

International Gramsci Journal

Volume 3
Issue 2 *The Modern Prince / Gramscian
Philology: The Prison Notebooks / Reviews*

Article 1

2019

Cover Page

Derek Boothman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci>

Recommended Citation

Boothman, Derek, Cover Page, *International Gramsci Journal*, 3(2), 2019.
Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol3/iss2/1>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

Cover Page

Abstract

Cover Page

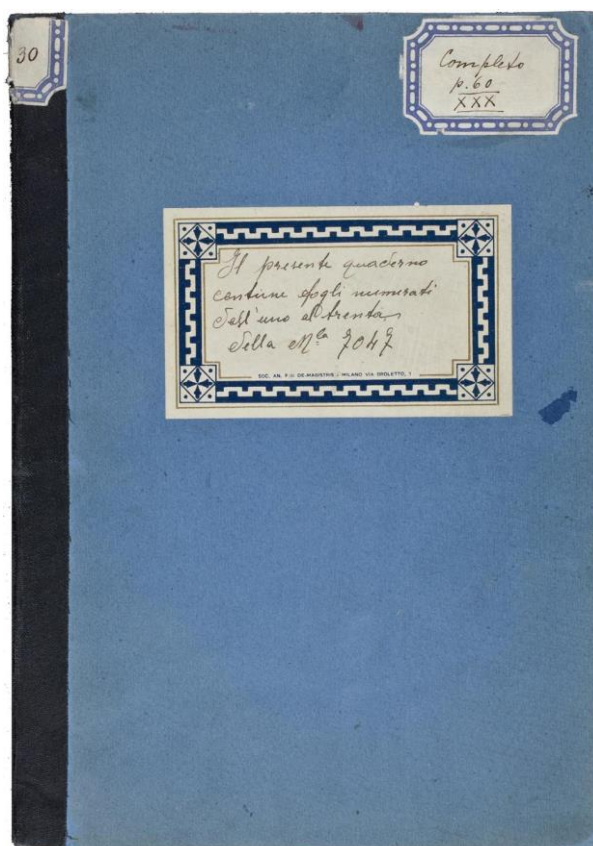
Keywords

Cover Page

INTERNATIONAL GRAMSCI JOURNAL

No. 10, Vol. 3, Issue 2 (Second Series / Seconda Serie)
Summer / Estate 2019

THE MODERN PRINCE / GRAMSCIAN PHILOLOGY: THE PRISON NOTEBOOKS / REVIEWS



Copertina Quaderno 13 (XXX) / Cover Notebook 13 (XXX)

«Noterelle sulla politica del Machiavelli»

(Foto pubblicata per gentile concessione della Fondazione Gramsci /
Photo reproduction by kind permission of the Fondazione Gramsci)

ISSN: 1836-6554

INTERNATIONAL GRAMSCI SOCIETY

International Gramsci Journal

Volume 3
Issue 2 *The Modern Prince / Gramscian
Philology: The Prison Notebooks / Reviews*

Article 2

2019

Table of contents

Derek Boothman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci>

Recommended Citation

Boothman, Derek, Table of contents, *International Gramsci Journal*, 3(2), 2019.
Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol3/iss2/2>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

Table of contents

Abstract

Table of contents

Keywords

Table of contents

ISSUE

The Modern Prince / Gramscian Philology: The Prison Notebooks / Reviews

Editorial

Derek Boothman

1

PART I: *The Modern Prince*

1. Panagiotis Sotiris

The Modern Prince as Laboratory of Political Intellectuality

2-38

2. Lelio La Porta

Dizionario gramsciano / Gramsci Dictionary: Modern Prince

39-45

PART II: *Gramscian Philology: The Prison Notebooks*

3. Gianni Francioni

Quaderni del carcere: Struttura e Descrizione (Italian)

46-64

4. Gianni Francioni

Prison Notebooks: Structure and Description (English)

65-82

PART III: *Reviews*

5. Manuela Ausilio

Oltre la subalternità. Praxis e educazione in Gramsci di Massimo Balducci (Italian)

83-92

6. Manuela Ausilio

Oltre la subalternità. Praxis e educazione in Gramsci by Massimo Balducci (English)

93-102

7. *Notes on contributors*

103-4

International Gramsci Journal

Volume 3
Issue 2 *The Modern Prince / Gramscian
Philology: The Prison Notebooks / Reviews*

Article 3

2019

Editorial

Derek Boothman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci>

Recommended Citation

Boothman, Derek, Editorial, *International Gramsci Journal*, 3(2), 2019, 1-1.
Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol3/iss2/3>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

Editorial

Abstract

Editorial

Keywords

Editorial

Editorial

In the *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci develops various interrelated concepts mainly centred around that of hegemony. The instrument conceived by him for the achievement and subsequent exercise of hegemony was the “modern Prince”, the subject of part one of the current issue of the journal. Panagiotis Sotiris’s double-length article *The Modern Prince as Laboratory of Political Intellectuality* follows up his article in IGJ no. 6; there in a richly developed argument, he dealt with the rise of a political right which, in countries across the globe, is attempting to give a populist and often racist interpretation of what it considers the nation and national sovereignty. The current article takes the argument a stage further, arguing that the entire complex of activities emerging from the subaltern classes requires an updated “modern Prince”, created through an “integral united front”, a strategy – echoing the early years of the Comintern – that was a constant reference point for Gramsci. As an essential guide, this article is backed up by Lelio La Porta’s analytical *Gramsci Dictionary* entry on the “Modern Prince” as treated in the *Prison Notebooks*. His reading rightly concentrates on *Notebook 13* (see cover), the main “special notebook” dedicated to Machiavelli, with additions from some of the “miscellaneous Notebooks”.

With thanks to the Fondazione Gramsci (the copyright holders), Part Two makes available an up-to-date description of the *Notebooks*. The guide explains the division between “special” and “miscellaneous” notebooks, paying particular attention to the structure of the latter and to a more precise dating of all of them. This, the subject of ongoing work in Italy, is helping dispel the myth that the writings are haphazard in nature. The Italian text, designed for an Italian exhibition, is by Gianni Francioni (author of the study *Un labirinto di carta*, IGJ no. 5). We also publish an English-language guide whose original version, based on the Italian, was simplified for a more general public in Moscow. Here much of the phrasing of the original is reinstated in the English translation to make it more suitable for specialist IGJ readers, and bring the two versions back more into line.

Part Three concludes this issue with the dual-language review article by Manuela Ausilio of Massimo Baldacci’s recent book *Oltre la subalternità. Praxis e educazione in Gramsci*, a subject intimately involving hegemony, which we hope to pursue in subsequent issues.

International Gramsci Journal

Volume 3
Issue 2 *The Modern Prince / Gramscian
Philology: The Prison Notebooks / Reviews*

Article 4

2019

The Modern Prince as Laboratory of Political Intellectuality

Panagiotis Sotiris

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci>

Recommended Citation

Sotiris, Panagiotis, The Modern Prince as Laboratory of Political Intellectuality, *International Gramsci Journal*, 3(2), 2019, 2-38.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol3/iss2/4>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

The Modern Prince as Laboratory of Political Intellectuality

Abstract

The aim of this article is to return to Antonio Gramsci's highly original contributions in the *Prison Notebooks* concerning questions of organization and especially his conceptualization of the Modern Prince. In particular, I want to stress the importance of a certain conception of the intellectuality of politics that emerges in the *Prison Notebooks*, and which I consider to be one of Gramsci's more original contributions. Since Gramsci's texts were written against the background of the various debates around the "organization question" in the history of the working class movement, the article begins by revisiting some the answers offered to this question, in order to stress that the question of a certain intellectuality of politics from the beginning has been central to these debates. Then, I move forward to Gramsci's own intervention, in an attempt to show how a conception of organization as a laboratory of political intellectuality and experimentation emerges and how it is linked to the entire conceptual framework of Gramsci's work-in-progress. Finally, I attempt to show how all these are relevant to contemporary debates regarding radical left political parties and fronts.

Keywords

Gramsci, Marx, Lenin, Lukács, Badiou, Political parties, Hegemony, Modern Prince, Communism

The Modern Prince as a Laboratory of Political Intellectuality

Panagiotis Sotiris

*Introduction*¹

In the history of the working-class movements, the question of organization, its form and functioning returns constantly.² The very notions of organization and the party have been debated extensively and intensively and constitute one of the most contested terrains within Marxism, both politically and theoretically. One of the most important contributions has been Antonio Gramsci's conceptualization of the Modern Prince in the *Prison Notebooks*, and in particular what can be described as his conception of organization as a laboratory of political intellectuality. In particular, I think that the very notion of political intellectuality (combined with a certain experimental conception towards which the analogy of the laboratory points) is at the centre of any attempt to actually think the question of organization and its strategic articulation with any hegemonic practice aiming at transformation and emancipation. The questions referring to organization and its role in the transformation of modes of thinking, in the confrontation with antagonistic ideologies, in the articulation of learning practices (including treating politics as an experimental configuration) in the production of knowledges, in the elaboration of strategies, in the enabling of the gnoseological, theoretical and cultural aspects of any potential subaltern hegemony, have been at the centre of debates around the question of organization and this is what makes Gramsci's intervention so important. To bring this forward, it is necessary to revisit some of the debates around the question of organization and political intellectuality in the Marxist tradition, before moving to Gramsci's elaborations in the *Prison Notebooks* and then attempting an assessment of Gramsci's contribution in the light of contemporary debates around questions of organization.

¹ The writer wishes to thank the anonymous referees and Derek Boothman for their invaluable comments on earlier versions of this text.

² On recent debates see Thomas 2013.

1. *The question of organization and political intellectuality in the history of Marxism*

1.1. *Marx: organization as aporia*

Marx's work does not offer a systematic reflection on the question of organization. Although Marx and Engels borrow the notion of the *party* from the political vocabulary of their era, texts such as the *Communist Manifesto* do not actually offer a theory for a working-class party. Rather, they presented communists as the most radical wing of the working-class organizations of that time.

The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties. [...]

The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others. (*MECW*, vol. 6, p. 497).

Even the "Address of the Central Authority of the League" to its members, written in March 1850, which insisted that the class interests of the proletariat demanded "an independent party as soon as possible" which will not be "misled for a single moment by the hypocritical phrases of the democratic petty bourgeois" and whose "battle cry must be: The Revolution in Permanence" (*MECW*, vol. 10, 287) does not make more concrete proposals upon how this "independent political party of the proletariat" should be organised.

We should take into consideration the fact that the working-class movements and the revolutionary tendencies of that time represented a galaxy of different and fragmented collective forms that included journals, small groups of intellectuals and workers, utopian experiments, small organizations, and personal circles. Even the *International Working Men's Association*, was less an "International" and more a network that brought together organizations, representatives of trade unions and important personalities, from a very broad spectrum of ideological currents, most of them at that time more influential than the positions of Marx and Engels. As Monty Johnstone has suggested these included:

(a) the small international Communist cadres' organization (the League of Communists – 1847-52); (b) the 'party' without an organization (during the ebb

of the labour movement – 1850s and early '60s); (c) the broad international federation of workers' organizations (the First International – 1864-72); (d) the Marxist national mass party (German Social Democracy – 1870s, '80s and early '90s); (e) the broad national labour party (Britain and America—1880s and early '90s) based on the Chartist model. (Johnstone 1967, p. 122).

Moreover, both Marx and Engels found themselves in the middle of a tension between two important currents of their time. On the one hand, there was the current of State Socialism represented by Lassalle, the current which at the same time was one of the first to insist upon the need to form a national labour party, and which was one of the constituent tendencies of German social-democracy. On the other hand, there was the anarchist current, in the particular version represented by Bakunin, where anti-statism was combined with a certain conception of the small conspiratorial group,³ a position that was influential in many countries. Both currents had a massive following and this was evident in the continuous influence of Lassalle's line in the German working-class movement, long after his death, and of course in the clash between Marx and Bakunin the Hague Congress. These currents represented positions which Marx and Engels felt obliged to struggle against (since it was obvious that they opposed both the logic of a state-centred socialist policy and with the practice of the small conspiratorial group) and at the same time to recognize as actually existing currents within the working class movement.⁴ It is as if such positions represented real currents and aspects of the reality of the working class movement. Regarding this point Étienne Balibar made an important observation:

Let us mention only one example: the triangle formed by Marx, Lassalle, and Bakunin. In my opinion, one does not wonder enough about the fact that such indefatigable polemicists such as Marx and his faithful assistant Engels turned out to be incapable of writing an "Anti-Lassalle" or an "Anti-Bakunin," which would have been practically much more important than an *Anti-Dühring* or even than the reissue of an *Anti-Proudhon*. No personal and no tactical reason in the world will ever be able to explain such a lapse, a lapse which moreover was, as we know, heavy with political consequences. *They did not write it because they could not write it* (Balibar 1994, p. 134).

³ A view also held by Blanquists. See Green 2017.

⁴ For a detailed account of the evolution of the other currents of the working class movement and Marx and Engel's confrontation with them see Draper 1990. See also Johnstone 1967.

In this sense, we can say that the question of organization remained an aporia for Marx and Engels in particular around the question of the form of a proletarian party, its internal functioning and above all the way that theory, knowledge and strategy could be produced in an antagonistic and class autonomous way.

It was the formation of German social-democracy with the SPD becoming the model party, in particular after the 1891 Erfurt Congress, that gave the first example of a really mass working class party. At the beginning of the 20th century, it was the most impressive example of a mass party in Europe. It was a party that was not simply involved in massive campaigns of political propaganda and organization building but also gradually created a “parallel universe” of working class newspapers, organizations, trade unions, clubs, mutual assistance organizations, schools, while at the same time insisting on its role as guarantor of Marxist “orthodoxy”, even after the appearance of the Bernstein’s “revisionist” positions.⁵ However, the overall experience and evolution of German social-democracy also made evident its limitations and its inability to initiate a revolutionary sequence.

Moreover, although an educational role and an insistence on mass ideological transformation was one of the main concerns, German Social-Democracy failed to offer an answer to the question: in what sense does the political organization produce antagonistic and autonomous forms of political intellectuality and strategy, by means and practices that are linked in an “organic” way to the subaltern classes themselves and their aspirations? Thus the question of a particular form and practice of antagonistic political intellectuality remained open.

1.2 What is to be done? *as a text of political gnoseology*

Few texts in the history of Marxism have come under as much accusation as Lenin’s *What is to be done?*. It is common to reject it as

⁵ On the ‘Erfurtian’ model of the mass Social-democratic party and its appeal in the international working class movement see Lih 2008. As Broué mentions (2006, pp. 14-15) in 1914 the SPD had 1,085,905 members, in the elections held two years before it had won 4,250,000 votes, the trade unions associated with the SPD had 2 million members, it had 90 daily newspaper, employed 267 full time journalists, 3,000 workers and employees to print and distribute them, it had 110 Reichstag deputies and 220 deputies in local parliaments, 2,886 municipal councilors and many professional cadres.

a text that simply insists upon a certain – and by now parochial – conception of a small conspiratorial group based upon the idea that socialist consciousness has to be brought to workers from the outside. However, this approach simply misses the importance of this text. Lars T. Lih (2008) has stressed, in his magisterial comparative reading of *What is to be done?*, the influence of German Social-Democracy and the “Erfurtian” model upon Lenin, but I think that this approach underestimates the originality of Lenin’s positions. In contrast, Lucio Magri stressed that Lenin actually tried to answer some of the open questions in Marx’s writings on questions of organization.

However, one aspect of the theory of the proletarian party, and by no means a secondary one, was never fully clarified by Marx. Confined to the immediacy of prevailing conditions, the proletariat cannot achieve a complete vision of the social system as a whole, nor promote its overthrow. Its practice as a class can only develop by transcending this immediacy via the mediation of revolutionary consciousness. What then is the process, the mechanism by which this consciousness is produced? Or, to pose the question more precisely: can this class consciousness develop within the proletariat spontaneously, by virtue of an intrinsic necessity, based on elements that are already present in its social objectivity and which gradually come to dominate over the other elements that originally condemned it to a subordinate and fragmented condition? Or must revolutionary consciousness represent a global transcendence of the immediacy of the proletariat, produced by a qualitative dialectical leap – a complex interaction between external forces and the spontaneous action of the class itself? (Magri, 1970: 101).

The central issue of *What is to be done?* is a question of political gnoseology in regard to the possibility of a revolutionary consciousness as a form of consciousness that transcends the immediacy of the everyday condition of labour and opens up towards an understanding of the overall working of the social system in order to rethink the possibility of a political movement for revolutionary change. Lenin’s position is organized not only around the acknowledgement of the influence of dominant ideology upon the spontaneous ideology of the masses, but also around the insistence that any attempt to enable the formation of a revolutionary consciousness should be intensified along with the spontaneous militancy of the masses.

[T]he fundamental error committed by the “new trend” in Russian Social-Democracy is its bowing to spontaneity and its failure to understand that the spontaneity of the masses demands a high degree of consciousness from us Social-Democrats. The greater the spontaneous upsurge of the masses and the more widespread the movement, the more rapid, incomparably so, the demand for greater consciousness in the theoretical, political and organizational work of Social-Democracy (*LCW*, vol. 5, p. 397)

So the crucial question is how to produce this particular form of consciousness within the terrain of class struggles, but in a way that goes beyond simply reproducing the spontaneous proletarian ideological representations. Although Lenin insists that revolutionary consciousness is not inherent to the working class in its everyday practice, the formation of such consciousness is not external to the terrain of social and political antagonism, but internal to class struggle and it refers more to qualitative transformation rather than “injection” from the outside. Moreover, it is here that the party is treated not as the “guarantor” of revolutionary truth, but rather as the production site for an antagonistic form of intellectuality. And as Sylvain Lazarus has stressed it is here that we find the actual tension between Marx and Lenin.

The tension lies rather in the fact that, for Marx, the appearance of Communists is something internal to the existence of the workers as a class. Lenin distances himself from this thesis by his critique of what he calls spontaneous consciousness. Revolutionary consciousness, the appearance of revolutionary militants, is not a spontaneous phenomenon. It is a very particular phenomenon, and it requires a break with spontaneous forms of consciousness. The political core of nonspontaneous consciousness is antagonism to the entire existing social and political order. As for the mechanism of realization of the conditions that will permit the emergence of a political consciousness, it is the party (Lazarus, 2007: 259).

Moreover, Lazarus insists that in Marx we cannot find a theory of political consciousness. We can find a theory of history as history of class struggles and a theory of historical consciousness but not a theory of political consciousness. For Lazarus it is Lenin that inaugurates the confrontation with this question.

With Marx, in fact, there is no theory of organization, nor can we speak of a real theory of political consciousness. There is a theory, major and fundamental, of historical consciousness and of consciousness as historical consciousness

– the history of humanity is the history of class struggles. I hold that Lenin brings the foundation of modern politics in the fact that revolutionary politics is required to announce and practice the conditions of its existence (Lazarus, 2007: 259).

On his part Antonio Negri in the reading he offers of Lenin, a reading influenced by the idiosyncratic Leninism of Italian *operaismo*, stresses the link between the particular condition of the Russian proletariat and the way the Lenin thinks the very question of organization, suggesting that Lenin thinks the political party as a factory of strategy.

The party, too, must be able to organize and form the multiplicative character of revolutionary labour, exalting and subverting against capital the very thing that it determines as a growth of the productive power of socialized labour. The party is a factory; it is an enterprise of subversion, an ability to impose a multiplier of productive rationality onto the revolutionary will of militants and the spontaneity of the masses. The party turns this primary matter, which is workers' insubordination, into the accumulation of revolution, into a generic power to attack the adversary (Negri, 2014: 36).

It is true that any attempt to present a unified "Leninist theory of the party" would only lead to simplifications, anachronisms and the reproductions of later canonizations. Most of Lenin's texts were interventions in the conjuncture, they answered to exigencies in relation to very specific times and places, are over-determined by the particular conditions and the history of the Russian working-class movement and often deal with tactics rather than strategy. However, we can note at least three important elements.

The first one has to do with the connection between party and strategy. The party represents the strong connection to revolutionary strategy, not as something referring to the distant future but as constant elaboration of the ways to connect immediate political exigencies and the ability to develop a form of revolutionary consciousness and practice that would enable the working class to be the leading force of all the subaltern classes.

The second element is what we could define as class autonomy. The demand for an independent political organization of the working class, as expression of its class antagonistic character, runs through the entire history of the working-class movement, ever since the *Communist Manifesto*. However, it is in Lenin's texts that we find this demand not only as an organizational aspect (this was

already evident in German Social-Democracy), but as a strategic line that runs through all practices and interventions. For Lenin the proletarian character of the party is not a question of class composition of the membership or of the electorate but rather a question of political strategy and strategic independence in regard to dominant ideology.

And this brings to the third crucial element, that of the need for a radical rupture. If class autonomy is above all a question of political strategic orientation, then the organizational break with the political forms of the working-class movement that represent the influence of bourgeois politics and ideology becomes the necessary condition of its revolutionary character. Lenin made this evident by his insistence that this should also take a symbolic form on the eve of the revolution by means of the choice of a new name (“communist”) and the formation of a new International

9) Party tasks:

(a) Immediate convocation of a Party congress;

(b) Alteration of the Party Programme, mainly:

(1) On the question of imperialism and the imperialist war;

(2) On our attitude towards the state and our demand for a “commune state”;

(3) Amendment of our out-of-date minimum programme;

(c) Change of the Party’s name.

10) A new International (*LCW*, vol. 24, p. 24)

For Lenin the class character of a party has more to do with strategy rather than sociology. The stake is to ensure that the largest part of the working class will recognize itself in the political current that represents the possibility of proletarian revolution. A careful reading of Lenin’s texts immediately before and immediately after October 1917 shows how his main concern and at the same time the element he thinks is an expression of the “ripening of conditions”, is the extent of the influence of the Bolsheviks in the Russian working class.

However, there is also a tension in his intervention. On the one hand Lenin quickly incorporated the Soviets in his conception of revolutionary politics, acknowledging that they represented a practice of politics and a form of power that was antagonistic to the bourgeois practice of politics. This is expressed in his conception of

dual power, his insistence that the Soviets were going to be the forms of the State under the dictatorship of the proletariat. We also know that, in a manner similar to that of Marx in regard to the Paris Commune, Lenin incorporated into his conception a form of autonomous class organization that emerged within class struggle itself and was not initially a choice of the Bolshevik current (Shandro 2007). We also know that even after the revolution Lenin was thinking in terms of a certain relation of autonomy between the Soviets and the parties of currents that participated in them in the struggle for hegemony. It would be through the experience of the Civil War and later in the Stalinist era that the idea of the single party system and the full identification between the proletarian party and the supposedly proletarian State would become the orthodoxy along with the abandonment of the Soviet model in favour of the single-party State parliamentarism of the “People’s democracies”.

Of course, one might say that some of Lenin’s interventions, especially those specific to the confrontation between the Bolsheviks and other currents, such as the particularly centralizing conception of the Central Committee as the main decision body in contrast to local organizations, can indeed to a bureaucratic conception if taken out of context and applied as general rules. In this sense, some of the more critical observations by Rosa Luxemburg in her critique of Lenin on questions of organization were valid and in particular her position that there were no organizational guarantees against opportunism (Luxemburg 1961). At the same time, although Lenin insisted on the relation between party, theory and revolutionary consciousness as the means to turn the organization into the production process of strategic initiatives, the particular way that this should be accomplished and in particular the question of the elaboration of an antagonistic political intellectuality still remained open.

1.3 Georg Lukács: The question of organization as an intellectual question

One of the most important theoretical interventions in the period after the Russian Revolution was Georg Lukács’s *History and Class Consciousness*. And it is here that the question of political intellectuality is posed in an explicit way in the last essay of the book, which deals with the question of organization (“Towards a

Methodology of the Problem of Organization”).⁶ For Lukács the contradictory views that different tendencies of the working class movement had in regard to the Russian Revolution and the persisting influence of “Menshevik” currents provided evidence of an ideological crisis of the proletariat and an inability to think on the basis of its own class perspective, as a result of the divisions running through the proletariat but also of the effects that the capitalist division of labour had upon the consciousness of the proletariat. If political organization can be defined as the “form of mediation between theory and practice” (Lukács 1971, p. 299), the crucial question is to what extent actual communist organizations perform this mediation. Moreover, the necessary independence of the communist parties (exemplified in the break with social democratic parties) should not be seen as the formation of a “General Staff” detached from the working class but a “new relation between spontaneous action and conscious theoretical foresight” (Lukács 1971, p. 317), which demanded the participation of members in all aspects of organizational life, in order to bring forward the proletarian worldview and struggle against all the inherited influences of bourgeois “reified” consciousness. When Lukács opposed the idea that the party “consists merely of a hierarchy of officials isolated from the mass of ordinary members” (Lukács 1971, p. 336), this was not only in order to avoid the reproduction of bourgeois politics but also it was a necessary condition for the party to perform this particular unity of theory and practice which would represent the proletarian worldview in the struggle for communism.

