

## GRAMSCI IN THE MIRROR OF ITALIAN FASCISM: MUSSOLINI, GENTILE, SPIRITO

The book of an Hegelian idealist, Giovanni Gentile, *The Philosophy of Marx* is noteworthy. The author deals with some important aspects of Marx's materialist dialectics which usually escape the attention of the Kantians, Positivists, etc.

V.I. Lenin, 1913<sup>1</sup>

### I. Introduction

Conventional readings in the field of Marxist thought have come to define Antonio Gramsci as the premier Italian thinker within a set of Marxist theoreticians spanning "from Lukács to Habermas."<sup>2</sup> Such points of reference, comprehensive and relevant though they may be, were foreign to the real world in which Gramsci lived and reduce his thought to one part of a broader, Marxian history of ideas. Yes, scholarly preoccupation with Gramsci's concepts of hegemony, war of position, and historical bloc have helped to organize and popularize his thought, but have not always served the best interests of intellectual history. By isolating Gramsci from his indigenous political culture in these ways, we misinterpret this history and impoverish, in turn, some of his own ideas. As a journalist and party leader, Gramsci's political formulas were a response to the events of 1914-1921 and to developments within Italian neo-idealism, both of which gave shape to the assumptions and aspirations which Gramsci made his own.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, Antonio Gramsci's place within Italian neo-idealism, and the more specific dynamics between Gramsci, Antonio Labriola, and Benedetto Croce, have become staple parts of the literature.<sup>4</sup> Richard Bellamy's *Modern Italian Social Theory* has most recently added to this literature with its novel review of historical context, and the corresponding dialogue on theoretical issues in which Pareto, Mosca, Labriola, Gentile, Croce, and Gramsci all took part. Yet what has remained largely absent from the English-language scholarship is an integrated view of Gramsci's relationship with the varieties of Italian fascism, by which we mean not only Mussolini's early socialism, but Giovanni Gentile's actual idealism and Ugo Spirito's integral corporativism.

If indeed Gramsci's attraction to Mussolini was only momentary, his appreciation for Gentile's and Spirito's social theories was enduring. Together they defined and redefined philosophies of actual idealism which informed Gramsci's communism as much as Gentile's and

Spirito's corporatism. The empty spaces which inhabit Gramsci's writings, the spoken and unspoken assumptions which he shared with these two figures, need to be explored in order to discover that which was self-evident to Gramsci, but that which does not remain self-evident to us.

## II. Rival Strategies of Revolutionary Socialism?

The Italian Socialist Party (PSI, Partito Socialista Italiano) should have welcomed the new year of 1920 as the moment of completion of the "red years" of post-war debate and protest. Instead, 1920 marked the beginning of the demise of the Left establishment. Once the heralded *duce* of the pre-war PSI, Benito Mussolini understood well that the failures of 1920 resulted from the fragmentation within Italian syndicalism, which he saw as "roving and oscillating in a kind of epileptic dance between laborist corporativism, traditionalism, and the disguise of Russian insurrectionism."<sup>5</sup> For all their journalistic flair, Mussolini's words reveal the peculiar dynamics within socialism and syndicalism in post-war Italy, dynamics out of which Antonio Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group emerged to forge and take leadership over the Italian Communist Party (PCI, Partito Comunista Italiano).

The shared voluntarism, interventionism, and productivism between the young Mussolini and the young Gramsci need not imply guilt by association, nor parallel these men so as to target what some scholars have termed Gramsci's early "idealist" corruptions. We need to reconstruct, in part, that "ensemble of relations" through which Gramsci came to self-identity. For both early "Mussolinian fascism" and "Gramscian communism" developed on the same ideological and political ground, struggled against the inertia of institutional socialism and were rivals for the allegiance of the urban proletariat.

So forceful were Mussolini's rhetoric and personality that he captivated the youth of the PSI between 1912 and 1914. His supporters within the *fasci* of the party youth groups were collectively known as "mussoliniani," among them the future leaders of the Communist Party: Amadeo Bordiga, Angelo Tasca, Gramsci, Palmiro Togliatti. Bordiga and Tasca actively contributed articles to Mussolini's theoretical journal, *Utopia*. Gramsci and Togliatti retained their "mussolinismo" even into late 1914, months after their mentor's betrayal of the party.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Tasca, Gramsci, and Togliatti were all zealous supporters of Mussolini's revolutionary socialism, a heady mix of Sorelian syndicalism and Bergsonian voluntarism, as Croce defined it. When combined in the minds of these young university students with both the activist humanism of the journal, *La Voce* (1912-1914), and the southernism of Gaetano Salvemini, this "mussolinismo" made for a unique blend of revolutionary socialism.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, Gramsci's support for Mussolini's interventionism in 1914 was not, as one biographer has claimed, a "*faux pas*,"<sup>8</sup> but was one phase in a critical process by which the impassioned young radical became the mature thinker. By way of "Active and Operative Neutrality," an article appearing in Turin's *Il grido del popolo* on 31 October 1914, Gramsci made his first and perhaps most controversial foray into political journalism. In support of Mussolini's own interventionist article in *Avanti!* of 18 October, entitled "From Absolute Neutrality to Active and Operative Neutrality," Gramsci agreed that the PSI was not simply aligned to an international class movement, but was also "autonomous," "also Italian," with a right to forge its

own path.<sup>9</sup> In both style and substance, Gramsci drew inspiration from Mussolini's own rhetoric. He was prepared, following Mussolini, to allow the bourgeoisie to fight its war, reveal the bankruptcy and illegitimacy of its rule, and thereby prepare for the ascension of the proletariat to national leadership.<sup>10</sup>

Although he did not continue to reveal his pro-war sympathies as openly as did Mussolini, Gramsci's article was interpreted by the socialist community as implicitly "interventionist," "mussolinian," and "bergsonian" in its exaltation of the creative will in history, labels which would haunt Gramsci for much of his life. If Mussolini was shunned by the party altogether, Gramsci quietly remained a member, although now under the cloud of his youthful exuberance.<sup>11</sup> Yet even though their paths began to diverge, both Mussolini's and Gramsci's interventionist statements were watersheds in the history of Italian socialism. For Mussolini's break with the party accelerated his critique of PSI neutralism and his definition of a rival revolutionary socialism. Gramsci's interventionist interlude marked the beginning, however insecure, of his own critique of PSI neutralism, one which he continued to elaborate both during and after the war. In 1921 Gramsci and the communists rallied against the same neutralism toward the domestic revolution which the PSI had directed earlier toward the European war, and against which Mussolini himself had begun his own struggle.

Indeed, two strains of revolutionary socialism congealed in the spring of 1919: *Fascismo* in Milan under Mussolini's leadership, and *Ordinovismo* in Turin partly under Gramsci's guidance. Granted, Mussolini's *Fascismo* moved ever more away from the leftist "fascism of the first hour" which had earlier informed him. Yet for a time both movements aimed for a revolution of producers, a profound renovation of social and industrial relationships: ideals of productive labor which had their roots, in part, in Marx's thought. For Marx's ideal man was an integral link in a new society of producers, which was destined to regulate industry rather than remain a passive object of its whims.<sup>12</sup> Drawing their inspiration from Marx and from Italian syndicalism, Mussolini and Gramsci shared this fascination with the vitality of modern industry and this vision of a coming economic democracy. Mussolini actively promoted "national syndicalism" and "economic democracy" throughout 1918-1920 and even gave explicit support to the principle of workers' control and to the workers' occupation of Turin's factories in September 1920, which was directed in part by Gramsci's *Ordine Nuovo* group.<sup>13</sup>

The nexus between Italian syndicalism, fascism and communism is highlighted here not to make recriminating comparisons, but to draw into sharper relief what might be called *the politics of proximity*: the degree to which Mussolini and Gramsci defined and redefined their ideologies in point of comparison and contrast with each other, and against the common backdrop of post-World War I Italy. Constant reference to the political and ideological differences between the two parties, and the exchange of polemics between them, can be misleading. Italian fascism and communism were engaged in a more sophisticated dialogue, a contest for hegemony over a common patrimony and political language. Gramsci's categories of hegemony, war of position, and historical bloc were as much a response to fascism as to capitalism, a response to that "powerful system of fortresses and earthworks" which came to dominate Italian life in the 1920s. Gramsci's Communism, his turn to mass politics and his attachment to such idealis-

tic categories, was proper to the circumstances in which he developed and found himself. Rivals have a way of understanding each other, all the more because of their rivalry.

### III. Marxism as the Philosophy of Praxis

Mussolini's productivism, as we know, paled before Gramsci's, who had much richer local (Turinese) and international (Soviet Russian) movements from which to draw. Indeed, lacking a critical awareness of his own, Mussolini was incidental to a process of revisionist Marxism in which Giovanni Gentile, Antonio Gramsci, and Ugo Spirito all took part. Yet these voices, which have been excluded from the conventional readings, and with whom Gramsci engaged in debate, need to be given more room to speak. Their dialogue with Gramsci, much more than Mussolini's alignments and realignments, highlights the proximity of theoretical insights between Gramscian communism and Italian fascism.

