

# 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 28th, 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



**Antonio Gramsci**  
**PRISON NOTEBOOKS**

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Bronx, NY 10456

Sunday

Chance of Storm

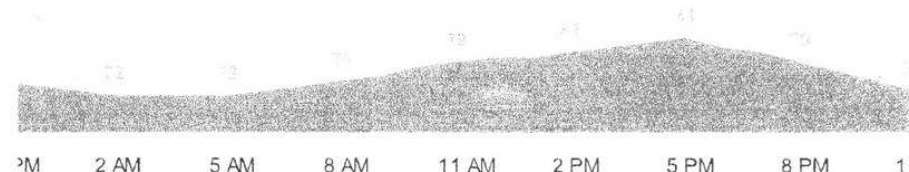
 **84** °F | °C

Precipitation: 60%

Humidity: 67%

Wind: 11 mph

Temperature    Precipitation    Wind



Day	Temp (°F)	Temp (°C)
Sat	82°	72°
Sun	84°	73°
Mon	82°	70°
Tue	84°	70°
Wed	86°	75°
Thu	84°	75°
Fri	91°	75°
Sat	90°	75°

## Gramsci's Correspondents and Members of the Gramsci and Schucht Families

Names marked with an asterisk are the correspondents. Unless otherwise indicated, the given names and nicknames of persons mentioned in the letters refer to correspondents and to members of the Gramsci and Schucht families.

### The Gramsci family

*Francesco ("Cicillo") Gramsci* (1860–1937), Antonio's father, a native of Gaeta, of Albanian descent. He was employed in the Office of Land Registry in the town of Sòrgono. From 1898 to 1904, he spent close to five years in prison on charges of misuse of public funds. Two of his brothers, *Alfredo* and *Cesare*, are mentioned in Gramsci's letter of August 22, 1932, to his mother.

*Giuseppina ("Peppina") Marcias Gramsci\** (1861–1932), Gramsci's mother, a native Sardinian. She raised her seven children with only sporadic help from her husband, who worked irregularly after his release from prison. The daughter of a local tax collector, she was better educated and more culturally sophisticated than most women belonging to the petit bourgeois class of the island.

The following are Antonio Gramsci's six siblings.

*Gennaro ("Nannaro") Gramsci* (1884–1965), the eldest of the Gramsci children. He spent three years on the Austro-Italian front in World War I, was on the administrative staff of the newspaper *L'Ordine Nuovo* in 1921–1922, and fought with an anarchist unit in defense of

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*Asja ("Anna") Schucht* (1893–?), a violinist who married *Theodore Zabel*, a professional pianist with whom she had a son *Valja ("Volia")*. *Viktor ("Vittorio") Schucht* (1899–?), also born in Geneva.

### Antonio and Giulia Gramsci's Children

*Delio ("Delka") Gramsci\** (1924–1981), Gramsci's eldest son, was a career officer in the Soviet Navy and taught mathematics at the Naval Academy in Leningrad.

*Giuliano ("Julik") Gramsci\** (1926–) is a professional violinist and clarinetist, now retired. He resides in Moscow with his wife, *Zina*, a pianist, with whom he has two children, *Olga* and *Antonio*. In the 1930s *Delio* and *Giuliano* were given Italian lessons by the mother of a family friend, *Lisa Misiano*, who later became a professor at the University of Moscow and edited the first Russian-language editions of the *Prison Notebooks* and the *Letters from Prison*. But for *Giuliano*, who never saw his father, it was his mother's Italian violin even more than the Italian language that "represented the most important link with the culture of that far-off country, a link that will become stronger precisely through music." (*Lettere ai familiari*, p. xi)

### Other Correspondents

*Clara Passarge\** was the landlady at via Morgagni 45 in Rome, where Gramsci was living at the time of his arrest on the evening of November 8, 1926. She and her husband, *Giorgio*, were Germans who had settled in the Italian capital. They formed a close personal attachment to Gramsci.

*Giuseppe Berti\** (1901–1979), was born in Naples. In 1921 he became the national secretary of the Italian Communist party's Youth Federation. After serving a period of police confinement and imprisonment, he fled to France and was active in the anti-Fascist movements in France, the Soviet Union, and the United States. After World War II, he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies and, in 1956, to the Senate.

*Virginio Borioni\** (1903–1961) was born in Macerata. In November 1926 he was a young Communist student and was in prison with Gramsci in Regina Coeli in Rome. In early December of that year he

was sent to the island of Ustica, where he again shared Gramsci's fate during the month prior to Gramsci's reassignment to prison in Milan. After World War II, he served as a Communist deputy in the first legislature of the Italian republic, from 1948 to 1953.

