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剑桥政治思想史原著系列（影印本）

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

葛兰西狱前著作选

Gramsci

*Pre — Prison
Writings*

Edited by

RICHARD

BELLAMY

中国政法大学出版社

ANTONIO GRAMSCI

葛兰西狱前著作选
Pre-Prison Writings

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HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT



ANTONIO GRAMSCI
Pre-Prison Writings

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剑桥政治思想史原著系列

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在政治理论领域，“剑桥政治思想史原著系列”作为主要的学生教科丛书，如今已牢固确立了其地位。本丛书旨在使学生能够获得从古希腊到 20 世纪初期西方政治思想史方面所有最为重要的原著。它囊括了所有著名的经典原著，但与此同时，它又扩展了传统的评价尺度，以便能够纳入范围广泛、不那么出名的作品。而在此之前，这些作品中有许多从未有过现代英文版本可资利用。只要可能，所选原著都会以完整而不删节的形式出版，其中的译作则是专门为本丛书的目的而安排。每一本书都有一个评论性的导言，加上历史年表、生平梗概、进一步阅读指南，以及必要的词汇表和原文注解。本丛书的最终目的是，为西方政治思想的整个发展脉络提供一个清晰的轮廓。

本丛书已出版著作的书目，请查阅书末。

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE
HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Introduction

Gramsci's status as a canonical figure within the tradition of Western Marxism often has led to an overly schematic reading of his work. Gramsci has been credited with the *formulation of a strategy for communist parties operating within the developed States of the West that was both revolutionary and democratic*. As such, his ideas have appeared to offer a radical alternative to social democracy on the one hand and the autocratic party bureaucracies of the countries of 'actually existing socialism' on the other. This view drew support from and provided legitimacy for the Eurocommunist movement of the 1970s and early 1980s, especially its chief protagonist – the Italian Communist Party (PCI). The largest communist party outside the Soviet bloc, its historic links with Gramsci, who was promoted throughout this period as the PCI's chief ideological inspiration, greatly strengthened the credibility and prestige of the Euro-Gramscian thesis. However, in the aftermath of the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, this thesis has lost its allure. Many if not most of the main proponents of Eurocommunism have ended up disavowing Marxism altogether, with even the PCI abandoning its Communist past and transforming itself into the Party of the Democratic Left. Thus, paradoxically this attempt to stress Gramsci's relevance has ended up by seeming to deprive him of any contemporary interest at all.

Fortunately, this negative judgement need apply only to one school of interpretation of his thought. Whilst the Eurocommunist view of Gramsci contained a kernel of truth, it also distorted central aspects of his thinking. In spite of Gramsci's deep commitment to the unity

of theory and practice, this reading of his writings divorced the first from the second and applied his ideas to events and movements which he neither knew nor could have anticipated. The original context of the crisis of liberal democracies at the end of the First World War, the Russian Revolution and the rise of Fascism was exchanged for the very different world that emerged from the Second World War. Above all, the distinctively Italian dimension of his ideas became lost from sight. There was always a certain incongruity about the fact that the supposed champion of a revised Marxism suited to the advanced economies and political systems of the West came from a peripheral region of one of the West's least industrialized nations and most fragile liberal democracies. One of the advantages of approaching Gramsci through the pre-prison writings rather than the *Prison Notebooks* is that the original intent and frame of reference of his ideas are harder to avoid. For most of the key concepts of the *Notebooks* can be found in the early texts, as this collection amply demonstrates. In particular, the emphasis on what Gramsci came to call 'hegemony' or ideological power, which forms the most distinctive feature of his Marxism, figures implicitly throughout his analysis of the contemporary Italian State and his views on the organization of the fledgling Communist Party of Italy (PCd'I), as it was then known. Seen within this Italian context, however, such characteristic Gramscian themes as the relative autonomy of political from economic struggle, and the role of will and education in the formation of a revolutionary consciousness, take on a rather different significance from that attributed to them by much of the traditional scholarship. Instead of providing the basis for a Marxist strategy suited to advanced capitalism, they can be seen to refer to the rather different problems posed by a somewhat earlier stage of development of the modern nation State.