Their exclusion from the scholarship first resulted, in part, from veiled attempts by Gramsci himself to quiet them, who in his prison writings set up Benedetto Croce as his main interlocutor, and set apart Antonio Labriola as the true founder of a uniquely Italian "philosophy of praxis." Mainstream interpretations both in Italy and in the United States have, with good reason, followed Gramsci's lead and focused on his relationship with Croce and Labriola. Gramsci, we know, was influenced by a whole tradition of neo-idealism and anti-positivism which he appropriated, by degrees, to give shape to his own thought. Labriola and Croce were indeed key influences on Gramsci's project for the renewal of politics and culture, a search for that "sounder and truer rationalism" in philosophy and politics, in Croce's words.<sup>14</sup>

Gentile's influence on Gramsci has been subject, more often than not, to partisan readings, which have aimed to discredit Gramsci rather than define him. The extent to which American scholars have ignored the serious studies on this issue, casually dismissing the Gentile factor out of hand, is even more distressing.<sup>15</sup> Yet Gramsci drew sustenance from the one concept, Marxism as a "philosophy of praxis," which Gentile defined with special clarity and force in his *La filosofia di Marx* of 1899. This study was the fourth in a series of works, begun by Labriola and continued by Croce, discussing Marxism as an "historical materialism," and surely was the most penetrating of all of them with its radically revisionist definition of Marxism. Thus Gentile's work needs to be read in conjunction with Labriola's *Del materialismo storico* (1896) and *Discorrendo di socialismo e di filosofia* (1898), whose insights on history and philosophy Gentile extracted and elaborated upon; and with Croce's *Materialismo storico ed economia marxistica* (1899), whose contention that Marxism was not a philosophy, but simply a new approach to the study of economics and history, Gentile eloquently denied.<sup>16</sup>

Lenin himself recognized the importance of Gentile's reflections in the 1899 work, as our introductory quotation suggests. Brief though this quotation may be, it nonetheless does highlight the relevance of Gentile's work for Marxist theory, and more specifically for Lenin's own philosophical understanding of Marxism and historical materialism. The quotation begs more questions than we can answer here. For example, how may Gentile's work be projected onto the debates about philosophy and revolution, proletarian culture and economy, in which V.I. Lenin, A.A. Bogdanov, and Antonio Gramsci all participated?<sup>17</sup> Might we even propose

that Gramsci was more the true Leninist (the Lenin of the *Philosophical Notebooks*) not because of the few political or polemical works which he read, but because of his own critical reading of Gentile?<sup>18</sup> We owe Lenin's insight an attempt at explanation: why did Gentile's work attract his interest?

Gentile's remarks on Marxism (as a political institution) were, in part, not very flattering. In the best tradition of Italian neo-idealism (Spaventa, Jaja), he launched a critique of Marxism's "metaphysical materialism." In part, this was an indirect attack on the determinism and orthodoxy of Engels and the Second International. Gentile argued — not without a note of sarcasm — that in contrasting matter (the relative) with the Hegelian Idea (the absolute), the "hegelian communists" posited matter and Idea in "two enemy camps, one armed against the other." What was even more troubling, continued Gentile, the crude Marxian materialists substituted matter — the "materialism" of historical materialism — for Idea, transforming what was a relative, *a posteriori* into an absolute, *a priori*. Hence the "absurdity: of making an *a priori* out of that which is empirical, of calling a *a priori* determinable that which must be restored to experience." When matter became such a transcendent given, part of a "metaphysic (necessary and absolute science) of the real," argued Gentile, the dialectic lost its dynamism, which was the power of thought (intelligence) over matter. Marxism in this respect, he concluded, amounted to a misunderstanding of the dialectic, which was not a diametric duality nor an absolute science, but a unity and a becoming: praxis.<sup>19</sup>

Gentile understood that a resolution to this misunderstanding was contained precisely in Marx's own notion of *praxis*, elaborated most powerfully in the *Theses on Feuerbach*. More than a simple materialism, Gentile understood Marx's own Marxism as a rough, "immanent" idealism, an *historical* materialism containing a "concrete reality" and "concrete conceptions" all its own (hence not really a materialism at all). For Marx, as for Gentile, the philosophy of praxis presumed the unity of thinking and doing. Knowledge was a "continuous development," meaning an activity by which the individual or society (as subject) made language, or ideas, or education, or circumstances real (as object) by understanding them, embracing them, recreating them. Or as Gentile summarized:

There is the society which educates, and there is the society which is educated: this same society, which is already educated, returns to educate. All education is consequently a praxis of society, a continuous activity of man, who grows (*crecscit*), so to speak, and grows again (*concrecscit*). Man educates, thereby educating himself, and bit by bit his own capacity for education grows ever more. In this way, if circumstances form the man, and are themselves formed by man, it is always man who works upon determining circumstances, which then react back upon him.<sup>20</sup>

Idea and matter, subject and object, educator and educated, were thus not separate entities, but a continuous unity made possible by man. Marx's simple novelty was to define the historical subject not, in the manner of Hegel, as "spirit, ideal activity"; but as "sense, material activity" (*sinnliche Thatigkeit*). For Marx, reality was a "subjective production of man; therefore a production of sensitive activity." Thus in place of spirit, ideal activity (the rational mind) Marx posited sensible, material activity (society-economy). Yet praxis, consciousness in

history in continuous development, was still common to both.<sup>21</sup>

Indeed, Marx carried this translation of the dialectical subject further to mean the proletariat, as social individual, immersed in a historical situation and economic reality which formed it, and which it was charged to revolutionize. Thus praxis meant not only the unity of thinking and doing, but the unity of theory and practice as well, a moral imperative to project the immanent dialectic of subject-object back into history. The task of the social individual was to understand the world so as to change it. The Marxian principle of a “reversing” or “revolutionizing praxis” (*rovesciamento della prassi*, in Gentile’s words), one of activity and creation over abstract philosophizing, followed precisely from the immanent dialectic. Praxis placed consciousness — the social individual for Marx, the “educated-educator” (*educatoeducatrice*) for Gentile — at the center of history, as the motive force of the dialectic itself.<sup>22</sup>

Gentile came to fashion the unity of thinking and doing, theory and practice, already key insights of Italian neo-idealism from Vico through Spaventa to Labriola, into actual idealism. He soon moved toward a reform of the Hegelian dialectic in more “absolute idealist” terms (as Gramsci called them), a reform for which Marxism (as metaphysical materialism) was unfit, to the extent that it was a historical materialism with its emphasis on the materialism rather than on the historical, and so remained an “eclecticism of contradictory elements.”<sup>23</sup> Yet Giovanni Gentile is central to our new reading of Gramsci not because he set himself apart from, but because he was continuous with the thought of Hegel through Marx. True, Gentile fashioned in time what has become known as a conservative, right Hegelian philosophy of life. He became infamous as the theoretician and ideologue of Italian fascism, promoter of the notions of “ethical” and “totalitarian” nation-state: the arch-enemy of Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks*. Yet he also appreciated political economy, or what Spirito called the “communism” or “humanism of labor” of Gentile’s *Genesis and Structure of Society*, a late restatement of the early positions in *La filosofia di Marx*. Gentile’s reform of the Hegelian dialectic into actual idealism amounted, in another sense, to his own lifelong theory of “permanent revolution,” an “eternal self-criticism.”<sup>24</sup>

These categories were but manifestations of a deeper current in his thought, which combined the best of Hegelian and Marxian idealism. With Hegel and Marx, Gentile looked for the reintegration of creative man into society and history by way of a new collective consciousness. His emphasis on praxis, on greater personal and popular participation in social life, we have seen, complemented Marx’s own *Theses on Feuerbach*, which likewise stressed a “socialized humanity,” an “educated-educator,” as well as the need to interpret the world only so as to change it. As Biago De Giovanni has written, for Italians of the pre-war era, the *Theses* were “the privileged text for discussing the novelty of Marx the philosopher.”<sup>25</sup> By way of *La filosofia di Marx*, Gentile was their first Italian translator and important commentator.

Gramsci and Spirito were “left Gentileans,” though at different points in their careers and to different degrees, because they accepted this italianate reading of Marx, as well as the actualist mindset which followed from it. They thereby expressed what was universal in Gentile: the unity of thinking with doing, or the superiority of well-informed, purposeful, ethical activity. Both Gramsci and Spirito elaborated upon this actual idealism in uniquely different

ways, devising in turn alternative models of Italian communism.

#### IV. Actualism Redefined

Gramsci's references in the prison writings to Marxism as "the philosophy of praxis" were more than a ruse to evade prison censors, more than a simple recapitulation from Labriola. We know that Gramsci had not only begun to read Marx's available works in French by 1917, but had also begun reading Giovanni Gentile (*La filosofia di Marx*, as well as the *Teoria generale dello spirito come atto puro*), appropriating Gentile's terminology and worldview into his own journalistic writings. Gramsci's reading of Gentile should be no less embarrassing than his reading of Mussolini, both of which occurred before the advent of fascism. Indeed, whatever Gramsci may have originally shared with them, or appropriated from them, he soon came to fit into his own framework.

Gentile's actual idealism became one of Gramsci's most useful tools in his first critiques of positivism, which had become such a favorite target of the avante-garde on the Italian intellectual scene of the turn of the century, and which understood man as a mere object in history, upon whom the mechanical laws of economy and society moved. Gentilean notions of man as "above all spirit, i.e., a creation of history and not of nature," fortified Gramsci's voluntarism as early as 1916, providing him with a philosophical antidote to the unwieldy voluntarism of the day (Marinetti, D'Annunzio, Mussolini), as well as a protective to Croce's own derisive view of Marxism. And if Gramsci the Marxist thinker came to appreciate more and more after the 1920s the significance of nature, economy, and necessity in his writings, he still saw them from a Gentilean frame of reference: spirit entering into dialectic relations with nature so as to control it; man's "faith in 'determinism'" and necessity itself becoming a moral imperative, a "stimulus to conscious action."<sup>26</sup>

In "Socialism and 'Actual' Philosophy" of February 1918, Gramsci recognized Gentile as the most important thinker on the Italian scene, one whose actualism had the capacity to reinvigorate the Italian socialist movement.

His system of philosophy is the latest development of German idealism, which had its culmination in Hegel, Karl Marx's teacher, and is the negation of every transcendentalism, the identification of philosophy with history, with the act of thought, in which the true and the fact are unified in a dialectical progression never definite nor perfect.<sup>27</sup>

Gentile's actualism inspired Gramsci's own project for the elevation of the proletariat through education and cultural organization, as evidenced by Gramsci's collaboration with Attilio Carena (another Gentilean disciple) in the *club di vita morale* of Turin. In Gramsci's view, proletarian unity was not merely a physical achievement, but was a spiritual bond as well: "mutual support in the work of individual perfection, it is reciprocal education and reciprocal control," the basis for the "independence of the masses from the intellectuals." This principle of "reciprocal education and reciprocal control" is characteristically Gentilean, to the extent that Gentile distilled it from Marx's third thesis on Feuerbach, "the educator must himself be educated"; from Labriola's writings, "to think is to produce . . . to learn is to produce by reproduction"; and turned it into his own sense of "educators who are educated, and the educated who educate."<sup>28</sup>

Gramsci himself applied this insight as an operating principle of the *Prison Notebooks* — on man's capacity to build upon and redirect knowledge (in one's self and in others) so as to better understand and control one's self and one's world.

