

# THE GRAMSCI MONUMENT. NEWSPAPER



"A periodical, like a newspaper, a book, or any other medium of didactic expression that is aimed at a certain level of the reading or listening public, cannot satisfy everyone equally; not everyone will find it useful to the same degree. The important thing is that it serve as a stimulus for everyone; after all, no publication can replace the thinking mind."  
Antonio Gramsci  
(Prison Notebook 8)



[www.gramsci-monument.com](http://www.gramsci-monument.com)

July 24th, 2013 - Forest Houses, Bronx, NY

The Gramsci Monument-Newspaper is part of the "Gramsci Monument", an artwork by Thomas Hirschhorn, produced by Dia Art Foundation in co-operation with Erik Farmer and the Residents of Forest Houses

## THE PERFORATED MAP ELÉNA RIVERA



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Bronx, NY 10456

Wednesday

Chance of Storm



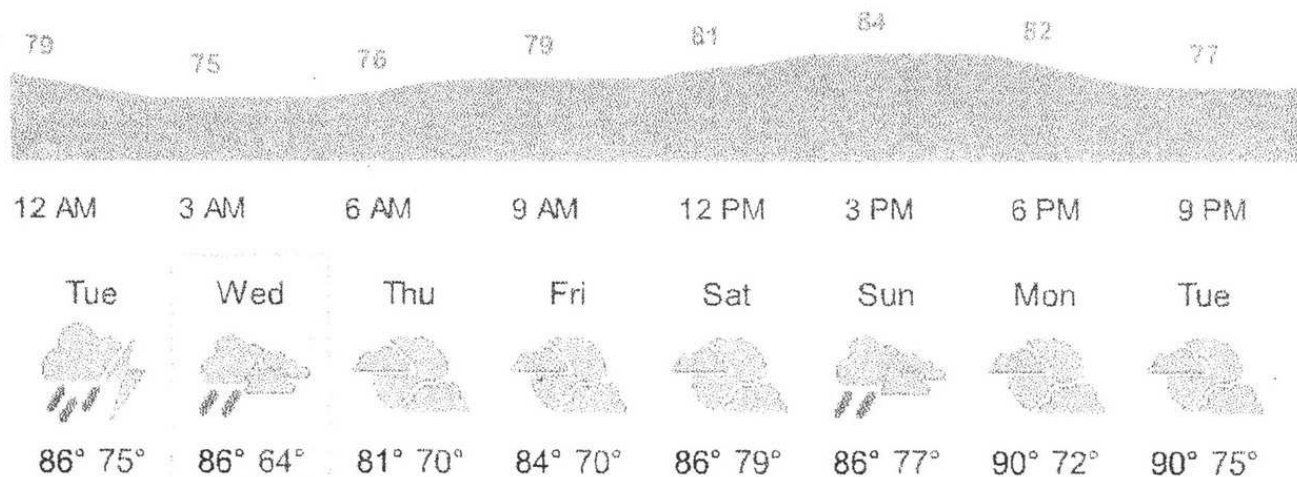
86 °F | °C

Precipitation: 20%

Humidity: 49%

Wind: 11 mph

Temperature	Precipitation	Wind
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## Disturbances in the Ocean of Air

1.

Across the border  
soft sadness feathers

A blue way  
an icy improvisation

2.

Prepare yourself before entering these impervious parts.

I took a stroll down the corridor and saw  
the Pacific hanging on a clothesline.

Did my thoughts choose this commotion?  
I wanted to compose under the overpass

so as not to hear the roar of the city.  
I took off my clothes and slid down in

a cold, moist repository—  
“and then who knows? Perhaps we will

be taken in hand by certain memories,  
as if by angels.”

3.

The full moon opens a hole overhead, hovers. I am cut open with an  
arrow of air. Disturbed by this I start to run. I am running around  
in circles of different sizes. Which one will lead to where I want to

go? My head is at the level of my mother's hand. I press my cheek against her soft smooth hand, her "every soft thing." Turbulent pleasure. She says, "A man will go home and tell his family how a little girl kissed his hand in the subway today." That was around the time when I saw the movie *Hara Kiri*. The wooden sword went in with much difficulty.

4.

Tender children  
clipped

mad for a home  
but only housebroken

5.

I wake from the dream while lunate pleasures adapt to stillness. I hear the sound of my body; it lies supine on the wet bed. I am wearing a wool coat (and nothing underneath). In the distance a truck/jeep is going toward the border of an immense ocean (disorder here). Water moves violently up and down, up and down. If this is real life what can one do? (I think.) If this is fiction what can happen? She is lying on the floor and levitates up and down, up and down, almost banging (terrifying). The way with childhood memories—how things are magnified. I was explaining how I was in a room where something was going on—how I could have taken it wrong, because when the insect crawled on my body it seemed like such a big thing. So in the room with Mom and this man, I could have easily, taken what had happened as a much bigger thing.

14

6.

Can one imagine: "Desire without the object of desire"?  
Without even an image? an extract? lava?

7.

Scarlet  
Scar

Imagine the peeling bark  
of a madrona

What is underneath?  
That huge intrusion

8.

A movie can also magnify a drip: "*You didn't see it.*" those words "*You didn't hear it.*" I was pushed from both sides, put in that in-between place, that bridge—the place between "tree" and "wood," "morning glory" and "dried flower," or "cow" and "a piece of beef wrapped in cellophane."

9.

and then you stumbled across  
I was at that age

where I heard everything  
a vessel for every hard word

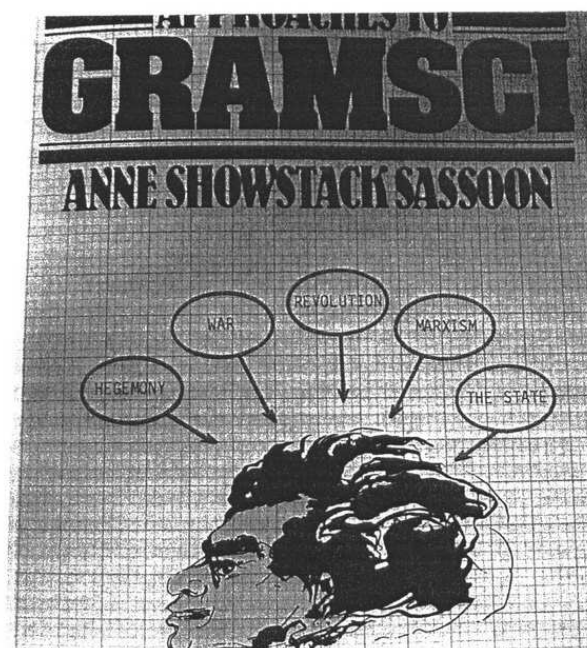
From mouth to air to ear  
The line is taut

Words are changed by refraction  
Can you rest where it is dark?

