

THE GRAMSCI MONUMENT.



NEWSPAPER

www.gramsci-monument.com

August 29th, 2013 - Forest Houses, Bronx, NY

"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)



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

WHY GRAMSCI ?

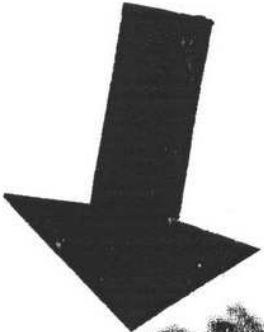
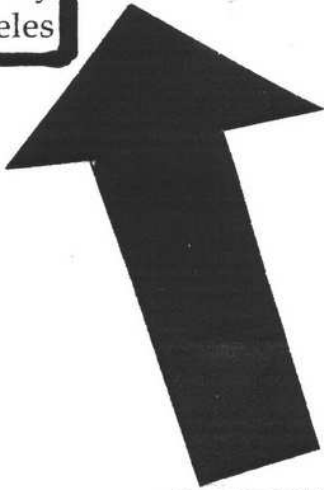
"The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born."
Antonio Gramsci
(Prison Notebook 3)

"Three (Long) Marches, Three Moments of Crisis: 1963, 1988, 2013"

Since I will be speaking literally on the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, I will talk about the original intent behind the first march (jobs, justice, freedom), the context for it, and what it has become in our memory—or how it was derailed. I will then jump to the 25th anniversary march, the era of Ronald Reagan and the terrible crisis facing African Americans, and how that commemoration march was used to paper over the crisis. Finally, will discuss today's march, its context, political vision, and ultimate failure to live up to the original vision of the movement. In all three cases, however, I will show that movements emerged out of these crises that could have moved the nation in a new direction. I take as my starting point Gramsci's line that "The crisis "consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born."



Robin D. G. Kelley, PhD
Gary B. Nash Professor of U.S. History
University of California at Los Angeles



Martin Luther King, Jr. delivering "I Have a Dream"
on August 28, 1963,
at the Washington D.C. Civil Rights March.



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Bronx, NY 10456

Thursday
Chance of Storm



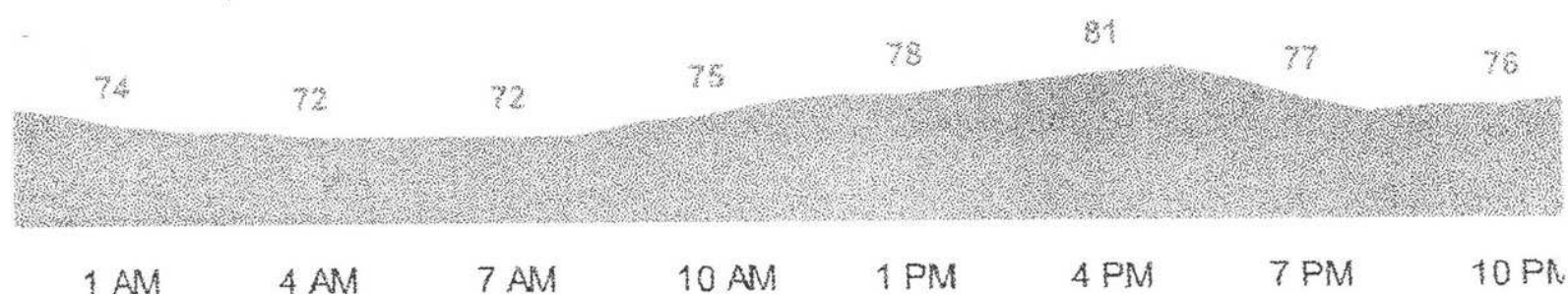
86 °F | °C

Precipitation: 20%

Humidity: 64%

Wind: 5 mph

Temperature	Precipitation	Wind
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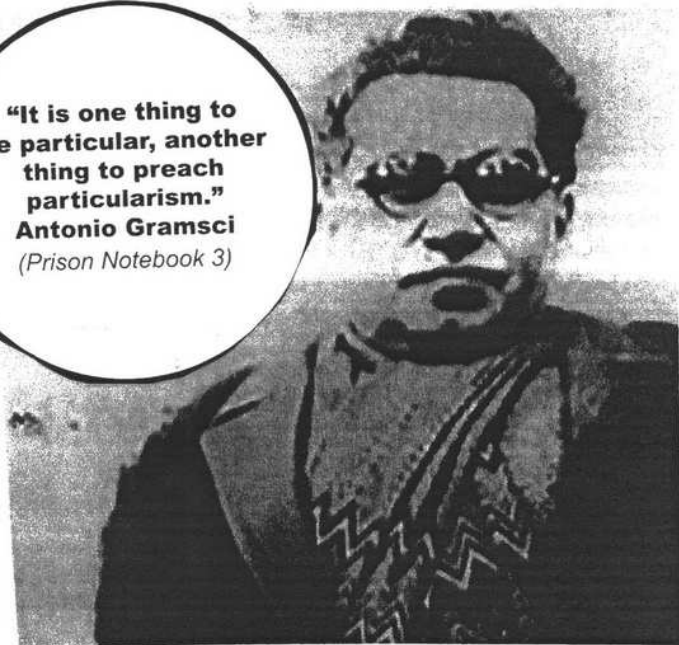
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Thu		86° 68°
Fri		84° 70°
Sat		82° 70°
Sun		84° 72°
Mon		81° 68°
Tue		86° 63°
Wed		77° 61°

“WHY GRAMSCI ?

WHY NEW YORK ?”



“It is one thing to be particular, another thing to preach particularism.”
Antonio Gramsci
(Prison Notebook 3)

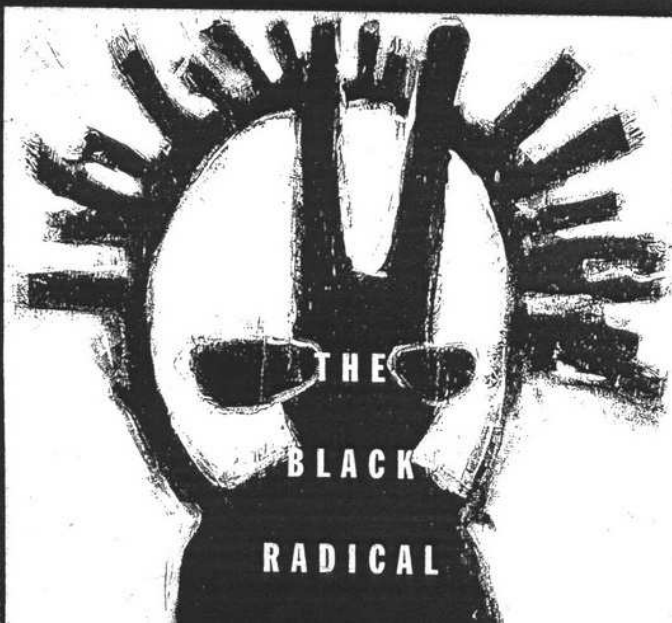


“‘Reality’ exists independently of the thinking individual.”
Antonio Gramsci
(Prison Notebook 7)



FREEDOM
ROBIN D. G. KELLEY
DREAMS

“A bold and provocative celebration of the black radical imagination in the 20th century.” —Laura Ciolkowski, *The New York Times Book Review*



