

NOTES AND GLEANINGS / NOTE E CURIOSITÀ

GRAMSCI IN THE WORLD: PIERO SRAFFA AND THE FIRST EDITIONS OF THE PRISON WRITINGS

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Sommario

Dopo aver riassunto e commentato i contributi a Gramsci in the World, un volume collettaneo curato da Roberto M. Dainotto e Fredric Jameson, aggiungo una 'chiosa' in cui parlo del modo in cui nel secondo dopoguerra la figura storica di Antonio Gramsci fu contestualizzata nella storia del Partito comunista italiano. A questo fine, prendo in considerazione l'importante ruolo svolto da Piero Sraffa da eminenza grigia dietro la pubblicazione delle prime edizioni delle Opere di Gramsci. Sraffa partecipò sia come garante delle ultime volontà di Gramsci sia come collaboratore di Felice Platone, il curatore delle prime edizioni dei Quaderni del carcere e delle Lettere dal carcere. Questi testi furono concepiti e programmati all'indomani della guerra, cioè nel periodo dell'unità nazionale antifascista, ma videro la luce qualche anno dopo, in piena Guerra fredda. Pertanto, occorreva gestire diverse e contrastanti esigenze, fra cui quella di persistere nell'esaltazione della figura di Gramsci, leader onorario del movimento operaio nella 'via italiana' al socialismo e quindi 'contrappeso' in Italia al culto di Stalin. Bisognava trovare altresì il modo di presentare Gramsci, e quanto prima, a pubblici divergenti — intellettuali da una parte e lettori meno colti dall'altra — posticipando al futuro una edizione critica dei quaderni gramsciani.

Keywords: Antonio Gramsci, Piero Sraffa, Palmiro Togliatti, *Lettere dal carcere*, *Quaderni del carcere*, Thematic edition, Critical edition

The volume, *Gramsci in the World*, (edited by Roberto M. Dainotto and Fredric Jameson) is an impressive collection of the work of scholars the world over, a tribute to the continuing importance of Gramsci's thought, the vitality of Gramsci studies, and an important addition to the Gramscian bibliography. Together the contributions give an insightful, panoramic view of the impact of Gramsci's prison notebooks throughout the Earth. As Fredric Jameson writes in his preface, "the richness" of this collection "will surprise even the most fervent Gramscian" (xiii).

Each chapter may be read fruitfully in isolation from the rest, that is, just as they were written. But the volume is best read, perhaps, cover-to-cover. The sum of the entries forms a mosaic where each helps contextualise the others and causes one to think of the notebooks as a sort of fine crystal that resounds no matter where it is touched. All chapters, with two exceptions — Kate Crehan's "Adam Smith: A Bourgeois Intellectual" (condensation of a chapter, on "the question of the shifting nature and role of intellectuals over time and across space" (60), from her 2016 monograph, *Gramsci's Common Sense*) and Maria Elisa Cevasco's "Reverse Hegemony" (from 2013) — are previously unpublished. Cevasco asks the reader to re-consider her essay, which documents the thinking and hopes of Brazilian progressives in 2013, in the light of subsequent events, particularly the Bolsonaro presidency.

Alberto Burgio provides a cogent analysis of "Gramsci, Historian of Modernity", or, better, the crisis of bourgeois modernity, and the "essential aspect of capitalistic development": its fundamental contradiction, "the antagonistic nature of a hierarchically structured society that survives" because of "the 'free' cooperation of the subaltern classes" (43).

Cesare Casarino analyses the impact of the retrieval of Bergson in Gramsci's elaboration of "the philosophy of praxis". In "Subalterns in the World: Typologies and Nexus with Different Forms of Religious Experience", Cosimo Zene provides an interesting application of the concept of subalternity, as found in Gramsci, to messianic cults.

Harry Harootunian looks at Gramsci's *The Southern Question* within the broader context of the deprovincialization of Marx, specifically, how Marx was read in the interwar period. He credits

Gramsci and Rosa Luxemburg for opening to what is now called the Global South.

Andrea Scapolo, in "Scattered Ashes: The Reception of the Gramscian Legacy in Postwar Italy", leads readers down a well-trodden path (for Italophones) with his critique 'from the Left' of Palmiro Togliatti and the Italian Communist Party.

