



Gramsci's Grand Plan

One of the most interesting aspects of the study of history is that very often men born in the most humble of circumstances nevertheless rise up to affect the course of human history dramatically. They may be men of action or men of thought, yet in either case their activities can father tremendous changes across the years. Antonio Gramsci was both a man of action and thought and, whatever the outcome of the events of the next several decades, he will almost certainly be reckoned by future historians to have been a remarkable figure.

Born in obscurity on the island of Sardinia in 1891, Gramsci would not have been considered a prime candidate to impact significantly the 20th century. Gramsci studied philosophy and history at the University of Turin, and soon became a dedicated Marxist, joining the Italian Socialist Party. Immediately after the First World War, he established his own radical newspaper, *The New Order*, and shortly afterwards helped in the founding of the Italian Communist Party.

Disillusioned Marxist

The fascist "March on Rome" and the appointment of Benito Mussolini to the prime ministry impelled the young Marxist theorist to depart Italy. Casting about for a new home, he chose the most logical place for a Communist, Lenin's newly fashioned USSR. However, Soviet Russia was not what he had expected. His powers of observation wakened immediately to the distance that so often separates theory from reality. A fanatical Marxist insofar as political, economic, and historical theories were concerned, Gramsci was profoundly disturbed that life in Communist Russia exhibited little evidence of any deeply felt love on the part of the workers for the "paradise" that Lenin had constructed for them. Even less was there any deep attachment to such concepts as the "proletarian revolution" or "dictatorship of the proletariat," apart from the obligatory rhetoric.

On the contrary, it was obvious to Gramsci that the "paradise" of the working class maintained its hold over workers and peasants only by sheer terror, by mass murder on a gargantuan scale, and by the ubiquitous, gnawing fear of midnight knocks on the door and of forced-labor camps in the Siberian wilderness. Also crucial to Lenin's state was a continuous drumbeat of propaganda, slogans, and outright lies. It was all very disillusioning for Gramsci. While other men might have reassessed their entire ideological outlook after such experiences, Gramsci's subtle, analytical mind worked on the seeming paradox differently.

The death of Lenin and the seizure of power by Stalin caused Gramsci immediately to reconsider his choice of residence. Building upon Lenin's achievements in terror and tyranny, Stalin began to transform agrarian Russia into an industrial giant that would then turn all of its energies to military conquest. It was Stalin's design to build the greatest military machine in history, crush the "forces of reaction," and impose Communism on Europe and Asia — and later on the whole world — by brute force.

In the meantime, however, to consolidate and assure his power, Stalin systematically commenced the extermination of potential foes within his own camp. That, as it turned out, became an ongoing process, one that lasted until his own demise. In particular, men suspected of even the slightest ideological heresy in relation to Stalin's own interpretation of Marxism-Leninism were sent straight to torture chambers or death camps, or were hurried before firing squads.

Prison "Prophet"



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His days obviously numbered in Stalinist Russia, Gramsci decided to return home and take up the struggle against Mussolini. Seen as both a serious threat to the safety of the fascist regime and a likely agent of a hostile foreign power, after a relatively short time Gramsci was arrested and sentenced to a lengthy term of imprisonment, and there, in his prison cell, he devoted the nine years that were left to him to writing. Before his death from tuberculosis in 1937, Gramsci produced nine volumes of observations on history, sociology, Marxist theory, and, most importantly, Marxist strategy. Those volumes, known as the *Prison Notebooks*, have since been published in many languages and distributed throughout the world. Their significance comes from the fact that they form the foundation for a dramatic new Marxist strategy, one that makes the “spontaneous revolution” of Lenin as obsolete as hoop skirts and high button shoes, one that promises to win the world voluntarily to Marxism, and one based on a realistic appraisal of historical fact and human psychology, rather than on empty wishes and illusions.

As we shall see, Gramsci’s shrewd assessment of the true essence of Marxism and of mankind makes his writings among the most powerful in this century. While Gramsci himself would die an ignominious and lonely death in a fascist prison, his thoughts would attain a life of their own and rise up to menace the world. What are these ideas?

Essence of the Red Revolution

Gramsci’s signal contribution was to liberate the Marxist project from the prison of economic dogma, thereby dramatically enhancing its ability to subvert Christian society.

