

# 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 5)

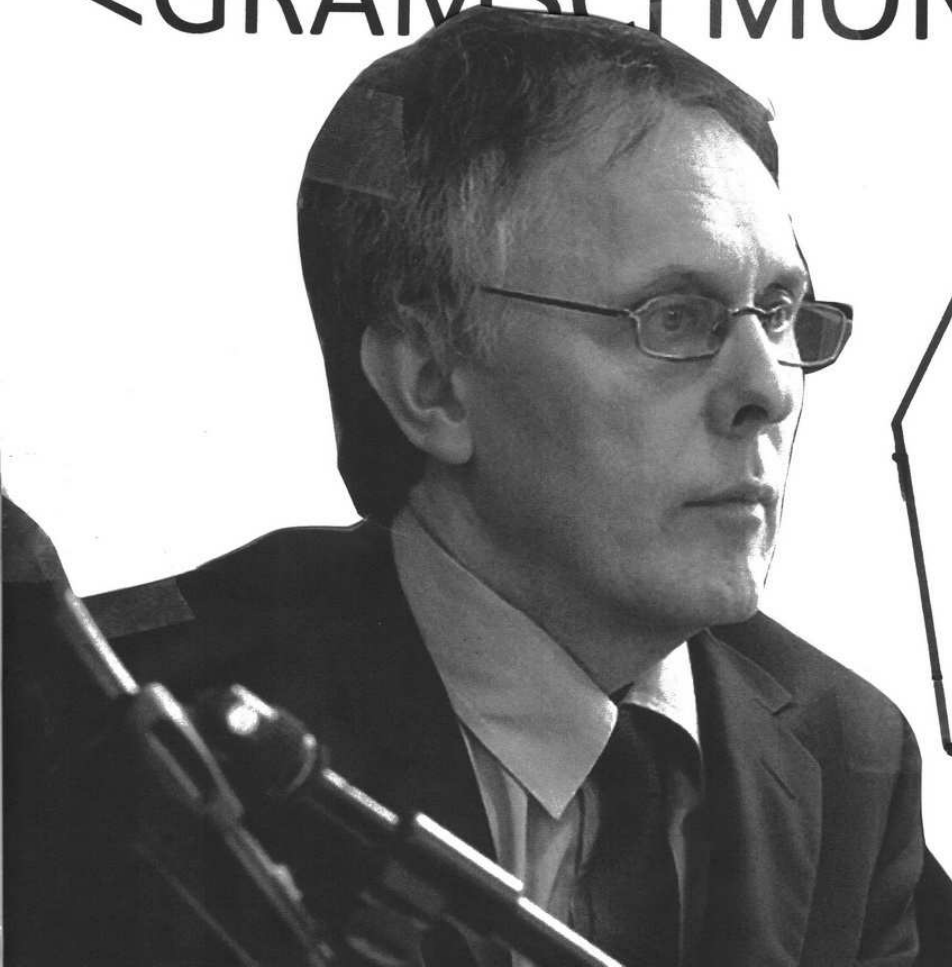


[www.gramsci-monument.com](http://www.gramsci-monument.com)

**September 6th, 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

## DAVID FORGACS – AUTHOR OF "THE ANTONIO GRAMSCI READER" AT THE <GRAMSCI MONUMENT>



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. COVER PAGE (DAVID FORGACS)

2. TABLE OF CONTENTS/WEATHER

3-6. EXCERPT OF "THE ANTONIO  
GRAMSCI READER"