Born in Ales, Sardinia on 22 January 1891, Gramsci was able to reflect on the failings of the Italian State from an early age. Owing to its peripheral status, Sardinia shared the lot of southern Italy as an economically and politically marginalized region. Throughout his writings, Gramsci displayed a mixture of profound affection for the traditions and culture of his native region mixed with outrage against the injustices and chronic poverty that characterized the life of the majority of its inhabitants. However, Gramsci never fell into the sentimentalism that frequently marks provincial nationalism. A hunchback, probably as a result of contracting Pott's disease, he suffered

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from the local superstition towards any one or thing that was different, and often felt rejected as a consequence. He appreciated at first hand, therefore, the narrowmindedness that sometimes characterizes folk cultures. His political education began early when his father, a local government official, fell victim to the endemic corruption of Italian political life. Having aligned himself with the losing faction in the 1897 election, Francesco Gramsci was suspended from his post in the registry office and subsequently charged with embezzling electoral funds and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. The financial difficulties this caused the Gramsci family forced the eleven-year-old Antonio temporarily to suspend his school studies and work in an office until, three years later, his parents could afford to send him to secondary school in the Sardinian capital of Cagliari. Here he lived with his elder brother Gennaro, who was an active member of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and introduced Antonio to socialist literature and circles. At this time, however, Sardinianism was more important to him than socialism and the most significant influences on him were the writers grouped around the Florentine journal *La Voce*.

The editor of this remarkable review, Giuseppe Prezzolini, had gathered together a highly diverse set of contributors linked largely by a common dissatisfaction with contemporary Italy. They felt Italian unification had been doubly incomplete. First, there were the cultural and economic divisions existing between both the different regions of the peninsula, particularly the developing north and the underdeveloped south, and the educated classes and the unschooled masses. Second, and largely as a result of these differences, there was the tension between 'legal' Italy, the set of liberal institutions resulting from political unification, and 'real' Italy, the fragmented social reality of divergent regional traditions, economic attainment and polarized classes. Both these problems were epitomized in the 'southern question', to which (as Gramsci later recalled) *La Voce* devoted a special issue on 16 March 1911. Unification was held to have subordinated the south politically, economically and culturally to the needs of the north in ways that had merely served to exacerbate the region's relative backwardness and suppress its distinctiveness. In particular, they argued that the centralized political system of the new State had given rise to a 'transformist' politics based on patronage and compromise between local elites and clientele. These groups

effectively blocked any reform of the social and economic inequities from which they derived their power and hindered the involvement of the masses in political life, who vented their frustration in widespread lawlessness and brigandage.

The chief goal of the *vociani* was to integrate Italy socially and culturally as well as politically in ways that built upon rather than suffocated the nation's regional strengths and popular energies. Their views of this common aspiration differed widely, however. Although Prezzolini had recently come under the influence of the Italian idealist philosopher Benedetto Croce, who also helped the journal financially, the contributors were an eclectic bunch, ranging from the elitist proto-futurism of Giovanni Papini to the democratic positivism and free trade arguments of the southern specialist Gaetano Salvemini. Much of this eclecticism fed into Gramsci's later Marxism and is particularly in evidence in the articles in the first section of this selection. He took from Prezzolini an appreciation of the political and educative role of culture, from Croce a concern with the role of human will in the fashioning of history, from Papini a certain iconoclasm, and from Salvemini a respect for the detailed empirical analysis of problems and a profound understanding of the links between the transformist political system, the import tariffs protecting certain landed and industrial interests, and the social and economic decline of the south. From the movement as a whole, he took the desire to build a new State commanding the active allegiance of all sections of Italian society.

Although Gramsci was sympathetic to socialism, it took some time before he incorporated these Vocean elements into a distinctively Marxist and socialist perspective. In 1911 he won a scholarship to the University of Turin. At first he was alienated by this proletarian city, identifying it with the industrial north's subjugation of the predominantly agrarian south. Angelo Tasca and his fellow Sardinian Palmiro Togliatti, who were also students in Turin and through whose friendship he became active in the PSI, both described him as still being more of a Sardinian nationalist than a socialist at this time. His Sardinianism even carried into his studies, as Gramsci became interested in the prospect of working on Sard dialects with the pioneering socio-linguist Matteo Bartoli. Significantly, he overcame this slight antipathy to socialism only when, returning to Sardinia for the elections of 1913, he began to see how socialist politics

was capable of linking the concerns of northern workers and southern peasants. In the first elections held under near universal franchise, the local landowners had been unable to secure their vote without the collaboration of the mainland power brokers. Gramsci quickly appreciated that the socialists offered the most effective counter to this strategy and participated actively in the PSI campaign, signing the pro-south anti-protectionist petition that they supported and that was later published in *La Voce*. On returning to Turin, he joined the Party.