If we were to take the ideological pronouncements of Marx and Lenin at face value, we would believe — as have millions of their deluded disciples — that the uprising of the workers was inevitable, and that all that was to be done was to mobilize the underclass through propagandea, thereby sparking universal revolution. Of course, this premise is invalid, yet it remained inflexible doctrine among Communists — at least, for public consumption.

However, the hard core of the Communist movement consisted of ruthless criminals, clear-eyed in their understanding of the intellectual errors of Marxism, who were willing to employ any necessary means to obtain the power they sought. For such hardened, hate-intoxicated conspirators, ideology is a tactic, a means of mobilizing supporters and rationalizing criminal actions.

Those who accept uncritically the idea that “Communism is dead” fail to understand the true nature of the enemy. Communism is not an ideology in which one believes. Rather, it is a criminal conspiracy in which one enlists. Although Lenin professed to revere Marx’s scribblings as sacred writ, once his Bolsheviks had seized power in Russia, Lenin freely modified Marxism to suit his needs. The same was true of Stalin. The Bolsheviks did not come to power in Russia by any uprising of the workers and peasants, but by a coup d’etat, orchestrated by a tightly disciplined Marxist cadre and ultimately consolidated by civil war. They also received — lest it be forgotten — critical help from Western political and banking elites.

In similar fashion, Communism did not come to power in Eastern Europe by revolution, but rather through the imposition of that system by a conquering Red Army — and, once again, through the corrupt connivance of conspirators in the West. In China, Communism came to power through civil war, aided by the Soviets and by traitorous elements in the West.

In no single instance has Communism ever achieved power by means of any popular revolutionary upheaval, but always by force or subterfuge. The only popular revolutionary upheavals recorded in the



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20th century have been anti-Marxist “counter-revolutions,” such as the revolt in Berlin in 1954 and the Hungarian uprising of 1956.

Looking back on the 20th century, it is clear that Marx was wrong in his assumption that most workers and peasants were dissatisfied with their places in, and alienated from, their societies, that they were seething with resentment against the middle and upper classes, or that they in any way were predisposed to revolution. Moreover, wherever Communism achieved power, its use of unprecedented levels of violence, coercion, and repression have generated underground opposition at home and militant opposition abroad, making endless killing and repression endemic to Marxism and essential for Communist survival. All of these undeniable facts, when examined honestly, posed insurmountable difficulties insofar as further extensions of Communist power were concerned, and assured some kind of ultimate crisis for Marxism.

While the foregoing is obvious to perceptive observers now, looking back from the vantage point of our time and after more than eight decades of experience with the reality of Communism in power, we begin to understand something of the insightfulness of Antonio Gramsci when we realize that what is evident now, at the close of the millennium, was evident to him when the Soviet regime was in its infancy and Communism still largely untried conjecture.

Gramsci was a brilliant student of philosophy, history, and languages. This education imparted to him an excellent grasp of the character of his fellow men and of the character of the societies that made up the civilized community of nations in the early decades of this century. As we have already seen, one of the foundational insights given him by this education was that Communist hopes for a spontaneous revolution, brought about by some process of historical inevitability, were illusory. Marxist ideologues were, he asserted, beguiling themselves. In the Gramscian view workers and peasants were not, by and large, revolutionary-minded and they harbored no desire for the destruction of the existing order. Most had loyalties beyond, and far more powerful than, class considerations, even in those instances where their lives were less than ideal. More meaningful to ordinary people than class solidarity and class warfare were such things as faith in God and love of family and country. These were foremost among their overriding allegiances.

Such attractiveness as Communist promises might possess among the working classes was, moreover, diminished by Communist brutalities and by heavy-handed totalitarian methods. Stirring the aristocratic and bourgeois classes to action, these negative attributes were so terrifying and sobering that militant anti-Marxist organizations and movements sprang up everywhere, effectively putting a halt to plans for Communist expansion. With all of this easily apparent to him, and, blessed in a way with the seemingly endless leisure afforded by prison life, Gramsci turned his excellent mind to saving Marxism by analyzing and solving these questions.

Subverting Christian Faith

The civilized world, Gramsci deduced, had been thoroughly saturated with Christianity for 2,000 years and Christianity remains the dominant philosophical and moral system in Europe and North America. Practically speaking, civilization and Christianity were inextricably bound together. Christianity had become so thoroughly integrated into the daily lives of nearly everyone, including non-Christians living in Christian lands, it was so pervasive, that it formed an almost impenetrable barrier to the new, revolutionary civilization Marxists wish to create. Attempting to batter down that barrier proved unproductive, since it only generated powerful counter-revolutionary forces, consolidating them and making them potentially deadly. Therefore, in place of the frontal attack, how much more advantageous



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and less hazardous it would be to attack the enemy's society subtly, with the aim of transforming the society's collective mind gradually, over a period of a few generations, from its former Christian worldview into one more harmonious to Marxism. And there was more.