7-8. TEXT FROM THOMAS HIRSCHHORN

9-10. A DAILY LECTURE BY MARCUS  
STEINWEG

11-13. WHAT'S GOING ON? FEED BACK

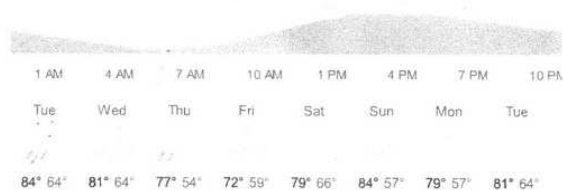
14. RESIDENT OF THE DAY

Bronx, NY 10456  
Friday  
Clear

 72 °F | °C

Precipitation: 0%  
Humidity: 37%  
Wind: 8 mph

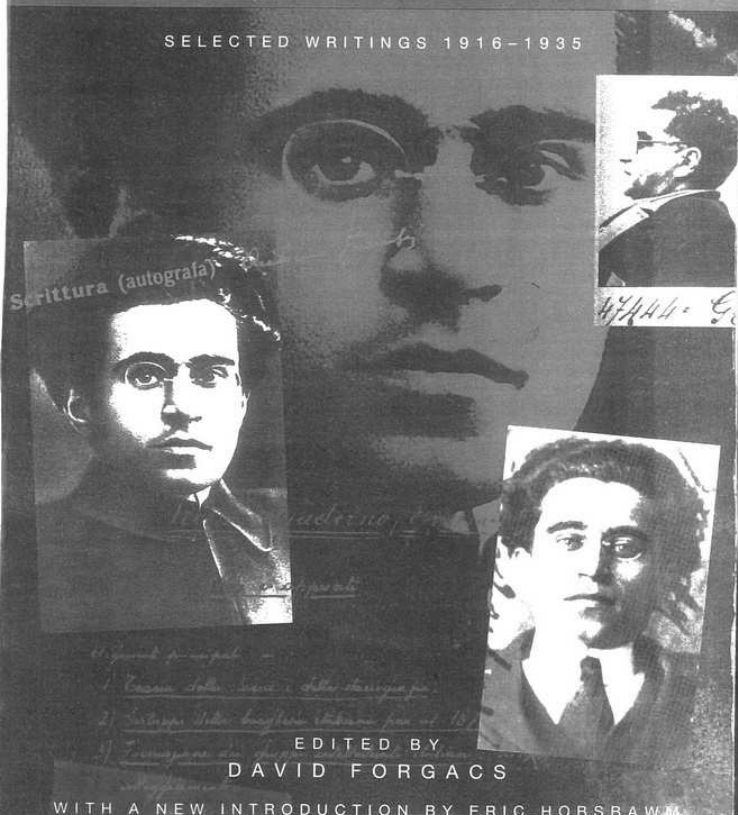
Temperature   Precipitation   Wind



# EXCERPT OF "THE ANTONIO GRAMSCI READER"

## The ANTONIO GRAMSCI Reader

SELECTED WRITINGS 1916-1935



EDITED BY DAVID FORGACS

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION BY ERIC HOBBSBAWM

### NOTE ON THE TEXT

Most of the writings included here are to be found in one of the four existing volumes published in Britain by Lawrence and Wishart and in the United States by International Publishers (with the exception of the last, of which the American imprint is by Harvard University Press): *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, 1971 (henceforth abbreviated as SPN); *Selections from Political Writings (1910-1920)*, selected and edited by Quintin Hoare, translated by John Mathews, 1977 (abbreviated as SPW I); *Selections from Political Writings (1921-26)*, translated and edited by Quintin Hoare, 1978 (abbreviated as SPW II); *Selections from Cultural Writings*, edited by David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, translated by William Boelhower, 1985 (abbreviated as SCW). Although I have sought to include as many important texts and passages as possible, with one or two exceptions I have deliberately left out or cut passages which require a specialized knowledge (historical, philosophical, literary). Where such passages seemed indispensable I have included them and put a note, although I have generally tried to keep notes to a minimum and to confine detailed explanations to the introductions heading each section. I have however used a few notes to cross-refer to passages in other texts. Some notes have been transcribed from the existing English editions; others are new.

Each item (text) in this book is identified by both an Arabic numeral and a separate title. Titles enclosed in square brackets have been supplied by me where Gramsci either did not give one or where the existing one is inappropriate (for instance some of the prison notes have only general headings). At the foot of each text I have indicated, using the appropriate abbreviation followed by page numbers, where it is to be found in one of the four volumes mentioned. Where no previous translation exists the text is marked \* and its published Italian source is indicated. In Part One this source is given in the form of abbreviated title followed by page numbers. The three editions cited here are: CT = *Cronache*

14

#### Note on the Text

15

torinesi, 1913-1917, CF = *La Città futura*, 1917-1918 and NM = *Il nostro Marx*, 1918-1919, all edited by Sergio Caprioglio, Einaudi, Turin, respectively 1980, 1982 and 1984. In Part Two an Italian source in the prison notebooks is given in all cases. This takes the form of a notebook (Q = *quaderno*) number and a paragraph (§) number, following the numbering of *Quaderni del carcere* edited by Valentino Gerratana, 4 volumes, Turin 1975. New translations are mine, except for VI, 4, 6 and 7, which are by Derek Boothman. The biographical outline in the prefatory material is based on the ones in CT and Gerratana's edition, as above.

As for dates of the writings, all texts in Part One carry a date of first publication or original composition. In Part Two I have not attempted to date individual texts, since a given draft in the prison notebooks cannot always be dated more accurately than by its year of composition and many of the later notes are in any case revised versions of earlier drafts. However, the following dates of composition of the individual notebooks drawn on in this volume will give readers a rough guide (the dating is that given in Gerratana's critical edition): Q 3: 1930; Q 5, 6 and 7: 1930-32; Q 8: 1931-32; Q 10: 1932-35; Q 11: 1932-33; Q 12: 1932; Q 13: 1932-34; Q 14: 1932-35; Q 15: 1933; Q 16: 1933-34; Q 19 and 21: 1934-35; Q 22, 23 and 24: 1934; Q 26, 27 and 29: 1935.

In most places the text given here follows exactly that of the earlier English editions, but six kinds of variant reading will be found.

1. I have made *cuts*, marked by [...], in some texts. This is partly for reasons of space (in the case of a long text), partly in order to remove specific references (e.g. to Italian political figures) that seemed dispensable in an edition of this kind. Every cut involves an editorial judgement, and it may be that some readers will disapprove of some of my judgements. Where this occurs, I can only refer them to the uncut version in the other editions. I had originally intended to include only uncut texts in this edition, but I soon realized that if I did so I should either have had to include many fewer texts than I wanted or else leave out for lack of space such fundamental writings as 'The Lyons Theses', 'Some Aspects of the Southern Question' and the prison notes on the Risorgimento and intellectuals. Some texts have been substantially reduced, but in many cases the cuts are minor ones.

2. At a few points there are *additional* passages. Where these

16

#### A Gramsci Reader

run to more than few lines I have enclosed them in angled brackets < >. In one case (I.4), the passage in question was cut from Gramsci's original newspaper article by the press censor. It was published for the first time in NM after Caprioglio found the original printers' proof seized by the censor in the State Archive at Turin. It was therefore not available to the translator of SPW I.

3. The *internal order of paragraphs* within some of the notes in Part Two differs from that in SPN and passages which appeared as footnotes in that edition appear here integrated into the main body of the text. In this respect I have followed the text of the critical edition, which reproduces Gramsci's manuscript notebooks more exactly. For the same reason, there are a few cases where what appears as a single note in SPN appears here as two notes or even three, and occasionally the other way round.

4. The *order of notes* themselves in Part Two does not correspond, on the whole, to the sequences in SPN. Like the earlier Italian editions, SPN did not generally follow Gramsci's manuscript arrangement. I have consequently felt free to regroup the notes, with respect to SPN, in an order that both seemed to make more sense for the particular thematic arrangements of this edition and to correspond as far as possible to the order of composition by year of their first drafts (the translations are however, with one exception (VIII.6), all of second drafts or unique drafts).

5. I have made some minor *emendations* to the translations in the few cases where the existing translation seemed to me either incorrect or unclear. Translations have been checked against the critical editions, where these have now appeared.

6. There are a few variants of *style* introduced to resolve inconsistencies between the four volumes: for instance the word 'state' appears here with a lower-case initial throughout, 'Communist', 'Socialist' and 'Fascist' (when they refer to political parties) have an initial capital, the forms 'II' and 'III', used as ordinals, are written out as 'Second' and 'Third', main quotations are in single rather than double inverted commas and most spellings in '-ise' have been amended to '-ize'.

## CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE

1891

Antonio Gramsci born in Ales (province of Cagliari, Sardinia) on 22 January, fourth of seven children.

1897

His father, Francesco, a civil servant, is accused of administrative irregularity and suspended from office. He is subsequently tried and sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

1903-05

Gramsci is obliged to work, because of the family's straitened circumstances, in the local tax office. Around 1905 his elder brother Gennaro, doing military service in Turin, starts sending him *Avanti!*, the organ of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI).

1908-11

Moves to Cagliari to complete his school studies. Lives with Gennaro (now a PSI activist) and has his first contacts with the socialist movement. Also becomes involved with Sardinian regionalist politics. He first reads Karl Marx's writings in this period.

