronomy. Domestic for judges are bound into a tighter political heteronomy than international judges. ICC judges are really independent and the prosecutor does have an autonomous initiative (a major stumbling block for the United States). Pablo Ciochini and Stéphanie Khoury give some clear indications of this by suggesting that the

novelty of applying a Gramscian perspective to the analysis of the judicial decision-making process is two-fold. Firstly, this analysis reveals that as judges enforce the law, they act as legal ‘technicians’, applying officially recognized interpretations of the law. Their role is to reproduce and conserve the status quo. But judges can also occupy a leadership role by promoting certain moral values. They do this by expanding, and in some cases even subverting, traditional legal concepts (Ciocchini and Khoury, 2018, p. 77),

and further

judges lead the dominant factions of the ruling class and create consensus within the power bloc (Ciocchini and Khoury, 2018, p. 84).

Gramsci was a convicted political prisoner of Mussolini’s Fascist Italy in 1930 when he wrote

Everything that directly or indirectly influences or could influence public opinion belongs to [ideological structure]: libraries, schools, associations, and clubs of various kinds, even architecture, the layout of streets and their names (Gramsci, 1975, Q3§49, p. 333; 1996, p.53).

Slavoj Žižek (2009) in a lecture in New York also puts his finger on the potentially hegemonic characteristics of public buildings:

in postmodernism we get a multiplicity of codes. This multiplicity can be either the multiplicity (ambiguity) of meanings or the multiplicity of functions [while ...] the antagonistic tension between different standpoints is flattened into indifferent plurality of standpoints.

Assuredly the ICC court buildings are the outcome of an enforced neutrality between not only different architectural standpoints, but cultural standpoints. And the result is a flattened, if defensive, construction. In the words of the Danish architects:

It was a real challenge to design this building given that many nations have signed the Rome Statute. However, we decided early on not to be specific regarding all these nationalities, cultures, and religions, as it’s just not feasible for all of them to be reflected in a coherent architectural design. Instead, you have to generalize, simplify, and be innovative.⁴

⁴ MOSA, Design Studios, 2015, on Architonic Website [https://www.architonic.com/en, International Criminal Court: the Hague](https://www.architonic.com/en,International%20Criminal%20Court%3A%20the%20Hague) at <https://www.architonic.com/en/project/mosa-international-criminal-court-the-hague/510326>.



Operating at all these levels are the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Each has its agenda, sometimes in violent opposition to that of others (e.g. right for abortion NGOs as against anti-abortion NGOs). The presence of NGOs it is said was crucial to certain clauses being incorporated in the Statute. The ‘Coalition for the ICC’, an overarching NGO, was even involved thanks to a Resolution of the ASP in the competition process which led to the building of the court. The independence of NGOs from neo-liberal hegemony must however be questioned: the very procedure of becoming recognized necessitates conformity to certain prerequisites. This falls into Gramsci’s description of the way a dominant class transforms an opposing force; he uses the evocative word *trasformismo* to describe this method of enervating a movement (cf. Gramsci, 1975, Q19§24, p. 2011; 1971, p. 58). This is a widely used way of watering down an antagonistic movement’s strength by agreeing on mutual concessions, where the dominant power actually surrenders something it doesn’t consider vital to its interests.

III. Tensions

Courts are spaces where struggles take place, using laws, procedures, and psychology as tools and weapons. An awkwardness in all truly international courts has been the difference between the common law and civil law systems, as they manifest themselves i.a. in law, in procedure and in evidentiary matters. These differences

have not (yet) led to damaging arguments but are at best a locus of struggle not conflict. The possibility for judges to pronounce their individuated opinion is an example of such a difference: although some civil law countries allow such an opinion it is far from universal. As Jiří Malenovský (2009, p. 39) says

It is nevertheless interesting to observe how a number of countries which are traditionally associated with civil law systems, amongst which are some which were faced with an excess of totalitarianism in the past, are ready to integrate certain elements of common law in their legal systems. They have for example introduced the practice of having separate opinions at the level of their respective constitutional courts. Examples would be Germany (*Sonder-votum*, *Abweichende Meinung*), Spain (*voto particular*) or the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe (Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia or Slovenia). In France, as in certain other countries of civil law discussions are being held although the situation has not yet progressed (author's translation).

The ICC specifically allows for separate opinions (Art. 83, RS): this was achieved not least because during consultations the judges of the ITFY and ITFR were very positive about their right to so do (ITFY, Art 23/3 and ITFR, Art 22). As the Trial Chamber shall have three judges and the Appeals Chamber shall have a bench with the president of the ICC and four other judges (Art. 39/1 and 2, RS), there is scope for such opinions.

The crimes which the ICC handles, just as its predecessors in Nuremberg, Tokyo or the ad hoc tribunals of Yugoslavia or Rwanda or the hybrids of Cambodia, Kosovo or Sierra Leone, are no different compared to the crimes which sovereign courts handle: it is the scale which is different. The legal conflicts they all concentrate on are fought out in the prescribed arena, according to mostly self-imposed but often contested rules. The origin and the remit of the ICC proceeds from a *longue durée* movement to create a forum where ICL would flourish and that movement is rooted in the global north. As the International Committee of the Red Cross website states with regard to ICL:

This is the branch of international law that is designed to hold individuals who are responsible for particularly serious violations of international law to account before the law. The idea that individuals, and not only States, could be found responsible for such violations started to gain ground after World War II with the establishment of the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals, which were set

up to prosecute persons responsible for atrocious crimes (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2021).

All the post-war and post-crime courts mentioned were called into life to handle crimes perpetrated in a specific territory, during a specific lapse of time and, in the minds of their creators, with a temporal finality. These pre-ICC courts came about by virtue of the will of military victors (e.g. the International Military Tribunal for Europe (IMTE) and the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE)), or of UN fiat such as the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the ICTY, or of a Treaty between a sovereign state and the UN (Special Court for Sierra Leone, Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, Kosovo Specialist Chambers & Specialist Prosecutor's Office, Special Tribunal for Lebanon).

The ICC is *sui generis*; it is a Treaty Organization, ratified by more than 120 sovereign States, which handles those crimes enumerated in the Treaty and perpetrated in all those signatory States or by any of their nationals, as from the date of ratification, without prescription or statute of limitations. The creation of the ICC was not *ex nihilo*; it was the product of many decades of political thinking on the expanding need for international crime to be punished. Furthermore, it built upon the text, experience and jurisdiction of its predecessors, especially the ICTR and the ICTY. Such an adherence to precedent is nearly inevitable. Gramsci would have elaborated it by looking to human sociology which shows how institutions which appear to work satisfactorily even if to the occulted advantage of any social class are manoeuvred by the dominant class into being accepted by the dominated class as common-sensical solutions, with no reasonable alternative. He summarizes this in a most interesting sentence in a note written in 1932 as follows, where art – which must include architecture – and law are furthermore united:

at this point we reach the fundamental question facing any conception of the world, any philosophy which has become a cultural movement [... or] produced a form of practical activity or will in which the philosophy is contained as an implicit theoretical “premiss” (One might say “ideology” [...] a conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity, in all manifestations of individual and collective life) (Gramsci 1975, Q11§12, p. 1380; 1971, p. 328),

which the author would link with an *a contrario* reasoning with a further sentence in the same note:

conclusions that old [new] conceptions have an extremely stable [unstable] position among the popular masses; particularly when they are in accord [in contrast] with orthodox convictions [...] conforming socially to the general interests of the ruling classes (Gramsci 1975, Q11§12, p. 1391; 1971, pp. 339-40).

The legislative creep towards individual liability and the dismantling of the so-called Westphalian sovereignty of States was resisted at nearly every stage by individual and powerful States or alliances of such States. Until the IMTE the combined cloaks of executing orders by superiors, reasons of state and or immunity had insulated individuals from most (international) criminal pursuit. The sovereignty of the territorial authority was at the basis of the Treaty of Westphalia and so was its authority over its citizens. Between individual sovereign States, agreements covering extradition establish this sovereignty. Sovereign States surrendered this authority by virtue of ratifying the RS in favour of an international institution. This resistance is best summarized by considering that three of the five PMs of the UNSC did not ratify and that the two weakest PMs which ratified were European.

When considering the ICC complex, its very architecture reflects four areas where tensions occur, both visible and occulted.

A. Symbolism and neutrality

The first struggle is between symbolism and neutrality. The core crimes which the ICC must prosecute are enormous crimes in every sense. It is therefore right that the space where such matters are fought out, should be accessible to all in surroundings which reflect the magnitude of the crime. It is considered appropriate and common-sensical that the majesty of a court be reflected in the majesty of the building where it is housed: so works symbolism. And indeed, as far as the ICC is concerned its openness to the outside world, its willingness to see and look out seems embodied by the use of very large amounts of windows. Loopholes in castles and forts are also designed to allow those inside to observe the outside. The polyangular style used for the ICC windows are a requirement for defending the building, making it blast-proof, but it

also means that the windows do not allow the outsider to actually see in very much.



A building erected on behalf of more than 120 States cannot project common symbols of justice, law or punishment, for they do not exist. It had to be soberly impressive, without any trace of cultural domination by any power. The ICC's statements made at different moments of the design and building read

the ICC will be housed in an iconic group of buildings that will leave visitors with a strong image of the Court: that of an august institution established to combat impunity by imparting justice in accordance with the rule of law (ICC Press Release, 2013),

and then, not quite two years later, when the finished building was handed over, the 'design of the building reflects the transparency of the institution and its innovativeness. It combines striking architecture with stringent security measures' (ICC Press Release, 2015) leads one to expect a truly memorable building: iconic, august, transparent, innovative, striking. A Derridean deconstruction of the latter statement cannot fail to show the divergence between what is said about a building and what it actually is. For what does Derrida's work require? Analysing a certain text and exposing the binary oppositions which form the basic structure of our way of

thinking. The ICC statement actually refers openly to a visible opposition: ‘transparency’ and ‘security measures’. But deconstructed, one must observe that in the legal thinking of the global north ‘innovativeness’ in criminal law is to be repressed and only very exceptionally allowed, not to be lauded and encouraged. Did the statement actually warn the ASP that the court would and should push for innovation? Similarly deconstructed ‘striking architecture’ which is combined ‘with stringent security measures’ is visually and visibly incorrect. The ICC building is either one or the other: what can these competing interpretations really say about it? That those who conceived of it were not able to reconcile these competing goals and agreed that security should dominate the architecture, not vice versa.

In the absence of a truly universal and homogenous culture, the struggle between impressive symbolism and neutrality had to be decided in favour of neutrality. The result is an expensive but standard complex of office blocks. The impressive official rhetoric which accompanied the opening of the ICC is not matched by the glass, concrete, and steel on the ground. Iconic buildings are also often actually marketing symbols on behalf of the financiers that back the construction. The ICC is not a shopping mall or a concert hall, so no immediate financial risk had to be taken into consideration when erecting such an edifice. However, there are principals – the ratifying, contributing States – who act as financiers. They do want these buildings to achieve a special status because the prestige of the building reflects positively on those who made it possible. Hence the legal class together with the architects and all the crafts and professions involved in the construction mobilize the media in order to obtain recognition that the building which houses the Court has such a symbolic and iconic status. This encourages the financiers to keep paying for the institution housed in the building, hence ensuring an economic future and social stability to those that work there. An expensive building has the sought-after effect of (self-)aggrandizement of the sponsors and those who work there.

The architecture of the complex reflects this. It is blatantly universally modernistic; the multitude of cultures from which the ICC Statute emerged could not allow for any clear architectural symbolism; no common culture could be reflected in a common building. What was built was an ideologically neutral structure. A

multicultural and international organization can only counteract any objection that there was domination by its physical headquarters by showing rigid control of size and cost and by studied neutrality. As far as size is concerned, the ICC building and the land it occupies is hardly majestic; at a surface area of 72,000m² and built area of 54,000m² it is hardly huge. Furthermore, the central tower is only 33m high whereas the Tribunal de Paris (opened 2019) is 160m high. As far as cost is concerned, a final bill of approximately €200 million is not immense. In most countries, this cost criterion is the one taken most into consideration, e.g. in England (H.M. Courts and Tribunals Service, 2019). The European Court of Justice is housed in buildings now with 150,000m² of court capacity and costing €500 million,⁵ the new law courts in Belgium (in Antwerp, a city of 500,000 inhabitants) have 57,000m² and cost at least €280.3 million. The Criminal Court Complex in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia which was taken into service in 2012, features one main tower block 44m high, has 46,330m² built in a total area of more than 100,000m², and cost less than €100 million. Neutrality in the ICC complex was maintained: the initial proposal of having the central tower, where the two courtrooms are situated, clad in black material was rapidly outvoted as possibly referring too much to the Kaaba in Mecca. It was replaced by the idea of having green gardens growing up the outside.

The lay-out of the courtrooms (for there are two) also reproduces that feeling of studied neutrality and technical expertise. During trials, the human link with the horrible crimes is maintained by the presence of witnesses and victims: but protective measures can make them invisible again, not only to the defence but also to the public gallery and the media. This when the judges decide that the witness, victim or their testimony should be *in camera*. The accused are normally present (at least by video-link if they are removed from the courtroom); their behaviour is controlled by rules which enhance the decorum of the court. There is no architectural provision of any kind for a jury; the hegemony of the judge is considered preferable to the unpredictability of a jury. A supreme judge, radiating expertise, is taken as a symbol of neutrality. The

⁵ Cf. information on the site of Design Build Network, presenting itself as Designbuild-network.com, the essential online industry resource for the architecture and construction industries.

complexity of the cases and the cost of keeping a jury empanelled are often cited as the main reasons for never having had juries in international criminal trials. Rarely is the equally possible reason advanced that it is the lawyers who make the process complex and its length inordinate. Having a jury system must produce a more efficient and faster procedure than that which currently prevails at the ICC. Hence cheaper, which would not be in the material interest of the multiple agents in ICL.

B. Imagery and efficiency

The second area of conflict is between imagery and efficiency. The Statute and the image of ICL projected by the media in the first place is that of an implacable source of justice for all. ICC statements on impunity and concern for victims regularly accompany media reports on atrocities and crimes; the ICC will provide justice as it is a defence and a rampart against illegality and impunity. Proving that the existence of the ICC has a deterrent effect on the commission of those crimes it prosecutes is very difficult, if at all possible. The ratifying States know that to banish crime and to punish culprits domestically is a never-ending battle which needs to be fought, whatever the cost. Apart from punishing the guilty, the ICC will succour the victims from the safety of its location. Reflecting this, the complex is a fortress, an enclosed space. It can be seen as either keeping out dangers which threaten it from outside but equally keeping dangerous people in who may not get out. The building proclaims that what happens inside it is of concern to everybody, but the larger part of the complex is hidden away from and inaccessible to the uninitiated.

The ICC building projects a business-like image to the outside world: this implies efficiency and expediency, expertise, and competence. Visitors are efficiently guided through the approach and entrance to the building. For them, this approach is towards a blind wall with a dark access gate. The subconscious feeling of a defensive curtain cannot be avoided. As little as possible is left to improvisation and chance: pre-booking, X-ray machines, bag- and person-searches, checking of passport, camera surveillance... All such measures are considered normal in today's security and safety conscious culture. What use if any is made of such information is less public. A large part of the ground-floor western wing of the

lobby is even a kind of museum, where artefacts of international justice are exhibited and explained. To continue the use of similes from military architecture is not difficult. The passage to the towers where the court itself is situated is across a bridge, with water on both sides;



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admittedly, there are no visibly chains to lift the bridge, nor a portcullis. The courtroom is in the central tower, like the living quarters in the keep of a castle. Once access – controls and checks again, no cameras or recording devices – to the courtroom has been granted, the comparison continues. The wide open space, the high ceiling, the lights, the raised dais for the judges: all echo medieval halls where kings and emperors held court. Only the total absence of any decoration makes a noticeable difference; but with so many cultures to satisfy, how could any harmony be achieved if paintings or sculptures, woodwork or tapestries were displayed?

Just like courts in any sovereign state, the ICC cannot prosecute every crime for which it has jurisdiction: expediency does not allow for it. This is an occulted locus of tension; between the utopia of overall justice and the reality of limited resources. Even if the political will were present, the financial consequences of such a policy are untenable. The ICC's annual budget is close to €150 million with as sole purpose the prosecution of the most serious crimes and, by doing so, ensuring they do not go unpunished and so ending impunity. Compared to the annual justice bill of most

developed countries this is very small and so it is not surprising that the ICC is constantly pressing for more money so that it can initiate more investigations and prosecutions. It has office space for nearly one third more staff than it currently employs and just as there is no shortage of crimes which can be prosecuted, there is no shortage of applicants to work at the ICC. The struggle here is between the ASP which represents the governments which foot the bill on the one hand and the aspirations of the court on the other hand. For indeed, the budget is financed by the States Parties; their contributions are assessed in the same way as they are for the working budget of the UN budget (ICC, 2020). The image projected is that law enforcement is a business, so an office-like architecture suits. Efficiency starts at the foundations of the complex and the Statute itself; every architectural decision was and is budgeted, every decision by the court also. So an ICC decision to proceed is actually in the hands of the registrar of the ICC: he holds the purse strings on behalf of the ASP. Even if it is the prosecutor who moves the court towards cases which the lawyers want to see prosecuted and, in their opinion, have a fair chance of success, it is a financial calculation, an assessment of the risks, of the opportunities and possibilities as also of the effects of a course of action which determines which situations metamorphose from examinations into situations under investigation and then into cases. Some would argue that this is the situation in most countries: that does not affect the argument that the RS was portrayed as the means of ending impunity which it seemingly cannot (yet) achieve and that therefore utopia is put back in its place whilst frail humanity is back in charge of the multiple stages of an ICC procedure: investigation with four phases of analysis, pre-trial stage, trial stage, appeals stage and finally enforcement of sentence. It is a practical demonstration of how the hegemony of economic forces pushes justice, with the consent of all, into a subservient position. Again Adam Morton sees the link with architecture:

Although reflective of repressive relations, or the seat of institutional power, monuments can equally be a site of collective redemption expressing an ethical and aesthetic power that can project a sense of alternative being, a differential space, an awareness of utopic space (Morton, 2018, p. 127).

This does not imply that politics (or economics) interfere directly in the application of law, only that resources are finite and that the judicial arm is responsible for deciding how to deploy these limited resources (ICC Report, 2019, p. 37).

Inside the court, the image of hi-tech management predominates. Although there is some paperwork on the lawyers' benches, the vast array of identical computer screens and terminals appear to make all equal. Overhead screens and power points all imply efficiency and expertise; guilt will undoubtedly be established.

In this sanitized world, the physical presence of witnesses and victims is a problem for the court. A unique feature of the ICC compared to previous such courts is that victims are to be given a protected and special status. But their physical presence although extremely useful for attracting media attention and coverage, is expensive and time consuming. It also creates security problems. And so there is an increasing use of digital and technologically derived evidence which allows for much of this problem to be avoided, so producing much needed savings. On the other hand removing victims from the courtroom, removes them from the legal theatre where the media operates. And the ICC needs the media to put its case to the ASP directly and to the electorates of the ASP indirectly so as to ensure its funding.

The ICC's funding is regulated by Articles 113 et seq. of the RS and Regulation 5 of the Financial Regulations and Rules as laid down by the ASP with as consequence that it is the scale adopted by the UN for its regular budget which determines the assessment of the States Parties. That scale is then adjusted according to the 'capacity to pay'. With some of the richest countries not having ratified (e.g. US and China) the burden falls on the current 123 ratifying countries. According to the author's calculation on the basis of World Bank classification, 47 countries (38%) are high income, 36 countries (29%) are upper middle income, 27 countries (22%) lower middle income and 13 countries (11%) lower income. These 13 countries contribute less than 1% to the ICC budget and the 47 richest more than 50%.

Theatricality is what the media need to justify their expensive presence and investment at the court, but the ICC needs the media to project its message across the world. As the court is removed from the place and indeed the people where the crimes took place,

the spectators or the public in the Hague can only be symbolic, in some way representative of those who cannot attend. The real public, the real target of the court is those very many viewers who can watch or listen live or to recorded material, who can read newspapers and magazines which cover important moments. This is the public whose opinion is vital to ensuring the power of the court and the growing power of its permanent inhabitants, the lawyers and their staff.

C. Judges as arbiters of law

The third arena where hegemony is an issue is where the Statute and the judicial class articulate. Not only the United States, but many other countries feared putting the power to sanction their nationals in the hands of a permanent court. Relevant in this context are not only military men and women who were only obeying orders, but also higher staff officers and political leaders. The attempts to increase the hold of the UNSC over the prosecutorial freedom of the ICC prove this sufficiently. It should not be a surprise that those countries where the judiciary are the most independent are those which are the most interested to curtail by law the freedom of those same judges (Rodriguez-Garavito and Santos, 2005, p. 271). States where the judiciary tend to obey the executive branch have less experience with and fear of independent-minded judges. The Statute defined the crimes which the ICC should prosecute but it was the ASP – which the ICC calls ‘the court’s management oversight and legislative body’ (ICC-Assembly of States Parties, current; cf. RS Art. 112) – which laid down in much greater detail than for any previous international crimes tribunal those Rules of Procedure and Evidence which the court is meant to adhere to. The democratic legitimacy of the ASP can be seriously put into doubt. Although States may send eminent legal experts to debate and decide, the electoral link with citizens is wafer-thin. Furthermore the Statute in its Articles 51(3) and 52 allows for the judges to draw up provisional Rules which will remain in force unless the ASP at a later date amends or rejects them. This is a further occulted way for the judges to develop their powers.

The judges, in their very interpretations of the Statute and of the area of their jurisdiction are combatants in an arena where the struggle for power is continuous. When in the matter of the

Rohingya/Bangladesh the Pre-Trial Chamber authorized the prosecutor to open an investigation into alleged crimes, the judges decided in effect that if there was a consequence on the territory of a ratifying State of possible crimes initiated on the territory of a non-ratifying State, the prosecutor could investigate the matter as the ICC has jurisdiction (ICC Pre-Trial Chamber Decision: ICC, 2018). This decision by the ICC can but irritate China, Russia and the United States whose Ambassadors at the Diplomatic Conference leading to the Statute raised this very specific possibility (UN Document 2002: pp. 196, 361-362). It seems that if the judges act in a way which the media present positively, the ASP will have to be extremely brave and judicially creative to rein in their power. The fortress-like structure of the court in the Hague may be an unconscious reflex by the architects and the competition committee, influenced by the judges who were members of this committee, to resist this possibility of pressure being applied to the judges' independence: a bulwark was needed against outside pressure. The Statute goes into great detail in order to ensure the representativeness of the judges, who are elected by the ASP. This to ensure that together they represent a universal desire for justice. The Statute itself makes the compulsory nod towards the principal legal systems of the world; however as to the qualifications of the judges, the Statute remains sufficiently vague for the political process to proceed unobserved. The procedure is entirely political; there is no qualifying examination by any body of the quality, background, opinion, ability of a proposed judge. This of course suits States who have a dominant status in the ASP; it allows for their opinions to be overrepresented. A cursory study of those judges who have been elected shows how hegemonic a global northern academic background is. The author has considered the *curricula vitae* of 53 judges elected since 2003 and divided them summarily into three groups based on them having spent an important academic time in any one of the three groups. The first comprises Canada, New Zealand, UK and the USA, the second EU countries and the third others. In percentage terms, the first has 45.28% of judges, the second 28.30% and the others 26.42% . The global north academia is not only dominant, but hegemonic: judges implicitly consent to this.

D. Choice of location

The fourth locus of struggle is that between existing hegemonic powers and dominated powers, where common-sense and the seeming lack of any alternative mean that the dominated States submit to what is proposed. The very location of the court is such a locus and seemed a sensible solution.

The economic value to that city of pulling in such a prestigious body as the ICC which might have over 1,000 well paid international civil servants is immense (van de Wijngaard, 2012).

Rwanda wanted the ICTR to be located in Kigali, but eventually accepted that it should be Arusha in Tanzania. An automatic consequence was that the Rwandan Government's intention of having many thousands of accused prosecuted by an international tribunal became a dream. By going to Arusha a severe selection had to be made. The ICTR eventually indicted less than 100 persons, mainly because of the logistical and financial burden of moving evidence, victims and accused over 1,000 kilometres.

