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Editorial. The IGS Cagliari Conference: “Gramsci in the World of Today”

Abstract

This is the Abstract of the Editorial in English of the IGJ issue 16, winter 2022.

Keywords

Editorial; English language; International Gramsci Society conference; Sardinia September-October 2021; IGJ issue 16

***The Cagliari Conference on
“Gramsci in Today’s World”.
Introduction to this Issue of the IGJ***

Guido Liguori and Derek Boothman

The material that we present in this issue of the *IGJ* comes from the Conference *Gramsci in Today’s World*, which took place in Cagliari (with significant ‘appendices’ in Ghilarza and Ales) from 30 September to 3 October 2021. The Conference was organized by the *International Gramsci Society (IGS)*, in collaboration with the *Interuniversity Research Centre for Gramsci Studies*, the *GramsciLab* of the University of Cagliari, the *Istituto Gramsci of Sardinia*, and the following associations: *Casa Natale Antonio Gramsci (Antonio Gramsci Birthplace)* in Ales, the *Association for Antonio Gramsci* in Ghilarza and the *Fondazione Casa Museo Gramsci (Gramsci House Museum Foundation)* of Ghilarza.

The *IGS* holds its world-wide meetings on the ten-year anniversaries of the birth and death of Gramsci, i.e. the first and seventh year of each decade. The last Congress-Conference of our *Association* (we usually accompany our study conferences with the assemblies of the members present) took place in 2017 at the University of Campinas (Brazil). On that occasion Joseph Buttigieg – President of the *IGS* and, before that, for long its Secretary, as well as being the last of the founders (with John Cammett and Frank Rosengarten) of the Association still alive – had expressed the wish that the next appointment for collective reflection should involve the greatest possible number of countries, with the overriding aim of trying to outline a ‘mapping’ of the most recent presence of Gramsci in the world.

Buttigieg died unexpectedly in January 2019. We took it upon ourselves to fulfil this wish of his, since among other things, it expressed a highly interesting and stimulating indication of work which was in effect necessary.

A meeting of a breadth comparable to the one proposed by Buttigieg took place in Formia, many years previously, in 1989. Other international meetings have followed, most latterly that in

Rome in 2017, organized jointly with the *Fondazione Gramsci*, but one that did not have the ‘representativeness’ hoped for by Joe.

We began, then, to work along the lines of the mapping desired by Joe, knowing however that we have only partially realized his aim (we are particularly self-critical of not having succeeded in involving friends and scholars from Japan, one of the countries of a major Gramscian tradition). In spite of this, we can say with some satisfaction that the number of scholars that we have succeeded in involving – despite the Covid pandemic creating not a few travel difficulties (some of the interventions were by video link) – was quite notable, with more than 30 interventions representing around 25 countries or geocultural areas. Almost all of these are present in this number of the *IGJ*, through texts that have been reworked and revised expressly for publication here, while a number of interventions – specifically devoted to the journals that play an important role in the debate surrounding Gramscian thought – will be published in the next number. As well as the contributions at the conference, we should also add the ‘satellite’ information meeting alongside the conference with two of the main protagonists of the *Italian National Edition of Gramsci’s Writings*, currently underway, namely Gianni Francioni and Leonardo Rapone.

The Conference, most of whose proceedings we are here publishing was made possible in the first place thanks to the high degree of ‘Gramscian militancy’ shown once more by *IGS* friends, located in various countries. In addition to this, thanks are also due to the usual generosity of our friends in Sardinia, especially those of the University of Cagliari. First of all, then, thanks go to Patrizia Manduchi, Sabrina Perra and Alessandra Marchi, also to Francesca Congiu, Marcos Del Roio, Lea Durante, Gianni Fresu, Massimo Modonesi, Claudia Ortu, Mauro Pala and Cristina Secci, who along with me formed part of the conference Scientific Committee, which inevitably then became the Organizing Committee.

What ‘photograph’ of the extension of Gramsci in the world may be gained through this Autumn 2021 Conference? It seems an in-

controvertible fact that the last two decades has seen a process of 'globalization' of the diffusion and knowledge of Gramsci.

This process is obviously proceeding unevenly, characterized by local specificities, by the state of progress of Gramsci's writings and also by the rootedness of a progressive and anti-capitalist tradition. Its reception has taken place at times on a purely cultural plane, at other times with political implications: sometimes remaining confined to university campuses, sometimes involving public debate. In some cases its limits are those of a symbolic and evocative significance, while in others it brings into play the sharpest instruments of hermeneutics, of philology, of research on origins.

This could not moreover be otherwise for an author whose secondary bibliography numbers over 22 thousand titles in more than 40 languages. Of this enormous diffusion our Conference has given, certainly, a partial – albeit significant – account, especially in relation to the fact that it was expressly limited to the last few years of the spread of Gramscian studies in the world.

This is work that the *IGS* intends to follow up, since putting into contact with one another scholars, cultures, experiences that in their different ways are involved with Gramsci, with his biography, and his thought constitutes a central part of its *raison d'être* and its work programme.

In order to carry this out, there needs to be the contribution of everyone interested in Gramsci and everyone whose heart lies with the diffusion of his presence in today's world.

Summing up, The articles in this issue of the *IGJ* give a glimpse of the situation of Gramsci studies in the countries of each author, as this has developed over the last fifteen years. A certain flexibility has been allowed on the period dealt with, as there has been for the contributors who have wished to give a broader historical picture of Gramsci studies in their country; yet other authors have instead dealt with particular aspects of their national or geocultural area.

As in other recent issues of the *IGJ*, we have included an English-language translation of a *Dizionario gramsciano* entry, here *Il mondo* (*The World*). The entry, by the late Giorgio Baratta, one of the most

original interpreters of Gramsci, suggests a radical anti-Eurocentrism in Gramsci, in line with the contributions at the Conference.

After the short *Preface* constituted by Giorgio's article, the rest of this issue corresponds to the order of the Conference sessions, reflecting, in so far as possible, the spread of Gramscian thought outside Italy. With slight adjustments, we follow the order of presentation of the talks given; in a small number of cases there are two interventions for a given country or geopolitico-cultural area. In a few, even important, cases conference participants have unfortunately not been able to write up their talk for inclusion here.

The language of each contribution was chosen by its author, and the bibliographical information in the footnotes or in the *Bibliographies*, follow conventions holding in the country and language of the article. We therefore apologize for what may appear a certain lack of stylistic homogeneity of presentation.

In brief conclusion, at least three aspects hit the eye. First, there is use of the entire range of the most important concepts present in the *Notebooks*, that of hegemony most of all. Second, speakers from different countries have commented that, in certain periods, interest in Gramsci has suffered an interruption, now in general left behind, as witnessed by the foundation of new *Gramsci Societies*. Third, in these pages one sees names appearing of key figures, each relevant to their own particular area, but often to a large extent unknown outside their own area.

With this monographic issue of the review, number 16, we conclude the Volume 4 of the *IGJ*. Two other numbers are planned for 2022, so that future volumes will coincide with a two-year calendar cycle. We are pleased to announce that there is planned for Volume 5(1) the most authoritative reconstruction yet done, of the various journeyings undergone by Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*. Publication of this article will possibly not resolve but at least shed light on polemics of the last few years regarding the *Notebooks*.