1911

Wins a scholarship to University of Turin. Meets Palmiro Togliatti and Angelo Tasca, also students in Turin. Particularly interested in linguistics.

1913

Becomes involved in PSI activity in Turin.

1915

Withdraws from university courses without graduating and devotes himself full time to working for the socialist press – the Turin office of *Avanti!* and the local Socialist weekly *Il Grido del*

17

### Chronological Outline

19

International (Comintern) in Petrograd sets conditions ('21 points') for membership. Lenin praises Gramsci's motion 'For a renewal of the Socialist Party' amid the dissent of the Italian delegation.

September. Occupation of the factories. 500,000 workers involved in northern industrial cities. Gramsci's article 'Red Sunday'. CGL votes against occupation being turned into revolution. Movement collapses.

November. Participates at PSI Congress in Imola where communist fraction is formed.

1921

January. Gramsci and others set up institute of Proletarian Culture in Turin, affiliated to Soviet Proletkult. Livorno congress of PSI. Motion of communist fraction wins a third of the votes. Fraction secedes to form Communist Party of Italy (PCdI). General secretary is Amadeo Bordiga.

December. Comintern launches 'united front' policy of working-class unity between Communists and Socialists at both party and trade union level. Policy opposed by PCdI.

1922

March. Second Congress of PCdI, Rome. 'Rome Theses' opposing united front policy approved by a large majority.

May. Gramsci, designated PCdI representative to Comintern, leaves for Moscow in poor health. He will not return to Italy for two years.

June. Begins to participate in Comintern activities but is taken ill. Spends several months in a Moscow sanatorium where he meets his future wife, Julia Schucht.

October. 'March on Rome'. Mussolini takes power.

November-December. Fourth Congress of Comintern deals with 'Italian question' and recommends fusion of PCdI with PSI. Majority of PCdI is opposed to the recommendation but accepts it out of discipline. Fusion however will never take place.

1923

February. Bordiga and several other Communist leaders arrested. Togliatti enters Executive Committee.

18

### A Gramsci Reader

*Popolo* (The People's Cry). He continues working part-time on a thesis in linguistics until 1918.

1917

February. Edits single issue of *La Città futura*, newspaper of the regional youth movement of the PSI.

April. First articles in support of Lenin and the Russian revolution.

August. Food riots and anti-war protests in Turin. Many local PSI leaders arrested in subsequent wave of repression.

September. Becomes secretary of provisional executive of Turin PSI and acting editor of *Il Grido del Popolo*.

December. Publishes article 'The Revolution against Capital' in support of the Bolsheviks and against a determinist Marxism.

1918

*Il Grido del Popolo* ceases publication. With Togliatti and others, launches a Turin edition of *Avanti!*

1919

May. Gramsci, Togliatti and Tasca launch the weekly *L'Ordine Nuovo* (The New Order).

June. Publishes in *L'Ordine Nuovo* the article 'Workers' Democracy' calling for the internal commissions in the workplace to be developed as 'organs of proletarian power, replacing the capitalist'. Translates many articles dealing with factory councils and the shop stewards' movement.

October. Meets Sylvia Pankhurst in Turin. A series of her 'Letters from England', translated by Togliatti, appears in *L'Ordine Nuovo*.

November-December. Factory council movement develops in Turin.

1920

April. Unofficial general strike in Turin (not supported by PSI or socialist trade union (CGL) leaders) involving over 200,000 workers.

July-August. Gramsci and *L'Ordine Nuovo* group approve the setting up of 'factory communist groups', later to be the local nuclei of the Communist Party. Second Congress of Communist

20

### A Gramsci Reader

April-June. Bordiga from prison launches appeal to party to oppose Comintern line on the issue of fusion with PSI. Gramsci refuses to sign. Nucleus of new leading group of party (Togliatti, Gramsci, Umberto Terracini) begins to form.

December. Gramsci is transferred from Moscow to Vienna to maintain links between PCdI and other European Communist parties.

1924

February. First issue of *L'Unità* appears, joint daily paper of PCdI and 'Third Internationalist' fraction of PSI (latter will fuse with PCdI in August).

April. General election. Gramsci elected parliamentary deputy.

May. Returns to Italy. Clandestine party conference in Como. Gramsci elected to Executive Committee, opposes Bordiga's policies. He subsequently becomes the new General Secretary.

June. Fascists murder opposition deputy Giacomo Matteotti. Gramsci calls for general strike and working-class anti-fascist unity against legalistic protest of other opposition parties.

August. Julia Schucht gives birth to her and Gramsci's first child, Delio.

August-September. Comintern calls for 'Bolshevization' of Communist parties: application of united front policy, slogan of 'workers' and peasants' government', restructuring of party organization on the basis of workplace cells.

1925

January. Fascist 'exceptional laws' introduced.

October. Julia with Delio joins Gramsci in Rome. She works at the Soviet Embassy.

1926

January. Third Congress of PCdI, Lyons. Drafts with Togliatti the main congress document ('Lyons Theses') which is overwhelmingly approved (90.8 per cent), a victory for the new leading group over the Bordiga opposition.

July. Julia, now expecting a second child, leaves Italy because of the deteriorating political climate.

August. Second son, Giuliano, born to Julia in Moscow. Gramsci will only ever see photographs of him.

October. Gramsci writes a letter to the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party expressing anxiety about the inner-party struggle (between the Stalin-Bukharin majority and the Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev Joint Opposition) and its effect on the international movement. He nevertheless declares his support for the majority. The letter is sent to Togliatti in Moscow, who withholds it, though he shows it to Bukharin. Drafts 'Some Aspects of the Southern Question'.

November. Arrested with other Communist deputies, in violation of parliamentary immunity. Imprisoned first in Rome, then (December) transferred to exile on the island of Ustica (off Sicily) where he briefly shares a house with Bordiga and others. To enable Gramsci to read during his imprisonment, his friend Piero Sraffa, the Marxist economist based in Cambridge, opens an unlimited account on his behalf at a bookshop in Milan.

1927

January. Transferred from Ustica to prison in Milan to await trial.  
 March. First plan of prison notebooks communicated in a letter to his sister-in-law, Tatiana Schucht, acting as an intermediary, in this instance, for Piero Sraffa. Four subjects outlined: history of Italian intellectuals, theatre of Pirandello, comparative linguistics and popular literature.