Michael Denning's answer to the question "Why No Gramsci in the United States" is that the American Left "made what Gramsci called a 'common error' in historical-political analysis", misreading 'the correct relation between what is organic and what is conjunctural' in an array of situations. The result was Gramsci's minimal "impact and influence in the United States and on the U.S. Left" (158).

R.A. Judy's fascinating contribution looks in depth at "Gramsci on *la questione dei negri*. He argues that Gramsci sees America "through the Negro" and concludes that the U.S.A. must be approached through a diverse paradigm, "as a complex of historical events that are unexplainable according to the history of thought that explains Europe" (171).

In "Thinking Andean Abya Yala with and against Gramsci: Notes on State, Nature and *Buen vivir*", Catherine A. Walsh engages Gramsci in an imaginary dialogue, from the perspective of the indigenous peoples of the Andes.

Pu Wang's "Gramsci and the Chinese Left: Reappraising a Missed Encounter" charts the similarities between ideas expressed in the notebooks and those of historical leaders and intellectuals of the Chinese Left.

Patrizia Manduchi, author of "Antonio Gramsci in the Arab World: The Ongoing Debate" provides a Gramscian reading of the formation process of the Arab nations and of much more recent events in that part of the world.

Peter Thomas' "The Modern Prince" is an insightful analysis of Gramsci's attempts at "re-inhabiting' the dynamic" he sees as "the distinctive feature that makes of Machiavelli's text a qualitatively new genre of political writing" (21). Thomas explores how "the later notebooks become a laboratory for experimentation in a new principle and practice of sociopolitical organization", and then attempts to "understand the terms and significance of development" in Gramsci's retrieval of Machiavelli (21).

Now, with my reader's permission, I would like to add a friendly 'gloss' to the informative and insightful essays brought together in this volume on Gramsci's notebooks. That is, I would like to bring to the fore how the noted economist Piero Sraffa, until his death in 1983, served as *éminence grise* behind the publication of Gramsci's *Opere* in the post-War years.

In 1924 Gramsci hosted on the pages of *L'Ordine nuovo* a letter from Sraffa, Gramsci's personal friend, since their time together as students at the University of Turin, and the periodical's "long-time subscriber and friend" (*vecchio abbonato e amico*). This courtesy was extended "even though [Sraffa] was not a member of" (*quantunque non iscritto*) the Partito Comunista d'Italia (PCd'I). Nor was Sraffa a political activist, a characteristic that did not seem, to Sraffa, "incompatible with being a communist, even an undisciplined one" (*inconciliabile coll'essere comunista, sia pure indisciplinatamente*) (Napolitano:146). Sraffa's autonomy was not a problem for the PCd'I, either. In November 1923 Party leaders decided it needed its own daily, and their original intent was to "entrust the new daily [*l'Unità*] to an editor-in-chief who [was] not a member" (*affidare il nuovo quotidiano a un direttore non appartenente*) of the Party. Their first choice was Sraffa, who turned down the offer (Gramsci, 2011:134, 136-7).

As Gerratana avers, Sraffa, until his death, "remained politically independent, outside any and all organizations" (*Politicamente rimase sempre indipendente, al di fuori di ogni vincolo organizzativo, come era sempre stato*) (XLVII).

Sraffa, as is well known, resolves for Gramsci, as the latter wrote from Ustica, the latter's concern with the possibility of an "intellectual brutalization" (*questo problema dell'abbruttimento intellettuale che specialmente [gli] preoccupa[va]*) (Gramsci:19) by opening an unlimited account for Gramsci with a Milanese bookstore, without which the bulk of the notebooks could not have been written at the Turi di Bari prison.

Gramsci leaves Turi in November 1933. A month later he arrives at a hospital in Formia, and, in early 1934, begins writing twelve new "special notebooks" (*quaderni speciali*), demonstrative, as Giasi has stated, of the fact that the notebooks were still very much at Gramsci's death a work in progress. The final contours of the overall project, for

as long as their author was able to work on them, were still being re-defined and honed (2020:XXXVI).

In other words, we can make informed conjecture, but cannot know with certainty, the definitive form Gramsci would have given to his notebooks, had he had 'world enough and time'. Herein lies, I believe, the "ambiguity" of the "open work" to which Jameson refers (xi).