## Excerpt from Eric Hobsbawm's essay *Gramsci and Marxist Political Theory* published in Approaches to Gramsci (part 2)

That Gramsci conceives of the transformation to socialism as a continuum does not mean that he committed himself on principle to any particular strategy or forecast. He was not a 'euro-communist' *avant la lettre*, for his analysis was neither designed exclusively for developed 'western' countries - in the Italy of his time it could not be - nor is it exclusively applicable to them. It was natural that he opted for a strategy of protracted struggle - the 'war of position' - since the alternative of a new October was unrealistic. It is still unrealistic, including today in many countries of the Third World. But he did not commit himself to any particular outcome of this 'war of position'. It might lead directly, sooner or later, to a transition to socialism, or into another war of manoeuvre, or into some other strategic phase. What he insisted on was that the struggle could not *only* be one for power - whatever the nature of the campaigns and battles - and that the actual transfer of power, however it occurred, was merely one moment, though a crucial one, in the transformation. We need not defend him against the accusation of being a gradualist, or even of encouraging gradualism. He obviously did not believe, and neither do his followers, that the gradual accumulation of reforms and changes within capitalism, even structural reforms, will automatically and spontaneously transform capitalism into socialism. Indeed his theory of 'passive revolution' implies the opposite. Continuity of political transformation is not the same as continuity through evolution.

We must, in short, beware of a purely localized 'western' reading of Gramsci. Thus the struggle for hegemony *before* as



well as during the transition to power is not merely an aspect of the war of position characteristic of western countries, but of all revolutionary strategy. It is naturally of special importance in countries where the core of ruling class power lies in the willing subalternity of the masses rather than in coercion, as in the west; in countries in which the ruling class, having to choose between the alternatives of hegemony and force, the velvet glove and the iron fist, have chosen hegemony - though, as always, keeping coercion in reserve. However, as we may see even in countries in which there has been a revolutionary overthrow of the old rulers, revolution may run into trouble because it has failed to develop a hegemonic force; as in Portugal. The revolution must still win enough consent and support from strata not yet detached from the old regimes. The basic problem of hegemony is not *how* revolutionaries come to power, though this is very important. It is how they come to be accepted, not only as the politically existing or irreplaceable rulers, but as guides and leaders. There are two aspects to this: how revolutionaries win assent and whether they are ready to exercise leadership.

There is also the concrete political situation, both national and international, which may make their task easier or more difficult. The Polish communists in 1945 established their power and were ready to exercise hegemony, but were probably not then accepted as a hegemonic force in that country. The German social-democrats in 1918 would probably have been accepted as a hegemonic force, but refused to accept that responsibility. Therein lies the tragedy of the German revolution. The Czech communists might have been accepted as a hegemonic force both in 1945 and in 1968, and were ready to play this role, but were not allowed to do so. The struggle for hegemony before, during and after the transition remains crucial in all circumstances. Power alone, even revolutionary power, cannot replace it.

Similarly, continuity is not only a problem affecting strategy in bourgeois-democratic countries. It is one of Gramsci's greatest merits to have discussed the dialectic of continuity and revolution; to have raised the question - seldom asked by Marxists - what exactly in the past is transformed by a revolution and what is conserved, and why, and how; of the way in which revolution is both the negation and the fulfilment of a

people's past history. For cohesion and continuity belong to human societies. These are more than mechanisms of economic domination and political power. As Engels knew, they have a certain cohesion even when riven by class antagonisms - and indeed these very antagonisms take their concrete form from them, and develop within the framework of specific countries and peoples. It is the identification of the society, the nation, the people past and present, with the state and civil society of the rulers which is the strongest element in their hegemony. Conversely, the struggle for hegemony, for victory in a revolution, and for the defence of a victorious revolution is so often, concretely, the struggle to represent and lead the entire people and nation - and in so doing to isolate the minority of exploiters and oppressors. That is what the communist movement tried to do during the period of anti-fascist unity, popular front and resistance; but let us not forget that even the Paris Commune was a rising of French patriotism - revolutionary patriotism. Gramsci recognized the enormous practical as well as theoretical significance of this relation between class and society, people or nation, between historic past, present and future more clearly than even Marx did, and we now know how important it is. And it is precisely because we can no longer rely on the simple growth of the manual proletariat until it becomes the overwhelming numerical majority of the nation, that the task of establishing the working-class movement as the leader of the nation is today more significant than ever.

Let me now turn, more briefly, to the other aspect of Gramsci's political theory: the nature of socialism. Like all Marxists, Gramsci was suspicious of speculations about the socialist future or utopian visions, and he was right. The weakness of utopianism, which is once again in fashion, lies not only in its a-historicity, but in its lack of organic contact with the social reality it wishes to transform. One of its most persistently surviving strands demonstrates this: architecture. Revolutionary architecture has always been given to designing, sometimes even to constructing, ideal cities and ideal environments for living. They have almost always - I am thinking of Le Corbusier but not only of him - either proved unrealizable or unattractive to those who are supposed to live in them. Indeed, architectural experience is one of the strongest arguments for

Gramsci's call for organic intellectuals. Nevertheless, from the 1920s on the discussion of socialist society was no longer a matter of speculation or utopian plans. And, as Gramsci saw with great clarity, its crux was the analysis of the politics and political organization of socialist states.

Here the socialist tradition was particularly weak. Lenin himself recognized the need for systematic thought on this subject on the eve of the October Revolution, but as we know he had not time to finish his *State and Revolution*. We cannot assume that it would have faced the actual problems which emerged in the course of the history of Soviet Russia, for the Marxist tradition of political thought had two major weaknesses. In spite of Marx's and Engels' more sophisticated approach, it tended to simplify the theory of the state into one of class power, the reversal of class power in the dictatorship of the proletariat, a withering away of the state, and a disappearance of politics. Yet it has become increasingly evident that communists must consider the political organization of socialist regimes, the process of political decision-making, and the relations between government and people in them. Indeed the necessity of this could be seen as early as 1921 when it became evident that even inner-party democracy in Soviet Russia was seriously undermined.