*Piero Sraffa\** (1898–1983), the world-renowned economist, was born in Turin. In 1927, after teaching at the universities of Cagliari and Perugia, he took up a teaching post at Cambridge University, where he was invited by John Maynard Keynes to pursue his research on David Ricardo. His best-known works are a critical edition of Ricardo's *Collected Works* and *Production of Commodities by Means of Commodities* (1960), which "established Sraffa as a major figure in economic thought" (Bottomore, *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, p. 458). His material assistance to Gramsci and indirect correspondence with him through Tania were vital to Gramsci's survival and intellectual productivity in prison.



Giulia Schucht à Rome en 1914.

the Republic in the Spanish Civil War. Bitterly disillusioned by his experiences in Spain, he was interned after the war, then made his way to France, where he worked for many years in a menial capacity and lost touch with his family. It was not until many years later that he became reconciled with his family and was able to overcome his intense hostility to the Communist party of Italy (PCI) that was a result of his experiences in Spain.

*Grazietta Gramsci\** (1887–1962) had musical ability and extraordinary proficiency in the domestic arts. She raised Gennaro's daughter, *Edmea* (1920–), who married a physician and became an elementary school teacher.

*Emma Gramsci* (1889–1920) was employed as a bookkeeper for an industrial engineering firm and died of influenza in 1920.

*Mario Gramsci* (1893–1945), the sole Fascist member of the Gramsci family. He was secretary of the local Fascist federation in Ghilarza, then moved to Varese, where he lived with his wife and two children, *Gianfranco* and *Cesarina*. He fought in the Abyssinian War and, later, in North Africa.

*Teresina Gramsci Paulesu\** (1895–1976) shared Antonio's intellectual interests and affinities. After her husband's death in 1941, she took his place as supervisor of the Ghilarza post office. She had four children: *Franco*, *Maria* ("Mimma"), *Luisa* ("Diddi"), and *Marco*. *Mimma* is the author and editor of important studies on Gramsci and on the Gramsci and Schucht families.

*Carlo Gramsci\** (1897–1968) served as an army officer in World War I. He worked in an administrative capacity for a milk cooperative in Sardinia until 1931, when he obtained a position with the *Snia Viscosa* textile firm in Milan. He was very active in efforts to assist Gramsci in prison and to obtain his transfer from prison to the *Cusumano* clinic in Formia, in 1933.

#### The Schucht Family

*Apollon Aleksandrovic Schucht* (1860–1933) and *Julia* ("Lula") *Grigorievna Schucht* (1860s–1942), Gramsci's parents-in-law. Apollon was a Russian of German descent. A personal friend of Lenin, he was an anti-Czarist political émigré in Switzerland, France, and then in Rome, where he lived with his wife and six children from 1908 to

1917. From 1917, when he joined the Bolshevik party, to his death in 1933 he lived in Moscow, where he was employed as a librarian at the Electro-Technical Institute. *Lula* was the daughter of a Russian father, who was a well-known lawyer, and a Russian Jewish mother. Although not as politically engaged as her husband, she did occasional stints of administrative work for the Communist party in the early 1920s.

*Julca* ("Giulia") *Schucht\** (1896–1980), Gramsci's wife. Born on September 19, 1896, in Geneva, *Giulia* became a professional violinist and taught violin in Ivanovo after World War I. She and Gramsci were married in 1923. Beginning in the early 1920s, she suffered from emotional and physical problems, caused almost certainly by a form of epilepsy, which required lengthy periods of rest and various forms of therapy. After World War II, she shared an apartment in Moscow and a dacha with her sister *Eugenia* until the latter's death in 1972. No longer able to care for herself, she spent the last eight years of her life at a home in Peredelkino reserved by the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist party for "old Bolsheviks."

The following are her five siblings.

*Nadja* ("Nadine") *Schucht* (1885–ca. 1918) had two children, *Oleg* and *Giuliano*.

*Tatiana* ("Tania") *Schucht\** (1887–1943) was born in Samara (now Kuibyshev) during her father's exile to Siberia. She was sympathetic to the Socialist revolutionaries at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution but later gave critical support to the Soviet government. She lived in Rome independently from 1917 to 1938 when, after more than ten years of devoted assistance to Gramsci in prison, she returned to the Soviet Union. In 1941, after the German invasion of Russia, she escaped with her mother, *Lula*, and her sisters, *Giulia* and *Eugenia* to Frunze, the capital of Kirghizia in central Asia. She died in 1943, of pellagra.