Sraffa makes three visits to Formia (2-3 January, 10-11 April, 13-14 August 1934). He sees Gramsci again, after Gramsci's transferal to Rome's Quisisana clinic (24 August 1934). There, the two men pass the days leading up to Christmas together (23-25 December 1935). Sraffa returns to the Quisisana in late June 1936; in January 1937; then again for five days in March 1937, this time visiting with Gramsci twice daily. On 18 April, three days before Gramsci re-acquires his, to be blunt, useless freedom, he asks Sraffa to forward his final request to the Italian government (Gramsci dies six days after his release, of a cerebral hemorrhage, 27 April 1937): that he be allowed to move to Moscow, to be with his wife and children, or at least, should that request be denied, that he be allowed to live with family in Sardinia.

During these visits Sraffa brings Gramsci — who since his arrest in November 1926 had lived isolated from topical events (excepting his journal subscriptions) and from the debates within the PCd'I and the Communist International — up to date on what had transpired out in "the grand and terrible world" (*il mondo grande e terribile*) (Spriano:15). During these encounters, Sraffa told the historian Paolo Spriano, Gramsci did far more listening than speaking. For example, Gramsci was unable to express an opinion on the trials of the Great Purge, ongoing at the time of Gramsci's death. Gramsci did ask Sraffa to forward one message to the Party's *Centro estero*: Gramsci reiterated the importance he attributed to an *Assemblea Costituente*, the strategy he had proposed to other members of the communist collective in Turi in 1930. He insisted on the long-term validity of a "united front" of all anti-Fascist parties, repeating his opposition to the Communist International's branding of social democrats as "socialfascists" and its turn toward the sort of sectarian tactics he had contrasted in Turin before his incarceration.

In sum, Gramsci entrusted his material legacy — his letters, notebooks, and prison library — to his sister-in-law, Tatiana Schucht. Sraffa was to safeguard Gramsci's intellectual legacy.

Gramsci's *Assemblea Costituente*, of course, was transformed from theory into practice by Togliatti's change in strategy — announced after the latter's return from exile, in Salerno, in April 1944 — which animated the Committee of National Liberation (CLN), thus giving form and impetus to the organised Resistance. After the War, the parties of the CLN (save the monarchists) teamed to win the institutional referendum, wrote an exemplary republican constitution, and provided the country with its first post-Fascist governments. This alliance continued until May 1947 when Alcide De Gasperi, in exchange for Marshall plan aid, agreed to limiting Italy's sovereignty. In foreign affairs De Gasperi opted for NATO over non-alignment. On the domestic front, the Italian Communist Party (Pci) and the Socialist Party were expelled from government, thus inaugurating the so-called *conventio ad excludendum* that precluded future Communist participation in any national governing coalition.

To take a step back in time, within a month of Gramsci's death, 20 May 1937, Togliatti wrote to Sraffa:

I strongly request you inform me, with precision, the instructions Antonio gave you for the publication, and in any case, the study and utilization of his writings. I am referring primarily to his prison writings, but also to those he wrote prior to his incarceration.

[...]

In fact, rather than provide clarifications to me or to others by voice, I believe you should write down everything Antonio said to you about this matter, in addition to what you learned through previous meetings with Antonio, conversations with Tatiana, etc.: his desires, his instructions, etc.

I have made known to our friends that I think we must refrain from publishing new material of his until we know exactly what his last wishes were, and you are the only person who can tell us this. (Gramsci-Schucht: 1486)

ti prego vivamente di farmi conoscere con precisione quali sono le istruzioni lasciate da Antonio per la pubblicazione eventuale, e in ogni caso per lo studio e la

utilizzazione dei suoi scritti. Intendo in primo luogo gli scritti suoi del carcere, ma anche gli altri, precedenti.

[...]

Anzi, più che dare dei chiarimenti a queste cose a me o a altri personalmente, credo che tu dovresti mettere per iscritto tutto quello che Antonio ha comunicato a te a questo proposito, nonché tutto quello che a questo proposito ti è noto per altra via (precedenti incontri con Antonio, colloqui con Tania, ecc.), i suoi desideri, le sue istruzioni, ecc.