During the Rome Diplomatic Conference and later discussions the consensual and common-sensical location, under the hegemony of the global north, was to place the ICC somewhere in Europe. Locating the ICC in the United States, Russia, or China, who were at best going to sign but never ultimately ratify the Statute was never contemplated. A similar mind-set determined that the ICC needed one prestigious and permanent building where ICL would be practised. This mind-set of having one permanent, fixed location was elaborated over 60 years; there seemed no alternative to the Hague which already had many international institutions, including the International Court of Justice. This mental and psychological attitude mirrored the cultural background of the vast majority of the participants at the Diplomatic Conference, ASP Meetings, and those committee members who considered and voted on the premises of the ICC.

As Richard Bower writes:

The wider potential for strategic change in such projects is rarely able to be followed through. They remain isolated by political and social entropy that seems to stifle architectural projects that attempt to exist outside conventional Westernized hegemonic relations (Bower, 2016, p. 117).

It seems therefore that again economic interests and motivations build consent in accepting that there is no seeming alternative; the cost of building the court, of maintaining it, of the many thousands who earn their living in and around it must be accepted and the interests of bringing justice close to the victims and perpetrators a very much less important fact. This is a clear manifestation of hegemony by economic forces of the global north.

The procedure and rules which governed the competition organized to find the best design for the premises were similarly a manifestation of that hegemony: the participants had to establish that they had 10 years' experience, had submitted a similar project in the last 10 years, had at least 20 employees in the last three years and had to show technical aptitude for such a project (Jansen, 2011). Young, less experienced, less financially strong but possibly creatively stronger architects would have had very little chance of getting over these hurdles. And so the architectural style of the ICC complex reflects the hegemony of global northern aesthetic norms which are, for public buildings, a continuation of those prevalent in large privately financed buildings. But the pre-ordained outcome of this struggle, this tension, was occulted by the very rules of the competition, which appeared neutral. A dominated architectural class locked in a hegemonic situation can however show resistance by developing its very own style. The Egyptian Supreme Court building, finished in 2000, is an excellent example of an alternative outcome to such a struggle. The neo-pharaonic elements contrast totally with any contemporary public building in the global north.

On the other hand, the ACHP court ('African Court on Human and People's Rights') on with an annual budget just above €9 million) established in Arusha creates a treble contrast with the ICC complex:

i. Rented and circumscribed.

First, it is not (yet) in a purpose-built edifice, but manages with temporary premises. Most striking for the approaching visitor and contrasting with the ICC is the very large sign over the main entrance: 'Welcome to the African Court'. The African Court Protocol may as yet not cover such horrific crimes as the ICC does but, as indicated above, the Malabo Protocol – when a sufficiency of States will have ratified it – will give the ACHP such a

competence and the court will create a new section to handle these cases (Protocol on Amendments, Article 16, paragraph 1 and 2). This development virtually ensures that when a sufficient number of States have ratified, the ICC's role will be curtailed in Africa at least, by the operation of the clause of complementarity. It hardly needs stating that the ultimate dominant class on the African continent is no different to the one which operates in the ICC context: the beneficiaries of the neo-liberal globalized economy. Class structure is just as powerful regionally as it is on a global basis. The confrontational aspect here is actually double. There is on the one hand the perceived advantage that activating the ACHP diminishes the power of the ICC but on the other hand the regional élite apprehends full well the disadvantage which might flow from the fact that the judges appointed to the ACHP will, just as their ICC confrères, seek to expand their role. The AU's position is maybe therefore also ambivalent. On the one hand, it is well known that the AU's position with regards to the ICC is usually negative: the AU has stated that they encourage the withdrawal from the ICC of African signatories from. The AU was instrumental in the matter of the Kenyan situation: it asked the UNSC to request deferral of the ICC's investigation. On the other hand the AU has not pushed strongly for development of the ACHP.

An appointment to the ACHP will follow occluded rules prevalent in most if not all bureaucracies; a *fin-de-carrière* successful candidate will be usually grateful to the authority which gave him or her such a position but at the same time wish to show some independence in their last rulings and decisions. To paraphrase Malenovský:

the personality of the 'national' [arbiter] judge reveals two contradictory aspects: on the one hand, that of a docile and privileged interpreter of the legal arguments advanced by his state and on the other hand that of an independent expert who cannot act as simple [representative] agent of a State, as if just a diplomat (Malenovský, 2009, p. 43: author's translation).

ii. Individuals or sovereign States?

The second contrast is proximity to people. Eight AU member countries have signed the Additional Protocol which allows individuals and NGOs to submit complaints. Although such a large proportion of those complaints emanated from Tanzanians that that country has in principle withdrawn its ratification of the

Additional Protocol, the principle has been established that individual victims may approach that court at least and apply for relief, sanction, and indemnity. This is not possible at the ICC.

iii. Global or continental?

The third contrast is that the Rome Statute attributed to itself a position as the fount of global norms. The Preamble of the ICC refers to 'all peoples', whereas the African Charter on Human and People's Rights not only restricts itself to Africa but proudly refers to a common African heritage and struggle against colonialism. The globalism of the ICC and its basic lack of common historical and cultural past mean that it has a profound weakness at its heart, which the African Charter does not have.

The other locus of the struggle within civil society over ICL clearly shows that the conflict over ideas which is continually taking place occurs in layers. The dominant powers wanted the precedent set by their post-war military tribunals to form the basis for any future ICL. This precedent determined not only how such Tribunals were created but also the rules and procedure which they would follow. The economic and ideological collapse of the Soviet bloc allowed a hegemonic United States to successfully push for further judicialization of humanitarian law at an international level. The UNSC and the General Assembly approved the *ad hoc* creation of the ICTY and ICTR; their rules and procedure follow nearly seamlessly from those of the IMTE and IMTF. As Gramsci pointed out when discussing common sense and the difficulty of finding alternatives, the very nature of law means that what has been done and seen to work, is copied. When the Statute was being negotiated, it became clear that the United States was worried about the independence of the court from the UNSC, where it had a veto power. China and Russia voiced similar fears and eventually all three did not ratify. The Westphalian principle of sovereignty played an equally very important role, especially as all three States feared the risk their nationals would face. The very strong support for the ICC from principally the EU, but also South American and still many African States, can actually be considered as a move by them against United States hegemony (with China and Russia). In Gramscian terms, it is clearly the weaker States which see advantages in supporting the ICC against the hegemon.

The United States consents to certain uses of ICC power in cases where humanitarian law is at stake and where it feels the ICC is moving in the correct way. Their abstention on (rather than veto of) the Darfur referral to the ICC prosecutor is a case in point. On the other hand, their very status as a military and economic hegemon, makes them see themselves as in a vulnerable situation vis-à-vis a court which could for blatantly political reasons assert jurisdiction over its nationals. The United States is also used to the judicial supremacy of its own Supreme Court which theoretically at least, can be controlled by constitutional changes enacted by their democratically elected institutions. It is the US President, flanked by the US Senate, who appoints the judges. This is not the way most of the ASP countries submit names of future ICC judges. A sign of this Westphalian inheritance is the possibility for ratifying States to emit reservations to Treaties they adhere to. In the case of the ITFY and ITFR, such a possibility was not possible to the international community of States, as it was the UNSC which created the Tribunals. In the case of the ICC which is a Treaty organization, the right to reservations was specifically excluded under Article 120 of the RS.

Opposition to the ICC can also be nascent: the IICJ is to date irrelevant. However, as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation has 56 member countries which together represent slightly more than 17% of the world's population, its empowerment would represent a very significant move down an alternative and antagonistic path. In its Statute, Sharia is taken as the cornerstone of law; a clearer conflict with the ICC cannot be envisaged. Adam Baczko's recent ground-breaking study of the Taliban courts in Afghanistan is foundational here. Three processes best demonstrate, in the opinion of the author of this article, the underlying difficulty in harmonizing the global north and Islamic legal systems when they confront each other in the legal arena.

First, rotation: the Taliban try to rotate judges every 6 months (Baczko, 2021, pp. 190 et seq.): whereas ICC judges every 9 years. Secondly, procedure: using professional counsel is not allowed and oral testimony is preferred (Baczko, op. cit. p. 235). Thirdly, speed: Taliban courts pride themselves on the celerity of their decision making: most judgements are made within days (Baczko, op. cit., pp. 236 and 289). From an architectural point of view, the distance

between all parties and the judge, sitting cross-legged in a private home, and the assembled lawyers in an ICC courtroom is immense. But Baczko unwittingly evokes a Gramscian principle when he says

the judicial system of the Taliban gives an advantage to people who have had a religious education, understand the language and the essential points of Islamic law [...] As the state's law is sharia'h, the Islamic jurisconsults have an interest in the state. By defending the application of a law and of judicial procedures separated from the specific interests of the conflictual parties, the ulemas universalize their own interest, that of a social group which does not have any economic capital [...] By their moral discourse and legal practice, they promote a society in which the religious form of cultural capital obtains levers to power and decision making (Baczko, op. cit., p. 297: author's translation).

There are differences between the Statutes governing the ad hoc Tribunals and the ICC, as there are between the buildings where they are situated. The ICC is in a purpose-built complex; with the exception of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, all other courts and tribunals were housed in existing buildings. When considering the physical architecture of the ICC complex, its blandness is in some way a reflection of the court's basic status among international courts. Although it is the ultimate forum, its competence is residual: it is only competent if no national court properly addresses the case. Such a limited competence was considered a very important concession by the majority of nations (which had wanted an ICC which could hear a case in all circumstances) to the United States. Complementarity *in fine* means that if a state prosecutes in acceptable circumstances an accused over whom the ICC is competent, the ICC cannot start proceedings. The clause creates a last chance, a kind of safety net to ensure that impunity cannot reign.

This concession did not suffice to bring the United States, China, India or Russia on board. A building without sharp edges or points, which projects static equilibrium, answers this requirement of not being aggressive, but blending into a quiet background. The local building regulations in the Hague comfort this view; no building, even in the international zone, even for an international organization, can escape these provisions. These laws, regulations, and decrees reflect the image of the host country, the Netherlands, as a constitutional and parliamentary monarchy. Its colonial past has been buried so deeply that it is accepted, consensually, as an

unexceptional, peaceful country. It makes common-sense that such a country should host an additional court in a city which even the UN has acknowledged as an international city of peace and justice.

IV. Hegemony by unusual classes

Gramsci's theories on hegemony have been used as explanatory building blocks progressively for more and more human activities. Law and architecture have remained relatively immune from the consequences which a confrontation with those theories would produce. There are two probable reasons for this, the first being that there is an academic and media concentration on politics and political economy as more obviously an area of struggle, power, and control than on law or architecture. The second is that the intellectuals involved in the articulation of this hegemony, i.e., the legal and the architectural profession, are protected by their consensual status as experts working on behalf of a superior ideal. In the case of law, this ideal is justice and neutrality; in the case of architecture, aesthetics and functionality. The author would propose the following *aperçu* of Gramsci's important and complex work on the place of intellectuals in a hegemonic structure.

Those who believe they are autonomous are traditional intellectuals, and those who are linked to a social class are organic intellectuals. This is not a scientific classification, only one established for analytical purposes. Indeed an intellectual or a group of intellectuals can change from organic to traditional or have characteristics of both types. So where would architects and lawyers fit in this changing society? Typically, lawyers will be traditional intellectuals. The successful exceptions (for example Cromwell, Robespierre, Gandhi) will coalesce a rising class of interests around them and establish a new hegemony. Architects are artists. As Gramsci says in Notebook 3§155 they are able to demonstrate their art on paper only; they do not actually have to build anything. It is in fact when they move to realization of their project that their intellectual typology is modified, as they then have to submit consensually to their principals, those who give them their practical task.

Architects as intellectuals

Architects are constrained by three classes of barriers. The first is financial; whatever the architects' views on the building they are commissioned to design, the principal will decide what the budget is

and what can therefore be built. This applied very much to the ICC complex and affected the final design in many ways.

The second is technical; this covers security matters (concrete walls, blast proof windows...), local building regulations (height of building, square metres per employee...) and functional requirements (media presence leading to provision of high-tech communication facilities).



Finally, aesthetics themselves must submit to the principals' wishes. A structural feature which could refer to a religious symbol (the Kaaba) had to be withdrawn but another incorporated: gardens and plants, from all the continents, were encouraged as they symbolized an apparent universal liking for greenery. But for security reasons they were placed between the towers and so only visible to those who come into the complex. This strongly diminishes the value of the public statements that they are a natural continuation of the dunes on the northern side of the ICC, themselves in a highly protected nature reserve.

Gramsci's comments on architecture and Rationalism (Gramsci, 2017), his views on Futurism (Gounalis, 2018; Holub, 2014) show how he understood that space and its divisions were strong ways for hegemony to manifest itself. The global north's ideology still rests on a scalar frame for assessing importance: the level of funds

allocated to architectural spending on spatial delimitation, control and order determine importance. Efficiency and security are invoked to insure this, suppressing alternative claims as for example closeness to the people, accountability and simplicity. Courtrooms built to handle minor offences are smaller than Assizes, just as the monetary fines often dispensed in the former weigh less than life sentences delivered in the second. In times of seemingly endless growth, as Gaëlle Dubois (2014) shows when considering the Belgian architect Poelaert's plans for the Brussels' Palace of Justice or in times of desperately holding onto a disappearing past as Miriam McKenna (2020) shows, this proportionality is lost.

Lawyers as intellectuals

Lawyers in the ICC context are theoretically united in achieving criminal law's purpose: establishing the truth. This is achieved by convincing the judges of which version of the truth best fits the facts as presented in court. Such a version arises out of a struggle, a conflict, between teams. This conflict does not occur in a vacuum; it takes place in a building whose very structure determines who can access which parts. It takes place between professionals whose expertise determines which version has the best chance of being accepted. Expertise comes at a cost, which in the case of the ICC means virtually entirely at the court's expense. This means the ASP or further down the line, the individual ratifying States and even their individual taxpayers foot the bills. The size of the ICC's budget, which is managed by the registrar, determines which situations will be investigated, which cases opened, which prosecutions initiated. Irrespective of those judicial steps, the staff will get its UN-related salary, whether there is one accused or none. Defence counsel also is paid by the ICC unless the accused is found to have sufficient means; it is the registrar who *in fine* decides on the budget for the defence. These judges, prosecutor, registrar and counsel are allocated separate spaces in the ICC building and access from one space to another is controlled. Access to the courtroom is similarly controlled to ensure physical independence; judges do not access the court the same way as defence, witnesses cannot meet the accused, judges don't share the same canteen as the others. In all these ways, the inner architecture of the building reflects the dominant ideology.

Lawyers and architects fall neatly into Gramsci's descriptions of intellectuals. They appear as principally experts and technicians with specialist knowledge; fundamentally and functionally they are the tools of the dominant group of the society where they live and work. As tools, the architects obey the rules imposed on them as far as dividing and classifying space is concerned just as the lawyers submit to their place in a hierarchy. They work in a hierarchical hegemony which imposes the proper procedure to be followed when faced with a situation leading to a predetermined range of results. And so lawyers and architects are not at all autonomous from the hegemonic socioeconomic class; the public image these classes broadcast of working on behalf of the rule of law or the satisfaction of functionality whilst being free of politics and ideologies is mythical. There is coercion operating on the architects' autonomy. Although the judges and the prosecutor are free of obvious constraint, the budget can decide which situation becomes a case and so they too are coerced.

V. Conclusion

Lawyers as motors for change

The public image of the ICC Statute and the Rules as well as the public image of a neutral and permanent ICC building, appear to reflect the primacy of the rule of law and the functionality of the building. We have seen that these images emanate from the overarching hegemony of the ASP and its working committees, where representatives of sovereign, preponderantly neo-liberal States lead the discussion and channel the decisions. One group of lawyers has the potential to fundamentally break the ICC away from this hegemony and determine an independent future: the judges. We classified three sub-groups as lawyers; the judges themselves, the prosecutor, and the registrar. In fact, they form a transnational élite whose common interest is their profession and their status. The judges of the ICC have no judicial masters; their Appeal Chamber has the final word on any matter submitted. The prosecutor, also elected for a non-renewable term of nine years, has no judicial masters either and benefits from the same élite status. Furthermore, he or she is the centre of media attention and the best pressure point for non-judicial influence. The registrar, elected for five years only but re-eligible once, is a very powerful actor through his or her

preponderant weight in all matters administrative and financial. Funding lies at the nexus of ICL's operations, and the ICC is no different than other tribunals in this matter. Donations to the Special Court for Sierra Leone increased substantially once it announced that Charles Taylor would be tried in the Hague rather than in Freetown; no link between the donations and the locus for the trial has been proven.

The judges are in a position to interpret the ICC Statute and adjust the Rules with no limit or control beyond that imposed by their conscience and their peers' consent. This countervailing strength (when put against the ASP as agents for their principals, the dominant sovereign states) has been used multiple times; the judicial class can be inferior in one relationship and hegemonic in another. The power of the judges can be seen in the following decisions: changes to the immunity of heads of state, territorial extension of jurisdiction, extension of jurisdiction from international to internal conflict, reduction of number of judges in cases of administration of justice sitting on pre-trial, trial, and appeal. The ICC went so far, in this latter case, as to invoke a neo-liberal prerequisite: 'efficiency would be improved'. The prosecutor can be the voice of this policy: the 'Policy Paper on Case Selection and Prioritization' of September 2016 (ICC 2016, pp. 5, 40-41) stated that ICC Statute crimes which result in the destruction of the environment would be given particular consideration. This when the Statute itself mentions the word environment just once.

The architecture of the ICC was considered and debated by committees established by the ASP. The manifest result of their deliberations and decisions is a balance between making the building important but also insignificant among other office buildings. As to the inside, the position of the court and the judges was visibly kept central but some kind of equilibrium was kept by enhancing the role of the prosecutor. This organ was granted a large amount of space. The registry has the most working area but this important status is occulted from the public. A preponderant working area for administration and finance is not considered the correct image for the court to broadcast.

It can be concluded from this study of the reciprocal influence which hegemony and architecture have on the operations of the ICC, that no great change was expected in the way that the worst

crimes against humanity were going to be prosecuted or the degree of impunity of the perpetrators of these crimes. The hopes of the victims past and especially future therefore must lie in the still dormant power of the judges of the ICC to seize the opportunity which they have been given to effectively use the tools to hand to create just law.

VI. Appendix

Possible adaptations to the Court and the Statute

A final consideration would be to consider what realistic alternatives can be proposed which have the greatest chance of gathering sufficient support to achieve a judicial system closer in every way to the people. The author insists on using the word 'realistic'. The RS is not only a tool for hegemonic forces, but also a utopian charter. To the extent changes are desired, these will only be achieved by slow and concerted action over many years. The author proposes hereafter a very short list of those changes which should reduce the underlying domination by certain States (moving trial away from a global north location), by judges (allowing juries and judges from States directly involved), by bureaucracy (make trials faster).

Physical adaptations

The court is not only a social complex, it is a physical complex which lacks empathy and funding. The author believes there is an inexpensive and rapid intervention which could change the face of this office building: use of the roof and parapet for visual stimulus and advertising. Coloured lights, including strobe lights with or without messaging would truly illuminate the court. During daytime, changing the fortress appearance is achievable again with the creative use of painting with light. At marginal cost the multitude of cultures involved in achieving justice and prosecuting criminals can be achieved in an up-to-date form which will also ensure continued media attention.

Statutory adaptations

We would propose five adaptations.

The first adaptation would be that no prosecution takes place in the Hague but only in the country where the crimes were committed or in the country of origin of the victims, in temporary

premises. It would be a requirement that these premises be close to operational public transport. This can be achieved by the addition of the following to Article 3:

1. The **principal** seat of the Court shall be established at The Hague in the Netherlands ('the principal host State').
2. The Court shall enter into a headquarters agreement with the **principal** host State, to be approved by the Assembly of States Parties and thereafter concluded by the President of the Court on its behalf.
3. For the Trial stage of the proceedings, the Court shall sit in the country where the serious crimes were said to be committed or from which the victims originate, unless it considers it undesirable

Rule 100 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence to be adapted in consequence.

The second adaptation, that the trial start within one month of arrest, terminate within a certain period, and that the court deliver its verdict within a certain time limit. The following changes to Article 29 would achieve this:

1. *No change suggested*
2. Notwithstanding the imprescriptibility of the crimes, no trial shall start later than 30 calendar days from the transfer of the incriminated person to the Court and no trial shall continue beyond 180 days from its commencement and a verdict delivered within 30 days thereafter

Rule 101 of the Rules of procedure on evidence to be changed by adding a third paragraph:

3. The Court shall issue its judgement within one calendar month of the 180th day of the commencement of the trial, failing which a decision of not proven will be issued by the Registrar.

It follows from a severe time limitation, that the presence of the accused should no longer be a requirement. A small addition to article 63 would solve that:

1. The accused shall **preferably** be present during the trial.

A fourth adaptation would be that the required uneven count of judges include one from the country of the indicted person and one from the victims' country if different. This would make the argumentation about victors' justice redundant and bring the judicial process closer to those more directly involved.

There shall be a new article 42:

Article 42. National judges

1. The judge elected by the Assembly of States Parties shall be in Chambers with one judge appointed by the State Party where the victims or the crimes have their origin and one judge appointed by the State Party of the country of origin of the incriminated person. Should there be plurality of sovereign territories involved, the President will determine which State Party has the preponderant interest in appointing a judge.

A consequence of involving more closely the territory where the crimes occurred in the human and practical stage of the trial is to keep the ICC for procedural matters only. The ICC in the Hague would function as a *Cour de Cassation* or Supreme Court: on points of law only. As proposed above, the Trial court would take place in the place much closer to where the crimes occurred, the victims and the perpetrators originated from.

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International Gramsci Journal

Volume 4

Issue 3 *Collective Will, Self-Consciousness,
Constitution of the Subject – in theory, and in
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Article 8

2021

Dizionario gramsciano / Gramsci Dictionary: Collective Will

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Recommended Citation

Coutinho, Carlos Nelson, Dizionario gramsciano / Gramsci Dictionary: Collective Will, *International Gramsci Journal*, 4(3), 2021, 128-133.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol4/iss3/8>

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Dizionario gramsciano / Gramsci Dictionary: Collective Will

Abstract

This is a translation into English of the Dizionario gramsciano entry 'Collective Will' by Carlos Nelson Coutinho. The concept of and need for the creation of a collective will, sometimes qualified as 'national-popular collective will', finds its most extensive development in a second draft text of Notebook 14. As such it is determining in the formation of social reality and, indeed, of democracy in Gramsci's sense of rule by the people. The emphasis placed on a collective will, 'attained through concrete individual effort', forms part of Gramsci's critique of the 'positivist and naturalist encrustations' of the determinist forms of Marxism, both of the Second International and those expressed notably at the time by Bukharin in the Soviet Union and is a factor in Gramsci's formulation of his 'philosophy of praxis'. The expression of this collective will is intimately linked to another Gramscian concept, that of the 'modern Prince' which becomes the 'protagonist of a real and effective historical drama', the aim in which is to reach concrete and rational goals: expressed otherwise it plays a key role in the struggle to create a new hegemony, an 'intellectual and moral reform', and a genuine democracy, one of whose expressions is the 'legislator', understood as a person expressing a 'specific collective will' and attempting through that 'to modify reality according to certain directive lines'. In conclusion the formation of such a collective will is essential in overcoming the direction-spontaneity (elsewhere 'leaders-led') dichotomy. (Note: Abstract written by the editors).