*Eugenia* ("Genia") *Schucht* (1888–1972) was born in Tomsk, in Siberia. Prior to World War I, she earned a degree from the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. Her friendship with Gramsci led to his meeting with *Giulia* in 1922. A dedicated Communist, in the early 1920s she was secretary to Lenin's wife, *Nadyezhda Krupskaya*, in the Commissariat of Public Education. She was one of two translators of the 1957 Russian-language edition of Gramsci's *Letters from Prison*.

## INTRODUCTION

ANTONIO GRAMSCI died quietly before daybreak on 27 April 1937 at the Quisisana clinic in Rome; he was forty-six years old. His sister-in-law, *Tatiana Schucht*, sat alone at his bedside. The funeral took place hastily the following day under the vigilant eyes of the police whose provincial chief recorded the event: "I report that the transportation of the body known as Gramsci Antonio, accompanied only by relatives, took place this evening at 19.30. The hearse proceeded at a trot from the clinic to the Verano cemetery where the body was deposited to await cremation." The police guards and the state security agents, in fact, greatly outnumbered the two mourners present, *Tatiana Schucht* and Gramsci's younger brother, *Carlo*. All the other relatives were far away: his wife, *Julia Schucht*, and two sons, *Delio* and *Giuliano* (who never saw his father), lived in Moscow; his elder brother, *Gennaro*, was in Spain fighting against *Franco*; his younger brother, *Mario*, was with the Italian army in Africa, while the rest of the Sardinian side of the family had not, for the most part, ventured far from the relatively isolated interior of their native island. *Piero Sraffa*, a faithful and generous friend, who had provided Gramsci with a virtually unlimited supply of books and periodicals, had maintained close contact with him through regular communication with *Tatiana Schucht*, and had visited him occasionally in jail, was settled more or less permanently in Cambridge, England. Those of Gramsci's political allies and Communist Party comrades who had not already been perse-

widely scattered in exile or in hiding. Within Italy itself, very probably, most people failed to notice Gramsci's disappearance; the major newspapers and the radio reported it uniformly on 29 April in a curt statement supplied to them by the Fascist wire service, Agenzia Stefani: "The former Communist deputy Gramsci died at the Quisisana clinic in Rome where he had been a patient for a long time."

Like Giacomo Matteotti, Giovanni Amendola, and Piero Gobetti more than a decade before him and Carlo Rosselli very soon after him, Gramsci became an anti-Fascist martyr; but so did many others whose names remain largely unknown or are rarely remembered. Unlike Matteotti and Rosselli, whose gruesome assassinations drew widespread public attention and revealed fully the ruthlessness of Mussolini's cohorts, Gramsci expired silently and without commotion in his sickbed after more than a decade of excruciating physical deterioration, devastating loneliness, and profound anguish. He had been almost totally sequestered from the "great and terrible world," as he sometimes called it, since his arrest on 8 November 1926. Gramsci's death, it must have seemed at the time, had quite simply brought to its inevitable end a painful life of selfless commitment to the socialist vision; of great expenditure of energy on behalf of the Italian Communist Party (PCd'I) he helped found; of brave, unyielding, and very costly defiance of the Fascist dictatorship; and of failure and defeat.

There was hardly any reason to believe in 1937 that Gramsci had left behind him a lasting legacy. Nevertheless, those who had known him well and worked closely with him—and they were not all communists—valued him as an exemplary figure and perceived the importance of preserving his memory. Mario Montagnana, for example, who obtained his political education at Gramsci's side in Turin, wrote to Palmiro Togliatti from Paris the day he learned of his mentor's death:

... I am sure that few can fully comprehend, as deeply as the two of us do, the seriousness of the loss which the Party and, therefore, our whole country has suffered. The reason for this is that Antonio revealed his greatness, his enormous political, intellectual and moral gifts primarily in conversation, in ordinary everyday life. Still, I was struck when a young comrade who did not even know Antonio told me that the most tragic and painful aspect of Antonio's death is the

But, first of all, I want you to write to me whether you think it is worthwhile, indeed absolutely necessary that you should put Nino's manuscripts in order. Undoubtedly, this work must be carried out only by a competent person. On the other hand, it was also Nino's wish that I pass on everything to Julia, to entrust everything to her until he gave further instructions. I thought it best to postpone sending anything until I hear from you whether you want to handle these materials yourself with the help of one of us in the family. Then I want to let Julia know of my intention to send her all the writings so that she will retrieve them and ensure that nothing gets lost and that nobody interferes...<sup>b</sup>