His newly acquired socialist principles mixed with rather than replaced his earlier Vocean allegiances. Moreover, the two were not entirely compatible. For example, one of his first initiatives within the local Party was to sponsor the adoption of Gaetano Salvemini, a frequent critic of the PSI, as a parliamentary candidate for one of the Turin electoral districts as an act of solidarity between the northern proletariat and the southern peasants. Salvemini turned down the offer, so the plan was never attempted, but it would almost certainly have generated a conflict with the national Party had it been implemented. The potential tension between Gramsci's Voceanism and his socialism is similarly evident in the first article he published in a national newspaper, on 'An Active and Functional Neutrality'. The PSI had been one of the few socialist parties successfully to maintain the Second International's opposition to worker participation in an 'imperialist' war after the outbreak of hostilities in 1914. Gramsci's piece developed out of an editorial in the Party journal *Avanti!* by Mussolini, then a leader of the maximalist wing of the PSI, who had cast the case for intervention in a new revolutionary light. Responding to the rebuttal of this argument by his comrade Angelo Tasca, Gramsci contended that 'absolute neutrality' risked degenerating into mere passivity. Such an attitude could not satisfy 'revolutionaries who conceive of history as the creation of their own spirit, made up of an uninterrupted series of lightning raids on the other active and passive forces in society, in an attempt to create the most favourable conditions possible for the final raid (the revolution)' (p. 5). Now that the war was engaged, the Party had to be ready to exploit the revolutionary possibilities that might present themselves in this new situation. Like Mussolini, Gramsci shrewdly recognized the weakening of the liberal State and opportunities for mass mobilization likely to arise from intervention.

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A number of points of Gramsci's analysis are worth underlining, for they reveal how early on some of the key themes of his thought emerged. First, the article illustrates Gramsci's independence of mind. 'Interventionism' was one of the major heresies of the PSI, particularly amongst those on the left of the Party, and Mussolini was ultimately expelled for this reason. It was characteristic of Gramsci that he did not falter from holding unpopular positions. Second, equally heretical was his emphasis on the role of ideas and the human will – a view that led to him being accused of 'voluntarism' at the 1917 PSI conference in Florence. The revolutionary wing of the Party typically adopted a more 'orthodox' Marxism that stressed the internal dynamics of the historical process and the necessary collapse of capitalism under its own contradictions. Gramsci, in contrast, argued that such vulgar versions of historical materialism encouraged an attitude of submission to the prevailing economic and political system, noting that reformists also generally embraced a vulgar positivism. Third, and as a corollary of his more idealist Marxism, he stressed the need to educate and organize the collective will of the masses, preparing them for the coming revolution through the dissemination of new values that gave them a critical purchase on their current situation and galvanized them to action. Fourth, he linked the achievement of the revolutionary goal with the creation of a new type of State. Indeed, he described the Party as 'a State *in potentia* which is gradually maturing; a rival to the bourgeois State, which is seeking, through its daily struggle with this enemy, and through the development of its own internal dialectic, to create the organs it needs to overcome and absorb its opponent' (p. 4). Even at this early stage, Gramsci had begun to formulate what was to become one of his most distinctive doctrines – the strategy of preparing for the revolutionary seizure of power by building a counter-State within the structures of civil society via a plethora of Party run organizations. Finally, although Gramsci embraced the cause of international socialism, he insisted that the PSI must remain at present relatively 'autonomous'. In the medium term, the Party had to concentrate on those special circumstances of the Italian situation that determined its '*particular, national* characteristics' and committed the Party 'to assuming a specific function, a particular responsibility in Italian life' (p. 4). This insistence on the 'Italian road to socialism' followed on from his undogmatic Marxism, which rejected the schematic generalizations of orthodox Marxists and allowed him to comprehend the peculiarities of the

Italian State. Gramsci elaborated all these points as his thought matured.