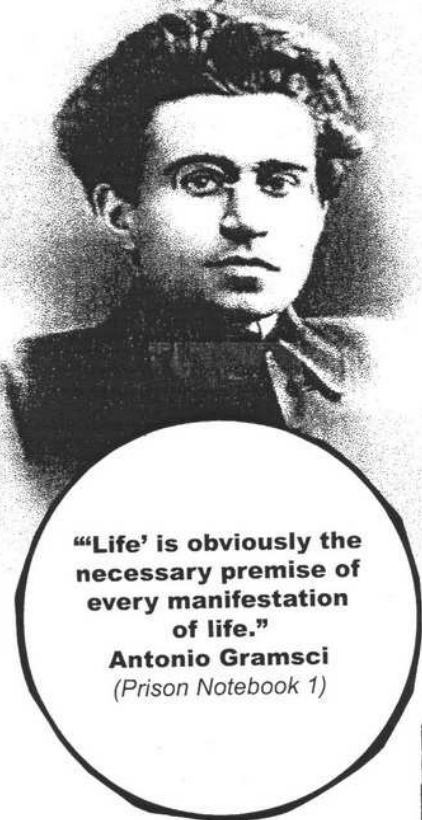
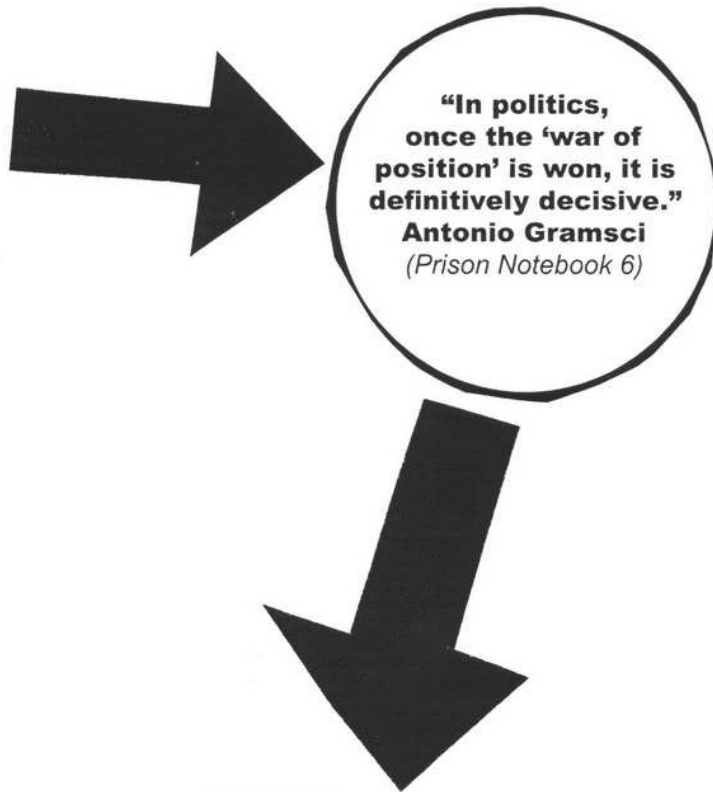
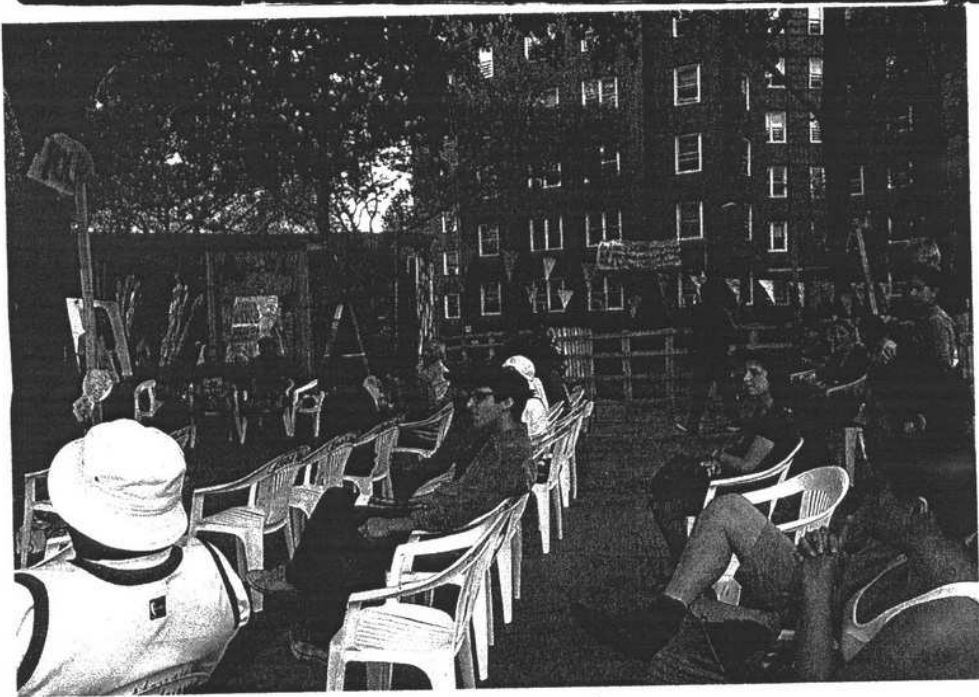
“I live, I am a partisan. That is why I hate the ones that don't take sides, I hate the indifferent.”
Antonio Gramsci
(*La città futura*)

Robin D. G. Kelley, PhD

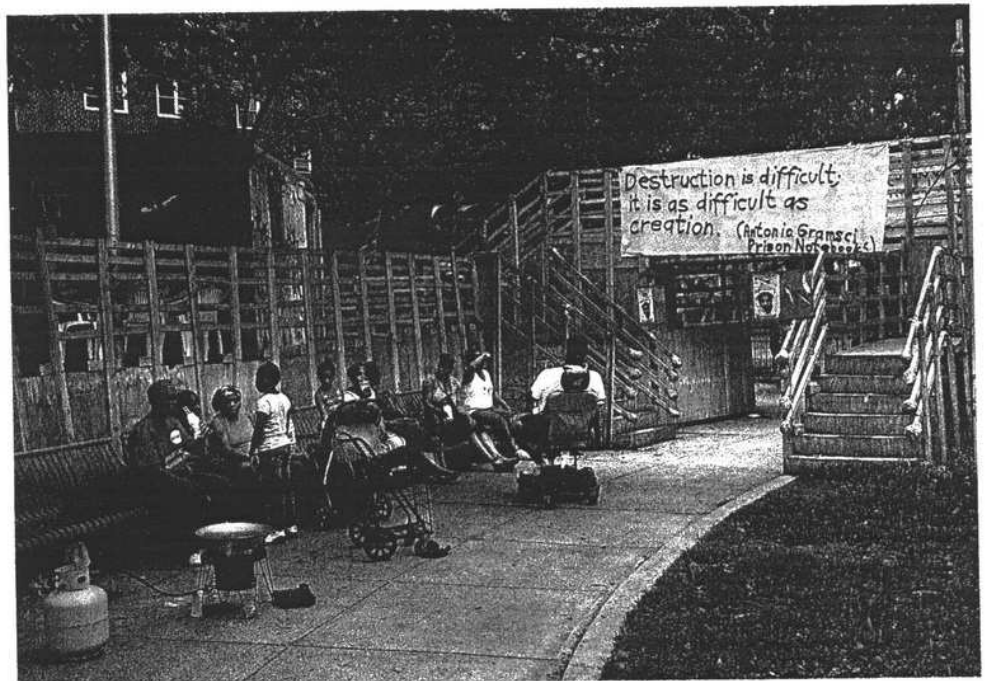
Democracy is a word made up by dispossessed porcupines in the rectum of another word called modernity that's why when it comes to puffing cigarettes the masses are uncontrollable.

—Jayne Cortez
(May 10, 1936 - December 28, 2012)

"WHY GRAMSCI ? WHY NEW YORK ?"



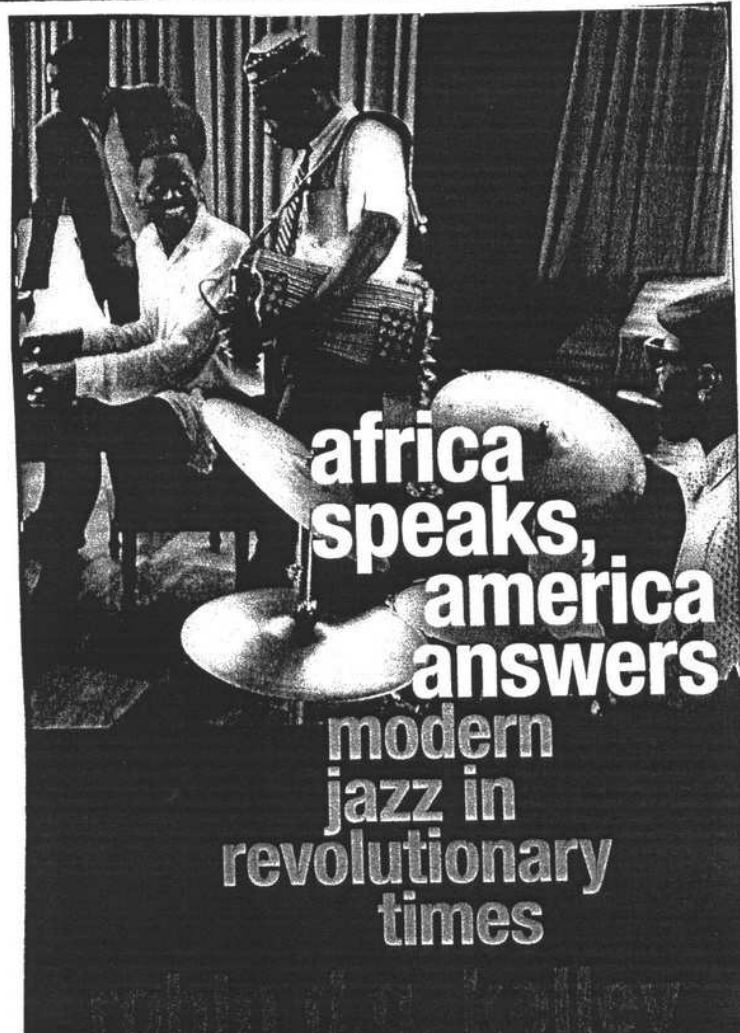
"Life' is obviously the necessary premise of every manifestation of life."
Antonio Gramsci
(Prison Notebook 1)