Sraffa thought that Gramsci's papers had better be entrusted to the leaders of the PCd'I. Tatiana Schucht placed the manuscripts in a bank vault in Rome while she set out to determine a safe way to send them to Moscow. In the meantime, she numbered the notebooks and started preparing a catalogue of their contents. The manuscripts eventually reached Moscow in the summer of 1938 and were entrusted to the care of Vincenzo Bianco, a close personal friend of Gramsci's and Italian representative to the Comintern. After the war, the notebooks together with Gramsci's books and letters were returned to Italy and eventually housed at the Gramsci Institute in Rome. Somehow, they escaped the censorious eyes of both Mussolini's and Stalin's security apparatuses.

Gramsci's most lasting legacy would never have become available to anyone were it not for Tatiana Schucht's efforts. As Valentino Gerratana points out in the introduction to his critical edition of the *Quaderni del carcere*:

Much is owed to the selflessness and the spirit of sacrifice of this woman: through her silent and discreet activity she thwarted the earliest and most serious dangers that threatened the survival of Gramsci's work. If these manuscripts had not been saved, Gramsci would have been remembered largely as a legend.<sup>c</sup>

Instead of a Gramscian legend there now exists Gramsci's legacy in the form of books—even though he never actually wrote any books.

<sup>b</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Lettere dal carcere*, ed. Sergio Caprioglio and Elsa Fubini (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), p. 915; hereafter cited as LC.

<sup>c</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere* ed. Valentino Gerratana (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), vol 1,

fact that his genius has been largely—how does one put it?—unused and thus unknown.<sup>a</sup>

In order to prevent Gramsci's "genius" from going to waste, Montagnana felt a pressing need to arrange for the quick publication of Gramsci's writings. Montagnana was obviously thinking of the articles and, perhaps, of some other political documents which Gramsci had composed prior to his arrest, for when he wrote the grief stricken letter to Togliatti he could not have known about the immense scholarly operation Gramsci had carried out during his years in prison.

Togliatti hardly needed any prompting from Montagnana; he was just as keen to see Gramsci's writings in print. On 20 May 1937 he wrote to Sraffa from Moscow asking whether Gramsci had left any instructions regarding the disposition of his papers. In his letter, Togliatti stressed the importance of preserving Gramsci's "political and literary legacy," while admitting that he had no idea at all what Gramsci's prison writings consisted in. Sraffa, on his part, was quite aware that during his incarceration Gramsci had devoted all the energy he could muster to intellectual labor, and he knew enough about the notebooks to be anxious about their survival. Through his contacts and by means of his advice he helped Tatiana Schucht protect the notebooks in Italy and get them past the cordon of surveillance into reliable hands.

At the time of Gramsci's death nobody understood and appreciated more fully than Tatiana Schucht the value of the thirty-three notebooks that he left behind him. With her gentle prodding and constant encouragement she had played a crucial (though still underrated) role in their composition; and, no sooner had Gramsci died, than she started making the necessary plans and arrangements to salvage and preserve them. Two weeks after the funeral she wrote Piero Sraffa at King's College, Cambridge a long letter narrating the details of Gramsci's final collapse, his death, the funeral, and so on. Uppermost in her mind, however, were Gramsci's prison notebooks; they were the very first thing she brought up in her letter after the opening epistolary formalities:

Dearest friend,  
please do not be angry at me for having taken so long to answer or rather to write to you with the details of the great misfortune.

<sup>a</sup> Quoted in Paolo Spriano, *Storia del Partito comunista italiano* (Turin: Einaudi, 1970), vol 3, p. 152.





## A TEXT FROM JOHN E. CHIARADIA

[Excerpt from the unpublished work: **20<sup>th</sup> Century Italian Communism and the Imperatives of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**, by John E Chiaradia]

Politically and chronologically, the *Sinistra* [Left] was the militant edge of a generation coming to maturity in the second and third decades of the new [20<sup>th</sup>] century. If in 1925 one eliminated all members still in their twenties, and certainly also those in their thirties, probably most of the *Sinistra* would have disappeared. Hence it was youthful, combative and ultimately a tested movement. “Toward a Renewal of the Socialist Party” stands as an example of the *Sinistra*’s radical political bent. Notwithstanding the varied political currents in the Turin section, the gist is clearly class-revolutionary and political-party oriented. Amidst the political and tactical confusion of those hopeful years, as a concise manual of *what is to be done* addressed by the Turinese proletariat to the working class, “Renewal” was unmatched.