Whereas conventional Marxist-Leninists were hostile towards the non-Communist Left, Gramsci argued that alliances with a broad spectrum of leftist groups would prove essential to Communist victory. In Gramsci's time these included, among others, various "anti-fascist" organizations, trade unions, and socialist political groups. In our time, alliances with the Left would include radical feminists, extremist environmentalists, "civil rights" movements, anti-police associations, internationalists, ultra-liberal church groups, and so forth. These organizations, along with open Communists, together create a united front working for the transformation of the old Christian culture.

What Gramsci proposed, in short, was a renovation of Communist methodology and a streamlining and updating of Marx's antiquated strategies. Let there be no doubt that Gramsci's vision of the future was entirely Marxist and that he accepted the validity of Marxism's overall worldview. Where he differed was in the process for achieving the victory of that worldview. Gramsci wrote that "there can and must be a 'political hegemony' even before assuming government power, and in order to exercise political leadership or hegemony one must not count solely on the power and material force that are given by government." What he meant is that it is incumbent upon Marxists to win the hearts and minds of the people, and not to rest hopes for the future solely on force or power.

Furthermore, Communists were enjoined to put aside some of their class prejudice in the struggle for power, seeking to win even elements within the bourgeois classes, a process which Gramsci described as "the absorption of the elites of the enemy classes." Not only would this strengthen Marxism with new blood, but it would deprive the enemy of this lost talent. Winning the bright young sons and daughters of the bourgeoisie to the red banner, wrote Gramsci, "results in [the anti-Marxist forces'] decapitation and renders them impotent." In short, violence and force will not by themselves genuinely transform the world. Rather it is through winning hegemony over the minds of the people and in robbing enemy classes of their most gifted men that Marxism will triumph over all.

Free-will Slaves

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, a classic study of modern totalitarianism, contains a line that epitomizes the concept that Gramsci tried to convey to his party comrades: "A really efficient totalitarian state would be one in which the all-powerful executive of political bosses and their army of managers control a population of slaves who do not have to be coerced, because they love their servitude." While it is improbable that Huxley was familiar with Gramsci's theories, the idea he conveys of free persons marching willingly into bondage is nevertheless precisely what Gramsci had in mind.

Gramsci believed that if Communism achieved "mastery of human consciousness," then labor camps and mass murder would be unnecessary. How does an ideology gain such mastery over patterns of thought inculcated by cultures for hundreds of years? Mastery over the consciousness of the great mass of people would be attained, Gramsci contended, if Communists or their sympathizers gained control of the organs of culture — churches, education, newspapers, magazines, the electronic media, serious literature, music, the visual arts, and so on. By winning "cultural hegemony," to use Gramsci's own term, Communism would control the deepest wellsprings of human thought and imagination. One need not even control all of the information itself if one can gain control over the minds that assimilate that information. Under such conditions, serious opposition disappears since men are no longer capable of grasping the arguments of Marxism's opponents. Men will indeed "love their servitude," and will not



even realize that it is servitude.

Steps in the Process

The first phase in achieving “cultural hegemony” over a nation is the undermining of all elements of traditional culture. Churches are thus transformed into ideology-driven political clubs, with the stress on “social justice” and egalitarianism, with worship reduced to trivialized entertainment, and with age-old doctrinal and moral teachings “modernized” or diminished to the point of irrelevancy. Genuine education is replaced by “dumbed-down” and “politically correct” curricula, and standards are reduced dramatically. The mass media are fashioned into instruments for mass manipulation and for harassing and discrediting traditional institutions and their spokesmen. Morality, decency, and old virtues are ridiculed without respite. Tradition-minded clergymen are portrayed as hypocrites and virtuous men and women as prudish, stuffy, and unenlightened.