Indeed, Gramsci applied Gentile's principles throughout his later writings: both in his general notes on philosophy and in his more specific critiques of Croce and Bukharin. Marxism was presented as a self-sufficient philosophy, providing a whole new synthesis of idealism and materialism. The unity of theory and practice, philosophy and politics, philosophy and history, was an underlying theme.<sup>29</sup> Most remarkably, Gramsci now defined the Marxian-Gentilean formula, "the education of the educator," as a metaphor for the "unity of the process of the real," by which "the superstructure reacts dialectically upon the structure and modifies it." Here was one of the philosophical bases for Gramsci's theory of hegemony.<sup>30</sup> These themes amounted to a continuation of that project which Gramsci began after his first reading of Gentile: to renew Marx as an Hegelian philosopher, to surmount that "eclecticism of contradictory elements" which Gentile had once called Marxism.

Marxism was reworked by Gramsci, in effect, on the basis of Gentile's philosophy. He characterized his own brand of Marxism as a completion and fulfillment of Hegelian idealism, and to that extent a correction and elaboration of Gentilean actualism, now freed from the latter's "unilateral and fanatical ideological elements," and truly immanent, active in the real world of forces and relations of production.<sup>31</sup> Gramsci's fusion corrected Gentilean actual idealism by grounding it in Marxism (as Gentile himself seemed to do in *La filosofia di Marx*). Creativity now took shape in a "rational will" which both derived from and impacted upon a broader historical and social reality. Necessity, prediction, foresight — these determinist concepts now became functions of man's creative will and intelligence in history.<sup>32</sup> Here was a reform of the Hegelian dialectic in more proper, immanent terms, linking Gramsci to Marx and Labriola, to be sure, but through Gentile.

*La vita come ricerca* of 1937 represented Ugo Spirito's own declaration of intellectual freedom from the actual idealism of Giovanni Gentile, with whom he had been closely associated since his days as a student of law and philosophy at the University of Rome (beginning in 1918). He may be best known, as a leading member of the "left Gentilean" group, for his failed attempt, at the Second Congress of Corporative and Syndical Studies (Ferrara, 1932), to implement his scheme of communistic "proprietary corporations." In his early years, Spirito had found actualism to be an enlivening and encouraging force, a welcome reprieve from the normal curriculum of law and political economy. According to his interpretation of Gentilean actualism, life was not "*fact*," nor a "structure to be defined one time and for all time," but was "*creative act*, in continuous development." Such a historicism denied all explanatory, metaphysical systems, given that they would be overcome by the very "creative process" in which man was engaged.<sup>33</sup>

Beginning most significantly in 1927, Spirito began to break away from Gentile, establishing the journal, *Nuovi studi di diritto, economia, e politica* in order to define his own sense of actualism in more worldly scientific and economic terms. Spirito would even claim, in time,



that Gentile had betrayed his own standards, by defining the act within a system: the actualism of the *Teoria generale dello spirito come atto puro*. Thesis, antithesis, and synthesis now became a series of definite dialectical categories: art, religion, philosophy. Gentile thereby presumed to define reality "one time for all, in its eternal and immutable structure, in its constant laws without exception." He presumed "to know the whole and to describe it as transcending time and space."<sup>34</sup> Actual idealism, which Gentile went on to characterize as the theoretical basis for the ethical state of Italian fascism, became a philosophy *cum* ideology. And Gentile was its caretaker, in possession of the truth.

Against this relapse to metaphysics, and worse yet ideology, Spirito advanced the theory of the problematic, *la vita come ricerca* (life as inquiry), following the logic of the indefinability of the act. The central premise of problematicism understood the dialectic as a problem and contradiction rather than as thesis and antithesis leading to a synthetic solution (in the apparent manner of Gentile). Synthesis was not a "definitive conclusion," but was itself the thesis of a whole new antithesis. Spirito was not seeking some grand reform of the Hegelian dialectic as much as beginning to understand the Hegelian "negation of the negation" as a metaphor for life itself. He positioned the "problematicism of life" against the "calm optimism" of the "definitive synthesis." "To think means to object," wrote Spirito. Doubt — "that terrible monosyllable: *but*" — was at the source of man's acquisition of consciousness, of his capacity to substitute the problem for dogma. Man's task was to multiply "the first 'but' into an infinite series." The future was at once both frightening and alluring. "I negate and I affirm," he wrote, "and I come to hurl the whole world down into a void, yet it is this same void which represents to me the richer and more complex world."<sup>35</sup>

In later years, Spirito qualified his 1937 critique of Gentilean actual idealism by realigning himself to the master, from whose actualism he had learned the most important lesson of all: the identification of philosophy with science. Spirito defined problematicism as a "constructive" or "scientific actualism," shorn of dogmatic tendencies, now "worldly, immersed in experience." He had been able to derive two central affirmations from Gentilean actualism: namely those of the "unity and infinity of categories, and of the theory of the act which cannot be defined because it is the act itself which defines." The first principle articulated a new "metaphysics as science," for the unity and infinity of categories spoke not of one philosophy with a "universal content," but of the universal or the whole as "present in each category," in each science. Here was the fundamental premise for the unity of philosophy with science. The second principle, as we have seen, effectively silenced the metaphysical impulse "to define and describe the whole." If the act, as reality in becoming, is indefinable, then reality itself defies definition. The act itself defines.<sup>36</sup>

The unity of philosophy with science, then, was not an abstraction in itself. The "metaphysics as science" meant that synthesis was simply not possible in higher metaphysics. Synthesis was an illusion. For the scientist was armed only with a hypothesis, and a continuing array of problems, the most urgent being how and where to apply knowledge for social use.

## V. Praxis and Productivism

If Gentile thought primarily in grander terms of the ethical nation-state, Gramsci and

Spirito thought in more exact terms of society and economy. Gramsci's theory of the factory councils, as elaborated in *L'Ordine Nuovo* between 1919 and 1926, and Spirito's integral corporativism, as defined in *Nuovi Studi*, the *Archivio di Studi Corporativi*, and in a series of published works between 1927 and 1937, were their most powerful elaborations upon this theme. Both journals, and the theories and movements of which they were a part, were committed to a revolution of producers, and to an assimilation of class forces: the one through factory councils, the other through corporations. Inspired by their Gentilean readings of Marx, both Gramsci and Spirito came to launch two remarkable offensives, ultimately unsuccessful, aimed against the industrial and political establishments of post-World War I Italy.<sup>37</sup>

Remarkably, both Gramsci and Spirito were convinced that Taylorist principles of work and organization could be revised by the proletariat for wider social application. The rationalized workplace was a measure of the self control which was necessary for the workers to govern themselves.<sup>38</sup> The unavailability of Marx's 1844 *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, as well as the *Grundrisse*, make this alignment all the more revealing of the philosophical assumptions (call them a mental world) which Marx, Gramsci, and Spirito shared, and which was partly transmitted through Gentile's *La filosofia di Marx*. Emancipation through control is a formula informed by the very subject-object identification which is common to praxis thinkers.<sup>39</sup> For productive labor is a premier field of practice, through which an ideal for change is projected by man onto the present and into the future. Marx understood this insight intuitively, as did the workers themselves in their struggles for self-management and control through workers' councils.

Antonio Gramsci elaborated upon his own theories of council communism and productivism in the *Prison Notebooks*. His discussion of "Americanism and Fordism," we know, relayed an appreciation for technical and productive collaboration within the workplace. The moral and political reforms which are so often associated with his project for cultural renewal remained firmly rooted in economic reality: the new " 'humanity and spirituality' cannot but realize themselves in the world of production and work, in productive 'creation,'" he wrote. Thanks to new methods (Americanism, Fordism, Taylorism) geared to "rationalize production and labor," Gramsci knew that the modern "planned" economy (*economia programmatica*) had within itself the very means by which workers' organizations, now strengthened in "self-discipline," could begin communist restructuring.<sup>40</sup>

Ugo Spirito developed the idea of workers' self-management through his integral corporativism, a theory he devised, in part, at the School of Corporative Sciences at the University of Pisa, which Gramsci himself grudgingly recognized — along with Spirito's *Nuovi Studi* — for its positive "corporative" efforts to remake the old Italy.<sup>41</sup> Spirito's 1937 treatise, *La vita come ricerca*, was itself a bold call upon the youth of Italy to deny the legitimacy of the fascist regime and its official orthodoxy in order to seek renewal in the life of inquiry. Spirito openly criticised the fictional corporativism and totalitarianism of the fascist state, which had lost its "universal character" by presuming omnipotency and "statolatry." Fascism was a regime of leading elites governing over the popular masses.

The corporate state, Spirito argued, urgently needed to rid itself of its "mythological

vestments," in order "to reveal itself in its more modest, tentative reality." Against bureaucracy, party, or class rule, he called for corporations of associated producers to place themselves between individuals and the state, corporations organized not one against the other, but "one within the other: hierarchically." Here was the true corporativism of Spirito's "stato totalitario" of participation, one of collaboration through the "coordination" and "subordination" of associations according to economic and technical function.<sup>42</sup>

Against Marx's reliance on political parties and historical necessity (the totality of domination), Spirito posed the advantages of the corporative or technocratic system (the totality of participation). If Marxian communism was born of "antitheses" "particular ideologies," and "opposing interests," Spirito's new scientific communism was "born of the participation of all." Science now became the basis for a more perfect form of communism, enabling people to finally master their own energies and their own natural world. The division of labor and the division of the sciences were not sources of discord and disorganization. They were the bases for new forms of cooperation: prompting a whole new "conception of man which may be defined as *anti-individualistic* and therefore *social*, by which man lives and affirms himself in as much as he unifies, collaborates, and achieves all of his potential."