October. A letter from Piero Sraffa publicizing Gramsci's plight and attacking 'the methods of Fascism' appears in the *Manchester Guardian* on 21 October.

1928

May. Transferred to Rome. Tried with other Communist leaders before Special Tribunal. The prosecuting attorney Michele Isgrò allegedly says of Gramsci: 'For twenty years we must stop this brain from working.'

June. Sentenced to 20 years and 8 months.

July. Sent to a special prison in Turi (near Bari, in the south) because of his ill health. At first he shares a cell with five other prisoners, then he obtains permission for a cell on his own.

1929

January. Granted permission to write in his cell. He begins with translation exercises.

August. Gramsci writes to Tatiana: 'I have reached a point where my strength to resist is about to collapse completely, with what consequences I do not know.'

November. As a result of the government's amnesty provisions for the tenth anniversary of the Fascist 'revolution', Gramsci's sentence is commuted to 12 years and 4 months.

December. Gramsci's mother dies. His relatives withhold the news from him.

1933

March. Gramsci collapses in his cell. For two weeks he is tended night and day by fellow prisoners. He is examined by a doctor, Professor Arcangeli, who certifies 'Gramsci cannot survive for long in present conditions: I consider it necessary for him to be transferred to a civil hospital or a clinic, unless he can be granted conditional liberty.' Gramsci refuses to submit a plea for mercy to the Fascist authorities.

May-June. Arcangeli's statement is published in *L'Humanité*. In Paris a committee for Gramsci's release and that of other victims of Fascism is set up, headed by Henri Barbusse and Romain Rolland.

December. Gramsci is transferred to a clinic in Formia (between Rome and Naples). Here in a third period of writing (1934-35), despite his deteriorating health, he begins to transcribe, revise and regroup earlier drafts of notes in a series of 'special' notebooks on particular themes.

1934

October. Gramsci submits a request for conditional release. The request is granted (25 October). He is allowed to go out of the clinic but is too weak to leave. The Fascist authorities block his request to be transferred to a clinic elsewhere, suspecting plans for his escape.

1935

August. After a further deterioration, Gramsci is transferred to a clinic in Rome.

1936

He resumes his correspondence with his wife and children. He considers returning to Sardinia to convalesce, but fears such a withdrawal would put him in a position 'of complete isolation, of an

February. Begins to write the first 'notebook', a school exercise book.

March. Outlines new plan of prison research to Tatiana Schucht: nineteenth-century Italian history, history of intellectual groups, theory and history of historiography, Americanism and Fordism. The notebooks of this first period (1929-31) are miscellanies containing writings on several themes.

1930

Internal crisis in PCdI leadership as a result of Togliatti's acceptance of Comintern 'Third Period' policy of 'class against class'. Three leading members who oppose the policy (Leonetti, Tresso, Ravazzoli) are expelled. Gramsci tells his brother Gennaro, sent by Togliatti to visit him, that he disagrees with the Third Period line and the expulsion of the three. Gennaro does not report this back to Togliatti, for fear that his brother too might suffer recrimination. Gramsci is subsequently criticized and ostracized by fellow Communists in prison for his opposition to the view that an immediately revolutionary situation would result from an imminent fall of Fascism and his suggested slogan of the constituent assembly for the transitional period.

1931

Gramsci's health deteriorates. On 3 August he coughs up blood in the night. A second period of notebook writing (1931-34) begins in which he rewrites and regroups earlier drafts and arranges notes more thematically.

1932

Revised plan of the notebooks set out in Notebook 8 under ten groupings: Intellectuals and education, Machiavelli, Encyclopaedic notions and cultural themes, Introduction to the study of philosophy and critical notes on Bukharin's *Popular Manual of Sociology*, Catholics, 'Past and present' (miscellany), Italian Risorgimento, Literature and popular literature, 'Lorianism', Journalism.

An attempt, supported by Gramsci, gets underway to obtain his release through an exchange of prisoners with the Soviet Union, where his wife and two children are living. The Soviet authorities approach the Italian government without success.

even more pronounced intellectual degradation than at present, of the complete or almost complete erasure of certain forms of expectation which in the past few years, although they may have tormented me, have also given my life a certain content' (letter to Julia, summer 1936).

1937

April. The period of conditional release ends and Gramsci is now legally free. But he is too ill to move. On 25 April he has a cerebral haemorrhage and he dies on 27 April.

June. First extracts of the prison letters (dealing with Croce) published in Paris in PCdI periodical *Lo Stato Operaio*.

July. Tatiana Schucht deposits manuscript prison notebooks, which she had removed along with Gramsci's other effects after his death, in a safe at the Banca Commerciale in Rome. A year later she has them despatched to Moscow. They are passed on to Togliatti.

1945

After the liberation from Nazi-Fascist occupation, further extracts from the prison letters and the first extracts from the notebooks appear in the PCI press.

1947

218 of the prison letters published in a first edition (*Lettere dal carcere*, Einaudi, Turin). A number of references to Bordiga and Trotsky have been excised.

1948-51

First edition of the prison notebooks (*Quaderni del carcere*). The manuscript notebooks are rearranged thematically by the editor Felice Platone into six volumes: *Il materialismo storico e la filosofia di Benedetto Croce* (1948), *Gli intellettuali e l'organizzazione della cultura* (1949), *Il Risorgimento* (1949), *Note sul Machiavelli, sulla politica e sullo Stato moderno* (1949), *Letteratura e vita nazionale* (1950), *Passato e presente* (1951).

1954-74

The bulk of Gramsci's writings from the period 1913-26 are edited and published at various intervals between these dates.

1957

The first selection of Gramsci's works, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, is published in English.

1971

*Selections from Prison Notebooks* makes a wide range of Gramsci's writings available to an English-language readership for the first time.

1975

Critical edition of the prison notebooks edited by Valentino Gerratana in four volumes (three volumes of text, one of critical apparatus). The notebooks are arranged in chronological order according to when they were commenced and, apart from some internal restorations of chronological order, are published in exact accordance with the manuscript. All drafts are included.

1980

A multi-volume critical edition of the pre-prison writings, arranged in chronological sequence, begins to appear in Italy.