Robin Kelley

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Robin Davis Gibran Kelley (born 1962) is the Gary B. Nash Professor of American History at UCLA.^{[1][2]} From 2006 to 2011, he was Professor of American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California (USC),^[3] and from 2003 to 2006 he was the William B. Ransford Professor of Cultural and Historical Studies at Columbia University. From 1994 to 2003, he was a professor of history and Africana Studies at New York University as well the chairman of NYU's history department from 2002 to 2003. Robin Kelley has also served as a Hess Scholar-in-Residence at Brooklyn College. In the summer of 2000, Dr. Kelley was honored as a Montgomery Fellow at Dartmouth College, where he taught and mentored a class of sophomores, as well as wrote the majority of the book *Freedom Dreams*. During the academic year 2009–2010, Kelley held the Harmsworth Chair of American History at Oxford University, the first African-American historian to do so since the chair was established in 1922.





"PRELIMINARIES TO A
STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY"
BY ANTONIO GRAMSCI

The
Open Marxism
of
Antonio Gramsci

Translated and Annotated
by
CARL MARZANI

NEW YORK
Cameron Associates
1957

Preliminaries to a Study of Philosophy

We must eliminate the widespread prejudice that philosophy is extremely difficult because it is the product of professional intellectuals. We must show people that "all men are philosophers," that every single human being has a "spontaneous philosophy" whose characteristics can be studied. This philosophy, which no one can avoid, is contained:

1. In language itself, for words are not only grammatical tools and symbols—they embody as well an ensemble of notions and concepts;
2. In common sense, and what we may call "good sense," that aspect of common sense which most relies on causality;
3. In the popular religions and in the entire systems of superstitions, beliefs, opinions, ways of thinking and acting covered by the term "folklore."

Ed. Note: Gramsci is intensely interested in what and how the mass of the people thinks. He takes for granted that how people earn their living is important; he takes for granted that it influences their thinking, but he wants to know actually how they think and what they think. He therefore sketches a line of attack for a study of their mentality.

*This approach is of some interest to Americans who wish to engage in politics, since there cannot be any political strategy or any political activity that will amount to anything if it isn't based, inter alia, on a knowledge of the mentality of the class enemy, one's own class, and its allies. As an example of analysis of middle classes see Whyte, *The Organization Man*, Simon & Schuster, 1956, and as a modest approach to working class thinking, Swados' essay, "The Myth of the Happy Worker," *The Nation*, Aug. 17, 1957.*

We establish then that everyone is, at the least, an "unconscious" philosopher since the language itself contains elements

demands the criticism of any past philosophy that has left its mark in the popular mind and in the popular philosophy. The accumulation of remnants of past philosophies in contemporary popular thought is enormous, yet an inventory must be attempted. Above all, it is clear that the beginning of a critique of one's own world view entails a consciousness of one's own self. You must "Know thyself," but know thyself as the product of a historical process.

Ed. Note: Here again it seems clear that Gramsci has put his finger on a problem of our times. In Marxist circles self-criticism has too often been taken to mean discussion of what caused some specific error, or, at a slightly deeper level, the examination and castigation of such superficial characteristics as vanity, rudeness, laziness, etc. Gramsci will have nothing to do with this. He demands that a Marxist study himself, understand himself as the product of an entire historical process. Thus American Marxists might more easily find within themselves large elements of pragmatism, male supremacy, chauvinism, facile optimism, and so on, which are endemic in our society. Perhaps such an examination might show to many that their Marxist world view was not as coherent as they believed; perhaps even that it was not there. Might not the result be a quality of tolerance, an awareness of fallibility without paralysis of the will?

It is impossible to study the content of a philosophy or culture without studying its history. One cannot have a critically coherent world view without knowing its historical development, its connections and conflicts with other world views.

A coherent world view is related to actual problems posed by reality. It is stultifying to think about the concrete present by modes of thought developed in the past to deal with quite different problems, particularly if those problems are completely out of date. Such "anachronistic" thinking cannot make for a unified personality. In social groups where such thinking is prevalent, the most developed modern ideas will go hand in hand with the most backward social positions. The result is to prevent the historical autonomy of that group.

of some world view. Now we move on to a second level, the level of consciousness and criticism, and we pose this question: Is it better to "think" in a disjointed and sporadic manner, through ideas imposed by the environment, or is it better to think critically, examining and rejecting ideas through the conscious activity of one's own brain?

Since every person is a member of some social grouping, the first alternative means that elements of a world view typical of that group are imposed on the individual. That social group can be as large as one's own village or province or it can be as narrow as a single "wise" patriarch or local "witch" with magic powers. The imposed ideas may have originated in the "intellectual activity" of the parish priest or that of a local petty intellectual pickled in his own stupidity.

In the second alternative, conscious critical examination and acceptance of one's own world view mean that the individual's own brain chooses his sphere of activity, consciously participates in world history, and becomes as it were a guide to his own self-development.

Several observations are germane to the above discussion. As we have said, one always belongs to some social group, and precisely to that group where people share substantially the same way of thinking and working. One is always a conformist in some conformism, one is always as it were a "collective man," a person within a social group. The question therefore is to determine or ascertain the historical character of that conformism, of that social group. If a person's world view is not coherent but disjointed and sporadic, then one develops a bizarre and capricious personality. Such a personality will have within it elements of the caveman alongside the most modern scientific concepts, remnants of parochial prejudices from past historical epochs, as well as intuitions of a rising philosophy suitable to the entire human species, united throughout the world.

To criticize one's own world view, therefore, means to make it coherent and unified, and to develop it to the point reached by the most progressive thought anywhere in the world. Such critique

Here is a further thought on language in relation to philosophy. If it is true that every language contains elements of a given world view, then it follows that from any language the complexity of the world view implicit in it can be deduced. The person who speaks only a dialect or understands imperfectly his national tongue will necessarily have a more restricted world view—parochial, fossilized, anachronistic—as compared to the great currents of thought prevalent in the world. His interests will be extremely narrow, tied to his most immediate economic problems. While it is not always possible to learn foreign languages in order to be in touch with other cultures, it is at least necessary to know well one's own language. A great culture may be translated into the language of another great culture since they are both rich and complex and capable of worldwide expression. A dialect obviously cannot do this.

Ed. Note: Gramsci is thinking here primarily of Italy, where substantial portions of the population are still speaking dialects which are incomprehensible to the rest of the population. In some areas even comparatively close villages cannot understand each other's dialects. Obviously the ignorance is enormous and the difficulties of teaching history, economics, etc., are appalling.

But Gramsci's thought has an insight of value into American problems. While our national language is extremely widespread and dialects are not a major problem (though they do exist), and while education is widespread, yet the leveling down of language in the popular press and comic books, and the erosion of intellectual standards in the schools, are resulting in a population which, slowly but perceptibly, is being placed in intellectual blinkers. Coupled with the pervasive pragmatism of our culture, it is becoming increasingly difficult to teach and understand Marxism. It is also the reason for the paucity of first-rate Marxist intellectuals in our country.

One more observation. A new culture is created not only by individual "original" discoveries, but also by the wide propagation of those truths which have already been discovered. These

truths must be "socialized" as it were, so they can give rise to actions and be woven into the growing structure of a new moral and intellectual order. That large groups of people should be led to think coherently about their present problems is a much more important "philosophic" fact than the discovery of a new truth which remains the property of a small group of intellectuals.

* * *

The relation of common sense and religion to philosophy. A philosophy is an intellectual, coherent system. Neither religion nor common sense (the two do not coincide, for religion is an element of common sense) . . . can constitute an intellectual system because neither can be made unified and coherent even within the individual consciousness, let alone collective consciousness. In the past and within limits, coherence and unity were forced "authoritatively" in religion, never by the "free" play of the mind.

Sociologically, the problem of religion is to achieve unity between a world view and a controlling standard of behavior. Such unity can, however, be called an ideology, or directly "politics" as well as religion.