The systematic neglect of politics in socialist societies contrasts with the experience of bourgeois revolutions and bourgeois societies. For historical reasons which need not concern us here, such societies in the nineteenth century always paid primary attention to their political institutions and mechanisms. That is why political arrangements have become a powerful means for reinforcing bourgeois hegemony. Slogans such as 'the defence of the Republic', 'the defence of democracy' or the defence of civil rights and freedoms bind rulers and ruled together. This is no doubt for the primary benefit of the rulers, but this does not mean that they are irrelevant to the ruled. They are thus far more than mere cosmetics on the face of coercion, more even than simple political trickery.

Socialist societies, also for comprehensible historical reasons, have concentrated on other tasks - notably on planning economic growth. But they have hitherto also systematically neglected to pay attention to their actual institutional, political and legal processes; except perhaps in

How and why was such an unsatisfactory situation allowed to develop in socialist countries? Because the traditional Marxist conception of socialism and the transition to socialism lacked that systematic political conception which is at the heart of Gramsci's approach. Because it conceived the development of a new society and new human relations as a natural by-product of socialization in the economic sense, *i.e.* the socially owned and planned economy which is its necessary basis and framework, and not as *politics* which 'is permanent action and gives birth to permanent organizations precisely insofar as it is identical with economics'. (Q 1022) Gramsci does not deny the importance of the socialist economy, and certainly not the necessity to maximize production, but he denies the possibility of isolating production as a technical or economic problem. Consequently he also avoids the opposite error, found not only in Maoism, which counterposes economic and non-economic behaviour and incentives, or in its extreme form 'being red' and 'being expert'. For, as he recognizes in his critique of Bukharin, a voluntarist idealism is the other face of an economic determinism.

Secondly, the traditional Marxist conception, including the Bolshevik, assumed as solved the fundamental question to which Gramsci devoted so much attention: that of the relation between leaders, party and masses. What we criticize in so many of the socialist states derives precisely from the identification of leaders with party and masses. This problem to which Gramsci returns time and again is that of the genuine formation of a 'collective will' based on 'active and conscious co-participation' on 'socialization' in the sociological (or rather, in Gramsci's terms, political) sense of the word. But this is not only, as Badaloni puts it 'the formation of habits of the collective political man which themselves became automatic, making superfluous apparatuses which would impose them from the outside.'<sup>2</sup> It is also the school of a new consciousness, a fuller humanity for the socialist future. I cannot claim that Gramsci solved, or even completely confronted the difficulties he recognized. His observations on democratic centralism or on bureaucracy show not so much pessimism of the intelligence as optimism of will. Nevertheless, unlike other critics of 'substitutism' on the left, Gramsci knows that the problem is political even in the narrower sense of the term, for it deals

multi-national states, those concerned with the relations between their national components. I shall not discuss the historic reasons for this omission, but the result is that these processes have been left to operate informally and in obscurity. The gap between official laws and constitutions and political realities always exists, but in socialist states up to the present it has been particularly wide. This applies even to the constitutions and statutes which were actually supposed to be effective, such as those of the state parties. For long periods these were systematically broken, *e.g.* by the failure to call regular congresses and other assemblies. It is now clear that this neglect to consider the political dimension of socialist states creates critical problems for them and jeopardizes the future of socialism. How can we expect to transform human life, to create a socialist *society*, as distinct from a socially owned and managed economy, when the mass of the people, or even the mass of the state party, are excluded from the political processes? Something is plainly very wrong when, as in China, major political decisions, affecting the future of the country, appear suddenly and in a manner reminiscent of palace intrigues in imperial Rome and Byzantium. How can any socialist be satisfied even by primitive, dangerous and inefficient mechanisms of politics such as now appear to evolve here and there, in which absolutism is mitigated by periodic concessions to technically illegal mass strikes? We now recognize that there are politics in a socialist society and that it must provide a place, even an institutional form, for them.

This, surely, lies behind our reevaluation of political democracy. If I were to criticize the present discussions on 'eurocommunism' it would be for seeing this problem in eurocentric terms, *i.e.* specifically in terms of countries which possess certain political institutions and practices. It also exists in countries lacking these institutions. Democracy requires institutions, formal or informal, everywhere - not necessarily those of western constitutions and pluri-party institutions, though in countries such as Italy and Britain these will be the general framework and the basis for further democratic development. But we should beware of a tendency to divide the world into two parts, one in which political democracy is indispensable, the other in which it is not. Democracy is indivisible. In one form or another there can be no socialism without it.

with the relation between leaders and followers, between administrators and the administered, between organizations and the unorganized.

It is the active and conscious participation of the people which is the key to social transformation. I think Gramsci learned this from his experience in a genuine mass movement of the proletariat, that of the Turin workers. I return to this point, since revolutionary Marxists with such experience were rare in his time. Those who had this experience before 1917 were mainly reformists, and did not pay adequate attention to the elements in the mass movements of labour which were not merely instrumental and corporative, but which brought about a new consciousness, a transformation in human potential. In these movements men and women could be seen to make and remake themselves, and in doing so to begin the process of remaking humanity under socialism. That is why Gramsci's exploration of the way to socialism and of socialism itself is largely through a repeated, elaborate and microscopic analysis of the nature, structure and development of the political movement, the party. That is why he traces with such care the emergence of a permanent and organized movement - as distinct from a rapid 'explosion' - down to its smallest capillary and molecular elements. For the 'Modern Prince' the party 'is at one and the same time the organizer and the active, operative expression' of a 'national-popular collective will' and 'the proclaimer and organizer of an intellectual and moral reform, which also means creating the terrain for a subsequent development . . . towards the realization of a superior, total form of modern civilization'. (SPN 132-3)

Let me conclude with yet another quotation from Gramsci. Criticizing the distortion of Marx's tradition by Bukharin, he observed, correctly: 'The philosophy of praxis was born in the form of aphorisms and practical criteria for the purely accidental reason that its founder dedicated his intellectual forces to other problems, particularly economic (which he treated in systematic form); but in these practical criteria and these aphorisms is implicit an entire conception of the world, an entire philosophy.' (Q 426) It is this which Gramsci attempted to make explicit and to develop in the form of a theory of politics. He knew that it required making explicit and developing - even beyond Marx and Lenin. We are fortunate enough