Ho fatto sapere agli amici che penso ci si debba astenere dal pubblicare cose inedite di lui sino a che non abbiamo esatta conoscenza delle sue ultime volontà, che tu solo ci puoi comunicare.

Sraffa, in his interview with Spriano, recalled answering “in writing and in detail Togliatti’s request” [*per iscritto dettagliatamente alla richiesta di Togliatti*] (15). However, as Giasi notes, “Sraffa’s response, or better, an extended report, written in response to Togliatti’s request has never been found, and we cannot know with certainty if one was ever written” (*La risposta di Sraffa, o meglio un suo rapporto steso per esaudire le richieste di Togliatti, non è stato rinvenuto, né si può avere la certezza che sia stato scritto*) (2014: 936).

In fact, it may be the case Sraffa simply provided, as Sraffa told Spriano, “a description of the themes and of the nature of the notebooks, based on what Gramsci told him [Sraffa], while showing them to him in the ‘Quisisana’ clinic” (*una descrizione dei temi e della stesura dei quaderni così come Gramsci la fece a lui, mostrandoglieli nella clinica “Quisisana”*) (Spriano:15). Sraffa also remembered explaining to Togliatti “the structure and the themes of the notebooks, telling him Gramsci planned to use those notes to compile a series of volumes, each dealing with a different aspect of his research; as was attempted a few years later” (*la struttura e la tematica dei Quaderni informandolo che Gramsci intendeva usare quelle note per mettere assieme più volumi, ripartiti secondo i vari filoni delle sue ricerche, così come si è cercato poi di fare nella pubblicazione delle Opere*) (Spriano:16).

Sraffa did not trust, to borrow Gerratana’s phrasing, “memories, those of others and even his own, which Sraffa said he did not want to

commit to paper “because they would take on a rigidity they did not deserve”. This is why he advocated against trusting memories “that are not substantiated by documents” (XLVIII) (*i ricordi, [...] quelli degli altri e anche [i] propri: dei quali diceva che non voleva metterli per iscritto “perché acquisterebbero una fissità che non meritano”. E per questo consigliava di non fidarsi mai dei ricordi “che non siano confermati da documenti”*).

That said, what matters is Sraffa contributed to the compilation of the first, thematic edition of the notebooks, especially the notes on economics included in the volume *Il materialismo storico e la filosofia di Benedetto Croce*, advising with a “long, hand-written note” (*lungo appunto manoscritto*) (Gerratana:68; see also Badaloni:44)¹. For example, he argued against the publication of a note in which he believed “the arguments made are not sufficiently elaborated; and there seems to be a superficiality about them that is not consistent with other notes dealing with economics” (*i punti accennati non siano stati sufficientemente meditati, e vi è un'impressione di superficialità che non si riscontra in alcune delle altre note economiche*)².

According to diaries Sraffa kept after the War³, he had number of meetings with Felice Platone. Sraffa was in Rome, from 20 June to 10 July 1946, where he met four times with Platone: 22, 27 (in the morning, followed by an evening meeting that same day with Giulio Einaudi), 28 June, and 6 July. At the VI National Congress of the Pci (Milan, 4-10 January 1948), where the Pci circulated a first edition of *Il materialismo storico*, Sraffa met again with Platone on 5 January

¹ To borrow Gerratana's phrasing, “Contiene una serie di osservazioni, assai minuziose, di carattere redazionale, con una premessa nella quale si consiglia di espungere, per ragioni di merito, una delle note gramsciane raccolte sotto il titolo di *Noterelle di economia*. Basti pensare alla personalità di Sraffa per escludere ogni sospetto di censura politica. Era il parere di uno specialista su pagine che Gramsci aveva scritto da non specialista (1989:69).

² Other notes — some because of the “clima politico” (the onset of the Cold War), others because of the campaign to monumentalize Gramsci — were also suppressed, along with one that contained one of Gramsci's “più dure critiche ai metodi dello stalinismo”, concealed within a critique of “cadornismo politico” (Gerratana: 69), “cioè la persuasione che una cosa sarà fatta perché il dirigente ritiene giusto e razionale che sia fatta: se non viene fatta, ‘la colpa’ viene riversata su chi ‘avrebbe dovuto’” ecc. Così è difficile estirpare la abitudine criminale di trascurare di evitare i sacrifici inutili” (Q15§4,1753).