In Lukács’s analysis there are no simple organizational or “military” metaphors of the party as leadership or “general headquarters”. Rather the party and the organization are presented as spaces of collective thinking, practice and transformation. We can see the same concerns in other texts by Lukács of that period (Lukács 2014), in which he deals with two crucial questions, one referring to tactics (the debate in the German communist movement regarding the “*Teilaktionen*”) and the other referring to the party (“mass party or sect”). Lukács insists that the question

⁶ On the importance of this text and of Lukács’s thinking on questions of organization in general see Thomas 2013.

cannot be answered by means of bureaucratic centralization, but by enhancing the full development of the consciousness of members. That is why for Lukács ‘the question of organization reveals itself to be an intellectual [*geistig*] question’ (Lukács 2014, p. 116).

It is obvious that for Lukács the question of political *intellectuality* becomes one of the determining aspects of any potential revolutionary politics, and consequently of the organizational form of any such politics, in a manner very similar to how Gramsci would later face again the challenge of this question, and on a similar basis with Lukács, namely the open questions and contradictions of the period after 1917.

1.4. Can politics be thought?

Before moving into Antonio Gramsci’s writings on questions of organization, I would like to turn to some more recent interventions. This detour (and slight anachronism) will help me show how Gramsci’s thinking is not only pertinent to these debates, but also offers a way out of crucial aporias regarding contemporary interventions.

If we speak about the party of an independent expression of the revolutionary dynamic of the working class, or about Lenin’s conception of the party as the way to enhance the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat, or about the questions posed by Lukács, it is obvious that there is a recurring question regarding the connection between (revolutionary) politics and thinking, it is the question whether politics can be thought.

This has been a question running through the work of Alain Badiou. *Can politics be thought?* was even the title of one of Badiou’s important interventions in the 1980s (Badiou 2018). In his reading of Sylvain Lazarus’s *Anthropology of the Name* (Lazarus 2015) Badiou suggests that it is possible to find in Lazarus’s work a distinct form of intellectuality in regard to politics, a distinct “configuration of intellectuality [*dispositif d’ intellectuelité*]” (Badiou 2005, p. 27, *translation modified*).

“People think” and “politics as thought”: Both Lazarus and Badiou oppose these two theses to any classical conception of theory in its relation to social reality and its potential transformation, including any conception of a dialectic of theory and practice. In contrast, for Badiou “[t]hought is not a relation *to* the object, it is

an *internal* relation of its Real” (Badiou 2005, p. 28) and the localization of a political singularity.

Politics is a thought. This statement excludes all recourse to the theory / practice pairing. There is certainly a ‘doing’ of politics, but it is immediately the pure and simple experience of a thought, its localization. Doing politics cannot be distinguished from thinking politics (Badiou 2005, p. 46).

In the line of reasoning presented by Lazarus and Badiou, the emphasis is always on the singularity of thought and the singularity of revolutionary sequence. In a certain sense, politics and thinking, thinking politics and doing revolutionary politics are part of the same self-constituting process, which unites the subjective condition and the fact that people now think under the event, under the new terrain opened by the opening of a singular revolutionary sequence. For Badiou this is exemplified in Lazarus’s insistence that “the possible is a category in subjectivity” and that “the prescriptive possible is thus the content of subjectivities and practices that presided over what has taken place” (Lazarus 2015, p. 160). For Badiou,

[t]his clarifies why one is able to think the singularity of a thought within a strictly prescriptive and self-constituting realm of interiority, both rationally (through the category of the name and places of the name), and without having to immerse it in the heterogeneity of time: what has taken place is thinkable, both as a precarious singularity restricted by dates [...] and as indifferent to time. To think a singularity does indeed determine it, in the words of Thucydides, in the guise of an ‘eternal acquisition’ (Badiou 2005, p. 38).

The notion of interiority is crucial in this conception of the intellectuality of politics. For Lazarus interiority suggests that it is a politics based in subjectivity and in relation to a singular sequence. “Politics in interiority is a politics in subjectivity” (Lazarus 2016, p. 110). It is also a politics of singularity and of producing new ways to do politics and new ways of organization.

Politics in interiority, in its assignment to the principle *people think*, produces a politics in subjectivity. In its assignment to *historicity*, it is what makes it possible to grasp the way in which politics exists, when it does exist, as *relation of a politics to its thought*: this is the theory of *politics’ historical mode*. The category of politics’ historical mode is what makes it possible to apprehend a politics in the *singular invention* that it presents, the equally singular practices that it deploys, its hitherto unseen forms of organization (Lazarus 2016, p. 112).

However, how can we define this form of intellectuality associated with new forms of politics and organization aiming at social emancipation and transformation? Although Lazarus and Badiou offer some lines of demarcation such as the insistence upon the need for a politics at a distance from the State, the insistence on the break with parliamentary logic and the fidelity to the communist idea, yet the question of organization remains open. Moreover, one can say that especially Badiou seems to reject any attempt to think the question of political intellectuality as also an organizational question.

This lack of a particular reference to the question of organization as a space and process producing militant intellectualities, can also be related to Badiou's critique of what he has defined as a democratic materialism and a certain form of democracy. Bruno Bosteels has suggested that this has to do with Badiou's critical position against a certain postmodern conception of radical democracy "paradoxically anchored in the essential unfulfillment of both subject and object as the founding poles of modernity" (Bosteels 2011, p. 252), in the sense of a radical lack at the centre of social non-ontology. "Grounded in the inherent lack of the field of the political, radical democracy always seeks to avoid the imminent threat of totalitarianism that lies at the core of democracy itself" (Bosteels 2011, p. 261). In contrast to this, according to Bosteels Badiou aims to "to think the actuality of the present and to historicize the processes of subjectivization" (Bosteels 2011, p. 261), by means of a politics based upon the communist hypothesis.

However, by delinking the question of the fidelity to the communist hypothesis from any considerations regarding questions of organization, political experimentation and revolutionary practice, Badiou in the end oscillates between a militant decisionism and an almost Platonic dogmatism. This is one of the limits of his conceptualization of politics.

In contrast, Jacques Rancière "bends the stick to the other side" in his egalitarian conception of the intelligence of everybody as a prerequisite of emancipation:

Instead it is the intelligence that does not fit any specific position in a social order but belongs to anybody as the intelligence of anybody. Emancipation

then means: the appropriation of this intelligence which is one, and the verification of the potential of the equality of intelligence (Rancière 2010, p. 168).

For Rancière the answer to this is a communism of the intelligence:

Emancipation means the communism of intelligence, enacted in the demonstration of the capacity of the ‘incapable’: the capacity of the ignorant to learn by himself, says Jacotot. We can add: the capacity of the worker to let his eyes and his mind escape from the work of his hands, the capacity of a community of workers to stop work even though it does not wait and even though they need it for their livelihoods, to transform the private space of the workshop into a public space, to organize production by their own forces or to take on the task of governing a city that its rulers have deserted or betrayed (Rancière 2010, p. 168).

This is a fascinating position and in a certain sense it has the extra advantage in comparison to Badiou’s position that it does not limit thinking to the conjuncture of a potentially revolutionary sequence. However, there are some open questions. Although Rancière stresses the political and intellectual potential of the subaltern social groups, he underestimates the need for any antagonistic political intellectuality, both as theory/knowledge and strategy, to be produced, elaborated, articulated and not just taken give. Although a useful reminder that the subaltern can actually think, in contrast to any doctrinaire and elitist conception of politics, this position refuses to see the importance of the organizational forms and political practices that enhance this “communism of intelligence” and turn into into a political strategy and emancipatory process.

Moreover, there is another important point. It is not only that the people think. The State also thinks, in the sense of producing discourses, knowledges and subjectivities. Although this is a position we tend to attribute to Foucault and his conception of the State producing discourses and truth regimes, I would like to turn our attention to Poulantzas and how he encapsulated this question in *State Power and Socialism*

This presupposes that, in the various codes of thinking, the state itself is *overcoded*: that it serves as the frame of reference within which the various

segments of reasoning and their supporting apparatuses find homogenous ground for their differential functioning. Through a process of measured distillation, this overcoding is inculcated in the totality of subjects. Thus, the capitalist State installs a uniform *national language* and eliminated all other languages. [...] It is therefore the mission of the *national State* to organize the process of thought by forging the materiality of the people-nation, and to create a language which while doubtless situated within ideological formations, is by no means reducible to an ideological operation. (Poulantzas 2000, p. 58).

So the question is how we counter this collective and materialized knowledge and intelligence, this over-coding produced by the State. And the question becomes even more important if we consider the fact that the people or the subaltern are neither outside the State nor immune to its ideological and intellectual functioning (something also underestimated by the way Rancière takes this communism of intelligence as given). What are the collective practices and forms, what are the forms of organization that can actually help people think politics and think a politics of emancipation and can induce the emergence of forms of intellectuality that maintain and expand the constitutive interiority to the possibility of a revolutionary sequence? It is obvious that these are open questions in the entire history of the working-class movements and their political forms. To try and answer these questions we must turn to Antonio Gramsci.

2. Gramsci and the challenge of mass political intellectuality

2.1 Gramsci's confrontation with questions of organization

Gramsci's thinking on questions of organization cannot be separated from his conceptualization of the integral State and his theory of hegemony, and is part of his broader confrontation with the question of how to rearticulate a revolutionary strategy in a period of defeat of the revolution. As I will try to show, all these can explain his particular emphasis on the question of organization of a mass political intellectuality as a necessary condition of the potential conquest of hegemony by the subaltern classes.

Gramsci's thinking on questions of organization was also conditioned by his own experiences of political militancy: his participation in the formation of an independent communist party oscillating between sectarianism – in the particular version

represented by Bordiga – and the emerging line of the United Front, which would also be the background of Gramsci's last interventions before his imprisonment; his experience and participation in a unique experiment of autonomous class organization, the worker's councils, would be a constant reference point as a case study of proletarian self-government; his first hand experience of the Communist International in a period when there was still open discussion and confrontation between different opinions before the advent of a supposed "monolithic" functioning.

Of all these experiences it is important to stress the formative character of Gramsci's involvement in the factory council movement in Turin and in the publication of *Ordine Nuovo* (d'Orsi 2017, pp. 98-131). The factory council movement presented for him an example of an emerging workers' democracy: "The socialist State already exists potentially in the institutions of social life characteristic of the exploited working class" (Gramsci 1977, p. 65). At the same time this experience made him confront the complex question of the relation between spontaneous movements and organized political forms, something evident in the tension in his writings at that time regarding the roles of the party and the councils (Silvestrini 2017).

The importance of the factory council / *Ordine Nuovo* experience is also evident in Q3§48, a note written between October and November 1930. The reference in the title of the note to *spontaneity and conscious leadership* sets the tone of the note. For Gramsci "pure spontaneity does not exist in history" (Gramsci 1975, Q3§48, p. 328; *PN* Vol. 2, p. 48) and elements of conscious leadership are always active in movements of the subaltern classes, "but none of them predominates or goes beyond the level of 'popular science' – 'common sense,' that is the [traditional] conception of the world – of a given social stratum" (Gramsci 1975, Q3§48, p. 328; *PN* Vol. 2, p. 49). Gramsci defends the Turin movement against accusations that it was sponteneist or voluntarist and defends "the creativity and soundness of the leadership that the movement acquired". And this is how Gramsci describes this creativity and soundness:

This was not an "abstract" leadership; it did not consist in the mechanical repetition of scientific or theoretical formulas; it did not confuse politics – real action – with theoretical disquisition. It devoted itself to real people in specific

historical relations, with specific sentiments, ways of life, fragments of worldviews, etc., that were outcomes of the “spontaneous” combinations of a given environment of material production with the “fortuitous” gathering of disparate social elements within that same environment. 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 by means of modern theory but in a living historical manner (Gramsci 1975, Q3§48, p. 330; *PN* Vol. 2, p. 50)

Gramsci here points to a complex conception of leadership as a transformative process, where the “spontaneous” elements in the resistances and aspirations of the subaltern classes are transformed into a conscious political practice by means of a “pedagogical” intervention that brings along theoretical elements not in order to replace the spontaneous elements but to unify them. Consequently, “[t]he unity of ‘spontaneity’ and ‘conscious leadership,’ or ‘discipline,’ is precisely the real political action of the subaltern classes” (Gramsci 1975, 3§48, p. 330; *PN* Vol. 2, p. 51). This makes evident that Gramsci not only always had a reference to the experience of the factory councils movement, but also that his conception of political “leadership” also included this articulation and reciprocal relation between the “party form” and the collective practices and ingenuity of the subaltern masses in struggle, especially when such forms of self-organization emerged.

Lukács also dealt with the same question in his 1968 *Process of democratisation* when he stressed that “seemingly overpowering mass spontaneity was even expanded, consolidated and directed toward concrete goals through the organizational work of the council movement [*Rätebewegung*]. Originating in the Commune of 1871, spontaneously cropping up anew in 1905, the council movement became the paradigmatic model of socialist democracy in and after 1917” (Lukács 1991, p. 125; translation modified). However, it is interesting that in this intervention, Lukács insisted on the impossibility of repeating the experience of the councils and stressed instead the role of the party in regard to the task of democratizing socialism: “the present, extremely widespread apathy of the laboring masses can only develop itself to such socialist democratic activity through goals provided it by an outside force”. For Lukács it was the Communist Party that should take up the task “of mobilization, of taking the currently private, intersubjective, and

subterranean movements and organizing them in practical life as emancipator, as goal-oriented behavior” (Lukács 1991, p. 162).

Returning to Gramsci, in a note on Machiavelli, originally in Notebook 8 and then in a second draft in Notebook 13, he encapsulates the necessity of the political party, in opposition to other forms of organization exactly on the basis of a need not only to form a collective will but also to enable it to articulate and execute a political project. Here the opposition is to Sorel, who is accused by Gramsci that, by remaining confined to the conception of the “myth” (the ideological and political imagery that would inspire the masses), he also remains within the limits of the trade union and the general strike, without being able to think either the notion of the party or a more general project of political transformation.

A study might be made of how it came about that Sorel never advanced from his conception of ideology-as-myth to an understanding of the political party, but stopped short at the idea of the trade union. 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 (it could only be given a positive character by the realization of a common accord between the various wills involved), an activity which does not envisage an “active and constructive” phase of its own (Gramsci 1975, Q13§1, pp. 1556-57; *SPN*, p. 127).

It is upon this basis that Gramsci can suggest the analogy between Machiavelli’s Prince, namely the way that the Florentine thinker sought the person that could function as the catalyst for a process of national unification of the fragmented Italian space, and the modern political party. The aim was to suggest that the communist party (but also the United Front) should also function in this unifying way, articulating the fragmented and “molecular” practices and aspirations of the subaltern in a common political demand for radical transformation.

The modern prince, the myth-prince, cannot be a real person, a concrete individual. It can only be an organism, a complex element of society in which a collective will, which has already been recognized and has to some extent asserted itself in action, begins to take concrete form. History has already provided this organism, and it is the political party – the first cell in which

there come together germs of a collective will tending to become universal and total (Gramsci 1975, Q13§1, p. 1558; *SPN*, p. 129).

This drawing of a line of demarcation from Sorel is also in fact Gramsci's way to transcend a politics of simply investing upon the spontaneous political forms emerging in the class struggle. However, transcending does not mean denying or rejecting. Rather it means acknowledging limits and confronting the challenge of a politics referring to political level per se. This can account for the positive account of Jacobinism as a reference point for the Modern Prince, with Jacobinism becoming a synonym for a politics aiming at the formation of a collective will for hegemony.

The abstract character of the Sorelian conception of the myth is manifest in its aversion (which takes the emotional form of an ethical repugnance) for the Jacobins, who were certainly a "categorical embodiment" of Machiavelli's Prince. 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, Q13§1, p. 1559; *SPN*, p. 130).

Consequently, for Gramsci the Modern Prince is a way to think the political operation of the revolutionary party (and also the United Front as the principal form of doing mass politics), treating it as the terrain par excellence for the elaboration of a collective will capable of being the protagonist of a process of social transformation. That is why the duties of the Modern Prince also include another crucial Gramscian notion: "intellectual and moral reform". This notion points to the way in which Gramsci considers both historical materialism and the communist perspective to refer to the universal transformation of all instances of social existence.

The Modern Prince must be and cannot but be the proclaimer and organiser of an intellectual and moral reform, which also means creating the terrain for a subsequent development of the national-popular collective will towards the realization of a superior, total form of modern civilization. (Gramsci 1975, Q13§1, p. 1560; *SPN*, pp. 132-3).

This is indeed a very important and very dense passage from Gramsci, since it both incorporates and at the same time transcends the “Jacobin” notion of the collective will, with the inclusion of a defining aspect of subalternity in the notion of “national-popular”, connecting it to the communist perspective (hence the reference to a superior and total form of modern civilization) and insisting that the terrain for the elaboration for such a political practice is indeed the Modern Prince.

2.2. *Mass intellectuality and common sense*

What is also particularly important is how Gramsci has a fairly broad conception of the intellectual aspect of all social practice:

There is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded: *Homo faber* cannot be separated from *homo sapiens*. [. . .] The problem of creating a new stratum of intellectuals consists therefore in the critical elaboration of the intellectual activity that exists in everyone ... (Gramsci 1975, Q12§3, pp. 1550-51; *SPN*, p. 9).

This broad definition of intellectuality is a very crucial node in Gramsci’s attempt to link the possibility of a subaltern hegemony with the form of intellectuality inherent to the practices of the subaltern classes. This need to find the elements of intellectuality that exist in the practices of the subaltern in order to transform them as part of a politics for hegemony, is also evident in his approach to the notion of the *common sense* [*senso comune*].

Every social stratum has its own ‘common sense’ and its own ‘good sense’, which are basically the most widespread conception of life and of man. Every philosophical current leaves behind a sedimentation of ‘common sense’: this is the document of its historical effectiveness. Common sense is not something rigid and immobile, but is continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life. ‘Common sense’ is the folklore of philosophy, and is always half-way between folklore properly speaking and the philosophy, science, and economics of the specialists. Common sense creates the folklore of the future, that is as a relatively rigid phase of popular knowledge at a given place and time. (Gramsci 1975, Q24§4, p. 2271; *SPN*, p. 326, footnote 5).

What is important in this conception is that this is not just a relation of transforming common sense into “good sense”, which would suggest a traditional “pedagogical” conception of politics as “political education”. One way to think these questions is by

turning to Gramsci's conception of hegemony as a pedagogical practice and relation. This is exemplified in the following well-known passage from Q10II§44):

This problem can and must be related to the modern way of considering pedagogical doctrine and practice, according to which the relationship between teacher and pupil is active and reciprocal so that every teacher is always a pupil and every pupil a teacher. [...] This form of relationship exists throughout society as a whole and for every individual relative to other individuals. It exists between intellectual and non-intellectual sections of the population, between the rulers and the ruled, elites and their followers, leaders [dirigenti] and led, the vanguard and the body of the army. Every relationship of "hegemony" is necessarily an educational relationship and occurs not only within a nation, between the various forces of which the nation is composed, but in the international and world-wide field, between complexes of national and continental civilisations (Gramsci 1975, Q10II§44, p. 1331; *SPN*, pp. 349-50).

Pedagogy in Gramsci has a specific signification and there is always a dialogue with Marx's third *Thesis on Feuerbach*, the *thesis* that articulates a dialectical pedagogical relation based upon the premise that the educator must also be educated with revolutionary *praxis*:

The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that it is essential to educate the educator himself. This doctrine must, therefore, divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society.

The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can be conceived and rationally understood only as *revolutionary praxis*. (MECW, Vol. 5, p. 4, translation modified).⁷

2.3 From the integral state to the possibility of integral autonomy

Gramsci did not only offer an important contribution to the theory of the State and hegemony. He also attempted an answer to

⁷ In the *MECW* *revolutionäre Praxis* is translated as *revolutionary practice*. I think that *praxis* is more accurate, especially since *praxis* is a crucial notion of Gramsci. It is also interesting that when Engels first included the "Theses on Feuerbach" as an appendix to his *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, he made certain modifications to the text of Marx's original manuscript. One of these was to replace *revolutionäre Praxis* with *umwälzende Praxis*. Gramsci in his own translation of the 'Theses' seems to use Engels's version and to follow a tradition that begins with Gentile and translates *umwälzende Praxis* as "rovesciamento della praxis" (Gramsci 2007, p. 744. See also the note of the editors (Giuseppe Cospito and Gianni Francioni) on pp 814-815).

the question to “how does the State think”, which is also a contribution to any potential theory of organization. Of particular importance is Gramsci’s conception of the “integral state” (Thomas 2009), which includes political society and civil society, public and private hegemonic apparatuses, the aspect of coercion, of direction / leadership but also of consent.

[T]he State is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules (Gramsci 1975, Q15§10, p. 1765; *SPN*, p. 244).

Gramsci’s reference to practical and theoretical activities is very important and it points towards a highly original relational and practical conception of the State. It points towards a thinking of the state neither as an instrument nor as a headquarters but as a terrain where the dominant classes produce discourses, ideologies, knowledges, strategies referring to their hegemonic practice.

However, there are differences between how the state thinks and how the subaltern classes can think the possibility of their unity in the struggle for emancipation. It is exactly here that the question of organization emerges. The question is not whether the subaltern classes can influence, directly or indirectly, social and political relations of forces. Rather, the question is how to transform the subaltern classes into an autonomous social force in order for the question for a conquest of hegemony by the subaltern to be posed. In the following passage Gramsci not only establishes the terms of this challenge but also makes evident that the aim has to be organizational forms that enable their autonomous political constitution and mobilization:

The subaltern classes, by definition, are not unified and cannot unite until they are able to become a “State”: their history, therefore, is intertwined with that of civil society, *it is a “dismembered” and discontinuous function of the history of civil society* [è una funzione «disgregata» e discontinua della storia della società civile] and thereby of the history of States and groups of States. Hence it is necessary to study: 1. the objective formation of the subaltern social groups, by the developments and transformations occurring in the sphere of economic production ; their quantitative diffusion and their origins in pre-existing social groups, whose mentality, ideology and aims they conserve for a time; 2. their active or passive affiliation to the dominant political formations, their attempts

to influence the programmes of these formations in order to press claims of their own, and the consequences of these attempts in determining processes of decomposition, renovation or neo-formation; 3. the birth of new parties of the dominant groups, intended to conserve the assent of the subaltern groups and to maintain control over them; 4. The formations which the subaltern groups themselves produce, in order to press claims of a limited and partial character ; 5. those new formations which assert the autonomy of the subaltern groups, but within the old framework ; 6. those formations which assert the integral autonomy, . . etc. (Gramsci 1975, Q25§5, p. 2288; *SPN*, p. 52. The italicized line, inadvertently omitted from *SPN*, is here reinstated with the consequent modification of a preposition that follows).

According to this approach, on the one hand we have the integral state as the material terrain of bourgeois hegemony and on the other hand the exigency for organizational forms that could enhance the integral autonomy of the subaltern classes in their struggle for an antagonistic form of hegemony. However, one point is very important. This seemingly apparent symmetry between *Stato integrale* and *autonomia integrale*, should not be treated in a simplistic way. The State and the organizational forms that enable this integral autonomy of the subaltern classes are fundamentally different apparatuses. They represent antagonistic forms of organization and practice of politics.

2.4. *The emergence of a new intellectuality*

How can we think such an antagonistic form of political intellectuality? Gramsci offers some important points. First, he insisted that “everyone is a philosopher” (Gramsci 1975 Q11§12, p. 1375; *SPN*, p. 323), thus pointing to the element of intellectuality inherent to any practice, as already discussed, but also the possibility of the emergence of mass forms of transformed intellectuality. Moreover, he stressed that the most important aspect refers to the transformation of the ways that people think when they think in a “coherent” way namely when they strive for their autonomy.

For a mass of people to be led to think coherently and in the same coherent fashion about the real present world, is a “philosophical” event far more important and “original” than the discovery by some philosophical “genius” of a truth which remains the property of small groups of intellectuals. (Gramsci 1975 Q11§12, p.1378; *SPN*, p. 325).

Gramsci insists that “[t]he political party for some social groups is nothing other than their specific way of elaborating their own category of organic intellectuals directly in the political and philosophical field and not just in the field of productive technique” (Gramsci 1975 Q12§1, p. 1522; *SPN*, p. 15). However, he makes it clear that does not refer to some group or stratum of “specialists” but to all the militants.

That all members of a political party should be regarded as intellectuals is an affirmation that can easily lend itself to mockery and caricature. But if one thinks about it nothing could be more exact. (Gramsci 1975, Q12§1, p. 1523; *SPN*, p. 16).

In his struggling effort to think the mass formation of organic intellectuals for proletarian hegemony as integral subaltern autonomy, Gramsci insists that “[i]f the ‘new’ intellectuals put themselves forward as the direct continuation of the previous ‘intelligentsia’, they are not new at all (that is, not tied to the new social group which organically represents the new historical situation) but are a conservative and fossilised left-over of the social group which has been historically superseded” (Gramsci 1975, Q11§16, p. 1407; *SPN*, p. 453). These new intellectuals must be formed within the struggle of the working class for autonomy, but also within the practical effort for new forms of social organization and production. The fact that their formation is not limited to the traditional institutions associated with intellectual activity calls to mind Foucault’s conception of the “specific intellectuals” (Foucault, 2002: 126-133), although it should be noted that Gramsci stresses the direct connection with revolutionary political practice. This is evident in passages such as this:

On this basis the weekly *O[rdine] N[uovo]* worked to develop certain forms of new intellectualism and to determine its new concepts, and this was not the least of the reasons for its success, since such a conception corresponded to latent aspirations and conformed to the development of the real forms of life. The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passions, but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, “permanent persuader” and not just a simple orator (but superior at the same time to the abstract mathematical spirit); from technique-as-work one proceeds to technique-as-science and to the humanistic conception of history, without

which one remains “specialised” and does not become “directive” (specialised and political). (Gramsci 1975, Q12§3, p. 1551; *SPN*, pp. 9-10).