Keywords

Collective will, national-popular, modern Prince, legislator, causality, democracy

Collective Will / Volontà collettiva: Gramsci Dictionary

Carlos Nelson Coutinho

From his early years onward Gramsci emphasized the central role of will in the construction of a social and political order. In a celebrated article written in December 1917, after having defined the soviet Revolution as a ‘revolution against *Capital*’, in which he asserted that the Bolsheviks had overcome the ‘positivist and naturalist encrustations’ claimed to be present even in Marx, Gramsci wrote that the most important factors in history are not ‘raw economic facts, but man, men in societies, men in relation to one another, developing through these contacts (civilization), a collective, social will: men coming to understand economic facts, judging them and adapting them to their will until this becomes the driving force of the economy and moulds objective reality, which lives and moves and comes to resemble a current of volcanic lava that can be channelled wherever and in whatever way men’s will determines’ (Gramsci, 1982, p. 514; in English, 1977, pp. 34-5).¹ This idea of a ‘collective, social will’ that comes as a result of the contacts between people, and which has a determining role in the creation of social reality – even if directly influenced by the neo-idealism of Croce and above all Gentile – is very similar to the contractualism of Rousseau. It is however true that, with this voluntaristic position, Gramsci was reacting against the ‘positivist and naturalist encrustations’ that marked the position not of Marx’s thought, as he then supposed, but certainly the Marxism of the Second International.

If Gramsci had kept faith with this ‘omnipotence’ of the will, he would not have gone beyond the neo-idealism that was indebted not so much to the objective dialectic of Hegel as to the subjective dialectic of Fichte. In his mature thought, i.e. in the *Notebooks*, Gramsci completed his assimilation of historical materialism, which he would later designate the philosophy of praxis. As a result of this

¹ Hereafter we include reference to English translations after the principal reference to the Gerratana 1975 critical edition (trans. note).

theoretical conquest, he was able to deal with the concept of collective will – which remained central to his reflections – at a different level of concreteness. Now the teleological moment of human action appears as organically articulated with the causal-genetic moment. Collective will continues to play an important role in the construction of the social order, no longer as moulding reality but as a decisive moment that is articulated with the determinations that stem from objective reality, in particular from the social relations of production.

In the *Notebooks* the concept of collective will (sometimes found requalified as ‘national-popular collective will’) finds its most extensive treatment in the long first paragraph of *Notebook 13* (Gramsci, 1975, Q13§1, pp. 1555-61; 1971, pp. 125-33), which is Gramsci’s rewrite, without substantial alteration,² of Q8§21 (1975, pp. 851-3; 2007, pp. 246-9). In analysing the role of the modern Prince (that is of the revolutionary political party) in the construction of the national-popular collective will, in other words of a new hegemony, Gramsci brings out – as he had not done in his early writings – the twofold determination of will. On the one hand, he emphasizes the active role of will, thereby distancing himself from those who, following in Hegel’s footsteps, understand collective will as some-thing that imposes itself objectively, ‘spontaneously’. It seems to me that it is here that one finds the nub of Gramsci’s critique of Sorel and his conception of the ‘myth’. Gramsci says, in effect, that ‘It is true that for Sorel the “myth” found its fullest expression not in the trade union as organisation of a collective will, but in its practical action – sign of a collective will already operative. The highest achievement of this practical action was to have been the general strike – i.e. a “passive activity” , so to speak, of a negative and preliminary kind [...] *an activity which does not envisage an “active and constructive” phase of its own.* [...] The outcome was left to the intervention of the irrational, to chance (in the Bergsonian sense of “*elan vital*”) or to “spontaneity” (Gramsci, 1975, pp. 1556-7; 1971, p. 127: emphasis added – C.N.C). Gramsci goes on to say that ‘In Sorel’s case it is clear that behind the spontaneity there lies a purely mechanistic³ assumption, behind the liberty (will–

² Where deemed necessary, there is however a requalification of ‘collective will’ in the first draft as ‘national-popular collective will’ in the rewritten text (trans. note).

³ This word may also be rendered, more literally, as ‘mechanicist’, which Hoare and Nowell-Smith choose in the passage below from Q11§59 (trans. note).

life-force) a maximum of determinism, behind the idealism an absolute materialism' (Gramsci, 1975, p. 1558; 1971, p. 129).

The role of the 'modern Prince' is instead that of *actively constructing* a new collective will: in consequence Gramsci's critique is not only of Sorel but all those who do not see 'that a new collective will must be created from scratch, to be directed towards goals which are concrete and rational, but whose concreteness and rationality have not yet been put to the critical test by a real and universally known historical experience' (Gramsci, 1975, p. 1558; 1971, p. 130). On the other hand, already in this passage Gramsci draws attention to the fact that the goals must be concrete and rational, in other words must be teleologically planned starting from and taking into consideration the causal conditions objectively posed by historical reality. Such is what it seems to me is contained in the following words: 'The modern *Prince* must have a part devoted to Jacobinism (in the integral sense which this notion has had historically, and must have conceptually), as an exemplification of the concrete formation and operation of a collective will which *at least in some aspects* was an original, *ex novo* creation. And a definition must be given of collective will, and of political will in general, in the modern sense: *will as operative awareness of historical necessity*, as protagonist of a real and effective historical drama (Gramsci, 1975, p. 1559; 1971, p. 130: emphasis added – C.N.C.). It is therefore only for 'some aspects' that the collective will is the 'operative awareness of *historical* necessity' (loc. cit.). We see here the dialectical articulation between teleology and causality, between the subjective and objective moments of human praxis, of which will is the ineliminable moment. The collective will that becomes the 'protagonist of a real and effective historical drama' (loc. cit.) – in other words becomes an epistemologically constitutive moment of social reality – is the one marked by this two-fold determination.

This conception of will, now formulated at a more purely philosophical level, appears in a still clearer way in another context, where Gramsci deals with the question of 'what is philosophy?'. He says 'To escape simultaneously from solipsism and from mechanistic conceptions implicit in the concept of thought as a receptive and ordering activity, it is necessary to put the question in an "historicist" fashion, and at the same time to put the "will" (which in the last analysis equals practical or political activity) at the base of philo-

sophy. *But it must be a rational, not an arbitrary, will, which is realised in so far as it corresponds to objective historical necessities*, or in so far as it is universal history itself in the moment of its progressive actualisation. Should this will be represented at the beginning by a single individual, its rationality will be documented by the fact that it comes to be accepted by the many, and accepted permanently: that is, by becoming a culture, a form of “good sense”, a conception of the world with an ethic that conforms to its structure’ (Gramsci, 1975, Q11§59, p. 1485; 1971, pp. 345-6: emphasis added – C.N.C.). Gramsci proposes here a conception of will, otherwise identified in the last analysis with political praxis, capable of going beyond both solipsistic idealism and vulgar mechanistic materialism, which see only subjective determinism, and the objective determinism of the will, respectively.

It should be remarked that in the common context given by this dialectical articulation of teleology and causality, Gramsci conceives of different historical manifestations of collective will. The one on which he insists more strongly is that of the collective will as an element of democracy. Speaking of the differentiation between the historical evolution of Italy and France, when for the first time he uses ‘collective will’ in the *Notebooks*, Gramsci observes that ‘the beginning of the divergence between Italian and French history can be witnessed in the Strasbourg oath (about 841),⁴ namely in the fact that the people (the people-army) participated actively in history by becoming guarantors of the observance of the treaties between the descendants of Charlemagne. The people-army gave its guarantee by “swearing in the vernacular”; in other words, the people introduced their language into the history of the nation, assuming a political function of the highest importance, *presenting themselves as a collective will, as a component of a national democracy*’ (Gramsci, 1975, Q5§123, p. 646; 1996, p. 367: emphasis added – C.N.C.). The negative side of this relation between collective will and democracy is, as Gramsci notes, that the absence of such a will leads to a bureaucratic despotism. In the ‘absence of a real democracy, of a real national collective will, and hence, because of this passivity of individuals, the need for a more or less disguised despotism of the

⁴ The ‘first time’, apart that is, apart from a use in Q3§87, predating the paragraph cited here by about half a year; the oath referred to was actually sworn on 14 February 842 (editorial note).

bureaucracy is shown.⁵ The collectivity must be understood as the product of painstaking will and collective thought attained through concrete individual effort and not through a reliance on a process of destiny that is extraneous to the individual, hence the need for inner discipline, not just external and mechanical discipline' (Gramsci, 1975, Q6§79, pp. 750-51; 2007, p. 63). But the formation of a collective will can also originate from the action of a charismatic leader; in this case however, this collective will – if one can attest to its existence – is fragile. In criticizing the theory of the charismatic leader in Weber and above all in Michels, Gramsci writes: 'But did collective man exist in the past? He existed, as Michels would say, under the form of charismatic leadership. In other words, a collective will was obtained under the impetus and direct influence of a "hero", of a paradigmatic individual, *but this collective will was promoted by extraneous factors, and once formed would disintegrate, repeatedly* (Gramsci, 1975, Q7§12, p. 862; 2007, p. 165 and also 1995, p. 276: emphasis added – C.N.C.).

Collective will in Gramsci also appears together with the traditional concept of sovereignty or, more precisely, it is posed as the basis for the action of the legislator. In effect, in Q14§9 (Gramsci, 1975, p. 1663),⁶ after having claimed '1) that the individual legislator (and individual legislator must be understood not only in the restricted case of parliamentary State activity but also in every other "individual" activity that attempts, in greater or lesser spheres of social life, to modify reality according to certain directive lines), that these individual legislators cannot but undertake "arbitrary", anti-historical actions since, once their act of initiative has been put into practice, that act functions as a force in itself in the given social circle, thereby giving rise to actions and reactions that are intrinsic to this circle, beyond the act in itself; 2) that every act, legislative or of directive or normative will, must also and especially be judged objectively for the effective consequences that it may have'. Gramsci concludes (loc. cit): '3) that all legislators cannot but be abstractly and by convenience of language considered as individuals since in reality they express a specific collective will such as to render effective their "will", which is will only in so far as the

⁵ The last two words were added editorially in Gramsci (1975) to complete the syntax (trans. note).

⁶ Not yet contained in a standard English translation (trans. note).

collectivity is disposed to put it into effect; 4) that therefore all individuals who differentiate themselves from a collective will and do not attempt to create, give rise to, extend, reinforce, organize it, are simply coachman-flies,⁷ “disarmed prophets”, will-o’-the-wisps’.

Finally, in Gramsci the concept of collective will is closely bound up with that of ‘intellectual and moral reform’, in other words with the question of hegemony. In effect, an important task of the ‘modern Prince’ is indeed that of being the ‘promoter of intellectual and moral reform, which constitutes the terrain for a subsequent development of the national-popular collective will⁸ rooted in a complete and accomplished form of modern civilization. In the end the modern Prince should focus entirely on these two basic points: the formation of a national-popular collective will, of which the modern Prince is the active and operative expression, and intellectual and moral reform’ (Gramsci, 1975, Q8§2, p. 953; 2007, pp. 248-9).

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⁷ A metaphor stemming from La Fontaine’s *Fable* of the fly who thinks that due to its efforts a coach drawn by six horses manages to climb a steep hill: cf. n. 19 on p. 224 of Gramsci, 1971 (trans. note).

⁸ In the published English translation of Q8§21 (Gramsci, 2007) the word ‘will’ was inadvertently omitted; it is here reinstated (trans. note).

International Gramsci Journal

Volume 4

Issue 3 *Collective Will, Self-Consciousness,
Constitution of the Subject – in theory, and in
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Article 9

2021

Gramsci en México

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Recommended Citation

Roux, Rhina, Gramsci en México, *International Gramsci Journal*, 4(3), 2021, 134-140.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol4/iss3/9>

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Gramsci en México

Abstract

This is the Abstract of the review / book presentation by Rhina Roux of the volume Gramsci en México, edited by Diana Fuentes and Massimo Modonesi, México, UNAM.

Keywords

Gramsci, Mexico, Latin American authors

*Gramsci en México*¹

Rhina Roux

Diana Fuentes y Massimo Modonesi coordinaron y acaban de publicar *Gramsci en México* bajo el sello editorial de Itaca, la UAM Xochimilco y la UNAM. Se trata de una compilación de doce ensayos en la que sus autores reconstruyen la recepción del pensamiento de Antonio Gramsci en México: de aquel dirigente político originario de Cerdeña que, preso en las cárceles mussolinianas, se propuso emprender una investigación *für ewig* (que trascendiera en el tiempo) desarrollando el análisis de la cuestión meridional iniciado poco antes de su encierro, rastrear el “espíritu popular creativo” italiano y combatir la reducción economicista del marxismo con una elaboración teórica de altos vuelos sobre la política, el Estado, la historiografía, la cultura, la lingüística y las probables sendas de construcción de una voluntad colectiva de emancipación, pensados todos desde el mirador de las vicisitudes de la historia europea e italiana.

A lo largo de 280 páginas este libro cristaliza así un esfuerzo colectivo de recuperación de los caminos, los debates y las ideas de quienes a lo largo de cinco décadas, desde diversas disciplinas y formas del pensamiento, contribuyeron en la recepción y difusión de la obra de Gramsci en tierras mexicanas. Rescatando artículos, libros, entrevistas, seminarios, reflexiones y polémicas suscitadas por la teoría y los conceptos gramscianos, los partícipes de esta obra colectiva: Diana Fuentes, Víctor Pacheco, Aldo Guevara, Massimo Modonesi, Jaime Ortega, Martín Cortés, Diana Méndez, César de Rosas, Mario Arellano, Dante Aragón, Sebastián Gómez y Joel Ortega iluminan de este modo el impulso que significó el pensamiento de Gramsci en este lado del mundo: tanto en la reflexión teórica sobre la política, el Estado, la cultura y la subalternidad, como en el análisis concreto de los procesos culturales y las formas estatales propias de las sociedades latinoamericanas, incluida la mexicana.

¹ Texto leído el 11 de mayo de 2021 en la presentación del libro coordinado por Diana Fuentes y Massimo Modonesi, *Gramsci en México*, publicado bajo el sello editorial de Itaca, la UAM Xochimilco y la UNAM.

Esta reconstrucción no se realiza en el vacío. Considera los ritmos de las traducciones y ediciones de los escritos de Gramsci en América Latina y en México, recordados por Diana Fuentes en su contribución: desde la traducción de los textos de la edición temática de los *Cuadernos de la cárcel* dirigida por Palmiro Togliatti (cuyos primeros volúmenes se publicaron en Argentina entre 1958 y 1962, en Brasil entre 1966 y 1968 y en México a partir de 1975 por la editorial Juan Pablos), hasta la traducción al castellano de la edición crítica, en orden cronológico, de los *Cuadernos de la cárcel* de Valentino Gerratana, realizada en México en una coedición de la editorial Era y la BUAP entre 1981 y 2000. Este último un acontecimiento que, como escribe Diana Fuentes, “marcó un parteaguas para la lectura de Gramsci en Hispanoamérica”. No sólo porque, como ella señala, “fue la primera traducción de la edición crítica en una lengua distinta a la italiana y, por tanto, uno de los primeros esfuerzos por mostrar a Gramsci de forma sistemática” (p.30), sino también porque abrió la posibilidad de un estudio más riguroso, de reconstrucción filológica, de la elaboración y articulación interna de los conceptos gramscianos. Un método por lo demás explícitamente valorado por Gramsci en una carta de 1931, en la que al narrar las dificultades que encontraban sus investigaciones en las condiciones del encierro, explicaba que “la costumbre de una severa disciplina filológica, adquirida durante los estudios universitarios” quizá había arraigado en él “excesivos escrúpulos metodológicos”.²

De otra parte, el libro considera también los acontecimientos históricos que ayudan a comprender los énfasis, las claves de lectura e incluso los usos políticos de la obra gramsciana: desde la “desestalinización” decretada en la Unión Soviética en 1956 hasta el viraje “eurocomunista” de los años setenta; desde el arribo a las universidades mexicanas de intelectuales obligados al exilio por el ascenso de las dictaduras militares sudamericanas, hasta la erosión del régimen posrevolucionario mexicano que colocaba en la agenda tanto la aprehensión conceptual de la peculiar estatalidad mexicana como la cuestión universal de la relación entre socialismo y democracia.

² Antonio Gramsci a Tatiana Schucht, 3 de agosto de 1931 en *Antonio Gramsci. Cartas de la cárcel, 1926-1937*, Era/BUAP/Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, México, 2003, p. 319.

Desfilan así ante el lector el registro del primer arribo de Gramsci a México: la traducción de “Maquiavelo y el nuevo Príncipe” realizada por Víctor Flores Olea en 1959 para la Revista de la Universidad de México; los usos del legado gramsciano por los militantes del Partido Comunista Mexicano, legalizado con la reforma política de 1977; el ambiente intelectual en la Facultad de Ciencias Políticas de la UNAM, enriquecido con la presencia de intelectuales latinoamericanos como el boliviano René Zavaleta, primer director de FLACSO México y uno de los grandes intelectuales que, apropiándose de Gramsci, pensó con originalidad el fenómeno estatal desde las abigarradas formaciones sociales latinoamericanas; las contribuciones de José Aricó y Juan Carlos Portantiero, exiliados argentinos fundadores de los *Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente*, el primero descubridor de las afinidades electivas entre Gramsci y Mariátegui y el segundo autor de *Los usos de Gramsci*, publicado en 1981; las reflexiones de Carlos Pereyra, siguiendo las huellas de Gramsci, sobre la centralidad de la política, el Estado y la sociedad civil y la figura de Dora Kanoussi, antropóloga griego-mexicana central en la interpretación y en las actividades académicas de difusión y deliberación sobre el pensamiento del sardo.

Aparecen también otras dos figuras intelectuales mayores. La del filósofo Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, exiliado de la guerra civil española, quien andando su propio camino y abrevando de los manuscritos juveniles de Marx, de Lukács, Korsch y Lefebvre llegó a deslindarse de la conversión del marxismo en una ideología de Estado y a coincidir con una de las principales tesis de Gramsci frente a las reducciones economicistas: la consideración de la teoría de Marx como una *filosofía de la praxis*, de la que por cierto Gramsci encontraba un lejano precursor en Maquiavelo: el antiguo secretario de la república florentina que en aquella Italia suya fragmentada y sometida por poderes extranjeros había anclado el arte de la política en el mundo de la acción humana y no en los designios de lo divino, apelando a la intervención de la voluntad y siempre en el terreno de la realidad efectiva para la creación de nuevas relaciones de fuerzas sociales.

En una entrevista rescatada por César de Rosas el filósofo hispano-mexicano, Sánchez Vázquez, narraba: “cuando yo escribí lo que fue la primera edición de mi libro *Filosofía de la praxis* [1967],

en realidad yo no pude beneficiarme plenamente por no disponer de este conocimiento del pensamiento de Gramsci. Y cuando empecé a leer a Gramsci, con detenimiento, fue para mí o tuvo para mí el carácter de un verdadero deslumbramiento, tomando en cuenta el tipo de marxismo en que nos movíamos en aquellos tiempos” (p. 172).

De otra parte, el libro recupera también lo que Mario Arellano describe como “una difusa y espectral presencia de las ideas y conceptos gramscianos” en la sociología histórica de Pablo González Casanova, quien recibió los escritos de Gramsci de manos de Vicente Lombardo Toledano, estudiándolos “en un contexto en que el marxismo llegaba a través de los escritos del existencialismo francés, el reformismo socialdemócrata y la ortodoxia del socialismo realmente existente” (p.176). González Casanova, escribe Arellano, utilizaría el concepto gramsciano de hegemonía “para dar cuenta de las formas heterogéneas en que se presenta la lucha de clases en América Latina, así como para indagar en las posibilidades efectivas de una política hegemónica de las clases subalternas en el contexto de las luchas de liberación nacional centroamericanas ocurridas en la segunda mitad del siglo XX” (p. 181).

Y aparecen también por último, bajo las plumas de Dante Aragón, Sebastián Gómez y Joel Ortega, respectivamente, las apropiaciones de Gramsci en los estudios de las culturas populares mexicanas (particularmente en los trabajos de Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, Héctor Díaz Polanco, García Canclini y Gilberto Giménez); en los estudios de etnografía educativa promovidos en los años setenta y ochenta por la mexicana Elsie Rockwell y la exiliada argentina Justa Ezpeleta y, finalmente, en las diversas y divergentes interpretaciones de la historia y del Estado mexicano realizadas en lo que va del nuevo siglo.

A esta constelación de figuras y pensamientos conformada en la recepción y apropiación de Gramsci en México debemos agregar con justicia a una figura intelectual ausente en el libro: la del filósofo mexicano Francisco Piñón Gaytán, autor de *Gramsci: prolegómenos filosofía y política*, publicado en 1987 y, más recientemente, de *La modernidad de Gramsci: ética, política y humanismo*, publicado en 2016. No sólo porque Piñón ha formado muchas generaciones de estudiantes en sus cursos en la Facultad de Ciencias

Políticas de la UNAM y en la UAM Iztapalapa, sino por su profundo conocimiento tanto de Gramsci como de Hegel, Benedetto Croce y Antonio Labriola, en los que Gramsci también formó su pensamiento. Y debemos también considerar el trabajo intelectual de Adolfo Gilly, quien en su larga pesquisa de una visión de la historia a contrapelo de las narraciones oficiales, encontró en Gramsci una “revolución metodológica”, una “alteración en el orden del discurso de la historia”, es decir, por quién y por dónde empezar: “no por ‘los de arriba’ ni por ‘los de abajo’, sino precisamente por ese punto de fricción donde se opera la juntura; donde la actividad se llama resistencia; donde la creación y la actividad de las clases subalternas se revelan como propias y no como si fueran una simple función del mando dominante”.³

Sería imposible comentar aquí en detalle los argumentos, las ideas, los encuentros y desencuentros contenidos en la rica producción intelectual que, sobre y desde Gramsci, puede encontrarse en los terrenos de la ciencia política, la sociología, la filosofía, la historia, la antropología y la pedagogía en los últimos cincuenta años. Me permito únicamente rescatar algunas ideas que encuentro en mi lectura para ilustrar el estímulo que ha significado Gramsci en la reflexión en tierras mexicanas.

En los terrenos de la teoría política destaca por supuesto el concepto gramsciano de *Estado integral*, que entrelazado en los *Cuadernos de la cárcel* con la elaboración teórica del concepto *hegemonía* y la reflexión sobre los criterios metodológicos para la reconstrucción de la historia de las clases subalternas, iluminó la trama de la moderna forma estatal en toda su complejidad, trascendiendo lo que habitualmente se entiende por “Estado” e incluyendo a la “sociedad civil” como uno de sus momentos constitutivos. En este horizonte de comprensión se ubicaba, a mi juicio, la reflexión teórica de Carlos Pereyra rescatada por Jaime Ortega: una reflexión que de la mano de Gramsci y a contrapelo de las visiones instrumentalistas, sugería en 1979 un concepto de Estado más procesual y dinámico: entenderlo no como una cosa o un instrumento, sino como “un campo de relaciones objetivado en

³ Adolfo Gilly, *Historia a contrapelo. Una constelación*, Era, México, 2006, ps.85-86.

un complejo y diversificado aparato institucional” y atravesado de arriba abajo, como toda entidad social, por la lucha de clases (p. 126).

Otra veta de fértiles análisis explícitamente inspirados en Gramsci se produjo en el terreno de lo que Dante Aragón ubica, con precisión, como los “estudios de las culturas populares en México”. “Popular”, aclara Aragón, “entendido no identitariamente, sino como una multiplicidad de saberes y prácticas en posición desigual y en relación de múltiple tensión” (p. 216). Este campo de estudios, que arrancó en 1979 con un Seminario de Culturas Populares organizado en el CIESAS por Guillermo Bonfil Batalla e impartido por el antropólogo italiano y gramsciano Alberto Mario Cirese, detonó ideas y consideraciones metodológicas que pueden seguir estimulando lo que Dante Aragón llama la “exploración del Gramsci popular mexicano”. Entre ellas el abordaje que hizo Bonfil Batalla de la cultura popular considerando la específica subalternidad mexicana y latinoamericana, es decir, en palabras del antropólogo mexicano, aquellas que “corresponden al mundo subalterno en una sociedad clasista y multiétnica de origen colonial”. “Esta consideración crítica de las culturas populares, es decir, ni su rechazo aristocrático típicamente croceano, ni su apología folklorista, supone un claro gesto gramsciano”, escribe con razón Aragón (p. 201).

Otra idea presente en los *Cuadernos de la cárcel* y rescatada por García Canclini en un ensayo de 1986 (“Gramsci y las culturas populares en América Latina”), refiere a la comprensión de la cultura popular en un proceso dinámico de intercambios y condicionamientos conflictivos con la cultura de las élites, de la cual nosotros podemos también derivar una comprensión más procesual, relacional y dinámica, de la hegemonía, usualmente entendida como sinónimo de “ideología dominante”.