³ Conserved at the Wren Library, Trinity College, Cambridge (UK) University.

1948, and separately that same day with Gramsci's children, then later with Einaudi⁴.

This contributes to why Gerratana argues against assigning “*tout court* and completely to Togliatti all responsibility” [tout court a Togliatti tutta la responsabilità] for the thematic edition of 1948-1951:

it is unlikely that Togliatti — weighed down in the years immediately following the War with enormous responsibilities, as head of the Italian Communist Party, minister in the governments of national unity⁵, and as a member of the Constitutional Congress — could have overseen first-hand the delicate and complex work of editing all of Gramsci's writings. (1989:63)

è improbabile che Togliatti, oberato nei primi anni del dopoguerra da enormi responsabilità, come capo del Partito comunista italiano, ministro dei governi di unità nazionale e membro della Costituente, potesse attendere personalmente, al tempo stesso, al delicato e complesso lavoro di editore di tutta l'opera di Gramsci.

Gerratana shifts partial responsibility for the editing to Platone and Casa Einaudi. Gerratana also underscores that the editing of the *Opere* (the *Lettere* and the *Quaderni*) did not take place in a vacuum. He believes it fundamental to

⁴ At this Congress the Pci distributed a numbered, limited (1000 copies) first edition of *Il materialismo storico*. According to Mangoni, Einaudi assigned further copyediting of this volume to Felice Balbo, instructing him to share the proofs with Delio Cantimori, and “segnalarci eventuali notevoli lacune” [368n258]). On 5 February Einaudi sent Sraffa the final version of the volume, informing him that they had corrected several errors in this reprint, prepared for bookstores, and asking him to point out quickly addition imprecisions, should he find any, since “non è improbabile che si faccia presto una ristampa” (Daniele: 95n80).

⁵ Togliatti was *Ministro di Grazia e Giustizia* in Parri I and De Gasperi I. In July 1946 he was replaced as *Guardasigilli* by Fausto Gullo and became a *ministro senza portafoglio*. Through January 1948 Togliatti was Vicepresidente della Commissione per i trattati internazionali; from June 1948 through June 1953 he was Vicepresidente della II Commissione rapporti con l'estero (<https://storia.camera.it/deputato/palmiro-togliatti-18930326> (21 January 2021)).

understand the extent to which the change in political climate influenced the preparation of the first edition of Gramsci's works: an edition conceived, planned, and determined in the period of national unity and brought to fruition several years later, after that unity had been broken and the Cold War set in motion. (64)

capire se e fino a che punto abbia influito il cambiamento di clima politico nella preparazione della prima edizione dell'opera di Gramsci: una edizione concepita, programmata e decisa nel clima politico dell'unità nazionale e realizzata, poi, quando questa unità si era già spezzata, nel periodo delle guerra fredda.

Of course, “the changes in political climate” (*cambiamenti del clima politico*) (66) were not the only factor influencing the modifications from the original plan for the notebooks (84). Originally, Platone believed the principal focus of Gramsci's notebooks was “a ‘history of [Italian] intellectuals’” (*Una “storia degli intellettuali”*), with a critique of Croce and an explication of historical materialism/philosophy of praxis as subheadings within the broader topic (Platone:1946). More or less at the same time, a special commission formed within the Pci hierarchy struggled with how to make Gramsci accessible while not separating “an esoteric Gramsci for intellectuals from a popularized Gramsci for the masses” (*un Gramsci esoterico per gli intellettuali da un Gramsci essoterico per le masse*) (Gerratana:66, 67). Ultimately, they forwarded to Platone a set of “general criteria” (*criteri generali*) one of which, according to Gerratana, “will be in great measure what was put into practice” (*in sostanza sarà in qualche modo seguito*): make the notebooks accessible to the broadest public possible — while taking care to avoid “a ‘popular,’ watered-down, trimmed, and, ultimately, enervated edition” (*un'edizione “popolare” spurgata, sfrondata e in definitiva snervata*) — and “postponing to a future date an edition inspired by philological scruples” (*rinvia[re] al futuro un'edizione ispirata a scrupoli filologici*) (68).