Another important element pointing to the same direction, is to return to Gramsci’s conception of the philosophy of praxis as also a form of mass critical intellectuality and as a different practice of philosophy. There we can also find the figure of the “democratic philosopher” which also points to new way to think this antagonistic form of political intellectuality.

One could say therefore that the historical personality of an individual philosopher is also given by the active relationship which exists between him and the cultural environment he is proposing to modify. The environment reacts back on the philosopher and imposes on him a continual process of self-criticism. It is his “teacher”. This is why one of the most important demands that the modern intelligentsias have made in the political field has been that of the so-called “freedom of thought and of the expression of thought” (“freedom of the press”, “freedom of association”). For the relationship between master and disciple in the general sense referred to above is only realised where this political condition exists, and only then do we get the “historical” realization of a new type of philosopher, whom we could call a “democratic philosopher” in the sense that he is a philosopher convinced that his personality is not limited to himself as a physical individual but is an active social relationship of modification of the cultural environment. When the “thinker” is content with his own thought, when he is “subjectively”, that is abstractly, free, that is when he nowadays becomes a joke. The unity of science and life is precisely an active unity, in which alone liberty of thought can be realised; it is a master-pupil relationship, one between the philosopher and the cultural environment in which he has to work and from which he can draw the necessary problems for formulation and resolution. In other words, it is the relationship between philosophy and history. (Gramsci 1975, Q10II§44 pp. 1331-32; *SPN*, p. 350).

This conception of an active social relation of transformation of the cultural environment offers the starting point for a transformative practice of political intellectuality that goes beyond the way suggested by Badiou. Here we are dealing with a process that included what people do in the struggle for emancipation, how they learn, think and change within struggle. This offers a much more dialectical image that combine doing politics and thinking politics, while at the same time being part of a movement that is transforming social relations and forms and this way producing the

intellectual elements and conditions that are necessary for such a movement. One might say that Gramsci had in mind not only a new quality of militancy but also a new form of mass intellectuality as a condition for hegemony.

For Gramsci we can find here one of the main duties of intellectuals: ‘the task of the intellectuals is to determine and to organise moral and intellectual reform, in words to fit culture to the sphere of practice (Gramsci 1975, Q11§16, p. 1407; *SPN*, p. 253). In the first draft of this text in Notebook 8, instead of moral and intellectual reform Gramsci writes “cultural revolution” (Gramsci 1975, Q8§171, p. 1044). As Fabio Frosini (Frosini 2003, p. 95-97) and Peter Thomas (Thomas 2009, pp. 232-234) have stressed the notion of the cultural revolution comes from the discussions of the NEP period and “Lenin’s last battle” (Lewin 1968), when in the thinking of Lenin there is a constant return of questions referring to the need for a new civilization and the new mass intellectuality as an answer to the contradictions of the transition process.

2.5. The party as laboratory

However, there are still open questions: how are these new mass forms of militant intellectuality going to be produced, especially when Gramsci was not simply suggesting copying the ways that the bourgeoisie formed its hegemonic apparatuses and articulated its hegemony? What form could the hegemonic apparatuses of a potential hegemony of the subaltern have? It is here that the conception of the political party as the terrain for new forms of mass political intellectualities emerges:

One should stress the importance and significance which, in the modern world, political parties have in the elaboration and diffusion of conceptions of the world, because essentially what they do is to work out the ethics and the politics corresponding to these conceptions and act as it were as their historical “laboratory”. The parties recruit individuals out of the working mass, and the selection is made on practical and theoretical criteria at the same time. The relation between theory and practice becomes even closer the more the conception is vitally and radically innovatory and opposed to old ways of thinking. For this reason one can say that the parties are the elaborators of new integral and all-encompassing intellectualities and the crucibles where the unification of theory and practice, understood as a real historical process, takes place (Gramsci 1975, Q11§12, p. 1385; *SPN*, p. 335 translation modified).

This is a very dense passage that offers a highly original conception of the political organization that at the same times offers both form and content to the question posed by Lukács when he referred to the question of organization as an intellectual question. The metaphor of the laboratory and the terrain of experimentation are radically different from the metaphors suggested for the party in the history of the working-class movement. In particular, it is important to stress that they do not point to imitating the State and its apparatuses. Gramsci presents the party as neither *imperium in imperio* nor as the general staff of the proletarian army. In contrast, he points towards the unification of theory and practice, proposing a political process for the production of knowledges, strategies, tactics, and forms of intellectuality, where the elements that come from the participation in struggles (experience, sensitivities, encounters with other forms of knowledge and discourse, theories, collective experiments) can be elaborated and transformed. It is this functioning of the party as a laboratory of intellectuality that enables it to contribute to the formation of a new historical bloc. It is only through such a process that the particular version of representation and transformation associated with a politics for communism.

If the relationship between intellectuals and people-nation, between the leaders and the led, the rulers and the ruled, is provided by an organic cohesion in which feeling-passion becomes understanding and thence knowledge (not mechanically but in a way that is alive), then and only then is the relationship one of representation. Only then can there take place an exchange of individual elements between the rulers and ruled, leaders [dirigenti] and led, and can the shared life be realised which alone is a social force with the creation of the “historical bloc” (Gramsci 1975, Q11§67 pp. 1505-6; *SPN*, p. 418).

There are certain conditions for such a conception of the political party. It is important to stress the distance between Gramsci and a bureaucratic conception of centralization and his opposition to the Stalinist version of the “party spirit”. The following passage from Q9§68, written between July and August 1932 (and then included in Q13§36) refers exactly to this point:

The most accurate name would be bureaucratic centralism. “Organicity” can only be found in democratic centralism, which is so to speak a “centralism” in movement –i.e. a continual adaptation of the organization to

the real movement, and is organic to the extent that it takes account of movement which is the organic way that historical reality manifests itself (Gramsci 1975, Q9§68, p. 1139; cf. the second draft in *SPN*, pp. 188-9).

Giuseppe Cospito (2016, pp. 169-184) has shown, by means of a very detailed presentation of all the relevant passages from the *Notebooks*, the displacements in the way that Gramsci deals with bureaucratic, organic and democratic centralism. Initially Gramsci opposes democratic centralism, which is presented as his own choice, to both bureaucratic centralism (in essence the Stalinist version of centralism) and organic centralism (which refers to Bordiga's conception of the party) thinking that they have similar problematic aspects. However, at a later stage, expressed in passages such as the one quoted above, the main enemy is bureaucratic centralism, namely the Stalinist conception of the party and democratic centralism is presented as the one that can also have the necessary organic character. This implies that the democratic functioning of the political organization is not only the guarantee to avoid bureaucracy, but also the necessary condition to achieve an "organic" character, namely close connection to the working class and to the potential emergence in a concrete historical conjuncture. Moreover, "organic" is an adjective that we often encounter in the *Notebooks* and it always refers to close relation, historical depth, and real adequation between politics and historical dynamics.

It is in this sense that for Gramsci one of the gravest dangers that a party faces is to become an anachronism. And although the following passage comes from a note referring to the broader issue of the role of political parties in a period of organic crisis, it is interesting how it can also refer to the political organizations of the working class:

This order of phenomena is connected to one of the most important questions concerning the political party – i.e. the party's capacity to react against force of habit, against the tendency to become mummified and anachronistic. Parties come into existence, and constitute themselves as organisations, in order to influence the situation at moments which are historically vital for their class; but they are not always capable of adapting themselves to new tasks and to new epochs, nor of evolving *pari passu* with the overall relations of force (and hence the relative position of their class) in the country in question, or in the international field. In analysing the development of parties, it is necessary to distinguish: their social group; their mass member-

ship; their bureaucracy and General Staff. The bureaucracy is the most dangerously hidebound and conservative force; if it ends up by constituting a compact body, which stands on its own and feels itself independent of the mass of members, the party ends up by becoming anachronist and at moments of acute crisis it is voided of its social content and left as though suspended in mid-air. (Gramsci 1975, Q13§23, p. 1604; *SPN*, p. 211).

Gramsci's distancing from Stalinist practices in regard to the internal fighting inside the party was evident in various moments. In the famous letter of 1926 on behalf of the Italian Party, in which they asked the leadership of the Soviet Party to not jeopardize the unity of the international communist movement, in his refusal inside the prison to endorse the denunciations of the "Opposition", despite his criticism of Trotsky and Bukharin, his critique of "statolatry" (Gramsci 1975, Q8§130, pp. 1020-21; *PN* Vol. 3, pp. 310-11), but also his dense critique of the evolution of the Stalinism in notes 74 and 76 of Notebook 14 (*SPN* pp. 254-7), written in March 1935 (notes that at the same time offer an insightful analysis of fascism).⁸

In contrast, Gramsci's conception of democratic centralism points towards a conception of the party as an open political and intellectual process, constantly adapting itself to the surrounding social environment and the dynamics of the conjuncture. It is very important that Gramsci insists that this process is experimental in nature, it is an experimental practice. The very notion of the experiment expands the notion of the laboratory towards an experimental conception of politics. The following passage from Q9§68 exemplifies this position:

In parties representing socially subaltern groups, the element of stability represents the organic need to ensure that hegemony does not belong to privileged groups, but to the progressive forces, those organically progressive with respect to other forces that are allied but composed of and oscillating between the old and the new. In any event, what is important to note is that in the manifestations of bureaucratic centralism the situation evolves due to the lack of initiative; that is, due to the political primitiveness of the peripheral forces, even when these are homogeneous with the hegemonic territorial group. Especially with international territorial organisms, the emergence of such situations is extremely harmful and dangerous. Democratic centralism is an elastic formula that lends itself to many 'incarnations'; it exists because it is

⁸ See the reading of these passages in Cospito 2016.

continually interpreted and continually adapted to necessity, and it consists in the critical search for that which is equal in the apparent dissimilarity and distinct and opposite in the apparent uniformity, and in organizing and closely connecting that which is similar, but in a way that this organization and connection should appear as an 'inductive', experimental practical necessity and not the result of a rationalistic, deductive, abstract procedure that is, produced by 'pure' intellectuals. This continual effort to distinguish between the 'international' and 'unitary' in the national and local reality represents, in reality, the concrete political operation, the merely productive activity of historical progress. This effort requires an organic unity between theory and practice, between intellectual strata and the masses, between governors and governed. The formulae of unity and federation lose much of their meaning from this point of view; they instead produce their poison in the 'bureaucratic' conception, according to which in reality unity does not exist, only superficially calm and 'mute' stagnant swamps; neither does federation exist, only sacks of potatoes; that is, the mechanical juxtaposition of individual 'units' without any interrelationship (Gramsci 1975, Q9§68, pp. 1139-40).⁹

3. *The question of organization today*

I think that in Gramsci we can find a much more dialectical approach to the question posed by Lazarus and Badiou regarding a form of thinking of politics in interiority to a potentially revolutionary sequence but also with an answer to the questions posed by Lukács. If we are talking about organizations that refer to a communist horizon, the question is much broader than simply avoiding bureaucratic sclerosis. Such organizations must also be a permanent learning process, production sites of thinking. This is suggested by the analogy to the laboratory. This points towards spaces where people coming from the movements come in order not only to be politicized, something that in the tradition of the Left was considered as synonymous with ideological indoctrination, but to contribute with their own voice, but also in their own voice, and experience to the complex process of elaboration of alternatives, while at the same time constantly struggling against the disaggregating effects of bourgeois ideology and politics. It also points towards the formation of antagonistic forms of theory and knowledge production, beyond and outside traditional academic frameworks, an approach that can be found in the history of the labour movement from Marx's *enquête ouvrière* to the idea of co-research in workerism / operaismo (Lanzardo 1965; Alquati 1975;

⁹ We use the translation of this passage in Cospito 2016, pp. 77-78.

Alquati 1993; Panzieri 1976; Wright 2002), to other experiments with alternative forms and practices of knowledge production. The analogy with the laboratory also includes an experimental approach, which is exactly the “gnoseological” aspect of any politics of transformation, since it points towards learning by struggles but also from the collective experimentation and ingenuity of the subaltern.

Such a conception of the organization, the party or the front as a laboratory and open learning process, enables us to think the hegemonic aspect of politics along with the element of encounter and articulation of movements, demands and political strategies beyond the limits of any claim to horizontality, a notion that cannot account for the element of transformation and potential unifications of resistances into a common hegemonic project, a path of collective experimentation towards communism. At the same time, it avoids the logic of imposing an imaginary unity or an almost metaphysical conception of the ‘political line, insisting on the open and necessarily but also creatively contradictory and transformative character of the process. Alan Sears has recently stressed this aspect:

A truly effective anti-capitalism requires a deep commitment to learning from every situation which requires both open-endedness and fundamental orientating principles. The resources of anti-capitalism cannot consist of the shards of the last infrastructure of dissent preserved as holy relics and passed on as “truth”. The current marginal anti-capitalist left is too often grounded in a faith-based politics, founded on a worshipful approach to the experience of twentieth-century socialism or anarchism. The next new left needs to work creatively and open-endedly together to identify emergent trends and develop new politics that fits the times and is informed by past struggles (Sears 2014, p. 111).

This need to restore the voice to the masses as part of the attempt towards a refoundation of the politics of emancipation was also stressed by Althusser in the 1970s. In one of his confrontations with the open crisis of the French Communist Party, which was not only strategic but also had to do with the prevailing organizational culture, Althusser insisted upon the importance of

restoring their voice to the masses who make history. Not just putting oneself ‘at the service of the masses’ (a slogan which may be pretty reactionary), but opening one’s ears to them, studying and understanding their aspirations and their con-

traditions, their aspirations in their contradictions, learning how to be attentive to the masses' imagination and inventiveness. (Althusser 1977, p. 11).

This call by Althusser, which was part of his broader self-critical acknowledgement of the crisis of the communist movement, can of course be linked to Badiou's insistence that people think that we have already discussed, they think in their aspirations and contradictions and their imagination and inventiveness. Yet this requires the terrain for this voice and this thinking to be heard. It is here that Gramsci's "Modern Prince" enters the stage and sets the terms of the debate. The party as laboratory represents this possibility.

This also gives a new meaning to the need for new forms of democracy and participation, new democratic forms of militancy. It is at the same time an attempt to create political spaces that offer a better "sociality" than the everyday confrontation with rigid hierarchies, exploitation, oppression and sexism and an attempt to enable this collective "restoring the voice", this opening to the lessons coming from the struggles and the movements and the experiments with alternative social configurations, along with new forms of radical theory and new forms of militant research.

I think that all these questions are today more pertinent than ever.¹⁰ The varieties of radicalism emerging after 2011 have confronted the question of organization in different and contradictory ways. The new forms of democracy and equal voicing in sometimes led to an underestimation of the question of organization of a new type, a question lost in the debates regarding horizontality and intersectionality. Traditional forms of "Leninist" organizing, at least in Western Europe and the US also went through a period of crisis, since the mentality of the "small group" cannot stand up to the challenge offered by mass movements of a different magnitude. Broad Fronts, especially those organized by means of forms of mass digital participation also showed their limits not only in strategic political terms (in the sense of an inability to work towards the formation of a new historical bloc) but also in the absence of any actual interaction between leadership and base. Putting aside the question of organization, as in a certain manner Badiou has

¹⁰ On the importance of Gramsci's consideration for the organization question today see also Thomas 2013.

suggested, in the name of the danger of all “party politics” turning into parliamentary “State politics”, is not an answer.

In the sense exactly as the integral State was defined by Gramsci as the “entire complex of practical and theoretical activities” (Gramsci 1975, Q15§10 p. 1765, *SPN* p. 244) that ensure the hegemony of the bourgeoisie, the Modern Prince can only be understood as the entire complex of the theoretical and practical activities that emerge out of the subaltern classes in their struggle for integral autonomy and hegemony. It is on the basis of this analogy that we can say that today the Modern Prince can only take the form of an *integral united front*.

Consequently, the question does not simply refer to the democratic character of organizations and fronts. In the same way that the integral state represents the unity of political society and civil society, in all their complexity and contradictory character, the integral united front represents the contradictory and tendential unity of political organizations and movements (against exploitation and precariousness, oppression, racism, neo-colonialism, patriarchy and heteronormativity). It is the reason that we cannot think of the party as an apparatus, even a complex one. We are referring to plurality of processes, practices, resistances and collectivities. Their potential unification requires thinking the party or the organization as a laboratory producing intellectualities, strategies, tactics, but also as a hegemonic practice. It is a constant encounter between practices, experiences and knowledges.

“Building the party” today – which in the contemporary historical period of fragmentation of the forces, militants and experiences that oppose capitalism, points towards the creation of united fronts rather than single parties – means transforming the terrain, forming networks, spaces and new public spheres along with new militant practices and a renewed conception of political discipline in a communist horizon above and beyond any ritualistic and mechanistic conception of political discipline. Moreover, this should be combined with new and original forms of struggle, of resistance, blockage, reappropriation and emancipation. In this sense it is not about a simple recruiting campaign but about a “permanent constituent process”, combined with the autonomy of the forms of self-organization and counter-power of the subaltern. The very fact that today the terrain of rethinking the very notion of the Modern Prince in-

cludes parties, organizations, movements, and networks points to the uneven and complex character of the process but at the same time offers a way to actually think the potential of such a process.

In this sense, we can return to the comparison that Negri makes and for whom the party should be a factory of strategies and an enterprise of subversion. Taking into consideration the changes that have taken place in the very form of the factory and the fact that capitalist production today is organized in a much more fluid way, more dispersed, more fragmented, at the same time that new, original and more complex forms of coordination are used, we can say that also the form of the party and the front need to change, while remaining loyal to their essential role: to produce strategies and subversive practices, to form a terrain in order for the movements that are at the heart of social antagonism to be transformed in all their multiplicity to hegemonic projects for communism. This also entails rethinking the forms of international coordination and a new international, in order to go beyond the quest for an “international revolutionary centre”, in order for an international public sphere to emerge, based upon a new anti-imperialism, in order to rethink and elaborate new strategies based upon local experiments. The entire history of the revolutionary tendencies of the working class movements is also the history of international debates, with the most fruitful of them being those where the emphasis was upon treating local experiences as experimental sites instead of looking for the “fidelity” to the line of some revolutionary centre.

Rethinking critically and in a practical manner the question of organization today means rethinking the possibility of a democratic laboratory for new forms of collective militant intellectuality, for the production of organic intellectuals of a new type and militant “democratic philosophers”, in order to put in practice the idea that “all members are intellectuals” and “everyone is a democratic philosopher”.

Bibliography

- Alquati, R. 1975, *Sulla Fiat ed altri scritti*, Milano: Feltrinelli.
- _____ 1993, *Per fare conricerca*, Padova: Calusca Editore.
- Althusser, Louis 1977, *On the Twenty-Second Congress of the French Communist Party*, "New Left Review", I, 104.
- _____ 2017, *Philosophy for Non-Philosophers*, ed. and trans. by G.M. Goshgarian, London: Bloomsbury.
- Badiou, Alain 2005, *Metapolitics*, trans. J. Barker, London: Verso.
- Badiou, A. 2018, *Can Politics be Thought?* followed by *Of an Obscure Disaster*, trans. B. Bosteels, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Balibar, É. 1994, *Masses, Classes, Ideas. Studies on Politics and Philosophy Before and After Marx*, trans. J. Swenson, London and New York: Routledge.
- Bosteels, B. 2011, *Badiou and Politics*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Broué, P. 2006, *The German Revolution 1917-1923*, ed. I. Birchall and B. Pearce and trans. J. Archer, Leiden: Brill.
- Cospito, G. 2016, *The Rythm of Thought in Gramsci. A Diachronic Interpretation of the Prison Notebooks*, trans. A. Panzini, Leiden: Brill.
- Draper, H. 1990, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution. Critique of Other Socialisms*, New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Foucault, M. 2002, *Power (Essential Works of Michel Foucault, Vol. 3)*, ed. J. D. Faubion, London: Penguin.
- Frosini, F. 2003, *Gramsci e la filosofia. Saggio sui Quaderni del carcere*, Roma: Carocci
- Gramsci, A. 1971, *Selections from Prison Writings (SPN)*, ed. and trans. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- _____ 1975, *Quaderni del carcere*, 4 vols., ed. V. Gerratana. Torino: Einaudi.
- _____ 1977, *Selections from the Political Writings (1910-1920)*, ed. Q. Hoare and trans. J. Mathews, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- _____ 1992-2007, *Prison Notebooks (PN)*, Vol 1-3, ed. and trans. J. A. Buttigieg (with A. Callari Vol. 1), New York: Columbia University Press.
- _____ 2007, *Quaderni del carcere. Edizione critica diretta da Gianni Francioni. 1. Quaderni di traduzioni (1929-1932)*, 2 vols, ed. G. Cospito and G. Francioni, Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana.

Green, D. E. 2017, *Communist Insurgent. Blanqui's Politics of Revolution*, Chicago: Haymarket.

Johnstone, M. 1967, *Marx, Engels and the Concept of the Party in Socialist Register 1967*, London, Merlin.

Lanzardo, D. 1965, *Intervento socialista nella lotta operaia: l'inchiesta operaia di Marx*, "Quaderni Rossi", no. 5, April 1965, pp. 1-30.

Lazarus, S. 2007, *Lenin and the Party, 1902-November 1917* in *Lenin Reloaded: Towards a Politics of Truth* ed. S. Budgen, S. Kouvelakis, and S. Žižek, Durham: Duke University Press.

_____ 2015, *Anthropology of the Name*, translated by G. Walker, London: Seagull Books.

_____ 2016, *Can politics be thought in interiority*, trans T. Harper, "Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy", Vol. 12 (1), 2016.

Lenin, V. I. 1977, *Collected Works (LCW)*, Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Lewin, M. 1968, *Lenin's Last Struggle*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, New York: Random House.

Lih, L. T. 2008, *Lenin Rediscovered. What is to be done? in Context*, Chicago: Haymarket.

Lukács, Georg 1971, *History and Class Consciousness. Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, tr. R. Livingstone, Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.

_____ 1991, *The Process of Democratization*, trans. S. Bernhardt and N. Levine, New York: State University of New York Press.

_____ 2014, *Tactics and Ethics 1919-1929*, trans. M. McColgan, London: Verso.

Luxemburg, R. 1961, *The Russian Revolution and Leninism or Marxism?*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Magri, L. 1970, *Problems of the Marxist Theory of the Revolutionary Party*, "New Left Review", I, 60, pp. 97-128.

Marx, K. and F. Engels, 1975-2004, *Collected Works (MECW)*, Vols 1-50, London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Negri, A. 2014, *Factory of Strategy: 33 Lessons on Lenin*, trans. A. Bove, New York: Columbia University Press.

Panzieri, R. 1976, *Lotte operaie nello sviluppo capitalistico*, Torino: Einaudi.

Poulantzas, N. 1980, *State, Power, Socialism*, London: Verso.

Rancière, J. 2010, *Communists without Communism?* in *The Idea of Communism*, ed. C. Douzinas and S. Žižek, London: Verso.

Sears, A. 2014, *The Next New Left. A History of the Future*, Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Silvestrini, F. 2017, *Gramsci e un bilancio (preventivo) dell'esperienza rivoluzionaria a Torino*, "International Gramsci Journal", Vol. 2, (2), pp. 3-16.

Shandro, A. 2007, *Lenin and Hegemony: The Soviets, the Working Class, and the Party in the Revolution of 1905*, in *Lenin Reloaded: Towards a Politics of Truth*, ed. S. Budgen, S. Kouvelakis, and S. Žižek, Durham: Duke University Press.

Thomas, P. 2009, *The Gramscian Moment. Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism*, Leiden and Boston: Brill.

——— 2013, *The Communist Hypothesis and the Question of Organization*, "Theory & Event" Vol. 16 (4).

Wright, S. 2002, *Storming Heaven. Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism*, London: Pluto.

International Gramsci Journal

Volume 3
Issue 2 *The Modern Prince / Gramscian
Philology: The Prison Notebooks / Reviews*

Article 5

2019

Dizionario gramsciano / Gramsci Dictionary: Modern Prince

Lelio La Porta

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci>

Recommended Citation

La Porta, Lelio, Dizionario gramsciano / Gramsci Dictionary: Modern Prince, *International Gramsci Journal*, 3(2), 2019, 39-45.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol3/iss2/5>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

Dizionario gramsciano / Gramsci Dictionary: Modern Prince

Abstract

This is an English-language translation of Lelio La Porta's entry on the "Modern Prince" in the *Dizionario gramsciano* (ed. G. Liguori and P. Voza, Roma: Carocci 2007).