“Gracias a esa consideración crítica de las culturas, que se hacía posible con la lectura de Gramsci”, escribe Aragón, “los estudios de las culturas populares escapaban, así, de populismos etnicistas identitarios que tenderían (y tienden) a romantizar las culturas populares, o bien de folclorismos que reducían la complejidad de los fenómenos populares, fetichizando ciertas prácticas u objetos deshistorizados” (p. 207).

Cierro por último la celebración de la publicación de este libro compartiendo plenamente la sugerencia de Dante Aragón de “repensar muy gramscianamente nuestra cuestión meridional, es decir, nuestra necesidad de analizarnos críticamente para traducirnos y fortalecer así a las hegemonías populares, evitando la salida cesarística o la pasivización” (p. 216) e invitando también a las nuevas generaciones a seguir explorando, estudiando y apropiándose creativamente de la obra abierta y del pensamiento vivo de Nino Gramsci.

International Gramsci Journal

Volume 4

Issue 3 *Collective Will, Self-Consciousness,
Constitution of the Subject – in theory, and in
practice; Architecture, Professions and
Hegemony / Reviews*

Article 10

2021

Una via gramsciana alla comprensione del populismo

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Recommended Citation

Mellino, Miguel, Una via gramsciana alla comprensione del populismo, *International Gramsci Journal*, 4(3), 2021, 141-148.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol4/iss3/10>

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Una via gramsciana alla comprensione del populismo

Abstract

This is the Abstract of the review in Italian by Miguel Mellino of the volume Gramsci e il populismo (ed. Guido Liguori), Milano, Unicopli, 2019, containing the proceedings of the 2018 International Gramsci Seminar on Gramsci and populism.

Keywords

Gramsci, Laclau-Mouffe, populism, left populism, IGS Seminar, people-nation

Una via gramsciana alla comprensione del populismo

Miguel Mellino

I. Nell'ascesa del populismo come fenomeno politico il nome di Gramsci finisce sempre per comparire nella filigrana di ogni dibattito o tentativo di definizione come il solito giano bifronte: tanto nella trincea di chi promuove politiche populiste in nome di un presunto popolo quanto dall'altra parte della barricata, e cioè da chi cerca di criticarle o di smascherare le loro mistificazioni ideologiche. Questa nuova raccolta (*Gramsci e il populismo*¹), proposta dall'International Gramsci Society, frutto di un seminario svoltosi a Roma nel 2018, si inserisce nell'imponente dibattito attuale sul populismo cercando proprio di apportarvi un chiarimento - parola non scelta qui a caso dato lo scopo del testo - di tipo gramsciano. La storia del populismo, come concetto e come fenomeno sociale, è certamente lunga e complessa, secolare, impossibile da contenere entro alcun significato politico univoco. È questo il primo problema da affrontare nel tentativo di dare un'interpretazione o definizione di questo concetto. Puntuale su questo nodo Frosini nel suo saggio: "Populismo è un termine scivoloso e teoricamente controverso... poiché esso è affetto dall'ambiguità costitutiva della stessa nozione moderna di 'popolo', contemporaneamente parte e tutto, classi spossessate e totalità della popolazione" (p. 58). Si tratta di un presupposto giustamente ricorrente all'interno della raccolta. E tuttavia si potrebbe ridurre la difficoltà dell'impresa, crediamo, fissando come punto di partenza una genealogia di più breve durata del ritorno di questo concetto: in particolare gli ultimi venticinque anni o l'alba del XXI secolo. Il ritorno globale del populismo è sicuramente una delle novità politiche più importanti che il nuovo secolo ha portato con sé. Ci sembra che privilegiare questo snodo temporale, per risalire poi anche indietro nel tempo, consente non solo di arricchire il dibattito, di renderlo meno sfuggente, barocco e scolastico, ma soprattutto di cercare nuove connessioni storiche, diverse narrazioni del presente, e quindi anche del passato. Nella

¹ *Gramsci e il populismo*, (a cura di G. Liguori), Unicopli, Milano, 2019.

rinnovata attualità del dibattito sul populismo appare indubbio che vi è un evento spartiacque. È difficile non riconoscere che il ritorno di questo vecchio concetto al centro dell'arena politica non sia stato indotto dall'arrivo al potere dei governi di centro-sinistra nell'America Latina nell'alba del XXI secolo. Governi che, come non accadeva da decenni, si sono autodefiniti come "populisti" in senso positivo e affermativo, per legittimare sia la loro origine e identità insorgente, in quanto espressioni di grandi insurrezioni popolari, sia il loro posizionamento politico. Sulla traccia di questo fenomeno è emerso poi il testo che ha maggiormente scosso il dibattito: *La razón populista* (2005, trad. it. 2008), di Ernesto Laclau². Il grande successo di questo scritto non fece che alimentare l'attenzione politologica per il termine. Questa scelta "latinoamericana" del populismo come significante non solo del proprio campo di azione e di governo, ma anche di un'appartenenza identitaria e di una memoria storica subalterna, ebbe l'effetto di ripolitizzare un termine divenuto, sempre di più, soprattutto nel Nord del mondo e sulla scia dell'inarrestabile ascesa del neoliberalismo come unica "razionalità sociale e culturale di governo"³, un semplice "stigma", un marchio di barbarie, arretratezza, demagogia, incompletezza, ovvero una sorta di scomunica che segnava apriori l'esclusione o la non-appartenenza alla tradizione civile-liberale-occidentale e, per implicito, "bianca" dei movimenti politici non graditi ai centri di comando del capitalismo globale. La crisi del neoliberalismo come modo di accumulazione globale, con il concomitante riemergere di sovranismi e populismi affermativi, di destra e sinistra, anche negli Stati Uniti e in Europa non fece che dare un'ulteriore spinta al ritorno del "momento populista". E più di recente a fomentare ancora il dibattito è stato anche lo stesso esaurimento delle esperienze "neo-populiste" latinoamericane, consumate dalle proprie contraddizioni politiche. Sta qui la preistoria, per dirla con Benjamin, del ritorno del populismo sullo scenario globale. Si tratta di qualcosa che occorrerebbe tenere sempre presente prima di affrontare l'argomento a suon di astratte e secolari ricostruzioni storiche.

² *La razón populista*, Fondo del cultura económica, México, 2005; trad.it. *La ragione populista*, Laterza, Roma, 2008.

³ P. Dardot, Ch. Laval, *La nuova ragione del mondo*, Roma, Deriveapprodi, 2013.

II. Non che questa genealogia non percorra implicitamente la raccolta. Anzi, si potrebbe anche sostenere che è il suo silenzioso *trait d'union*, il punto nodale dell'interrogazione collettiva proposta dal testo, il punto di partenza del chiarimento gramsciano offerto. E tuttavia tale genealogia non ci viene mai resa del tutto esplicita: non è certo per mancanza, ma per scelta. Questo “dire e non dire” ci sembra un aspetto importante da interrogare. E qui è il titolo stesso a presentarsi in modo sintomatico: *Gramsci e il populismo*. Un titolo chiaro, autorevole, ma è anche un titolo che, visto dall'esterno, balbetta, come direbbe il R. Barthes de *Il piacere del testo*⁴. Balbetta nel suo riferimento continuo a un “populismo” sans-phrase, a un concetto che lascia presupporre, come ogni concetto che si rispetti, un'astrazione storica, e cioè un fenomeno sociale e politico in qualche modo continuo, formale, atemporale, pur nelle sue ambivalenze. Populismo di allora e populismo di oggi. Se ci lasciamo (tras)portare da questa precomprensione implicita nel titolo, potremmo essere indotti a cercare qualcosa che il testo, come anticipato, dice e non dice, qualcosa su cui (volontariamente) balbetta, appunto, e che propone solo come seconda mossa: un'analisi del populismo contemporaneo alla luce di Gramsci. Ci pare infatti che la piega del testo finisca per andare in un'altra direzione, che ci immette in un percorso assai utile, ma parallelo: non tanto *Gramsci e il populismo* (anche contemporaneo), quanto forse *Gramsci sul populismo*. È la stessa struttura del testo a suggerirci questa sua precomprensione. Quindi molto spazio - di grande chiarezza e rigore filologico (come accade spesso per i testi prodotti dalla *International Gramsci Society*) - all'analisi dell'approccio di Gramsci non solo a quello che egli considerava i movimenti populistici del suo tempo, ma anche alle sue concezioni di “popolo” e di “nazionale-popolare”. Su questi argomenti il testo presenta contributi assai utili e suggestivi (Cingari, Mordenti, Frosini, Meta), e per nulla scontati, data una certa vulgata corrente del Gramsci presunto populista. Minore lo spazio invece dedicato alle figure del populismo contemporaneo: da una parte accenni generici, spesso già connotati di “giudizi di valore” non distanti dal senso comune liberale dominante (Anselmi), dall'altra qualche piccola e interessante incursione (Cortés, Campolongo, Durante, Forenza), piccola nel senso delle poche pagine concesse rispetto ad altri argomenti

⁴ R. Barthes, *Il piacere del testo*, Torino, Einaudi, 1973.

più strettamente filologici. Mentre a prevalere, in diversi dei saggi, come confronto con il contemporaneo, è il corpo a corpo con il grande nemico di oggi del gramscismo italiano: l'apostata Laclau (Voza, Prospero, Anselmi). Ieri gli studi culturali, la teoria post-coloniale, i subaltern studies, la destra neo-con, oggi il fuoco dell'artiglieria è rivolto a Laclau (e Mouffe). Misurato, giustamente imparziale e contenuto in alcuni dei saggi (nell'introduzione di Liguori, per esempio), decisamente eccessivo (Voza, Prospero), e anche presuntuoso (Anselmi), in altri. Chiara la lezione fondamentale che ci propone il testo, soprattutto alla luce del dibattito e della congiuntura attuale, non solo sul populismo in sé, quanto sugli usi "populisti" del pensiero gramsciano. Gramsci non era certo populista, anche se guardava con interesse al populismo del suo tempo, ma sempre dall'interno di quello che egli considerava il processo complessivo di emancipazione delle classi popolari italiane e non come mera celebrazione acritica della cultura popolare. L'andare verso il popolo di Gramsci, la sua concezione del "popolo-nazione" o del "nazionale-popolare" (non nazional-popolare, come qui spesso si sottolinea), stava a significare il contrario del populismo, e cioè il popolo che esce dalla subalternità, "che è se non egemone almeno avviato verso una nuova egemonia" (Mordenti, p. 44). Molto suggestivo, soprattutto alla luce del presente, e per certi versi problematico, il complemento a tale interpretazione offerto dal saggio di Frosini, da cui emerge una sensibilità diversa di Gramsci per il populismo, ovvero la concezione secondo cui per Gramsci il populismo non fosse né positivo né negativo in sé, quanto qualcosa di inevitabile a causa della profondissima crisi dello stato-nazione italiano dei primi decenni del XX secolo. Il metodo gramsciano sul populismo – è quanto si desume dal testo – ci sollecita dunque a scendere sul terreno analitico dei contenuti concreti dei diversi movimenti populistici per una loro valutazione politica, e non a restare sul piano esterno delle mere definizioni formali e quindi della propria e rassicurante buona coscienza *civile* borghese. Gramsci, si potrebbe dire con le parole di Sartre, sul populismo, e nonostante un suo "anti-populismo teorico" (Prospero, p. 100), invitava dunque a "sporcarsi le mani". Il populismo può essere letto non solo come un sintomo, ma anche come un punto di non ritorno, della crisi dello stato-nazione moderno borghese. Sta qui il nucleo del suo approccio: nel cercare di cogliere la razionalità

(popolare) interna del populismo, anziché nel denunciare, in modo classista ed elitario, un mero abbaglio del potere sulle masse subalterne (Cingari, Mordenti). Si tratta di un'indicazione di metodo fondamentale, ancora una volta, alla luce del presente e dell'atteggiamento di buona parte delle sinistre globali rispetto a questo fenomeno. E tuttavia *Gramsci e il populismo*, se un appunto costruttivo si può fare, finisce per fermarsi consapevolmente laddove si è fermato buona parte del dibattito contemporaneo: nell'affrontare la questione populista soltanto dal piano del discorso, senza indagare a fondo le politiche reali dei diversi movimenti populistici contemporanei, e cioè la loro eventuale razionalità (popolare) interna nel rapporto con le classi popolari di oggi (ad eccezione del pur breve e stringato saggio di Cortés). A prevalere nel testo quindi è più l'illustrazione del metodo gramsciano di lettura del populismo, che non una sua reale messa in pratica.

III. Sta dunque in questo ritorno filologico su Gramsci alla luce del presente la parte migliore e più stimolante del testo. Meno sul viceversa, e qui soprattutto per quanto riguarda le critiche ricorrenti, e oramai ripetitive, a dire la verità, a Laclau. Non perché a volte non siano (filologicamente) giuste, ma perché il confronto con la teoria politica del filosofo argentino quasi mai prevede un passaggio approfondito attraverso i processi economici, le trasformazioni sociali e movimenti politici concreti con cui Laclau ha comunque cercato di misurarsi. È sicuramente legittimo, anche utile, mostrare filologicamente l'irriducibilità di Gramsci ai ragionamenti di Laclau: ma sembra una strada senso unico, per dirla ancora con Benjamin, e senza un altro sbocco. Forse vale la pena ricordare che il testo di Laclau sul populismo, come il resto della sua opera, si propone come una risposta politica alle trasformazioni intercorse nel capitalismo globale e nella conflittualità sociale dagli anni sessanta in poi, in particolare con l'ascesa dei movimenti sociali (femministi, antirazzisti, pacifisti, ecologisti, contro-culturali, ecc.) e delle politiche dell'identità, ma anche del post-fordismo, del neoliberalismo (pur quasi mai chiamandolo con il proprio nome) e, non da ultimo, del populismo latinoamericano. La prospettiva di Laclau cerca di fare i conti con fenomeni come il declino della classe operaia industriale come figura centrale del lavoro e della ricomposizione politica, con le trasformazioni dello Stato moderno

e delle soggettività politiche e culturali alla luce delle dinamiche sempre più interconnesse del capitale globale, così come con il divenire sempre più eterogeneo del lavoro e sempre più multiculturale delle nazioni, e, infine, anche se non viene quasi mai detto, con l'eredità del colonialismo nel Sud del mondo (si veda qui i suoi primi testi). Un altro elemento importante da ricordare, per una comprensione più dall'interno della logica del suo impianto, è che la sua opera è venuta alla luce in una congiuntura storica in cui buona parte delle classi lavoratrici europee, soprattutto in Gran Bretagna ma non solo, cominciavano a esprimere un esplicito e determinato consenso verso politiche socialmente regressive, anti-classiste, nazionaliste, razziste e patriarcali. Da questo punto di vista, il suo lavoro, pur se diverso nell'orientamento, andrebbe messo a fianco a quello di autori come, molto prevedibilmente, Stuart Hall, ma anche N. Poulantzas, A. Gorz e molti altri. Bene o male, è questo il suo punto di partenza, e sta qui il senso della sua operazione teorico-politica. Laclau dunque non propone una teoria astratta, per così dire, del populismo. E per ciò che ci riguarda la sua idea di "ragione populista" forse è qualcosa di più di una semplice teoria "imparziale" o "formale" del "politico" in quanto tale, come viene spesso suggerito nel testo, anche se a volte è la stessa impostazione di Laclau ad alimentare questa idea. *La razón populista*, è questa la nostra proposta, può anche essere letta come una sorta di filosofia della storia, per così dire, dei perdenti o dei subalterni, ovvero come il ritorno della "differenza" di tutti quei gruppi, classi e soggetti che la lunga e sanguinaria marcia della modernità capitalistica occidentale ha sommerso nell'ombra, nella morte e nell'oblio. I sanculotti, i comunardi, i descamisados, gli indigeni, gli schiavi, i proletari – le masse su cui il capitalismo moderno occidentale ha costruito il proprio dominio. Il "popolo" di Laclau, in questo senso, può anche essere concepito come il frutto della sedimentazione storica e culturale di un'identità e di una memoria popolare e subalterna negata e repressa, come un soggetto politico che nel mondo contemporaneo si manifesterà sempre esposto (in senso anti-essenzialista e anti-sciovinista), ovvero attraverso "l'articolazione egemonica" di diverse "catene di equivalenze" e l'imprevisto emergere di diversi "significanti vuoti". Espressione di un "popolo" più parte (subalterna) che tutto (sovrano), sempre da (ri)costruire a seconda dei posizionamenti e dei diversi momenti

storici, il populismo di Laclau non può che essere espressione plebea, conflittuale, agonistica, ma soprattutto, a differenza dei populismi del Nord del mondo, progressista e inclusiva: è quanto trasmette la sua stessa genealogia storica della ragione populista delineata nel suo testo. Non tanto “egemonia come lotta per l'apparenza” (Voza, p. 91), quanto lotta per l'egemonia culturale e politica dei subalterni, da intendere qui non certo seguendo soltanto le fratture della classe in senso meramente economicistico: il populismo divide, nega ogni pretesa di universalità, di habermasianesimo consenso razionale, di mera amministrazione tecnocratica dell'esistente, per affermare invece le posizioni di parte o meglio, per dirla nel linguaggio di Laclau, l'inconciliabilità di popolo e anti-popolo. Il problema dunque non sembra tanto una presunta prospettiva “culturalista” di Laclau quanto - come mostra non solo il suo dibattito con autori come S. Žižek, J. Butler, A. Negri, J. Rancière e altri, ma anche all'interno stesso della sinistra latino-americana – il rapporto di autonomia relativa tra ogni singola istanza della catena, la catena stessa e il significante vuoto, ovvero la questione di ciò che potremmo chiamare il “dualismo di potere”, per riprendere qui l'espressione di Mezzadra e Neilson⁵, tra i diversi movimenti politici, “l'articolazione egemonica” di cui fanno parte, le istituzioni (lo stato) e la leadership. Difficile non vedere qui l'influenza dell'esperienza peronista in Argentina sulla sua caratterizzazione positiva, affermativa e antagonista (anche anticoloniale) del populismo; non di una sua “idealizzazione del peronismo” (Anselmi, p. 109) – francamente non sappiamo come prendere un giudizio così sprezzante – ma della sua interpretazione dell'esperienza storica, politica e culturale di lotta reale di quel movimento in quanto principale significante politico non solo della classe operaia, ma soprattutto del sottoproletariato rurale e urbano, degli esclusi e degli emarginati argentini, ovvero di una nazione in lotta per la propria liberazione dal secolare dominio coloniale-imperiale durante almeno tre decenni 1945-1975. A volte si ha l'impressione che Laclau non faccia che proiettare sul suo concetto di populismo, non solo le caratteristiche del peronismo come movimento nazionale-popolare, ma anche gli effetti della sua irruzione (come espressione politica di una grande sommossa proletaria) nella cornice oligarchica e razzista della democrazia liberale-coloniale argentina di

⁵ B. Neilson, S. Mezzadra, *Le operazioni del capitale*, Roma, Manifestolibri, 2021.

inizio Novecento. Non poche volte lo stesso Laclau, già militante del Partido Socialista de la Izquierda Nacional in Argentina, ha affermato che la sua opera è una sorta di finale e personale resa dei conti con l'eredità del peronismo. In ogni caso, si tratta di una concezione del populismo che, avendo come riferimento la storia dei popoli oppressi dell'America Latina, potrebbe rivelarsi di grande utilità per una decolonizzazione della filosofia e delle scienze politiche europee, e cioè della loro "geopolitica eurocentrica della conoscenza"⁶.

IV. Si può condividere o meno la nostra lettura, non è importante, ma in ogni caso crediamo che debba essere alla luce di una riflessione su tutte queste considerazioni che occorre valutare la reinterpretazione laclausiana del pensiero gramsciano. Inoltre, nel momento di valutare la reinterpretazione laclausiana del pensiero gramsciano si dovrebbe tenere sempre presente anche un altro punto importante: Gramsci è soltanto uno degli elementi – e forse nemmeno quello centrale – di questa complessa e composita macchina teorica. Non si tratta dunque di ridurre il confronto a una questione meramente epistemologica – materialismo contro culturalismo, primato della classe contro primato del discorso, ecc. – bensì di affrontarlo in virtù di una disamina e di un posizionamento nei confronti della costituzione materiale del proprio presente. Mettere Laclau più al vaglio dell'interpretazione della conflittualità sociale e dell'analisi dei processi produttivi nelle diverse congiunture storico-geografiche, anche da un punto di vista gramsciano, che non al vaglio di un mero confronto filologico con i *Quaderni*. D'altronde, è lo stesso Liguori a ricordarci che la lettura di Gramsci promossa da Laclau è "volutamente infedele, rapsodica e permeata da altre filosofie". Conviene forse invertire il percorso: non Laclau alla luce di Gramsci, ma il contrario. Prendersi sul serio Laclau, sempre che se ne sia convinti che ne valga la pena. Potrebbe essere un modo di pervenire a qualcosa di diverso da ciò che si sa già in anticipo. Ci pare che se il confronto "gramsciano" con il populismo di Laclau partisse proprio da qui, anziché dall'invettiva facile, sarebbe sicuramente non solo più stimolante, ma soprattutto più costruttivo dal punto di vista politico.

⁶ E. Lander (a cura di), *La colonialidad del Saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales. Perspectivas Latinoamericanas*, Buenos Aires, Clacso, 2001.

International Gramsci Journal

Volume 4

Issue 3 *Collective Will, Self-Consciousness,
Constitution of the Subject – in theory, and in
practice; Architecture, Professions and
Hegemony / Reviews*

Article 11

2021

A Gramscian Way to Understanding Populism

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Recommended Citation

Mellino, Miguel, A Gramscian Way to Understanding Populism, *International Gramsci Journal*, 4(3), 2021, 149-157.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol4/iss3/11>

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A Gramscian Way to Understanding Populism

Abstract

This is the Abstract of the English-language version of the review by Miguel Mellino of the volume *Gramsci e il populismo* (ed. Guido Liguori), Milano, Unicopli, 2019, containing the proceedings of the 2018 International Gramsci Seminar on Gramsci and populism.

Keywords

Gramsci, Laclau-Mouffe, populism, left populism, IGS Seminar, people-nation

A Gramscian Way to Understanding Populism

Miguel Mellino

I. In the rise of populism as a political phenomenon Gramsci's name always insinuates itself into any debate or attempt at a definition, commonly appearing on both sides of the barricade: in the trenches of those who foster populist policies in the name of some presumed 'people', as much as on the other side, of those seeking to criticize these policies or unmask their ideological mystifications. The new selection (Liguori (ed.) 2019¹), published under the auspices of the Italian section of the International Gramsci Society as the outcome of a seminar held in Rome in 2018, finds its place in the current lively debate on populism, in its attempt to introduce some element of clarification – a word chosen not merely by chance given the aim of the volume – of a Gramscian type.

Populism as a concept and a social phenomenon certainly has a long and complex history, a long-standing one impossible to limit to any one unambiguous political meaning. And this constitutes the first problem to be faced in trying to give an interpretation or definition of the concept. On this point Fabio Frosini is precise when he states that 'populism is a slippery and theoretically controversial term [...] since it is affected by an ambiguity constituted by the modern notion itself of "people", at one and the same time a part and the whole, the dispossessed classes and the totality of the population' (p. 58). This is a premise that, rightly, runs through the entire group of essays. And yet the difficulty of the undertaking may be reduced, in our view, by fixing as the starting point a genealogy of shorter duration for the return of this concept: more precisely this would be the last quarter of the twentieth century or the dawn of this century. The world-wide return of populism is without doubt one of the most important new political factors that the new century has brought. In our opinion to give pride of place to this nexus of time, in order then to go back in time, allows not only an enrichment of the debate, making it less fleeting, less

¹ *Gramsci e il populismo*, G. Liguori (ed.), 2019; page numbers of authors cited in the text refer to this volume.

baroque, less scholastic; above all it allows us to find new historical connections, different narratives of the present and hence also of the past. In the renewed relevance of the debate on populism, it comes across without doubt that there is a watershed event. It is not difficult to identify the return of this old concept to the centre of the political arena as the result of the advent to power of the centre-left governments in Latin America at the turn of the twenty-first century. These are governments that, as had not happened for decades, defined themselves as ‘populist’ in a positive and affirmative sense, in order to legitimize both their origin and their insurgent identity, in so much as they were expressions of great popular insurrections, and their consequent political positioning.