Ill-health and growing political commitments led Gramsci to break off his studies in 1915, and he began to devote himself full time to journalism for the socialist press – one of the traditional routes to advancement within the PSI. His writing was incredibly varied, ranging from drama and general cultural criticism to commentary on daily local, national and international events. The outbreak of the Russian revolution in February 1917 gave a tremendous stimulus to his thinking. He regarded it as confirming his anti-deterministic interpretation of Marxism, revealing the ‘real and undying Marxist thought’ to be that which ‘continues the tradition of German and Italian idealism’ and was uncontaminated ‘by positivist and naturalist incrustations’ that often sullied Marx’s own writings. For it was ‘a revolution against Karl Marx’s *Capital*’, that showed ‘the canons of historical materialism are not as iron-clad as . . . it has been thought’ (p. 40). Far from occurring as part of the natural process of social evolution, as the positivist interpreters of Marx claimed it would, he argued that the revolution had sprung from the organization of the people’s will and social consciousness to a sufficient level to be able to take advantage of the revolutionary opportunity when it had arisen. It is important to note that Gramsci’s position was not quite so voluntarist as it first appears. He was not denying that revolution could occur only under the right structural conditions, merely that these in themselves were insufficient to bring about social and political change. For revolution to occur, it was necessary both to know these conditions and to have the capacity to exploit their potential. Economic facts constrained but did not mechanically determine politics; it was necessary for people ‘to understand . . . and to assess them, and to control them with their will, until this collective will becomes the driving force of the economy, the force which shapes reality itself’ (p. 40).

The education and cultural preparation of the proletariat played a correspondingly central role in Gramsci’s thinking. As he put it in a famous article on ‘Socialism and Culture’, ‘every revolution has been preceded by a long process of intense critical activity, of new cultural insight and the spread of ideas through groups of men initially resistant to them’ (p. 10). The State education system served the mass of people extremely badly, with Italy having some of the highest illiteracy

rates in Europe – rising to as much as 70 per cent in parts of the south. However, Gramsci was not greatly impressed by the attempts of the labour movement to remedy this through organizations such as the Popular Universities. He believed that these bodies failed to relate the knowledge they imparted to the needs and practical concerns of the workers. Culture, in Gramsci's view, entailed much more than the mere acquisition of esoteric information. It involved self-knowledge and with it self-mastery: 'the attainment of a higher awareness, through which we can come to understand our value and place within history, our proper function in life, our rights and duties' (pp. 9–10). In accord with his reinterpretation of Marxism, Gramsci saw education as enabling the masses to take conscious control of the forces moulding their lives and to make the most of the emancipatory potential of existing material conditions. Once again, however, the superficially voluntarist and libertarian nature of this argument needs qualifying. For Gramsci firmly believed the Marxian thesis that the liberation of the individual could come about only with the emancipation of the proletariat and with it the whole of humanity through the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a communist society. Thus, he insisted that revolution would be achieved only by the individual's overcoming his or her rebelliousness and joining the collective will of the mass movement of the proletariat. Hence, he stressed discipline as being the necessary complement to freedom, going so far in his later writings as to treat the Party line as a moral imperative that all workers had a categorical duty to follow.

In spite of these authoritarian implications, Gramsci's linking of education to *self*-emancipation sought to guard against the intellectual and political elitism into which even the socialist intelligentsia had a tendency to fall. Intellectuals had to avoid adopting a 'traditional' paternalistic attitude and seek to act 'organically' and aid the ordinary person's self-awareness of his or her situation by teaching people to teach themselves. He even regarded attempts to popularize ideas by expressing them in a simplified form as condescending. In the article on 'Why We Need a Cultural Association' and the letter to Lombardo Radice about his short-lived 'Club of Moral Life', Gramsci outlined the sort of educational organization he had in mind. History played a vital role in his programme, since he maintained that an understanding of the cultural and social influences that form us was at the heart of the self-understanding necessary for our gaining control over