Keywords

Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, Machiavelli, Modern Prince, Party, Communism

Dizionario gramsciano / Gramsci Dictionary: The Modern Prince

Lelio La Porta

Machiavelli's Prince is for Gramsci not only the founding text of the science of politics; in it, without doubt, there is to be found the original separation of politics from religion and morals, as well as an identification of the general and universal laws of the work of those who, among the great people of history, created politics. But above and beyond this, as Gramsci underlines, *The Prince* is a political text to be read within the sweep of the historical context in which it was produced. From this type of reading, we see the emergence of the Machiavelli's concrete aim, i.e. the political subject to whom "the revolutionary class of the time, the 'people' and the Italian 'nation'", the citizen democracy that gave birth to men like Savonarola and Pier Soderini, rather than to a Castruccio or a Valentino". Machiavelli, Gramsci comments, "had in mind 'those who are not in the know'"¹, in other words his intended public was not the politicians, who in the course of time had always applied the things that he was expounding, while at the same time hiding themselves defensively behind an "anti-Machiaellianism" of convenience. He had in mind, rather, those who had to "recognize that certain means as necessary, even if they are the means of tyrants".² The ones who were "not in the know" is a reference therefore to the revolutionary class of the sixteenth century whom Machiavelli, in Gramsci's view, wishes to persuade, so that it becomes convinced of the "necessity of having a 'leader' who knew what he wanted and how to obtain it, and accepting him with enthusiasm even if his actions might conflict or appear to conflict with the generalised ideology of the time – religion".³ This implies there should be a leader, a prince who, in the conditions of

¹ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, ed. V. Gerratana, Torino: Einaudi 1975, Q13§20, p. 1600; in English *Selections from the Prison Writings*, (henceforward *SPN*), ed. and trans. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith, London: Lawrence and Wishart 1971, p. 135; cf. also the translation of the less detailed first draft (Q4§8, p. 431) in *Prison Notebooks* (henceforward *PN*), Vol. 2, ed. and trans. J. A. Buttigieg, New York: Columbia University Press 1996, p. 151.

² Q13§20, p. 1601; *SPN*, p. 136.

³ loc. cit.

modernity, will have to become involved both in the construction of a modern revolutionary political project and of the realization of such a project through revolutionary praxis, through action. In this sense, this political subject cannot be any other than the “political party”,⁴ “the first cell in which there come together the germs of a collective will tending to become universal and total”,⁵ a collective will which is to be understood as operative awareness of historical necessity, as protagonist of a real and effective historical drama.⁶ Even more clearly, “the protagonist of this ‘new Prince’ should not be the party in the abstract, a class in the abstract but rather a determinate historical party operating in a precise historical environment, with a particular tradition, in a distinctive and quite specific combination of social forces”.⁷

The “modern Prince”, therefore, as a “political party” and not as an “individual hero” [*eroe personale*]⁸ even if Gramsci had already reasoned on the figure of the “leader” (or “chief”) as a fundamental passage in the construction of the project of the “modern Prince”, when in 1924 he recalled that the link between the Russian Communist Party and the Russian proletariat and therefore the entire Russian nation had its leader in Lenin, to the extent that “it is not possible even to imagine one without the other”.⁹ The figure of Lenin, and hence of the leader, as observed, as a fundamental passage in the construction of the project of the “modern Prince” is evoked by Gramsci in the form of a myth in which the revolutionary aspirations of the peasant masses, poor, oppressed and historically and culturally backward, would be embodied. This is expressed in a letter from Vienna of 1924, in which he describes the funeral in an Italian village, three days after Lenin’s death (21 January 1924), of “an agricultural wage worker [who had] died, a communist who (...) had himself buried, dressed in red, with ‘Long live Lenin’ on his breast. (...) These names, in a great part of the poor and backward part of the masses, become almost a religious

⁴ Q5§127; in English *PN* Vol. 2 p. 382.

⁵ Q13§4, p. 1558; in English *SPN*, p. 129.

⁶ Q13§4, p. 1559; in English *SPN*, p. 130.

⁷ Q4§10, p. 432; in English *PN* Vol. 2, p. 152.

⁸ Q13§21, p. 1601; in English, *SPN*, p. 147.

⁹ *Capo* in “L’Ordine Nuovo”, March 1924, then republished in “L’Unità”, 6 November 1924 and now in Gramsci, *La Costruzione del Partito Comunista 1923-1926*, Torino: Einaudi, 1971, p. 14; in English *Leader in Selected Political Writings 1921-1926*, ed. and trans. Q. Hoare, London: Lawrence and Wishart 1978, p. 210.

myth. And this is a force that must not be destroyed”.¹⁰ The content of this letter allows us to understand why Gramsci identifies the basic nature of Machiavelli’s book not in its being “a systematic treatment, but a ‘live’ work, in which political ideology and political science are fused in the dramatic form of a ‘myth’”.¹¹ Different from Sorel, Gramsci realizes that in Machiavelli, and above all in the prince-myth that he created, a passion is present, indeed the Florentine is impassioned (“Machiavelli [...] is a passionate man, an active politician”), as he writes,¹² a man who – far from subtracting scientific content from his treatment – empowers it and makes it indeed a “‘live’ work”.¹³ For this reason, in Gramsci’s view it is not at all improbable that sometimes, in order to work on popular imagination in the attempt to raise it above the level of “common sense”, it will be necessary to have recourse to myths, to metaphors (“the philosophy of praxis, in setting itself the task of the moral and intellectual reform of culturally backward social strata will sometimes have recourse to metaphors that at times are ‘crude and violent’ in their popularity”),¹⁴ which are on a level with those used by Machiavelli in *The Prince* and which, if they served him to educate the revolutionary class of his time, by analogy will also be of use to those who, in modernity, wish to create a revolutionary politics. The new aspect introduced into political science by Machiavelli lay in the fact that, different from all preceding utopian construction, it embodied the theoretical element in a *condottiero* “who represents plastically and ‘anthropomorphically’ the symbol of the ‘collective will’”.¹⁵ This collective will, which forms with the aim of attaining a political goal, is represented “in terms of the qualities, characteristics, duties and requirements of a concrete individual. Such a procedure stimulates the artistic imagination of those who have to

¹⁰ Gramsci, 10 March 1924 letter to his wife Jul’ka; typed transcription in the *Archivio Antonio Gramsci*, Fondazione, Gramsci Rome, with earlier transcription in the Comintern Archives, RGASPI (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History), Moscow, fascicules 519-1-95 and 519-1-104. In English in Gramsci, *Letters 1908-1926. A Great and Terrible World*, ed. and trans. D. Boothman, London: Lawrence and Wishart 2014, pp. 249-50.

¹¹ Q13§1 p. 1555; in English *SPN*, p. 125.

¹² Q8§84 p. 990; in English *PN* Vol. 3, 2007, p. 283.

¹³ Q13§1 p. 1555; in English *SPN*, p. 125.

¹⁴ Q11§50 p. 1474; in English *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. D. Boothman, London: Lawrence and Wishart 1995, p. 315.

¹⁵ Q13§1 p. 1555; in English *SPN*, p. 125.

be convinced, and gives political passions a more concrete form”.¹⁶ The prince-myth comes over in all its dramatic intensity at the end of Machiavelli’s book, where he “invokes the real *condottiero* who is to incarnate him historically”.¹⁷

A considerable part of political action in a revolutionary sense, of which the “modern Prince” must be the protagonist, has “an intellectual and moral reform” as its aim¹⁸, in pursuance of which the protagonist must assert itself as an almost absolute subject: “[t]he modern Prince, as it develops, revolutionises the whole system of intellectual and moral relations, in that its development means precisely that any given act is seen as useful or harmful, as virtuous or as wicked, only in so far as it has as its point of reference the modern Prince itself, and helps to strengthen or to oppose it”.¹⁹ Bearing in mind the historical context within which Gramsci developed his theory of the “modern Prince” one cannot overlook the fact that his being presented as an absolute power, who “takes the place of the divinity or the categorical imperative”, is to be placed in relation to the then dominant totalitarian force (fascism) and its ideology. Against this, on the side of the future construction of socialism, another instrument must be opposed, which is also a bearer of certainties. But Gramsci is aware that an intellectual and moral reform is not possible without the socially depressed strata of society having experienced “a previous economic reform and a change in their position in the social and economic fields”, just because “the programme of economic reform is precisely the concrete form in which every intellectual and moral reform presents itself”. Precisely in so far as it is the protagonist of such a complex upheaval of historical processes which, beginning from the structure arrives at involving the super-structures, the “modern Prince” then “becomes the basis for a modern laicism and for a complete laicisation of all aspects of life and of all customary relationships”.²⁰

In order to assert itself as the “proclaimer and organiser of an intellectual and moral reform”,²¹ in order to leave behind the

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Q13§1 p. 1560; in English *SPN* p.132.

¹⁹ Q13§1 p. 1561; in English *SPN* p.133.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Q13§1 p. 1560; in English *SPN* p.133.

abstract territory within which Sorel maintained his myth – exactly because he experienced an aversion that, in the form of a “passion”, became “an ethical repugnance”²² for the Jacobins – “the modern Prince must have a part dedicated to the Jacobins” as Gramsci continues immediately afterwards, in other words a conceptual apparatus that is able to reconstruct historically the birth of the collective will and an organizational apparatus able to give this will the most appropriate forms for dealing with and solving that historical drama that “the first Italian Jacobin”, viz. Machiavelli, had singled out in the lack of an integral Italian State able to constitute an army with the aim of organizing “the hegemony of the city over the countryside”.²³ In other terms, Machiavelli had realized that without the irruption of the peasant masses into political life, through the reform of the militia, no national-popular collective will would have been formed; from this intuition of his, which constituted the base from which the French Jacobins began, the “modern Prince” had also to begin. But Machiavelli’s intuition must be read together with two other intuitions forming the political base of the activity of the “modern Prince”. The first is found in the authority-consent dialectic in so far as there are “allusions to the moment of hegemony or consent in *The Prince* too, beside those to authority or force”,²⁴ which make explicit the “dual nature of Machiavelli’s centaur – half-animal and half-human – [...] the levels of force and of consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilisation, of the individual moment and of the universal moment [...], of agitation and of propaganda, of tactics and of strategy, etc..²⁵ The second intuition regards Machiavelli as a “democrat”, in other words the theoretician who defines the political subject to whom the action of the Prince is directed. Gramsci does not at all hide the possibility that the teachings of *The Prince*, as already pointed out, may be directed towards the holders of power but, at the same time, he indicates

²² Q13§1 p. 1559; in English *SPN* p.130. [To the *SPN*’s wording “emotional” we prefer here the literal “passion”, thereby maintaining the conceptual link to Croce’s notion of politics as a “passion” and Gramsci’s critique of that notion – trans. note.]

²³ Gramsci, *Lettere dal Carcere*, ed. Antonio A. Santucci, Palermo: Sellerio, Vol. 2 p. 479 (letter to Tat’jana of 7 Sept 1931). In English *Prison Letters*, ed. F. Rosengarten and trans. R. Rosenthal, New York: Columbia University Press, Vol. 2, p. 67; the word order is here modified to put the focus on “hegemony”.

²⁴ Q13§5 p. 1564; in English *SPN* p. 125, footnote 3.

²⁵ Q13§14 p. 1576; in English *SPN* pp. 169-70.

that between the parties in combat, i.e. the rulers and the ruled, it is above all the those who are ruled who benefit most, in that they are “where the historically progressive force is to be found.”²⁶ Therefore, the action of the “modern Prince” (also defined as the “New Prince”²⁷) has the result “that the unity based on traditional ideology is broken; until this happens, it is impossible for the new forces to arrive at a consciousness of their own independent personality”.²⁸

There is nothing in common between this modern or new Prince and the one discussed by Mussolini in his “Prelude to The Prince” of 1924.²⁹ In this 1924 work there is only political cynicism, not realism, only politics in the sense of the exercise of force at the moment when an evident rupture was taking place, such as the one immediately after the First World War, between the masses and the dominant ideology.³⁰ At that historical moment, since the dominant class had lost consent, it had lost its capacity to lead, remaining merely dominant and therefore needing a coercive force that would allow it to retain this dominance; fascism, in the form of a regressive “Caesarism” provided it with this force.

Two particular characteristics of the “modern Prince” remain to be highlighted. The “modern Prince” possesses a State projection. Since no “division of its political powers” can be admitted, the modern Prince “is an embryonic State structure”.³¹ What distinguishes the activity of the “modern Prince” is the will towards “founding a new State”, in that it is constituted with this aim.³² Exactly from this comes the second characteristic, namely a totalitarian, all-encompassing nature, which does not regard only the government parties.³³ The “modern Prince” is the component that is already directive of the whole subaltern area in so far as “some part of even a subaltern mass is always directive and responsible” and, in this way, it prefigures the new social order: “the philosophy of the part always precedes the philosophy of the

²⁶ Q13§20 p. 1601; in English *SPN* p. 136.

²⁷ Q13§21 p. 1601; in English *SPN* p. 147.

²⁸ Q13§20 p. 1601; in English *SPN* p. 136.

²⁹ [“Preludio al Principe”, published in the monthly review *Gerarchia*, April 1924 – tr. note.]

³⁰ Q3§34 p. 332 [where “Preludio al Principe” is referred to as “Preludio al Machiavelli” – tr. note]; in English *PN* Vol. 2, 1996, pp. 32-3.

³¹ Q3§42 p. 320; in English *PN* Vol. 2, p. 42.

³² Q13§21 p. 1601; in English *SPN* p. 147.

³³ Q6§136 p. 800; in English *PN* Vol. 3, pp. 107-8.

whole, not only as its theoretical anticipation but as a necessity of real life”.³⁴ This means that the “modern Prince”, in other words the revolutionary party, is potentially the State of the subaltern classes, the place in which the collective will is made coherent by posing the basic question of a new political order. For Gramsci, this represents the totalitarian nature of the “modern Prince”, an entity located within the organic crisis of bourgeois society that found its outlet in fascism, and which places on the agenda a decisive conflict involving all social, political and military forces.³⁵

³⁴ Q11§12 p. 1389; in English *SPN* p. 337.

³⁵ Q6§138 pp. 801-2; in English *PN* Vol 3 p. 109 and alternative translation in *SPN* pp. 238-9.

International Gramsci Journal

Volume 3
Issue 2 *The Modern Prince / Gramscian
Philology: The Prison Notebooks / Reviews*

Article 6

2019

Struttura e descrizione dei Quaderni del carcere

Gianni Francioni

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci>

Recommended Citation

Francioni, Gianni, Struttura e descrizione dei Quaderni del carcere, *International Gramsci Journal*, 3(2), 2019, 46-64.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol3/iss2/6>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

Struttura e descrizione dei Quaderni del carcere

Abstract

This is the Italian guide to Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, designed initially for an exhibition in Cesena in Italy's Emilia Romagna region, in which the *Notebooks* were on show. The guide illustrates their structure, lists the general contents of each of them and, as far as possible, indicates why given notes are found in given sections of the *Notebooks*, often special sections set aside on purpose, sometimes with Gramsci's own titling, for second draftings. Such notebook titles and section sub-titles, if in italics, are Gramsci's own; otherwise they are additions by subsequent editors. Particular attention is paid to the division between miscellaneous, special and translation notebooks; the article includes the most up-to-date information available on when and where each notebook was written.

Keywords

Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, special notebooks, miscellaneous notebooks, translation notebooks, dates of writing

Struttura e Descrizione dei Quaderni del carcere

Gianni Francioni

Introduzione

Antonio Gramsci, deputato e segretario del partito comunista, fu arrestato a Roma l'8 novembre 1926, in flagrante violazione dell'immunità parlamentare. Il 4 giugno 1928 il Tribunale speciale per la difesa dello Stato, istituito con le leggi eccezionali fasciste, lo condannò a oltre 20 anni di reclusione.

Già dopo l'arresto, durante il periodo di confino a Ustica e in seguito nel carcere di San Vittore di Milano, manifestò il desiderio di avviare uno studio sistematico su argomenti di carattere storico e letterario, ma il permesso di scrivere gli fu concesso solo nel gennaio del 1929, mentre era detenuto nella casa penale di Turi di Bari (matricola 7047).

L'8 febbraio di quell'anno stilò un primo elenco di temi riguardanti la storia italiana, la funzione degli intellettuali, la letteratura popolare e altre "quistioni" filosofiche, storiografiche e politiche. Ai suoi studi e ai suoi appunti accennò frequentemente nelle lettere inviate alla cognata Tatiana Schucht – e attraverso lei all'amico Piero Sraffa – e alla moglie Giulia, che viveva a Mosca con i figli Delio e Giuliano. Sino al 1932 si dedicò anche a traduzioni dal tedesco, dal russo e dall'inglese. Dopo aver annotato e schedato per circa tre anni le riviste e i libri che gli era consentito leggere in carcere, iniziò a riordinare le note in nuovi quaderni da lui definiti "speciali" perché dedicati a un unico argomento (*La filosofia di Benedetto Croce, Il Risorgimento italiano, Noterelle sulla politica del Machiavelli, Americanismo e fordismo*, ecc.), cancellando le precedenti stesure con lunghi tratti di penna. A causa dell'aggravarsi delle condizioni di salute, nel novembre 1933 fu trasferito in una clinica a Formia, dove poté riprendere il lavoro solo nella seconda metà del 1934 dedicandosi soprattutto alla compilazione dei quaderni di carattere monografico. Ottenuta la semilibertà nell'ottobre 1934, nell'estate successiva fu ricoverato a Roma nella clinica Quisisana assistito dalla cognata. Morì il 27 aprile 1937, pochi giorni dopo aver riacquisito la libertà, all'età di 46 anni.

Alla sua morte i 33 quaderni furono presi in consegna da Tatiana Schucht che prima di inviarli a Mosca, li catalogò e numerò con cifre romane. I manoscritti tornarono in Italia il 3 marzo 1945 e da essi furono tratti i sei volumi della prima edizione dei Quaderni del carcere pubblicata dalla casa editrice Einaudi tra il 1948 e il 1951. Nel 1975 vennero ripubblicati da Einaudi nell'edizione critica curata dall'Istituto Gramsci. *L'Edizione nazionale degli scritti di Antonio Gramsci*, edita dall'Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, prevede la loro suddivisione in Quaderni di traduzioni, Quaderni miscellanei e Quaderni speciali.

* * * * *

La numerazione in cifre romane fu apposta da Tatiana Schucht alla morte di Gramsci; quella in cifre arabe indica la sequenza cronologica stabilita nell'edizione critica del 1975 e accolta dall'Edizione nazionale degli scritti di Antonio Gramsci.

I titoli e i sottotitoli dati da Gramsci sono in corsivo. Le pagine utilizzate sono comprensive delle minute di lettere, liste di libri e appunti estranei alla ricerca.

QUADERNO 1 (XVI) 1929 - 1930

cm. 15x20,6 / Pagine utilizzate 201

Primo quaderno (8 febbraio 1929)

Il quaderno, che reca in evidenza la data di avvio, è inaugurato con l'elenco dei sedici "argomenti principali" sui quali Gramsci si ripromette di scrivere "note e appunti". Alcuni di essi saranno utilizzati come sintetici titoli di rubrica, poi costantemente ripresi nelle note dei quaderni successivi (*Americanismo*, *Risorgimento*, *Lorianismo*, *I nipotini di padre Bresciani*, *Riviste tipo*, *Azione cattolica* e altri). Accanto alle schede bibliografiche e alle note brevi, spiccano due lunghi paragrafi sul Risorgimento e sul tema degli intellettuali (§§ 43 e 44) che sviluppano molti spunti contenuti nel saggio sulla questione meridionale, ultimo scritto di Gramsci prima dell'arresto. Il quaderno è concluso nel maggio 1930.

QUADERNO 2 (XXIV) 1929 - 1933

cm. 15x20,6 / Pagine utilizzate 161

Miscellanea I

Dopo la stesura di alcuni paragrafi nel febbraio 1929, nel maggio 1930 il quaderno viene destinato ad annotazioni sollecitate dallo spoglio sistematico di vecchie riviste. Pur conservando il carattere di schedario bibliografico con riferimenti a libri, periodici e quotidiani, vi compaiono anche i titoli di rubrica maggiormente presenti nei manoscritti dello stesso periodo: *Niccolò Machiavelli*, *Risorgimento*, *Azione cattolica*, *Cultura popolare*, *Letteratura popolare* e *Funzione cosmopolita degli intellettuali italiani*. Il quaderno, di fatto concluso nell'ottobre 1931 (ma un'ultima nota vi verrà aggiunta nel 1933), contiene anche le minute delle istanze del settembre 1930 e dell'ottobre 1931 a Mussolini.

QUADERNO 3 (XX) 1930

cm. 14,5x19,7 / Pagine utilizzate 158

Miscellanea

Nel manoscritto, che prosegue il Quaderno 1 ed è redatto tra il maggio e l'ottobre 1930, ai titoli già utilizzati si affiancano nuove rubriche che mostrano l'evolversi della ricerca dopo un anno di lavoro. *Passato e presente* è una delle più ricorrenti. Apparsa tra le ultime note del Quaderno 1, la rubrica diviene il luogo privilegiato per appunti e ricordi legati alle esperienze politiche degli anni Dieci e Venti, con frequenti cenni autobiografici. La ricerca sugli intellettuali italiani viene significativamente ampliata e trovano spazio molte note sulla storia delle classi subalterne.

QUADERNO 4 (XIII) 1930 - 1932

cm. 15x20,5 / Pagine utilizzate 160

Il canto decimo dell'Inferno

Miscellanea

Appunti di filosofia - Materialismo e idealismo - Prima serie

Nel maggio 1930 il quaderno viene diviso in due parti, destinate alle note su *Il canto decimo dell'Inferno* (scritte, con interruzioni, fino all'agosto 1932) e alla prima serie degli *Appunti di filosofia*, che sviluppa la riflessione sull'eredità di Marx e sul pensiero di Benedetto Croce. Conclusa questa serie nel novembre 1930, tra l'uno e l'altro blocco è introdotta una sezione miscellanea sugli intellettuali e sulla questione scolastica. Infine tra l'agosto e il settembre 1932 viene aggiunto un piccolo gruppo di note varie. Sul Canto X Gramsci riesce a stabilire, tramite Piero Sraffa, uno scambio epistolare con Umberto Cosmo, suo professore all'Università di Torino.

QUADERNO 5 (IX) 1930 - 1932

cm. 14,5x19,7 / Pagine utilizzate 152

Miscellanea

Viene inaugurata in queste pagine (scritte in prosecuzione del Quaderno 3 fra l'ottobre 1930 e, al più tardi, i primi del 1932) la rubrica *Cattolici integrali, gesuiti, modernisti*, che si aggiunge ad *Azione cattolica*, già presente dal Quaderno 1. Gramsci avvia una vasta ricognizione sul ruolo svolto dai cattolici e dalla Chiesa, con un particolare interesse per l'Azione cattolica nel Risorgimento e per la posizione del Vaticano nei confronti dello Stato unitario italiano, anche in relazione alla recente firma del Concordato con il regime fascista (1929). In parallelo, Gramsci porta avanti la ricerca sugli intellettuali avviata nei quaderni precedenti.

QUADERNO 6 (VIII) 1930 - 1932

cm. 14,7x19,7 / Pagine utilizzate 155

Miscellanea

Scritto tra il novembre-dicembre 1930 e il gennaio 1932. Tra le molte rubriche presenti, numerose sono le note di *Passato e presente* relative ai temi d'attualità (dalla riforma Gentile della scuola ad altri provvedimenti del regime fascista). In un folto gruppo di paragrafi continua l'indagine sulla storia degli intellettuali e si approfondiscono poi i caratteri del primo Rinascimento, dalla civiltà comunale del Duecento ad alcuni problemi specifici dell'Umanesimo. Gli aspetti linguistici e letterari mostrano le tensioni e la contraddittorietà della transizione dal feudalesimo alla prima modernità. In questa ricerca si iscrive anche il confronto fra Dante e Machiavelli. Molte annotazioni sono dedicate al rapporto tra Stato e società civile. Questi ultimi temi saranno ripresi e sviluppati nel Quaderno 7.

QUADERNO 7 (VII) 1930 - 1931

cm. 14,5×19,7 / Pagine utilizzate 149

Traduzioni da K. Marx, *Lohnarbeit und Kapital. Zur Judenfrage und andere Schriften aus der Frühzeit*

Miscellanea

Appunti di filosofia - Materialismo e idealismo - Seconda serie

Avviato nel maggio 1930 come quaderno di sole traduzioni, nel novembre la seconda metà è destinata a una nuova serie di *Appunti di filosofia*, che sviluppano fino al novembre 1931 la ricerca iniziata nel Quaderno 4. Le traduzioni dei brani dell'antologia (scelti secondo un ordine che privilegia i testi più strettamente legati alla riflessione di Gramsci, a partire dalle *Tesi su Feuerbach* e dalla *Prefazione* del 1859 a *Per la critica dell'economia politica*) si ascrivono al proposito di un "ritorno a Marx" e di una ridefinizione del materialismo storico che superi sia le interpretazioni idealistiche, sia il determinismo e l'economicismo. Le pagine residue accolgono infine un gruppo di note miscellanee (agosto-dicembre 1931).