Following on in this line came the book that more than any other changed the face of the debate: Ernesto Laclau’s *La razón populista* (2005). The great success of this volume created renewed attention for the term in the political science community. This ‘Latin American’ choice of populism as signifying not only its field of action and of government, but also of an identitarian belonging and a subaltern historical memory, had the effect of re-politicizing a term that, most of all in the North of the world, in the wake of the irresistible rise of neoliberalism as the only ‘social and cultural rationale of government (Dardot and Laval, 2014), had become a simple stigma, a sign of barbarism, backwardness, demagoguery, incompleteness, in other words a sort of excommunication that a priori marked the exclusion or the non-belonging to the civil-liberal-western and implicitly ‘white’ tradition of the political movements welcome to the centres of command of global capitalism. The crisis of neo-liberalism as a global mode of accumulation, with the concomitant re-emergence of populist and national sovereignty movements, on the right and on the left, even in the United States and in Europe, only gave further impetus to the return of the ‘populist moment’. And more recently, adding fuel to the debate, has been the exhaustion of the Latin American ‘neo-populist’ experiences, worn down by their political contradictions. To call Benjamin to our aid, here lies the pre-history of the return of populism to the global scene. We are dealing with something that must always be held in consideration before tackling the argument in terms of abstract and age-old historical reconstructions.

II. It is not that this genealogy is not implicitly present throughout the collection. Rather, it even may be argued that it forms its silent *trait d'union*, the nodal point of the collective interrogation proposed by the text, the departure point for the Gramscian clarification offered there. And yet this genealogy is never made wholly explicit to the reader, not certainly by omission but by choice. This 'saying and not saying' seems to the present reviewer an important aspect on which to question ourselves. And it is the title itself – *Gramsci and populism* – that is presented to us symptomatically. The title, judged from the outside, is clear and authoritative but, as Barthes would say, it also one that stammers.² It stammers in its continual reference to a 'populism' *sans-phrase*, to a concept that leaves one to presuppose, like any self-respecting concept, a historical abstraction, in other words a social and political phenomenon that, while maintaining its ambiguity, is in some way is continuous, formal, atemporal: the populism of the past and today's populism. If we allow ourselves to be transported by this pre-understanding implicit in the title, we might be induced to seek something that the text, as suggested at the start, says and does not say, something over which the text – on purpose – stammers, and which it proposes only as a second move: an analysis of contemporary populism in the light of Gramsci.

It seems to us that the direction taken by the text ends up by going elsewhere, taking us along a very useful, but parallel, path: not so much that of *Gramsci and populism* (including contemporary populism) but *Gramsci on populism*, and it is the structure of the text itself that suggests this pre-comprehension. Much space – of great clarity and philological rigour (as often is the case in the *International Gramsci Society* publications) – is therefore devoted to what Gramsci considered to be the populist movements of his time, but also to his concept of the 'people' and of the 'national-popular'. On these subjects the volume contains contributions that are very useful and rich in their implications (Cingari, Mordenti, Frosini, Meta), not at all to be taken for granted given a certain vulgate of Gramsci as a presumed populist. Less space is devoted to the figures of contemporary populism. On the one hand, there are generic mentions, often connoted by 'value judgments' not far from the dominant liberal common sense (Anselmi) and, on the other, some small yet

² Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1976.

interesting incursions (Cortéz, Campolongo, Durante, Forenza), small in the sense of only a few pages conceded as compared with other, more strictly philological topics. At the same time what prevails in a number of contributions having reference to the present, is a 'hand-to-hand combat' with today's great enemy of Italian Gramsci studies: the 'apostate' Laclau (Voza, Prospero, Anselmi). Yesterday it was cultural studies, post-colonial theory, subaltern studies, the neo-con right, today the artillery fire is directed against Laclau (and Mouffe). This is measured, justly impartial and contained, in some of the essays (in Liguori's *Introduction* for example), but decidedly excessive in those of Voza and Prospero, and even presumptuous in others (the case of Anselmi). The lesson that the text offers us is clear, most of all in the light of the debate and the current conjuncture, not only as regards populism in itself, so much as the 'populist' uses to which Gramscian thought is put. Gramsci was certainly no populist even though he looked with interest at the populism of his time, but always from the inside of what he considered the overall process of the emancipation of the popular classes in Italy and not as a mere acritical celebration popular culture. Gramsci's 'going to the people', his conception of the 'people-nation' or of the 'national-popular' (*nazionale-popolare* and not *nazional-popolare* as a number of contributors are at pains to point out) is there to signify the opposite to populism, namely the people leaving behind their subaltern nature, 'which albeit not hegemonic, is at least on the road to a new hegemony' (Mordenti, p. 44).

Very rich in its implications, especially for the present, and in some ways problematic, is the complement to this interpretation offered in the essay by Frosini, from which a different sensitivity of Gramsci's towards populism emerges, a conception which in Gramsci's assessment in itself is neither positive nor negative, but rather something that was inevitable because of the exceptionally deep crisis that the Italian nation-State was going through in the first decades of the twentieth century. According to the text, Gramsci's method vis-à-vis populism urges us to descend to the analytical level of the concrete contents of the various populist movements in order to make a political assessment of them, and not to remain on the external plane of mere formal definitions and hence of one's own reassuring good bourgeois *civil* consciousness.

To express this with Sartre's words, Gramsci – despite his 'theoretical anti-populism' (Prospero, p. 100) – invited us to 'dirty our hands'. Populism can be read not only as a symptom, but also as a point of no return, of the crisis of the modern bourgeois nation-State. It is here that we find the core of his approach: to seek to understand the (popular) rationality within populism, rather than denouncing it in a classist and elitist fashion, as a mere blinding deception of power exercised over the subaltern masses (Cingari, Mordenti). Yet once more it is an indication of basic method, in the light of the present and the attitude of a good part of the global left towards this phenomenon. And still, *Gramsci and Populism* – here making a constructive point in its favour – finishes by knowingly pausing over the point where much of the contemporary debate has stopped: in dealing with the question of populism solely on the discursive plane, without going really into depth into real politics of the different contemporary populist movements, and therefore of their eventual (popular) rationality inside the relation among today's popular classes (here the short but telling essay by Cortés is the exception). It is, then, more the illustration of Gramsci's method of reading populism that is the prevailing element in the volume and not its real putting into practice.

III. It is therefore in this philological return to Gramsci in the light of the present that we find the best and most stimulating part of the volume. Less in the other respect, and here above all as regards the recurrent, and also to put it bluntly repetitive, criticisms of Laclau. This is not because at times they are not (philologically) correct, but because the challenge represented by the political theory of Laclau almost never foresees an in-depth passage through economic processes, social transformations and concrete political movements against which Laclau has in any case attempted to measure himself. It is certainly legitimate and even useful to show philologically the irreducibility of Gramsci to the reasoning of Laclau, but it seems, to bring Benjamin once more into play, a one-way street, constituting additionally a blind alley. Perhaps it is worthwhile to recall that Laclau's writing on populism, like moreover the rest of his work, puts itself forward as a political response to the transformations that have taken place in global capitalism and in the social conflict processes from the 60s of the

last century onward, in particular with the rise of social movements (those of feminism, anti-racism, peace, ecology, counter-culture etc.) and the politics of identity, but also of post-Fordism, of neo-liberalism (while hardly ever calling it by its proper name) and, not least, Latin American populism. Laclau's perspective tries to come to terms with phenomena such as the decline of the industrial working class as the central figure of labour and political recomposition, and with the transformations of the modern State and political and cultural subjectivities in the light of the ever greater interconnections dynamics of global capitalism. At the same time, he attempts to deal with the ever more heterogeneous future of labour and ever more multicultural future of nations, and finally, though hardly ever mentioned, with the legacy of colonialism in the South of the world (cf. his early publications).

Another important aspect to recall, for understanding more from within the logic of its structure, is that his work saw the light in a historical conjuncture in which a good part of the European working classes, most of all but not solely in Great Britain, were beginning to express an explicit and determinate consensus towards socially regressive, anti-classist, nationalistic, racist and patriarchal policies. From this point of view his work, while different in its orientation, could well be placed alongside that, very predictably, of authors such as Stuart Hall, but also Nikos Poulantzas, André Gorz and many others. For better or worse this is his starting point and it is here that we see the sense of his theoretical-political operation. Laclau thus does not propose an abstract theory, so to speak, of populism. And as regards his idea of 'populist reason' perhaps it is something more than a simple 'impartial' or 'formal' theory of the 'political' in itself, as is often suggested in the text, even though it is sometimes Laclau himself who fuels this idea. *On Populist Reason* may, we are here suggesting, be read as a sort of philosophy of history, so to speak, of the losers or of the subalterns, in other words of the 'difference' of all those groups, classes and subjects that the long march of western capitalist modernity has thrown into the shadows, into death, into oblivion. The sans culottes, communards, decamisados, the indigenous, slaves, proletarians: the masses on whom modern western capitalism has constructed its dominion. Laclau's 'people' in this sense may also be conceived as the fruit of the historical and cultural sedimentation of an identity and of a

popular and subaltern memory that has been negated and suppressed, as a political subject that in today's world will always manifest itself ex-post (in an anti-essentialist and anti-chauvinist sense), i.e. through the 'hegemonic articulation' of various 'chains of equivalence' and the unforeseen emergence of different 'empty signifiers'. Expressions of a 'people' that is more a (subaltern) part than a (sovereign) whole, ever to be (re-)constructed according to the positionings and the various historical moments, Laclau's populism cannot but be a plebeian, conflictual, agonistic expression, but above all, one that is different from the populisms of the North of the world, one of a progressive and inclusive nature: this is what is transmitted by the historical genealogy of populist reason outlined in his work. It is not so much 'hegemony as the struggle for the appearance' (Voza, p. 91) as the struggle for the cultural and political hegemony of the subalterns, understood here certainly not as following class fractures in a merely economic sense: populism divides, denies any pretence at a rational consensus of universality à la Habermas, of mere technocratic administration of the existent, in order to assert the positions of one side: or better, using the language of Laclau, the irreconcilability of the people and the anti-people. The problem does not therefore seem to be one of a presumed 'culturalist' perspective of Laclau as much – as is shown by his debates with authors such as Slavoj Žižek, Judith Butler, Antonio Negri, Jacques Rancière and others, as well as with those on the Latin American left – as the relation of relative autonomy between each single instance in the chain. The chain itself and the empty signifier, in other words the question of what, to use the expression of Mezzadra and Neilson (2019), we may call the 'dualism of power' among the difference political movements, the 'hegemonic articulation' in which there form part the institutions (the State) and the leadership. It is difficult here not to see the influence of Peronism in Argentina on Laclau's positive, affirmative and antagonistic (and also anti-colonial) characterization of populism: not an 'idealization of Peronism' of his (Anselmi, p. 109) – quite frankly we do not understand how to take such a disparaging judgment – but its interpretation of the historical, political and cultural experience of the real struggle of that movement in its role as a main political signifier not only of the Argentinian working class but of the rural and urban sub-

proletariat, the excluded and the marginalized: in other words of a nation fighting for its liberation from centuries-old colonial-imperial domination over a period of at least three decades from 1945 to 1975. At times one has the impression that Laclau is doing nothing other than project his own concept of populism, not only the characteristics of Peronism as a national-popular movement, but also the effects of its irruption (as the political expression of a great proletarian revolt) within the oligarchic and racist framework of Argentinian liberal-colonial democracy of the beginning of the twentieth century. On not a few occasions Laclau, a former militant of the Partido Socialista de la Izquierda Nacional (Socialist Party of the National Left) in Argentina, declared that his work is a sort of final and personal settling of accounts with the legacy of Peronism. In any case, we are dealing with a conception of populism that, in referring to the history of the oppressed peoples of Latin America, could show itself to be of great use for a decolonization of European philosophy and political sciences, that is to say of their 'Eurocentric geopolitics of knowledge' (Lander, 2001).

IV. It is of no importance whether our reading is shared by others, but in any case we believe that Laclau's reinterpretation of Gramsci's thought must be assessed in the light of a reflection on all these considerations. Moreover, at the moment of assessing Laclau's reinterpretation of Gramsci's thought, it is necessary to take into account another important point: Gramsci is only one of the elements – and perhaps not the central one – of this complex and composite theoretical machine. It is not, then, a matter of reducing the juxtaposition to a merely epistemological question – materialism as against culturalism, primacy of class against primacy of discourse, and so on – but of dealing with it in virtue of an examination and an adoption of position vis-à-vis the material constitution of one's own present. One should subject Laclau more to the measure of the interpretation of social conflictuality and analysis of the productive processes in the different historico-geographical conjunctures, even from a Gramscian point of view, than to the measure of a mere philological comparison with the *Notebooks*. Moreover, it is Liguori himself who reminds us that the reading of Gramsci promoted by Laclau is 'on purpose unfaithful, rhapsodic and permeated by other philosophies'. It is therefore of use to

follow the journey in the reverse direction: not Laclau in the light of Gramsci, but the opposite – that is to take Laclau seriously, always in the idea that it is worth the trouble of so doing. This could be a way of arriving at something different from what is known at the start. In our opinion, it seems that if the ‘Gramscian’ juxtaposition with the populism of Laclau started precisely from this point, rather than from facile invective, it would certainly be more stimulating, but above all more constructive from the political point of view.

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International Gramsci Journal

Volume 4
Issue 3 *Collective Will, Self-Consciousness,
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Article 12

2021

Ciliberto e Vacca: Per l'autonomia filosofica del marxismo

Alessio Panichi

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Recommended Citation

Panichi, Alessio, Ciliberto e Vacca: Per l'autonomia filosofica del marxismo, *International Gramsci Journal*, 4(3), 2021, 158-172.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol4/iss3/12>

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Ciliberto e Vacca: Per l'autonomia filosofica del marxismo

Abstract

This is the Abstract of the double review in Italian by Alessio Panichi of the volumes *In cammino con Gramsci* by Giuseppe Vacca (Roma, Viella, 2020) and *La fabbrica dei Quaderni. Studi su Gramsci* by Michele Ciliberto (Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2020). The former analyses Gramsci's elaboration of the philosophy of praxis and the latter looks how Gramsci's reading of the national history and cultural tradition of Italy informed the concepts developed in the Prison Notebooks.

Keywords

Philosophical autonomy of Marxism, role of intellectuals, hegemony, Reformation-Renaissance, Italian history

Per l'autonomia filosofica del marxismo: egemonia, filosofia della praxis e il nesso Riforma-Rinascimento

Alessio Panichi

I. Il biennio 2019-2020 è stato indubbiamente felice per quanto riguarda gli studi su Antonio Gramsci, poiché ha visto la pubblicazione di un numero cospicuo di contributi, che, seppure da angolature e con finalità differenti, hanno concorso a fare nuova luce sulla riflessione gramsciana, tanto carceraria quanto precarceraria, nonché sulla storia (sempre più globale) della sua ricezione, passata e presente. Si pensi, tanto per fare pochi ma significativi esempi, al volume collettaneo *Revisiting Gramsci's Notebooks*,¹ di cui Gianmarco Fifi ha lungamente parlato sulle pagine di questa rivista;² oppure al bel libro di Francesca Antonini, *Caesarism and Bonapartism in Gramsci. Hegemony and the Crisis of Modernity*,³ che ha il merito di indagare con serietà e rigore filologico due categorie chiave del pensiero di Gramsci, dando così un contributo di rilievo alla sua comprensione; infine, a un altro volume collettaneo, *Gramsci in the World*,⁴ che mostra bene come l'interesse per i *Quaderni* e dunque la loro pluridecennale fortuna siano stati – e continuino a essere – nutriti da preoccupazioni sorte sul terreno della lotta politica e culturale, svoltesi nell'Italia del secondo dopoguerra e in altre “province” del mondo grande e terribile. Questi esempi potrebbero essere facilmente moltiplicati e forse, a conti fatti, varrebbe la pena dedicare loro una rassegna puntuale e accurata, utile se non altro a lumeggiare le direzioni di marcia della gramsciologia contemporanea, in buona parte debitrice

¹ *Revisiting Gramsci's Notebooks*, edited by F. Antonini, A. Bernstein, L. Fusaro, R. Jackson, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2019.

² G. Fifi, *Past and Present, Subalternity and Revolution*, «International Gramsci Journal», 3, 4, 2020, 169-184.

³ F. Antonini, *Caesarism and Bonapartism in Gramsci. Hegemony and the Crisis of Modernity*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2020.

⁴ *Gramsci in the World*, edited by R.M. Dainotto, F. Jameson, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2020.

agli ottimi lavori svolti, da quindici anni ad oggi, in vista dell'*Edizione Nazionale* degli scritti di Gramsci.⁵

In ogni caso, restano indubbie la varietà e la rilevanza storiografica dei contributi apparsi lo scorso anno, fra cui meritano particolare attenzione, insieme alle opere citate, due raccolte di saggi, che si vogliono qui esaminare e mettere a confronto al fine di coglierne specificità e comunanze, differenze e assonanze. Si tratta dei volumi di Giuseppe Vacca, *In cammino con Gramsci*, e di Michele Ciliberto, *La fabbrica dei Quaderni. Studi su Gramsci*, pubblicati rispettivamente da Viella⁶ e dalle Edizioni della Normale.⁷ La scelta di prendere in esame proprio questi due volumi si giustifica alla luce non solo di una concordanza esterna e, per così dire, formale, trattandosi appunto di raccolte di scritti già apparsi in diverse sedi; ma anche del rapporto di amicizia e collaborazione che lega da tempo i due studiosi e che, pochi anni fa, è sfociato nella curatela a quattro mani di una importante antologia degli scritti e dei discorsi di Palmiro Togliatti alla filosofia della praxis, o meglio, all'impegno profuso da Gramsci sia per ripensare il marxismo sulla scia della Rivoluzione d'ottobre e sulla scorta di un confronto critico con la tradizione nazionale, sia per sostenerne l'autonomia filosofica contro la riduzione crociana a canone interpretativo della storia.⁸ Ma procediamo con ordine, iniziando dal volume di Vacca, che si compone di tre saggi (pubblicati tra il 1977 e il 1991)⁹ e segue altri suoi contributi recenti sul pensatore sardo, in particolare *Vita e pensieri di Antonio Gramsci 1926-1937* e *Modernità alternative. Il*

⁵ A conferma e testimonianza di questo quindicennio di studi cfr. *Un nuovo Gramsci. Biografia, temi, interpretazioni*, a cura di G. Francioni, F. Giasi, Roma, Viella, 2020.

⁶ G. Vacca, *In cammino con Gramsci*, con un saggio di M. Mustè, Roma, Viella, 2020.

⁷ M. Ciliberto, *La fabbrica dei Quaderni. Studi su Gramsci*, Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2020.

⁸ Cfr. F. Frosini, *La "filosofia della praxis" nei Quaderni del carcere di Antonio Gramsci*, «Isonomia. Rivista di Filosofia», 2002, p. 5; Id., *Filosofia della praxis*, in *Le parole di Gramsci. Per un lessico dei Quaderni del carcere*, a cura di Frosini, G. Liguori, Roma, Carocci, 2004, p. 94.

⁹ I tre saggi stanno a testimoniare anche un cambiamento complessivo di temperie storica e culturale, perché, come osservato da Fabio Frosini, si collocano cronologicamente «nell'epicentro di una duplice trasformazione: per un verso, coprono il salto dalle ultime propaggini del 'trentennio glorioso' all'avvio della 'rivoluzione neoconservatrice'; per un altro, vanno dagli ultimi tentativi di 'uso' politico del pensiero di Gramsci dall'interno del Pci (il convegno fiorentino del 1977) all'emergere di uno scenario quasi del tutto inedito, in cui l'assenza di diretti referenti politici si accoppiava al rivolgimento completo del corpus gramsciano, con l'avvio dell'edizione nazionale dei suoi scritti» (F. Frosini, *In cammino con Gramsci*, *un pensiero declinato al futuro*, «il manifesto», 22 agosto 2020, consultato online in data 23/08/2021).

Novecento di Antonio Gramsci,¹⁰ con i quali si pone in relazione dialogica e va a comporre una sorta di “trittico gramsciano”.

II. Nel primo dei tre saggi, *La «questione politica degli intellettuali» nei Quaderni del carcere*,¹¹ Vacca sottolinea come la riflessione gramsciana nel suo insieme, innervata dalla volontà di riformulare e arricchire la teoria marxista, si sviluppi sotto lo stimolo congiunto di precisi eventi e fatti storico-politici. Innanzitutto, la Rivoluzione d'ottobre e la nascita, in Europa e nel mondo, del primo stato operaio, che non può non incidere «sullo statuto teorico del marxismo» e, al tempo stesso, fare chiarezza sui limiti teorici e pratici del marxismo secondointernazionalista, mostrandone l'ineadeguatezza ad affrontare i compiti posti dal presente. Poi, la necessità di tornare a tessere la trama dell'azione politica dopo la sconfitta, a livello europeo, del movimento operaio – una sconfitta il cui processo di causazione deve essere analizzato e tenuto a mente nel prosieguo del lavoro organizzativo e analitico. Infine, la consapevolezza, ben radicata nella mente di Gramsci, delle profonde differenze che intercorrono fra l'Occidente e l'Oriente europei, tra l'Italia e la Russia, l'approfondimento delle quali costituisce «uno dei punti fermi di tutta la sua ricerca e un cardine della sua ottica e della sua teoria rivoluzionaria».¹² Ebbene, Vacca è dell'avviso che Gramsci, vedendo con lucidità questo insieme di fattori, connetta lo sviluppo del marxismo a due opzioni teorico-politiche organicamente connesse: da una parte, il rifiuto definitivo dell'economicismo, che, oltre a impedire tale sviluppo, rende la teoria marxista subalterna «alle nuove correnti della cultura borghese», privandola *ipso facto* di quell'autonomia filosofica sulla cui importanza Vacca pone più volte l'accento; dall'altra parte, l'accoglimento della concezione leniniana dell'egemonia, che sviluppa e rende attuale il marxismo sia «nel campo della scienza storica, sia nel terreno della strategia politica».¹³

¹⁰ G. Vacca, *Vita e pensieri di Antonio Gramsci 1926-1937*, Torino, Einaudi, 2012; Id., *Modernità alternative. Il Novecento di Gramsci*, Torino, Einaudi, 2017. Si veda da ultimo Id., *Il comunismo italiano. Una cultura politica del Novecento*, Roma, Carocci, 2021.

¹¹ Pubblicato in *Politica e storia in Gramsci*, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi gramsciani, a cura di F. Ferri, vol. I, Roma, Editori Riuniti-Istituto Gramsci, 1977, pp. 439-80.

¹² G. Vacca, *In cammino con Gramsci*, cit., pp. 16, 34.

¹³ Ivi, pp. 35-6.

Va da sé che questa seconda opzione ponga al centro del ragionamento gramsciano la funzione degli intellettuali, che Vacca non esita a definire «determinante», nonché «l'elaborazione della cultura complessiva e degli apparati egemonici attraverso i quali una classe, giustificando la propria funzione sul terreno produttivo, diviene 'classe di governo' dell'intera società».¹⁴ A tal proposito, Vacca compie una delle non poche puntualizzazioni che, relative a nodi tematici diversi, attraversano il volume e rispondono all'obiettivo di smentire quelle che (a suo dire) sono interpretazioni errate e fuorvianti del pensiero gramsciano. In questo caso, l'intento chiarificatore riguarda il concetto-chiave di intellettuale organico, che per Vacca non «può essere confuso, come comunemente avviene, con la nozione di intellettuale di partito» e – ciò che più conta – acquista senso «se riferito ai rapporti dei gruppi intellettuali con le classi fondamentali e alla esplicazione delle loro competenze tecniche». Detto altrimenti, essere «una categoria intellettuale organica ad una classe vuol dire incorporare competenze tecniche e assolvere funzioni dirigenti specifiche di un determinato modo di produzione al fine di garantire la riproduzione sociale complessiva».¹⁵

Nel primo saggio, dunque, Vacca si sofferma sulla centralità della teoria dell'egemonia e del ruolo degli intellettuali nella ricostruzione gramsciana del marxismo, maturata al fuoco dei più recenti sviluppi della storia d'Europa e d'Italia. Nel secondo, come si evince fin dal titolo, *Dal materialismo storico alla filosofia della praxis*,¹⁶ lo studioso riprende queste tematiche, pur con accenti diversi, e le mette in relazione con l'idea di filosofia della praxis, nella quale individua il punto di approdo di un tale sforzo ricostruttivo. Va notato inoltre che l'indagine di Vacca muove nuovamente dal nesso storia-teoria o, per meglio dire, dalle implicazioni teoriche e gnoseologiche dei cambiamenti storici avviati dalla Rivoluzione bolscevica.