Tatiana, as Dainotto reminds us, did not trust the leadership of the PCd'I because of the “very ‘strange’ letter” (*molto “strana” lettera*)

written by Ruggiero Grieco on 10 February 1928, while Gramsci was in jail in Milan. Gramsci harbored the hope his trial would go well, but he was convinced by the investigating magistrate that Grieco's letter proved that Gramsci had "friends who most certainly want [Gramsci] to remain in jail for a long time" (*degli amici che certamente desiderano che [Gramsci] rimanga un pezzo in galera*)⁶. Moreover, Gramsci believed, and Tatiana with him, that Grieco had written on the instructions of others higher up in the party hierarchy, probably Togliatti, who had their reasons for not wanting Gramsci released.

Sraffa disagreed. After Gramsci's passing, this difference of opinion caused their friendship to sour. Sraffa recommended Tatiana go to Paris and confront Grieco. She refused.

This, and the fact that she remained in Italy rather than return home to Moscow contributed — despite the direct appeal to Stalin by the Schucht sisters, Tatiana, Gramsci's widow Julka, and Evgenia — to the assignment by the Communist International of Gramsci's literary legacy to the Italian Party (see Pons *passim*).

Soon after Gramsci's death, Tatiana wrote to Sraffa asking if he were willing accept the notebooks from her and if he agreed it was "useful, in fact absolutely necessary" (*utile, anzi necessario assolutamente*) that he put "in order Nino's manuscripts" (*in ordine i manoscritti di Nino*) (Sraffa:260). Sraffa declined. "After accepting to be the connection between Gramsci and the Party, he preferred to avoid giving the impression of wanting to sequester Gramsci's literary legacy" (*Dopo aver accettato di far da collegamento tra Gramsci e il partito, non avrebbe potuto dare l'impressione di voler sequestrare l'eredità letteraria di Gramsci*) (Gerratana:XLVII). Nonetheless, despite their disagreement over Grieco's missive, when Tatiana sent the notebooks to Moscow, she included instructions to her sister Julka: "do not entrust anything to anyone at least until his friend Piero has made his opinion known [...]" (*non affidare nulla a nessuno almeno finché il suo amico Piero non avrà espresso il suo parere [...]*) (quoted in Giasi, 2020:IX-X).

Furthermore, it seems there were important details about Grieco's letter that Gramsci and Tatiana did not know. Firstly, as Pons's archival research has shown, Grieco had written not only to Gramsci, but to

⁶ Letter to Tatiana Schucht, 5 December 1932 (Gramsci, 2020:891).

Umberto Terracini and Mauro Scoccimarro also, in response to a request from Terracini's wife, who had told Grieco of her husband "complaining about the Party, asking why no one writes" (*lamentele contro il partito, perché non scrivono*) (Pons:85). Secondly, as Pons points out, "The succession of events did not correspond to reality, to how things transpired. We know now that the investigating magistrate put Gramsci's trial on the court calendar before Grieco's letter arrived" (*La successione non corrispondeva, in realtà, all'andamento delle cose (sappiamo che la richiesta di rinvio a giudizio era già stata inoltrata prima dell'arrivo della lettera di Grieco)*) (97-98).

As we have seen, Sraffa "collaborated willingly" (*Collaborò volentieri*) with Felice Platone, editor of the thematic edition of the *Quaderni*; in fact, "he reviewed the page proofs" (*rivide sulle bozze di stampa*) of *Il materialismo storico* (Gerratana:XLVII). Sraffa died in 1983, and, to my knowledge, at no point objected to the editing of any edition of Gramsci's writings, including the *2000 pagine di Gramsci* that came forth in 1964, not long before Togliatti's death. The publication of the *2000 pagine* brought to light "80 previously unpublished letters" (*ben 80 lettere sconosciute*) (Giasi, 2020:XXXIV), "not included", as Togliatti stated in his review, "in previous collections because they had not been shared by their recipients" (*non comprese nelle precedenti raccolte perché non ancora recuperate*) (Togliatti, 1964:1187): through the 1950s and 1960s new documents had continued to arrive at the Fondazione Gramsci. Moreover, public discussions of *2000 pagine* brought into the open a previously suppressed prison note from 1933 that revealed the profound psychological toll of incarceration, a note that might have undermined the image of Gramsci the Pci had popularised since his arrest in 1927 as "the leader of the working classes" (*capo della classe operaia*).