Notwithstanding all the hype during the decades of “really existing socialism”, identified and profiled vanguards have been rare subjects in Left historiography. In addition to the *Sinistra*, one thinks of the Bolsheviks. It is probable that others existed but remain unknown and unrecorded perhaps much the way the *Sinistra* remains to be researched fully and is widely forgotten in today’s Italy.

This absence of attention is only partially attributable to the general bias of a dominant bourgeois historiographic perspective. We are informed of the intimate conduct of the lives and doings of the John Rockefellers, the Henry Fords or John Fiskes, but not the names of the men and women who fought them in the class war, often with great individual fortitude and at great personal costs for values universally recognized today as eminently beneficial—a living wage, limited hours, and a recognition of the workers’ humanity. In so far as regards the *Sinistra*, the dearth of this knowledge may be traced with greater certainty to a precise political source. It is difficult to imagine a greater disservice to such a group and to the class itself than to bury the tale of their efforts—the narrative of aspirations, development, composition, victories, and defeat; Italian Centrist historians and writers succeeded in doing just that, much more so than with the historic person of Bordiga, though he was portrayed most often in their literature as a political “misfit” of little worth. Behind that misrepresentation, Centrist commentators very much erased the political and social origins of the initial Italian communist movement.

Drawn up by authors many initially drawn by sympathy for the workers’ movement, the perversity in these writings rested on a politically pragmatic logic. Once revolution had been discarded and the class struggle subsumed to a political contest seeking compromise within the polity,<sup>1</sup> arguably a tactic attributable to Gramsci’s influence, what value would the history or the aroused genie of the class hold for a Centrist PCI [Italian Communist Party] seeking an integrated accommodation? Such a policy would bridle and condemn to

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*Le origini del PCI* (1999 edition). p. 392. The postwar party never attempted to fully mobilize the class for revolutionary ends.

dissolution any militant workers' movement. Even if the PCI's post-1945 policies were a perversion of Gramsci's original intent, as Boggs argued, ultimately it was Gramsci who was responsible for the destruction of the leftwing communist faction. Bordiga's rise to leadership in 1921 was propelled by a decade of activity and labors amongst the youth and in working class struggles.<sup>2</sup> Bordiga was not the creator of the *Sinistra*, but became its mentor. His adherence did bring a sharper doctrinal profile, a clarification of tactics, and the embodiment of an articulate and respected spokesman around which the current could rally. For all of the above, he gained its loyalty and in return gave his allegiance. Gramsci became leader by Comintern intervention.

Active historians on the Left in Italy today are likely correct in arguing that the initial PCd'I was more *Livornese* than *Bordighist*--that in the working class depths the desire for a fundamental change of society was what led them to accept Bordiga. Yet both man and current worked in intimate, symbiotic cooperation. Fortichiari and the men around him exemplified this relationship. Though critical of Bordiga in a number of areas, they remained in basic agreement on the precepts that led them into becoming, with Bordiga--not "Leninists before Lenin," a primacy they never claimed and a status Gramsci never achieved—but working class revolutionaries who agreed with Lenin's revolutionary tactics and, beforehand, had anticipated ideas associated with Leninism.<sup>3</sup> Gramsci's very refusal to admit to the prior existence of such a socialist left, whose existence has been acknowledged by every historian, again reflects on the openness of his mind and limns his role in the movement. Anticipation in this context is intended to signify similarity and parallelism between the *Sinistra* and Leninism, never mimicry.

Also contrary to later historiography, Bordiga's leadership was characterized by flexibility, not intransigence. This was demonstrated at the Bolgona *convegno* prior to the Italian entrance into war in 1915, where he demanded the party undertake anti-war street action, at the Imola meeting of 1920 that moved the current away from abstentionism, and similarly at the II Congress of the International on the contents of parliamentarianism. When he could not go along with the Comintern, he resigned. The action was a public statement of political disagreement with a tactical turn he felt cut too deeply to the negative. He espied in the new endorsement of the united front an undermining of the rationale for the birth of the PCd'I at Livorno, and a threat to the integrity of the International itself.