Per la ricostruzione del marxismo Gramsci parte dal fatto che, per la prima volta nella storia, in un territorio determinato le classi subalterne, guidate da Lenin, avevano dato vita a un loro Stato. Sul piano teorico, questo si traduce

¹⁴ Ivi, p. 46. Sul ruolo degli intellettuali quali «funzionari o commissari» dell'egemonia cfr. G. Cospito, *Egemonia*, in *Le parole di Gramsci*, cit., p. 90; Id., *Egemonia*, in *Dizionario gramsciano 1926-1937*, a cura di G. Liguori, P. Voza, Roma, Carocci, 2009, pp. 268-9.

¹⁵ G. Vacca, *In cammino con Gramsci*, cit., pp. 49-50.

¹⁶ Tratto da G. Vacca, *Il marxismo e gli intellettuali. Dalla crisi di fine secolo ai Quaderni del carcere*, Roma, Editori Riuniti, 1985, pp. 31-101.

nella rilevanza «gnoseologica» del «principio teorico-pratico dell'egemonia». Da ciò Gramsci trae alcuni elementi per [...] rielaborare le categorie *gnoseologiche* del materialismo storico e non a caso adotta il termine di «filosofia della praxis».¹⁷

In realtà, il nesso storia-teoria spiega per Vacca non solo il processo di formazione della filosofia della praxis, lo sfondo su cui si staglia e dal quale emerge, ma anche la sua finalità e, di conseguenza, i motivi di fondo che hanno spinto Gramsci a adottarla. Motivi che a detta dello studioso sono riconducibili al «punto nodale del programma di ricerca gramsciano», ossia alla convinzione che il materialismo storico, se vuole ricostruire l'efficacia strategica e teorica delle sue categorie, deve liberarsi dalle pastoie dell'economicismo e, soprattutto, «avere una nozione chiara della *propria storicità*». Compito precipuo della filosofia della praxis è proprio quello di impartire tale nozione attraverso, per così dire, un doppio movimento concettuale, che comporta, da un lato, la liquidazione di «ogni residuo trascendentalismo», dall'altro il recupero «della *storicità* integrale delle categorie». Insomma, la filosofia della praxis, concepita da Gramsci come un «compito critico, immanente allo sviluppo storico del marxismo», è funzionale al conseguimento di un obiettivo preciso: «ripristinare la connessione genetica e funzionale delle categorie con le condizioni storiche della loro validità», garantendo così «il carattere *critico e storico-sociale*» di queste stesse categorie.¹⁸

L'enfasi messa su un obiettivo del genere, che è la cifra costitutiva del secondo saggio, sembra venire meno nel terzo e ultimo capitolo del libro, *I Quaderni e la politica del Novecento*,¹⁹ dove il fuoco dell'attenzione di Vacca si sposta sul legame fra tre elementi teorici già emersi in precedenza, ossia tra l'autonomia filosofica del marxismo, la filosofia della praxis e la concezione dell'egemonia, di cui l'autore mette a fuoco le peculiarità mediante alcuni chiarimenti e osservazioni. Occorre però precisare, a scanso di equivoci, che anche in questo caso il lavoro critico di Vacca prende le mosse dalla constatazione che la riflessione carceraria di Gramsci, almeno a partire da una certa altezza cronologica, si sviluppa lungo le due direttrici (tradizionalmente intrecciate) dell'analisi storica e dell'elaborazione politico-programmatica. Vacca osserva infatti che

¹⁷ G. Vacca, *In cammino con Gramsci*, cit., pp. 96-7.

¹⁸ Ivi, pp. 97, 102-3.

¹⁹ Tratto da G. Vacca, *Gramsci e Togliatti*, Roma, Editori Riuniti, 1991, pp. 5-114.

i *Quaderni*, dalla metà del '30 in avanti, «sono rivolti principalmente a indagare i limiti di fondo del movimento operaio e ad elaborare i fondamenti (e alcuni indirizzi essenziali) d'un nuovo programma, destinato innanzitutto al movimento comunista internazionale».²⁰ Svolta questa indagine e giunto alla conclusione che la sconfitta del socialismo dipende in ultima analisi dalla «sua mancata autonomia filosofica», dal fatto cioè di non aver definito «un proprio fondamento della politica», Gramsci pone alla base di siffatto programma l'elaborazione della filosofia della praxis, che va dunque a costituire «l'orizzonte generale e il principale obiettivo programmatico» dei *Quaderni*. Inoltre, continua Vacca raffinando e approfondendo la propria analisi, Gramsci radica tale elaborazione nel terreno teorico e pratico dell'egemonia, che si configura come la condizione indispensabile al «raggiungimento d'una autonomia filosofica compiuta» da parte del marxismo.²¹

Ho appena detto che Vacca dedica parte del capitolo a delucidare alcune caratteristiche peculiari del concetto gramsciano di egemonia; nel far ciò, egli ritorna sul rapporto fra Gramsci e Lenin, confermando e arricchendo quanto affermato in *La «questione politica degli intellettuali» nei Quaderni del carcere*, e offre una chiave di lettura che colloca questo concetto nel più vasto contesto storico-politico, correlandolo con la *vexata quaestio* del rapporto fra etica e politica. In primo luogo, infatti, Vacca scrive che il pensatore sardo, quando rimarca la necessità di «elaborare una concezione della politica in chiave di egemonia» e «ne specifica i contenuti nuovi», indica nel leader bolscevico il punto di partenza e coglie il «valore innovativo» della sua idea di egemonia rispetto a Marx e al marxismo. Al contempo, però, Vacca, anziché credere che la teoria gramsciana dell'egemonia si esaurisca *tout court* in quella leniniana, ridimensiona l'importanza di questa connessione a tutto vantaggio di un'altra «fonte»: «la teoria dell'egemonia a cui egli [*scil.* Gramsci] si rifà nei *Quaderni* non è tanto quella elaborata da Lenin o nei dibattiti dell'Internazionale comunista fra il '23 e il '24, quanto piuttosto quella sviluppata dalla scienza politica europea dopo il 1870».²² In secondo luogo, l'autore mette in guardia dal ritenere,

²⁰ Sul rapporto fra Gramsci e il comunismo internazionale si veda ora *Gramsci nel movimento comunista internazionale*, a cura di P. Capuzzo, S. Pons, Roma, Carocci, 2020.

²¹ G. Vacca, *In cammino con Gramsci*, cit., pp. 111-14, 120-21.

²² Ivi, pp. 112-13, 115. Che Gramsci metta a punto una concezione della politica non assimilabile del tutto a quella leniniana trova conferma, nelle pagine di Vacca, a proposito della

come spesso avviene, che la dottrina gramsciana dell'egemonia si riduca a enfatizzare l'importanza del consenso ai fini dell'esercizio della direzione politica. Se così fosse, se Gramsci si limitasse cioè a «voler richiamare l'attenzione sul consenso», si tratterebbe «di un richiamo teoreticamente banale e sarebbe solo uno sfoggio di retorica (inconcepibile in un “autore” come Gramsci) il fatto che egli parli di “dottrina dell'egemonia”». Le cose stanno diversamente per Vacca, che, pur senza negare il valore decisivo del consenso, interpreta la dottrina in questione come un «programma di subordinazione gerarchica della politica-potenza [...] alla politica-egemonia», ovvero come «un tentativo di risolvere l'antinomia fra etica e politica connessa al ruolo dello Stato nella “costituzione del moderno”». Tentativo, questo, che è coronabile dal successo solo nella misura in cui la politica-egemonia, contrariamente alla dottrina dello Stato-forza e fondandosi sui principi di «relazionalità e reciprocità dei soggetti», attua il «coordinamento degli interessi generali del gruppo dominante con quelli dei gruppi subordinati».²³

III. In estrema sintesi, possiamo dire che il quadro interpretativo offerto da Vacca ruota attorno a tre punti essenziali: 1) la Rivoluzione d'ottobre e la sconfitta del movimento operaio (italiano ed europeo) convincono Gramsci della necessità di rielaborare le categorie della teoria marxista, con l'obiettivo di preservarne la forza analitica e garantirne l'efficacia strategico-politica in uno scenario ormai mutato; 2) questa rielaborazione deve condurre il marxismo alla consapevolezza circa la storicità delle sue

teoria del partito, sulla quale lo studioso si concentra in polemica con quegli interpreti che, facendo leva proprio su questa teoria, denunciano il carattere totalitario del pensiero gramsciano. Vacca non potrebbe essere più chiaro al riguardo: «Diversamente dalla teoria marxista classica del partito, di Lenin/Kautsky o del “marxismo occidentale”, per Gramsci fra classe e partito non c'è un rapporto espressivo: il partito non è il “portatore” della “coscienza di classe” “dall'esterno” [...]. Nei *Quaderni* [...] il rapporto espressivo fra classe e partito è rifiutato esplicitamente» (ivi, p. 160). L'inclinazione di Gramsci ad attribuire al lemma «egemonia» un significato diverso da quello «cristallizzato» nelle diverse versioni del marxismo è sottolineata da G. Cospito, *Egemonia*, in *Le parole di Gramsci*, cit., p. 74. Cfr. Id., *Egemonia*, in *Dizionario gramsciano*, cit., p. 269, dove si legge che Gramsci, convinto della necessità di ritornare alle «fonti originarie» del marxismo, attribuisce a Lenin la paternità del concetto di egemonia. Cfr. inoltre F. Frosini, *Riforma e Rinascimento: il problema della “unità ideologica tra il basso e l'alto”*, in *Scuola, intellettuali e identità nazionale nel pensiero di Antonio Gramsci*, a cura di L. Capitani, R. Villa, Roma, Gamberetti, 1999, pp. 106-8; Id., *La “filosofia della praxis”*, cit., pp. 40-41; Id., *Filosofia della praxis*, cit., p. 110; Id., *Lenin, Nikolaj (Vladimir Il'ič Ul'janov, detto)*, in *Dizionario gramsciano*, cit., pp. 458-9.

²³ G. Vacca, *In cammino con Gramsci*, cit., pp. 118, 162, 168-9.

categorie e al raggiungimento dell'autonomia filosofica, senza la quale ogni via al comunismo è sbarrata o si rivela un vicolo cieco; 3) entrambe le mete sono conquistabili in virtù dell'elaborazione della filosofia della praxis, il cui fondamento risiede nella dottrina dell'egemonia, formulata da Gramsci sulla base degli insegnamenti leniniani e – in misura maggiore – dei più recenti sviluppi della politologia europea.

Rispetto a questo quadro interpretativo, il volume di Ciliberto, composto da sei saggi pubblicati tra il 1980 e il 2013, presenta importanti affinità e differenze rilevanti, che emergono fin dalle pagine introduttive, nelle quali gli spunti critici e le considerazioni storiografiche si intrecciano a osservazioni schiettamente autobiografiche – ciò che del resto non sorprende, poiché l'attenzione alla componente autobiografica delle esperienze intellettuali è uno dei tratti caratteristici del lavoro di Ciliberto.²⁴ Ebbene, nella introduzione lo studioso, al pari di Vacca, rileva che all'origine della riflessione carceraria di Gramsci vi sono problemi di natura storico-politica, solo che tali problemi – e qui sta il punto – sono relativi soprattutto, se non esclusivamente, agli uomini e alle cose della vecchia Italia. Si tratta infatti delle «ragioni della sconfitta subita ad opera del fascismo»²⁵ e dell'«analisi della storia italiana fin dall'antica Roma», finalizzata a «comprendere ciò che era accaduto e stava accadendo, penetrando, per così dire, fino alle ultime radici della lunga crisi italiana per riprendere l'iniziativa e riorganizzare il proprio campo anche sul piano teorico».²⁶

La scelta di stringere in un nesso le pagine dei *Quaderni* e il confronto con la storia d'Italia contraddistingue il primo saggio, *La fabbrica dei Quaderni (Gramsci e Vico)*,²⁷ che è anche il primo contributo, in ordine di tempo, dedicato da Ciliberto al pensatore sardo. Qui lo studioso afferma che «un problema essenziale» dei *Quaderni* è quello di fare i conti, in maniera profonda e sistematica, con «la tradizione nazionale italiana» che va da Vico a Gentile

²⁴ Esemplare in proposito è il volume *Niccolò Machiavelli. Ragione e pazzia*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2019.

²⁵ Su questo punto cfr. F. Antonini, *Caesarism and Bonapartism in Gramsci*, cit., p. 152: «In a certain sense, it can be said that the entire analysis in the *Prison Notebooks* is shaped by Gramsci's will to understand the causes of the success of Mussolini's dictatorship (and, as a consequence, of the failure of the workers' movement)».

²⁶ M. Ciliberto, *La fabbrica dei Quaderni*, cit., p. 17.

²⁷ Originariamente pubblicato con il titolo *Come lavorava Gramsci (varianti vichiane)*, «Dimensioni», 15, giugno 1980, pp. 9-53.

passando per Spaventa e Croce, allo scopo non solo di individuarne la fisionomia e le radici autentiche «al di là dell'“autobiografia” idealistica», ma anche di effettuare un processo di revisione del marxismo, o meglio, di alcune sue correnti e tendenze. In una parola, nei *Quaderni* «il distanziamento dalla ‘storia’ idealistica s'intreccia ad un movimento di pensiero che sottopone, contemporaneamente, a revisione organica la filosofia della storia del socialismo massimalistico e del marxismo ‘ortodossistico’». Da questo punto di vista, Ciliberto si muove sulla stessa lunghezza d'onda di Vacca, nel senso che sottolinea come Gramsci, al termine di questa revisione, giunga a interpretare il marxismo come filosofia della praxis, nonché a definirne la specificità e l'autonomia rispetto all'«intera tradizione speculativa del mondo moderno» e in rapporto a quella italiana.²⁸ Per dirla con le parole di Eugenio Garin, la cui eco risuona in queste pagine cilibertiane, Gramsci si è «consapevolmente calato tutto nella tradizione culturale italiana più viva» e la «filosofia della prassi, se respinge ogni mistificazione speculativa, rifiuta ogni esperantismo; traduce il marxismo in italiano, ossia intende rispondere alle richieste maturate lungo la storia italiana in modo ad esse appropriato».²⁹

Ciliberto si interroga inoltre sulle ragioni che spinsero Gramsci a compiere un tale «movimento di pensiero» e fornisce una risposta diversa ma complementare a quella offerta da Vacca; una risposta che rimanda alla particolarità della fase storica italiana, per la precisione all'«esigenza di un'iniziativa politica contro il fascismo», e riposa sull'assunto per cui nei *Quaderni* l'analisi teorica è

²⁸ M. Ciliberto, *La fabbrica dei Quaderni*, cit., pp. 24-6, 34.

²⁹ E. Garin, *Gramsci nella cultura italiana*, in Id., *Con Gramsci*, Roma, Editori Riuniti, 1997, pp. 52, 60. Cfr. ivi, pp. 53-4: «Di fronte alla cultura tradizionale, a tutta la vicenda di un paese quale è sboccata nella situazione del presente, di fronte alla cultura presente, la filosofia della prassi tende, non a rifiuti radicali o a scelte interessate, ma a una visione comprensiva, la più comprensiva possibile, capace di intendere le radici di ogni termine in contrasto [...]. In questi termini l'elaborazione della filosofia della prassi fa corpo con una storia d'Italia, dei suoi gruppi intellettuali, non isolati nelle loro idee o nei loro scritti, ma visti in rapporto con le forze reali operanti, e con quei popoli la cui voce solo di rado sembra affiorare o essere ascoltata e conservata». Sulla presenza di Gramsci nel lavoro e nella riflessione di Garin cfr. A. A. Santucci, *La 'filologia vivente': Eugenio Garin e il metodo di Gramsci*, «The Italianist», 16, 1, 1996, pp. 364-75; G. Sasso, *Garin e Gramsci*, «Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana», 5, 2, 2009, pp. 329-77; F. Frosini, *La presenza di Gramsci nella storiografia di Garin sul Novecento*, in *Il Novecento di Eugenio Garin*, a cura di G. Vacca, S. Ricci, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana/Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, 2011, pp. 245-66; G. Vacca, *Eugenio Garin interprete di Gramsci*, in ivi, pp. 273-305.

costantemente sollecitata da problemi di ordine politico,³⁰ per quanto fra la prima e i secondi non vi sia sempre riscontro o concordanza. Nella produzione carceraria «politica e teoria tendono a muoversi su piani omogenei secondo un processo assai intricato, a strati, nel corso di un lavoro caratterizzato da elementi anche di asimmetria, di non corrispondenza»,³¹ scrive appunto Ciliberto. Ciò non toglie però che a suo dire l'interpretazione del marxismo come filosofia della praxis attesti la matrice tutta politica della teoria gramsciana: se è vero, infatti, che tale interpretazione è pur sempre l'esito di un lavoro intellettuale, ossia «un punto di arrivo della ricerca svolta [...] tra il 1930 e il 1935, nella quale svolge un ruolo essenziale la “riscoperta” di Antonio Labriola», a cui risale, come noto, la locuzione “filosofia della praxis”;³² è però altrettanto vero che questa ricerca trae nutrimento dalla questione politica della Costituente, che, secondo Ciliberto, «produce due conseguenze fondamentali nei *Quaderni*. Da una parte, stimola Gramsci a ripensare criticamente le «forme culturali dell'egemonia borghese in Italia – da Vico a Croce»; dall'altra parte, lo induce a polemizzare contro i generi del marxismo massimalistico e ortodossistico, accusati di affievolire o spegnere la capacità di autonomia politica e teorica del proletariato moderno – capacità che Gramsci rivendica in modo netto ed esplicito,³³ facendone, a guardar bene, il vero centro propulsore di questo suo «movimento di pensiero».³⁴

³⁰ Non stupisce allora che nella introduzione Ciliberto scriva che Gramsci «è stato sempre un politico ed è con un obiettivo politico che redige i *Quaderni del carcere*, subordinando la dimensione storica al centro politico della sua meditazione [...]. In Gramsci la teoria è sempre un predicato e una forma della praxis rivoluzionaria ed è per questo motivo che essa diventa centrale nel ‘sistema’ dei *Quaderni*» (Ivi, p. 17). Su questo aspetto della lettura cilibertiana cfr. G. Vacca, *Il Gramsci di Michele Ciliberto*, consultato in data 23/08/2021 al seguente link: <https://palomarblog.wordpress.com/2020/08/09/il-gramsci-di-michele-ciliberto/>. Cfr. E. Garin, *Gramsci*, cit., pp. 48-9.

³¹ M. Ciliberto, *La fabbrica dei Quaderni*, cit., pp. 68-71.

³² Sull'importanza di Labriola e, in particolare, del suo *Discorrendo di socialismo e di filosofia* per lo sviluppo della filosofia della praxis cfr. F. Frosini, *La “filosofia della praxis”*, cit., pp. 4-5, 11-19; Id., *Filosofia della praxis*, cit., 93-7. Cfr. inoltre R. Dainotto, *Filosofia della praxis*, in *Dizionario gramsciano*, cit., pp. 312-13; F. Frosini, *Labriola, Antonio*, in Ivi, p. 448. Sempre di Frosini si veda *Dalla filosofia di Marx alla filosofia della praxis nei Quaderni del carcere*, in *Marx e Gramsci. Filologia, filosofia e politica allo specchio*, a cura di A. Di Bello, Napoli, Liguori, 2011, pp. 67-79. Una ricostruzione complessiva e puntuale della storia di questo concetto è ora offerta da M. Mustè, *Marxismo e filosofia della praxis. Da Labriola a Gramsci*, Roma, Viella, 2018.

³³ Cfr. al riguardo quanto scritto da Vacca, per il quale la convinzione di Gramsci circa tale capacità risale al periodo ordinovista: «Già negli scritti che precedono i *Quaderni* la concezione del partito come *parte* della classe operaia [...] traeva origine, per gli “ordinovisti”, dalla dimostrazione (che essi ritenevano ormai avvenuta grazie al movimento torinese dei Consigli oltre che alla Rivoluzione d'ottobre e altre esperienze consiliari) che la classe operaia era capace

Il proletariato come soggetto originale e autonomo della trasformazione della società: è questa la leva fondamentale della critica della tradizione nazionale italiana e della filosofia della storia delle tradizioni socialiste: esse convergono nella riduzione – o nella dissoluzione – della dimensione teorica e dell’iniziativa politica del proletariato moderno.³⁵

La tesi di fondo del primo saggio – l’esistenza di un legame organico fra l’elaborazione della filosofia della praxis e la riflessione sulla storia italiana – fa da sfondo anche al quarto contributo (intitolato *Rinascimento e Riforma*)³⁶ e può essere considerata, almeno in via ipotetica o dubitativa, un dato acquisito della interpretazione cilibertiana. Comunque sia, lo studioso fa luce su questo sfondo fin dagli inizi, quasi a sgombrare il campo da possibili malintesi: i numerosi riferimenti alla coppia oppositiva Riforma-Rinascimento – mutuata dal Croce della *Storia della età barocca in Italia* –³⁷ che attraversano come un basso continuo i *Quaderni*, non originano da preoccupazioni o interessi storiografici, poiché si pongono alla confluenza di due interrogazioni diverse ma correlate: una di natura storico-politica, «imperniata sull’individuazione dei caratteri propri della nostra storia nazionale, considerata dal punto di vista del suo approdo»; un’altra di natura teorica, incentrata sulla «delineazione dei caratteri costitutivi della filosofia della praxis, intesa come “riforma intellettuale e morale” moderna»,³⁸ capace di raccogliere e

d’iniziativa storica: era in grado, cioè, di elaborare autonomamente una risposta ai problemi della produzione e della organizzazione della società» (G. Vacca, *In cammino con Gramsci*, cit., p. 160).

³⁴ M. Ciliberto, *La fabbrica dei Quaderni*, cit., pp. 48, 70, 96-7.

³⁵ Ivi, p. 97.

³⁶ Pubblicato col titolo *Rinascimento e Riforma nei Quaderni di Gramsci*, in *Filosofia e cultura. Per Eugenio Garin*, a cura di M. Ciliberto, C. Vasoli, vol. II, Roma, Editori Riuniti, 1991, pp. 759-88.

³⁷ B. Croce, *Storia della età barocca in Italia*, Bari, Laterza, 1929, pp. 11-12: «Il movimento della Rinascita era rimasto aristocratico, di circoli eletti, e nella stessa Italia, che ne fu madre e nutrice, non uscì dai circoli di corte, non penetrò fino al popolo, non divenne costume o “pregiudizio”, ossia collettiva persuasione e fede. La Riforma, invece, ebbe bensì questa efficacia di penetrazione popolare, ma la pagò con un ritardo nel suo intrinseco sviluppo, con la lenta e più volte interrotta maturazione del suo germe vitale». Cfr. F. Frosini, *Riforma e Rinascimento: il problema della “unità ideologica tra il basso e l’alto”*, cit., pp. 93-5; Id., *La “filosofia della praxis”*, cit., p. 8; Id., *Filosofia della praxis*, cit., p. 94; Id., *Riforma e Rinascimento*, in *Le parole di Gramsci*, cit., p. 173; Id., *Gramsci lettore di Croce e Weber (Rinascimento, Riforma, Controriforma)*, in *Réforme et Contre-Réforme à l’époque de la naissance et de l’affirmation des totalitarismes (1900-1940)*, textes réunis et édités par C. Lastraoli, Turnhout, Brepols, 2008, pp. 145-146; Id., *Riforma*, in *Dizionario gramsciano*, cit., p. 707; R. Dainotto, *Rinascimento*, in Ivi, p. 713; F. Frosini, *Reformation, Renaissance and the state: the hegemonic fabric of modern sovereignty*, «Journal of Romance Studies», 12, 3, 2012, p. 66.

