

The Marxism Of Gramsci

THE OPEN MARXISM OF ANTONIO GRAMSCI. Translated and annotated by Carl Marzani. New York: Cameron Associates. \$2.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI is one of the martyrs of the Twentieth Century. He coughed his lungs out in a series of Mussolini's prisons, dying in 1937 after 11 years of cruel incarceration. It is only now that his mind and spirit are made to live again the English-speaking world.

This resurrection could not come at a more opportune moment, for in these days when the socialist third of the globe is re-examining its Marxist heritage, it is precisely the insights of this fearless Italian thinker which are becoming more and more the working principles in Milan, in Moscow and Peking.

In this thin volume Carl Marzani has endeavored to show exactly how Gramsci's creative Marxist thought might have prevented some of the unnecessary political errors of the past 40 years. The core of the problem for Gramsci, as for both Marx and Lenin, was to prevent the ossification of revolutionary thought into a series of rigid dogmatic principles which superficial thinkers might mistake for "eternal truths." This problem has two sides: one which involves an attitude towards general Marxist precepts, regarding them as overall guides to social and physical reality; the other which bears on the relationship between the Marxist party and the people. Whenever the former becomes separated from the latter, the first victim is likely to be the quality of Marxist thought itself.

THIS PROFOUND truth was voiced by Gramsci within the stone cage which fascism built around him. Thus there was little reason for those enjoying more favorable vantage points to be unaware of this pitfall. A careful reading now of Gramsci's works ought to be the first duty of all those who seek to guide socialist destinies.

—STEPHEN WALDEN.