

“PEOPLE HAVE THE POWER”

POTENZA, LIMITI E CONTRADDIZIONI DI UN CONCETTO MODERNO

a cura di Stefano Visentin

Editoriale

p. 7 Stefano Visentin, *“People have the power”*. *Potenza, limiti e contraddizioni di un concetto moderno*

Monografica (I) – Figure del popolo tra XIX e XX secolo

p. 15 Maurizio Ricciardi, *Politicizzare il popolo. Semantiche del soggetto collettivo in Germania tra il 1848 e il nazionalsocialismo*

Abstract: The essay analyses three specific ways in which the “people” is politicized in relation to the emergence of capitalist society, of its conflicts and divisions. The semantics of the collective subject is thus determined by its constant opposition to that of society. The first politicization is the one highlighted by the Hegelian left, particularly, by Arnold Ruge and Edgar Bauer. According to them, the “democratic people” is both an end in view and an alternative to the empiric people, and reproduces the distinction between the social and the political also in the middle of the 1848-1849 revolution. The “population construct” and the concept of nation establish a specific field of tension with that of the people (Bluntschli) in an attempt to maintain change within the consolidated order of the State and its doctrine. The reaction against the revolution and the establishment of industry triggers a refusal of the societal politicization of the people, that is of a conception of the people as a class society whose conflicts can be sociologically analyzed (Tönnies, Weber) and administratively neutralized (Stein). This refusal produces a conception of the people as a natural and artistic object that – particularly in Heinrich Riehl work – in the following decades has a long-lasting influence on the German culture. The outcome of the politicization of society proposed by Karl Lamprecht is an attempt to restore those corporative authorities that can support the policies for governing an increasingly dynamic society. The debacle of the Weimar Republic paves the way for the specifically racist and communitarian politicization of the people provided by National- Socialism. The concept of people is regarded as political insofar as it can express a non-representative configuration of the State and the law, based on the unconditional obedience to the Führer’s command.

Keywords: People; Capitalism; Collective subject; Hegelian left; Sociology; Classes.

p. 41 Javier Balsa, *Il popolo in Marx (dal giovane Marx al 18 Brumaio di Luigi Bonaparte)*

Abstract: This article analyzes the use of the concept of “people” during Karl Marx’s first decade of intellectual work. In his first writings, it was a main concept. However, the signifier “people” quickly lost presence and practically disappeared in the texts of the second half of the 1840s. In the works dedicated to the French conjuncture from 1848 to 1851, Marx made a direct criticism of the use of the concept of “people” because it veils the perception of the class struggle. However, a careful analysis of these writings shows that Marx continued to use the signifier “people”. The hypothesis is that this continuity is due to two functions present throughout all the texts analyzed. First, the term “people” would make it possible to describe in a unitary manner a diversified set of actors that make up the popular sectors and, in this way, could contribute to their political unity. And, secondly, “people” are

at the center of the rhetoric of a democratic proposal conceived as “sovereignty of the people”. Hence this signifier has an interpellative force and a rhetoric function that, beyond the problems that its ambiguity may generate, can hardly be replaced by another.

Keywords: People; Marx; *Volkgeist*; Sovereignty; Classes.

p. 73 Domenico Palano, *“Sotto la vernice lucente delle civiltà moderne”. “Razza”, “popolo” e “folla” nella psicologia collettiva di Gustave Le Bon: appunti di rilettura*

Abstract: This article offers a new reading of Gustave Le Bon’s thought, in particular regarding his conceptions of “crowd”, “race” and “people”. This paper tries to show the inconsistencies in the vision of the “crowd” proposed by Le Bon’s in his books *Lois psychologiques de l’évolution des peuples* (1894) and *Psychologie des foules* (1895). In fact, until 1894 Le Bon excluded that it was possible to arrest the process of degeneration of Latin races, and moreover he used the words “crowd”, “people” and “race” as substantially equivalent. On the contrary, in *Psychologie des foules*, he not only distinguished between “crowd”, “people” and “race”, but he also believed that it was possible to govern the masses by psychological manipulation. In order to carry out this radical revision, and to present himself as a Machiavelli of the “age des foules”, Le Bon must however modify some important points of his former conception of the psychology of people.

Keywords: Gustave Le Bon; Crowd Psychology; Race; People Psychology; Degeneration.

p. 111 Patricia Chiantera, *Democrazia diretta e controllo del mercato? Un’antinomia del primo populismo americano*

Abstract: Not only different and opposite issues and demands build the complex ideological constellation of the first American Populism (People’s Party) but also a plurality and variety of political and social forces represent the main agents of the populist protest movements between the nineteenth and twentieth century in America. One of the main contradictions emerging from the political debate led by American populist leaders at the time is the one between the claim for a stronger role of the central government and the implementation of direct democracy. The essay deals with this contradiction, which is key to understand the vagueness of the populist ideology and of the “people’s identity” in the populist movements. The article shows that the ambiguous nature of the idea of people, as Laclau argues, may explain the reason for the success of populist movements, namely for their ability to mobilise and bring together different classes and opposite interests.

Keywords: People’s Party; Populism; Direct Democracy; Greenbackers; Laclau.

p. 131 Stefano Visentin, *“Un popolo innumerevole”. Frantz Fanone l’invenzione di una nazione*

Abstract: The entire work of Frantz Fanon is traversed by a theoretical and political critique of the method of the humanities and social sciences, accused of legitimizing European colonial rule. The struggle for the liberation of colonized peoples is thus intertwined with the construction of a new political conceptuality, based on the “direct protagonism” of the damned of the earth. Through the material and symbolic-linguistic mobilization generated by the struggle, the people take on the task of “inventing” a nation through built on new collective behaviors and institutions. In particular, it is the very composition of the people that acquires different characteristics from the sovereign people of the modern Western political tradition: rejecting any unitary and homogenizing obsession, the people of the damned of the earth appear to be crossed by heterogeneous subjects, who nevertheless find ways of acting in common in order to constitute a free nation.