³⁸ Per l’espressione «riforma intellettuale e morale» cfr. F. Frosini, *Riforma intellettuale e morale*, in *Dizionario gramsciano*, cit., pp. 710-12.

far maturare «il germe fecondo sia del Rinascimento che della Riforma».³⁹ Entrambe le interrogazioni, ferme restando le loro differenze, scaturiscono per Ciliberto da uno stesso nucleo di riflessioni, che, per ragioni puramente metodiche ed espositive, può essere suddiviso in tre sottonuclei. Innanzitutto, la convinzione – comune a tanta parte della cultura italiana fra Otto e Novecento – che la Riforma sia «un momento cruciale del processo costitutivo della civiltà moderna»; e questo perché, secondo Gramsci, senza l’“andata al popolo” che contraddistingue il movimento riformatore non è possibile «il processo di nazionalizzazione degli intellettuali e delle masse» e, di conseguenza, «la formazione dello Stato-nazione». Poi, la tesi che lo stato di crisi e decadenza in cui versa l’Italia sia dovuto al mancato incontro nella sua storia fra Rinascimento e Riforma, che ha dunque impedito lo sviluppo nel nostro paese di «una cultura nazionale» e di «un moderno Stato-nazione», cioè di «un processo di nazionalizzazione degli intellettuali e delle masse nell’unità di una moderna struttura statale».⁴⁰ Infine, l’idea che nella tradizione culturale italiana vi è chi ha intuito la necessità di coniugare il momento riformatore e il momento rinascimentale, al fine di “costruire” una «nuova forma di statualità» e quindi di civiltà. Si tratta di Niccolò Machiavelli, la cui intuizione costituisce un «contributo decisivo alla modernità, fino a Marx, fino alla filosofia della *praxis*»; la quale, continua Ciliberto, è in grado di superare lo iato storico fra Rinascimento e Riforma, dando così vita a una riforma morale e intellettuale, proprio perché recupera e al contempo sviluppa in modo radicale questa intuizione.⁴¹ La filosofia della *praxis*, infatti, procede sì da Machiavelli, ma

ne radicalizza il motivo fondamentale e lo oltrepassa ponendosi il problema della risoluzione integrale dello Stato nella società, della società politica nella società civile. In questo sviluppo, che è un rivoluzionamento, risiede la sua originalità, anche rispetto all’esperienza del Segretario fiorentino [...]. In

³⁹ M. Ciliberto, *La fabbrica dei Quaderni*, cit., pp. 159-60. Il «compito del marxismo», scrive Frosini in linea con le osservazioni di Ciliberto, sta nel sintetizzare «storicamente, politicamente, e non astrattamente, di fatto e non solo di principio, i due momenti del Rinascimento e della Riforma» (F. Frosini, *Riforma e Rinascimento*, cit., p. 179). Sulla stessa lunghezza d’onda di Ciliberto e Frosini si muove R. Dainotto, *Rinascimento*, cit., p. 713. Cfr. F. Frosini, *Riforma e Rinascimento: il problema della “unità ideologica tra il basso e l’alto”*, cit., pp. 91-2; Id., *Gramsci lettore*, cit., p. 163; Id., *Riforma*, cit., pp. 707-8; Id., *Reformation*, cit., p. 70.

⁴⁰ Per una chiave di lettura analoga, cfr. F. Frosini, *Riforma e Rinascimento: il problema della “unità ideologica tra il basso e l’alto”*, cit., p. 93.

⁴¹ M. Ciliberto, *La fabbrica dei Quaderni*, cit., pp. 174, 176, 182-3, 199-200.

conclusione: Machiavelli è l'autentico precursore di Marx, e Marx ne è l'autentico erede, il vero prosecutore.⁴²

Siffatta idea di Machiavelli – una delle diverse immagini del Segretario fiorentino presenti nei *Quaderni* – può colpire per la sua lontananza dalla «verità effettuale della cosa», per il suo sapore di forzatura antistorica, ma proprio per questo ci permette di toccare, seppur brevemente, un altro aspetto saliente della lettura cilibertiana, che compare di passata nel penultimo capitolo, *Cosmopolitismo e Stato nazionale*,⁴³ e si manifesta appieno in quello conclusivo, dal titolo eloquente di *Gramsci e Guicciardini. Per una interpretazione "figurale" dei Quaderni*.⁴⁴ Nel quinto saggio, infatti, lo studioso osserva fuggacemente che il lettore dei *Quaderni* si imbatte in «grandi "miti" simbolici – declinati sul piano storiografico – piuttosto che [in] specifiche analisi storiche». ⁴⁵ E nel sesto contributo Ciliberto, specificando e svolgendo questa osservazione, sostiene che Gramsci lavora per mezzo di figure e tropi, i quali «non vanno giudicati sul piano storico, ma come principi generativi della sua teoria politica. A tale livello essi sono decisivi, mentre non hanno particolare consistenza dal punto di vista storico e storiografico». Detto altrimenti, Machiavelli e gli altri «grandi protagonisti dei *Quaderni*» sono figure «da decifrare senza cercare quello che non sono e non possono essere, ma esplorandone le potenzialità critiche ed ermeneutiche». ⁴⁶ Varrebbe la pena estendere questo tipo di esplorazione ad altre «figure» dei *Quaderni*, che, pur non rientrando nel novero ristretto dei suoi «grandi protagonisti», svolgono una funzione rilevante – o comunque degna di interesse – sotto il profilo della teoria politica. Penso in particolare a Giordano Bruno e a Giovanni Botero, ma anche e soprattutto a Tommaso Campanella, che agli occhi di Gramsci rappresenta, anzi impersona due caratteri propri della storia d'Italia, vale a dire: l'accentuazione, dovuta alla Controriforma, del «carattere cosmopolitico degli intellettuali

⁴² Ivi, p. 186. Sul pensiero di Machiavelli quale modello di filosofia della praxis cfr. le osservazioni di F. Frosini, *Filosofia della praxis*, cit., pp. 103-4.

⁴³ Cfr. *Cosmopolitismo e Stato nazionale nei Quaderni del carcere*, in *Gramsci e il Novecento*, a cura di G. Vacca, vol. I, Roma, Carocci, 1999, pp. 157-73.

⁴⁴ Cfr. *Gramsci e Guicciardini. Per una interpretazione "figurale" dei Quaderni del carcere*, «Rinascimento», 53, 2013, pp. 157-75.

⁴⁵ M. Ciliberto, *La fabbrica dei Quaderni*, cit., p. 207.

⁴⁶ Ivi, pp. 233, 249. Cfr. E. Garin, *Gramsci*, cit., p. 59: «Nella "figura" di Machiavelli, forse meglio che in ogni altro suo scritto, Gramsci ha fissato il proprio pensiero, e la propria lontananza non solo da Croce ma dal tipo di cultura che Croce ha incarnato».

italiani» e del «loro distacco dalla vita nazionale»;⁴⁷ la manifestazione, da parte della letteratura utopistica, «dello spirito ‘moderno’ essenzialmente contrario alla Controriforma» stessa. «Tutta l’opera di Campanella» – scrive Gramsci riecheggiando forse, coscientemente o meno, una certa immagine ottocentesca del domenicano quale cospiratore e rivoluzionario –⁴⁸ «è un documento di questo lavoro ‘subdolo’ di scalzare dall’interno la Controriforma».⁴⁹

IV. Non è certo questa la sede adatta ad approfondire un tema del genere, su cui mi propongo di ritornare in un futuro studio, dedicato ad analizzare i riferimenti al filosofo calabrese negli scritti precarcerari e carcerari. Mi preme invece concludere ricapitolando quanto detto nei paragrafi precedenti: i volumi di Vacca e Ciliberto concordano sia nel conferire centralità alla rielaborazione gramsciana del marxismo – o di un certo marxismo – in termini di filosofia della praxis, sia nel sottolineare come questo percorso rielaborativo risponda allo scopo di garantire al pensiero marxista la dovuta autonomia teorica e pratica, emancipandolo «dalle radici decisionistiche e contrattualistiche del pensiero borghese».⁵⁰ Inoltre, i due studiosi colgono e valorizzano la connessione causale tra i processi storici in atto, il conseguente bisogno di ripensare l’iniziativa politico-strategica e le riflessioni carcerarie – quasi a conferma del fatto che per entrambi Gramsci, pur non avendo «avuto fortuna nella lotta immediata»,⁵¹ mantiene in carcere la postura intellettuale e lo sguardo sul mondo del combattente politico. Certo, Vacca e Ciliberto guardano a questa connessione da angoli visuali diversi: il primo considera soprattutto gli effetti della Rivoluzione russa, il rapporto con la teoria politica leniniana e gli

⁴⁷ A. Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, edizione critica dell’Istituto Gramsci, a cura di V. Gerratana, vol. I, Torino, Einaudi, 1975, Q3§141, p. 399.

⁴⁸ Sulla storia di questa immagine – e delle molte altre che “compongono” la fortuna plurisecolare di Campanella – si veda ora il libro, per più versi importante, di L. Addante, *Tommaso Campanella. Il filosofo immaginato, interpretato, falsato*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2018. Per un approfondimento del pensiero politico campanelliano, anche nei suoi rapporti con la cultura della Controriforma, mi permetto di rinviare a A. Panichi, *Il volto fragile del potere. Religione e politica nel pensiero di Tommaso Campanella*, Pisa, ETS, 2015.

⁴⁹ A. Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, cit., vol. III, Q25§7, pp. 2291-2. Sul tema della Controriforma nei *Quaderni*, che varrebbe la pena di analizzare sistematicamente, si legga R. Dainotto, *Controriforma*, in *Dizionario gramsciano*, cit., pp. 162-3.

⁵⁰ F. Frosini, «In cammino con Gramsci», cit. Cfr. G. Cospito, *Egemonia*, in *Le parole di Gramsci*, cit., p. 90.

⁵¹ A. Gramsci, *Lettere dal carcere 1926-1937*, a cura di A.A. Santucci, Palermo, Sellerio, 2015 (1996¹), pp. 448-9; ora in *Lettere dal carcere*, a cura di F. Giasi, pp. 627-8.

insuccessi del movimento operaio e socialista, mentre il secondo privilegia la storia nazionale rispetto a quella europea e internazionale, ponendo mente alla tradizione di pensiero «da Vico a Spaventa, a Croce e Gentile»,⁵² alla riorganizzazione della lotta antifascista mediante la parola d'ordine della Costituente; all'origine della decadenza del paese e dell'assenza, nel suo "tessuto molecolare", di quei principi che informano la modernità. Questi angoli visuali, tuttavia, si completano a vicenda e concorrono a restituire l'immagine di un Gramsci che, come teorico e uomo politico, è attento a comprendere il movimento della realtà (tanto italiana quanto europea ed extraeuropea) e ad analizzarne le dinamiche di lunga durata e i processi di cambiamento. Il tutto nella consapevolezza, oggi come ieri preziosa, che sbagliare nell'analisi significa né più né meno che sbagliare nell'orientamento politico.

⁵² M. Ciliberto, *La fabbrica dei Quaderni*, cit., p. 47.

International Gramsci Journal

Volume 4

Issue 3 *Collective Will, Self-Consciousness,
Constitution of the Subject – in theory, and in
practice; Architecture, Professions and
Hegemony / Reviews*

Article 13

2021

Ciliberto e Vacca: The Philosophical Autonomy of Marxism

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Recommended Citation

Panichi, Alessio, Ciliberto e Vacca: The Philosophical Autonomy of Marxism, *International Gramsci Journal*, 4(3), 2021, 173-189.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol4/iss3/13>

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Ciliberto e Vacca: The Philosophical Autonomy of Marxism

Abstract

This is the Abstract of the double review in English by Alessio Panichi of the volumes *In cammino con Gramsci* ('On the Road with Gramsci') by Giuseppe Vacca (Roma, Viella, 2020) and *La fabbrica dei Quaderni. Studi su Gramsci* ('The Workshop of the Notebooks. Studies on Gramsci') by Michele Ciliberto (Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2020). The former analyses Gramsci's elaboration of the philosophy of praxis, and the latter looks how Gramsci's reading of the national history and cultural tradition of Italy informed the concepts developed in the Prison Notebooks.

Keywords

Philosophical autonomy of Marxism, role of intellectuals, hegemony, Reformation-Renaissance, Italian history

The Philosophical Autonomy of Marxism: Hegemony, Philosophy of Praxis and the Reform-Renaissance Nexus

Alessio Panichi

I. The two-year period 1919-20 was without doubt fortunate for studies on Gramsci, since it saw the publication of a substantial number of contributions which, in their differing viewpoints and goals, have together shed new light on the Gramsci's thought, both before and during the prison years, as well as dealing with the history of his past and ever more global current reception. To cite just a few significant examples, recent publications include the collectively authored *Revisiting Gramsci's Notebooks* (Antonini, Bernstein et al. 2019), reviewed at length in this journal by Gianmarco Fifi (Fifi 2020); Francesca Antonini's fine volume *Caesarism and Bonapartism in Gramsci. Hegemony and the Crisis of Modernity* (Antonini 2020), which has the merit of investigating with philological rigour and seriousness two of the key categories of Gramsci's thought, thus offering an important contribution to understanding them; last, here, is another collectively authored volume, *Gramsci in the World*, (Dainotto and Jameson (eds.) 2020) which is good illustration of how the interest in the *Notebooks*, and therefore their decades-long fortune, have been and continue to be fed by issues born on the terrain of political and cultural struggle both in post-war Italy and in other 'provinces' of the 'great and terrible world'. These examples could easily be extended and, in summing up, it would perhaps be worthwhile to dedicate a precise and careful review of them to shed light on the main directions of contemporary Gramsci studies, in debt to a large extent to the excellent work undertaken over the last fifteen years¹ in compiling the *National Edition* of Gramsci's writings (Gramsci 2007-present).

In any case these contributions over the last two years remain of undoubted value for their variety and historiographical importance, and to them we must here add two collections of essays of special value, which we here examine and compare, and which aim at

¹ In confirmation of this decade-and-a-half's work, cf. Francioni and Giasi (eds., 2020).

identifying their specificity and similarities, their differences and their parallels. The two volumes both date to 2020: Giuseppe Vacca's *In cammino con Gramsci* (*On the Road with Gramsci*: 2020a), with an essay by M. Mustè; and Michele Ciliberto's *La fabbrica dei Quaderni. Studi su Gramsci* (*The Workshop of the Notebooks. Studies on Gramsci*: 2020). The choice of devoting attention to these two volumes is justified not only by their external and, one might say, formal concordance – both are collections of writings, previously published in various places – but also because of the relations of friendship and collaboration that have long united the two authors. Indeed, only a few years ago, this had an outlet in their joint editorship of an important anthology of the speeches and writings of Palmiro Togliatti on the philosophy of praxis, or more precisely on Gramsci's wide-ranging undertaking to rethink Marxism. This took place in the wake of the October revolution and in the light of a critical measuring up to the national tradition at the same time as arguing for Marxism's philosophical autonomy as against Croce's reduction of it to an interpretative canon of history.² However, proceeding in an orderly fashion, we first take the volume by Vacca, comprising three essays, published between 1977 and 1991,³ with another two on Gramsci that follow on (Vacca, 2012 and 2017 [English edition: 2020c] respectively, with the Spanish edition in press), which together find themselves in a dialogic relation and thus form a sort of 'Gramscian triptych'.

II. In the first of the three essays, *La 'questione politica degli intellettuali' nei Quaderni del carcere* (*The 'Political Question of the Intellectuals' in the Prison Notebooks*),⁴ Vacca spotlights how Gramsci's overall reflections, animated by the desire to reformulate and enrich Marxist theory, develop under the joint stimulus of precise events and historical-political factors. It is first of all the

² Cf. F. Frosini (2002), p. 5; id. (2004), p. 94.

³ The three essays are also testimony to an overall change in historical and cultural climate since, as Fabio Frosini has pointed out, they are chronologically placed 'at the epicentre of a two-fold transformation: on the one hand they cover the leap from the last traces of the "glorious three decades" to the start of the "neoconservative revolution"; on the other hand, they go from the last attempt at a "use" of Gramsci's thought within the PCI (the Florence Conference of 1977) to the emergence of an almost unknown scenario, in which the absence of direct political referents went hand-in-hand with the complete revolution in the Gramscian corpus, with the beginning of the *National Edition* of his writings' (Frosini, 2020).

⁴ Originally published in Franco Ferri (ed.), 1977.

case that the October Revolution and the birth, in Europe and in the world, of the first workers' State could not but have its bearing on the 'theoretical status of Marxism'. This simultaneously throws light on the theoretical and practical limits of the Marxism of the Second International, showing its inadequacy for facing the tasks posed by the then-contemporary situation. Secondly, there was the need to go back and reconstitute the fabric of political action after the defeat at the European level of the working-class movement, a defeat whose causal process had to be analysed and born in mind in carrying on the organizational and analytical work. Last, the awareness, well-rooted in Gramsci's mind, of the profound differences between West and East in Europe, between Italy and Russia, the in-depth investigation of which constitutes 'one of the fixed points of all his research and a cardinal principle of his optic and his revolutionary theory' (Vacca, 2020a, pp. 16 and 34). Vacca, then, is of the opinion that Gramsci, in clearly seeing this ensemble of factors, linked the development of Marxism to two organically connected theoretical-political options. On the one hand there was the once-and-for-all rejection of economism which, as well as impeding its development, made Marxist theory subaltern to 'to the new currents of bourgeois culture' depriving it *ipso facto* of that philosophical autonomy whose importance Vacca oftentimes stresses. On the other hand, there is the adoption of the Leninist conception of hegemony, which develops and makes actual Marxism both 'in the field of historical science, and on the terrain of political strategy' (Vacca, 2020a, pp. 35-6).

It goes without saying that this second option places at the centre of Gramsci's reasoning both the role of the intellectuals, which Vacca does not hesitate to define as 'determinant', and 'the elaboration of the overall culture and of the hegemonic apparatuses through which one class, justifying its own function on the terrain of production, becomes the "governing class" of the whole of society' (Vacca, 2020a, p. 46).⁵ On this subject Vacca makes one of a number of clarifications which, in relation to different thematic nodes, run through the volume and respond to those who in his view hold mistaken and misleading interpretations of Gramsci's thought. In this case, the clarification regards the key concept of

⁵ On the role of intellectuals as 'functionaries' or as 'underlings' of hegemony, see G. Cospito (2004) p. 90; id., 2007, pp. 268-9.

organic intellectual, which for Vacca ‘cannot be confused, as commonly happens, with the notion of a party intellectual’ and – what is more important – it acquires its sense ‘if referred to the relations of intellectual groups with the fundamental classes and to the implementation of their technical expertise’. In other words, to be ‘an intellectual category organic to a class means incorporating technical expertise and carrying out leading functions specific to a specific mode of production with the goal of guaranteeing overall social reproduction’ (Vacca, 2020a, pp. 49-50).

In the first essay, then, Vacca deals with the centrality of the theory of hegemony and of the role of the intellectuals in Gramsci’s reconstruction of Marxism, forged in the furnace of the most recent developments of the history of Europe and Italy. In the second essay, as one deduces from the title *From Historical Materialism to the Philosophy of Praxis*,⁶ Vacca takes up this subject again, with different accents, and places it in relation to the idea of the philosophy of praxis, singled out as the point of arrival of this effort of reconstruction. It should further be noted that Vacca’s investigation again moves from the history-theory nexus or, to express this better, from the theoretical and epistemological implications of the historical changes set in motion by the Bolshevik Revolution.

For his reconstruction of Marxism, Gramsci sets off from the fact that, for the first time in history, in a given territory the subaltern classes, here led by Lenin, had given birth to a State of their own. At the theoretical level, this is retranslated into the ‘epistemological’ importance of the ‘theoretical-practical principle of hegemony’. From this, Gramsci extracts a number of elements for [...] re-elaborating the *epistemological* categories of historical materialism and bot by chance adopts the term of ‘philosophy of praxis’ (Vacca, 2020a, pp. 96-7).

In actual fact, the history-theory nexus explains for Vacca not only the process of formation of the philosophy of praxis, the background against which it takes shape and from which it emerges, but also its goal and, consequently, the basic motives that drove Gramsci into adopting it. These are motives which, Vacca claims, go back to the ‘crux of Gramsci’s research programme’, i.e. to the conviction that if historical materialism wishes again to rebuild the strategical and theoretical efficacy of its categories, it

⁶ First published in Vacca (1985)

must free itself of the shackles of economism and, above all, 'have a clear notion of its *own historicity*'. The main task of the philosophy of praxis is precisely to impart this notion through, so to speak, a two-fold conceptual movement. On the one hand, this involves the liquidation of 'any residual transcendentalism', and on the other it involves regaining the 'integral *historicity* of the categories'. In short, the philosophy of praxis, conceived by Gramsci as a 'critical task, immanent in the historical development of Marxism is functional to the attainment of a precise goal: 'to bring back into action the genetic and functional connection of the categories with the historical conditions of their validity', thereby guaranteeing the *critical* and *historico-social* nature of these categories themselves (Vacca, 2020a, pp. 97, 102-3).

The emphasis placed on an aim of this type, which is the key to the second essay, seems to drop away in the third and last chapter of the book, *The Notebooks and the Politics of the Twentieth Century*, reproduced from the author's 1991 volume, *Gramsci e Togliatti* (Vacca, 1991, pp. 5-114). Here Vacca's focus of attention shifts to the linkage between three theoretical elements that had already emerged previously. These are the philosophical autonomy of Marxism, the philosophy of praxis and the conception of hegemony, where the author focuses on the peculiarities that distinguish it, using a number of clarifications and observations. One must point out here, to avoid misunderstandings, that in this case too, Vacca starts from the observation that Gramsci's prison reflections, at least from a certain point in time onward, develop along the two traditionally intertwined directions of historical analysis and political-programmatic elaboration. Indeed Vacca points out that the *Notebooks*, from the middle of 1930 onward, are 'directed in the main to investigating the basic limits of the workers' movement and to elaborating the bases (and a number of essential directions) of a new programme, aimed first of all at the international communist movement'.⁷ Once having carried out this investigation and reached the conclusion that the defeat of socialism depended in the last analysis on the 'absence of a philosophical autonomy', in other words on the fact that it had not defined 'its own political basis' Gramsci puts at the foundation of this programme the develop-

⁷ On the relation between Gramsci and international communism, see Capuzzo and Pons (eds), 2020.

ment of the philosophy of praxis, which thus goes to constitute ‘the general horizon and the programmatic objective’ of the *Notebooks*. Furthermore, in refining and deepening his own analysis, Vacca goes on to say that Gramsci roots this development in the theoretical and practical plane of hegemony, configured as the indispensable condition for Marxism to attain ‘a complete philosophical autonomy’ (Vacca, 2020a, pp. 111-4, 120-21).