By way of his corporate system, Spirito believed that he had finally reconciled the needs of the individual with the needs of society and the state, a dilemma which Hegel and Marx had, presumably, never been able to fully articulate or resolve. *Corporativismo* was a new "hierarchical communism," and a "new type of immanentist totalitarianism" which "resolved politics into technics." Here was a system whereby people collaborated with each other according to their different degrees of competence, people now ever more equal in skill and station, given advances in automation and in universal education.<sup>43</sup> Corporativism was a rationalized, streamlined revolutionary proposal.

We have already seen that both Gramsci and Spirito shared a mixed appreciation for Gentile's actual idealism, which each criticised for its return to metaphysics and for its divorce from real practice and social action. Marxism translated into "the philosophy of the act (praxis, development), but not of the 'pure' act," wrote Gramsci, "but rather of the real 'impure' act, in the most worldly and profane sense of the word." Spirito identified Gentile's actualism as a "metaphysic." Through problematicism "philosophy is transformed and does not want to be pure any longer, but wants to become worldly, and descend into the reality of the empirical, identifying with history or with science."<sup>44</sup> Gramsci and Spirito together redefined the Gentilean metaphysical "act" as impure, worldly, "communist" act.

The communal workplace, we have seen, was an ideal field of praxis. The experimental and applied methods of the scientist were its paradigm. In contrast to the passive, sterile methods and conclusions of positivism, Gramsci defined his own kind of activist scientism in the *Notebooks*, not inconsistent with Labriola's and Gentile's views, outlined in a passage which paralleled Spirito's own conclusions:

One might say that the typical unitary process of reality is found here in the experimental activity of the scientist, which is the first model of dialectical mediation between

man and nature, and the elementary historical cell through which man puts himself into relations with nature by means of technology, knows her and dominates her. There can be no doubt that the rise of the experimental method separates two historical worlds, two epochs, and initiates the process of dissolution of theology and metaphysics and the process of development of modern thought whose consummation is in the philosophy of praxis. Scientific experiment is the first cell of the new method of production, of the new form of active union of man and nature. The scientist-experimenter is also a worker, not a pure thinker, and his thought is continually controlled by practice and vice versa, until there is formed the perfect unity of theory and practice.<sup>45</sup>

The whole of Spirito's problematicism was an elaboration, in a sense, upon this passage written by Gramsci between 1932 and 1933, long before Spirito himself would have access to the published *Notebooks*. The notion that applied science would be the highest expression of the unity between theory and practice in advanced communist society was itself alien neither to Marx, Gramsci, nor Spirito. For under communism, the highest stage of social development, devoid of politics and politicians, applied science was to serve the new economics of liberation. Man was to begin to fully master nature through collective effort. Like Marx, Gramsci did not view technical education as demeaning for the future communist intellectual precisely because it would ground him in practical, scientific work. Spirito was correct in his assessment that, "in effect, the great metaphysical merit of Marx was precisely in giving a scientific character to philosophy and in wanting to realize exactly a communism that would find its foundation in science."<sup>46</sup>

## VI. The Gramscian and Spiritian Critiques

These shared theoretical assumptions were overcome by a unique conjuncture of events: for Gramsci, the defeat of the factory-council movement and the need to create a strong Communist Party in response, for Spirito, the fascist statization of corporativism and the need to establish more genuine forms of self-management in turn. If Gramsci became preoccupied with party and hegemony, Spirito turned away from them altogether. Let me suggest the following, tentative formula: Gramsci responded to a historical problematic with a closed system; Spirito responded to a closed system with his own problematicism. Gramsci, having first identified a problematic between socialist theory and practice, went on to compose a systematic solution for himself, in part using categories from Gentilean, Crocean, and Marxist thought. Spirito, on the other hand, having first accepted a systematic philosophy for himself in actual idealism (as embodied in Italian fascism), went on to critique its internal contradictions, and to devise a general theory of problematicism in response.

Against Gentile and Spirito, Gramsci posited "spirit" – the "unitary process of reality," the victory of science – as a "point of arrival" rather than as a point of departure or "unitary presupposition" (what Gramsci wrote by way of introduction to the previous long quotation). A marked pessimism and preoccupation with contradiction infiltrated Gramsci's writings after the defeat of the council movement and the rise of fascism. Thus oppressed by forces beyond his immediate control, Gramsci could not speak of objectivity *per se*, but only of the "struggle for objectivity (to free oneself from partial and fallacious ideologies)." Marxism was "con-

consciousness full of contradictions,” meaning that it was “‘tied to ‘necessity’ and not to a ‘freedom’ which does not exist and, historically, cannot yet exist.” Marxism was an ideology born of contradictions, an instrument devised to overcome them, and would therefore only disappear with the contradictions themselves. The Marxist, wrote Gramsci, “cannot escape from the present field of contradictions, he cannot affirm, other than generically, a world without contradictions, without immediately creating a utopia.”<sup>47</sup>

Here was the basis of Gramsci’s own critique of Spirito’s scientific communism, which was seen to be divorced from class contradictions and which was seen to postulate a class collaboration which had no grounding in “effective reality.” Gramsci recognized Spirito as the false prophet of Marx’s advanced communism. But this insight itself reveals the kind of organization which Gramsci himself believed advanced communism would entail, call it council communism or corporativism. “The utopia of Spirito,” he wrote, lay in “confusing the State with regulated society,” lay in equating his own corporativism (which was really “class Statism” or capitalism) with communism.<sup>48</sup> Gramsci was identifying Spirito with fascist corporativism (class Statism) in 1931-1932, at the same time that Spirito was beginning to define himself against this very system, redefining corporativism in his own terms, which denied the class statism to which Gramsci referred, and which more closely approximated the “regulated society” of advanced communism.

True, Gramsci’s new formulas made more room for party politics, but only at the expense of the more open council communism and culture-building of his early years. The realm of necessity now became a moment of contradiction and struggle rather than moment of engagement and control of nature. If Spirito bypassed the transitional socialism of Marx altogether, the problem of Marx’s choice of means was compounded in Gramsci, in that he advocated a unique kind of proletarian cultural hegemony for the purpose of eradicating classes. Gramsci understood ideology, in the “good sense,” as a necessary and valid category within the philosophy of praxis. Speaking of such ideologies, “they ‘organize’ human masses,” he wrote, “and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc.” The tasks of Gramscian Marxism were to replace feudal culture with modern culture, to educate the uneducated, to fight ideology with ideology.<sup>49</sup> He called for new and sophisticated proletarian superstructures to consolidate proletarian ranks.

A key component of this new strategy was the *theory* of hegemony itself, together with all the colorful notions within its orbit: the “philosophy of praxis,” “modern prince,” “ethical state,” “national-popular collective will,” “progressive totalitarianism,” “ethico-political moment,” “absolute historicism.”<sup>50</sup> These were highly mobile metaphors, part of a national ground of new ideas, upon whose forms Gramsci superimposed new functions. To define the parentage of any one of these concepts, thereby connecting Gramsci to Labriola, or to Croce, or to Gentile, is a complex task (perhaps not even possible, or useful). Yet if, by Gramsci’s own admonition, the “anti-Croce” (meaning critical appropriation of Croce’s ideas for Italian communism) must also be an “anti-Gentile,”<sup>51</sup> the manner by which he articulated this opposition requires some study. And *opposition*, in the case of four thinkers who spoke both for and against each other, can only mean a mixed process of reception and rejection. Such “effects of

chiaroscuro in the picture, which are necessary for a greater relief," in Gramsci's words, are precisely what are missing from the literature on Gramsci. The honest critique, true to the sources and to the history, must ask: how was the anti-Croce also a pro-Gentile; and in turn, the pro-Croce an anti-Gentile? At present, let me propose some methodological limits for such a project.

Gramsci's crude polemics with Gentile, and critical deference to Croce, which have too often been accepted at face value, should not mislead us. Rather we should ask, what accounts for the lack of balance between the simple anti-Gentile and the sophisticated anti-Croce? Political exigencies, no doubt, together with his own set of priorities, precluded Gramsci from engaging in an undistorted review of actual idealism and integral corporativism, those self-proclaimed components of fascist ideology. The "anti-Gentile" of the prison writings (under which we may subsume Gramsci's "anti-Spirito" as well) revealed Gentile's Hegelianism, his ethical state, his totalitarianism, his corporativism to be false and hollow: so much "verbalism," so many "banal sophisms." Gentile and Spirito fell conveniently under the rubric of "economic-corporatism," a self-serving dictatorship over society and culture by way of brute force and the fiction of corporativist legitimacy. These may have been effective political polemics, but they did not match with the philosophical rigor and the seriousness of effort accorded to Croce, nor with Gramsci's open, critical appropriation of Crocean principles. Gramsci, like Togliatti after him, became unable "to distinguish the thinker" in Gentile "from the political bandit," to distinguish "the writer of pedagogical books from the *camorrista*, the corruptor of all of Italian intellectual life; to distinguish the philosopher from the traitor of the fatherland."<sup>52</sup>

Gramsci had good reason to be so harsh on Gentile. For Gentile had compromised his philosophy by identifying it with fascist ideology, leaving politics stale and oppressive. In Gramsci's mind, Gentile posed the false, a priori, purely verbal and abstract unity of teacher to student, elite to mass, state to individual: a crude, linear unity. Gramsci, in contrast, joined with Croce in appreciating the finer and more tenacious distinctions of "historical reality": from partial ideologies, to real contradictions, to ideological divisions, all operative in contemporary state and society. Only the more judicious unity of theory with practice, philosophy with politics, which Marxism would carry to completion through creation of an integral, ethical community, could hope to erase these distinctions.<sup>53</sup> Gramsci posed an a posteriori unity of party with mass, superstructure with structure: the true unity of reciprocity. Thus Gentile became an appropriate stationary target; Croce providing some of the ammunition for attack.