Philosophy in general does not exist; what exists are different philosophies, world views, and one always chooses among specific philosophies. How is this choice made? Is it explicit, conscious, purely intellectual, or is the choice made in a vague, much more complex way? Haven't we often seen, for example, a contradiction between an individual's intellectual concepts and his acts, his standard of behavior? Which, then, should we say is his real world view: that which he asserts logically or that which he shows implicit in his actions? Furthermore, human action is always a social action, it is a "political" action. Can't we say therefore that a person's philosophy is always wholly contained in his politics?

The coexistence of two world views, often contradictory, one expressed in words and the other shown through actions, is not always due to bad faith. Bad faith may be a true and satisfactory explanation for single individuals or even small groups, but it is neither true nor satisfactory as an explanation when this con-

tradition is found in large numbers of people. Then this contradiction must be the expression of deeper contradictions at a historical and sociological level.

Ed. Note: This passage has a poignant relevance for American progressives. Too many "Marxists" jump automatically to conclusions of bad faith on the part of fellow-progressives, workers and allies of the professional and middle classes whenever they see contradictions between words and deeds. This "devil theory" of history creates political havoc among friends and allies, but it has equally disastrous consequences even in dealing with the class enemy. Contradictions may be due to bad faith, but it isn't always so and only the most concrete analysis of a concrete situation will show which is which. In another connection later on, Gramsci shows that deterministic thinking does not allow for the possibility of "error" on the part of the ruling class. The "devil theory," itself a deterministic concept, does not allow for "errors" arising out of the complexities of ideology.

Such contradictions reflect the following: A social class has its own world view but not as yet consciously. This world view is shown only in action, when the class moves as an organic whole, and since this happens only sporadically the world view is manifested sporadically. This is one reason why the class is not yet conscious of its own world view. However, because of social and intellectual subordination, this class borrows a world view from another class and asserts this borrowed world view in words although in action a contradictory world view is manifested. It must be remembered that this subordinate class does believe in the borrowed world view because it does follow it in action in "normal times," that is, when the class is subordinated, divided, and does not act as an organic whole. This discussion shows that we cannot divide philosophy from politics, and in fact the choice and the critique of a world view are a political act.

Ed. Note: The imposition and fostering of a pragmatic philosophy on the population (including the workers) in England and America are a good example of a "borrowed"

world view. It is against this phenomenon that we must consider the current widespread accusations that the American working class is becoming corrupt and "middle class" in its attitude. The fact is that in "normal" times, times of not too great economic and social stress, the working class is always "middle class" in ideology. It is in times of stress that the working class moves autonomously, not according to its "borrowed" ideas but according to its needs.

We must understand how at any time there exist many systems and currents of philosophy, how they are born, how they are propagated and diffused, why the propagation follows certain directions, splits and breaks up along certain "fracture" lines, etc. We must systematize coherently our own thought and intuition of the world and do so critically rather than pedantically. Such an elaboration can be made only within the framework of the history of philosophy, which shows how thought has developed over the centuries and what a great collective effort has been necessary to achieve our present way of thinking. Contemporary thought summarizes all our past history, including errors and hallucinations. Even errors which were made in the past, and corrected at that time, can and do reproduce themselves today and must be corrected anew.

The popular ideas on philosophy may be sought in the idioms of popular language. For example, the idea implicit in the phrase "to take things philosophically." When examined, this idea is not to be lightly dismissed. It is true that it contains an appeal to resignation and patience, and is often used to that end. Yet, more important, it would seem to me, is the appeal to reflection and to the examination of things. The idea is implied that reason is effective, that what happens is ultimately rational. Rational events can be faced and dealt with by concentrating one's own rational forces and not letting oneself be dragged along by instinctive impulses.

Popular writers use similar expressions and idioms and whenever the word "philosophy" or "philosophically" is used there is always the connotation of a concept of necessity which goes

beyond bestial and elementary passions. Such is the healthy nucleus in common sense, what we may term "good sense," which merits development to become unified and coherent. Thus it seems to me that it is not possible to separate what is called "scientific philosophy" from that "vulgar philosophy" which is only a disjointed aggregate of ideas and opinions.

This point, the continuum from common sense to the highest philosophy, poses the fundamental problem of all world views which have penetrated an entire society, namely, how to maintain the ideological unity throughout the social body from the most ignorant to the most sophisticated. It has been the strength of all religions, and particularly of the Catholic Church, that they have recognized the necessity of doctrinal unity throughout the entire community, and have fought against the separation of higher intellectual strata from the lower ones.

The Catholic Church has struggled tenaciously to prevent the formal development of two religions, one for the "intellectuals" and one for the "simple souls." This struggle has seriously inconvenienced the Catholic Church, particularly as the long-range trend in modern culture is to undermine and corrode all religions. In resisting this trend, the clergy has shown a noteworthy organizational ability, especially in the field of culture. Within its own milieu the Catholic Church has stabilized the relations between the intellectuals and the average people. The Jesuits have been the major architects of this equilibrium. They have given the Church a certain progressive orientation to keep abreast of scientific and philosophic developments but with a rhythm so slow and methodic that the mass of the faithful do not perceive the changes. At the same time, these changes are real and offend the die-hard Catholics.

Ed. Note: An excellent recent example of this strategy of the Catholic Church is the encyclical on evolution. The Church could no longer deny evolution without seriously crippling Catholic scientists and the science departments of its universities. The Church therefore has given its official approval to evolution—but only up to Adam and Eve! From Adam and

Eve all humanity has descended. Thus the local priest can tell the faithful that we are all descended from Adam and Eve, implicitly rejecting evolution (of course we're not descended from monkeys!) while evolution is taught at Notre Dame. This kind of thing infuriates the die-hard Catholic Church in Spain and pleases the opportunistic Church in the U.S.A.

One of the major weaknesses of immanent philosophies* has been precisely their inability to forge an ideological unity between the intellectuals and the people. In the history of Western civilization this has been exemplified by the failure of the Renaissance to attract the masses of the people and in part also by the failure of the Reformation in attracting Catholic intellectuals.

Another example of the weakness of immanent philosophies is shown in education. Not one such philosophy has been able to develop a system of philosophical education which could compete with religion in the education of children. The result is that nonreligious pedagogues (most of them atheists) have conceded the teaching of religion by default. There has even developed a pseudo-historical justification for this: the sophism that since religion is the philosophy of the childhood of man, it has to be repeated in each contemporary childhood.

Idealist philosophy in general has shown itself indifferent to cultural movements of "going to the people." Such movements could succeed only if there were a unity between intellectuals and the people such as should exist between theory and practice. If intellectuals are organically of the people, they can develop and make coherent those problems and principles which the people are setting forth in their practical activity. Then a political and social unity would be constituted.

This is only a restatement of the fundamental problem of the

* *Ed. Note:* Immanent is the opposite of transcendental. Immanent philosophies are based on men's minds and/or the material world. Transcendental philosophies are based on God. Most Christian sects are transcendental; materialist philosophies are immanent. Idealist philosophies can be either. I would consider Berkeley a transcendentalist and Kant an immanent philosopher even though Kant to avoid solipsism was forced to bring in God at the end of his inquiry to underwrite his philosophic system.

cular quirk of pragmatism on the American scene, all the intellectuals in the labor movement would rather be caught dead than admit it. Worse, most of them turn their backs on a systematic intellectualization of the secondary leadership in their unions, looking to educating broader and broader strata. Men like Bridges of the Longshoremens, Gorman of the Meatcutters, Emspak of the Electrical Workers, Reuther of the Auto Workers, are widely read, cultured men. Yet their intellectual impact on their unions is minimal. Nor is this a result of political conservatism; left, center, and right operate on an implicit, often explicit, basis of anti-intellectualism. A different attitude is being built up in the UAW and the UE particularly, but the process is slow.

Let us now look at the philosophy of Marxism in the light of this discussion. Marxism seems like a philosophy of intellectuals separated from common people and from common sense. Since Marxism supersedes previous philosophies and modes of thought, it has at the beginning a polemical and critical stance and must be a criticism of common sense. Yet, at the same time, from the beginning, it also bases itself on common sense in showing that every person is in fact a philosopher, that philosophy is not necessarily a narrow specialized science, and that Marxism in particular is not introducing a brand new science in every person's life but rather wishes to develop, make conscious, and make critical an already existing activity.