The lionisation of Gramsci began immediately after his arrest, and party propaganda did, in fact, go against, at times, the prisoner's desires. As Giasi avers, "to speak of Gramsci through venues published outside Italy meant naming a leader whose activities were known only by small groups of activists" (*Parlare di Gramsci attraverso la stampa dell'emigrazione significava fare il nome di un dirigente la cui attività era nota soltanto a cerchie ristrette di militanti*) (2020:921-22). One motif accentuated by the clandestine party was Gramsci's break with the extremism of Bordiga (Giasi, 2020:922, 923).

This strategy resonates in a memoir written by Giuseppe Ceresa, a fellow inmate at Turi, published in a collective volume edited by Togliatti to commemorate the first anniversary of Gramsci's death (Togliatti, 1938). That volume's readers would, most likely, have remembered Bordiga, who was much more widely known than Gramsci, but they probably did not know Bordiga was no longer politically active. Ceresa recalls for them Bordiga's "disdain [...] for the masses, for lesser-skilled workers" (*disprezzo [...] verso le masse, verso i lavoratori più umili*) (114). He also comes forth with vivid memories of a Gramsci admired by working-class inmates for his patience in explaining complex concepts to semi-literate interlocutors in terms they could understand (113). Ceresa contrasts Gramsci to the intellectuals of the Socialist Party, whose "leaders, dilettante intellectuals and adventurers" (*capi intellettuali dilettanti ed avventurieri*), had been "quick to betray the workers' movement whose development they had continuously undermined since its inception" (*pronti a tradire il movimento operaio del quale erano stati la vera peste durante tutto il corso del suo sviluppo*) and bore responsibility for the triumph of Fascism (112).

Immediately after the War, Gramsci was represented to intellectuals on the pages of the semi-autonomous periodical *Società* in a "Ricordo di Gramsci" written by another fellow inmate at Turi, Mario Garuglieri, like Ceresa a "manual labourer" (*lavoratore manuale*) (694). Garuglieri's Gramsci is a hero of the working classes, a man who repeatedly opted for death over betraying the cause. This grand image of Gramsci — published at the time when Togliatti's "New Party" (*partito nuovo*) was embarking on its "Italian Road to Socialism" (*via italiana al socialismo*)⁷ — was well suited to counterbalance the cult of Stalin.

The intellectuals who read *Società*, culled from Garuglieri's memoir three fundamental themes geared to conditioning reception of the thematic *Quaderni*. One regarded the need to set aside economic determinism and analyse events as elements of an

⁷ Lenin's metaphor regarding the necessity of translating the Russian experience into each party's national language was, Giasi avers, "assai cara a Gramsci" (2020: 927). See, to cite one corroborating example, Santhià: 113. See also Gramsci: 1975, Q7§2, 854 and Q11§46, 1468: "Nel 1921 trattando di questioni di organizzazione Vilici scrisse e disse (press'a poco) così: non abbiamo saputo 'tradurre' nelle lingue europee la nostra lingua".

“historical process in which all factors must be considered” [*processo storico nel quale tutti i fattori prendono parte*] (Garuglieri:697).

Garuglieri's second and third points foreshadow the reprise of the “battle of ideas” (*battaglie delle idee*) for cultural hegemony conducted by Togliatti on the pages of *L'Ordine nuovo*, now to be waged armed with the *Quaderni*, on two major fronts: one was the pope (that is, leader of the Roman Church), the other the lay pope, Benedetto Croce. Garuglieri's non-sectarian Gramsci had professed, during the inmates' *passeggi*, their walks in the prison courtyard, a materialism with which Catholics could dialogue⁸. This lesson in unity of workers' purpose resonates in both *La città futura*⁹, and in a prison letter dated 15 June 1931 to Gramsci's mother¹⁰ (Gramsci, 2020:595; and Francese:58-59, 62-63).