Gramsci's own standard, that "identity of terms does not mean identity of concepts,"<sup>54</sup> is an appropriate reference point. For throughout the prison writings, Gentilean insights and concepts (primarily from *La filosofia di Marx*) were fitted into a new Gramscian framework. Simple comparisons between the two thinkers violate this reality. Yet the extent to which the concepts of "philosophy of praxis," "ethical state," "totalitarianism," "national-popular collective will" owe their inspiration to Gentile, or are elaborations after him, remains a subject worthy of more theoretical and philological research, as well as discussion. That the "philosophy of praxis" was an "interpretation of Gentilean actualism," Gramsci himself admitted in the prison writings, was "perhaps" more than just a "question of terminology."<sup>55</sup>

We also need to pick up the trail of history where the trail of the text leaves off. For

throughout the 1920s and 1930s Gentile and his young actualist followers exercised a remarkable "hegemony" over Italian culture: legislating the powerful reform of education between 1922 and 1924, creating the *Enciclopedia italiana*, publishing the *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* and *Educazione fascista*, defining the limits of corporatist debate at the Ferrara Congress of 1932, contributing philosophical works on actualism — all with varying degrees of loyalty to, and influence on, Italian fascism.<sup>56</sup>

Gramsci's prison writings on historical materialism and Crocean philosophy, on philosophy and politics were, in fact, direct challenges to Gentile's dominant "philosophy-ideology." He sought to construct a true hegemony against the false. And what better ally — "counterfoil," in Gramsci's words — to use in this struggle than Croce himself, Gentile's onetime collaborator and friend, and longtime philosophical and political adversary. Togliatti would act as Gramsci's reliable surrogate in this project. Remarkably, one week after Gentile's assassination by communist partisans in April 1944, Togliatti celebrated the "execution" of this "traitor," calling on the Italian people "to destroy without mercy all the roots of the betrayal." Four years later, Togliatti would approve for publication the first of several edited portions of the prison writings, entitled *Il materialismo storico e la filosofia di Benedetto Croce* — part of the continuing process of uprooting Gentile's legacy, if even in Gramsci's own thought.<sup>57</sup>

To the extent that, in subtle ways, Gentilean principles may have informed Gramsci's Marxism, from its anti-positivism to its anti-Croce, we are left with a not-so-subtle irony. Here was not simply a Gramscian strategy responding to the fascist hegemony over culture, but a Communist strategy born from the very neo-Hegelian idealism which that fascism, however falsely in Gramsci's view, now called its own. Spirito himself had little patience for all this talk of hegemony and ideology, and would not have found the irony very surprising. According to his critique, Gramsci's ethico-political formulas, proletarian superstructures, and heady abstractions amounted to a Marxism that was more burdensome than liberating. Communism's verbal formations were, to Spirito, as exalted and menacing as fascism's. Party and State were simply anachronistic terms for Spirito, who believed that ideals could only become alive in people, gathered together in corporative association. "Ideology divides," he wrote, "but science unites."<sup>58</sup>

The very contradictions in Gramsci's thought — between council and party communism, human will and historical necessity, liberty and authority, participation and hegemony, superstructure and structure — are proof enough that "ideology divides." To define such antinomies is a mark, not surprisingly, of the conventional reading.<sup>59</sup> The degree to which Gramsci lost touch with the factory-council movement (the economics of liberation), drawing ever nearer to party politics and relying on both Gentile's and Croce's philosophical language, speaks of a slide into closure, into the politics of dominance: rule by the few in the name of the many. The Spiritian critique highlights the degree to which Gramsci's mediating categories and abstractions were a part of such a dialectic of synthesis.

## VII. Conclusion: the Gramscian Problematic

Such a discussion of the antinomies in Antonio Gramsci's thought may contribute more

confusion than clarity to our understanding of the man and his works. Antinomies, after all, are too easily identified, and tend to simplify and distort Gramsci's highly textured works. In the first place, we need to remember that his mediating categories were either functions of the demands of the moment (hence prone to some exaggeration) or of the isolated and difficult prison environment in which he labored (hence prone to abstraction). More importantly, to preoccupy ourselves with fixed categories of contradiction is to disregard the very philosophy of praxis which informed Gramsci's thought: Marxism as a "dialectical progression never definite nor perfect." For every "pessimism of the intellect" which presented itself, Gramsci responded with an "optimism of the will." His concepts find a unity in his theoretical system which is more *actualist* than dialectical, and which is therefore more open to creative application in and through time. This concept of praxis, of unity through reciprocity — that reciprocity which is human action in history — is precisely the one concept which *is reducible* between the young Gentile and the elder Gramsci.<sup>60</sup>

Gramsci's communism, combining both the economics and the politics of liberation, was not a fixed formula, but a statement of personal conviction, reflecting Gramsci's own actualist mindset, which made for a unique blend of self-confidence and self-correction. Thus we would do more justice to Gramsci by understanding the problematics in his thinking rather than the antinomies. To comprehend Gramsci's rejection of simple materialism is to comprehend his rejection of simple productivism as well. The victory of labor was not only a matter of man taking control of the workplace, but required education and cultural reorientation, both of which would determine the quality of emancipation. Gramsci knew that techniques of production could not become emancipatory by way of new productive relations alone (Spinoza's simplified rational project) but needed reinforcement. The Gentilean philosophy of man helped to teach Gramsci perhaps his most important lesson of all: that education is the highest form of praxis, both for the educator and the educated, which unite in the integral person and integral community. Gramsci's philosophical anthropology may be best summarized in his own terms: "Man is aristocratic in so far as man is a serf." To educate the serf is to abolish the aristocrat.<sup>61</sup>

Ironically, this latter insight may be what makes Gramsci so appealing to intellectuals and professors in our own day, who take up a leading place for themselves in his revolutionary process. Hegemony, war of position, historical bloc (sometimes summarized as the bases for a "pedagogic dictatorship") are concepts which have, without a doubt, reinvigorated academic communities. Less sympathetic critics cannot help but mistrust Gramsci's processes altogether, immersed as they seem to be within the politics of transition, certainly the most politicized phase in Marxian thinking. These kinds of readings help to explain why most of the available literature on Gramsci's political theory speaks more about the interpreters, less so about the theory itself. Gramsci's problematic, in effect, becomes our own, born either of an excess of enthusiasm or cynicism on the part of those of us who read and write about him.

Thus to disregard the implications of praxis and actualist thinking, by imposing our own meanings on Gramsci's words, is to impose contradictions as well. Before we try to assign meanings, then, perhaps we ought first to learn how to read Gramsci, not only in terms of



historical context, but in reference to the philosophy of praxis, the one concept which unlocks the broader network of Gramscian meanings. To the extent that these meanings contain a certain spaciousness and dynamism, they owe as much to Gentile as to Marx, Labriola, or Croce.

To read Gramsci in these contexts and these terms is to engage, unavoidably, in a polemic. For Gentile's loyal attachment to the fascist regime remains a source of controversy. Yet Gentile was a central player within the neo-Hegelian, idealist tradition, within which Gramsci himself belongs. The points of correspondence between Italian communism and fascism are as well defined as the points of political opposition. What are givens have only *become* provocative. We need to broach past polemics, then, in order to lead us out of our own, with the hope that these reflections on Marxism and Italian political culture will not so much spark a partisan defense of Gramsci, as promote an openness to new voices, and to new readings.

Georgetown University

MICHAEL G. SMITH

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 21 (Moscow: Progress, 1964), p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Richard Kilminster, *Praxis and Method: a Sociological Dialogue with Lukács, Gramsci and the Early Frankfurt School* (London: Routledge, 1979); *Telos* has dedicated itself to this continuity over the years, while also stressing Gramsci's place within the Italian neo-Hegelian tradition, although curiously without insightful reference to Gentile.

<sup>3</sup> The literature on Gramsci's formative years is extensive. Several biographies reveal the polemical and dialogic nature of Gramsci's works: Walter Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Alastair Davidson, *Antonio Gramsci: Towards an Intellectual Biography* (London: Merlin Press, 1977); Giuseppe Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary*, trans. by Tom Nairn (New York: Dutton, 1971); as does Gramsci's own self-perception, which Maurice Finocchiaro has used as an organizing principle for his study, *Gramsci and the History of Dialectical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 2

<sup>4</sup> Richard Bellamy, *Modern Italian Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987). On Gramsci's idealism, see Paul Piccone, *Italian Marxism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). On the Gramsci-Croce relationship, see Edmund Jacobitti, "Labriola, Croce, and Italian Marxism," in *Journal of the History of Ideas XXXVI/2* (1975), pp. 297-318, and "Hegemony Before Gramsci: the Case of Benedetto Croce," in *Journal of Modern History* 52 (1980), pp. 66-84. On the Gramsci-Labriola relationship, see Piccone, *Italian Marxism*; Nicola Badaloni, *Il marxismo di Gramsci* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975); as well as a series of articles in *Critica marxista*, issues 2 and 4 (1979), 2 and 6 (1981), 5 (1983), 4 and 5 (1986). There are also several insightful studies on Gramsci's "philosophy of praxis" as I define it in this article, but which linger in a kind of historical vacuum: for example, Mihailo Markovic, "L'unità di filosofia e politica in Gramsci," and Karel Kosik, "Gramsci e la filosofia della prassi," both in *Gramsci e la cultura contemporanea*, vol. II, ed. by Pietro Rossi (Rome: Riuniti, 1970), pp. 19-27, 45-50; and Giorgio Nardone's excellent *Il pensiero di Gramsci* (Bari: De Donato, 1971). Renato Zangheri, "Gramsci e la teoria del materialismo storico," in *Critica marxista* 5 (1983), is also very useful; as is Guido Morpugo-Tagliabue, "Gramsci tra Croce e Marx," in *Il ponte* (May 1948), pp. 429-438.