The  
**ANTONIO GRAMSCI**  
Reader

**'Very usefully pulls the key passages from Gramsci's writings into one volume, which allows English-language readers an overall view of his work. Particularly valuable are the connections it draws across his work and the insights which the introduction and glossary provide into the origin and development of some key Gramscian concepts.'**

STUART HALL

The most complete one-volume collection of writings by one of the most fascinating thinkers in the history of Marxism, **The Antonio Gramsci Reader** fills the need for a broad and general introduction to this major figure.

Antonio Gramsci was one of the most important theorists of class, culture, and the state since Karl Marx. His influence has penetrated beyond the left and his stature has so increased that every serious student of Marxism, political theory or modern Italian history must now read him.

Imprisoned by the Fascists for much of his adult life, Gramsci wrote brilliantly on a broad range of subjects: from folklore to philosophy, popular culture to political strategy. Still the most comprehensive collection of Gramsci's writings available in English, **The Antonio Gramsci Reader** now features a new introduction by leading Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm, in addition to a biographical introduction, informative introductions to each section, and a glossary of key terms.



**DAVID FORGACS** is co-editor of *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from Cultural Writings* and editor of *Rethinking Italian Fascism*. He is a professor in the department of Italian, University College, University of London.



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David Anthony Forgacs joins the Department of Italian Studies as holder of the newly endowed Guido and Mariuccia Zerilli-Marimò Chair in Contemporary Italian Studies. He earned both his B.A. in English and his M.Phil. in Comparative Literature and Literary Theory at the University of Oxford (1975, 1977) and his Ph.D. in Philosophy at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa (1979). Previously, he taught at University College London, where he held the established Chair of Italian, at Royal Holloway University of London, University of Cambridge and University of Sussex.

**Authored / edited books:**

Dr. Forgacs is the author or editor of numerous works, including *The Antonio Gramsci Reader* (1989), *Italian Cultural Studies* (1996), *Roberto Rossellini, Magician of the Real* (2000) and *Italy's Margins: Photography, Writing and Social Exclusion Since 1861* (forthcoming). He has been awarded numerous research grants from organizations including the British Academy, Arts and Humanities Research Council, and Economic and Social Research Council.

# TEXT FROM THOMAS HIRSCHHORN

## *LESS IS LESS, MORE IS MORE*

What I want to do here is get down on paper why I almost always show many, very many, in fact, too many, works in my exhibitions. This is a criticism that is often leveled at me, but I don't have any difficulty living with it; I'm not trying to explain anything or defend myself. What I'm trying to do is write down—positively, assertively—what I had in mind, for example, in the case of *Less Is Less, More Is More* (1995). There's the old Bauhaus idea of leaving things out, of simplifying, eliminating. This leads to products, and to artworks, that may be elegant and chic, even pretty, but they aren't beautiful. Beautiful form is a fraud, and in art—and above all, in art's presentation in galleries, exhibition venues, and museums—this is pushed to the limit.

White walls, gray floors, large spaces, that's all fine, but then comes the problem: people put very little in these spaces, ideally as little as possible, presenting what's most important, most valuable. What I have difficulty with here is that this approach is totally systematic. You see it done over and over again, even today—in fact, especially today.

This insistence on value, this exclusiveness, this luxury is what scandalizes me. And the result is often exactly what people want: art exhibitions that look just like art exhibitions, but only because of their form. Less is more: it's a designer's precept. I know a gallery isn't a worker's home, and a museum isn't a canteen; a gallery isn't a place where people really work. But galleries, museums, exhibition spaces are often more like upper-middle-class homes or white-collar residences than any of the above. It's all about "less is more" as an appropriate language of form, borrowed initially from art and then applied to other fields, such as design. Who buys art? What are they buying? I think more is always more. And less is always less. More money is more money. Less success is less success. More unemployed are more unemployed. Fewer factories are fewer factories. I think entirely in terms of economics. That's why I'm interested in this concept: more is more, as an arithmetical fact, and as a political fact. More is a majority. Power is power. Violence is violence. I want to express that idea in my work as well. I don't accept the dictatorship of the isolated, the exclusive, the fine, the superior, the elite.

And that's why when I show many, far too many, works, I'm making a political statement. That's why it's never right to call it "swamping," "flooding," etc. Ideas like that don't interest me, because they're passive: you (the artist) can't stop the tide of the work yourself; you're flooded, you have no choice, etc. No; what it's about is showing this excess actively, assertively; it's not about all-over composition, it's about economy, power, and a political position. I don't want to swamp anyone, flood them, overwhelm them; I want the show to be about individual works—not as a formal *diktat*, but to make the individual important in a conscious effort, using quantity to help the individual assert its own importance, but in relation to the others, not without them. That's how I see it, and though I admit that I've done it myself—shown a single work in a single space at an exhibition—I didn't see that as a distinction or added value. In this case, the individual work was a representative, a witness, no more and no less; a representative or witness that's very present, and reports on behalf of the others. That's important to me. Even though I know it's an approach that's very difficult to keep up, from the point of view of the whole of art history, it's still what I want to do. In my exhibitions I always try to find ways of making that possible for viewers. I work through presentation and form—for example, on fabrics, on tables, as a cascade—by trying to work with limitations, to stress change; but I still let the presentation form remain what it is: the form, the mold, the vessel in which the work is contained. And for that reason alone, because there is a vessel there, my vessel, it can't overflow unless I want it to.

I like the Barnes collection, but not for the individual masterpieces that make it up. No; it's more the way the pictures are presented and put together: they're arranged by size, not by period or subject or artist. What this apparently