Foremost amongst his reactions was to turn to the members and request a deep-rooted discussion by all in arriving at a policy. Here, too subsequent history is with him. Whatever the means the executive group used to arrive at consensus, the resignation was an open, collective decision by the entire Committee, and time would show that the rank and file was in agreement. Unavoidably, the disagreement raised the quandary-- principle or

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<sup>2</sup> De Clementi deserves credit here. P. 141.

<sup>3</sup> The writings of Fortichiari, Mingrelli, Peregalli, Cortesi, and to some degree the PCd'Int., have begun to flesh out this history.

power? The dilemma seems not to have hindered the decision. The deviousness that marked Gramsci's time in power was not Bordiga's hallmark.

With leadership in hand, Gramsci faced the problem of "disciplining" the party, an imperative from which he could not escape. The more he insisted on acceptance of the new policies, the harsher he had to act with the base, the repository of the vanguard. Such top-down policies impose their own cost: parties refashioned from above lose vitality and become no more than transmission belts for leaders; so it was to be with the PCI. After Liberation, the PCI's need to keep the door to its own past shut was subsumed under the attention given to Gramsci. One might argue that the immediate postwar cult was instrumental in insulating the party from that past and freeing the leadership to continue its own policies of integration while wrapped in the "revolutionary" mantle of a pseudo-founder. These were the years when the fictive image of Gramsci "gripped" the imagination of more than one Western leftwing scholar. The reaction of a few inaudible counter-critics was to posit a "golden age" of Italian communism in the pre-Gramscian years.

With the elimination of the left current in Italy by 1926, and Bordiga's silence during the fascist interregnum, the vitality of a numerically much-reduced *Sinistra* re-manifested itself abroad through an ideological redefining of key precepts, and this is glimpsed in the several star quotations illustrating the continued ideological alertness of the exiled faction. Compelled to respond to the degeneration on the Soviet scene in the 1930s, the exiled-*Sinistra* responded through a reconfiguration of basic credos. In 1936: "The dictatorship of the party cannot become ... the imposition on the working class of the solutions arrived at by the party; above all it cannot mean that the party can rely on the repressive organs of the State to sniff out any discordant voice, basing itself on the axiom that any criticism, any position coming from other workingclass currents is by nature counterrevolutionary." Further, refashioning the circle several years later to arrive at sunrise on the eve of the Second World War: "The emancipation of the workers will be the task of the workers themselves, said Marx, and this central formulation of socialism has for us nothing to do with a conception to justify denigrating those workers who follow other conceptions: IT [this recognition] REPRESENTS THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF THE PROLETARIAT."<sup>4</sup> Published amidst the Stalinist trials of the old Bolsheviks, we are left to guess what response such statements drew from the equally-exiled Centrist ideologues committed to a mindless defense of Stalinism. Lastly and definitively, with emphasis in the original: **whoever talks about the state talks about constraint. Whoever talks about socialism talks about liberty.**<sup>5</sup> Coupled with a rejection of Soviet practice, the importance of these quotations lies in the continued indication of critical independence.

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Bourrinet, pp 215 & 216. My pagination. Emphasis in original.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Emphasis in original.



# A DAILY LECTURE

## MARCUS STEINWEG

**28th Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 28th July 2013**  
**ON ZIZEK**  
**Marcus Steinweg**

Slavoj Žižek has emphasized the homogeneity of Wittgenstein's language-game and the form of life with the symbolic order, which Lacan also calls the *big Other*. The decisive step the late Wittgenstein's thinking takes, Žižek writes, is the *assertion* of an "irreducible—albeit imperceptible and ineffable—gap separating 'objective certainty' from 'truth.' 'Objective certainty' does not concern 'truth'; on the contrary, it is 'a matter of attitude,' a stance implied by the existing life-form where there is no assurance that 'something *really unheard-of* will not emerge which will undermine 'objective certainty,' upon which our 'sense of reality' is grounded."<sup>1</sup> The function of the form of life and the language-game consists in *not obscuring* the *non-functioning* that the smooth processes taking place on the plane of reality threaten to conceal. For we must distinguish between the reality of certainty that is the cognitive world of these processes—and truth, whose status is non-cognitive. This distinction is irreconcilable. It has the quality of an irreducible conflict.