our lives. The historicist idealism of Croce and the 'actualist' doctrine of Gentile, whose pedagogical theories were particularly well developed, greatly influenced Gramsci's ideas in this respect, and he urged his comrades to study their writings and those of their followers. Although he had an interest in certain aspects of the contemporary *avant-garde*, being an early enthusiast for the plays and stories of the Sicilian writer Pirandello and sympathizing with some of the experimental elements of the Soviet *Prolekult* movement, many of his favourite authors and not a few of his views – such as his emphasis on the 'classics' and the benefits of 'sweating at' grammar – would be considered traditionalist now. However, it needs to be remembered that the writers he admired, such as the great literary historian and philosopher respectively of the late nineteenth century, Francesco De Sanctis and Bertrando Spaventa, and their contemporary followers and continuers, Croce and Gentile, were in the process of *constructing* a cultural tradition, rather than merely defending an existing canon. Although Croce later joined the liberal and Gentile the Fascist establishment, at this time they were outspoken critics of the low level of contemporary Italian cultural life, which they, like the *vocianti*, related to the corruption of the Italian political system. Gramsci shared their contempt, merely radicalizing their analysis.

Vocean themes continued to shape his socialism after the war and the Russian revolution. The pieces on 'Cocaine' and 'Football and *Scopone*', for example, not only show his skill as a journalist in drawing out the wider significance of everyday occurrences and practices, but also a Vocean desire to *épater les bourgeois* manifested in his almost puritanical loathing for what he regarded as the degeneracy of the Italian bourgeoisie and the society they had created. His more detailed discussions of Italian politics, such as 'Class Intransigence and Italian History', 'Three Principles and Three Kinds of Political Order' and 'Men, Ideas, Newspapers and Money', show the influence of Salvemini in particular, with Gramsci even espousing the arguments of free market economists such as Luigi Einaudi and Vilfredo Pareto who saw protectionism as the chief source of the nation's failure to evolve into a fully fledged parliamentary democracy. Like them, he believed the Italian State reflected an admixture of capitalist and quasi-feudal social and economic relations, the dire effects of which were summed up in the south's economic dependence on the north and the political dependence of northern elites on the southern

clienteles. To a large extent, therefore, Gramsci still saw himself as participating in the general project of the anti-Giolittian intellectuals of renewing Italy via a new cultural identity suited to its present social and political conditions, and as broadening that enterprise to include and promote the interests and aspirations of the working class. However, unlike them, he believed that only socialism could provide this new culture, for it was 'the one ideal which unites the Italian people'. Moreover, as 'the tangible representation of this unity, of this new consciousness, of this new world', the task of building this new order fell to the Socialist Party and its supporters (p. 29).

The weekly journal *L'Ordine Nuovo* that Gramsci founded with Umberto Terracini, Tasca and Togliatti in May 1919 was initially a continuation of this policy of cultural politics, similar in style to an earlier attempt of Gramsci's to create a socialist *La Voce* in the single issue *La Città Futura*. However, it soon became something far more important in Gramsci's eyes, namely the intellectual voice of a revolutionary movement – the Factory Councils that grew up in Turin over the next few months. The councils evolved out of the 'internal commissions' that had emerged within a number of engineering and metal-working factories around 1906 and become widespread during the war. Although function and composition varied, they were essentially a small elected body of workers designed to handle everyday problems of discipline and arbitration and to implement national wage agreements at a local level. At this stage, they were seen as part of the national union machinery, and in an agreement between the metal-workers' union FIOM and the employers' federation in Turin, they became incorporated into the official labour relations mechanism there in April 1919. However, the Russian revolution led many to interpret them in a different light, seeing them as an Italian equivalent of the soviets. Although in practice Lenin's position on the soviets was ambiguous, given that they were often dominated by the Bolsheviks' rivals, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, he hailed them in *State and Revolution* and other writings as a model of the new socialist politics and as contemporary equivalents to the form of democratic organization Marx had praised in his analysis of the Paris Commune. As a result, Gramsci, in common with most other foreign sympathizers, saw the soviets as the most distinctive feature of the Russian revolution. They were the means whereby the Bolsheviks had not merely seized power but altered its nature by creating