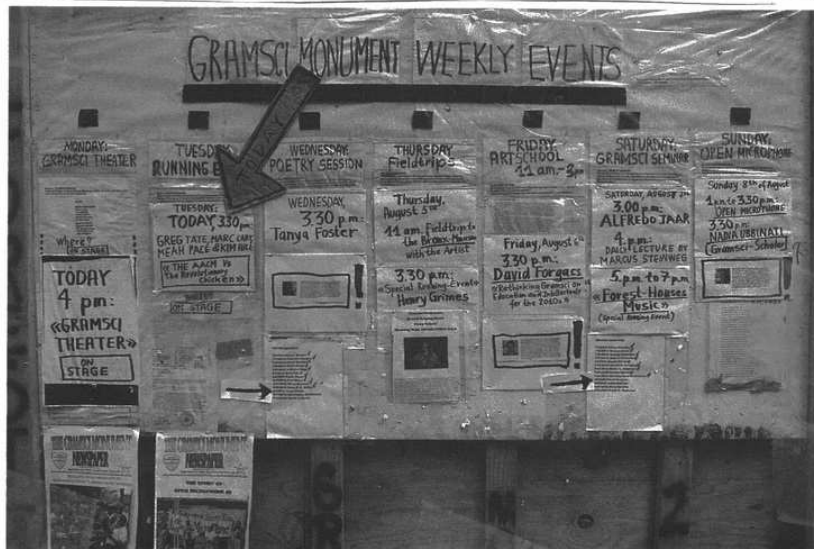
silly, simple, strange decision—to arrange the pictures by size, all hung to the middle line—does create an overall impression that's overwhelming, simply because there are so many pictures. It lets viewers completely isolate one picture from all the others—they pretty well have to if they want to focus on it. They have to forget the others around it for a moment, but then the overall impression returns again, like focusing your eye on a detail and then shifting back to the whole. In my recent exhibitions it wouldn't have been possible to take a single work away without being aware that something was missing. It would have left a hole, although the hole wouldn't have actually told you what was missing; it would just have given a few clues as to its size and its external form.

1995

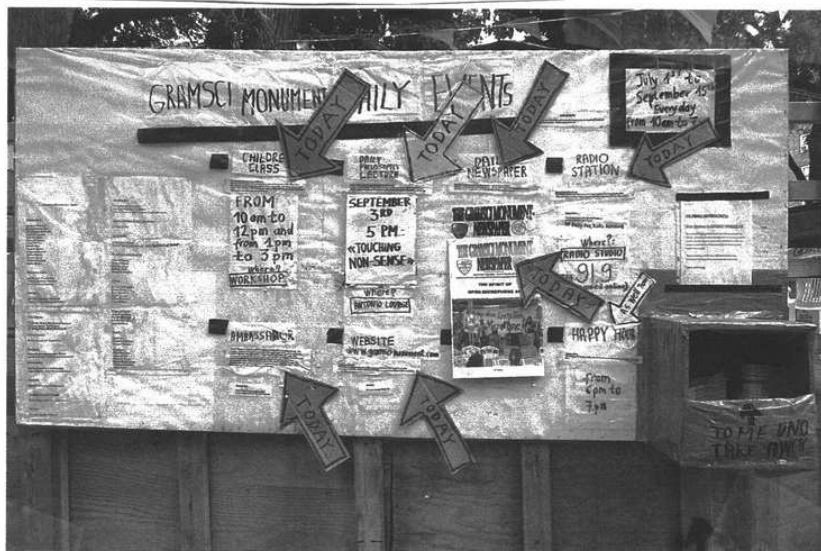
[Translated from German by Michael Robinson]



1.1 *Less Is Less, More Is More*, 1995. First Johannesburg Biennale, Johannesburg, South Africa, 1995.



Thomas Hirschhorn  
 "Gramsci Monument", Forest Houses, Bronx NY, 2013





# A DAILY LECTURE WRITTEN BY MARCUS STEINWEG

**68th Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 6th September 2013**  
**RESISTANCE, REFUSAL, DESTRUCTION**  
*Marcus Steinweg*

1. The resistance to the established order is coextensive with the resistance to historical time and geographical space.
2. Therefore it can be said of resistance that it traverses the mensurabilities toward the incommensurable which, following Nietzsche and Deleuze, can be called the dimension of the untimely and of becoming.
3. In resistance, the subject frees itself from the dictates of history as well as geography by referring to a domain that inscribes itself in these dictates as their implicit limit, for the domain of the untimely knows neither extension nor duration.
4. It outlines the lack of outline of a magnitude illegible in the universe of historico-geographic paradigms which the incommensurable is.
5. Blanchot has spoken of the incommensurable also as the exterior (*dehors*).
6. The category of the exterior consequently became the measureless measure of those movements of thought which, no matter how differently they have been articulated and developed, coincide in the attempt to situate the infinite within the horizon of finitude of materiality and mortality without becoming assimilated to the spectrum of mensurability which is geo-historical space.
7. One could designate this geo-historical space also as the domain of the manifest, and in this sense, legible and already instituted presences.
8. The refusal would prove itself to be a refusal of presence itself, as a refusal of all that is.
9. Herein lies the ontological deployment and the ontological reach of this category: in the suspension of functional realities and presences.
10. The refusal resists all realities and presences that have asserted themselves, and continue to assert themselves, as dominant realities and powerful presences.
11. It opens itself to the non-power of a kind of non-present presence whose ontological status is too complicated to bend it to the alternative between presence and absence.
12. This opening implies a resistance which demands of the subject of refusal the endurance of an *infinite* contestation.
13. To refuse means to contest "without let-up"<sup>1</sup>, to continually articulate a resistance against what is established, a resistance that even refuses to be anything other than resistant, merely negative.
14. The refusal introduced by Blanchot is anything other than reactive.<sup>2</sup>
15. It is affirmative and aggressive.
16. It corresponds to the law, not of unity, of 'consensus' and of 'satisfaction', but of a "necessary division and an infinite destruction".<sup>3</sup>
17. In it an echo of Benjamin's *destructive character* can be perceived.
18. Its destructive power resists any form of self-enclosure within models of coherence such as the self, the state, fatherland, the party, religion, the family, 'home'.
19. Refusal includes resistance against the phantasm of interiority and ontological stability of human subjectivity.
20. It is resistance to the 'law of the father', to any authority that tears the subject away from the exterior in order to assimilate it into some kind of interior promising it a kind of transcendental shelter.
21. It would be too simple to see in refusal nothing other than the figure of a romanticism of destruction.