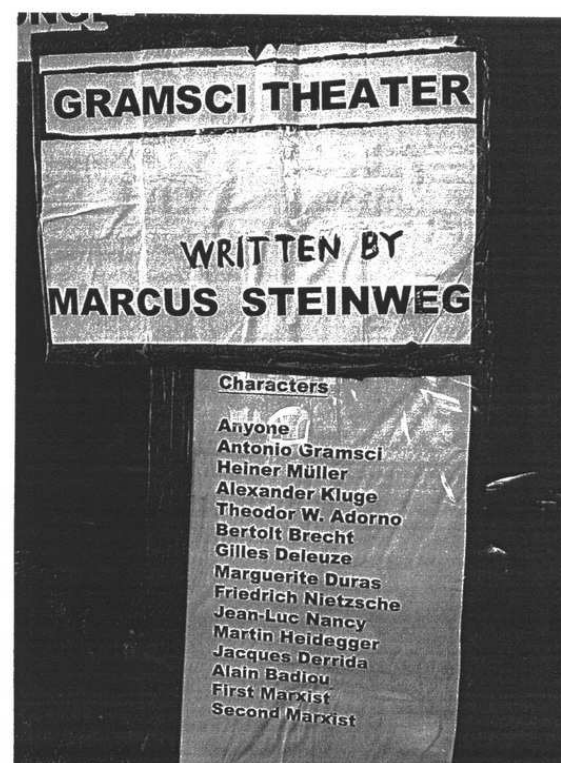
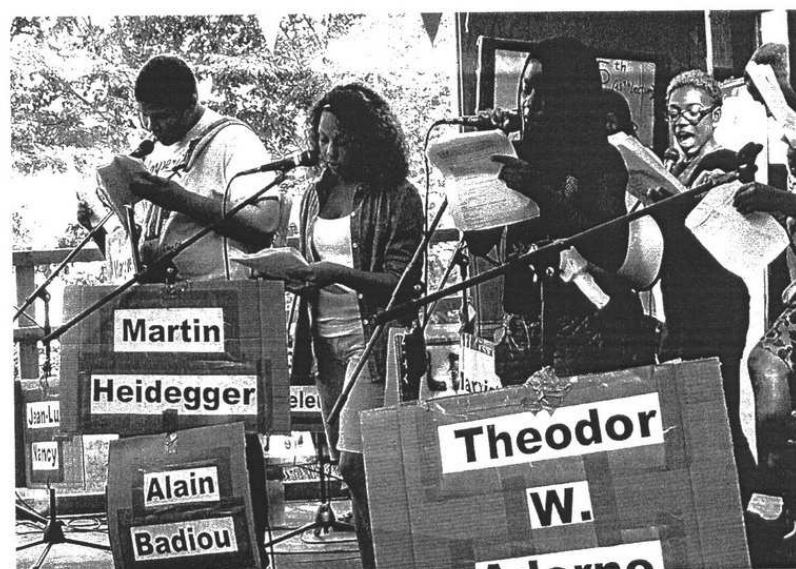
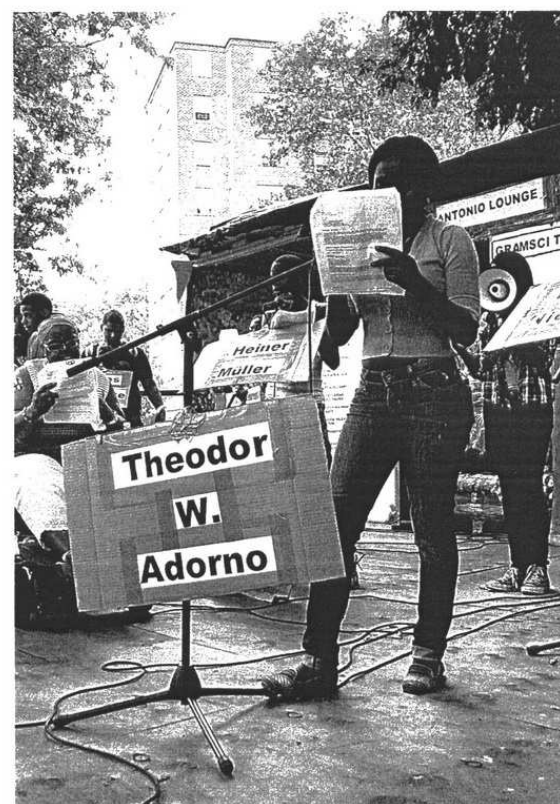
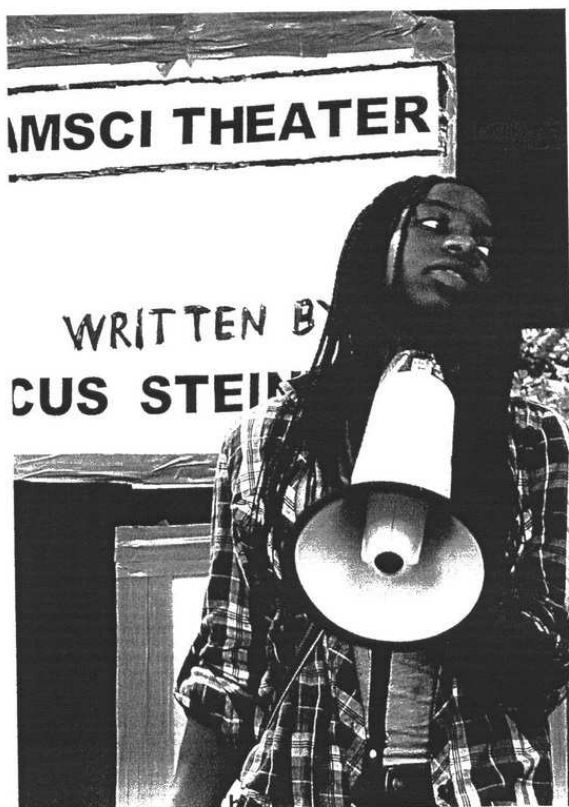
to be able to continue his labours. I hope we shall do so with as much independence as he did.

## NOTES

1 See her article, 'State, transition and passive revolution' in *Gramsci*

# A TEXT BY THOMAS HIRSCHHORN

## CONCERNING GRAMSCI THEATER



PROJECTS

THÉÂTRE PRÉCAIRE FOR "CE QUI VIENT"<sup>16</sup>

For "Ce qui vient" I want to make *Théâtre Précaire*. *Théâtre Précaire* will be both the title of my work and what I want to do. *Théâtre Précaire* is the form of this work, an exhibition platform with numerous elements, and at the same time a theater platform on which, from time to time, *Théâtre Précaire* is performed.