QUADERNO 8 (XXVIII) 1930 - 1932

cm. 14,7×19,7 / Pagine utilizzate 157

Note sparse e appunti per una storia degli intellettuali italiani

Raggruppamenti di materia

Miscellanea

Appunti di filosofia - Materialismo e idealismo - Terza serie

Il manoscritto (che Gramsci in una sua numerazione parziale contrassegnerà con *I*) è iniziato nel novembre-dicembre 1930 con il programma di una raccolta di note sulla storia degli intellettuali italiani. Nel novembre 1931 la seconda metà del quaderno è destinata alla terza serie degli *Appunti di filosofia*, conclusa nel maggio 1932, mentre dal gennaio al maggio 1932 la prima metà accoglie una sezione di note miscellanee (in prosecuzione del Quaderno 6), molte delle quali riconducibili allo stesso tema della serie filosofica, quello della "traduzione" del marxismo nella "filosofia della prassi". Nel marzo-aprile 1932 viene stilato nella terza pagina un elenco di dieci *Raggruppamenti di materia*, che prefigurano la realizzazione di alcuni "quaderni speciali".

QUADERNO 9 (XIV) 1929 - 1932

cm. 15x20,6 / Pagine utilizzate 201

Antologia russa di R. G. Polledro e A. Polledro (traduzioni)

Miscellanea

Note sul Risorgimento italiano

Miscellanea

Tra l'aprile 1929 e i primi mesi del 1930 Gramsci traduce (lasciando in bianco fino a oltre la metà del quaderno il *recto* delle carte per eventuali correzioni) una parte dell'*Antologia russa* di Rachele Gutmann-Polledro e Alfredo Polledro (1919), contenente cento testi di autori quali Tolstoj, Puškin, Gogol', Turgenev, Dostoevskij, Čechov, Gorkij e altri. Nel 1932 riprende il quaderno – assegnandogli il numero *II* – con una sezione di note miscellanee (scritte tra l'aprile e il settembre sul *recto* delle carte riservate alle traduzioni) che continuano quelle di vario argomento del Quaderno 8; un blocco di trenta paragrafi sotto il titolo *Note sul Risorgimento italiano* (maggio-settembre); una seconda sezione di note miscellanee (settembre-novembre) che completa la prima. Tra gli appunti di vario argomento compaiono numerosi riferimenti alle esperienze politiche vissute dagli anni della Grande Guerra all'arresto.

QUADERNO 10 (XXXIII) 1932 - 1935

cm. 20,8x26,7 / Pagine utilizzate 100

La filosofia di Benedetto Croce

È questo il primo dei “quaderni speciali”, secondo una denominazione istituita dallo stesso Gramsci per indicare i luoghi in cui seleziona e trascrive una parte delle note sparse nei miscellanei. Il quaderno, al quale assegna il numero *III*, è compilato a Turi tra l'aprile 1932 e i primi mesi del 1933 (sarà integrato a Formia nel 1935 da aggiunte a margine) ed è interamente dedicato alla critica della filosofia di Croce e del suo tentativo di “superare” il marxismo. Accanto a paragrafi scritti *ex novo*, sono riprese molte note presenti nelle tre serie degli *Appunti di filosofia* e in special modo quelle contenute nel Quaderno 8 (del quale vengono continuate le rubriche *Punti per un saggio sul Croce*, *Introduzione allo studio della filosofia*, *Punti di meditazione per lo studio dell'economia*).

QUADERNO 11 (XVIII) 1932

cm. 14,8x19,8 / Pagine utilizzate 147

Appunti per una introduzione e un avviamento allo studio della filosofia e della storia della cultura

In questo “quaderno speciale” (1° bis, secondo la numerazione di Gramsci) compilato tra il giugno-luglio e il dicembre 1932, in un primo momento vengono lasciate in bianco le dieci carte iniziali per potervi poi scrivere un testo introduttivo o un indice sommario (che però non verrà redatto). Alle cinque sezioni numerate vengono aggiunte da ultimo, utilizzando alcune delle carte rimaste vuote, un’avvertenza preliminare e una sesta sezione non numerata di *Appunti e riferimenti di carattere storico-critico*. Gramsci raccoglie e rielabora la precedente riflessione sul materialismo, sull’idealismo e sull’originalità del pensiero di Marx. La critica alle sue volgarizzazioni viene ampiamente sviluppata nella seconda sezione, *Osservazioni e note critiche su un tentativo di “Saggio popolare di sociologia”* (di Bucharin). La prima, *Alcuni punti preliminari di riferimento*, è sollecitata da un saggio di Dmitrij Petrovič Mirskij sul dibattito filosofico in Urss segnalatogli da Sraffa.

QUADERNO 12 (XXIX) 1932

cm. 21,8x31,2 / Pagine utilizzate 24

Appunti e note sparse per un gruppo di saggi sulla storia degli intellettuali e della cultura in Italia

Il tema degli intellettuali, che riveste un ruolo centrale nella riflessione gramsciana – come testimoniano sia i diversi programmi di lavoro sia le lettere scritte dal carcere alla cognata Tatiana Schucht –, diviene in questo quaderno argomento monografico. Gramsci riprende nel titolo il già menzionato prospetto generale del Quaderno 8 e sviluppa in sole tre note (redatte tra il maggio e il giugno 1932) una serie di appunti miscelanei sugli intellettuali contenuti nel Quaderno 4.

QUADERNO 13 (XXX) 1932 - 1934

cm. 21,8x31,2 / Pagine utilizzate 60

Noterelle sulla politica del Machiavelli

L'interesse per Machiavelli, già presente negli scritti precedenti l'arresto, si manifesta sin dalle annotazioni contenute nel Quaderno 1. Per lungo tempo Gramsci si preoccupa prevalentemente della collocazione del Segretario fiorentino nello scenario nazionale ed europeo del suo tempo. In seguito, la rubrica *Machiavelli* raccoglierà la maggior parte delle note sulla politica, sullo Stato e sulla funzione del moderno partito politico. Via via Gramsci è venuto precisando il concetto di "egemonia". Il "quaderno speciale", avviato nel maggio 1932 e in gran parte compilato a Turi, è completato a Formia nel 1934.

QUADERNO 14 (I) 1932 - 1933

cm. 15x20,5 / Pagine utilizzate 81

Miscellanea

Le rubriche più consistenti del quaderno, che prosegue le note miscellanee del Quaderno 9, sono *Passato e presente*, *Letteratura popolare* e *Machiavelli*, nelle quali si sviluppano analisi già presenti nei manoscritti precedenti: in particolare sulle funzioni del partito politico e sui concetti di "guerra di posizione", "guerra manovrata" o "di movimento" e "cesarismo", in relazione anche all'evoluzione dell'Unione Sovietica. Recenti ricerche hanno stabilito che, contrariamente a quanto finora si riteneva, il quaderno non è stato iniziato a Turi e completato a Formia, ma scritto interamente in carcere tra il dicembre 1932 e il febbraio 1933.

QUADERNO 15 (II) 1933

cm. 15x20,5 / Pagine utilizzate 80

Miscellanea

Il quaderno – “iniziato nel 1933”, come avverte una nota di Gramsci a carta 1 *verso* – è redatto in prosecuzione del Quaderno 14 tra il febbraio e il settembre di quell’anno. La maggior parte delle note sono rubricate sotto i titoli *Passato e presente*, *Machiavelli e Risorgimento italiano*. Il nucleo centrale della riflessione è dato dal concetto di “rivoluzione passiva” che, già introdotto in precedenti quaderni, è qui sottoposto a una progressiva dilatazione teorica e storica. Uno dei primi paragrafi è intitolato *Note autobiografiche*: l’aggravarsi delle condizioni fisiche e psicologiche induce Gramsci a riflettere sulle “catastrofi del carattere” che possono intervenire “molecolarmente”.

QUADERNO 16 (XXII) 1932 - 1934

cm. 15x20,5 / Pagine utilizzate 71

Argomenti di cultura. 1°

Questo “quaderno speciale” (2 *bis*, secondo la numerazione di Gramsci) è avviato a Turi nel giugno-luglio 1932 e compilato ancora a Formia nel 1934. Contiene numerose note riprese dalle rubriche *Nozioni enciclopediche* e *Argomenti di cultura*, volte a fornire “spunti per un dizionario di politica e critica”, come si legge nel Quaderno 8. Un posto di rilievo occupa una serie di annotazioni sulla filosofia della praxis, sulla religione e la Chiesa. Riprendendo una nota del Quaderno 4, Gramsci riformula alcune indicazioni su come interpretare Marx, teorico e politico, e i suoi scritti postumi: l’invito a cercare il “ritmo del pensiero in isviluppo”, più che le “singole affermazioni casuali” e “gli aforismi staccati”, sembra rivolto anche a chi in futuro si fosse cimentato con i suoi scritti.

QUADERNO 17 (IV) 1933 - 1935

cm. 15x20,6 / Pagine utilizzate 43

Miscellanea

Iniziato a Turi nel settembre 1933 (come prosecutore del Quaderno 15) e continuato a Formia non oltre il giugno 1935, il quaderno reca sul contropiatto anteriore l'indicazione a matita, di mano di Gramsci: "1933 · miscellanea". Raccoglie dodici paragrafi della rubrica *Argomenti di cultura*, nove di *Passato e presente*, sette di *Machiavelli*, cinque di *Umanesimo e Rinascimento*, quattro classificati con *Letteratura popolare*, tre della serie *Introduzione allo studio della filosofia*, altrettanti di quella intitolata *I nipotini di padre Bresciani* e due di *Risorgimento italiano*. A carta 19 è presente la minuta dell'istanza presentata da Gramsci a Mussolini nel settembre 1934.

QUADERNO 18 (-) 1934

cm. 21,8x32,1 / Pagine utilizzate 3

Niccolò Machiavelli. II°

È il primo dei quaderni iniziati a Formia, come attesta l'assenza di contrassegni carcerari. Tenuto conto che per parte del 1934 Gramsci non è in grado di lavorare, questo "speciale" va assegnato a un momento non meglio precisabile di quell'anno. Raccoglie alcune note di prima stesura sul Segretario fiorentino rimaste escluse dal Quaderno 13 (di cui questo, fin dal titolo, si presenta come continuazione). La mano che ha scritto il numero "(34)" in testa al piatto superiore e l'indicazione "N 4" sull'etichetta (ammesso che sia la stessa) non è stata identificata.

QUADERNO 19 (X) 1934 - 1935

cm. 14,8x19,5 / Pagine utilizzate 133

Risorgimento italiano

Pur non avendo un titolo, fa parte del gruppo dei “quaderni speciali” inaugurati a Formia nel 1934. Le dieci pagine iniziali vengono in un primo momento lasciate in bianco e in seguito parzialmente utilizzate (pagine 3-4) per un testo introduttivo che annuncia la “doppia serie di ricerche” in cui si articola il quaderno. Il manoscritto è completamente dedicato alla storia e alla storiografia del Risorgimento italiano, due temi da tempo oggetto dell’interesse di Gramsci e presenti sin dalle prime note carcerarie. Al centro della riflessione il ruolo dei moderati capeggiati da Cavour e quello dei democratici guidati da Mazzini. Il quaderno è stato compilato sino al febbraio 1935.

QUADERNO 20 (XXV) 1934 - 1935

cm. 14,8x19,8 / Pagine utilizzate 25

Azione cattolica - Cattolici integrali, gesuiti, modernisti

Appartiene al gruppo dei “quaderni speciali” avviati a Formia nel 1934 e anche in questo caso le prime dieci pagine sono lasciate in bianco (salvo la pagina 1, utilizzata per il titolo). Vi si analizza il ruolo dell’Azione cattolica, la funzione dell’ordine dei gesuiti all’interno della Chiesa e il ruolo di quest’ultima nella vita politica italiana, oltre alle ragioni che hanno portato alla repressione del movimento riformatore dei “modernisti”. Il peggioramento delle condizioni di salute probabilmente non consente a Gramsci di riprendere dai quaderni miscelanei molte delle note dedicate all’argomento: il manoscritto non sembra essere stato più incrementato dopo i primi mesi del 1935.

QUADERNO 21 (XVII) 1934

cm. 14,8×19,8 / Pagine utilizzate 33

Problemi della cultura nazionale italiana. 1° Letteratura popolare

Le dieci pagine iniziali sono lasciate in bianco, a eccezione della pagina 1 che contiene il titolo generale e delle pagine 3-6 che accolgono un testo di carattere introduttivo intitolato *Nesso di problemi*. Concepito a Formia nel 1934 come primo dei quaderni monografici sui *Problemi della cultura nazionale italiana*, raccoglie le note della rubrica *Letteratura popolare*. Si analizzano, fra l'altro, temi come la questione della lingua e l'assenza di una letteratura nazionale-popolare italiana, nonostante il successo riscosso nel paese dalle traduzioni dei romanzi d'appendice.

QUADERNO 22 (V) 1934

cm. 15×21 / Pagine utilizzate 46

Americanismo e Fordismo

In questo “speciale” compilato a Formia nel 1934, le dieci pagine iniziali sono lasciate in un primo momento in bianco e in seguito parzialmente utilizzate (pagine 1-2) per registrare un testo rimasto incompleto, destinato a illustrare la “serie di problemi che devono essere esaminati sotto questa rubrica generale”. Il tema è già presente nel programma di studio che apre il *Primo quaderno*. La ricerca si approfondisce via via anche alla luce della crisi mondiale seguita al crollo della borsa di Wall Street dell'ottobre 1929. Gramsci analizza la struttura politica ed economica degli Stati Uniti d'America, il loro sistema di produzione, il rapporto con i paesi europei e l'influenza dell’“americanismo” su questi ultimi.

QUADERNO 23 (VI) 1934

cm. 15x21 / Pagine utilizzate 75

Critica letteraria

Gli appunti di *Critica letteraria* che costituiscono questo “quaderno speciale”, redatto a Formia nel 1934, sono collegati strettamente a quelli sulla *Letteratura popolare* del Quaderno 21. Fittamente compilato da pagina 3 a pagina 77, il manoscritto raccoglie in seconda stesura note presenti nei quaderni miscellanei all’interno della rubrica *I nipotini di padre Bresciani*, che prendono spunto da riviste e giornali.

QUADERNO 24 (XXVII) 1934

cm. 15x21 / Pagine utilizzate 18

Giornalismo

Scritto da pagina 5 a pagina 22 e appartenente al primo gruppo di “speciali” inaugurati a Formia nel 1934, il quaderno analizza la funzione sociale e politica della stampa, l’utilizzo del linguaggio giornalistico e il ruolo dell’informazione. L’argomento, inizialmente rubricato nel Quaderno 1 come *Riviste tipo: teorica, critico-storica, di cultura generale (divulgazione)*, si intreccia fortemente con la biografia di Gramsci. Avviatosi alla militanza politica come redattore dell’“Avanti!” (alla fine del 1915), poi ideatore di riviste – prima tra tutte “L’Ordine nuovo” –, il dirigente comunista aveva sempre dato grande rilievo al giornalismo come strumento di mediazione tra cultura e politica, tra intellettuali e ceti popolari.

QUADERNO 25 (XXIII) 1934 - 1935

cm. 14,8x19,8 / Pagine utilizzate 17

Ai margini della storia (storia dei gruppi sociali subalterni)

Le dieci pagine iniziali vengono lasciate in bianco per un testo introduttivo o un indice sommario, poi non realizzato. Sono trascritte, in otto paragrafi, tredici note appartenenti ai Quaderni 1, 3 e 9. In questi passaggi Gramsci affronta i problemi metodologici della storiografia e delle possibili fonti per una nuova “storia integrale”. Alla base della sua riflessione vi è la nozione di “subalterni” in riferimento ai gruppi sociali esclusi dalla storia delle classi dominanti e dalla storiografia, sebbene protagonisti della storia reale. Il quaderno, che appartiene al primo gruppo degli “speciali” messi in cantiere a Formia nel 1934, non pare essere stato proseguito oltre i primi mesi del 1935.

QUADERNO 26 (XII) 1934 - 1935

cm. 14,8x20,5 / Pagine utilizzate 12

Argomenti di cultura. 2°

Sin dal titolo il quaderno appare la prosecuzione del Quaderno 16. Come molti dei “quaderni speciali” di Formia risulta compilato solo in minima parte: avviato alla fine del 1934, probabilmente non supera i primi mesi del 1935.

QUADERNO 27 (XI) 1935

cm. 15x20,5 / Pagine utilizzate 7

Osservazioni sul “Folclore”

Sono qui analizzati i concetti di folclore, di senso comune e di pittoresco negli strati popolari. Attraverso questi temi è studiato il rapporto tra classi subalterne e classi dominanti. Già dagli scritti giovanili Gramsci dimostra una non superficiale conoscenza delle tradizioni popolari. La volontà di inserire questi temi nel programma di studio steso nel *Primo quaderno* non è estranea all’esperienza vissuta al confino a Ustica, come si evince dalle lettere dei mesi immediatamente successivi all’arresto. Il quaderno – uno degli ultimi tre “speciali” cominciati a Formia – è da assegnare ai primi mesi del 1935.

QUADERNO 28 (III) 1935

cm. 14,8x20,5 / Pagine utilizzate 18

Lorianismo

Il Lorianismo è un neologismo ricavato dal nome di Achille Loria, professore di Economia politica all'Università di Torino e bersaglio di Gramsci sin dagli scritti giovanili. Il termine connota quegli intellettuali che, per gusto dell'originalità e voglia di successo, fanno affermazioni non sostenute da ricerche scientifiche rigorose. Per Gramsci questi aspetti "deteriori e bizzarri" rientrano nella peculiare debolezza dello Stato italiano e degli intellettuali nazionali. I diciotto paragrafi del "quaderno speciale", redatto a Formia nei primi mesi del 1935, sono tutti dedicati a figure individuali, partendo ovviamente dallo stesso Loria.

QUADERNO 29 (XXI) 1935

cm. 14,8x20,5 / Pagine utilizzate 10

Note per una introduzione allo studio della grammatica

Si tratta di nove note redatte interamente *ex novo* – unico caso nei "quaderni speciali" – che rappresentano la conclusione ideale della parabola intellettuale di Gramsci, iniziata negli anni universitari con lo studio della linguistica sotto la guida del professore Matteo Giulio Bartoli. Il quaderno, ultimo degli "speciali" di Formia e scritto probabilmente nell'aprile 1935, riprende la critica alla riforma di Gentile e alla concezione dell'inutilità dell'insegnamento scolastico della grammatica, considerata invece da Gramsci come necessaria allo sviluppo e alla crescita intellettuale.

QUADERNO A (XIX) 1929

cm. 15x20,6 / Pagine utilizzate 200

“Die Literarische Welt” (traduzioni)

Traduzioni da J. e W. Grimm, *Fünfzig Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (I)

Nella prima metà del quaderno sono tradotti articoli e brani letterari apparsi sui fascicoli del 14 ottobre (interamente dedicato alla letteratura degli Stati Uniti) e del 30 settembre 1927 della rivista tedesca “Die Literarische Welt”; nella seconda metà, avviata simultaneamente, quindici favole dei fratelli Grimm, autori cari da tempo a Gramsci, come attestano i suoi scritti giornalistici. L'intero quaderno è da assegnare al febbraio-marzo 1929.

QUADERNO B (XV) 1929 - 1931

cm. 15x20,6 / Pagine utilizzate 191

Traduzioni da J. e W. Grimm, *Fünfzig Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (II)

Le famiglie linguistiche del mondo di Franz Nikolaus Finck (traduzione)

Il quaderno contiene nella prima metà la versione di altre nove favole dal libro dei fratelli Grimm (eseguita tra l'aprile 1929 e il novembre 1931), nella seconda metà la traduzione – svolta nel 1929, a partire dalla metà dell'anno – di gran parte del volume del linguista tedesco Franz Nikolaus Finck, *Die Sprachstämme des Erdkreises* (terza edizione, 1923), la più completa classificazione delle lingue allora disponibile, basata sulla loro distribuzione etnico-geografica.

QUADERNO C (XXVI) 1929 - 1930

cm. 15x20,6 / Pagine utilizzate 193

Esercizii di lingua inglese (traduzioni)

Continuazione di F.N. Finck - I ceppi linguistici del mondo (traduzione)

Conversazioni di Goethe con Eckermann (traduzioni)

Esercizi di lingua tedesca sulle poesie di Goethe (traduzioni)

Tra l'aprile e il giugno 1929 il quaderno è inizialmente destinato, nella prima metà, a esercizi elementari di inglese (abbandonati dopo due pagine); nella seconda metà, alla traduzione (conclusa nel dicembre di quell'anno) di alcune poesie comprese nel volume antologico *Über allen Gipfeln. Goethes Gedichte im Rahmen seines Lebens* (1922). Successivamente Gramsci vi ricava una terza sezione per la conclusione, entro il 1929, della traduzione di Finck cominciata nel Quaderno B, e una quarta sezione, in cui nei primi mesi del 1930 traduce parzialmente il volume *Goethes Gespräche mit Eckermann* (1921).

QUADERNO D (XXXI) 1932

cm. 23x15,8 / Pagine utilizzate 2

Traduzione di J. e W. Grimm, *Rumpelstilzchen*

Seconda e parziale stesura, da assegnare con ogni probabilità al gennaio 1932, della traduzione della fiaba dei fratelli Grimm già eseguita nel Quaderno A e messa in bella copia in questo album da disegno, probabilmente destinato ai figli della sorella Teresina. Qui, come nella prima stesura, Gramsci non traduce il nome del personaggio che dà il titolo alla favola.

QUADERNI 17*bis* e 17*ter* (-) 1933

cm. 15x20,6 / Nessuna pagina utilizzata

I due quaderni, consegnati al prigioniero tra l'agosto e il settembre 1933 insieme al Quaderno 17 (di cui hanno gli stessi contrassegni carcerari e, nella prima pagina, la sigla del direttore Pietro Sorrentino), non erano stati ancora utilizzati quando Gramsci lascia Turi il 19 novembre 1933. A Formia, oltre a continuare il proprio lavoro su quelli ricevuti a Turi e non ancora completati, Gramsci può iniziare nuovi quaderni senza più l'obbligo di farli timbrare e vidimare dalle autorità di sorveglianza: ciò spiega l'abbandono di questi due ancora intatti, ma recanti i segni visibili del precedente regime di detenzione.

International Gramsci Journal

Volume 3
Issue 2 *The Modern Prince / Gramscian
Philology: The Prison Notebooks / Reviews*

Article 7

2019

Structure and Description of the Prison Notebooks

Gianni Francioni

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci>

Recommended Citation

Francioni, Gianni, Structure and Description of the Prison Notebooks, *International Gramsci Journal*, 3(2), 2019, 65-82.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol3/iss2/7>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

Structure and Description of the Prison Notebooks

Abstract

This is an English-language guide to Gramsci's Prison Notebooks. The original guide (see the previous article) was originally modified and made available in English for an exhibition in Moscow earlier in 2019, in which some of the *Notebooks* were on show. The English-language version for the Moscow exhibition was more generic in nature than the Italian one on which it was based. The current English version contains integrations from the Italian text to bring it more into line with the original text (see previous article). The guide illustrates the structure of the *Notebooks*, lists the general contents of each of them and, as far as possible, indicates why given notes are found in given sections of the *Notebooks*, often special sections set aside on purpose, sometimes with Gramsci's own titling, for second draftings. Such notebook titles and section sub-titles, if in italics, are Gramsci's own; otherwise they are later editorial additions. Particular attention is paid to the division between miscellaneous, special and translation notebooks; the article includes the most up-to-date information available on when and where each notebook was written.

Keywords

Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, Special notebooks, Miscellaneous notebooks, Translation notebooks, Dates of writing

Structure and Description of the Prison Notebooks

Gianni Francioni

Introduction

Antonio Gramsci, parliamentary deputy and secretary of the Communist Party, was arrested in Rome on 8 November 1926, in flagrant violation of parliamentary immunity. On 4 June 1928 the “Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State”, set up by fascism’s “exceptional laws”, condemned him to over 20 years in prison.

After his arrest, during the period of preventive detention on the island of Ustica and then in the prison of San Vittore in Milan, he announced the wish to begin a systematic study of subjects of a historical and literary nature, but permission to write was given only in January 1929, when he was in the prison of Turi di Bari (detainee 7047 – his prisoner number, which appears on his *Notebooks*).

On 8 February 1929 he made a first list of subject matters: Italian history, the role of the intellectuals, popular literature and other philosophical, historiographical and political questions (“quistioni” as he used to write it). He made frequent mentions of these studies in the letters he sent to his sister-in-law Tat’jana Schucht – and through her to his friend Piero Sraffa – and to his wife, Julija, living in Moscow with their two sons Giulano and Delio. Up to 1932 he also spent some of his time translating from German, Russian and English. After, for three years, having made notes on the reviews and books he was allowed to read in prison, he began to order his notes in new notebooks that he defined “specials” since they were devoted to a single subject (*The Philosophy of Benedetto Croce*, *The Italian Risorgimento*, *Brief Notes on Machiavelli’s Politics*, *Americanism and Fordism*, etc.), cancelling his previous drafts with long pen strokes. Because of a worsening of his health, in November 1933 he was transferred to a clinic in Formia, where he was able to begin work again only in the second half of 1934, devoting his time to notebooks of a monographic nature. After obtaining semi-liberty in October 1934, the following summer he was admitted to the Quisisana Clinic in Rome, and was assisted by his sister-in-law. He died on 27 April 1937, at the age of 46, a day or two after having been freed.