Culture is no longer a buttress supporting the integrity of the national heritage and a vehicle for imparting that heritage to future generations, but becomes a means for “destroying ideals and ... presenting the young not with heroic examples but with deliberately and aggressively degenerate ones,” as theologian Harold O.J. Brown writes. We see this in contemporary American life, in which the great historical symbols of our nation’s past, including great presidents, soldiers, explorers, and thinkers, are shown to have been unforgivably flawed with “racism” and “sexism” and therefore basically evil. Their place has been taken by pro-Marxist charlatans, pseudo-intellectuals, rock stars, leftist movie celebrities, and the like. At another level, traditional Christian culture is condemned as repressive, “Eurocentric,” and “racist” and, thus, unworthy of our continued devotion. In its place, unalloyed primitivism in the guise of “multiculturalism” is held as the new model.

Marriage and family, the very building blocks of our society, are perpetually attacked and subverted. Marriage is portrayed as a plot by men to perpetuate an evil system of domination over women and children. The family is depicted as a dangerous institution epitomized by violence and exploitation. Patriarchally oriented families are, according to the Gramscians, the precursors of fascism, Nazism, and every organized form of racial persecution.

The Frankfurt School

With respect to the subject of the undermining of the American family, and to many other aspects of the Gramscian technique, let us explore briefly the story of the Frankfurt School. This organization of leftist intellectuals, also known as the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, was founded in the 1920s in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. There it flourished amidst the decadence of the Weimar period, both compounding and feeding off the decadence, and extending its influence throughout the country.

With Hitler’s acquisition of the chancellorship in 1933, the leftist stalwarts of the Frankfurt School fled Germany for the United States, where they soon established a new institute at Columbia University. As is characteristic of such men, they repaid their debt to the United States for sheltering them from Nazi brutality by turning their attention to what they regarded as the injustices and social deficiencies inherent to our system and society. Immediately they set about devising a program of revolutionary reform for America.

Max Horkheimer, one of the notables of the Frankfurt School, determined that America’s profound allegiance to the traditional family was a mark of our national inclination towards the same fascist system from which he had fled. Explaining this connection between fascism and the American family, he declared: “When the child respects in his father’s strength a moral relationship and thus learns to love



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what his reason recognizes to be a fact, he is experiencing his first training for the bourgeois authority relationship.”

Commenting critically on Horkheimer’s theory, Arthur Herman writes in *The Idea of Decline in Western History*: “The typical modern family, then, involves ‘sado-masochistic resolution of the Oedipus complex,’ producing a psychological cripple, the ‘authoritarian personality.’ The individual’s hatred of the father is suspended and remains unresolved, becoming instead an attraction for strong authority figures whom he obeys unquestioningly.” The traditional patriarchal family is thus a breeding ground for fascism, according to Horkheimer, and charismatic authority figures — men like Hitler and Mussolini — are the ultimate beneficiaries of the “authoritarian personality” instilled by the traditional family and culture.

Theodor W. Adorno, another notable of the Frankfurt School, underscored Horkheimer’s theory with his own study, published in book form as *The Authoritarian Personality*, which he authored together with Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford. Upon closer examination, it became apparent to critics that the research on which *The Authoritarian Personality* was based was pseudo-sociological, flawed in its methodology, and skewed in its conclusions. But, the critics were ignored.

America, Adorno and his research team pronounced, was ripe for its own, home-grown fascist takeover. Not only was the American population hopelessly racist and anti-Semitic, but it had far too acquiescent an attitude towards authority figures such as fathers, policemen, clergy, military leaders, and so forth. It was also far too obsessed with such “fascist” notions as efficiency, cleanliness, and success, for these qualities revealed an inward “pessimistic and contemptuous view of humanity,” a view that leads, Adorno held, to fascism.

Through such unmitigated balderdash as one finds in the writings of Horkheimer, Adorno, and the other luminaries of the Frankfurt School, the structures of the traditional family and traditional virtue have been called seriously into question and confidence in them blunted. Elected government officials and bureaucrats have contributed to this problem through government taxation policies, which mulct the traditional family while subsidizing anti-traditional modes of life.

Additionally, these officials are inclined more and more towards the elevation of abominations such as homosexual and illicit heterosexual unions to the same level as marriage. Already, in many localities throughout the country and in numerous private corporations, benefits previously reserved to married couples are now granted to unmarried sexual “partners.” Even the word “family” is slowly being superseded by the vague euphemism “household.”