"Ce qui vient" [What comes]: The general title of the event in Rennes in 2010 finds its meaning in my proposal. It's the situation of the theater stage before a play is performed, with elements that indicate "information" about what will happen. It's the situation of imagining something to come, "the dream and the projection" of something to come. "Ce qui vient" furthermore makes sense because it is what will come. It is a new work—never made, never outlined—conceiving of an exhibition as a theater platform. "Ce qui vient" will be my first work with *Théâtre Précaire* that is not a theater but a play performed inside and integrated into one of my works. So, "Ce qui vient" also includes my own work. "Ce qui vient" can also be what has happened and what will happen again.

**Precarious:** With *Théâtre Précaire* I want to make a formal manifesto—give a form—to the precarious. And to what's wonderful, important, the grace, the treasure, of the precarious: the precious value, the importance of the instant, the importance of the moment, the awakened presence of someone who dares to confront the precarious and its fragile, cruel, wild but free force. For, what is precarious is free. I want *Théâtre Précaire* to be a manifesto for freedom, instants of precarious liberty that supersede—through their fragility, the fragility of making things, the difficulty of making things—the term "precarious," which is only used demagogically, negatively, today. To me, "precarious" is a positive term, for it demands that I be awake, that I be present, attentive, open; it demands that I be active. That is why I absolutely insist on the "precarious" as opposed to the "ephemeral," the biological logic of which is always death. The logic of the precarious, on the contrary, is the precious value of the fragility of life and also its universality; and precariousness is the very form of the

unique life, of the unique world in which we all live. Our only, unique, and indivisible world.

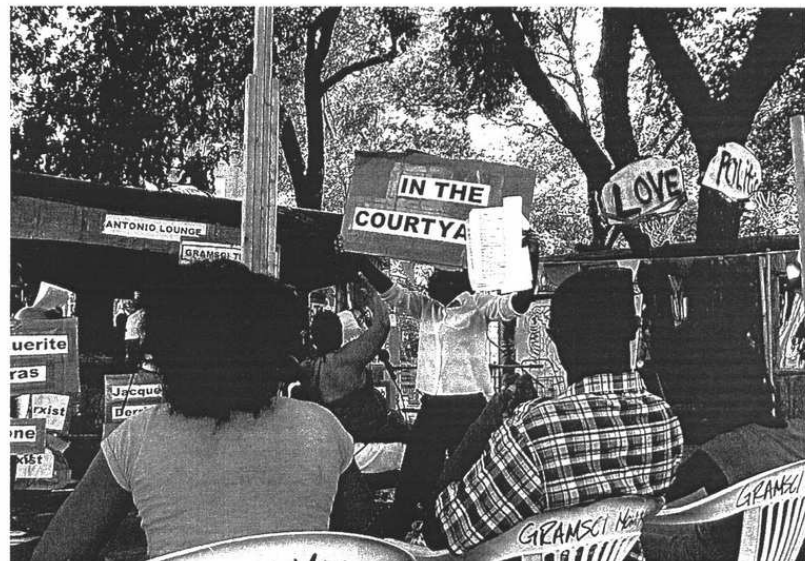
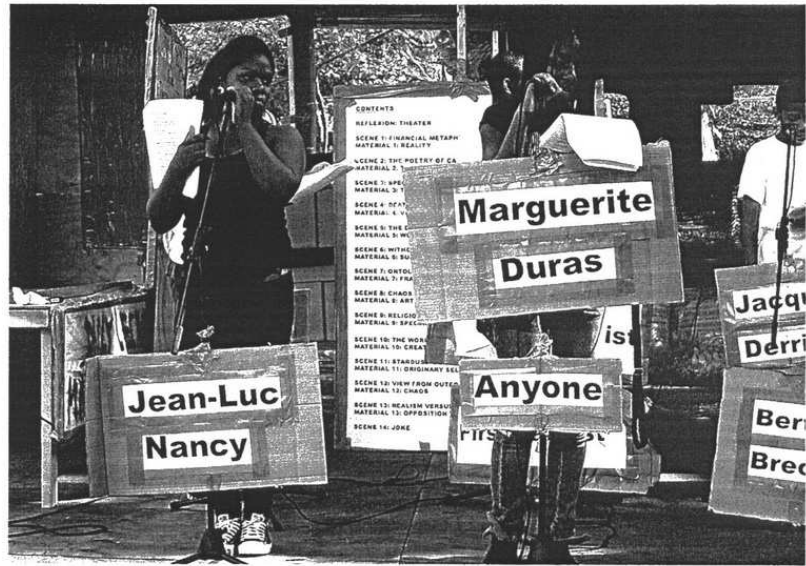
Theater: I don't want to do theater. What I want is to use a dimension that encompasses theater—the dimension of the presence of a human being. I want to use this presence so as to integrate text in my work. This involves extending the field of collage. The actor in *Théâtre Précaire* will—by reading or declaring the text—integrate it in my work. The text is, moreover, already integrated into my work on supports and in various elements. There is another dimension of the theater that I want to use in *Théâtre Précaire*. It is the instant in which the play is performed—that precise moment in which the action is crystallized. I want to repeat those moments during the exhibition. They are events within an event, which is the exhibition itself. These events are not essential for the work, but these events are “becoming” the event; it is neither a finality nor a “foreshadowing.” The moments, the instants of theater in the *Théâtre Précaire* are instants in which ce qui vient becomes.

Concretely: exhibition, theater, the play's text, the site of the exhibition. I want to make an exhibition with several elements, with the title *Théâtre Précaire*. In this exhibition I want to give form to what is important in the term “precarious” as I've described above. In the exhibition there will be a text and extracts of the text *Théâtre Précaire* that Manuel Joseph will write. In fact, Manuel Joseph will write a play titled *Théâtre Précaire*. This play will be performed once every week in the exhibition. I asked Manuel Joseph to write a play about thirty-minutes long, for between six to nine actors/actresses. The text and extracts of this text will be integrated into the exhibition. The site of the exhibition must be around two- to three-hundred square meters. It must be a place in a residential neighborhood because I intend to ask the residents nearest to the site of the exhibition *Théâtre Précaire* to be the actors and actresses in *Théâtre Précaire*. So it is the site of the exhibition that is defined by the residents, its actors/actresses, its spectators too. It is the very site that is becoming, that becomes. That's why it makes sense to do this event in a residential neigh-