On his death Tat'jana managed to get possession of the 33 notebooks. Before sending them to Moscow she catalogued and put Roman numerals on them. The manuscripts returned to Italy on 3 March 1945 and were used as the basis for a first edition in six volumes of the *Prison Notebooks* (*Quaderni del carcere*), published by Einaudi between 1948 and 1951. The notebooks were republished by Einaudi in 1975 in a critical edition, curated by Rome's Gramsci Institute (now the Fondazione Gramsci). The *Edizione nazionale degli scritti di Antonio Gramsci*, (*National Edition of Antonio Gramsci's Writings*), curated by the *Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana*, foresees their sub-division into Translation Notebooks, Miscellaneous Notebooks, and Special Notebooks.

* * * * *

While, as mentioned above, the Roman numerals are those appended by Tat'jana Schucht, the Arabic numerals indicate the chronological sequence established by the 1975 critical edition and accepted by the *National Edition of Gramsci's Writings*.

The titles and sub-titles, given by Gramsci himself to list the contents of each notebook, are here written in italics; normal type font is used for any editorial integration to the contents list. The number of pages compiled in each notebook is inclusive of the drafts of letters, lists of books and other notes extraneous to Gramsci's research.

NOTEBOOK 1 (XVI) 1929 - 1930

15x20.6 cm. / Pages compiled: 201

First Notebook (8 February 1929)

The notebook, the only one bearing its initial date, opens with a list of sixteen “main arguments” on which Gramsci promised to write notes and “jottings”. Some of them would be used later as short section titles, then used in notes (*Americanism*, *Risorgimento*, *Lorianism*, *Father Bresciani’s Progeny*, *Types of Periodicals*, *Catholic Action* and others) in subsequent notebooks. Besides bibliographical and short notes, two long paragraphs (§43 and §44) on the *Risorgimento* and on the intellectuals stand out; these develop many ideas featured in Gramsci’s essay on the “Southern Question”, his last work before his arrest. The Notebook terminates in May 1930.

NOTEBOOK 2 (XXIV) 1929 - 1933

15x20.6 cm. / Pages compiled: 161

Miscellaneous I

After a number of notes penned in February 1929, in May 1930 the notebook was largely destined to reflections prompted largely by Gramsci’s reading of issues of reviews, “Nuova Antologia” in particular, published between 1927 and 1930. Although maintaining the nature of a bibliographical file with frequent references to books, periodicals and newspapers, Notebook 2 features the most common section titles in the manuscripts of the same period: *Niccolò Machiavelli*, *Risorgimento*, *Catholic Action*, *Popular Culture*, *Popular Literature* and the *Cosmopolitan Function of Italian Intellectuals*. The notebook, terminated in October 1930 (although a subsequent note was added in 1933) also contains the drafts of his petitions to Mussolini in September 1930 and October 1931.

NOTEBOOK 3 (XX) 1930

14.5x19.7 cm. / Pages compiled: 158

Miscellaneous

This notebook, written between May and October 1930, follows on Notebook 1, new sections appearing alongside the already existing ones, an indication of the evolution of his research after the first year's work. *Past and Present*, a heading first used in the final notes of Notebook 1 then becomes common and is a favoured place for notes, containing frequent autobiographical references, linked to the political experiences of the 1910s and 1920s. Research on the Italian intellectuals is gone into in significantly more depth, while space is devoted to many comments on the history of the subaltern classes.

NOTEBOOK 4 (XIII) 1930 - 1932

15x20.5 cm. / Pages compiled: 160

Canto Ten of the Inferno

Miscellaneous

Notes on Philosophy. Materialism and Idealism. First Series

The notes are structured here in a new way. In May 1930, the notebook was divided into two monographic sections which appear to be started simultaneously. One consists of *Notes on Philosophy*, which develop considerations on Marx's legacy and the thought of Benedetto Croce. On conclusion of this series of notes (November 1930), a miscellaneous section was started, which includes notes on intellectuals and schooling and education questions; then, between August and September 1932, a short group of notes, varied in character, was also added. Regarding the second monographic section, on *Canto X* of Dante's *Inferno* (continued, with interruptions, up to August 1932), Gramsci was able, through his sister-in-law Tat'jana Schucht and Piero Sraffa, to renew a correspondence with Umberto Cosmo, a professor of Gramsci's at the University of Turin and a renowned scholar of Dante.

NOTEBOOK 5 (IX) 1930 - 1932

14.5x19.7 cm. / Pages compiled: 152

Miscellaneous

Notebook 5, continuing Notebook 3 and written between October 1930 and, at the latest, the first months of 1932, inaugurates the section *Integralist Catholics, Jesuits, Modernists*, in addition to notes on *Catholic Action*, already present as from Notebook 1. Gramsci begins a vast reconnaissance survey on the role of catholics and the Church, with a particular interest shown towards the “Catholic Action” movement during the Risorgimento and towards the Vatican’s position vis-à-vis the unified Italian State, including the then recent signing of the Concordat with the fascist regime (1929). At the same time, he carries on research into the intellectuals, initiated in the previous notebooks.

NOTEBOOK 6 (VIII) 1930 - 1932

14.7x19.7 cm. / Pages compiled: 155

Miscellaneous

This Notebook was written between November-December 1930 and January 1932. Among its many sections, there are numerous notes in the *Past and Present* series about current topics (from the Gentile school reform to other measures of the fascist regime). A considerable number of paragraphs continue the study on the history of intellectuals and inquire into the nature of the first Renaissance, from the Medieval communes in the thirteenth century to a number of the specific problems of Humanism. The tensions and the contradictory nature of the transition from feudalism to the dawn of modernity are shown up in their various linguistic and literary aspects. A comparative estimation of Dante and Machiavelli also falls within this research. There are, furthermore, numerous annotations devoted to the relationship between State and civil society. These latter themes are taken up and further developed in Notebook 7.

NOTEBOOK 7 (VII) 1930 - 1931

14.5x19.7 cm. / Pages compiled: 149

Translations from *Karl Marx: Lohnarbeit und Kapital. Zur Judenfrage und andere Schriften aus der Frühzeit*

Miscellaneous

Notes on Philosophy - Materialism and Idealism. Second Series

This notebook was begun in May 1930 as a notebook purely devoted to translations, but in November it was then followed by a part destined to a second series of *Notes on Philosophy*, developing - up to November 1931 - the analysis of Notebook 4. The translations from the anthology of Marx indicate Gramsci's wish to "return to Marx" through redefining historical materialism and overcoming idealistic interpretations, determinism and economism. Gramsci's translations do not follow the order of the anthology, but start with the texts most closely linked to his research, namely the *Theses on Feuerbach* and the 1859 *Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. The other pages of Notebook 7 (August-December 1930) consist of miscellaneous notes.

NOTEBOOK 8 (XXVIII)

1930 - 1932

14.7x19.7 cm. / Pages compiled 157

Loose Notes and Jottings for a History of Italian Intellectuals

Groupings of Subjects

Miscellaneous

Notes on Philosophy - Materialism and Idealism. Third Series

This notebook (in Gramsci's own partial numbering designated I) was begun in November-December 1930 with the idea of grouping together notes on the history of the Italian intellectuals. In November 1931 the second half of the notebook was destined to the third series of the *Notes on Philosophy*, concluded in May 1932, while from January to May 1932 the first half also contains a miscellany of notes, carrying on Notebook 6, many of them connected to the philosophical series, i.e. the "translation" of Marxism into the "philosophy of praxis". Page 3 (March-April 1932) contains a list of ten *Groupings of Subjects* prefiguring some of the "special notebooks".

NOTEBOOK 9 (XIV) 1929 - 1932

15x20.6 cm. / Pages compiled: 201

Russian anthology by R.G. Polledro and A. Polledro (translations)

Miscellaneous

Notes on the Italian Risorgimento

Miscellaneous

From April 1929 to the first part of 1930 Gramsci translated some of Rachele Gutman-Polledro and Alfredo Polledro's *Russian Anthology*, a school book of a hundred extracts by authors such as Tolstoj, Puškin, Gogol', Turgenev, Dostoevskij, Čekhov, Gorkij and others, leaving blank for later corrections the reverse side of ca. half the notebook's pages. In April-September 1932 he took the notebook up again – giving it the number “II” – for a series of miscellaneous notes on the pages he had left blank. These notes continue the ones on varied subjects of Notebook 8, such as a bloc of 30 *Notes on the Italian Risorgimento* (May-September), and another set of miscellaneous ones (September-November) completing the first. Between the blocs of notes of varied subject matters, there are notes on political experiences up to his arrest, e.g. on socialism in Turin and critical considerations on the first years of the PCI.

NOTEBOOK 10 (XXXIII)

1932 - 1935

20.8x26.7 cm. / Pages compiled 100

The Philosophy of Benedetto Croce

This is the first of the “special notebooks”, as Gramsci himself names them, in which, from April 1932 to the start of 1933, he selected and transcribed part of his previous miscellaneous notes. Notebook 10 (designated by him Notebook “III”) was started in Turin and finished in Formia in 1935, with the addition of integrations in the margin. It is entirely dedicated to the critique of Croce's philosophy and his attempt to “go beyond” Marxism. As well as completely new matter, Gramsci takes up several notes of the three *Notes on Philosophy* series, especially those of Notebook 8, continuing the notes under the headings *Points for an Essay on Croce*, *Introduction to the Study of Philosophy*, *Points of Meditation for a Study of Economics*.

NOTEBOOK 11 (XVIII) 1932

14.8x19.8 cm. / Pages compiled: 147

Notes for an Introduction and an Approach to the Study of Philosophy and the History of Culture

In this “special notebook” (“1 bis” in Gramsci’s numbering), compiled between June-July and December 1932, the first ten pages were initially left blank; leaving space for a subsequent introductory text or a summary index, neither however then done. To the five numbered sections, there was then added, using some of the pages left blank, a preliminary comment and an un-numbered sixth section, *Notes and References of a Historico-Critical Nature*. Under this heading Gramsci collects and re-elaborates his previous reflections on materialism, idealism and the originality of Marx’s thought. The criticism of popularizations of Marxism is extensively developed in the second section, *Observations and Critical Notes on an Attempt at a Popular Manual of Sociology* (by Bukharin). The first section, *Some Preliminary Points of Reference*, was stimulated by his reading of an essay, pointed out to him by his friend Piero Sraffa, by D. P. Mirsky on the philosophical debate in the USSR. In the notebook, the term ‘Marxism’ is systematically replaced with ‘philosophy of praxis’.

NOTEBOOK 12 (XXIX) 1932

21.8x31.2 cm. / Pages compiled: 24

Notes and Loose Jottings for a Group of Essays on the History of the Intellectuals

The subject of the intellectuals, a central one in Gramsci’s thought – as shown by both the Notebooks’ various programmes of work and the letters from prison to his sister-in-law Tat’jana Schucht – come together in this notebook to form a monographic subject. The title of Notebook 12 takes up again the already mentioned general formulations of Notebook 8 and in just three notes (penned between May and June 1932) develops a series of miscellaneous annotations on the intellectuals contained in Notebook 4.

NOTEBOOK 13 (XXX) 1932 - 1933

21.8x31.2 cm. / Pages compiled: 60

Brief Notes on Machiavelli's Politics

The interest in Machiavelli, already present in the writings before the arrest, was first expressed in the annotations of Notebook 1. Gramsci deals at length mainly with locating the Florentine “Secretary” in the national and European context of his time. Under the heading *Machiavelli* he later gathered the greater part of his notes on politics, the State and the function of the modern political party. Little by little he clarifies the concept of “hegemony”. The “special notebook”, begun in May 1932, was to a great extent compiled in Turi and finished in Formia in 1934.

NOTEBOOK 14 (I)

1932 - 1933

15x20.5 cm. / Pages compiled 81

Miscellaneous

The most significant sections of the notebook are *Past and Present*, *Popular Literature* and *Machiavelli*, in which analyses are developed that are already present in the previous notebooks; in particular these analyses deal with the functions of the political party and the concepts of ‘war of position’, ‘war of manoeuvre’ or ‘of movement’ and ‘Caesarism’, aspects that also refer to the evolution of the Soviet Union. Recent research has established that, contrary to what had been thought up to recently, the notebook was not begun in Turi and finished in Formia, but written entirely in prison at Turi between December 1932 and February 1933.

NOTEBOOK 15 (II) 1933

15x20.5 cm. / Pages compiled: 80

Miscellaneous

The notebook (“begun in 1933” as Gramsci says a note on the front face of page 1), was written between February and September of that year and carries on the subject matter of Notebook 14. Most of the notes fall under the headings *Past and Present*, *Machiavelli* and the *Italian Risorgimento*. The core of the considerations is the concept of “passive revolution” which, already introduced in previous notebooks, here undergoes a gradual theoretical and historical expansion. One of the first paragraphs is entitled *Autobiographical Notes*: his worsening physical and psychological conditions induce Gramsci here to reflect on the “catastrophes afflicting character” which can intervene “molecularly”.

NOTEBOOK 16 (XXII) 1932 - 1934

15x20.5 cm. / Pages compiled: 71

Cultural Topics 1

This “special notebook” (2 *bis* in Gramsci’s numbering) was begun in Turi in June-July 1932 and then continued in Formia in 1934. It includes several notes taken from the sections *Encyclopedic Notions* and *Cultural Arguments*, aimed at supplying “suggestions for a political and critical dictionary”, as one reads in Notebook 8. An important role is also given to a series of annotations on the philosophy of praxis, on religion and on the Church. Returning to a note of Notebook 4, Gramsci rephrases some indications on how to interpret the theoretical and political aspects, as well as the posthumous writings, of Marx. The invitation to seek the “rhythm of thought as it develops”, more than the “single casual affirmations” and “isolated aphorisms”, seems also addressed to future readers of his own writings.

NOTEBOOK 17 (IV) 1933 - 1935

15x20.6 cm. / Pages compiled: 43

Miscellaneous

In following up Notebook 15, this notebook was begun in Turi in September 1933, then continued in Formia, but not beyond June 1935. On the inside front cover the notebook bears an indication in pencil, written by Gramsci: “1933 • *Miscellaneous*”. The notebook includes twelve paragraphs of the section *Cultural Topics*, nine of *Past and Present*, seven of *Machiavelli*, five of *Humanism and Renaissance*, four classed as *Popular Literature*, three of the series *Introduction to the Study of Philosophy*, three of the series *Father Bresciani’s Progeny* and two on the *Italian Risorgimento*. Page 19 bears the draft of the petition addressed by Gramsci to Mussolini in September 1934.

NOTEBOOK 18 (-) 1934

21.8x32.1 cm. / Pages compiled 3

Niccolò Machiavelli. II

This is the first of the notebooks begun in the prison-approved clinic in Formia, as one sees from the absence of prison stamps. Taking into consideration that for part of 1934, Gramsci was unable to work this “special notebook” has to be assigned to a undefined moment of time of that year. It includes some first draft notes about the Florentine “Secretary” omitted from Notebook 13 (of which Notebook 18, as its title confirms, is a continuation). The author of the handwritten “34” at the top of the front cover and the indication “4” on the label on the notebook has not been identified (if indeed it is the same person both times).

NOTEBOOK 19 (X) 1934 - 1935

14.8x19.5 cm. / Pages compiled 133

Italian Risorgimento

Even if untitled, this is one of the “special notebooks” begun in Formia in 1934. The first ten pages were at first left blank on purpose, set aside for a subsequent index-summary; later they were partially used (pages 3 and 4) for an introductory text announcing a “double series of researches” which one finds in the Notebook. The manuscript is entirely dedicated to the history and historiography of the Italian Risorgimento, two subjects in which Gramsci had long been interested and which appear right from his very first prison notes. The focus of the research is the role of the moderates headed by Cavour, and that of the democrats lead by Mazzini. The writing of the Notebook continued up to February 1935.

NOTEBOOK 20 (XXV) 1934 - 1935

14.8x19.8 cm. / Pages compiled: 25

Catholic Action – Integralist Catholics, Jesuits, Modernists

This again belongs to the “special notebooks” begun in Formia in 1934 and, here too, the first ten pages were left blank (except for page 1, which bears the title). The themes of the notebook are the roles of Catholic Action, of the Jesuit Order within the Church and of the this latter in Italian political life, as well as the reasons for the repression of the catholic “modernist” reform movement. The worsening of Gramsci’s conditions of health probably did not allow him to take in hand many of his notes dedicated to these subjects from the miscellaneous notebooks. The manuscript does not appear to have been added to after the first few months of 1935.

NOTEBOOK 21 (XVII) 1934

14.8x19.8 cm. / Pages compiled: 33

Problems of Italian National Culture. 1st Popular Literature

The first ten pages were left blank except for page 1 which bears the general title and pages 3-6 which contain a text of an introductory nature entitled *Nexus of problems*. Conceived in Formia as the first of the “special notebooks” on *Problems of Italian National Culture*, Notebook 21 includes notes written under the *Popular Literature* heading. Among the themes analysed are the language question and the absence of a national-popular Italian literature, despite the success in Italy of the translations of *feuilletons*.

NOTEBOOK 22 (V) 1934

cm. 15x21 / Pages compiled: 46

Americanism and Fordism

In this “special notebook” compiled in Formia in 1934, the first ten pages were at first left blank and then put to partial use (pages 1-2) to register a text that had remained incomplete, intended to illustrate the “series of problems which have to be examined under this heading”. The subject matter had already been present as from the programme of study at the start of Notebook 1. The research in Notebook 22 gradually goes more into depth in light of the world crisis after the Wall Street stock market crash in October 1929. Gramsci examines the political and economic structure of the United States of America, their production system, the relationship with the European countries and the influence on these latter of “Americanism”.

NOTEBOOK 23 (VI) 1934

15x21 cm. / Pages compiled: 75

Literary Criticism

These *Literary Criticism* annotations, which constitute a “special notebook”, written in Formia in 1934, are closely connected with the ones on *Popular Literature* of Notebook 21. The manuscript is compiled compactly from page 3 to page 77 and brings together second draft notes from the miscellaneous notebooks present under the heading *Father Bresciani's Progeny*, together with sometimes new texts inspired by reviews and newspapers.

NOTEBOOK 24 (XXVII) 1934

15x21 cm. / Pages compiled: 18

Journalism

Notebook 24, written from page 5 to page 22 and belonging to the first group of “special notebooks” started in Formia, examines the social and political role of the press, the use of journalistic language and the role of information. The subject – first found in Notebook 1 as *Types of Periodicals: Theoretical, Critical-Historical, of General Culture (Dissemination)* – is strongly linked to Gramsci's biography. Having begun his political involvement as a journalist on “Avanti!” at the end of 1915, and then as founder of new journals, most of all “L'Ordine nuovo”, Gramsci always emphasized journalism as a tool of mediation between culture and politics, between intellectuals and the popular strata.

NOTEBOOK 25 (XXIII) 1934 - 1935

14.8x19.8 cm. / Pages compiled: 17

On the Margins of History (History of the Subaltern Groups)

The first ten pages were left blank for an introductory text or a summary index, then not done. The eight sections contain thirteen notes from Notebooks 1, 3 and 9. In these passages Gramsci deals with the methodological problems of historiography and the possible sources for a new “integral history”. At the base of his thought lies the notion of “subaltern” referring to the social groups excluded from the history of the ruling classes and from historiography, even though they are the protagonists of real history. The notebook, belonging to the first group of the Formia “specials” initiated in 1934, appears not to have been continued after the first months of 1935.

NOTEBOOK 26 (XII) 1934 - 1935

14.8x20.5 cm. / Pages compiled: 12

Cultural Topics. 2

As seen from its title, the notebook is the continuation of Notebook 16. Like other Formia “special notebooks”, it is compiled only very partially; begun at the end of 1924, probably it does not go beyond early 1935.

NOTEBOOK 27 (XI) 1935

15x20.5 cm. / Pages compiled: 7

Observations on “Folklore”

This notebook analyses the concepts of folklore, common sense and the picturesque in the popular strata; through these subjects it analyses the relationship between the subaltern and ruling classes. From his early writings, Gramsci reveals a deep knowledge of popular traditions. The wish to include these subjects in the Notebook 1 study programme is not unrelated to his experience of confinement on Ustica, as may be deduced from the letters of the months immediately following his arrest. The Notebook, one of the last three “specials” begun in Formia, belongs to the first months of 1935.

NOTEBOOK 28 (III) 1935

14.8x20.5 cm. / Pages compiled: 18

Lorianism

Lorianism, a neologism taken from the name of Achille Loria, Professor of Political Economy at the University of Turin is an object of Gramsci's criticism from the very earliest writings. The term demotes those intellectuals who, out of originality and desire for success, make statements not supported by rigorous scientific research. For Gramsci, these "degenerate and bizarre" aspects fall within the peculiar weakness of the Italian State and national intellectuals. The eighteen paragraphs of the "special notebook", written in Formia in the first few months of 1935, are all devoted to individual figures, starting of course from Loria himself.

NOTEBOOK 29 (XXI) 1935

14.8x20.5 cm. / Pages compiled: 10

Notes for an Introduction to the Study of Grammar

This includes nine entirely new notes – the only case among the "special notebooks" – which represent the ideal conclusion of Gramsci's intellectual itinerary, which had begun by studying linguistics at university under the guidance of Professor Matteo Bartoli. The notebook, the last one of the "specials" written in Formia and probably written in April 1935, once more takes up the critique of the Gentile reform and of this latter's idea of the uselessness of teaching grammar in schools, considered instead by Gramsci as necessary for intellectual development and growth.

NOTEBOOK A (XIX) 1929

15x20.6 cm. / Pages compiled: 200

Die Literarische Welt (translations)

Translations from *J. and W. Grimm, Fünfzig Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, I

The first half of the notebook includes translations of articles and literary excerpts from the issues of October 14 (dedicated entirely to literature in the United States) and of 30 September 1927 of the German review "Die Literarische Welt"; in the second

half of the notebook, begun simultaneously with the first, Gramsci translates a series of folk tales by the Brothers Grimm, authors whom, as shown in his journalistic writings, Gramsci had long held dear. The entire notebook dates to February-March 1929.

NOTEBOOK B (XV) 1929 - 1931

15x20.6 cm. / Pages compiled: 191

Translations from *J. and W. Grimm, Fünfzig Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, II
Le famiglie linguistiche del mondo by *Franz Nikolaus Finck*, I (translation)

The first half of this notebook includes the translations of nine more tales from the volume of the Brothers Grimm (done between April 1929 and November 1931) followed, in the second half, by Gramsci's translation (done in the second half of 1929) of much of the third edition of the book by the German linguist Franz Nikolaus Finck *Die Sprachstämme des Erdkreises* [*The Language Families of the World*], the most complete categorisation available at the time of the world's languages, based on their ethno-geographical distribution.

NOTEBOOK C (XXVI) 1929 - 1930

15x20.6 cm. / Pages compiled: 193

English Language Exercises (translations)

Continuation of F.N. Finck - The world's language families, II (translation)

Goethe's Conversations with Eckermann (translations)

German Language Exercises on Goethe's Poems (translations)

Written between April and June 1929, the notebook consists of four separate sections. Gramsci begins by translating a number of English texts (an endeavour soon abandoned). Then, the second section contains the translation (completed in December 1929) of a number of poems included in the anthology *Über allen Gipfeln. Goethes Gedichte im Rahmen seines Lebens* (1922). He then creates a third section for the conclusion, by the end of 1929, of the translation of Finck begun in Notebook B, and a fourth which, in the first months of 1930, he translates part of Goethe's volume of conversations with Eckermann (*Goethes Gespräche mit Eckermann*), including some of Goethe's poems.

NOTEBOOK D (XXXI) 1932

23x15.8 cm. / Pages compiled: 2

Translation of J. and W. Grimm, "*Rumpelstilzchen*"

Second and partial translation draft, probably to be assigned to January 1932, of the folk tale by the Brothers Grimm, already done in Notebook A and in this notebook – a drawing album – included in a fair copy; the translation was probably intended for his sister Teresina's children. Gramsci does not translate the name of the character after whom the folk tale is entitled.

NOTEBOOKS 17^{bis} and 17^{ter} (-) 1933

15x20.6 cm. / No pages compiled

The two notebooks, consigned to Gramsci between August and September 1933 together with Notebook 17 (with which they share the same official prison stamps and, on the first page, the initials of the Prison Governor, Pietro Sorrentino), had not been used when Gramsci left Turi on 19 November 1933. In Formia, as well as continuing his work on the notebooks received in Turi and not yet completed, Gramsci was able to begin new notebooks without any longer needing to have an official stamp and authorization by the prison superintendence. This explains the abandonment of these two notebooks, still unused but bearing the visible signs of the previous regime of detention.

International Gramsci Journal

Volume 3
Issue 2 *The Modern Prince / Gramscian
Philology: The Prison Notebooks / Reviews*

Article 8

2019

Usare Gramsci. Una prospettiva pedagogica.

Manuela Ausilio

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci>

Recommended Citation

Ausilio, Manuela, Usare Gramsci. Una prospettiva pedagogica., *International Gramsci Journal*, 3(2), 2019, 83-92.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol3/iss2/8>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

Usare Gramsci. Una prospettiva pedagogica.

Abstract

This is an Italian-language review by Manuela Ausilio of Massimo Balducci's recent book *Usare Gramsci. Una prospettiva pedagogica* (Roma, Carocci). It looks at Gramsci's relevance to current pedagogy and includes a critical examination of previous writers on Gramsci and educational topics, with a glance at others who adopted similar stances to his.

Keywords

Gramsci, Pedagogy, Hegemony, Subalterns, Philosophy of praxis

Usare Gramsci. Una prospettiva pedagogica.