A Lawless Land

Americans have long boasted that their nation is a government of law, not of men. American law is derived directly from English common law and from the biblical and Christian principles that are at the root of English common law. One would therefore expect law to constitute one of the chief barriers against the subversion of our society. Instead, in the field of law, revolutionary change has become the order of the day, change so astounding that it could not have been imagined by Americans of 50 years ago. None would have dreamed of the outlawing of prayer and any expression of religious conviction on public property, the legalization of abortion as a constitutionally guaranteed “right,” and the legalization of pornography, to mention but three.

Clearly expressed principles embraced by the Founding Fathers and set forth in our Constitution are now routinely reinterpreted and distorted. Those that cannot be reinterpreted and distorted, such as



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the Tenth Amendment, are simply ignored. Worse yet, the ideological agenda underpinning the radicalization of American law is blithely accepted by millions of Americans, who have themselves been radicalized without ever realizing it.

Crucial to the Gramscians' success is the disappearance of all memory of the old civilization and way of life. The older America of unregulated lives, honest government, clean cities, crime-free streets, morally edifying entertainment, and a family-oriented way of life is no longer vivid in the minds of many Americans. Once it is gone completely, nothing will stand in the way of the new Marxist civilization, which demonstrates as nothing else that through the Gramscian method it is indeed possible to "Marxize the inner man," as Malachi Martin wrote in *The Keys of This Blood*. Then and only then, writes Fr. Martin, "could you successfully dangle the utopia of the 'Workers' Paradise' before his eyes, to be accepted in a peaceful and humanely agreeable manner, without revolution or violence or bloodshed."

It must be evident to all but the most simple souls that after the passage of a generation or two, such ceaseless social conditioning is bound to alter the consciousness and inner-substance of a society, and it is bound to produce significant structural crises within that society, crises that manifest themselves in numberless ways in virtually every community throughout the country.

The Good Fight

It may seem to some that the situation in our nation is hopeless and that no force or agency can possibly put a halt to the insidious strategies working to destroy us. Despite the grim chronicle of the past 60 or 70 years, however, there is still much that may be done and much reason for hope. Families and individual men and women still possess, to a large extent, the freedom to avoid and escape the mind-altering social conditioning of the Gramscians. They have the power to shield themselves from these influences and especially to shield their young. There are alternatives to public schools, television, trashy movies, and strident "rock" music, and those alternatives must be embraced. The propaganda and cultural strychnine must be excluded from our lives.

Those in charge of young people have an especially weighty responsibility. Despite all of the efforts of the radical left and of their sympathizers in the schools and media to transmute young Americans into savages, they must not be allowed to succeed, because disorganized minds — mental vortices of anarchism and nihilism — have no powers of resistance. Savages soon become slaves. Children and youths should be introduced to such bedrock concepts as honesty, decency, virtue, duty, and love of God and country through the lives of authentic national heroes — men like George Washington, Nathan Hale, John Paul Jones, and Robert E. Lee.

Similarly, they will better be able to retain civilized values and maintain healthy minds if they are encouraged to learn to love their cultural inheritance through great literature, poetry, music, and art. Parents must demand from their children the upholding of the morals, manners, and standards of their ancestors.

In school, the young must be required to adhere to high standards of scholarship. Most importantly, traditional religion must be an integral part of daily living.

We as citizens must also exercise our persuasive powers over our elected representatives. In doing this our mindset must be one of demanding absolute non-compromise from politicians. Likewise, in choosing elected representatives at every level, we must look to men and women who refuse to compromise.

Just as importantly, the honorable, uncompromising men and women we elect to represent us must be made aware of the Gramscian strategy of cultural subversion; they must be able to recognize the tactics



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and strategies being used to undermine the institutions upon which our liberties depend. Building that understanding will, in turn, require the creation of an educated and principled electorate that will impart this wisdom to our representatives — and hold them accountable once they have been entrusted with elective office.

We should never allow ourselves to be stampeded, herd like, into forming opinions and judgments stimulated and orchestrated by the sensationalism of the press and the other media masters. Instead, we must calmly resist their mind-control techniques. We must strive to be independent thinkers. Realizing that we are not alone, we should turn to tradition-minded churches, schools, and political and educational organizations, and there lend our voices and support to the creation of bastions of resistance to the Gramscian onslaught.

Finally, we must never give up our faith in the future and our hope for a better America and world. God, with His infinite power and boundless love for us, will never forsake us but will answer our prayers and reward our efforts, as long as we do not lose our faith. Marxism — and whatever other flags the total state parades under these days — are not inevitable and are not the wave of the future. As long as we think and act in the indomitable spirit of our forefathers, we cannot fail.



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