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Rivoluzione. Un secolo dopo

Revolution. A Century Later

CURATORI / EDITORS

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1. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Libera Pisano, Giacomo Pisani

La stella rossa e i suoi raggi. Un secolo di rivoluzione (1917-2017) • The Red Star and its Rays. A Century of Revolution (1917-2017)

The Editorial of Lo Sguardo's 25th issue. The article introduces the collection discussing the articles as well as their historiographical placement.

2. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Giso Amendola

Lenin e le trappole della politica assoluta • Lenin and the Traps of the Absolute Politics

In Lenin's idea of Revolution, the concept of historical contingency is central. The revolutionary is who knows how to grasp the right time. But the ability to act on time is always in relation to the development of the productive forces and to the transformations of the subjects, as well as interpreting the Italian workerism (operaismo). At the opposite side, in some readings, as in the one inspired by the Lacanian psychoanalysis offered by S. Žižek, the contingency of revolutionary action turns into a decision based solely on itself, open not to the concreteness of class relationships and transformations of subjectivity but to a transcendent Truth. So Lenin's thought is likely to be transformed into a thought of the 'autonomy of politics'. Instead, it would be more urgent to come back to thinking about the original way in which social self-organization (the Soviets) and political decision-making are articulated in Lenin.

3. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Valeria Ferraretto

Adorno e un nuovo Manifesto. La rivoluzione senza proletariato e senza prassi • Adorno and a New Manifesto. The Revolution without Proletariat and Praxis

In two discussions – the first one in autumn 1939, the second one in spring 1956 – Adorno invites his friend Horkheimer to write a contemporary version of the Communist Manifesto. According to Adorno, the new Manifesto must be a «strictly Leninist manifesto», that certainly follows Marx' and Engels' lessons, but has to go further. Firstly, Adorno realizes that in the late capitalism there is no longer a class consciousness. The Manifesto from 1848 was written for the proletarian class, who had a revolutionary role, but now the proletariat is well integrated into the society and it has forgotten its revolutionary mission. Then, Adorno wants to underline the importance of the theory over the praxis. His new Manifesto was never written, but we can see a new reposition of Marxian questions, useful even for us, in the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution.

4. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Gabriele Vissio

Il mondo deve cambiare. Storia e rivoluzione in Eric J. Hobsbawm • The World Must Change. History and Revolution in Eric J. Hobsbawm

The main claim of this paper is about the presence of a particular philosophy of history in Hobsbawm's works, founded on the notion of «revolution». In the first two parts of the essay, I present Hobsbawm's studies on (1) the 19th Century's «double revolution» and (2) the Bolshevik Revolution. On the basis of the Hobsbawm's concept of revolution in the third part of the paper I try to sketch out a general philosophical conception of history and of historical changing, also introducing the philosophical concept of «counterfactual».

5. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Marco Riformetti

Egemonia e istituzioni come macchine collettive di enunciazione del 'General Intellect' • Egemony and Institutions as Collective Machines of the 'General Intellect's' Enunciation

The present paper deals with some main aspects of the work of two communist revolutionaries: A. Gramsci and V. Lenin. Furthermore, it copes with the concept of 'Hegemony', its historical recognition and its subversive re-signification in the contemporary lecture of the Italian Marxist. As the phenomenology of the autonomous class institution, the 'Soviet Power', in the work of Lenin, can be used to reconfigure a set of practices for the conflicts, in the process of subjectivation in the class war as well as in the process of collective self-government. The former part of the essay will be focused on the genealogy of this concepts, whereas the latter will analyze the possibility of a social transformation embodied in the General Intellect, based on the theoretical and political practices of the two Marxist philosophers.

6. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Angelo Nizza

Un percorso nella filosofia politica di Lenin tra classe, partito e Stato • A Route in Lenin's Political Philosophy. Between Class, Party and State

The year 2017 is the 100th anniversary of an event that had a tremendous impact on the entire XX century history and that irreversibly marked the political discourse of the contemporary world. This event had two main protagonists: the Russian popular masses, who tried to launch an extraordinarily daring 'assault to the sky' and a man who was – and not by accident – that assault's leader. The event is the October Revolution and the man is Vladimir Ilič Ulyanov, Lenin. In this contribution, we intend to propose a journey inside Lenin's political philosophy between Class, Party and State.

7. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Michele Fiorillo

Lavoro e rivoluzione. Sapere, linguaggio e produzione nel pensiero radicale italiano • Work and Revolution. Knowledge, Language and Production in the Italian Radical Thought.

According to the Italian Radical Thought, the study of work structure gives the basis for the concept of revolution. In this paper, the aim is to highlight one of the contradiction of the 21th century society: it's true that one of the requirements of communist society – conceived as the result of the revolution – consists in the suppression of the separation between manual and intellectual work; but, at the same time, it's also true that the unification of hand and mind qualifies more and more the work of contemporary capitalism. Taking note of this contradiction allows us to clear the characteristics of social production relationships and to provide certain elements about a theory of social transformation.

8. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Michele Fiorillo

The Freedom to Think Differently. Rosa Luxemburg's Democratic Critique of Leninism

The search for a form of 'true democracy' – where the governors can potentially coincide with the governed – seems to be the central point of the political research and struggle of Rosa Luxemburg, as it was for Antonio Gramsci. Both of them co-founders of communist parties, in Germany and Italy respectively, they exercised their own strong critical view, in different moments, on the degeneration of the Soviet experience. Both practiced and theorized a 'conciliar' model of democracy, imagining it as a final full participation of the people to the government of the 'common'. Luxemburg criticized particularly the idea of Lenin and Bolsheviks about the supremacy of a strongly centralized revolutionary party, claiming at the contrary for a well understood 'dictatorship of the proletariat' conceived as a self-government of the working masses. Moreover, in the controversial manuscript on The Russian Revolution she was opposed to the dissolution of the Constituent assembly and to the limitation of civil rights perpetrated by the Bolsheviks. Conversely, in Luxemburg's opinion

complete freedom was essential for a full emancipation and for the flourishing of people's power.

9. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Regletto Aldrich D. Imbong

From Lenin to Badiou. The Philippine Revolution against Neoliberal Capitalism

This paper will examine the concrete appropriation of Leninism in the Philippine communist movement. It will further trace the triadic convergence between Leninism, the Philippine Revolution, and Badiouian emancipatory politics. It will argue that three essential Leninist concepts are appropriated by the current Philippine Revolution: the vanguard party, the basic alliance of the peasants and the workers, and the united front work. It will also discuss Badiouian emancipatory politics, and particularly highlight Badiou's treatment on the question of organization or the party of the new type vis-à-vis the need to wage emancipatory struggles against neoliberal capitalism. The paper will conclude by positing three crucial points as necessary for an emancipatory politics: eventual rupture with the state, reconstitution of the organization or party of a new type as a political necessity, and the recognition and forging of a broader revolutionary unity with other sites of oppression.

10. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Matthieu Renault

Dalle colonie russe all'America nera... e viceversa: Lenin e Langston Hughes • From the Russian Colonies to the Black America... and back. Lenin and Langston Hughes

Lenin's essays on national self-determination and anti-colonial struggles are well known. Much less are his earlier remarks on the process of internal colonization of the Russian Empire's 'free' borderlands. 'Oppressed nations' are conspicuously absent in those writings, which are complemented with a cross analysis of the shared destiny of Russian serfs and American slaves. This urges us to look afresh at the later identification between the experience of Asian and African people subjected to the yoke of European imperialism and that of African Americans, considering themselves as colonized from within. Finally, Langston Hughes's narrative of his travel to Soviet Central Asia in the early thirties offers a valuable perspective for re-examining the emancipation of the Empire's 'colored people' after 1917, and its limits.

11. SAGGIO/ESSAY: John LeJeune

Lenin's Revolutionary Tactics in an Age of Liberal Revolution

Though he is widely recognized as the most brilliant revolutionary tactician of the twentieth century, appreciation of Lenin's revolutionary thought has largely concentrated on Marxist or other class-based forms of revolutionary action. In addition, Lenin's legacy is inextricably tied to revolutionary violence and post-revolutionary dictatorship, leading some – including many among the

most recent wave of revolutionary protestors in the Western and Arab worlds – to reject leadership or organizational models of revolution altogether. From Occupy to the recent failures of liberal democratic revolution in Egypt, however, recent history has shown the political weakness of leaderless and anti-organization movements, including those relying on diffuse or social media platforms of mobilization. Against these patterns, I suggest that we revisit and reassess the tactical insights of Lenin's revolutionary thought even in our post-Leninist democratic age, and argue that Lenin's basic tactical approach is as relevant to liberal revolutions as to Marxist ones.

12. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Gian Piero Piretto

La propaganda visuale dell'ateismo nell'Unione Sovietica dei primi due decenni • The Atheist Visual Propaganda of the URSS in the First Two Decades

Religious iconoclasm was one of the main issues of the new born Soviet power. Church holydays, according to the Bolsheviks, were responsible for drunkenness and bad work. Visual culture was highly employed to fight superstition and promote atheism among the proletarians. Russian peasants were illiterate and extremely conservative. It was not easy to convince them to abandon old habits. Special newspapers and magazines were dedicated to this problem. Especially the illustrated «Bezbozhnik u stanka» (The godless in the factory) published fierce images stimulating hate against religion and its representatives. Churches were demolished or transformed into more politically correct worker clubs. Cinema also dedicated great attention to this process. Dziga Vertov's *Enthusiasm or The Donbass Symphony* (1931) showed how a church was dismantled and transformed into a youth club, but the highly innovative artifices and avant-garde sound and image relationship proposed by the director were not appreciated by the censors, and the film was not distributed. The same happened in 1937 with Sergei Eisenstein's *Bezhin Meadow*. The ritual dismantling of a church by peasants who, because of the montage technique, turn into saints or prophets, was condemned for the excess of formalism and lack of political involvement. Soviet power was more interested in the result of actions than in the poetic description of the process. Mass illustrations were more effective and the great investment in propaganda posters and magazine covers continued throughout the years of the Soviet experience. The article investigates several examples of the creation of visual iconoclasm and how it 'functioned' among the newly born proletarians.

13. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Nathalya Kholkhova

Stuck in-Between: Supple Gender in Eisenstein's Alexander Nevsky (1938)

Eisenstein's films, as well as his sketches and conceptual essays, are strongly suggestive of the artist's avant-gardist preference for independently functioning and floating limbs over-articulate and emotionally responsive human characters. However, in his historical drama, *Alexander Nevsky* (1938), regardless of their marginal position and the scarcity of their appearances within a visual narrative of sequential shots, female characters guard and reaffirm the boundaries of the two ideological

agendas: of the artist himself inspired by the revolutionary attitudes of the modern art-form, and the authoritative office of the Soviet cinematography under Stalin. Women, in this Eisenstein production, happen to be makers of meaning who address both socialist realist (imposed on the artist) and Eisenstein's own, formalist aesthetics of intellektual'noe kino that was developed under the ideological climate of the Russian Revolution. This article uncovers how Sergei Eisenstein preserved his artistic autonomy and individuality in Stalin Prize-winning film Alexander Nevsky (1938) via the means of the avant-gardist device of plasmaticness. The study of Eisenstein's film, Alexander Nevsky, demonstrates that there is no give and take interaction between the spectator and the woman bodies represented on the screen, because formalist aesthetics is designed to work towards the functional dominance of art over people and their sentiments and desires.

14. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Sebastiano Sitta Zanussi

Rivoluzione come mito politico: icone di una rivoluzione • Revolution as a Political Myth: Icons of a Revolution.

This article addresses the role of icons and symbols in the Soviet Revolution. At first it will be analyzed the political power of myths and symbols; then I will concentrate on the Revolutionary myth from the XVII century on; at last the specific case of SSSR will be taken into consideration. In fact, as far as October Revolution is concerned, traditional iconography and symbols played a relevant role as for both the 'worker' and the 'leader' images. I will show how – after a first period of incubation – the imagery was used by Bolsheviks to represent Soviet auto-consciousness in metaphysical terms. In conclusion, it will be analyzed the 'apocalypse' concept in relation to the characters of Revolution that were previously exposed.

15. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Roberto Bravi, Giovanni Campailla

Di quale esperienza l'Idea di comunismo è il nome? • Which Experience the Idea of Communism is the Name of?

The term communism appeared to be discredited. However, for more than a decade now, it has surprisingly come back. This is detectable, in the academic field, through a series of conferences that have taken place in recent years. The present article examines some of the contributions from the first of these conferences (which took place in London in 2009): those of Badiou, Rancière, Negri, and Žižek. Each section analyses the way in which the author, in his own way, proposes an answer to the question of the relationship between the idea of communism and its concrete or historical experience. The article will conclude that this is the true legacy of this debate. It is a theoretical knot that lies at the very heart of the traditional methodology of critical thinking: the relationship between theory and praxis. In light of this knot, we will remark the antinomies of this debate, but also the broader perspective opened by it, regarding, more than the term communism in itself, the

subjective experience that can be named communist.

16. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Augusto Illuminati

1917-2017: effetti della guerra, effetti del neoliberalismo • 1917-2017: Consequences of War, Consequences of Neoliberalism

Martov, the Menshevik, was defeated in October 1917 by Lenin and Trotsky, but some of his acute analysis of the transformations made by the World War I on composition and mindset of the working class can also be useful today to understand the traumatic shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism and the crisis of ethics of labour and progressivism.

17. SAGGIO/ESSAY: Luciana Castellina

The Russian Revolution and Us

Luciana Castellina celebrates the hundredth anniversary of the Russian Revolution as the first real massive movement committed to removing the status quo, in accordance with the desire to erase class privileges. Far from being a rhetorical celebration, this essay sheds light on the revolutionary legacy of the Red October by trying to answer to these questions: Was the actual experience of the USSR the inevitable consequence of the Revolution, or was a different development possible? As an ideal model for the society we are fighting for, has communism died with the Soviet failure?

18. INTERVISTA/INTERVIEW: Gianni Vattimo

Il grido degli sfruttati, oltre il mito della rivoluzione. Intervista a Gianni Vattimo • The Cry of the Exploited. Beyond the Myth of the Revolution.

In a short but intense interview, Gianni Vattimo interprets and discusses the legacy of the Russian Revolution. Instead of a commemoration which betrays the liberating significance of the revolution itself, re-thinking the Russian Revolution today should consist in a re-appropriation movement in which, under the specific – historically located – conditions, the subjects break the present state of things on the world scene.