<sup>5</sup> Benito Mussolini, *Opere Omnia*, vol. 14, ed. by Eduardo and Dulio Susmel (Florence: La Fenice, 1951-1963), p. 245.

<sup>6</sup> A. James Gregor, *Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 135-138; Piccone, *Italian Marxism*, p. 114. In later years, Gramsci and Mussolini would often find themselves referring to their onetime association. Gramsci recognized that "hardened mask of a face which we have already seen at socialist meetings. We know that face, we know that rolling of the eyes in their sockets, eyes which in the past sought with their ferocious movements to bring shudders to the bourgeoisie . . ." in Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Political Writings, 1921-1926*, ed. and trans. by

Quintin Hoare (New York: International, 1978), p. 47. Mussolini sarcastically referred to the "intellectual affinities" between Fascists and Communists with regard to their mutual support for a "centralized, unitary state," in *Opere*, vol. 17, p. 295. "I know the Communists," he said in 1921, "because part of them are my offspring . . . because I initially tainted these gentlemen when I first introduced into the circulation of Italian socialism one bit of Bergson mixed with many parts of Blanqui," in *Opere*, vol. 16, p. 440.

<sup>7</sup> John Cammett, *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), p. 33; Fiori, *Revolutionary*, pp. 83-88, 91, 94-95; Benedetto Croce, *A History of Italy, 1871-1915*, trans. by Cecilia Ady (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), pp. 266-267.

<sup>8</sup> Davidson, *Intellectual Biography*, p. 112; see also Antonio Straga, "Il problema della guerra e la strategia della pace in Gramsci," *Critica Marxista* 3 (1984), pp. 156-157, which refers to the "youthful idealist vice" which informed the article, and ventures to downplay its interventionism and any "acritical 'abbraccimento' of Mussolini's theses."

<sup>9</sup> Gramsci's article is reprinted in Pedro Cavalcanti, Paul Piccone, et al., eds., *History, Philosophy and Culture in the Young Gramsci* (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1975), pp. 117-120; Mussolini, *Opere*, vol. 6, pp. 396-403. On Gramsci's and Togliatti's interventionism, see Piccone, *Italian Marxism*, pp. 114-115, 120-124; and Paolo Spriano, *Storia del partito comunista italiano*, vol. 1, *Da Bordiga a Gramsci* (Turin: Einaudi, 1967), pp. 46-48.

<sup>10</sup> Spriano, *Storia*, pp. 46-48; Robert Paris, in his "La premiere experience politique de Gramsci (1914-1915)," in *Le mouvement sociale* 42 (1965), pp. 38-40, refers to Gramsci's "mussolinian" style. Gramsci carried some of this harshness into his later critiques of PSI neutralism. Thus we find Gramsci in 1921 referring to the PSI as a "Barnum's Circus" of "repentant Magdalenes" (one of Mussolini's favorite slanders) and "Malthusian subversives," in Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Political Writings, 1910-1920*, ed. by Quintin Hoare, trans. by John Mathews (New York: International, 1977), pp. 7, 47, 172-174. Mussolini took delight in such derisions of the PSI. He spoke in the Chamber of Deputies in December 1921 of how his "spirit was gladdened" to see the "cerebral communists of Turin" branding the PSI as a "Barnum's Circus," in Mussolini, *Opere*, vol. 17, p. 290.

<sup>11</sup> At the Livorno Congress of the PSI in 1921, and during the parliamentary election campaign of the same spring, Gramsci was accused of "bergsonismo" and "idealismo" by his rivals — whose memories stretched back to 1914. See Spriano, *Storia del partito*, p. 118. On Mussolini's violent expulsion from the party, and Gramsci's slow acceptance back into it, see Mussolini, *Opere*, vol. 7, pp. 2, 451-459; and Spriano, *Storia del partito*, pp. 13-16; Davidson, *Intellectual Biography*, p. 68; Fiori, *Revolutionary*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>12</sup> On Marxian "productivism," see Michael Smith, "Marx, Technocracy and the Corporatist Ethos," in *Studies in Soviet Thought* 36 (1988), pp. 233-250.

<sup>13</sup> See the assorted articles in Mussolini, *Opere*, vol. 12, pp. 11-14, 242-245, 310-311; vol. 15, pp. 188, 219, 224, 231-233. For a discussion of Mussolini's "productivism," see Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario, 1883-1920*, (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), pp. 410-413. On Gramsci's "revolutionary syndicalism," see Martin Clark, *Antonio Gramsci and the Revolution that Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 9, 16-18, 69-70. As David D. Roberts, *The Syndicalist Tradition and Italian Fascism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979) and Franklin H. Adler, "Italian Industrialists and Radical Fascism," in *Telos* 30 (1976-77), pp. 193-201, have shown, Mussolini's ideas were really only a small part of a broader movement of Syndicalism and Corporativism which influenced politics and economics, and to which Gramsci and Spirito belonged, each in his own way.

<sup>14</sup> In his later writings, Gramsci stressed Croce's influence, conveniently ignoring whatever impact Gentile may have had; see Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, vol. 2, ed. by V. Gerratana (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), pp. 1213, 1232-1233, 1306-1307. On his evaluation of Labriola, see Gramsci, *Quaderni*, vol. 2, pp. 1507-1509, vol. 3, p. 1855. For a review of those studies which focus their interpretations on the Crocean legacy, see Geoff Eley, "Reading Gramsci in English," in *European History Quarterly*, 14/4 (1984), pp. 441-478, to which we should add, Finocchiaro, *Dialectical Thought*. Croce saw his own mission as one of battling both the "superficial rationalism of the positivists" and the many "pseudo-geniuses, mystics, and diletanti" (Marinetti, Gentile, Mussolini, for example) plaguing Italy, in Benedetto Croce, *A History of Italy*, pp. 240-241; see also Adamson, *Hegemony*, p. 32.

<sup>15</sup> The accusation of "Gentilean idealism" against Gramsci is as old as his first rifts with the maxi-

malist Bordigan faction of the PSI: see Spriano, *Storia del partito*, pp. 11-13, 118, 265. More recently, a number of critics have drawn rather crude, direct parallels between Gentile's and Gramsci's neo-Hegelianism. On *gramscismo* as a "monistic-atavistic idealism" and "generic historicism" in the manner of Gentile, altogether uprooted from any Marxian foundations, see Christian Reichers, *Antonio Gramsci: Marxismus in Italien* (Europäische Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1970); and Tito Perlini, *Gramsci e il gramscismo* (CELUC, Milan, 1974), pp. 155-157. For a review of these and other "left-wing," "Trotskyist" interpretations of Gramsci, see Raymond Morrow's essay in *Telos* 22 (Winter 1974-1975), pp. 174-181; together with Paul Piccone, "Gramsci's Marxism: Beyond Lenin and Togliatti," in *Theory and Society* 3/4 (1976), pp. 487, 489-490, 508; and the review in *Telos* 31 (1977), pp. 229-236. Luciano Pellicani, a leading member of the Italian Socialist Party, draws even more stunning parallels between Gramsci and actual idealism in his *Gramsci: An Alternative Communism?* (Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1978), p. 106 — clearly with an eye to embarrass the Communist Party. The Morrow essay in *Telos* also contains short reviews of several German works, by Sandkuhler, Polka, Rodriguez-Lores, and Roth which take a more reasonable, objective approach to the Gentile-Gramsci connection. Interesting and reliable works in Italian on the Gentile-Gramsci relationship include: Riccardo Fiorito, "La lettura gentiliana di Marx e Labriola," in *Critica Marxista* V/6 (1967), pp. 141-151; Mario Tronti's two essays — "Tra materialismo dialettico e filosofia della prassi," in *La città futura*, ed. by Alberto Caracciolo and Gianni Scalia (Feltrinelli, Milan, 1959), pp. 141-162, and his "Alcune questioni intorno al Marxismo di Gramsci," in *Studi Gramsciani* (Riuniti, Rome, 1969), pp. 305-321; several important works by Biagio De Giovanni — *Marx e la costituzione della praxis* (Cappelli, Bologna, 1974), "Sulle vie di Marx filosofo in Italia," in *Il Centauro* 9 (1983), pp. 3-25, and "Il Marx di Gramsci," in *Marx dopo Marx* (Cappelli, Bologna, 1985), pp. 3-31. Augusto Del Noce was one of the first scholars to develop the themes in these latter works, arguing that Gramsci both appropriated Gentile's critique of Marxist historical materialism and succeeded it — Gramsci's being a "revolutionary version of actualism," a neo-Marxism inconceivable without reference to its Gentilean origins, in Augusto Del Noce, *Il suicidio della rivoluzione* (Rusconi, Milan, 1978), pp. 15, 121-198, 253. Unfortunately, several important English-language studies either relegate Gentile's influence on Gramsci to marginal status: Bellamy, *Social Theory*; Carl Boggs, *The Two Revolutions: Antonio Gramsci and the Dilemmas of Western Marxism* (South End Press, Boston, 1984); Joseph V. Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness and the Revolutionary Process* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987); or dismiss it entirely: Piccone, *Italian Marxism*; Finocchiaro, *Dialectical Thought*; and Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Gramsci and the State*, trans. by David Fernbach (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1980).