22. In it something is expressed that reaches far beyond romantic self-delusion: the insistence on a freedom that would no longer be the freedom of phantasmal consciousness, of the subject completely at home in its fictions of reality.
23. To open the subject to the exterior means precisely this: to make it go through the experience of the ontological inconsistency of its world against its fictions in order to confront it with the discomfort of a freedom that makes it into a subject of unrest or, to use Nietzsche's and Deleuze's language, of *becoming*.
24. The dimension of becoming or of chaos is this space of unrest which Deleuzian thinking determines as a hyperborean zone.
25. In this zone, the subject is related to its indefiniteness, its truth as an *open subject* or as the "not finally determined animal" (Nietzsche).
26. In his lectures on *Philosophical Terminology*, Adorno insists on the connection of identity and the thinking of identity with the *principle of synthesis* and the concepts of the *whole* and the *one vis-à-vis* the dangerous uncontrollability of the non-identical, the diffuse and the many which resists its reduction to the principle of identity.
27. Everything belonging to the side of the subject has the trait of something *enduring*, of *constancy* and *self-preservation* whereas "what itself is not a subject has the character of uncertainty, of openness which evades the reduction to one".<sup>4</sup>
28. The subject of identity of the self hovers above the abyss of pre-synthetic multiplicity.
29. Philosophy as ontology is an idealist identification and making-identical of what is present which, in Heidegger's terminology, is the *ontic*.
30. But did not Heidegger think the ontological difference between the *ontic* and the *ontological*, between beings and being at first as an inverse constellation?
31. Beings in Heidegger's arrangement is the name for the chaotic abyss.
32. It denotes *ontic* reality which overlays this abyss (which corresponds to *being* as *nothingness* or as *withdrawal* or *concealment*) like a Deleuzian plane of consistency.
33. The difference between beings and beings would be that between abyss and (always inadequately) grounded facts, in Lacanian terminology, the crevice is between the *real* and *reality*.
34. This crevice can be defined as the difference between the universe of certainty which is the world (albeit as an incommensurable and intransparent totality of everything that *is*) and the truth (the truth of being, as Heidegger says) that postulates the exterior of the world, its essential limitedness.
35. The difference between certainty or knowledge and truth concerns the difference between established, constituted, classified, instituted and archived reality and that which resists its establishment, constitution, classification, institutionalization and archiving.
36. It concerns the incompatibility of two orders of which the first can be described as the *order of function* and the second as the *order of dysfunction*.
37. The order of function is the order of the possible and the feasible, the domain of *small politics* which is the *politics of the possible*.
38. The order of dysfunction includes what represents itself to the calculus of function as a resistance and disturbance: the impossible, the non-representable and unknowable, the measurelessness or incommensurability of life itself.
39. To it corresponds a *politics of the impossible* which would be *grand politics* that interrupts any calculus.

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Blanchot *Politische Schriften 1958-1993*, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> Naturally it is nevertheless apposite to refer to the reactivity of Blanchot's political statements insofar as they (the articles collected in the *Écrits politiques*) react to current political events. They do this not only with regard to their contents, but already formally by investing their reactivity with a universal activity and affirmation transcending reactivity. Cf. Martin Saar, *Eine Frage der Politik. Zu Maurice Blanchots Écrits Politiques 1958-1993*, paper presented to the Maurice Blanchot Colloquium, Institut für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft, JWGU, Frankfurt/M., 13-14 July 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Maurice Blanchot *Politische Schriften 1958-1993*, op. cit. p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> Theodor W. Adorno *Philosophische Terminologie*, Vol. 2, Frankfurt/M. 1974 pp. 81ff.

# WHAT'S GOING ON? FEED BACK

## ED MORALE

### gramsci takes the bronx

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## S

A blog about the  
Global Archipelago

Wailing away like a 21st century version of the Fugs, the contemporary alterna-pop consortium known as Urayoán Noel/Edwin Torres with Los Guapos Planetas performs its counter-hegemonic re-working of the Talking Heads' song "And She Was" at an open mike in my hometown of Morrisania. The lyrics re-imagine 20th century philosopher, organic intellectual, and Marxist journalist Antonio Gramsci as a thinker indigenous to NYCHA's Forest Houses. Neighborhood folks in plastic chairs, the high art world artist/creator of the whole scene, and the friends of UN/ET & LGP looked on, accepting the vacilón praxis of the moment as a kind of inescapable truth.

After a summer of not being much of anywhere at all, I finally made the pilgrimage up to Thomas Hirschhorn's art installation Gramsci Monument, a temporary structure in the middle of Morrisania's Forest Houses. The installation has come under something of an attack from art critics like *The New York Times's* Ken Johnson, who found it uninspiring, "dismally decrepit," and in the end, "another monument to [Hirschhorn's] monumental ego."

A more positive spin was provided by Whitney Kimball and Will Brand in *artcity*, whose reporting focused more on the appreciative reaction from the local residents. Finding it a welcome change of pace, they embraced the public performance space, library, and radio station as most of all "fun for the kids." Hirschhorn was not seen to be "condescending" by promoting Gramscian ideas like "Every Human Being is an Intellectual," and "Destruction is Difficult; It is as Difficult as Creation."



Here's my take: This was a scene that reminded me very much of various iterations of artist-neighborhood interaction that happened in places like ABC No Rio, Charas, and the Gas Station on the Lower East Side, and Fashion Moda in the Bronx. Those scenes, as well as this one, were imperfect yet potentially empowering space-sharing where the absence of what Gramsci called hegemony, all by itself, constituted an almost revolutionary situation.

These days it's actually easier to have such a moment, since the hegemonic force of whatever—the state apparatus, the heavy overhang of dominant narratives, the transformation of everyday human dialog into continually reified forms of advertising—makes any attempt to escape it an authentic act of human liberation. While Hirschhorn has been criticized for attempting to impose European intellectual snobbery on the hood, the two sides in this dialog are actually speaking the same language, whether or not the Gladstone Gallery or the DIA Art Foundation is paying the bill. (Actually, check out the image of Antonio below—this European intellectual may be kind of a cat of color himself.)

As a critical mass, we were in need of a break from the madness that continues to dominate the damned discourse. It's like, Syria, WTF?

During the performance, you can see Hirschhorn sitting in one of the "ugly plastic chairs" reading along with the lyrics to "Gramsci Was." He smiles, laughs, murmurs like everyone else. The monumental ego seems to have taken the day off. Sure, this isn't quite Afrika Bambaata or DJ Kool Herc happening here, and there are a lot of questions about whether books and computers and radio equipment will be available after the structure is torn down in a couple of weeks. The problem of continual gun violence—last night there was a shooting just a few blocks away—flourishes despite whatever Bloomberg thinks of stop and frisk. (Forest Houses was actually the site of an "Operation Gun Stop" event that Boro President Rubén Díaz Jr held last year.)



Remember Darius James before he moved to Berlin?

But I can't tell you there's a big problem with the Gramsci Monument. However you may interpret Hirschhorn's "out-of-placeness" he seems to have just wanted to create the space and allow people to talk whatever shit they want to. Heck, in addition to Edwin, a Nuyorican head I hadn't seen for years, there was Miguel (without piragua truck), the usual Santurce/Rio Piedras suspects (Monch, Lib, Tito, Mar), and I even ran into Greg Tate (He's reading from a play he wrote on Tuesday). All this just a couple of blocks from 163rd Street, where I once rode a beat-up tricycle before there was even hip-hop.