Gramsci held Croce, “an intellectual of high caliber” (*uomo di alto pensiero*), in esteem, writes Garuglieri (697). But Gramsci also stressed the need to supersede the work of “the last exponent of a liberal doctrine that defends a societal structure on its way to extinction” (*l'ultima espressione della dottrina liberale in difesa di una società che ormai volge al tramonto*) (697). Indeed, when Garuglieri told Gramsci there were those who thought him a follower of Croce, Gramsci responded, “they will see [...] exactly the sort of “Croceano” I am, if they read a

⁸ At Turi Gramsci would explain to fellow members of the communist collective that those who hope to arrive at a “concezione democratica della vita” (Garuglieri:694) must elevate their inner life, and “sentire la necessità interiore che il proprio livello sia raggiunto da tutti i nostri simili”. This is to be achieved by dialectically interacting with others while interrogating the “problema morale” shared by all humans: “il fine morale della vita” (694-95, 696). To that end, egoistic, individual salvation attained through the cult of Divine Justice must be set aside in favor of “il grande operare”, activism that benefits all. Eternal life is attained in the “memoria dei posteri [...] e la morte darà a chi bene opera fama e riposo” (696).

⁹ In *La città futura* Gramsci reprints a selection from Croce's *Religione e serenità*, and he returns to it several times in his notebooks. See, for example, Q10§6,1233.

¹⁰ This letter reads in part: “Se ci pensi bene tutte le quistioni dell'anima e dell'immortalità dell'anima e del paradiso e dell'inferno non sono poi in fondo che un modo di vedere questo semplice fatto: che ogni nostra azione si trasmette negli altri secondo il suo valore, di bene e di male, passa di padre in figlio, da una generazione all'altra in un movimento perpetuo. Poiché tutti i ricordi che noi abbiamo di te sono di bontà e di forza e tu hai dato le tue forze per tirarci su, ciò significa che tu sei già da allora, nell'unico paradiso reale che esista, che per una madre penso sia il cuore dei propri figli. Vedi cosa ti ho scritto? Del resto non devi pensare che io voglia offendere le tue opinioni religiose e poi penso che tu sei d'accordo con me più di quanto non pare.”

work I plan to publish on Croce” (*si accorgeranno [...] di quanto io sia crociano, se leggeranno un lavoro che darò alla luce, su Croce*) (697).

We have a draft of that “work”: Gramsci’s critique of Croce appeared in print less than a year later — in April 1947, a month after Churchill gave his “The Iron Curtain Speech” in Fulton, Missouri — in the first edition of the prison letters. This critique, of course, had been written on the prompting of Piero Sraffa¹¹.

In sum, as Dainotto points out, “while philologically arguable, Togliatti’s use of Gramsci’s ‘central idea’” as put forth in the letters and notebooks that came forth between 1947 and 1951 — and of Gramsci the man, I would add — “might have had some bearing on the growth of the PCI as the largest communist party in the whole of Western Europe” (3). In other words, if we are to speak, following Liguori, of a *Gramsci conteso*, it is in reference to the manner in which the historical figure of Gramsci was contextualized within the history of the Pci in the decade following WWII.

In any case, readers can only agree with Jameson when he argues that the incomplete nature — the “ambiguity” of the notebooks — “makes for the richness of [Gramsci’s] work and its urgent relevance for us today”. Our discussions of his legacy produce new problems, and “the dispute itself [...] is thereby of enormous value in its own right” (xii).

Indeed, if the purpose of books is to stimulate thought, then, as I hope my ‘gloss’ helps demonstrate, *Gramsci in the World* more than meets this primary task. *Gramsci in the World* is a noteworthy contribution to our understanding of Gramsci’s “für ewig” — as Gramsci used the term, not to connote eternity, statically existing outside time, but taking place in time, in perpetuity, in the historical materiality of individuals each of whom reads and acts in their own ‘here and now’ (Francesse:54) — contribution to our understanding of the world around us.*

¹¹ 2 May, 9 May, and 6 June 1932 (Gramsci, 2020:779-87, 798-801). The *Lettere dal carcere* convey another critique of Croce’s literary methodology: Gramsci’s commentary on the 10th Canto of the *Inferno* (Letter to Tatiana Schucht, 21 September 1931 in Gramsci, 2020:646-49).

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