The dimension of truth – the dimension of the real in the words of Lacan & Žižek – is the dimension of the unfamiliar or uncanny. That there is truth means that knowledge and its certainties are limited. Truth is the name of this limitation. Truth points to the groundless and nameless that is the uncanny. Certainty can exist only in the form of this functional form, or form of life, that approximates the human subject to the chaotic uncanny. That is why we can say of the subject's form of life that it is *logical*. For the logos keeps in touch with the abyss over which it remains held. There are such things as cognition and logic, but they are entrusted to the unknowable and alogical. Philosophy was never anything but the mediation of the immediable: of reason to non-reason, of the finite to the infinite, of being to becoming, of the sayable to the unsayable, of knowledge to unknowing, etc. Wittgenstein's theory of language-games and forms of life insists on the originary embeddedness of any knowledge in contexts that lack an ultimate basis in an absolute system of reference. Descartes bases *certitudo* on a *fundamentum inconcussum*, the *ego cogito*; Wittgenstein, by contrast, declares such a foundation to be inexistent. He does not deny that there is, that there can be knowledge; he shows that cognition and knowledge require a prosthetic faith and a trust that are "corroborated" by experience. Knowledge rests on a form of experiential knowing that engenders conventions as it relies on conventions. What Wittgenstein says *ex negativo* is that no knowledge is absolute. It owes its objectivity to the convention of the language-game, which for its part lacks ultimate foundation. Perhaps we may say of this convention that it is the glue of our realities. A minimum of agreement is the condition of the possibility of certainty, i.e., of reality. For what is reality if not the product of a convention that constitutes *our* knowledge? Hence the plural, the implicit *we* that indicates the community of believers in fact, the community of subjects that trusts in the solidity of its certainties without basing them on an absolute foundation: a community that confirms the inconsistency of its consistencies by acknowledging them to be precarious constructions. I call reality the aggregate of consistencies handed down by tradition, on which even the most recent and the most outlandish evidences rest. How to define an experience that convicts this aggregate of its arbitrariness, of its ontological contingency?

<sup>1</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do. Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (London: Verso, 2002), 151.

# WHAT'S GOING ON? FEED BACK (TRANSLATED IN TURKEY)

Devlet ve Siyaset | Enternasyonal | Soldakiler | Ekonomi | Kent Gündemleri | Sonuncu Kavga | Dünyadan | Bilim Teknoloji | N

27 TEMMUZ 2013  
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## Gramsci, Bronx'ta

Aslı Kayabal

Thomas Hirschhorn, İsviçre kökenli bir sanatçı. Paris'te yaşayan Hirschhorn'un son işi Bronx'ta L'Unita'nın kurucusu Antonio Gramsci'ye adanmış bir yapıt. Roma Gramsci Enstitüsü Vakfı, Ghilarza Antonio Gramsci Müzesi ve New York John Calandra İtalyan ve Amerikan Enstitüsü işbirliğiyle düzenlenen ve Gramsci'nin tutsaklık yıllarını eksen alan sergi, hapisteki Gramsci'yi kişisel eşyaları aracılığıyla ziyaretçiye anlatıyor. Sergi kapsamında Lino Del Fra'nın yönettiği "I giorni del carcere/Hapishane Günleri" adlı film de gösteriliyor.

Sardunya adasında dünyaya gelen Gramsci'nin entelektüel dünyasını ve düşüncelerini Bronx'a taşıyan Thomas Hirschhorn, projesini ve Gramsci'yi neden sevdiğini L'Unita' gazetesine anlattı.

-Gramsci'yi Bronx'ta düşünmek... Proje nasıl doğdu?

Spinoza, Deleuze, Bataille gibi sevdiğim düşünürlerin heykellerini yapıyordum. Sıra Gramsci'ye geldi.

-Bronx'ta 400 bin kişi Forest Houses'ın inşa ettiği toplu konutlarında yaşıyor. ABD'de yaşayan Afrika ve İspanyol kökenli nüfusa seslenen bir sergi düzenlemek düşüncesi nasıl doğdu? Bugüne kadar dergiyle ilgili 47 proje takip ettim. Erik Farmer'a rast gelene kadar bir çok kişiyle görüştim. Farmer, Forest Houses konutları derneğinin yöneticisi. Burada ikamet edenler Erik Farmer'ı tanıyor. Gramsci sergisini ve projeyi şimdi Farmer yürütüyor.

-Bir ay boyunca 17 kişiyle çalışarak Gramsci heykelini tamamladınız. Beklentiniz nedir? Benim görevim yeni kişilerle tanışmak, etkinlikler düzenlemek ve Gramsci'yi ve düşüncelerini bugün yeniden yorumlamak ve tartışmak. Gramsci heykeli de bu ortaklaşa girişimin bir ürünü.

-Ya semt sakinlerinin yaklaşımı?