Marxism must be also a critique of individual philosophers because philosophy has been developed through particularly gifted individuals. Actually we can consider these individuals as nodal points in the development of common sense, at least the common sense of the cultivated strata of society and through them to the popular common sense. Therefore a study of philosophy must show synthetically how problems arise in the development of a culture. That culture is only partly reflected in the history of philosophy, yet in the absence of a history of common sense (which can never be written for lack of data) the history of philosophy remains the greatest source of study. Philosophy

unity of a philosophical system throughout the social group. A philosophical movement can be a specialized culture for restricted groups of intellectuals or it can be a movement which never forgets to remain in contact with the people while at the same time developing a coherently scientific system superior to common sense. In this very contact with the people such a philosophical movement finds the source of its problems. Only through such a contact can a philosophy become historical, be cleansed of individual idiosyncrasies, become "life."

It may be useful to probe a little deeper in the relation between philosophy and common sense to understand the movement from one level to another at any given time. In philosophy the characteristics of individual thought tend to predominate. In common sense these characteristics are dispersed. You get the general thought of a given epoch in a given popular environment. However, every philosophy is to some extent the common sense of a group of intellectuals, however small.

We need to develop a philosophy which has the possibilities of wide diffusion because it is implicit in practical activity, give it the clarity and coherence of individual philosophies, and then have it become a widespread "common sense" at a much higher level. All this is impossible if one does not feel the necessity of maintaining contact with the people. Marxism should be such a philosophy.

Ed. Note: The discussion of the rise of intellectuals from the ranks of its people is becoming relevant in the United States to an ever increasing degree, particularly in the trade unions. The CIO from the beginning was widely staffed by intellectuals because of the combination of free publication, education, substantial opportunities at the college levels, and the depression which restricted avenues of employment. Many of the unions were led by intellectuals, some formally educated, others self-educated—Bridges, Carey, Selly, Helstein, the Reuther brothers, Emspak, Flaxner, Goldblatt, etc. Today the process is continuing in the staffing of old-line AFL unions as well. At the same time, however, by the pe-

must criticize the old problems, show their current value, if any, or their significance in the past as part of a chain, pose the new current problems or the current validity of the old.

In Marxism, as in Catholicism, the unity between the "higher" philosophy and common sense is assured by "politics." But the difference between the two world views is enormous and fundamental. Marxism lifts up the people; Catholicism presses down on the intellectuals. In Catholicism, whenever the development of history separates the intellectuals from the people, the Church cannot heal this rift by lifting the people to the level of the intellectuals. The Church doesn't even try to; economically and ideologically the task is beyond her. The Church heals the break by imposing an iron discipline on the intellectuals to prevent an ideological differentiation which would be catastrophic and irreparable by resulting in two religions. In the past such breaks in the community of the faithful were healed by popular mass movements which were brought into line within the Church by strong personalities who created various religious orders—St. Dominic, St. Francis, etc.*

The Counter-Reformation sterilized this upsurge of popular forces within the Church. The Company of Jesus was the last great religious order and was designed precisely to stifle popular movements. Authoritarian and reactionary in origin, it has operated by repression and maneuver, "diplomacy." Its birth marked the ossification of the Catholic organism. The new orders that have appeared after the Jesuits have had little "religious" significance and a great deal of "disciplinary" significance. They were either ramifications of the Jesuits, or have come under their control, serving as political instruments rather than renovating forces in a religious development. Catholicism has become "Jesuitism." In modern times the Church has created no great

* The heretical movements of the Middle Ages based on the social conflicts created by the rise of the towns were simultaneous reactions to the politics of the Church and to Scholastic philosophy. They were often hemmed in by the popular religious movements and taken back into the Church through the formation of Mendicant Orders and a new religious unity.

religious orders, but rather a political party, Christian Democracy.*

The position of Marxism is the opposite of the Catholic position. Marxism does not try to keep the people within the confines of their primitive philosophies. It leads them from common sense to a higher view of life. Marxism insists on the necessity of contact between the intellectuals and the masses of people not in order to limit scientific activity and achieve unity at a low level, but rather to build an intellectual bloc which will make politically possible the higher intellectual development of the people.

Ed. Note: After the revelations and upheavals in the Socialist world, the ideas of Gramsci on the contrast between Catholicism and Marxism seem naïve. Many observers would argue that there is no essential difference between the two, that both impose an iron discipline on intellectuals and both stifle the spirit of inquiry and the spirit of artistic and scientific freedom. Many progressives in America have accepted this view and are profoundly disoriented. Many ask whether socialism is not by its nature totalitarian.

Yet a closer analysis of Soviet development, including its dark and somber areas, shows a great correspondence to Gramsci's analysis. The enormous educational achievements of the U.S.S.R. designed to lift an entire population from the cultural level of the Middle Ages to that of the Twentieth Century are beyond dispute. The Soviet Union today has one of the finest public educational systems in the world in terms of coverage of population, lack of discrimination, educational standards, social status of teachers, and so on. Their scientists are among the best and Professor E. Teller, the "father" of the H-Bomb, after a recent visit to the U.S.S.R., stated flatly that in a decade their science would lead the world. Fortune Magazine of February, 1957, acknowledging

** Wickham Steed in his *Memoirs* tells the anecdote of a Cardinal explaining to a pro-Catholic English Protestant that the miracles of Saint Gennaro (patron saint of Naples) are articles of faith for the Neapolitan populace but not for Catholic intellectuals. Whereupon the Protestant asks, "But aren't you all Catholic Christians?" And the Cardinal answers, "I am a 'prelate' which means an office-holder, a 'politician' of the Church of Rome."*

struggle of political "hegemonies,"* first in the field of ethics, then in politics, to reach a higher understanding of reality. The consciousness of belonging to a given hegemony is the first phase of a further self-consciousness in which theory and practice are finally united. Therefore even the unity of theory and practice is not a mechanical given fact but a historical process. That is why we have stressed that in political development the concept of hegemony is a great philosophical step forward for mankind. This concept includes and presupposes an intellectual unity and an ethic which conforms to reality.

Ed. Note: The moral and political passivity of many progressives in the United States and elsewhere illustrates this discussion, but with a reverse twist. That is, one can argue that, among progressives, Marxism is the "verbal" consciousness while the consciousness shown in acts is idealist, pragmatist, or what have you. As a matter of fact, in many cases both consciousnesses are becoming explicit. Ruling class concepts are striving against Marxist concepts in the minds of men. A good illustration is the discussion over ends and means. The ruling class loves to ask, "Does the end justify the means?" and all they are up to is to stop opponents before they get well started. They set up absolutes like the Ten Commandments and then try to prevent unions by calling the leadership atheists, or break up a strike because someone is killed or prevent socialism by saying that the means used are evil, inhuman, etc. Meanwhile throughout history the ruling classes have merrily gone on with wars, killing, force, violence, breaking every rule they ever made, all quite "legally" and "officially."

Actually the dispute over ends and means is artificial. Only the end can justify the means. Hegel says, what else can justify the means except the end? The end to be achieved is subject to ethical judgments; is it right or wrong, good or evil? But the only valid question about means is: are they causally

** By "hegemony" Gramsci means moral leadership of a social group through the sum total of its concepts, actions, and methods. He considers that Lenin sharpened and developed this concept and gave it a concrete expression in Bolshevism.*

the world leadership of Soviet scientists in many areas, attributed it to the freedom of Soviet scientists in contrast to other areas of Soviet life so that the brilliant students gravitated to science. All this in forty years. Whereas after 2,000 years the Catholic Church is still one of the most powerful world-wide forces for intellectual backwardness of the people. Where the Church is strongest (Spain, prewar Hungary and Poland, Slovakia, etc.) there education of the people is at its lowest.

Isn't it possible that the very education of the Soviet population, transforming the country psychologically as the industrialization has transformed it physically, is one of the root causes of the present evolution of Soviet politics, at home and abroad?

The average man acts practically to achieve certain ends. To the extent that he is successful he has to some degree shaped the world around him—his activity has changed the world. But his success is in direct relation to his understanding of himself and the world around him. Vice versa, his activity is a form of knowledge of the world around him in so far as he is changing it. Yet the average man has no theoretical consciousness of this. In fact, his theoretical consciousness may be, and often is, in contradiction to his actions; one may almost say that he has two theoretical consciousnesses (or, perhaps, one contradictory consciousness). One consciousness is *implicit* in his actions which are uniting him with all his coworkers in the practical transformation of reality; the other is the *explicit* consciousness, the verbal one, which he has inherited from the past and which he has uncritically accepted. This "verbal" consciousness is also responsible for actions. It is tied to a given social group which influences his ethical behavior, the direction and exercise of his will. The existence of these two consciousnesses, this contradiction, may reach a point that it prevents any action, any decision, any choice. It may create a state of moral and political passivity.