Manuela Ausilio

1. Introduzione

Leggere Gramsci da pedagogisti, oggi. Questa la specifica angolatura da cui Massimo Baldacci richiama l'attenzione degli studiosi, in particolare dei pedagogisti, sull'attualità del pensiero del comunista sardo sui temi formativi. Il volume *Oltre la subalternità. Praxis e educazione in Gramsci*¹ aspira infatti a una «nuova lettura pedagogica del pensiero di Gramsci» (8) seguendo l'interrogativo: cosa vuol dire pensare in modo “gramsciano” le problematiche pedagogiche fondamentali della nostra epoca? Quale *uso* si può fare oggi della sua teoria educativa?

La persistente disattenzione della pedagogia contemporanea verso il pensiero di Gramsci resta infatti un problema aperto. Questo sostanziale silenzio sembra prevalentemente frutto del modo in cui si è letto il pensiero di Gramsci per molto tempo, a seguito dell'intreccio complesso di biografia intellettuale e politica, storia italiana ed edizioni dei suoi scritti che ne ha condizionato la ricezione del pensiero, anche pedagogico – Gramsci fu infatti, per quella parte della sua vita che ebbe possibilità di autodeterminare, un intellettuale militante, giornalista, fondatore e dirigente del Partito Comunista d'Italia. A fronte dell'impegno della comunità scientifica, che dalla metà degli anni Settanta lavora alla nuova edizione critica degli scritti gramsciani, sembra un buon momento anche per riprendere a interrogarsi non solo sul «che cosa egli abbia veramente detto» ma anche e soprattutto sul «cosa può ancora dirci» (8). Assumendo senza remore il punto di vista dell'*utilità pratica* del pensiero gramsciano, la riconsiderazione di Baldacci assume come punto di vista privilegiato quello della pedagogia teoretico-dialettica. Nella situazione attuale di «egemonia politico-culturale del neoliberalismo» più forte è l'esigenza di «superare le nuove forme di subalternità culturale e mentale a essa collegate» (9-10). Gramsci può essere d'aiuto.

¹ Massimo Baldacci, *Oltre la subalternità. Praxis e educazione in Gramsci*, Carocci, Roma 2017.

2. L'educazione, antitesi e conformismo. *Alla ricerca dell'unità pedagogica*

Il libro si compone di densi capitoli: *Leggere Gramsci da pedagogisti; Le interpretazioni della pedagogia di Gramsci; Ripensare Gramsci, usare Gramsci*. Al centro vi è prevalentemente l'analisi dei *Quaderni del carcere* (pochi e brevi cenni sono dedicati agli scritti pre-carcerari e agli epistolari). A seguito di una disamina molto densa delle interpretazioni più rilevanti della pedagogia gramsciana degli anni Settanta del secolo scorso (Urbani, Broccoli, Manacorda) e il vaglio critico di alcuni nodi concettuali di teoria educativa, Baldacci sostiene che la "pedagogia" di Gramsci non è isolabile dall'insieme dei *Quaderni* e dalla sua opera, ma ne costituisce «una *prospettiva*» interna (7). Non è quindi da intendersi come ennesimo "settore" del suo pensiero, ma rappresenta precisamente – questa la tesi fondamentale argomentata nel libro – «un *lato interno* della filosofia della praxis» o «questa intera filosofia concepita dalla prospettiva di tale lato pedagogico» (9). Baldacci propone una concezione ampia della pedagogia di Gramsci, non limitata alle tematiche della formazione scolastica, ma proiettata nell'orizzonte della società intera e nella prospettiva di una formazione permanente, e come processo di natura duplice: 1) l'educazione come *antitesi*, ovvero come lotta contro il senso comune dominante per la costruzione di una "cultura superiore" e una "nuova mentalità"; 2) l'educazione come *nuovo conformismo*, come processo atto a rendere l'uomo appunto «conforme a una data concezione del mondo e, in senso forte, a una data organizzazione produttiva» (250). Di questi due lati, che pure non si possono separare, Baldacci intende valorizzare il primo, quello in cui *educazione* e *politica* coincidono nell'ottica della «formazione di una nuova soggettività, capace di superare la mentalità subalterna per assumere gli abiti da dirigente» (*ibidem*). Educare in senso gramsciano, dunque, vuol dire essenzialmente innescare una lotta pedagogico-culturale che consenta di andare *oltre la subalternità*.

3. La sfida pedagogica: uscire dalla "filosofia primitiva del senso comune"

«Nel nostro lavoro partiamo da un assunto diverso che sviluppa una traccia di Broccoli. Il nostro tentativo è quello di identificare il pensiero pedagogico di Gramsci con un lato della filosofia della praxis» – così Baldacci – «il lato "critico"» o «questa intera filosofia vista dalla prospettiva di tale lato. Questo approccio non sopprime

la rilevanza delle categorie di *egemonia* (sottolineata da Urbani e Broccoli), *conformismo* (Manacorda) e *blocco storico* (Broccoli), ma conduce a inquadrare tali categorie secondo la prospettiva della filosofia della praxis» (175).

Baldacci riconosce a Gramsci un grande merito: l'onestà di cogliere «l'ambiguità del rapporto educativo» che nella sua «forma storica concreta» include sia un aspetto *persuasivo* che un aspetto *coercitivo* (85). Il rapporto educativo è «il primo rapporto egemonico (dunque, di potere) che l'essere umano sperimenta nella propria esistenza sociale» (86). Non è intrinsecamente emancipativo: in quanto «traduzione molecolare del rapporto egemonico, condivide con esso la struttura di potere» (87) e dunque può diventare «tanto un dispositivo di assoggettamento (...) quanto un fattore di emancipazione» (87). La dinamica coercizione-consenso può essere rivolta all'emancipazione dei subalterni o al mantenimento della condizione di subalternità. È qui che interviene un terzo elemento e criterio che è la concezione del mondo rappresentata dalla *filosofia della praxis*, filosofia che «non tende a mantenere i “semplici” nella loro filosofia primitiva del senso comune, ma invece a condurli a una concezione superiore della vita»². In questo senso «il processo egemonico-pedagogico ha una capacità emancipatrice solo se è unito a un'autentica volontà di liberazione del soggetto» (88). Pedagogia e filosofia gramsciana sono profondamente connesse: «la pedagogia va vista dall'angolazione della prassi trasformatrice delle mentalità esistenti, volta alla riforma intellettuale e morale», perciò rappresenta il lato critico della filosofia della praxis sul piano formativo (176).

4. Gramsci pedagogista, un interesse discontinuo: Urbani, Broccoli e Manacorda

La domanda sull'uso pedagogico del pensiero di Gramsci è mossa dall'interesse a saggiarne la validità pratica nel presente, motivo per cui Baldacci introduce anzitutto alcune questioni metodologiche inerenti all'interpretazione dei *Quaderni del carcere* volte a chiarire l'impossibilità di una lettura “innocente” di Gramsci e i presupposti che guidano la sua, come anche ogni interpretazione: l'elaborazione della *filosofia della praxis* di Gramsci come qualcosa di originale, qui

² Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, 4 voll., ed. critica a cura di V. Gerratana, Einaudi 1975: Q11§12, p. 1384.

detto *marxismo critico*; la costruzione *relazionale* e *dialettica* dei concetti; l'influenza del carattere politico delle interpretazioni di Gramsci sul modo di leggerne la pedagogia.

Pur menzionando rapidamente lavori più recenti (come quelli di Orsomarso, Maltese e altri, soffermandosi in particolare sull'interpretazione di Ragazzini (*Società industriale e formazione umana*, 1976), il libro si occupa per la maggior parte a quei pochi studi, ma «di importanza capitale», divenute punto di riferimento per gli studi pedagogici su Gramsci, ovvero le letture di Urbani, Broccoli e Manacorda. Individua alcuni concetti-chiave (o relazioni concettuali) che li caratterizzano e ne fa una disamina critica: da quello *storicamente polisemico* di *egemonia* (approfondito anche nei suoi aspetti di *apparato egemonico* e in relazione all'*ideologia*) a quello di *blocco storico*, di *conformismo* (*dinamico e creativo*) e soprattutto di *filosofia della praxis*. Si tratta di interpretazioni che cadono nel primo sottoperiodo (1964-1975; il secondo sottoperiodo: 1956-1964) di quella fase dell'interpretazione di Gramsci che Baldacci chiama *post-togliattiana* (1964-1989) – differenziandola da quella antecedente *togliattiana* (1944-1964) e quella successiva *postcomunista* (post 1989) –, caratterizzata dalla cosiddetta “fabbrica fordista” e da specifiche forme del conflitto fra capitale e lavoro.

Baldacci sottolinea alcuni aspetti problematici di tutte e tre le interpretazioni. Giovanni Urbani, che non ebbe modo (come Broccoli e diversamente da Manacorda), di consultare l'edizione critica dei *Quaderni del carcere* incentrava la sua analisi prevalentemente sul rapporto *educazione-egemonia*³. Sosteneva che in Gramsci processo *storico* e *formativo* si sovrappongono, e che vi è un'*analogia esemplare* fra rapporto educativo e rapporto egemonico, intesi entrambi come processi progressivi, con riferimento al *postulato* gramsciano: «Ogni rapporto di “egemonia” è necessariamente un rapporto pedagogico»⁴. Baldacci obietta tuttavia che l'accezione del rapporto egemonico come equilibrio sempre progressivo in quanto anche formativo non corrisponde al concetto di egemonia di Gramsci. Inteso nella sua accezione ampia, come unità di direzione-dominio, forza e consenso, il rapporto egemonico rivela un'*asimmetria* fra dirigenti-diretti, governanti-

³ Cfr. l'*Introduzione* ad Antonio Gramsci, *La formazione dell'uomo: scritti di pedagogia*, a cura di Giovanni Urbani, Editori Riuniti, Roma 1967.

⁴ Gramsci: Q10II§44, p. 1331.

governati che può implicare diverse soluzioni: ci sono gli educatori/politici che vorrebbero «tenere sempre gli uomini in culla»⁵ e coloro che vedono nel momento della forza solo un punto transitorio del processo educativo. Nel secondo caso si tratta di «rapporto pedagogico dinamico», il solo volto all'emancipazione dalla condizione di subalternità. Urbani rischia invece di scivolare in una visione culturalista della formazione umana, sostenendo che si tratterebbe solo di uniformare il grado difforme di “consapevolezza critica” o “livello culturale” fra i due gruppi.

Mario Alighiero Manacorda nel suo *Il principio educativo in Gramsci. Americanismo e conformismo*⁶ affronta il tema formativo in Gramsci in una prospettiva non settorializzata, commentando analiticamente i passi di interesse pedagogico dei suoi scritti in connessione con il motivo teorico dell'*americanismo*, posto a fondamento del principio educativo. Mette inoltre al centro la categoria di *conformismo* in contrapposizione a quella di *spontaneismo* educativo. Secondo Baldacci lo studioso romano «ci consegna un'interpretazione organica e coerente del pensiero pedagogico di Gramsci, destinata a rimanere l'interpretazione *mainstream*» (114). Tuttavia i passi “pedagogici” non sembrano inseriti a sufficienza nel quadro complessivo del pensiero di Gramsci; l'ipotesi crittografica per cui Gramsci parla di americanismo perché non può parlare dell'Unione Sovietica viene assunta in modo acritico; ma, soprattutto, ponendo al centro la categoria di *conformismo* educativo finirebbe per accentuare eccessivamente la componente “disciplina” del processo formativo, rischiando di presentare la pedagogia gramsciana come una sorta di “economicismo pedagogico” in cui la *forma* dell'educazione è coercitiva e il suo *contenuto* determinato dalla produzione industriale. Anche quando Manacorda sottolinea l'importanza per i ceti subalterni che vogliano dirigere sé stessi di assumere la prospettiva del *conformismo proposto* (per cui si giunge all'appartenenza collettiva attraverso una «fase di sviluppo di individualità e personalità critica»⁷) respingendo il *conformismo imposto* (autoritario e retrico), non si conduce il discorso alle estreme conseguenze. S'intende il concetto di *conformismo proposto* solo se

⁵ Q11§1, p. 1366.

⁶ Mario Alighiero Manacorda, *Il principio educativo in Gramsci. Americanismo e conformismo*, Armando, Roma 1970.

⁷ Gramsci: Q9§23, p. 1111.

s'inserisce nella «cornice della *filosofia della praxis*, all'interno della quale assume priorità l'emancipazione dei subalterni» come fine della divisione dirigenti-subalterni: «l'autodisciplina significa diventare dirigenti di sé stessi» (119).

È l'interpretazione di Broccoli quella che Baldacci ritiene la più ricca e articolata sui temi educativi. In *Antonio Gramsci e l'educazione come egemonia*⁸ torna al centro il rapporto educazione-egemonia, ma secondo una *concezione dinamica* di entrambi i concetti. Se l'egemonia – pur intesa essenzialmente dal lato culturale come dialettica intellettuali-massa – muta nel tempo, tendendo a sviluppare «forme sempre più avanzate di partecipazione consapevole», vero è che questa dinamicità informa anche il rapporto pedagogico. Questo, inteso come rapporto maestro-allievo come rapporto tra due blocchi storici, si modifica assieme al progressivo arretramento del folklore e si configura quindi in termini «attivi, reciproci, dinamici», *relazionali*. Inoltre, secondo Baldacci, Broccoli valorizza il legame *conformismo-blocco storico* (sostenendo che la conformazione educativa muta nel tempo assieme al rapporto egemonico) e il *conformismo creativo* come processo non solo di «adattamento al processo storico», ma anche «del processo storico attraverso uno sforzo collettivo, a cui ognuno può partecipare in modo originale» (137). Il blocco storico è infatti un'«unità processuale tra l'azione delle forze materiali sociali e la reazione attiva costituita dalla loro elaborazione ideologica» (143). Tuttavia, sostiene Baldacci, la creatività per Gramsci va intesa entro il quadro della filosofia della praxis, in quanto esprime la possibilità di trasformare la realtà come trasformazione del senso comune, del modo di “sentire” e di “pensare” delle masse, come diffusione di «una nuova concezione capace di porsi come principio d'azione» (146), come «norma attiva di condotta»⁹. Nel suo lavoro successivo (*Ideologia e educazione*, 1974) Broccoli valorizza proprio questa connessione, individuando nella *filosofia della praxis* il «motivo centrale che anima il pensiero pedagogico di Gramsci», «punto fondamentale per una nuova interpretazione (e un nuovo uso) del pensiero pedagogico di Gramsci» (147).

⁸ Angelo Broccoli, *Antonio Gramsci e l'educazione come egemonia*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1972.

⁹ Gramsci: Q11§59, p. 1486.

5. Solo la filosofia della praxis è diretta all'emancipazione dei subalterni

Ripercorrendo le tre *Serie* di *Appunti di filosofia. Materialismo e idealismo* (maggio 1930-maggio 1932), Baldacci intende ricostruire il «percorso diacronico della filosofia della praxis e della pedagogia» (181). L'impostazione gramsciana del rapporto scienza-senso comune farebbe emergere il tema pedagogico fondamentale della *riforma intellettuale e morale* come «*dialettica rivoluzionaria della mente*», lotta contro il folklore per creare un «*nuovo ordine mentale* (un pensiero di tipo superiore)» (180). Baldacci individua in Q8§220 (marzo 1932)¹⁰ il luogo testuale in cui diverrebbe evidente il «*lato pedagogico intrinseco della filosofia della praxis*»:

una filosofia della prassi non può presentarsi inizialmente che in atteggiamento polemico, come superamento del modo di pensare preesistente. Quindi come critica del “senso comune” (dopo essersi basata sul senso comune per mostrare che “tutti” sono filosofi e che non si tratta di introdurre ex-novo una scienza nella vita individuale di “tutti”, ma di innovare e rendere “critica” un’attività già esistente) e della filosofia degli intellettuali, che è quella che dà luogo alla storia della filosofia.

Qui si presenta, tuttavia, anche qualche nostra perplessità sull’interpretazione. L’autore commenta:

La filosofia della praxis, quindi, non si pone in atteggiamento polemico soltanto verso la filosofia degli intellettuali, essa anche un compito formativo. Tale compito consiste nel criticare il senso comune per favorire il superamento del modo di pensare diffuso, realizzando una riforma intellettuale e morale (180-81).

Baldacci diversifica ciò che Gramsci tiene insieme: critica alla filosofia degli intellettuali e critica del senso comune appartengono entrambe al «modo di pensare preesistente» e sono perciò investite dall’atteggiamento “polemico” della filosofia della praxis. Non sembra un caso il fatto che Gramsci nel passo ci tenga a sottolineare che questa filosofia *si basa* sul senso comune. Baldacci sembra vedere il «compito formativo» (critico-polemico), invece, essenzialmente nella critica del senso comune come «*lotta contro una forma di cultura inferiore per l’affermazione di una cultura avanzata*» (180-81). Pare esclusa l’ipotesi che la condizione di

¹⁰ Gramsci: Q8§ 220, p. 1080.

«mentalità subalterna» possa riguardare anche gli intellettuali e la loro “filosofia”: ma è così? Forse per fugare rischi di fraintendimenti, l'autore commenta la famosa nota di Quaderno 4, paragrafo 33 (*Passaggio dal sapere al comprendere al sentire e viceversa dal sentire al comprendere al sapere*), sostenendo che

per lottare efficacemente contro il senso comune occorre comprenderlo (e quindi riuscire a sentire attraverso esso), perché solo allora si potrà capire come collegare dialetticamente quel sentire comune al sapere,

adoperando il criterio gramsciano della *filologia vivente* per capire lo scolaro «quale genere di conformismo ha interiorizzato (190).

Tuttavia la questione non secondaria di “pedagogia democratica”, rispetto al modo in cui l'educatore si rapporta al senso comune dell'educando (e la filosofia dell'intellettuale alla filosofia del senso comune) ci pare resti una questione aperta e da approfondire.

6. *Da subalterni a dirigenti*

Sotto il profilo pedagogico il problema fondamentale dei *Quaderni*, secondo Baldacci, è stabilire *a quali condizioni è possibile che i soggetti subalterni acquisiscano una mentalità da dirigenti*. Anzitutto, la condizione di *subalternità* non coincide con quella di *oppressione* indicata da Freire nella *pedagogia degli oppressi*¹¹. L'*oppressione* è uno stato di «coercizione e potenziale violenza», di «vessazione e prevaricazione», rispetto al quale siamo essenzialmente impotenti; la *subalternità* è invece «dipendenza e sudditanza, spesso accompagnate da consenso subordinato» (257). Dunque la *pedagogia dei subalterni* di Gramsci (258) porrebbe anzitutto al centro la «lotta contro il senso comune per la trasformazione della mentalità» (253).

Il discorso di Baldacci si muove sullo sfondo dell'attualità: come portare avanti oggi questa lotta, considerando le nuove forme di *subalternità* veicolate dal paradigma economico-ideologico del “neoliberismo”? I processi egemonici odierni presenterebbero il profilo specifico per cui «il lato dell'egemonia predomina su quello

¹¹ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia do oprimido*, Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1968, e successive edizioni Porto: Edições Afrontamento; tr. it. *La pedagogia degli oppressi*, a cura di L. Bimbi, Milano: Mondadori 1971.

della coercizione» (256). La concentrazione imponente dell'egemonia-consenso si esprime nella tendenza a «forme di pensiero unico» che, in quanto forma egemonica, «incorpora un progetto “pedagogico” di trasformazione dell'uomo» e di «formazione di un nuovo tipo umano». La *pedagogia dei subalterni* di Gramsci è importante e utile in quanto sa «porre la questione dell'emancipazione non solo in forma “negativa”», ma nei termini costruttivi di una «trasformazione della mentalità subalterna in mentalità da dirigente, e quindi della libertà positiva di pensare con la propria testa e partecipare attivamente alle decisioni collettive» (258). La formazione «del nuovo tipo di produttore» deve allora procedere insieme al «superamento della subalternità culturale, alla conquista di una mentalità da dirigenti, per partecipare attivamente al corso della storia, anziché subirla in modo fatalista» (256).

7. Ogni foresta sociale trova nutrimento nelle sue radici

L'autore assume l'ipotesi del mutato scenario attuale, quello di un'economia “postfordista” nella quale «il conflitto sociale si è frammentato su molti fronti, e in cui la cultura di sinistra ha mutato forma e ha perso vitalità, cedendo all'egemonia del neoliberismo» (156). Anche la pedagogia si trova davanti a nuove sfide ed è alla ricerca di nuove soluzioni, e senz'altro il volume consegue l'obiettivo di richiamare l'attenzione sul pensiero pedagogico di Gramsci, un autore rilevante in quanto pone al centro l'esigenza di superare le nuove forme di subalternità mentale-culturale. Abbiamo detto: fra i due lati della pedagogia gramsciana (educazione come *antitesi/critica del senso comune* e educazione come *nuovo conformismo*) Baldacci propende per la vitalità soprattutto del primo. Ma diciamolo: concretamente, è davvero possibile educare esercitando solo la critica di un dato senso comune senza in qualche modo provare insieme a favorire la nascita o il mantenimento di un certo ordine sociale e di valori (più o meno consapevolmente conforme a un determinato modo di produzione)? Se non ci si assume *anche* la responsabilità della *tesi* (per rimanere nella metafora dialettica) – ovvero favorire la diffusione di un sistema di credenze, principi e valori cui si fa riferimento, come fu per Gramsci il comunismo – è ancora possibile un *agire educativo*? In effetti, questo sistema di valori Baldacci sembra vederlo nella costruzione di una cultura di “sinistra” che metta al centro «l'emancipazione dalla subalternità»

come «perno della prospettiva democratica» (262). Il libro richiama il legame “democrazia-educazione” nella misura in cui l’«emancipazione dalla *subalternità culturale*» coincide con l’«emancipazione dell’intelligenza», con lo sviluppo della capacità di pensare: «solo l’educazione può andare oltre la subalternità», poiché consente di «formare abiti mentali critici verso il senso comune dominante», che favoriscono il superamento della «divisione tra una formazione per i gruppi dirigenti e una rivolta ai gruppi subalterni» (ivi). L’appello finale dell’autore è ad accettare una «sfida aperta», ma problematica: quella di non «rinunciare all’ideologia liberal-democratica» ma di «approfondirla ed estenderla in direzione di una democrazia radicale e plurale» (*ibidem*). Sul ritorno alla *radicalità* non si può che concordare: tenendo a mente, tuttavia, che ogni piantina, alberello, gruppo di alberi o foresta sociale *ha le sue, di radici*. Che non si possono estirpare in nome della necessità di una ripulita “democratica” astratta, giacché il terreno entro cui affondano è condizione di sopravvivenza dell’organismo vivente, nella sua complessità. *Oltre la subalternità di chi*, dunque, rimane forse questione aperta, su cui vale la pena continuare a interrogarsi.

International Gramsci Journal

Volume 3
Issue 2 *The Modern Prince / Gramscian
Philology: The Prison Notebooks / Reviews*

Article 9

2019

Using Gramsci. A Pedagogical Perspective.

Manuela Ausilio

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci>

Recommended Citation

Ausilio, Manuela, Using Gramsci. A Pedagogical Perspective., *International Gramsci Journal*, 3(2), 2019, 93-102.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol3/iss2/9>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

Using Gramsci. A Pedagogical Perspective.

Abstract

This is an English-language review by Manuela Ausilio of Massimo Balducci's recent book *Usare Gramsci. Una prospettiva pedagogica* [*Using Gramsci. A Pedagogical Perspective*] (Roma, Carocci). It looks at Gramsci's relevance to current pedagogy and includes a critical examination of previous writers on Gramsci and educational topics, with a glance at others who adopted similar stances to his.

Keywords

Gramsci, Pedagogy, Hegemony, Subalterns, Philosophy of praxis

Using Gramsci. A pedagogic perspective

Manuela Ausilio

1. Introduction

How, as educationalists, should we read Gramsci today? This is the stance adopted by Massimo Balducci to call the attention of scholars, in particular educationalists and pedagogues, to the actuality of Gramsci's thought on the question of the formation of the human subject. His volume *Oltre la subalternità. Praxis e educazione in Gramsci* [*Beyond Subalternity. Praxis and Education in Gramsci*]¹ aims at a "new pedagogic reading of Gramsci's thought" (p. 8) following the question he poses of what is the meaning of thinking out in a "Gramscian" way the pedagogic bases of our times? To what use can we today put his educational theory?

The persistent lack of attention of contemporary pedagogy vis-à-vis Gramsci's thought does indeed remain an open question. This substantial silence seems to be predominantly the result of the way in which Gramsci's thought was for long interpreted, following on the complex interweaving of his political and intellectual biography, of Italian history and of the editions of his writings: All these factors have conditioned the reception even of his pedagogical thought – as regards that part of his life which he was able to determine for himself, Gramsci was, as we know, a militant intellectual, journalist, and founder and leader of the Communist Party of Italy. Taking into account the involvement of the scientific community, which beginning from the mid-1970s has had at its disposal the critical edition of Gramsci's prison writings, it now seems the right time to ask once more not only "what he really said" but also and above all "what he can still say to us" (p. 8). Assuming without further ado the point of view of the *practical utility* of Gramsci's thought, Baldacci's reconsideration takes as a privileged standpoint that of theoretical-dialectical pedagogy. In the current situation of the "politico-cultural hegemony of neoliberalism" the need to "supersede the new forms of cultural and mental subalternity linked to this" (pp. 9-10) is ever stronger and Gramsci here can be of use.