The problem is not the imperfect/potentially productive interaction between "artists" and the organic intellectual everyone in Forest Houses is. The problem is how it gets interrupted, again and again, by the anti-dialog, anti-language environment we're continually forced to live in. Of course in the Bronx, people being people is nothing out of the ordinary. But for this summer, it was about the people-navigating the idea of this people and that people, laughing, reading, talking, and filling up the space in between. Kind of like Gramsci does.

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#### ONE COMMENT

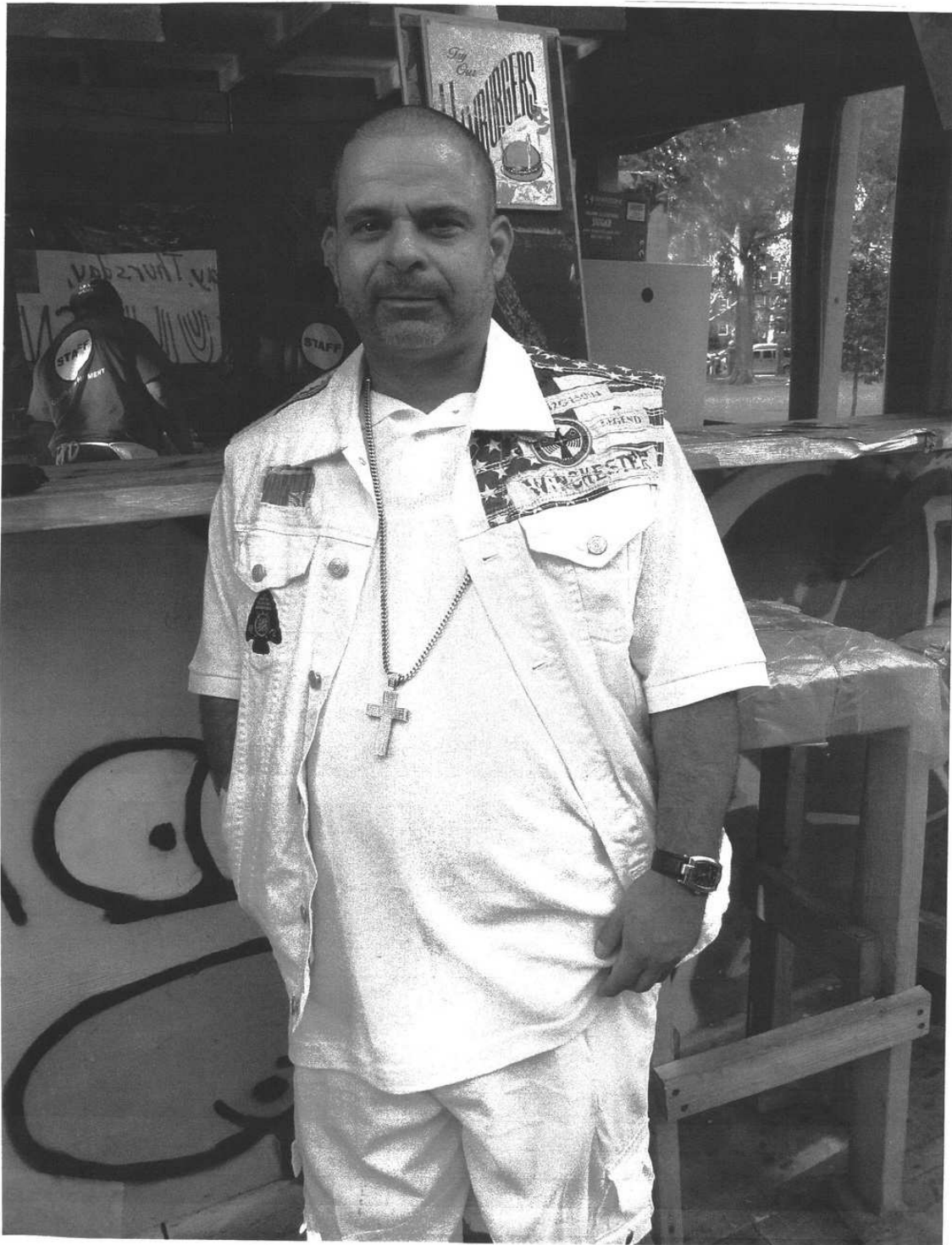
Monxo Lopez

This is a wonderful and moving assessment of the Gramsci Monument and of Mr. Hirschhorn's artistic temperament. I believe that, at least here in NYC, critics and connoisseurs have somehow lost the capacity to truly appreciate and ENJOY these types of intervention, much less of appreciating other people enjoy themselves within an aesthetically curated environment. Hirschhorn is inviting us all to a different kind of revolt: one that allows people to dance, participate, sing, and have fun. And that is all deadly serious stuff. This reading of the Gramsci Monument feels intimate, knowledgeable and in-the-know. You obviously get it because you grew up around those blocks and can really appreciate the subtleties of the interactions.

Tellingly, this effort towards publicly-owned -but ephemeral-monumentalism comes from abroad (Hirschhorn is Swiss but lives in France). Against the incapability of NYC to create anything truly monumental and public nowadays, Hirschhorn's work is a slap in the face. The Gramsci Monument is also a nasty and very specific blow to the market-driven fallacy that only Brooklyn or Manhattan can produce, be entrusted or house world-class art.

Yet, beyond all of that, there is still all that Gramsci political philosophy that is not a by-product of the monument, but at its very core. Gramsci's idea of civil society ruling itself, his understanding that economics did not take primacy over culture as agent of political change (contra some strands of orthodox Marxism), but mostly and more importantly, Gramsci's belief that things could change for the working class and the poor. I think Hirschhorn's take on Gramsci's political thought is mostly a sunny reading, and in that sense it is perfectly attuned to our beloved ghetto-spirituality and optimism. Gramsci would have understood and identified with the folks in the South Bronx and the projects. He knew jail, he understood the repressive forces operating everywhere against freedom and societal and individual growth, yet he never despaired. As they say in the Bronx, Gramsci kept on keeping on. A true ghetto cat!

# RESIDENT OF THE DAY



**LUIS ROBLES**