<sup>16</sup> Although Gramsci may have become all the more Crocean and Labriolan in his later years, in terms of the debate on revisionist Marxism at the turn of the century, Gentile was his teacher. Gentile criticized several of Labriola's and Croce's ideas, but key insights from Labriola's *Discorrendo di socialismo e di filosofia*, now reprinted in Antonio Labriola, *Scritti filosofici e politici*, vol. 2, ed. by Franco Sbarbèri (Einaudi, Turin, 1973), formed a basis for Gentile's *La filosofia di Marx* (see the text and notes below for cross references). Indeed, Labriola was first to use the term, "philosophy of praxis" in reference to Marxism, in *Discorrendo*, pp. 689, 702-703, a source of inspiration for both Gentile and Gramsci. Gramsci would criticize Croce's position in *Materialismo storico ed economia marxistica* from a Gentilean point of view even into the prison writings, as in the *Quaderni*, vol. 2, p. 1236. Gentile's work has been republished in Giovanni Gentile, *Opere Complete*, vol. 23, *La filosofia di Marx* (Sansoni, Florence, 1955). Roberto Racinaro's *La crisi del Marxismo nella revisione di fine secolo* (De Donato, Bari, 1978) places the work in context. For a study of Gentile (rather than Labriola or Croce) as the major influence on Gramsci, see Di Giovanni, "Sulle vie di Marx," pp. 10-15. Gentile's superior sense of Hegelian Marxism and his influence on Croce have been explored by Edmund Jacobitti, *Revolutionary Humanism and Historicism in Modern Italy* (Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, 1981), pp. 70-73; Emilio Agazzi, *Il giovane Croce e il Marxismo* (Einaudi, Turin, 1962), pp. 103, 234-243; H.S. Harris, *The Social Philosophy of Giovanni Gentile* (Univ. of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1960), p. 20. On Croce's initial opposition to Gentile's definition of Marxism as a philosophy of praxis, see Benedetto Croce, *Lettere a Giovanni Gentile (1896-1924)*, ed. by Alda Croce (Mondadori, Milan, 1981), pp. 4-6, 55-59. The full correspondence between the two on these issues has been published in Giovanni Gentile, *La filosofia di Marx*, ed. by V.A. Bellezza (Sansoni, Florence, 1974). Thomas Nemeth has provided a fine summary of the Labriola-Croce-Gentile debates in his *Gramsci's Philosophy* (Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands,

1980), pp. 21-36, and in his "Gentile and the 'Marxismusstreit' in Italian Philosophy," in *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 2 (1979), pp. 279-300.

<sup>17</sup> Zenovia Sochor has touched on some of these questions in her article, "Was Bogdanov Russia's Answer to Gramsci?" in *Studies in Soviet Thought* 22 (February 1981), pp. 59-81, and in her recent book, *Revolution and Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1988), but without full reference to the broader European debate on these issues – given the scope of the study – and without specific reference to Gentile's reading.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Piccone, "Gramsci's Marxism," p. 494; and Bucu-Glucksman, *Gramsci and the State*, pp. 348, 376, 452, corroborate the point that Gramsci's Lenin was *not* the Lenin we know today, but in fact a much more voluntarist and even idealist Lenin by Gramsci's own design.

<sup>19</sup> Gentile, *La filosofia*, pp. 41-42, 54-58, 165.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84, 75-77, 160-161, 164-165; and Labriola, *Discorrendo di socialismo*, pp. 689, 691, 702-703, 705. Gramsci best expressed these very Gentilean principles on the unity of subject-object in the *Quaderni*, vol. 2, pp. 1048-1049, 1415-1416.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79, 85-86, 156-157, 161, 164-165; and Labriola, *Discorrendo di socialismo*, pp. 726-727.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 121-122.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165. Gentile further developed his actual idealism in a series of works: *La riforma della dialettica hegeliana* (1913), *Sommario di pedagogia come scienza filosofica* (1913-1914), *Teoria generale dello spirito come atto puro* (1916), *I fondamenti della filosofia del diritto* (1916), and *Sistema di logica come teoria del conoscere* (1917) – all now part of his *Opere complete*. The unity of thinking and doing, theory and practice postulated in these works amounted to a significant departure from *La filosofia di Marx*, as outlined in Harris, *Social Philosophy*.

<sup>24</sup> The classic example of Gentile's Fascist philosophy-ideology is his "Dottrina – idee fondamentali" in Benito Mussolini, "Fascismo," in *Enciclopedia italiana*, 1932. On Gentile's "humanism of labor" see Ugo Spirito, *Giovanni Gentile* (Florence: Sansoni, 1969), pp. 70, 194-195, where Spirito relates how Gentile accused the communists of being "impatient corporativists"; and Harris, *Social Philosophy*, pp. 274-275. On his "theory of permanent revolution," see Harris, *Social Philosophy*, pp. 49, 51, 228-229, 277-284; Luigi Punzo, *La soluzione corporativa dell'attualismo di Ugo Spirito* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche, 1984), pp. 15-17, 155-157; and E. Paolo Lamanna and Vittorio Mathieu, *Storia della filosofia: La filosofia del novecento*, vol. 7, t. 1, *La filosofia italiana: idealismo, anti-idealismo, spiritualismo* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1972), pp. 394-396.

<sup>25</sup> De Giovanni, *Marx e la costituzione*, p. 9; De Giovanni, "Il Marx di Gramsci," pp. 3-31. See also Dario Ragazzini, *Società industriale e formazione umana* (Rome: Riuniti, 1976), pp. 18-25.

<sup>26</sup> The quote is from Gramsci's article, "Socialism and Culture," of January 1916, in *History, Philosophy and Culture*, pp. 20-23; Gramsci's distinction in this article between the "animal and vegetable kingdom" and human culture may be compared to Gentile's distinction between the "empirical self" and the "transcendental self," in Giovanni Gentile, *The Theory of Mind as Pure Act* trans. by H.W. Carr (London: Macmillan, 1922), p. 32. On Gramsci's appropriation of Gentilean concepts, see Leonardo Paggi, *Gramsci e il moderno principe* (Rome: Riuniti, 1970), pp. 20-23; Giancarlo Bergami, *Il giovane Gramsci e il Marxismo, 1911-1918* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1977), pp. 83-84, 100-120; Adamson, *Hegemony*, pp. 48, 255; Davidson, *Intellectual Biography*, pp. 97-98, 103. More specifically, on Gramsci's redefinition of the Gentilean distinction between "act" and "fact," see his articles, "The Revolution Against Capital," of November 1917 in *History, Philosophy and Culture*, p. 123-124, and "L'uomo più libero," of May 1917, in Antonio Gramsci, *La città futura, 1917-1918*, ed. by Sergio Caprioglio (Turin: Einaudi, 1982), pp. 173-174. In the early years, party editors claimed that Gramsci's reference, in the former article, to Marxism as completion of Italian and German idealism was an "error" in Gramsci's thought, in the editorial preface to Antonio Gramsci, *Scritti giovanili, 1914-1918* (Turin: Einaudi, 1958), p. xviii. On Gramsci's Gentilean sense of necessity as a stimulus to action, see "Liberata la tua volontà" of August 1918, quoted in Paggi, *Il moderno principe*, pp. 22-23; "Our Marx" of May 1918, now in *History, Philosophy and Culture*, p. 51; and especially "La critica critica" of January 1918, in Gramsci, *Scritti giovanili*, pp. 154-155. These were ideas which Gentile already developed in *La filosofia di Marx*, pp. 37-39, 49-52, 115-118, 122; following from Labriola,

*Discorrendo di socialismo*, pp. 740-741. As Harris wrote in *Social Philosophy*, "A rational necessity becomes a moral imperative for those who understand it," p. 47.

The young Palmiro Togliatti – as was the case with many of the *ordinovisti* – was also attracted to Gentile's actualism, "which seemed positive back then, as a reaction to the decadence of those times," in Palmiro Togliatti, *Opere scelte*, ed. by G. Santomassimo (Rome: Riuniti, 1974), p. 329; see also Togliatti's " 'Guerra e fede' di Giovanni Gentile," in *Opere*, vol. 1 (Rome: Riuniti, 1973), pp. 19-23. Angelo Tasca would later claim that "we were all Gentilean back then, in no way Crocean," quoted in Antimo Negri, *Giovanni Gentile*, vol. 2, *Sviluppi e incidenza dell'attualismo* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1975), p. 22.

<sup>27</sup> Gramsci, *La città futura*, p. 650 – the first major publication of which I am aware to include this long-suppressed article. The "true and the fact" refer to Vico's principle, *verum et factum convertuntur*, "the concept of truth coincides with the concept of fact," which Gentile redefined as *verum et fieri convertuntur*, in which the fact is not "a fact or a deed but a doing." See Gentile, *The Theory of Mind as Pure Act*, pp. 15-17.

<sup>28</sup> See "Prima liberi" of August 1918 in Antonio Gramsci, *Il nostro Marx, 1918-1919*, ed. by Sergio Caprioglio (Turin: Einaudi, 1984), pp. 274-275. For the quotes, see Gentile, *La filosofia*, pp. 70, 74, 131, 87, 160.

<sup>29</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. by Quintin Hoare and G.N. Smith (New York: International, 1980), pp. 172, 355-357, 465; and Gramsci, *Quaderni*, vol. 1, pp. 309, 421, 435-436, and vol. 2, pp. 1434, 1780; vol. 1, pp. 432-433, and vol. 2, pp. 1048-1049, 1415-1416, 1437, 1443, 1492; vol. 2, 1385, and vol. 3, p. 1860.

<sup>30</sup> Gramsci, *Quaderni*, vol. 2, pp. 854, 868, 1244, 1300.

<sup>31</sup> Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 405. On Gramsci's sense of an Hegelian Marxism and of an historical materialism, inspired by Gentile, see the *Prison Notebooks*, pp. 404, 465, and the *Quaderni*, vol. 2, pp. 1437, 1487, 1492. Such a conception of a singular, unified Marx should convince us of the unity of Gramsci's own thought as well, from the younger to the elder.

<sup>32</sup> The prison writings refer consistently to "collective will as operative awareness of historical necessity, as protagonist of real and effective historical drama"; or further of the "historical 'automatism' of certain premises (the existence of certain objective conditions)" as "potentialised politically by parties and by men of ability," in *Ibid.*, pp. 130, 191, and also pp. 369, 412; and in Gramsci, *Quaderni*, vol. 2, pp. 1266-1267, 1403-1404, 1477-1479, vol. 3, 1875-1876. See also Ruggiero Orfei's "Il problema della realtà in Antonio Gramsci," in *Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica*, 53/1 (1961), pp. 25-58, and his "Prevedibilità storica a mentalità scientifica in Antonio Gramsci," in *Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica* 55/3-4 (1963); together with Nardone, *Il pensiero di Gramsci*, p. 488; and Chiara Lefons, "Scienza, tecnica e organizzazione del lavoro in Gramsci," in *Critica marxista* 4 (1978), p. 115.