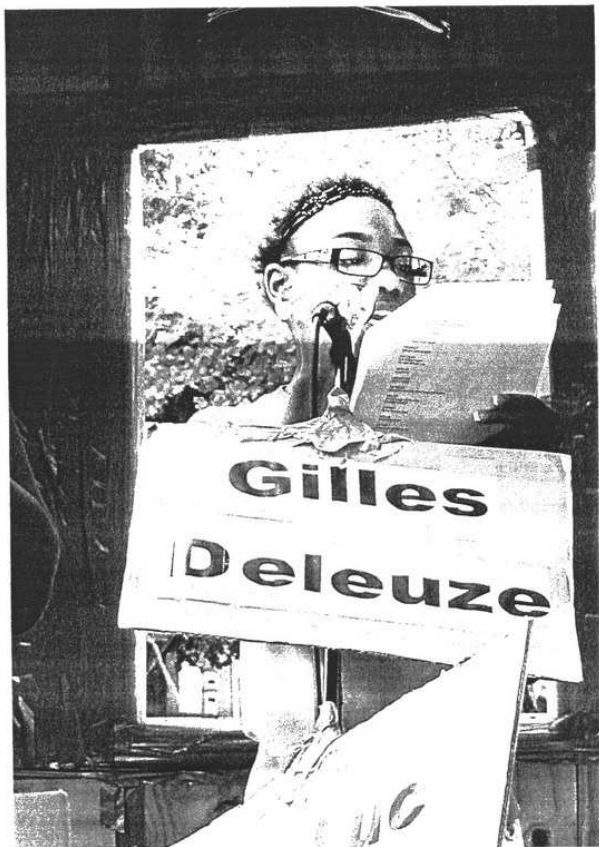
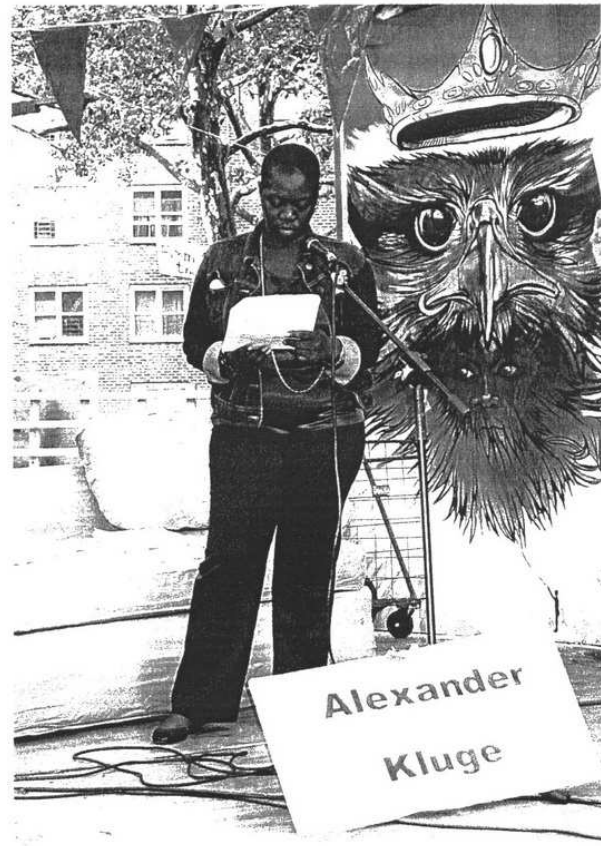
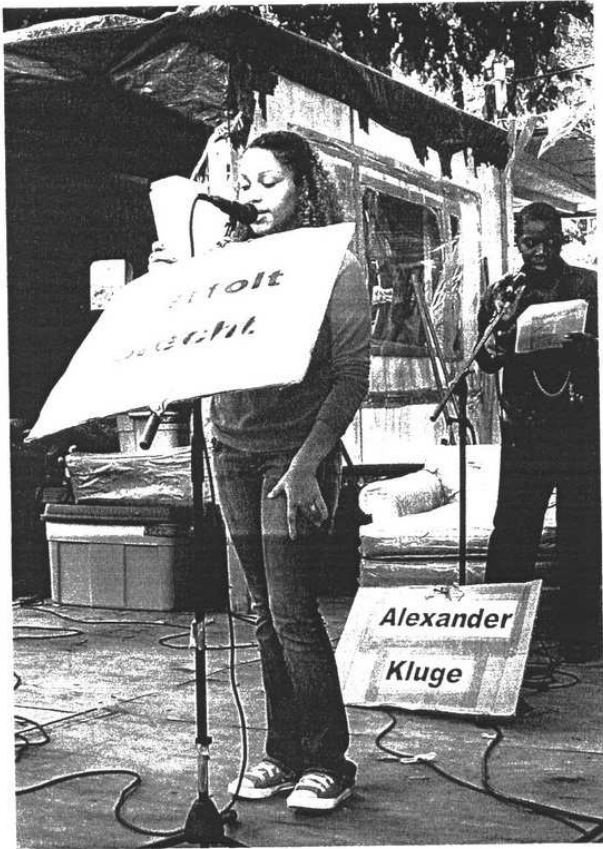
borhood in Rennes—a neighborhood like any other, a place like any other, a universal place.

What I want is for there to be a dynamic between the Subjecters (the mannequins—one of the elements of the *Théâtre Précaire* exhibition), the visitors (or spectators) of *Théâtre Précaire*, and the actors/actresses of *Théâtre Précaire* when it is performed. I want there to be for a very brief instant—precarious—the doubt, question, dream, the project that enters one's head because of the questions that are posed: Who is actor? Who is spectator? Who is playing a role? Who is someone? These questions interest me not because of the sensation of not knowing who is who, but because they interrogate our consciousness of our own reality and of the reality of others.