Critical understanding of one's own self takes place through a

correct, are they efficient, will they bring about the desired result; are they necessary and sufficient?

In the more recent developments of Marxism we are still at the initial phase of deepening the concept of the unity of theory and practice. Remnants of mechanism remain in ideas such as theory as a "complement" to practice or as "ancillary" to practice. This concept too can be looked at as an aspect of the political problem of intellectuals.

The awareness of the unity of theory and practice is a historical development of critical self-consciousness. This entails the development of a "leading group" of intellectuals within the mass of people. The mass of people cannot become independent and autonomous without organizing itself, and organization is impossible without organizers and directors, without intellectuals. A group within the mass must develop the theoretical concepts necessary for development including most particularly the unity of theory and practice.

This process of developing a group of intellectuals is long and difficult. It is full of contradictions, of advances and retreats, of people coming together, disbanding, regrouping, and so on. In this process the loyalty of the mass of people to its own intellectuals is sorely tested. And it should be noted that loyalty and discipline are the form of the agreement of the people with the intellectuals, and the form of their collaboration in the developing historical process.

"Leadership" develops within the people dialectically. As the group of leaders develops intellectually quantitatively and qualitatively it is inextricably connected with the people. Every leap forward of the intellectuals toward a widening of their horizons and toward greater complexities has a relation to the cultural level of the people which also rises, via individuals and small groupings, toward the level of the intellectuals.

Again and again, however, in this process, the intellectuals lose contact with the people. There is a lag, a separation, and therefore the impression arises that theory is complementary to practice,

that it is subordinate. At such times, to insist on the primacy of "practice" is to show that the historical development is in a primitive phase where the production relations of a society are still changing and an adequate superstructure has not fully developed.

Ed. Note: The discussion above may help to understand one of the factors in the upheaval in Hungary, the break between the leadership and the people. Production relations were changing rapidly; the superstructure was not adequate. To say that economic problems were serious in Hungary is to beg the question: the proper contact between leadership and people would have prevented the upheaval, as Poland shows. It was the hypocrisy and arrogance of the leadership which in part fueled the flames. This discussion illuminates another observation of Gramsci quoted in the introduction: "in the phase of state power all the superstructure must be developed, or the state itself may disintegrate."

In further discussing the unity of theory and practice we should take a look at political parties in the modern world. Political parties develop and propagate the ethics and politics corresponding to specific world views. Their role in this context is of the greatest significance. They function almost as "experimental laboratories" in the historical testing of world views. Individuals adhere to these parties so that the parties act as screening devices through which the mass of the people is divided among various world views. This screening takes place both in the field of practical activities and in the field of theory, separately and in various mixtures. The more the specific world view is vitally and radically new, the more it is antagonistic to older world views the tighter is the relationship between theory and practice as the screening takes place. It may be said that political parties are the developers of new ideologies, that they are the crucibles wherein takes place the unity of theory and practice on a historical scale.

It should now be easy to understand why a working class party should be formed through the adherence of individuals and not through the unions. [Gramsci has in mind the British Labor

Party, which is composed in both ways.—*Ed. Note*] A party must be composed of individuals who know what they are doing and why if it is to direct organically the entire mass of the people. Such direction cannot take place by old methods but by innovations in organizations and procedures, and innovations cannot become the property of the people except through the teaching of a leadership group. These leaders at all levels must have some consciousness of the world view implicit in the people's practical activity, must have some coherence in their thinking and a will which is clear and committed.

Discussions of the concept of the unity of theory and practice still suffer from the over-all vulgarization of Marxism. One can still sense deterministic, fatalistic, mechanistic elements which have created an "ideological aroma" around Marxism, making it a kind of religion. We can see how this came about, and is even historically justifiable, given the "subordinate" character of the social groups which accepted Marxism.

When one does not have initiative in a struggle the struggle becomes identified with a series of defeats. In such a situation mechanical determinism becomes a formidable morale builder, making for cohesion, patience, and obstinate perseverance. The rationale is well known: "I have been defeated for the moment but the logic of things works for me in the long run, etc." We can understand and sympathize but the fact is that in such a view the act of will becomes a travesty, becomes an act of faith in the assured rationality of history. In form, it is nothing but an empirical and primitive type of passionate fatalism which seems simply a substitute for similar concepts in religions like predestination, Providence, etc. It should, however, be observed that even under such conditions the will is acting directly on the "logic of things," but it is doing so implicitly, almost ashamed of itself, so that the consciousness is veiled, contradictory, lacks critical impact, etc.

But when the "subordinate" group becomes the ruling group responsible for the economic activity of the people, then mechanistic Marxism becomes at some point a clear and present danger.

Ed. Note: This is perhaps the most prophetic insight of Gramsci, as the events of Poland and Hungary have shown. This sentence written thirty years ago has the immediacy of current events. Wrong ideas always do harm, but wrong ideas plus power can be catastrophic.

When such a group rules it is imperative that it change its mode of thinking because life itself has changed. The "logic of things" is no longer absolute; it has limits and restrictions. Why? Because it can be acted upon. If the "subordinate group" felt itself yesterday a plaything of outside forces, this ruling group today has power and initiative; yesterday it was irresponsible, today it is active and independent. But even this formulation is wrong, for is it ever true that even yesterday it was an irresponsible plaything? Certainly not. Fatalism is the weakling's garb for a real will. Hence we must always show the futility of a mechanistic determinism. We can understand it as a naïve philosophy for the average man, and, as philosophy, an element of strength for him. But if it is accepted by intellectuals as a coherent and critical philosophy, then it leads to passivity and a kind of imbecilic self-sufficiency, whether the intellectuals are subordinate or ruling. We must always remember that within the people, however downtrodden, there are elements which are responsible and developing and that their philosophy anticipates the future not only theoretically but in their daily activities.

The proof that a mechanistic conception is the philosophy of subordinate groups is shown by an analysis of Christianity. Under given historical conditions Christianity is a "necessity" for the masses, giving them a means of expression, a rationality of the world, a framework for practical activity. This function seems well phrased in an article in *Civiltà Cattolica* ("Pagan Individualism and Christian Individualism," March 5, 1932):

"Faith in a secure future, in the immortality of the soul destined to Paradise, the certainty of being able to reach eternal happiness, all this was the mainspring of a drive for internal perfection and spiritual development. True Christian individualism found here the impulse to its victories. All the strength

of a Christian was gathered around this noble end. Freed from speculative waverings which disarm the soul with doubts, and guided by immortal principles, man felt his hopes resurgent. Certain that in his struggle against evil a greater power sustained him, man surpassed himself and won the world."

Of course, this refers to primitive Christianity, not the jesuitized religion which has become a narcotic for the people.

Even clearer and more significant for our argument is the position of Calvinism with its iron concept of predestination and grace which determined a vast expansion of individual initiative.

* * *

We move on to another aspect of philosophy: how and why are new world views widely propagated and popularized. This process of propagation of the new is at the same time a substitution for, and often a combination with, the old. Various factors feed this process: the form in which the new world view is taught, the recognized authority of the teacher and of the thinkers who support him, the kind of people who belong to the organization which supports the new world view (even those who joined for other motives than the acceptance of the new world view). All these elements vary according to the social group and its cultural level.

But the research in which we are most interested is the research on these factors within the broad population. The people change concepts with great difficulty, and never by accepting new concepts in their "pure" form, so to speak, but always in some eclectic combination. Rationality, logical coherence, completeness of argumentation, all these are important but far from decisive in dealing with the people. Of course, it can be decisive at a secondary level, if the person involved is already in a state of intellectual crisis, has lost faith in the old, and is wavering between the old and the new.

Ed. Note: A pregnant analysis that seems tailor-made for American progressives who do have a tendency to assume that "rationality, logical coherence, completeness of argumenta-

tion" are decisive in propaganda. Lincoln and Roosevelt knew better. So did a Lenin, or, in our own back yard, a Marcantonio. They knew, and consciously too, that in dealing with large groups of people the new ideas they presented would be absorbed unevenly, in highly personal mixtures with other ideas and interpretations. They gave here and there, seeking the largest areas of agreement, and so were accused of opportunism and compromises. Yet they held to their course, successful political leaders. The Eisenhowers and the Nixons have no such problems, for they are not introducing new ideas. They manipulate the stereotypes of old, embedded in the popular mind, and can thus find easily wide areas of agreement with the people.

The same may be said of the authority of thinkers and scientists, which is generally very great among the people. But every world view can cite thinkers on its behalf, so that their authority is divided. Moreover, every thinker has a tendency to refine and qualify, to cast doubt on what he has said by his way of saying it.