Her geçen gün katılım artıyor. Proje onlarla doğdu ve onlarla devam ediyor.

-Sanatçı kimliğiyle ürettiğiniz işler sosyal açıdan ne tür bir işlev yükleniyor?

Sanatçı olduğum için öncelikle form ilgimi çekiyor. Burada yaşayan halkın ilgisini çekebilme ve katılımını sağlamak için Gramsci'nin heykelini nereye dikmem gerekir diye düşündüm.

-Bronx sakinleri uzak bir coğrafyadan gelen Gramsci'nin dünyasına nüfus edebiliyor mu? Bronx'ta yaşayanlar Gramsci'nin uzun yıllar hapis yatmış olmasını ve yaşam öyküsünü ilgiyle izliyor. Gramsci'nin gündelik yaşama dair düşünceler ürettiğini keşfediyor. Ama Bronx'lular adına konuşmak istemiyorum. Benim açımdan önemli olan Gramsci'nin varlığını, adını ya da en azından doğum tarihini anımsamaları. Bu başlı başına iyi bir başlangıç.

## Yazarın Önceki Yazı

'Orangutan Kyenge'...

'Özgürlük köyü', Paralo

'Akdeniz mezarlığı', göç dramı, 'Sila gemisi'...

Indesit'ten S.O.S...

Tanrı'nın bankasında gölgeler

Don Kişot Arapça konuşuyordu

Saççı militanların 'mask balosu'

'Neruda'nın Ölümü'

Hızlı trene karşı, 'Rugby Tav'

Etna'da filizlenen avuka hareketi

Sicilya'da tadın estetiği

Amyant katiline 18 yıl

Beppe Grillo ABD'nin kımı?

Sollima'yla müzikli yolcu

Fukuşima'da saklanan gerçekler



-10 Amerikalı'dan 9'u komünizm sözcüğünden hoşlanmıyor. Bronx'un toplu konutlarında yaşayanlar nasıl yaklaşıyor Gramsci sergisine ve savunduğu düşüncelere?  
Sergi çerçevesinde yayına başlattığım Radio Gramsci bu konuda bir tartışma başlattı. "Komünizm" sözcüğü ABD'de korku duygusuna neden oluyor. Ama Bronx, farklı. Burada komünizm sözcüğü ve anlamı çerçevesinde birçok tartışma yapıyoruz..

-Gramsci heykeli aynı zamanda farklı perspektiflerden okunabilecek bir iş; Bir sanat yapıtı, yaratıcı bir yapı, bir tür kültür merkezi ve siyasi bir çağrı...  
Gramsci projesi en azından semt sakinleri için yeni olanaklar sağladı. İnsanlar kahve içmek, sohbet etmek için Gramsci Corner'a uğruyor. Dileyen sergi boyunca yayımladığımız gazetenin hazırlanış sürecine de katkı veriyor.

-Gramsci'nin Bronx'la bir bağlantısı yoktu...  
Gramsci heykelinin ziyaret edenlerde yeni kapılar açabileceğini düşündüm. Hiçbir iş, sonsuz değil. Zaman içinde tarihin bir noktasında işler de konuşmayı kesiyor.

-Gramsci'yi neden seviyorsunuz?  
Ürettiği işler ve yaşamı ilgimi çekiyor. Devrimci kimliği ve siyasete profesyonel siyasetçi gibi değil düşünür gibi yaklaşması hoşuma gidiyor. Siyasetin yanı sıra kültür ve sanata da ilgi duyuyordu Gramsci. Joseph Beuys, "Her insan, sanatçıdır", Gramsci, "Her insan entelektüeldir" diyordu. Sözün kısası Gramsci'yi sevmek için birçok neden var.



-Sizce Gramsci'nin en etkileyici niteliği nedir?  
Tuttuğu notlar, yazdığı mektuplar ve kağıt parçalarına düştüğü düşünceler. Bütün bu ayrıntılar, Gramsci'nin en çarpıcı yönü.

-Birçok işinizi düşünülere, felsefecilere adadınız? Siz kendinizi bir entelektüel olarak görüyor musunuz?  
Evet görüyorum. Her ne kadar bir sanatçı olsam da, Gramsci düşünceleriyle beni sanat dünyasının geleneksel kalıpları ve sınırlarının dışına taşıdı.

-Ya gelecek projeniz?  
Bilmiyorum, şimdi Bronx'ta olmaktan memnunum.

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# ART SCHOOL 4 with Thomas Hirschhorn





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