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INTRODUCTION

Introduction: Selected Papers from the 12th Annual Foucault Circle Conference

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The 12th annual meeting of the Foucault Circle took place in March 2012 at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York. The two selections in this volume represent a small sample of the conference's highlights. Marco Checchi asserts the primacy of resistance in Foucault's analytics of power, while Robin Weiss further illuminates the relationship between Stoicism, truth, and politics. Both of these articles were presented at the conference in much shorter form, and were then significantly expanded and revised in light of conference discussions, for publication in *Foucault Studies*.

The Foucault Circle first met in 2001 (in conjunction with the American Philosophical Association's Pacific Division meetings in San Francisco, CA), and has met annually since then, hosting its first stand-alone conference in 2003. The most recent conference was at Malmö Högskola (Malmö University) in Malmö, Sweden, in June 2014; the next meetings will be hosted by the University of Richmond in Richmond, VA, in March 2015.

Hosting the 2012 conference in Buffalo provided the group with a unique opportunity to direct the Circle toward some of the research themes that Foucault took up during his tenure at State University New York at Buffalo. In particular, Foucault was interested in prisoners' rights and was involved with work at Attica Prison. It was an opportune confluence that the 2012 Foucault Circle meeting took place in the wake of the 40th anniversary of the Attica Prison Uprising.¹ It was shortly after that event that Foucault had his first experience inside an American prison when he toured Attica Correctional Facility on April 21, 1972.² Like Foucault himself some 40 years prior, Foucault Circle conference

¹ On September 9, 1971, prisoners at Attica Correctional Facility in upstate New York revolted, took a number of guards hostage, and negotiated for improved prison conditions. On September 13, after several days of negotiations, State Police troopers assaulted the prison, killing 9 hostages and 29 inmates. For a first-hand account of the events, see Tom Wicker, *A Time to Die: The Attica Prison Revolt* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011 [1975]); for an account of the events' aftermath and ongoing legal cases, see the documentary film "Ghosts of Attica", directed by Brad Lichtenstein (Lumiere Productions, 2001).

² Cf. the chronology in vol. 1 of *Dits et Écrits* (Gallimard, 1994), I:41. "Michel Foucault on Attica: an interview" (*Telos*, no. 19 (Spring 1974), 154-161; also in *Dits et Écrits*, text no. 137), an interview with John K. Simon (with whom Foucault visited Attica prison), discusses some of his observations and insights from that visit.

participants toured the facility and experienced one of the institutional structures that shaped *Discipline and Punish*. Several conference papers also drew upon Foucauldian themes to explore and critique such contemporary penal practices as mass incarceration and supermax prisons. In addition, the group inaugurated the practice of reading a common text that was discussed during a workshop session. The first “read-in” focused on documents from the *Groupe d’Information sur les Prisons* (G.I.P.), edited by Kevin Thompson and translated by Perry A. Zurn.³ The conference drew an international group of scholars into dialogue across the disciplines while discussing many complex topics in a generous, collegial atmosphere that celebrated exploration of and innovation upon Foucault’s ideas. It is in this same spirit that this special section offers the following articles.

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³ These translations will be forthcoming with Verso Press.