We may conclude therefore that the propagation of new concepts takes place for political, ultimately social, reasons, and that logic, authority, and organization are very important only as soon as a general reorientation has taken place in the individual or in the group. From this we conclude that in the people at this stage, philosophy can be lived only as a faith.

After all, consider for a moment the intellectual position of the average person. He has been shaped by opinions, convictions, some criteria of discrimination, and certain rules of behavior. Any ideological opponent who is intellectually superior can argue his position better than our man can, defeat him logically, and so on. What should our man do, change his convictions because he can't win the given discussion? But then he might be changing his opinions once a day if he should happen to meet superior opponents. This he cannot do, and he won't do. Therefore what is the basis of the philosophy of the average man, and especially of his ethics? Undoubtedly the most important element is not reason but faith. But faith in whom and in what? Faith in that social group to which he belongs and who think as vaguely as he

does; the average man feels that so many people cannot be as wrong as his argumentative opponent would like him to believe. It is true, thinks our man, he himself is not capable of winning the argument, but there is someone in his own group who can, and in fact our man remembers hearing such a coherent impressive argument for his beliefs that he was, and has remained, convinced. He may not remember the argument concretely, and he couldn't repeat it, but he knows it was true because he heard it and was convinced. The permanent reason for the permanence of a conviction is to have been strikingly convinced once.

Ed. Note: This fine analysis of how new ideas spread out among the people is of great relevance to the American progressive movement. After a decade of reaction many progressives are disheartened. The power of propaganda of the ruling class seems so enormous (newspapers, comic books, radio, TV, movies, large sectors and elements of schools and colleges) that its sheer weight is sometimes paralyzing. But its power is deceptive. Years and years of falsification are swept aside at one stroke when a single experience teaches a person the truth, particularly (though not necessarily) if someone is at hand to focus the meaning of that experience for the person concerned.

The truth has to break through but once; the lies of the ruling class have to be constantly reiterated. Again and again, a bitterly anti-union man becomes pro-union in a struggle, and generally speaking this change is definitive; once a union man, always a union man.

The ruling class in their propaganda are like the Red Queen: they must run and run to stay in the same place. Nay, they are constantly losing ground. Since the birth of Marxism, over a hundred years ago, Marxism has steadily spread among the people from generation to generation, in every country and corner of the world including the West. It is a thought to keep in mind in bad times.

We conclude that there is an extreme instability in the new convictions of the people, particularly if these convictions contradict the orthodox convictions that conform to the interests of the

dominant class. We see this, thinking over the vicissitudes of religions and of churches. A given church maintains its community of faithful to the extent that it maintains its basic faith in an organized manner, indefatigably reiterating its apologetics, fighting at any and all times, using always the same arguments, and maintaining a hierarchy of intellectuals who dignify the faith with at least a semblance of thought. Every time the relations between the church and the faithful have been violently interrupted for political reasons, as in the French Revolution, the losses to the church have been incalculable. If the difficulties in carrying out habitual rituals had continued, it is conceivable that the losses would have been decisive and that a new religion would have arisen. In a sense this did happen in France with a mixture of new ideas and the ancient Catholicism.

We deduce certain musts for any cultural movement which seeks to supplant old world views:

1. To repeat unceasingly and tirelessly one's own arguments, though, of course, varying the literary form. Repetition is the most efficient didactic method of working on the popular mind.

2. To work incessantly to raise the intellectual level of ever greater strata of the population. This entails developing groups of intellectuals of a new type, who rise directly from the people yet remain in contact with them, forming as it were the "ribs" corseting the mass.

If this second condition is fulfilled, the "ideological panorama" of an epoch is truly changed. The development of groups of individuals entails an organization within themselves, a hierarchy of intellectual competence and authority. This hierarchy may culminate in a great individual philosopher if he can relive concretely the ideological needs of the people, if he understands that this ideology cannot have that elegance and subtlety appropriate to an individual brain, and must therefore develop formally a collective doctrine suitable to the ways of thinking of a collective man.

It should be quite apparent that a basic conceptual change in the people cannot take place "arbitrarily" around any ideology

whatever as a consequence of the will of a strong personality or of a group who just wants to do it because of the fanaticism of its own convictions. The adherence or nonadherence of the people to an ideology is precisely the test which reveals the reality of a new concept, its rationality and its historical validity. "Arbitrary" systems may reach a degree of popularity because of favorable circumstances, but they are invariably eliminated in this historical competition. Concepts and systems which correspond to the complex necessities of an organic historical period always prevail in the end, even though they may have to go through intermediate phases during which their acceptance takes place in heterogeneous combinations and formulations.

The unfolding of the movement whereby a new world view is accepted by the masses presents many problems. The fundamental one which we have mentioned is the relationship between the intellectuals and the people. More specifically, the problem lies in the function of the higher intellectual groups. On one hand their own intellectual development must be safeguarded; on the other hand they must bring creative support to the lower intellectual groups and the masses of people, bearing in mind their capacities for discussion and development of new concepts. It is a question basically of setting the limits of freedom of discussion and propaganda, a freedom which must be understood not in the context of police methods, but in the context of self-discipline and self-control which the leadership places upon itself.

Ed. Note: Here we come to the great problem which is agitating all the socialist countries of the world, a problem which life itself poses and not this or that bureaucracy, as many people think. The character of a bureaucracy is primarily the result and not the cause of the way this problem is resolved, though, of course, one affects the other.

We are speaking, in effect, of laying down the "line" in culture and politics. Let us look at the problem this way: who will determine the "rights of science" and the limits of scientific research?

In fact, can these rights and these limits be determined at all? I think not. It seems to me that of necessity the search for new truths, and for clearer, more coherent formulations of these truths must be left to the free initiative of the individual scientists—even if scientists continually re-examine those very premises which seem most essential, fundamental, and settled once and for all.

Ed. Note: Gramsci, the Marxist philosopher in the great Marxist tradition, unequivocally asserts the necessity—necessity, not desirability—of free scientific inquiry. The scientist himself must be the judge of his own freedom. When Gramsci speaks of science he includes Marxism. His last sentence serves both to rivet his philosophic position and to hint that this creates problems for the statesman. Since Gramsci was an active political leader, he is fully aware of these problems. Therefore, having spoken as a philosopher, he continues the analysis as a political leader.

Of course, it is not too difficult to clarify and expose those "scientific initiatives" which have ulterior motives and are not the result of disinterested scientific inquiry. In addition, while the thought is free, it is not impossible to consider that the results do not have to be publicized. Individual initiatives may be disciplined by passing through the sieve of academies, cultural institutes of various kinds, and so on. Only after such examination can they become public.

Ed. Note: This is not a jesuitical argument, taking back with the left hand what he gave with the right. Gramsci is wrestling with a problem which is insoluble in principle at our level of civilization, the conflict between innovation and stability; the conflict between the needs of the individual and the needs of the group; the conflict between the minority and the majority in a society. The role of the political leader and of political science is to reconcile, make things viable. Politics is the art of the possible. Note the word art, not science; the individual plays an important role. This is what Gramsci is doing.

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pendent thinker has more influence than the entire institution of universities.

Finally, a few words on the historical role of fatalism within Marxism. We should, I think, prepare a funeral elegy on the concept of fatalism, praising its usefulness in a certain historical period but burying it once for all—with full honors. Fatalism can be compared to the theories of grace and predestination at the beginnings of the modern world which finally culminated with the classical German philosophy and its concept of freedom as the recognition of necessity. The concept of fatalism was a popular substitute for the medieval cry "God will it," although even at this primitive level of causality it was a more modern and fruitful concept. It is possible that a new concept might be born in a different "formal" manner than the rough and uncouth form which the people shape. Nevertheless the historian with his perspectives can point out that the beginnings of a new world, always stony and bitter, are superior to the decline of a dying world and its swan songs.

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* written in 1956

*We would offer the so-called American Dilemma as an example, the problem of race prejudice in the South. It is insoluble under conditions of capitalism. It can be ameliorated by a combination of laws, force, education, the pressure of social approval and disapproval of the rest of the country. Negroes will go to school, Negroes will get the vote, but racial prejudice will not disappear. It will take a considerable period of socialism until racism will completely disappear, that is, be completely eliminated from the consciousness of human beings just as totemism has disappeared from the consciousness of modern man. In our stage of society in the United States the best a functioning political leader can do is to remove the legal disabilities against Negroes and stop the use of force and violence against Negroes in the South. **

As an aid to studying the relationships between philosophy and the people, it would be of great interest to examine concretely, for a single country, the cultural organization which keeps the ideological world in motion. It would be useful to examine its practical day-to-day operations. It would be useful also to study the numerical relations between the professional personnel engaged in cultural work and the population of a given country, together with an estimate of the nonprofessional people so engaged. Schools at all levels and churches are the two major cultural organizations in any country in view of the number of people working in them. Newspapers, magazines, libraries are next as well as private scholastic institutions. Certain professions include in their specialized activities a substantial amount of cultural work, for example, doctors, army officers, judges.

