

EDITORIAL NOTE

Antonio Gramsci has had a remarkably long afterlife. That an early-twentieth century Italian writer, socialist organizer, and opponent of capital and fascism found an intrigued audience among later generations of academics and activists may be a matter of context. The radical acceleration of socioeconomic changes and their movement across space over the latter half of the last century—the making of a world market economy and the hegemony of the Global North over the South—are certainly one aspect. A few responded to commodification, capital accumulation, and empire by dabbling with the importance of texts and ideas to historical processes and retreating to the confines of expanding university systems. Some, however, chose otherwise. What makes Gramsci so appealing is that his writings, while perhaps not as plentiful as others, traced a strain of historical materialism that differed slightly from what came before and what was present. One novelty was the seriousness with which Gramsci took the relationship and interplay of class relations of capitalist societies to ideas and cultural institutions. And, in taking this stance, intellectuals, whose origin, choices, and experiences mattered, were not outside of social and economic relations, but, rather, embedded in the struggle of the working-class and bourgeoisie. For those of us on the Left and living through the (ongoing) global wreckage of capitalist transformation, the lives and labour of intellectuals are important, whether to the interconnectivity of the counter-hegemonic project or demystifying relations of power.

While a thumbnail sketch of Gramsci's ideas, it offers a window into some of the dynamics and themes of this issue's articles and essays. Put simply, each author takes thinkers and their ideas seriously, sometimes challenging who we see as an intellectual and what shape we accord to ideas. This process unfolds in multiple ways throughout this issue. Mariana Stoler's examination of Argentinian steelworkers in the mid-to-late twentieth century Buenos Aires shows how different levels of workplace experience and the spatial organization of the workplace constructed contradictory views of unionism and labour leadership. These relationships, as Stoler illustrates, meant that, rather than a reactionary monolith, Argentinian steelworkers developed their own ideas about collectivity and economic justice. On the other hand, Jason Garner and José Benclowicz's study of revolutionary anarchism in early-twentieth Russia and Europe prioritizes this kind of complexity. Rather than marginal and static, Garner and Benclowicz show the dynamism of anarchist critique, as separation from the labour movement and competition of ideologies prompted new tactics and goals. Yet, as Kanaaneh argues, religion and socialist thought should not be treated as mutually exclusive. For Kanaaneh, Ali Shari'ti, a mid-twentieth century Iranian intellectual, integrated Islam and the existential aspects of Marxism into an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist discourse, one that sought to generate a revolutionary consciousness among Islamic countries.

Two authors, who continue our multi-issue examination of today's "left

history,” capture this dynamic well. Both items—a collection of poetry and an author interview—trace lives on the left and the dialectic of thought and action to political struggle. Larry Hannant, an historian of the left and Canada, wrote the verses—literary observance of working life and poetic critiques of capital and state—during his time as an activist for the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) in 1970s. With around forty years between then and now, he suggests that, while embedded in industrial workplaces, conceived as “revolutionary working-class poetry”, and informed by party ideals, the context and content contain multitudes about youth and radical education. In contrast, Kent Worcester offers an interview with academic Sam Farber, a Cuban by birth, American by residence, sociologist by training, and socialist by conviction. It charts the different intersections of Farber’s scholarship and activism, highlighting, to note a couple of elements, the movement away from a petty bourgeois upbringing into the contested terrains of socialist theory and academics in the late-twentieth century and the actions of International Socialists (IS) and Free Speech Movement of the United States. Farber, when asked to conceptualize his contributions, views these efforts as a builder of an “ideological tendency.”

The editors would like to take a moment to note that our book review editor and proofreader, Anna Jarvis, is leaving the journal. It is fitting that her final issue traces the relationship of power, struggle, and radical ideas and how these experiences informed varying lines of analysis and critique. Jarvis lives her politics and brought that experience—anti-nuclear protests, feminist projects, legal activism, co-operative life, community gardening—to the academic workplace. The journal, as all the editors can attest, is better because of her labour and insight. We also know that, once all is written and done, the broader academic community will be as well.

The Editors