
◆

EDITORIAL PERSPECTIVES

CHINA: REALITIES AT THE CROSSROADS, PERSPECTIVES IN CONTENTION

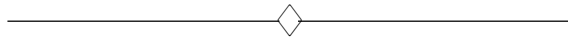
We are especially pleased to present to our readers this special issue devoted to current thinking in and on China. This country of 1.2 billion people, 9.6 million square kilometers, 5,000 years of history, and tempestuous rates of economic growth is, as everyone knows, playing an increasingly central role in the world political economy, a role that will only become more central as time passes. There is a wealth of current information and speculation about the nature of China's social and economic system, its variegated history, and possible paths of evolution into the near future. Largely lacking, however, is systematic study based on Marxist categories and understanding: modes of production contending within a social formation characterized by multiple dimensions of complexity. Has China in fact evolved a historically unique form of "socialist market economy"? Is the country, by contrast, capitalist (apart from the clear capitalist character of certain enclave regions — Shanghai, Hong Kong)? How and to what extent is this mix modified ("overdetermined") by precapitalist elements? By western imperialist overdomination, beginning in the 19th century? By the influence of the Soviet Union in the 20th?

The Guest Editors for this issue, Barbara Foley and Bernard H. Moss, have assembled a unique set of contributions, in the form of statements and interviews, together with a series of commentaries on them. Most of the participants are Chinese scholars, either living and working within the PRC, or at universities abroad. They represent a range of positions, from those espousing the current thinking within the Communist Party of China to varying degrees of criticism of and opposition to that view. All participants in this discussion, needless to say, think and write from a position of partisanship with the working class and peasantry in China, and sympathy with the socialist project in the largest sense. The tensions thus revealed tell us much more about current realities in China than any number of empirical and journalistic studies that offer facts without this theoretical context. The

result, we truly believe, is a set of materials that will spark debate and study of this crucial topic for some time to come.

The Guest Editors, and the contents of the issue itself, will provide fuller information about the origins of the project and the identities of the participants. For our part, the editorial staff of S&S believes we have broken new ground in creating sincere international — and internationalist — dialog, especially among Marxist thinkers occupying different relations to “official” positions. This has not been done currently, and was (for the most part) not achieved in the past, in relation either to China or to the USSR and other post-capitalist societies in the 20th century. So our special thanks go to the Guest Editors for their vision, hard work, and persistence in bringing this project to fruition. We expect the debate to continue.

D. L.



JOHN MCKAY CAMMETT

July 8, 1927–July 30, 2008

We are saddened to inform our readers of the death of a dear colleague and comrade. John Cammett was a valued member of the S&S Editorial Board from 1969 until 1994, when he left our active circle in order to devote all his time to the *Gramsci Bibliography*. He contributed to our work until the end of his life — reading manuscripts, offering advice, putting us in touch with new authors and reviewers. We have asked Frank Rosengarten, scholar of Italian history and language and a long-time colleague of John’s, and ours, to prepare this appreciation of John Cammett’s life and legacy.

John M. Cammett’s death on July 30, 2008 was a great loss not only to his family, friends and colleagues but to the U. S. left and, indeed, to the entire world community of engaged intellectuals committed to the struggle for a more just and egalitarian society.

From his early years in Detroit, where he worked in the automobile industry before deciding to pursue doctoral studies in history at Columbia University, to the last 15 years of his life, which he devoted to the creation of an international *Gramsci Bibliography*, John used his exceptional abilities

to advance the cause of what we might call socialist enlightenment. Never a doctrinaire ideologue, he was nonetheless an exponent throughout his life of a form of “critical communism” that is associated, in Italy, with the names of Antonio Labriola and Antonio Gramsci.

As most readers of *Science & Society* no doubt know, John made his first significant mark in the field of historical scholarship in the United States with his pathbreaking study *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism* (Stanford University Press, 1967), an outgrowth of his doctoral dissertation. At that time Gramsci was still relatively unknown outside Italy. But John was well aware of the work that had been produced on Gramsci somewhat earlier, notably by Louis Marks and Carl Marzani, the latter of whom John befriended around the time that Marzani published his translation of key passages from the *Prison Notebooks*. The title of the book, *The Open Marxism of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: Cameron Associates, 1957), alluded to a feature of Gramsci’s writing that always intrigued and fascinated John.

John began his long involvement in the history and political fortunes of Italian communism in 1950–51, when he won a Fulbright scholarship to Italy and was able to observe the growing political and intellectual influence of the Italian Communist Party, of which he later became a member. This was a moment when McCarthyite anti-communism was taking hold in the United States. The contrast with the political scene in Italy, and elsewhere in Europe, made a strong impression on John, which he soon converted into research that led him to undertake doctoral studies at Columbia. There he studied under Professor Shepard Clough, who became his dissertation adviser and later nominated him for membership in the university-sponsored Seminar in Modern Italian History.

Among John’s many publications, of special note are his essay “Communist Women and the Fascist Experience,” in *European Women on the Left* (Greenwood Press, 1981); “Socialism and Participatory Democracy,” in *The Revival of American Socialism* (Oxford University Press, 1971); “Risorgimento, Jacobinism and Capitalism,” in A. William Salomone, ed., *Italy from the Risorgimento to Fascism* (Anchor Books, 1970); and “Communist Theories of Fascism, 1920–1935,” *Science & Society*, XXXI:2 (Spring, 1967). He also co-edited two volumes of essays: *The Revival of American Socialism* (Oxford, 1971) and *The European Past* (Macmillan, 1970).

John Cammett’s work as a professor and academic administrator was quite diverse. After brief stints of part-time teaching at Wayne State University, Middlebury College, Columbia College, and Hunter College, he taught full-time at Rutgers University, from 1962 to 1967, then began teaching at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in 1967. John served as Dean of Faculty from 1969 to 1975. Subsequently he was chair of the History Department from 1984 to 1991, and was on the faculty of the Graduate School

of the City University of New York. He retired from John Jay and the Graduate School in 1991.

John is credited with having enlivened and enriched the curriculum of studies at John Jay. During his tenure as Dean of Faculty he opened up the College to a much broader conception of the kind of education that police officers and others working in the criminal justice system should have available. He believed that members of the citizenry involved in law enforcement must be able to understand the authority invested in them as a means of serving the needs of the community, a role that required rethinking the relationship between the centers of political power and ordinary working people. As a result of the strongly democratic and socialist ideals that underlay these curriculum reforms, John earned the sobriquet "The Red Dean," which made him and his friends smile but also made them feel rather proud.

John was a member of several professional associations, including the American Historical Association, the Society for Italian Historical Studies, and the Columbia University Seminars on Modern Italian History and on War and Peace. As a result of his signal contributions to Gramsci studies, he was elected President of the International Gramsci Society, a post he held from the founding of the Society in 1990 to his death.

I met John Cammett in the mid-1950s, when we were fellow graduate students, and in the following years we became friends and collaborators on various projects. I benefited greatly from our friendship, a feeling that I know is shared by many others.

FRANK ROSENGARTEN

*160 East 84th Street
New York, NY 10028
frosengart@aol.com*