¹ Massimo Balducci, *Praxis e educazione in Gramsci*, Roma: Carocci, 2017.

2. *Education, antithesis and conformism: the quest for pedagogical unity*

The book is divided into a number of densely written chapters: *Reading Gramsci as Pedagogues*; *Gramsci's Interpretations of Pedagogy*; *Rethinking Gramsci*, *Using Gramsci*. The book is mainly centred on the analysis of the prison *Notebooks* with few and brief comments being devoted to the pre-prison writings and the letters. After a close examination of the more important interpretations of Gramscian pedagogy of the last century (Urbani, Broccoli, Manacorda) and a critical run-down of a number of conceptual nodes of educational theory, Baldacci argues that Gramsci's "pedagogy" cannot be taken in isolation from the *Notebooks* in their entirety and from his work, but "constitute a *perspective*" from the inside (p. 7). This pedagogy is not then to be understood as the nth "sector" of his thought, but represents precisely – this is the book's basic argument – "an *internal side* of the philosophy of praxis" or "this whole philosophy conceived from the perspective of this pedagogical side" (p. 9). Baldacci proposes a broad conception of Gramsci's pedagogy, not limited to the school, but projected within the horizon of the whole of society and within the perspective of permanent training, and of a dual-nature process: 1) education as an antithesis, in other words as a struggle against the dominant common sense for the construction of a "higher culture" and a "new mentality"; 2) education as a new conformism, as a process appropriate to making man precisely "conformant to a given conception of the world and, in a strong sense, to a given organization of production" (p. 250). Of these two inseparable sides, Baldacci's intention is to privilege the former, the one in which *education* and *politics* coincide in the optic of the "formation of a new subjectivity, able to supersede the subaltern mentality in order to don the clothes of the leaders" (*ibid.*). To educate in a Gramscian sense means, then, in essence to set in motion a pedagogical-cultural struggle that allows one to go *beyond subalternity*.

3. *The pedagogical challenge: how escape from the "primitive philosophy of common sense"*

"Our work starts off from a different assumption, which develops one of Broccoli's arguments. Our attempt represents the identification of Gramsci's pedagogic thought with one side of the philosophy praxis – Baldacci argues – the 'critical' side" or "this

entire philosophy seen from the perspective of that side. This approach does not suppress the importance of the categories of *hegemony* (emphasized by Urbani and Broccoli) *conformism* (Manacorda) or *historical bloc* (Broccoli) but leads to contextualizing these categories within the perspective of the philosophy of praxis” (p. 175).

Baldacci acknowledges a great merit in Gramsci: his honesty in recognizing “the ambiguity of the educational relationship” which in its “concrete historical form” includes both a *persuasive* aspect and a *coercive* aspect (p. 85). The educational relationship is “the first hegemonic relationship (and therefore one of power) that human beings experiences in their social existence” (p. 86). It is not intrinsically emancipatory: in so far as it is a “molecular translation of the hegemonic relationship, it shares the power structure with this latter” (p. 87) and can therefore become “as much a device of subjection (...) as a factor of emancipation (p. 87). The coercion-consent relationship may be directed towards the emancipation of the subalterns or to the maintenance of their subaltern status. And here a third element and criterion intervenes, which is the conception of the world represented by the *philosophy of praxis*, a philosophy which “does not does not tend to leave the ‘simple’ in their primitive philosophy of common sense, but rather to lead them to a higher conception of life”.² In this sense the “hegemonic-pedagogical process has an emancipatory capacity only if it is united to an authentic will for the liberation of the subject” (p. 88). The connection between pedagogy and Gramscian philosophy runs deep: “pedagogy must be seen from the viewpoint of the transformatory praxis of existing mentalities, aimed at intellectual and moral reform”, and as such represents the critical side of the philosophy of praxis at the formative level (p. 176).

4. Gramsci as pedagogue, a discontinuous interest: Urban, Broccoli and Manacorda

The question regarding the *pedagogical use* of Gramsci’s thought begins from the interest in testing its practical validity at the present time, the reason for which Baldacci introduces first of all a number of methodological questions regarding the interpretations of the

² A. Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, ed. V. Gerratana (hereafter *QdC*), Torino: Einaudi 1975, Q11§12, p. 1384. In English *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (hereafter *SPN*), ed. and tr. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith, London: Lawrence and Wishart 1971, p. 332.

Prison Notebooks aimed at clarifying the impossibility of an “innocent” reading of Gramsci, and the presuppositions that guide his own interpretation, as in the case of any interpretation. These guidelines are the elaboration of Gramsci’s philosophy of praxis as an original conception, here called critical Marxism; the relational and dialectical construction of the concepts; and the influence of the political nature of Gramsci’s interpretations on the way of reading their pedagogy.

After rapidly going over later publications, such as those of Orsomarso, Maltese and others, and pausing in particular over the interpretation given by Dario Ragazzini in his *Società industriale e formazione umana* (1976), Baldacci’s volume concentrates on just a few publications, but those “of prime importance”, which have become a reference point for pedagogical studies on Gramsci, namely the readings given by Urbani, Broccoli and Manacorda. It singles out a number of key concepts (or conceptual relations) characterizing these works and subjects them to a critical examination. These concepts range from the historically polysemic one of hegemony (an in-depth analysis that includes its aspects of *hegemonic apparatus* and *ideology*) through to those of *historical bloc*, *conformism* (in its *dynamic* and its *creative* aspects), and most of all the *philosophy of praxis*. We are here dealing with interpretations that lie in two sub-periods (1964-75, and 1956-64) of that phase of the interpretation of Gramsci that Baldacci calls post-Togliattian (1964-1989) – differentiating it from the preceding Togliattian phase (1944-1964) and the successive *post-communist* one (after 1989) characterized by the so-called “Fordist factory” and by specific forms of the conflict between capital and labour.

Baldacci underlines a number of problematic aspects of all three interpretations. Giovanni Urbani, who (like Broccoli but different from Manacorda) was unable to consult the critical edition of the *Prison Notebooks*, centred his analysis mainly on the *education-hegemony* relation.³ He argued that in Gramsci the *historical* and *formative* processes are superposed and that there is an *exemplary analogy* between the educational relationship and the hegemonic one, both understood as progressive processes, with reference to Gramsci’s *postulate*: “Every relationship of ‘hegemony’ is necessarily an

³ Cf. the *Introduction* to Antonio Gramsci, *La formazione dell'uomo: scritti di pedagogia*, ed. Giovanni Urbani, Roma: Editori Riuniti 1967.

educational relationship”.⁴ Baldacci however makes the objection that the meaning of the hegemonic relationship as always a progressive equilibrium – in so far as it is formative – does not correspond to the concept of hegemony in Gramsci. Understood in its broad meaning, as the unity of leadership-domination, force and consent, the hegemonic relationship reveals an *asymmetry* between leaders-led, rulers-ruled that may imply different solutions. There are the educators/politicians who “would like to confine men for ever to the cradle”⁵ and those who see in the moment of force only a transitional point of the educational process. In the second case we are dealing with the “dynamic educational relationship”, the only one aimed at emancipation from the position of being subaltern. The risk Urbani runs, instead, is that of sliding into a culturalist vision of human formation by arguing that we are dealing only with making uniform the deformed degree of “critical awareness” or “cultural level” between the two groups.

Mario Alighieri Manacorda’s *Il principio educativo in Gramsci. Americanismo e conformismo*⁶ deals with the subject of formation in Gramsci in a non-sectoralized perspective, commenting analytically on the passages of pedagogic interest in his writings in connection with the theoretical motif of *Americanism*, located at the base of the educational principle. Additionally it puts at the centre the category of *conformism* in contrast to that of educational *spontaneity*. In Baldacci’s view Manacorda “provides us with an organic and coherent interpretation of Gramsci’s pedagogical thought, destined to become the mainstream interpretation” (p. 114). The “pedagogical” passages, however, do not seem sufficiently well-inserted in the overall context of Gramsci’s thought. The hypothesis of a cypher by which Gramsci speaks of Americanism since he cannot speak of the Soviet Union is assumed uncritically. But, above all, putting the category of educational *conformism* at the centre would end up with an excessive accentuation of the component of “discipline” in the formative process, with the risk of presenting Gramsci’s pedagogy as a sort of “pedagogical economism” in which the *form* of education is coercive and its *content* determined by

⁴ *QdC*, cit., Q10II§44, p. 1331. In English, *SPN*, cit., p. 350.

⁵ *QdC*, cit., Q11§1, p. 1366. In English *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (hereafter *FSPN*), ed. and tr. D. Boothman, London: Lawrence and Wishart 1995, cit., p. 158.

⁶ Mario Alighieri Manacorda, *Il principio educativo in Gramsci. Americanismo e conformismo*, Roma: Armando 1970.

industrial production. Even when Manacorda underlines the importance that the subaltern strata (*ceti*), in wanting to be their own leaders, should assume the perspective of a *proposed conformism* (by which one reaches a collective belonging together through a “stage comprising the development of individuality and critical personality”⁷ rejecting an *imposed conformism* of an authoritarian and regressive type), he does not take the argument to its extreme conclusion. The concept of proposed conformism is understood only if it is inserted within the “framework of the *philosophy of praxis*, within which the emancipation of the subalterns assumes priority” as the end of the division between leaders and subalterns: “self-discipline means becoming leaders of oneself (p. 119).

The interpretation that, in Baldacci’s opinion, is the richest and most articulated in terms of educational topics is that of Angelo Broccoli. In his *Antonio Gramsci e l’educazione come egemonia*⁸ the education-hegemony relation again assumes a central position, but with a *dynamic conception* being attached to both. If hegemony – while being understood essentially from the cultural side as the intellectual-mass dialectic – changes in time, tending to develop “ever more advanced forms of aware participation”, then it follows that this dynamic feature influences the pedagogic relationship. This relationship, understood as the master-pupil relation between two historical blocs, is modified together with the progressive retreat of the folklore element and is therefore configured in “active, reciprocal, dynamic, *relational*” terms. In addition, in Baldacci’s view, Broccoli gives full value to the *conformism-historical bloc* connection (arguing that the educational conformation changes in time alongside the hegemonic relationship) and to *creative conformism* as a process not only of “adaptation to the historical process” but also adaptation “of the historical process through a collective effort, in which all participate in their own original way” (p. 137). Indeed, the historical bloc is a “processual unity between the action of material social forces and the active reaction constituted by their ideological elaboration” (p. 143). However, as Baldacci argues, creativity for Gramsci is to be understood in the framework of the philosophy of praxis, in so far as it expresses the possibility of transforming reality as the transformation of common sense, as the way of “feeling”

⁷ *QdC*, cit., Q9§23, p. 1111; in English *FSPN*, cit., p. 270.

⁸ A. Broccoli. *Antonio Gramsci e l’educazione come egemonia*, Firenze: La nuova Italia, 1972.

and “thinking” of the masses, as the diffusion of a “new conception able to put itself forward as a principle of action” (p. 146), as an “active norm of conduct”.⁹ In his successive work (*Ideologia e educazione*, 1974) Broccoli values this connection to the full, identifying in the philosophy of praxis the “central motif that animates Gramsci’s pedagogical thought”, a “fundamental point for a new interpretation (and a new use) of his pedagogical thought” (p. 147).

5. *Only the philosophy of praxis is directed to the emancipation of the subalterns*

Tracing his way through Gramsci’s three series of *Notes on Philosophy. Materialism and Idealism* (May 1930-May 1932), Baldacci’s intention is to reconstruct the “diachronic pathway of the philosophy of praxis and of pedagogy” (p. 181). Gramsci’s formulation of the relationship science-common sense makes the basic pedagogic theme of *intellectual and moral reform* emerge as the “*the mind’s revolutionary dialectic*”, a struggle against folklore to create a “*new mental order* (a higher type of thought)” (p. 180). Baldacci identifies in Q8§220 (March 1932) the place in the text where we first find the emergence of the “*intrinsic pedagogical side of the philosophy of praxis*”:

A philosophy of praxis must initially adopt a polemical stance, as superseding the existing mode of thinking. It must therefore present itself as a critique of “common sense” (but only after it has based itself on common sense in order to know show that “everyone” is a philosopher and that the point is not to introduce a totally new form of knowledge into “everyone’s” individual life, but to revitalize an already existing activity and make it critical). It must also present itself as a critique of the intellectuals, put of which the history of the intellectuals arises.¹⁰

Here however we have to state a certain perplexity of ours regarding the interpretation. The author goes on to say:

The philosophy of praxis, then, does not present itself in a polemical attitude only towards the philosophy of the intellectuals, which is also one of the tasks of formation. This task consists in criticizing common sense in order to promote the supersession of a widespread mode of thinking, thereby effecting an intellectual and moral reform (pp. 180-81).

⁹ Gramsci Q11§59, p. 1485. In English *SPN*, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

¹⁰ Q8§220, p. 1080. In English, *Prison Notebooks* (hereafter *PN*), Vol. 3, trans. J. A. Buttigieg, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, p. 369.

Baldacci diversifies what Gramsci keeps together: the critique of the intellectuals and the critique of common sense both belong to “the existing mode of thinking” and are both therefore the object of the “polemical” attitude of the philosophy of praxis. It does not seem by chance that Gramsci goes out of his way to emphasize that this philosophy *is based* on common sense. Baldacci seems to consider the “formative task” (a critical-polemical one), instead, essentially in the critique of common sense as the “*struggle against* a lower form of culture for an advanced culture” (pp. 180-81). He seems to exclude the hypothesis that the “subaltern mentality” condition may also involve the intellectuals and their “philosophy”: but is this really the case? Perhaps in order to avoid risks of being misunderstood, the author comments on the famous note from *Notebook 4* (Q4§33) (Passage from *Knowing* to *Understanding* to *Feeling* and vice-versa from *Feeling* to *Understanding* to *Knowing*)¹¹ arguing that:

to effectively struggle against common sense one has to understand it (and thus to feel through it), since only then can one understand how to link dialectically that common feeling and understanding to knowing,

using Gramsci’s criterion of living philology to understand “what type of conformism” the scholar “has internalized” (p. 190).

However, in our view a “democratic pedagogy” – far from secondary as compared with the way in which the educator relates to the common sense of the person being educated (and the philosophy of the intellectual to the philosophy of common sense) – is a still-open question requiring further investigation.

6. *From subalterns to leaders*

From the pedagogical stance the basic problem of the *Notebooks* is, in Baldacci’s view, to establish *in what conditions it is possible for the subaltern subjects to acquire a mentality of leaders*. First of all, the condition of subalternity does not coincide with that of oppression

¹¹ In English, *PN* Vol. 2, cit., 1996, p. 173. In agreement with the translation strategy used by Hoare and Nowell-Smith for the second draft “C” text (*SPN*, *op. cit.*, p. 418: Q12§13, p. 1396), Buttigieg here renders the single word “sentire” in two senses (“understanding” and “feeling”); elsewhere in the words quoted (the first draft “A” text), for the verbs *capire* and, in this context, *comprendere*, there is no ambiguity and they both are translated “understand”. [Tr. note.]

indicated by Freire in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.¹² *Oppression* is a state of “coercion and potential violence”, of “harassment and perfidy”, in the face of which we are essentially impotent: subalternity is instead “dependence and subjection, often accompanied by subordinate consent” (p. 257). Gramsci’s *pedagogy of the subalterns* (p. 258) would before all put at the centre the “struggle against common sense for the transformation of mentality” (p. 253).

Baldacci’s argument has current conditions as its background: how in the real situation of today is this struggle to be carried out, taking account of the new forms of subalternity conveyed by the economic-ideological paradigm of “neoliberalism”? Today’s hegemonic processes present the specific profile according to which “the hegemonic side prevails over that of coercion” (p. 256). The huge concentration of hegemony-consent is expressed in the tendency, towards “single-thought forms” as a form of hegemony, which “incorporates a ‘pedagogic’ project of the transformation of man” and of the “formation of a new type of person”.¹³ Gramsci’s *pedagogy of the subalterns* is important and useful in so far as it knows how to “pose the question of emancipation not only in a ‘negative’ form” but in the constructive terms of a “transformation of the subaltern mentality into the mentality of leaders, and thence of the positive freedom of thinking by oneself and playing an active role in taking collective decisions” (p. 258). The formation of a “new type of producer” must then proceed hand in hand with the “super-session of cultural subalternity, with the conquest of the mentality of leaders, in order to take an active part in the course of history, instead of undergoing this fatalistically” (p. 256).

7. *Every social forest finds nutrition in its roots*

The author assumes the hypothesis of the modified current scenario, that of a “post-Fordist” economy in which “social conflict has been fragmented on many fronts, and in which left culture has changed form and lost vitality, yielding to the hegemony of neo-liberalism” (p. 156). Pedagogy too finds itself faced with new chal-

¹² P. Freire, *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1968; and subsequent editions Porto: Edições Afrontamento. In English *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. M. Ramos, New York, Herder and Herder, 1970 and, for recent editions, New York: Continuum.

¹³ [In Gramsci’s “C” texts, the phrase in English is used as here in Q15§74, p. 1833 (*FSPN*, *op. cit.*, p. 274: “Freud and the Collective Man”) and as “a new type of man” in Q22§2, p. 2146 (*SPN*, *op. cit.*, p. 286 - tr. note).]

allenges and is seeking new solutions, and without doubt the book attains the objective of calling attention to the pedagogic thought of Gramsci, an important author in so far as he puts in a central position the need to supersede new forms of mental-cultural subalternity. We said earlier: between the two sides of Gramscian pedagogy (*education as antithesis/critique of common sense* and education as a *new conformism*), Baldacci inclines towards the vitality above all of the former. But we should also say: in concrete terms, is it really possible to educate by exercising only the critique of a given common sense without in some way attempting, together with that, to foster the birth or maintenance of a certain social order and order of values (more or less knowingly conformant to a determinate mode of production)? If one does not *also* assume the responsibility for the *thesis* (remaining here within the metaphor of the dialectic) – in other words favouring the diffusion of a system of reference beliefs, principles and values, such as communism was for Gramsci – is *educational action* still possible? In effect, Baldacci seems to see this system of values in the construction of a “left” culture, putting at the centre the “emancipation from subalternity” as the “pivoting point of the democratic perspective” (p. 262). The volume deals with the “democracy-education” link to the extent that the “emancipation from *cultural subalternity*” coincides with the “emancipation of the intelligence”, with the development of the capacity to think: “only education can go beyond subalternity”, since it allows the formation of “mental habits that are critical towards the dominant common sense”, which favour the supersession of the “division between a formation for leading groups and one directed at the subalterns” (*loc. cit.*). The author’s final appeal is to accept an “open challenge” but a problematic one: that of not “renouncing liberal-democratic ideology” but “deepening and extending it in the direction of a radical and plural democracy” (*loc. cit.*). On the return to *radicality* (where we include the etymological sense of “*rootedness*”), one cannot but agree, bearing in mind however that every small plant, every tree, group of trees or social forest *has roots of its own*. These cannot be torn up in the name of the need for an abstract “democratic” clean-up, since the terrain in which they sink their roots is their condition for the survival of the living organism itself in all its complexity. “*Beyond whose subalternity?*” perhaps remains an open question, on which it is worthwhile continuing to reflect.

International Gramsci Journal

Volume 3
Issue 2 *The Modern Prince / Gramscian
Philology: The Prison Notebooks / Reviews*

Article 10

2019

Notes on contributors / Note sugli autori

Derek Boothman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci>

Recommended Citation

Boothman, Derek, Notes on contributors / Note sugli autori, *International Gramsci Journal*, 3(2), 2019, 103-104.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol3/iss2/10>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

Notes on contributors / Note sugli autori

Abstract

Notes on contributors, Note sugli autori

Keywords

Notes on contributors, Note sugli autori

Notes on contributors

PANAGIOTIS SOTIRIS is a journalist and independent researcher working in Athens. He has taught social and political philosophy at the University of Crete, Panteion University (Athina / Athens), and the University of the Aegean, the University of Athens and the Hellenic Open University. A member of the editorial board of “Historical Materialism” and of the “International Gramsci Journal”, he has edited the collective volume *Crisis, Movement, Strategy: The Greek Experience* (Historical Materialism Book Series, Leiden, Brill 2018) and is author of *A Philosophy for Communism: Rethinking Althusser* (Historical Materialism Book Series, Leiden, Brill forthcoming). His research interest include Marxist philosophy, the work of Althusser, and social and political movements in Greece.

GIANNI FRANCIONI (Sassari 1950), professore ordinario di Storia della filosofia all'Università di Pavia, è attualmente distaccato presso l'Accademia dei Lincei. Ha pubblicato diversi saggi su Gramsci, a partire da *L'officina gramsciana. Ipotesi sulla struttura dei «Quaderni del carcere»* (Napoli, Bibliopolis, 1984). È presidente della Ghilarza Summer School - Scuola internazionale di studi gramsciani, membro del consiglio di direzione di «Gramsciana. Rivista internazionale di studi su Antonio Gramsci» e dell'editorial board dell'«International Gramsci Journal». Nell'ambito dell'Edizione Nazionale degli scritti di Antonio Gramsci, dirige la nuova edizione critica dei *Quaderni del carcere*.

GIANNI FRANCIONI (Sassari 1950), full professor of the History of Philosophy at the University of Pavia, is currently on secondment to the Academy of the Lincei. He has published various works on Gramsci, beginning with *L'officina gramsciana. Ipotesi sulla struttura dei «Quaderni del carcere»* [*Gramsci's workshop. Hypotheses on the structure of the 'Prison Notebooks'*] (Napoli, Bibliopolis, 1984). He is President of the Ghilarza Summer School – International School of Gramsci Studies, a member of the editorial committees of “Gramsciana. Rivista internazionale di studi su Antonio Gramsci” and of the editorial board of the “International Gramsci Journal”. For the *National Edition of the Writings of Antonio Gramsci*, he is editing the new critical edition of the *Prison Notebooks*.

MANUELA AUSILIO (Roma 1984) è *Research Consultant* presso la Fondazione Gramsci di Roma, dove svolge attività di ricerca per l'*Edizione Nazionale degli Scritti di Antonio Gramsci*. Specializzata in *Filosofia, filologia e archivi*, si è occupata di pedagogia pratica come *Teacher in Philosophy for Children* (P4C). Laureata in Filosofia Pratica (La Sapienza) e assegnista di ricerca t.d. (Roma Tre), ha collaborato nel Direttivo della International Gramsci Society-Italia (2014-2019). Marxista, è parte del Coordinamento Nazionale di *Potere al popolo!*. Fra i

suoi contributi: *La volontà collettiva nazionale-popolare: Rousseau, Hegel e Gramsci a confronto* («Critica marxista», 2007); diverse voci storico-filosofiche e politiche per il *Dizionario gramsciano. 1926-1937* (Roma, Carocci, 2009); «Rileggendo i “Quaderni del carcere”» (in *Il Risorgimento, un’epopea?* Milano, Zambon 2012); *Il socratismo politico e storicista (1915-1918)* (“Articolo 33”, 2019).

MANUELA AUSILIO (Rome 1984) is a Research Consultant at the Gramsci Foundation in Rome, working on the *National Edition of the Writings of Antonio Gramsci*. Her academic training is in philosophy, philology and archive work, graduating in political philosophy Rome’s *La Sapienza* university. She has carried out post-doc research at Rome’s *Università III* and also worked in the practical educational field as teacher in Philosophy for Children. A collaborator of the Executive of the International Gramsci Society-Italia (2014-2019), she is a member of the National Coordinating Group of “Potere al Popolo!”. Among her publications are *Il socratismo politico e storicista (1915-1918)* (“Articolo 33”, 2019), *Rinascimento e Risorgimento in Italia: la “paura del popolo”. Rileggendo i Quaderni del carcere* (*Il Risorgimento, un’epopea?* Milano, Zambon 2012), and various entries in the *Dizionario gramsciano 1926-1937* (Roma, Carocci, 2007).

LELIO LA PORTA è membro del Direttivo dell’International Gramsci Society Italia e collaboratore di “Critica Marxista”. È autore di diverse voci del *Dizionario gramsciano 1926-1937* (a cura di G. Liguori e P. Voza, 2009) e ha curato alcune antologie gramsciane fra le quali *I Quaderni del carcere di Antonio Gramsci. Un’antologia* (con Prestipino, 2014), *Un Gramsci per le nostre scuole e Gramsci chi?* (2017), *Scritti di letteratura* di A. Gramsci (2019). Oltre che su Gramsci, ha scritto su Marx, Lukács, Arendt.

LELIO LA PORTA is a member of the Executive of the International Gramsci Society Italia and a collaborator of the review “Critica Marxista”. He is the author of various entries in the *Dizionario gramsciano 1926-1937* (eds G. Liguori and P. Voza, 2009) and has edited a number of Gramsci anthologies including *I Quaderni del carcere di Antonio Gramsci. Un’antologia* (with G. Prestipino, 2014), *Un Gramsci per le nostre scuole* and *Gramsci chi?* (2017), *Scritti di letteratura* of Antonio Gramsci (2019). As well as his work on Gramsci he has written on Marx, Lukács and Arendt.