Aubervilliers, November 2009  
[Translated from French by Molly Stevens]







# A DAILY LECTURE BY MARCUS STEINWEG

**24th Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 24th July 2013**

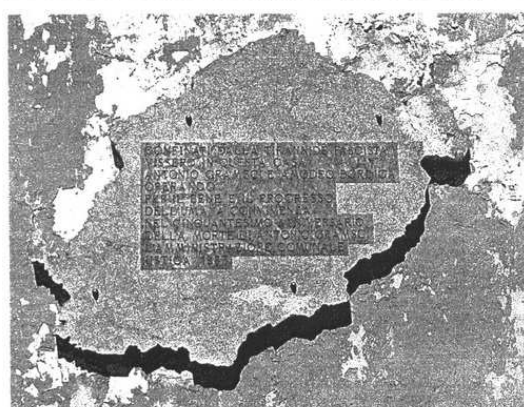
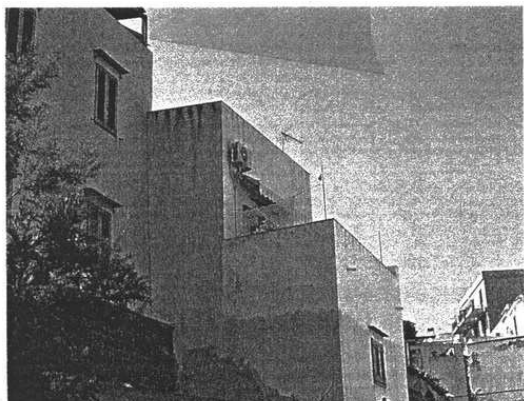
**THE SYMBOLIC & THE IMAGINARY**

**Marcus Steinweg**

*I began with the Imaginary,  
I then had to chew on the story of the Symbolic...  
and I finished by putting out for you this famous Real.*  
JACQUES LACAN

1. The concept of the human being remains inadequately grasped as long as it only delimits what is graspable in human being — reason, morality —, instead of taking account of its ungraspability, it is an opening toward a lack of focus which carries thinking to the limit of what is thinkable.
2. The *subject* describes a void which is the abyss of this lack of focus.
3. What "we call human," says Lacan in the *Ethics Seminar* would be, "that which suffers under the significant from the real".
4. What is human is not covered by the order of the significant, by the logic of reason. It resists its disappearance in symbolic space and the imaginary.
5. Instead of assimilating itself to the patterns of the humanisms of facts, the humanity of the human being persists outside the human being as a social, political, cultural figure.
6. I call all humanisms of facts anthropo-ontologies which define the concept of human being by excluding the dimension of the 'non-human' and the 'inhuman'.
7. This dimension outlines the limit of the space of facts including its entire definitional practices of reducing the human being to its 'self' (its 'humanity', its 'idea') which tried to adapt the human being without resistance to this space.
8. The human being becomes a fact in the world of facts instead of denoting its limit and perforation, its *excess*.
9. Truth is the name for breaking into the systems, institutions and archives of truth which look after the administration of factual truths, of *knowledge*.
10. Truth is an *excess*.
11. It surpasses and transgresses naked knowledge and marks the point of the most extreme restlessness.
12. The touching of truth performed by the desire for truth on the part of art and the philosophy is the restless encroaching upon what cannot be encroached upon.
13. Philosophy and art exist only as this encroachment.
14. This encroachment demands of the subject of art or the subject of philosophy that it traverse the space of the symbolic and the imaginary which is the space of *doxa*, of mere opinion and of the factual certainties established by it, and for the moment in which the work is posited — the art work or the philosophical assertion — that it suspend this space.

# DID YOU KNOW ANTONIO GRAMSCI?



On December 7, 1926, Gramsci arrived in Ustica. During his stay on the island he lived with five other political prisoners: Bordiga, two other communists from Aquila, and two former socialist deputies, Paolo Conca and Giuseppe Sbaraglini. He helped organize a school among the prisoners – Bordiga was in charge of science while Gramsci taught history and studies German. Gramsci was able to obtain books thanks to an open account established for him at a Milan bookshop by his friend, the economist Piero Sraffa who at that time was a professor of economics at the University of Cagliari.

On 20 January, 1927, Gramsci left Ustica for the prison in Milan. The journey lasted 19 days, with stops in the prisons of Palermo, Naples, Cajanello, Isernia, Sulmona, Castellammare Adriatico, Ancona, and Bologna.

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Conca, from Milan. Among the Unitarian Socialists there is Attorney Sbaraglini from Perugia and a magnificent Molinellese peasant type. There is a Republican from Massa and six Anarchists who have a complicated moral makeup; the rest are Communists, that is, the great majority. There are three or four who are illiterate, or almost; the education of the others varies, but the general average is very low. All of them, however, are very glad to have the school, which they attend with great assiduity and diligence.

Our financial situation is still good: they give us, the political prisoners, ten lire a day; the *mazzetta* of the common detainees at Ustica amounts to four lire a day, on the other islands, when there are possibilities for work, it is sometimes even less. We have the choice of living in private homes; six of us (I myself, Bordiga, Conca, Sbaraglini, and two others) live in a small house that costs us ninety lire a month each, all services included. We're planning to organize a collective mess, so as to be able to take care of our needs for board and lodging with the daily ten lire of the *mazzetta*. Of course the food is not at all varied: for example it is impossible to find eggs, and this annoys me a lot because I cannot eat the abundant meals based on fish and seafood. The regime by which we must abide consists in: reporting home by eight o'clock in the evening and not leaving the house before dawn; not going beyond the town limits without a special permit. The island is small (eight sq. km.) with a population of 1,600 inhabitants, approximately 600 of them common criminals: there is just one cluster of houses. The climate is excellent, it has not yet been cold; nevertheless the mail arrives irregularly because the steamer that makes the trip four times a week is not always able to overcome the wind and high seas. In order to reach Ustica we had to make four attempts to cross and this tired me more than the entire transfer from Rome to Palermo. But I've kept in excellent health, to the great surprise of my friends, who have suffered more than I: can you imagine, I've even gained a bit of weight. Recently, however, due to accumulated fatigue and the food that does not suit my habits and my constitution, I feel very weak and worn out. But I hope to adjust rapidly and get rid of all my past ailments once and for all.

I will write to you often if it pleases you, to give myself the illusion of still being in your enjoyable company. I greet you affectionately.

Antonio

December 21, 1926

Dearest friend,<sup>1</sup>

I've received your letter of the thirteenth; however I've not yet received the books you listed. I thank you most cordially for your offer; I've already written to the Sperling bookshop and given them quite a large order, certain that I wasn't being indiscreet, for I know your kindness. Here in Ustica there are thirty of us political prisoners: we've already initiated a series of elementary and general culture courses for the various groups of prisoners; we will also begin a series of lectures. Bordiga directs the scientific section, while I have the historical-literary section; this is the reason I've ordered certain particular books. Let's hope that in this way we will spend our time without becoming completely brutalized and at the same time help our friends, who represent the entire gamut of political parties and cultural backgrounds. Here with me there are Schiavello and Fiorio<sup>2</sup> from Milan; among the Maximalists there is also the former deputy,

January 15, 1927

My dearest Julca,

Let me describe for you my daily life in its most essential outlines, so that you may follow it and every so often grasp some feature of it. As you know, since Tania must have already written this to you, I live together with four other friends, among them Engineer Bordiga from Naples, whose name you perhaps know. The other three are: a reformist former deputy from Perugia, Attorney Sbaraglini, and two friends from the Abruzzo. Now I sleep in a room with one of these Abruzzesi, Piero Ventura; before this three of us slept here, because with us we had Paolo Conca, the Maximalist former deputy from Verona, a very engaging type of factory worker, who at night would not let us sleep because he was obsessed by thoughts of his wife, would sigh and pant, then he would turn on the light and smoke certain pestilential cigars. At last his wife has also come to Ustica to join her husband and Conca has left us, so there are five of us distributed in three bedrooms (this is the entire house): we have at our disposal a very beautiful terrace from which by day we admire the boundless sea and at night the magnificent sky. The sky free from all urban haziness allows us to enjoy these marvels with the greatest intensity. The colors of the sea's water and of the firmament are truly extraordinary in their variety and depth: I've seen unique rainbows.