It has just been remarked that Vacca dedicates part of the chapter to clarifying certain particular characteristics of the relation between Gramsci and Lenin, confirming and enriching what was stated in *La ‘questione politica degli intellettuali’ nei Quaderni del carcere*, and offers an interpretation that locates this concept in a wider historico-political context, correlating it with the vexed question of the relation between ethics and politics. In the first place, Vacca writes that, when Gramsci notes the need to ‘elaborate a conception of politics in the form of hegemony’, and to ‘specify its new contents’ he indicates Lenin as his point of departure and takes on board, as compared with Marx and Marxism, the ‘innovative value’ of the Russian leader’s idea of hegemony. At the same time however, rather than believing that Gramsci’s theory of hegemony is once-and-for-all exhausted in that of Lenin, Vacca scales down the importance of this connection to the great advantage of another ‘source’: ‘the theory of hegemony to which he [Gramsci] turns in the *Notebooks* is not so much the one elaborated by Lenin or in the debates of the Communist International between 1923 and 1924, as instead that developed by European political science after 1870’ (Vacca, 2020a, pp. 112-13, 115).⁸

In the second place, the author warns against maintaining, as often happens, that Gramsci’s theory of hegemony may be reduced

⁸ That Gramsci renders precise a conception of politics not entirely in line with Lenin is confirmed by Vacca in regard to the theory of the party, on which he concentrates in polemics with those interpretations that, relying on this theory, denounce the totalitarian nature of Gramsci’s thought. Vacca, however, could not be clearer: ‘Different from the classical Marxist theory of the party, or from that of Lenin/Kautsky or from “Western Marxism” for Gramsci there is no expressive relation between class and party. The party is not the “bearer” of “class consciousness” “from outside” [...] In the *Notebooks* the expressive relation between class and party is explicitly denied’ (Vacca, 2020a, p. 260). Gramsci’s leaning towards attributing to the term ‘hegemony’ a different meaning from the one ‘crystallized’ in the various forms of Marxism is highlighted by Giuseppe Cospito (2004, p. 74) and 2009 (p. 269; in English 2018, p. 25) where we read that Gramsci, convinced of the need to return to the ‘original sources’ of Marxism, attributes the paternity of the concept of hegemony to Lenin. Cf., further, Frosini (1999), pp. 106-8; id., 2002, pp. 40-41; id., 2004, p. 110; id., 2009b, pp. 458-9.

to underlining the importance of consent in the exercise of political direction. If such were the case, if – that is – Gramsci limited himself to ‘wishing to call attention to consent’ we should be dealing with ‘a theoretically banal call and (in an “author” like Gramsci) the fact of his speaking of a “doctrine of hegemony” would be a mere display of rhetoric’. For Vacca, the question is different. Without denying the decisive value of consent, Vacca interprets the theory at issue as a ‘programme of hierarchical subordination of politics-as-power to politics-as-hegemony’, in other words as an ‘attempt to resolve the antinomy between ethics and politics bound up with the role of the State in the “constitution of the modern”’. This is an attempt that may be crowned with success only to the extent that politics-as-hegemony, contrary to the doctrine of the State-as-force and founding itself on the principles of ‘relationality and reciprocity of the subjects’, puts into effect the ‘coordination of the general interests of the dominant group with those of the subordinate groups’ (Vacca, 2020a, pp. 118, 162, 168-9).

III. In a nutshell, we may say that the interpretational framework that Vacca offers hinges around three essential points: 1) the October revolution and the defeat of the (Italian and European) workers’ movement convinced Gramsci of the need to rethink categories of Marxist theory with the aim of preserving its analytical strength and guaranteeing its strategic-political efficacy in a changed scenario; 2) this rethink had to lead Marxism to the awareness of the historicity of its categories and to the attainment of philosophical autonomy, in the absence of which any road to communism was blocked or showed itself to be a blind alley. Both goals could be reached as a result of developing the philosophy of praxis, whose basis was grounded in the doctrine of hegemony, formulated by Gramsci on the basis of Lenin’s teachings and – to a larger extent – of the more recent developments of European political science.

As compared with this interpretative framework, the volume by Michele Ciliberto, comprising six essays written between 1980 and 2013, show significant affinities and important differences which emerge from the start. Here critical points and historiographical considerations are intertwined with clearly-defined autobiographical annotations; this should come as no surprise given that the autobiographical component of intellectual experiences is one of

Ciliberto's hallmarks (cf. Ciliberto, 2019). In his introduction, therefore, on a par with Vacca, Ciliberto shows that at the origin of Gramsci's prison reflections there are problems of a historico-political nature, just that these problems – and this is the point – relate most of all, if not exclusively, to people and affairs of the old Italy. We are dealing in fact with the 'reasons for the defeat undergone at the hands of fascism' (cf. Antonini, 2021)⁹ and with the 'analysis of Italian history from the time of ancient Rome' with the goal of 'understanding what had happened and was happening, penetrating, so to speak, down into the furthest roots of Italy's long crisis in order to take up again the initiative and also reorganize one's own side on the plane of theory' (Ciliberto, 2020, p. 17).

The choice of bringing together the pages of the *Quaderni* and juxtaposing them to the history of Italy defines the first essay, *La fabbrica dei Quaderni (Gramsci e Vico)*,¹⁰ which is also the first contribution, chronologically, that Ciliberto made in respect of Gramsci. Here Ciliberto states that 'an essential problem' of the *Notebooks* is that of coming to terms, in a profound and systematic way, with the Italian national tradition going from Vico to Gentile by way of Spaventa and Croce. This had to be aimed not just at defining the physiognomy and authentic roots 'over and above the "autobiography" of idealism', but also at carrying out a process of revision of Marxism, or rather, of certain of its currents and tendencies. Putting it succinctly, in the *Notebooks*, the 'distancing from idealist "history" is interlinked with a movement of thought that, at the same time, subjects the philosophy of history of maximalist socialism and of "orthodoxist" Marxism' to organic revision. From this point of view, Ciliberto finds himself on the same wavelength as Vacca in the sense of underlining how, at the end of this process of revision, Gramsci reaches an interpretation of Marxism as a philosophy of praxis, as well as defining its specificity and autonomy with respect to both 'the whole speculative tradition of the modern world' and to the Italian one (Ciliberto 2020, pp. 24-6, 34). To express this in the words of Eugenio Garin, the echo of whom resounds through Ciliberto's volume, Gramsci 'immersed himself wholly in the most lively cultural tradition of Italy' and the

⁹ Cf. F. Antonini, 2021, cit., p. 152: 'In a certain sense, it can be said that the entire analysis in the *Prison Notebooks* is shaped by Gramsci's will to understand the causes of the success of the Mussolini's dictatorship (and, as a consequence, of the failure of the workers' movement)'.

¹⁰ Originally published by Ciliberto (1980) under the title *Come lavorava Gramsci (variant vichiani)*.

‘philosophy of praxis, if rejecting any speculative mystification, also refuses any Esperantism; it translates Marxism into Italian, in other words it responds to the requests that had long been maturing in Italian history in a manner appropriate to those requests’ (Garin, 1997, pp. 52, 60).¹¹

Ciliberto enquires further into the reasons that drove Gramsci to carry out such a ‘movement of thought’ and provides a different answer from Vacca’s. Ciliberto’s response goes back to the particularities of the phase of Italian history, to be precise to the ‘need for a political initiative against fascism’, resting on the assumption that in the *Notebooks* the theoretical analysis is ‘constantly stimulated by problems of a political nature’,¹² in as much as that between the analysis and the problems there is not always comparison or concordance. He goes on to say that in the prison writings ‘politics and theory tend to move according to a quite intricate process on homogeneous planes, at levels, in the course of a work characterized by elements that may even of asymmetry, of non-correspondence’ (Ciliberto, 2020, pp. 68-71). This does not detract from the fact that Gramsci’s interpretation of Marxism as a philosophy of praxis attests to the wholly political matrix of his theory. If indeed it is true that this interpretation is still the outcome of an intellectual labour, i.e. of ‘a point of arrival of the research undertaken [...] between 1930 and 1935, in which an essential part is played by the “rediscovery” of Antonio Labriola’, to whom one may trace that locution ‘philosophy of praxis’,¹³ then it is also equally true that this

¹¹ See also Garin (1997), pp. 52, 60.; cf. *ivi*, pp. 53-4: ‘Faced with traditional culture, to the entire events of a country such as have emerged in the present situation, faced with the present culture, the philosophy of praxis tends, not to radical rejections or to partisan choices, but to an overall vision, the most comprehensive possible, capable of understanding the roots of each of the contrasting terms [...] In these terms the elaboration carried out by the philosophy of praxis becomes one with the history of Italy, of its intellectual groups, not groups isolated in their ideas or their writings, but seen in their relation to the real forces at work, and with those of the people whose voice only rarely seems to come over or be heard and conserved’. On the presence of Gramsci in Garin’s work and thought, cf. Santucci (1996, pp. 364-75), Sasso (2009, pp. 329-77), Frosini (2011a, pp. 245-66), Vacca (2011, pp. 273-305).

¹² It should then come as no surprise that in his *Introduction* Ciliberto writes that Gramsci ‘was always a political being and it was with a political objective that he wrote the *Notebooks*, subordinating the historical dimension to the political centre of his reflection [...] In Gramsci theory is always the predicate and a form of revolutionary praxis, and it is for this reason that theory acquires centrality in the “system” of the *Notebooks*’ (Ciliberto, 2020, p. 17). On this aspect of Ciliberto’s reading cf. Vacca (2020b, 9 August 2020; Cf. Garin (1997) pp. 48-9.

¹³ On the importance of Labriola and in particular his *Discorrendo di socialismo e di filosofia* (Labriola 1898; and Labriola *Socialism and Philosophy*, 1906), cf. Frosini (2002, pp. 4-5, 11-19) *id.*, (2009, pp. 93-7). See also Dainotto (2009b, pp. 312-3) and, again, Frosini (2009a, p. 448). Yet

research contains the input from the political question of the Constituent Assembly, which, in Ciliberto's view, 'has two fundamental consequences in the *Notebooks*'. On the one hand, it stimulated Gramsci to rethink critically the 'cultural forms of bourgeois hegemony in Italy – from Vico to Croce' and, on the other, it induced him to polemicize against those types of maximalist or 'orthodoxist' Marxism accused of weakening or dousing the capacity for political and theoretical autonomy of the modern proletariat, capacities that Gramsci clearly and explicitly asserted (Vacca, 2020a, p. 160),¹⁴ making them – *nota bene* – into the real driving force of his 'movement of thought' (Ciliberto, 2020, pp. 48, 70, 96-7).

The proletariat as original and autonomous subject of the transformation of society: this is the fundamental lever of the critique of the Italian national tradition and of the philosophy of the history of the socialist traditions. They converge in the reduction – or in the dissolution – of the dimension of theory and of the political initiative of the modern proletariat (Ciliberto, 2020, p. 97).

The basic thesis of the first essay – the existence of an organic link between the elaboration of the philosophy of praxis and the reflection on Italian history – also forms the background to Ciliberto's fourth contribution (*Renaissance and Reformation*)¹⁵ and may be considered, at least as a possible hypothesis, an established factor in Ciliberto's interpretation. However that may be, he throws light on this area right from the start, as if to clear the field of eventual misunderstandings: the various references to the oppositional coupling Reformation-Renaissance, taken over from Croce's *History of the Baroque Age in Italy*¹⁶ and which accompany the

again of this latter author, see Frosini (2011b, pp. 67-79). An overall and precise reconstruction of the history of this concept is found in Musté (2018).

¹⁴ Cf. what is said by Vacca (2020, p. 160) for whom Gramsci's conviction on these capacities goes back to the *Ordine nuovo* period: 'Already in the pre-prison writings the conception of the party as *part* of the working class [...] had its origin, for the "ordinovists" in the demonstration – which they by now argued was established thanks to the Turin Council movement as well as the October Revolution and other council experiences – that the working class was capable of historical initiative, in other words it was capable of the autonomous elaboration of a response to the problems of production and of the organization of society'.

¹⁵ Originally (*Rinascimento e Riforma*) in Ciliberto (1991) pp. 759-88.

¹⁶ Croce (1929), pp. 11-12: 'The movement of the Renaissance remained an aristocratic movement and one of elite circles, and even in Italy, which was both mother and nurse to the movement, it did not escape from courtly circles, it did not penetrate to the people or become custom and 'prejudice', in other words collective persuasion and faith. The Reformation, on

Notebooks like a *basso continuo*, do not stem from historiographic preoccupations or interests since they are found at the intersection of two different but correlated questions. One is of a historico-political nature, ‘pivoted around the definition of the characters inherent in our national history, considered from the point of view of its arrival point. The other is of a theoretical nature, centred on the ‘delineation of the constitutive features of the philosophy of praxis, understood as the “modern intellectual and moral reform”’,¹⁷ able to gather and bring to maturity the ‘fruitful seed both of the Renaissance and of the Reformation’ (Ciliberto 2020, pp. 159-60)¹⁸. Both questions, while bearing their differences in mind, originate for Ciliberto from the same nucleus of reflections, which – for purely methodical and expository reasons – may be sub-divided into three sub-nuclei. First there is the conviction – common to many parts of Italian culture between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – that the Reformation was ‘a crucial moment in the constitution of modern civilization’. And this in Gramsci’s view was because without this ‘going to the people’ that distinguishes the movement for reform ‘the process of nationalization of the intellectuals and of the masses’ and hence the ‘formation of the State-nation’ is not possible. Further, there is the thesis that the state of crisis and decadence in which Italy was found was due to the missing encounter in its history between the Renaissance and the Reformation, which therefore impeded the development in Italy of ‘a national culture’ and a ‘modern nation-State’ in other word of ‘a process of nationalization of the intellectuals and of the masses in the unity of a modern State structure’.¹⁹ Last, we have the idea that in the Italian cultural tradition there is

the other hand, did indeed possess this efficacy of popular penetration, but it paid for it with a retarding of its intrinsic development, with the slow and often interrupted maturation of its vital germ’ [words of Croce quoted by Gramsci: see Gramsci, 1975, Q16§9, p. 1585 (in English, Gramsci 1971, p. 393) – trans. note]. Cf. Frosini (1999, pp. 93-5); id., (2002, p. 94); id., (2004, p. 173); id., (2008, pp. 145-6); id., (2009, p., 707); Dainotto (2009c, p. 713); Frosini (2012, p. 66).

¹⁷ For the expression ‘intellectual and moral reform’ see Frosini (2009d), pp. 710-12.

¹⁸ The ‘task of Marxism’, as Frosini writes, in line with Ciliberto’s observations, lies in synthesizing ‘historically, politically and not abstractly, in reality and not just in principle, the two moments of the Renaissance and the Reform’ (Frosini, 1999, cit., p. 179). Dainotto is on the same wavelength as Ciliberto and Frosini in his dictionary entry (Dainotto 2009c) on the *Renaissance* (*Rinascimento*), cit., p. 713. Cf. Frosini (1999) cit., pp. 91-2; id. (2008, p. 163); id., *Riforma*, (2009c, pp.707-8); and id., (2012, p. 70).

¹⁹ For an analogous interpretation cf. Frosini (1999, p. 93).

someone who intuited the need for marrying the moment of reformation and that of renaissance with the aim of ‘constructing’ a ‘new form of statehood’ and thus of civilization. This ‘someone’ was Niccolò Machiavelli, whose intuition consisted in a ‘decisive contribution to modernity, up to Marx, up to the philosophy of praxis’, which, Ciliberto goes on to say, is able to overcome the historical hiatus between Renaissance and Reformation, thereby giving birth to a moral and intellectual reform, precisely because it brings back and at the same time develops radically this intuition (Ciliberto, 2020, pp. 174, 176, 182-3, 199-200). The philosophy of praxis proceeds from Machiavelli, then, but

radicalizes its basic motif and goes beyond this by posing the problem of the integral resolution of the State in society, of political society in civil society. It is in this revolutionizing development that its originality resides, even in regard to Machiavelli [...]. It is he who is the authentic precursor of Marx, and Marx is his authentic heir, the real successor (Ciliberto, 2020, p. 186).²⁰

This idea of Machiavelli – one of the various images of him in the Notebooks – may strike the reader for its distance from the ‘real truth of affairs’, for its flavour of an anti-historical forcing, but it is just this which allows us to feel, however briefly, another salient aspect of Ciliberto’s interpretation. This is the one that appears fleetingly in the last-but-one chapter, *Cosmopolitismo e Stato nazionale* (*Cosmopolitanism and National State*) (initially Ciliberto, 1999), and is shown to the full in the last chapter, which bears the eloquent title *Gramsci e Guicciardini. Per una interpretazione ‘figurale’ dei Quaderni* (*Gramsci and Guicciardini. Towards a symbolic interpretation of the Notebooks*) (initially Ciliberto, 2013). In the fifth essay Ciliberto comments in passing that the reader of the *Notebooks* runs up against ‘great symbolic “myths” – deployed on the historiographic plane – more than specific historical analyses’ (Ciliberto, 2020, p. 207). In his sixth chapter Ciliberto, developing and making this observation specific, argues that Gramsci worked by means of figures and tropes which ‘must not be judged on the historical plane, but as principles that engender his political theory. At this level they are decisive, while they do not have particular consistency from the historical and historiographic point of view’. Put differ-

²⁰ On the role of Machiavelli as the model for the philosophy of praxis cf. Frosini’s remarks (Frosini 2002, pp. 103-4).

ently, Machiavelli and the other ‘great protagonists of the *Notebooks*’ are figures that ‘have to be deciphered without looking for what they are not and cannot be, but exploring their critical and hermeneutic potentialities’ (Ciliberto 2020, pp. 233, 249).²¹ It is worth the trouble of extending this type of exploration to the other “figures” of the *Notebooks*, who, while not entering the ranks of his ‘great protagonists’, play an important role – or in any case one worthy of interest – under the profile of political theory. Here I am thinking particularly of Giordano Bruno and Giovanni Botero, but most of all of Tommaso Campanella, who in Gramsci’s eyes represented, even impersonated, two natures characteristics of the history of Italy: the accentuation, due to the Counter-Reformation, of the ‘cosmopolitan character of Italian intellectuals’ and ‘their separation from national life’ (Gramsci 1975, Q3§141, p. 399; Gramsci 1996, p. 117); and the manifestation, found in utopian literature, ‘of the “modern” spirit, that is essentially opposed to the Counter-Reformation’ itself. As Gramsci writes, re-echoing, consciously or not, a certain nineteenth-century image of this Dominican friar as a conspirator and revolutionary:²² ‘All of Campanella’s work is a document of this “underhanded” effort to undermine the Counter-Reformation from within’ (Gramsci 1975, Q25§7, p. 2291; Gramsci 2021, p. 53, and alternatively 1985, p. 239).²³

IV. This is certainly not the right place to go in depth into a theme of this type, on which I propose to return in further work dedicated to analysing the references to Campanella in the prison and in the pre-prison writings. It behooves me to conclude however by recapitulating what has been written in the previous sections: the volumes by Vacca and Ciliberto agree in conferring centrality on the re-elaboration of Marxism – or a certain type of Marxism – in terms of the philosophy of praxis both in underscoring how this re-elaborative path responds to the aim of

²¹ Cf. E. Garin (1997, p. 59): ‘In the “figure” of Machiavelli, perhaps better than in any other of his writing, Gramsci has fixed his thought, and his distance not only from Croce but from the type of culture that Croce embodied’.

²² On the history of this image – and of many others the ‘comprise’ the centuries-old fame of Campanella – see the book (in many aspects important) by L. Addante (2018). For going deeper into Campanella’s political thought, including its relations with the culture of the Counter-Reformation, readers are referred to my publication (Panichi 2015).

²³ On the subject of the Counter-Reformation in the *Notebooks*, which it is worthwhile to analyse systematically, see R. Dainotto (2009a).

guaranteeing to Marxist thought due theoretical and practical autonomy, emancipating it ‘from the decisionist and contractualist roots of bourgeois thought’ (Frosini, 2020 and Cospito, 2004). These two authors grasp and set store by the causal connection between the historical processes taking place, the consequent need to rethink politico-strategic initiative, and the prison reflections – almost in confirmation of the fact that for both of them Gramsci, while not having had ‘luck in the immediate struggle’ (Gramsci, 2015 [1996¹], pp. 448-9, and 2020, pp. 627-8; 1994, vol. 2, pp. 58-9), in prison maintained the intellectual posture and the outlook on the world of the political combatant. Certainly, Vacca and Ciliberto look at this connection from different angles: the former considers above all Leninist political theory and the lack of success of the working-class and socialist movement while the latter privileges national above European and international history, concentrating on the tradition of thought extending ‘from Vico to Spaventa, to Croce and to Gentile’ (Ciliberto, 2020, p. 47); concentrating on the reorganization of the anti-fascist struggle through the agency of the Constituent Assembly; concentrating on the origin of the decadence of the country and the absence in its ‘molecular tissue’ of those principles that inform modernity. These visual angles however integrate mutually and combine to hand back the image of a Gramsci who, as theoretician and political militant, is careful to understand the movement of reality – Italian as much as both European and extra-European – and analyse its long-term dynamics and processes of change. And all this in the awareness, as precious now as it was then, that mistaking the analysis means neither more nor less than mistaking political direction.

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International Gramsci Journal

Volume 4

Issue 3 *Collective Will, Self-Consciousness,
Constitution of the Subject – in theory, and in
practice; Architecture, Professions and
Hegemony / Reviews*

Article 14

2021

Note sugli autori / Notes on Contributors

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Recommended Citation

Boothman, Derek, Note sugli autori / Notes on Contributors, *International Gramsci Journal*, 4(3), 2021, 190-191.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol4/iss3/14>

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Note sugli autori / Notes on Contributors

Abstract

This is the Abstract of the Notes on Contributors to Issue 15 of the International Gramsci Journal.

Keywords

Notes on contributors

Note sugli autori / Notes on Contributors

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A. MICHAEL BAINES

Michael Baines read Law at Belgian Universities, starting his Candidature in 1968 and finishing his Licenciatura in 1973. Further academic studies as actually practising his favourite subject, criminal law, at the Bar, were not options. When he retired in 2016 from a business career which took him all over the world, he could take these interests up again. He is now a researcher and doctoral student, especially interested in Gramsci's concept of hegemony and International Criminal Law.

CARLOS NELSON COUTINHO

Carlos Nelson Coutinho (1943-2012) was an all-round Marxist intellectual, academic and active political militant, who did much towards innovating the line of the Brazilian Communist Party. As writer and translator he was responsible more than anyone for the diffusion of Gramsci's thought in Brazil. Outside Latin America he is known, among other things, for the translated volume *Gramsci's Political Thought* (Leiden, Brill, 2012). Carlos Nelson was also one of the first members of the Editorial Board of the *IGJ*.

CAIO GONTIJO

Caio Gontijo is a doctoral student in Social Sciences at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), Master and Bachelor in International Relations at the Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais (PUC Minas). His research interests and recent publications involve contemporary Brazilian politics and Gramscian political theory.

MIGUEL ANGEL MELLINO

Miguel Mellino currently teaches cultural anthropology in the Department of Social and Human Sciences of the Università di Napoli 'L'Orientale', and has taught in various universities in Europe and South America. His varied research experience is seen in review articles and volumes, edited or written by him, in among others, the fields of post-colonialism, new social movements and the politics of identity and belonging, of migration and exclusion.

MASSIMO MODONESI

Massimo Modonesi is full professor in the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences of the National University of Mexico (UNAM). His research interests include Gramsci's thought, Marxist political theory and the social and political movements in Latin America. He is the author of a number of books in Spanish, Italian and English dealing among other things with questions of antagonism, autonomy, the subalterns and hegemony.

ALESSIO PANICHI

Alessio Panichi teaches in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Johns Hopkins University. His research interests are centred mainly on the history of political thought in the Renaissance and contemporary eras, in particular on

Machiavelli and Campanella, Gramsci and Bobbio. His publications include *Il volto fragile del potere. Religione e politica nel pensiero di Tommaso Campanella* (Pisa, ETS, 2015) and *Antonio Gramsci e la favola. Un itinerario tra letteratura, politica e pedagogia* (Pisa, ETS, 2019).

PIERMARCO PIU

After studying in Pisa, Piermarco Piu obtained a Sociology PhD from Warwick (UK) with a thesis on the production, transnational circulation and re-articulation of the ‘subaltern question’ from Gramsci to global and postcolonial sociologies, a continuing field of work. Current research includes Gramsci’s pre-prison writings and the circulation of proletarian culture issues across the Proletcult Institute in Turin and other proletkul’t experiences in Europe and Russia. His book-length study *Subalterna/o in Gayatri Spivak* (Ghilarza, ISKRA, 2019) gained first prize in the 2017 *Premio Letterario Antonio Gramsci*.

RHINA ROUX

Rhina Roux teaches in the Departamento de Relaciones Sociales of the UNAM (Metropolitan Autonomous University of México) and is a member of the national section of the International Gramsci Society (*Asociación Gramsci México*). As well as Gramsci her research interests include the nature of the Mexican State and of the conflicting hegemonies within it since the 1917 Constitution.