It must be noted, however, that in all countries, to a varying degree, there is a gap between the masses of people and the intellectual groups, even those closer to the people in great numbers, like priests and teachers. This is so because, no matter what the rulers say, the state does not have a coherent unifying role, so that various intellectual groups are disjointed from level to level of the population. The universities, for example, except in a very few countries, play no unifying role, so that often a single inde-

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60th Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 29th August 2013

WHAT IS A COLLECTIVE?

Marcus Steinweg

1. A collective, in my terms, is a community whose members are bound by nothing but the absence of an objective or absolute bond.
2. The collective is perhaps nothing other than the *community without community* evoked by Georges Bataille and Maurice Blanchot (although in different ways).
3. The bond that binds the subjects bound in the collective does not exist or, it is the factual non-existence of the bond.
4. So how can a collective be imagined which is radically different from all communal structures based on objective criteria or norms, and also from the absolute communities which conjure up an ultimate transcendent ground?
5. The Latin *colligere*, which refers to selecting and gathering together, already indicates the dynamics of gleaning, of collecting bit by bit.
6. *Colligere* means to allow one's gaze to roam in order to create a minimum of order in the disorder which reality is by starting to group its elements together.
7. Now, it is correct to see in the act of grouping a force which is the force of simplification, of reduction.
8. The collective which is a community beyond anything communal must bring in a resistance to the idea of grouping because the collective is obviously a group whose members are too different to bend to a unified principle or a common ideal.
9. The collective I am thinking of is an infinitely fragile construction; a community indeed, but a community that has to make do without a shared ground and without a shared goal.
10. It is the community of those without community in the sense that this community puts its trust in no bond other than the bond of a lack of bond.
11. Therefore it must be said of this community that it does not exist.
12. That is the most extreme sense of the collective, its non-existence and impossibility.
13. Where a collective forms or begins to form, there is already a minimum of shared order, a minimum of consistency of shared hopes and projects; there is also the shared betrayal of the non-existence which ultimately constitutes the collective.
14. If there are no binding criteria regulating the dynamics and existence of the collective, then there is no collective, or there is only the non-existence or the pure possibility of a casting completely hidden in its latency.
15. Whenever a collective is formed it becomes obvious what has to remain occluded: the collective itself as a dream, as an impossibility and latency.
16. The ontological sense of the collective would have to be sought in the domain of dreams that are more than illusions or phantasms.
17. There is the dream of a language which communicates with itself purely and without any detour, the idealism of listening to oneself speak.¹
18. There is the dream of a subject that appears completely within its self-evidence, which radiates almost without matter; that is the dream of a soul overflying its corporality, the dream of the eternal, self-transparent *ego cogito*.
19. There is the dream of a knowledge which no longer has to leave itself to be completely with itself: absolute knowledge identical with itself, pure intelligibility.
20. There is the dream of a future that is completed already today by bending to the thinking that anticipates it.
21. There is the dream of a community which creates its total meaning out of itself, its force and possibility, its stability and duration; dream of a community which is what it is for good reasons and exists per se.
22. The collective, its appearance in the space of history — of cultural, social, political texture — denotes a dream completely different from these dreams.
23. The collective is the dream that interrupts merely dreamy consciousness, the imaginary, and leads it to its limits.
24. The collective is the dream which recognizes itself as impossible.
25. The collective has no appearance in history which would not already be its own betrayal, and it is at the same time nothing other than this self-betraying appearance, nothing other than this dream which recognizes itself as a dream.

26. This distinguishes the collective from the phantasms and dreams arising from the fantasy of a well-founded, guaranteed, teleologically fixed identity.
27. In the collective, the limit of the phantasm of identity is revealed because it includes both, and to the same extent: appearance and non-existence.
28. The absence of objective or absolute criteria is what makes the collective an impossibility: the dream of a community overflying all particularities and interests.
29. And yet, the collective is something other than the universal we-community of transcendental subjectivity which Husserl addresses.
30. Transcendental subjectivity is the we-family of entities of self-consciousness which draw the pure enjoyment of ontological justification from their membership of the transcendental we to which they belong.
31. Participation in the transcendental we makes of the empirical subject a family member completely subjected to the law of the family, in this case, the law which transcendental subjectivity itself is: a law that obliges the subject to self-identity.
32. What I call a collective is the dream-figure of a lawless community of subjects who put their trust in nothing but their singularity and ontological loneliness, a trust which, like all trust, is without ground, blind.
33. One could formulate the difference between the subject of we-subjectivity and the singularity of this hyperbolic trust as follows: the subject of the we-community does not trust because it knows.
34. It is the subject of its knowledge, subject of self-consciousness whose orientation is originarily given, programmed knowledge that programs itself further, that remains completely within the framework of a pre-given identity; cadre-subject of its certainties, opinions, hopes and fears which will never completely take possession of it (it can be sure of that) because it knows them to be shared joys and cares.
35. This subject will not fall out of place; it simply can't.
36. It is a subject completely embedded in its ontological family.
37. All its experiences are family excursions.
38. No experience can lead it to the limits of its familiarity which would also allow it to recognize the limits of its communal formations.
39. The subject that I want to call the subject of the collective, however, is a subject related directly to the limit.
40. It is a subject without subjectivity.
41. Instead of profiting from the transcendental patronage of universal subjectivity, this subject moves in its space with other subjects in an incomparably more vulnerable, incomparably more naked way — in its space which is its living space, the dimension beyond any structural or even empirical security, naked living space of a subject of ontological nakedness or poverty insofar as poverty here denotes the richness of a pre-identical or para-identical existence.
42. The subject of the collective dreams, in the midst of the one reality that is the world, the dream of a community of subjects whose coming-together is without identity, i.e. without presupposition, because the world as the only world is already this: the living space of subjects who should not deceive themselves too often about the fact that they stand in direct contact with the incommensurable, with the inconsistency ultimately of their own lives.
43. A collective is a dream with truth value, thus a dream that is more than merely a dream without therefore already becoming reality or possibility.
44. The subject of the collective moves along the watershed between the possible and the impossible.
45. It does not cease to dream the dream of a humanity without exterior while at the same time recognizing this exterior as the proper living space of human beings.
46. The collective is the bond of all human beings under the criterion of a lack of criteria that I call the incommensurable or the truth of the subject, as long as truth here means nothing other than the non-existence of a second world.
47. In the collective, something is realized that resists its representation in the space of appearances: the dream of a community of subjects who, without knowing or understanding one another, share the space of their lives, their happiness and their humiliations in order, in the here-and-now of a shared world, both together and each individual for itself, to explore new forms of living, a new thinking, another reality.

FEEDBACK



THE DAILY PIC

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Power to the People?

by *Blake Gopnik* | Aug 26, 2013 4:50 PM EDT

The Daily Pic: In his Gramsci Monument, Thomas Hirschhorn gives the projects a taste of a dead communist.



(Photo by Lucy Hogg)

I finally visited [Thomas Hirschhorn's Gramsci Monument](#), installed in the green space of the Forest Houses apartment complex in the Bronx. It's a scruffy "club house" dedicated to the Italian communist thinker, who died after a long detention under Mussolini, and consists of a computer room, Gramsci library, speaker's corner, radio station and other such amenities, all cobbled together from crude plywood sheeting and plexiglass and Hirschhorn's signature packing tape. Discussing it afterward with an artist and two art historians who'd joined me, we couldn't decide what to make of the piece. Was there something condescending about bringing this ultra-elite culture to a project's residents? Was it a serious and useful homage to Gramsci, or just materialized name dropping? Was the presence of high-end outsiders a constitutive part of the piece – and if so, how did we feel about being turned into Hirschhornian brushstrokes? Was the monument actually built around the exoticizing pleasure of slumming, on the part of the artist and his art-world audience? And was it simply rude, in the end, to add more disvelment to a neighborhood that has more than its share – did the people of Forest Houses not deserve some beauty and order in the monument built in their midst? (Compare the elegant scrap-lumber facilities that Theaster Gates has built on bad streets in Chicago.)

In the end, we decided that by simply raising such questions, and foiling all easy answers, the project declares itself pretty good art. (Photo by Lucy Hogg)

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