Keywords: Frantz Fanon; Colonial Psychopathology; Peasantry; Lumpenproletariat; Women Struggle; Anti-colonial Nationalism.

p. 163 Alberto Toscano, *A Just People, or Just the People? Althusser, Foucault and Juridical Ideology*

Abstract: The return of the figure of the people to the forefront of radical theorising in France can be contextualised and complicated by contrasting it with the relative hostility or indifference to it in the ambit of *la pensée soixante-huit*. For a spell, the people was largely displaced by collective formations that sought to escape the nation-state cage of political modernity, not just antagonistic conceptions of class, but all kinds of groups, movements, multiplicities, minorities, etc. This essay probes two theoretical episodes that can contribute to a critical archaeology of the people, namely Louis Althusser's reading of Rousseau in the mid-1960s and Michel Foucault's problematisation of popular justice in the early 1970s. In both we see how a critique of the modern (and Republican) figure of the people is accompanied by a militant anatomy of juridical ideology, and an effort to think forms of group formation and conflict irreducible to the dominant paradigms of political modernity.

Keywords: Louis Althusser; Michel Foucault; Juridical Ideology; People; Popular Justice.

Monografica (II) – Presenza e assenza del popolo nel dibattito politico contemporaneo

p. 185 Rocco Picciotto Maniscalco, *Popolo, domande sociali e istituzioni populiste. Populismo in e oltre Laclau*

Abstract: The main objective of this essay is to critically analyze part of the thought of Ernesto Laclau, one of the most important South American intellectuals of the last decades, especially referring to one of his most important works: *On Populist Reason*. The text will be divided into 3 parts: in the first one, I will briefly introduce the thought of the Argentine philosopher, highlighting the most problematic parts and less consistent with the theoretical framework of Laclau himself. The second and third part of the essay will instead be devoted to a synthetic critical examination of two central elements of Laclau's discursive construction: the minimum unit of analysis possible according to the Argentine philosopher (social questions), and the relationship that is established between populism and institutions, (especially following the democratic conquest of the government). Studying the two extremes of this continuum, the minimal unity and "point of arrival" of populism in power, it can be useful to understand something more about the very concept of people and some of its most recent transformations.

Keywords: Laclau; Populism; People; Social demands; Institutions.

p. 201 Giorgio Cesarale, *Dal popolo ai suoi soggetti: cittadini, denizens, lavoratori nell'epoca neoliberista*

Abstract: Is neoliberalism a threat to citizenship? This question is answered with the help of Bryan S. Turner's analysis of the contemporary obsolescence of citizenship in a market-driven society. According to him, the neoliberal citizen has become similar to the denizen, because the former now enjoys less rights; his/her ethical belonging to the State and the people has been weakened; he/she does not participate in political opinion- and will-formation. The argument of this article, though, is that citizenship itself must be re-examined, re-framing it as a *trait d'union* between the three main spheres of capitalist society (circulation, production, reproduction). In this light, the neoliberal

citizen must also be conceived of as a member of a now world-scale sphere of circulation, which appears to be abstracted from the sphere of production and re- production. As such, the neoliberal citizen is also experiencing unprecedented levels of autonomy.

Keywords: Citizenship; Denizenship; Neoliberalism; State; Production.

p. 223 Roberta Ferrari, *Da Olympe de Gouges alla Rojava. La critica femminista del popolo tra differenza e uguaglianza*

Abstract: To understand the feminist critique of the concept of people means re-constructing the semantics of a struggle on the body of the nation, exploring the relationship, the paradoxes and the contradictions between equality and difference. It means showing the external and internal struggle waged constantly against the political neutralization and the social valorization of the difference by political, social and economic institutions. Above all it means questioning the problem of political unity and the way in which the feminist critique has unveiled its patriarchal character. Taking as a starting point Olympe de Gouges' critique, in the framework of the universalism of rights born in the French Revolution, the essay reaches the Kurdish critique at the base of the political experiment of the Rojava, discussing the theoretical and political path of black feminism and the political inventions of those postcolonial and transnational feminists who, also today, continue to analyse freedom, autonomy and democracy in the global world from the point of view of the dilemma of equality.

Keywords: People; Feminism; Olympe de Gouges; Bell Hooks; Rojava.

p. 251 Adalgiso Amendola, *I popoli mancati del momento populista e le sfide dell'eterogeneità*

Abstract: According to many interpreters, since 2015 we live a “populist moment”. With “populist moment”, they intend to bring very different movements to a common matrix, the reaction to neoliberalism. In a “populist moment”, it would be inevitable, also for progressive and emancipatory movements, express their social demands in populist language. But, on one hand, populist movements are internal responses in the crisis of neoliberalism, more than an opposition to neoliberalism. On the other hand, populism cannot resume heterogeneity and multiplicity of emerging political subjectivities into the idea of “one” people, that is rooted in the modern tradition of sovereignty. New intersectional movements are examples of political coalitions, as alternative to populism and to idea of “building the people”.

Keywords: Populism; People; Sovereignty; Intersectionality; Counterpowers.

Recensioni e segnalazioni

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