<sup>33</sup> Ugo Spirito, *Inizio di una nuova epoca* (Florence: Sansoni, 1979), pp. 232-233. On the various generations and factions of Gentilean actualism, see Negri, *Giovanni Gentile*, vol. 2, *Sviluppi e incidenza dell'attualismo*.

<sup>34</sup> Ugo Spirito, *Dal mito alla scienza* (Florence: Sansoni, 1966), pp. 320-321, 346-347. Spirito first developed his own ideas in articles appearing in the *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* between 1926 and 1929, in the *Nuovi studi* and *Archivio di studi corporativi* of the same time period, and in his first published works, *I fondamenti dell'economia corporativa* (1932), *Scienza e filosofia* (1933), and *Capitalismo e corporativismo* (1933).

<sup>35</sup> Ugo Spirito, *La vita come ricerca* (Florence: Sansoni, 1943, second edition), pp. 104-105, 7-8.

<sup>36</sup> Spirito, *Dal mito*, pp. 224-230, 352, 320-322, 355.

<sup>37</sup> The relationship between these two offensives had its political as well as theoretical manifestations. Gramsci reached out on several occasions to Left Fascist elements (of whom Ugo Spirito counted himself as one), in an attempt to broaden the military and mass base of the Communist Party. See Paolo Spriano, "Gramsci, il fascismo e gli arditi del popolo," in *Critica marxista* Quaderni 3 (1967), pp. 175-199; Gramsci, *Writings, 1921-1926*, pp. 56-58, 308-309, 402-407; Spriano, *Storia del partito*, pp. 133-134, 139-151, and Davidson, *Intellectual Biography*, pp. 191-192. Left Fascists, in turn, took a keen interest in Gramsci's productivist *ordinovismo*. See the text and notes in Antonio Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, trans. by Lynne Lawner (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), pp. 204-206; Giuseppe Prezzolini, *La cultura italiana* (Florence:

La Voce, 1923), pp. 120-122. The exigencies of political and ideological opposition, however, rendered impossible any forms of viable cooperation between Left Fascism and Bolshevist Communism, regardless of theoretical affinities.

<sup>38</sup> See Gramsci, *Political Writings, 1910-1920*, pp. 100-101, 110-111, 114-124, 145-146, 165, 286; and Carlo Petri's article, one of a series which appeared in *L'ordine nuovo* in 1919, "Il sistema Taylor e i consigli dei produttori," reprinted in *Capitalismo e lotta operaie in Italia, 1870-1970*, ed. by Dora Marucco and Rosanna Tos (Società Editrice Internazionale, 1976), pp. 86-87; and for a review of Gramsci's more open and humane productivism and rationalism, Massimo Salvadori's *Gramsci e il problema storico della democrazia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1973), and his *Gramsci e l'organizzazione del lavoro nel periodo di transizione dal capitalismo al socialismo* (Turin: Giappichelli, 1971). See also Ugo Spirito, "La crisi del capitalismo e il sistema corporativo," in *La crisi del capitalismo* (Florence: Sansoni, 1934), pp. 142-147; and "Capitalismo, socialismo, corporativismo," in *Nuove esperienze economiche* (Florence: Sansoni, 1935), pp. 237-241.

<sup>39</sup> On the "infrastructure" of the "Hegelian Subject-Object" see Alvin Gouldner, "The Metaphoricity of Marxism and the Context-Freeing Grammar of Socialism," in *Theory and Society* 1/4 (1974), pp. 402-406; refer also to Smith, "Marx, Technocracy," pp. 246-247.

<sup>40</sup> Gramsci, *Quaderni*, vol. 2, pp. 862, 1137-1138, and vol. 3, pp. 2139; as well as vol. 3, 2147-2150, 2165-2169.

<sup>41</sup> Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 287; and Gramsci, *Quaderni*, vol. 2, p. 753, vol. 3, pp. 2147, 2155-2156 — a momentary appreciation of Spirito's work within Gramsci's broader polemic with him. Palmiro Togliatti referred in 1935, somewhat favorably, to the "socialist" and "extreme left" corporativism of Ugo Spirito, with its "subversive" and expropriatory character, in his *Opere*, vol. 3, t. 2 (Rome: Riuniti, 1973), p. 609.

<sup>42</sup> Spirito, *La vita*, pp. 194-197, 236-237, 200-207.

<sup>43</sup> Ugo Spirito, *Il comunismo* (Florence: Sansoni, 1979), pp. 285, 412-416, 55-66.

<sup>44</sup> Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 372, and the *Quaderni*, vol. 2, p. 1492; Spirito, *Inizio*, p. 239; Spirito, *La vita*, p. 217.

<sup>45</sup> Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 446, Gramsci, *Quaderni*, vol. 2, pp. 1049, 1416, 1448-1449, 1457. These ideas may have followed from Gentile's discussion of science as "an effect, not the cause of practice," in Gentile, *La filosofia di Marx*, p. 180 — to the extent that scientific activity was seen as a function of fully human activity rather than its regulator. See also Labriola, *Discorrendo di socialismo*, pp. 700-705, on science and labor. For a more complete review of Gramsci's understanding of science, see Lefons, "Scienza, tecnica," pp. 103-132; Domenica Mazzu, "Profili epistemologici nei *Quaderni* di Antonio Gramsci," in *Critica marxista* 3 (1978), pp. 127-139; and Paolo Rossi, "Antonio Gramsci sulla scienza moderna," in *Critica marxista* 2 (1976), pp. 41-57.

<sup>46</sup> Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, pp. 9-10; Gramsci, *Quaderni*, vol. 3, pp. 1531, 1551; see also Gramsci's "Schools of Labour," (July 1916) in *A Gramsci Reader. Selected Writings, 1916-1935*, ed. by David Forgacs (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1988), pp. 59-62. Spirito, *Il comunismo*, p. 409.

<sup>47</sup> Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, pp. 405, 445-446.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257, and the *Quaderni*, vol. 2, p. 693. The ultimate failure of Spirito's corporativism highlights the cogency of Gramsci's critique.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 376-377, 392, and the *Quaderni*, vol. 2, p. 869.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129, 133, 265, 366-367, 395, 417, 465; and Gramsci, *Quaderni*, vol. 2, pp. 800, 1051, 1437, vol. 3, pp. 1558-1561, 1826, 2302.

<sup>51</sup> Gramsci, *Quaderni*, vol. 2, pp. 1234.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 1049, 1245, 1306, 1370. Palmiro Togliatti, "La fine di Giovanni Gentile," in *Opere scelte*, ed. by G. Santomassimo (Rome: Riuniti, 1974), pp. 328-329. This unwillingness to separate the philosophical Gentile from the political Gentile — indeed the unwillingness to read all of his works as a coherent whole, the good with the bad — sets an unfortunate standard for even some of the present-day scholarship.

<sup>53</sup> Gramsci, *Quaderni*, vol. 1, p. 119, vol. 2, p. 1355, and vol. 3, pp. 1568-1569. See also Franco Fergnani, "La questione Gramsci — una proposta di riconsiderazione," in *Aut Aut* (November-December 1974), pp. 16-18.

<sup>54</sup> Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 456.

<sup>55</sup> Both Nemeth, *Gramsci's Philosophy*, and Del Noce, *Suicidio* provide points of reference and provocation for discussion. Indeed, Del Noce claims that Gentile and Gramsci converge precisely "at the idea of a national-popular collective will," in *Suicidio*, p. 195. Gramsci's admission is in the *Quaderni*, vol. 2, p. 1210.

<sup>56</sup> On Gentile's "hegemony" over Italian culture, see Gabriele Turi, *Il fascismo e il consenso degli intellettuali* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1980); Mario Isnenghi, *Intellettuali militanti e intellettuali funzionari* (Turin: Einaudi, 1979); Luisa Mangoni, *L'interventismo della cultura: intellettuali e riviste del fascismo* (Rome: Laterza, 1974); and A. Leone De Castris, *Egemonia e fascismo: il problema degli intellettuali negli anni trenta* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1981). Gramsci himself recognized Gentile's domination over culture, in the *Quaderni*, vol. 2, pp. 755, 800, 1081, 1250-1251, 1306, and vol. 3, pp. 1854-1855.

<sup>57</sup> Gramsci referred to Croce and Croceanism as a "matrice" or counterfoil to Gentilean actualism in the *Quaderni*, vol. 2, p. 1223. See Togliatti, "La fine di Giovanni Gentile."

<sup>58</sup> Spirito, *Il comunismo*, p. 422.

<sup>59</sup> The interpretation of Gramsci as a self-contradictory thinker, unable to reconcile process with institution (revolutionary praxis with proletarian hegemony), in the tradition of "totalitarian democracy," is not uncommon in the literature. See, for example, Sigmund Krancberg, "Common Sense and Philosophy in Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*," in *Studies in Soviet Thought* 32 (1986), pp. 163-164; and Roberto Mondolfo, "Le antinomie di Gramsci," in *Critica sociale* 55/23 (1963), pp. 629-634; Perry Anderson, "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci," in *New Left Review* 100 (1976-1977); Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought*; David D. Roberts, *Benedetto Croce and the Uses of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 259.

<sup>60</sup> Buci-Glucksmann, *Gramsci and the State*, pp. 363, 374, left little room for discussion when she wrote: Gramsci's "position in philosophy coincides with Labriola's. Contrary to several of his commentators, certain of whom incidentally end up in a monstrous confusion of philosophical naivety and error, the Gramscian concept of praxis is irreducible to the Gentilean identity of subject and object." Maurice Finocchiaro wrote in a more reasoned, but equally strident tone: "the diversity between Gentile's thought and Gramsci's cannot be undermined by the similar sounding conclusions to which they arrive," in *Dialectical Thought*, p. 257, which quoted from Nicola Matteucci's *Antonio Gramsci e la filosofia della prassi* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1951) for support.

<sup>61</sup> Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 355.

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