In the morning, I'm usually the first to get up; Engineer Bordiga declares that at that moment my step has special characteristics, it is the step of a man who has not yet had his coffee and is waiting for it with a certain impatience. I myself make the coffee, when I've been unable to convince Bordiga to make it, in view of his outstanding culinary aptitude. Then our life begins: we go to school, as teachers or as pupils. If it is a mail day we go to the shore and anxiously wait for the arrival of the steamer: if because of bad weather the mail does not arrive, our day is ruined, for a sort of melancholy spreads over all our faces. At noon we eat: I participate in a communal mess and in fact today it is my turn to act as waiter and dishwasher: I don't know yet if I have to peel potatoes, prepare the lentils, or wash the salad before serving at table. My debut is looked forward to with great curiosity: several friends wanted to take my place for this service, but

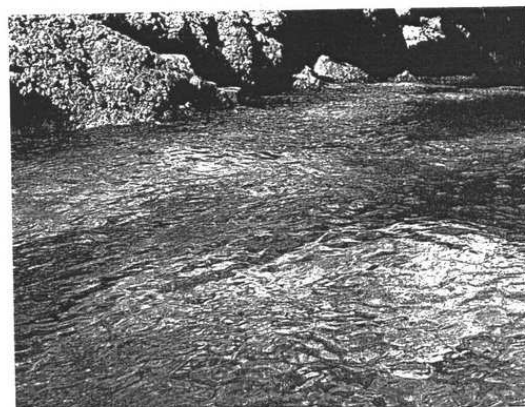
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I've been adamant in wanting to do my share. In the evening we must be back in our domiciles by eight. Sometimes there are inspections to ascertain whether we are really in the house. Unlike the common convicts we are not locked in from the outside. Another difference consists in the fact that we are free to stay out until eight and not just until five; we could obtain special evening permits if we needed them for anything. At home in the evening we play cards. I'd never played cards until now; Bordiga assures me that I have the stuff to become a good player at *scopone scientifico*.<sup>1</sup> I've already been able to rebuild something of a small library and I can read and study. The books and newspapers that arrive here for me have already brought about a certain struggle between me and Bordiga, who wrongly maintains that I'm very untidy; behind my back he creates disorder among my things, with the excuse of symmetry and architecture: but in reality I can no longer find anything in the symmetrical mess that he arranges for me.

Dearest Julca: write to me at length about your life and the life of the children. As soon as possible, send me Giuliano's photograph. Has Delka made much more progress? Did his hair grow back? Did his illness have any aftereffects? Write me a lot about Giuliano. And has Genia recovered? I give you a very tight embrace.

Antonio.

1. An Italian card game similar to cassino, in which each player wins cards by matching or combining cards exposed on the table with cards from his hand.



Recent photos of the house where Gramsci lived and the seaside of Ustica by artist Pedro A.H. Paixão, July 22, 2013.

# AMBASSADOR'S CORNER NOTE #18-19

## BY YASMIL RAYMOND

Note 18 - 19

(continues from note 17) For instance, Dr. Lucio Oliver, the editor of *Gramsci: The Other Politics* and a member of the faculty in the Department of Political Sciences at the UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), has been recapitulating and reformulating a "monument" to Gramsci for the past thirty-five years. He recounted his first encounter with Gramsci's writing as a student, through Palmiro Togliatti's book and later on with the first Spanish translation of *The Prison Notebooks* by Dora Kanoussi. Understanding the implication of Gramsci's analytical thinking and conceptualization of the State, Dr. Oliver, together with his peers he fought to have political theory integrated to the curriculum and in particular, Gramsci's work. More recently he has been involved in a three-year project focused, intensively and extensively on the study of Gramsci's writing and his legacy in contemporary Latin American politics working with a long list of scholars and professors including: Fernando Martinez Heredia (Cuba), Guido Liguori (Università di Calabria, Italia), José Aricó Horacio Crespo (UAEM), Jorge Luis Acanda (Universidad de la Habana, Cuba), Elvira Concheiro (UNAM, Mexico City), Massimo Modonesi (UNAM, Mexico City), Alba Carvalho (Universidade Federal Do Ceará, Brazil), Adam Morton (University of Nottingham, Great Britain), Francesca Savoia (University of Pittsburg), Mabel Thwaites Rey (Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina), Jaime Massardo (Universidad de Valpariso, Chile), Luis Tapia (Universidad Nacional de Comahue), and Jorge Gantiva Silva (Colombia), among others. The international dimension of the names that Dr. Oliver shared with us during our conversation speak to the currency and resilience of Gramsci's theoretical position which is able to take root and adapt to different contexts. On the other hand, the list of "intellectuals" also reveals a hopeful promise, that is, the deep longing for tangible change in Latin America. It is no surprise that Stanley Aronowitz mentioned the Southern hemisphere as the only conglomerate of nations with the conditions of possibility to organize forms of social thought and achieve what Gramsci called a "philosophy of praxis."



The Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) (National Autonomous University of Mexico) is a university in Mexico. UNAM was founded on 22 September 1910 by Justo Sierra as a liberal alternative to the Roman Catholic-sponsored Royal and Pontifical University of Mexico (founded on 21 September 1551 by a royal decree of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and brought to a definitive closure in 1867 by the liberals). UNAM's autonomy, granted in 1929, has given it the freedom to define its own curriculum and manage its own budget without interference from the government. This has had a profound effect on academic life at the university, which some claim boosts academic freedom and independence.

Number of students enrolled in 2011-12 academic year at the UNAM: **324,413 students**

## RESIDENT OF THE DAY



MS. MYRNA ALVAREZ