

# GRAMSCI QUOTATIONS

1- "I'm a pessimist because of intelligence, but an optimist because of will."  
(Letters from prison. Vol 1, dec 19. 1929)

2- "I live, I am a partisan. That is why I hate the ones that don't take sides, I hate the indifferent."  
(*In citta Futura*, Feb 17. 1917)

## From the Prison Notebooks

3- "Having been in prison no longer rouses repulsion, because one may have been there for political reasons." (Notebook 1)

4- "'Life' is obviously the necessary premise of every manifestation of life." (Notebook 1)

5- "The same ray of light passes through different prisms and yields different refractions of light: in order to have the same refraction, one must make a whole series of adjustments to the individual prisms." (Notebook 1)

6- "The dry twigs are indispensable for making the log burn, but not in and of themselves. Only the log, by burning, changes the surroundings from cold to warm." (Notebook 1)

7- "*Quality* should be attributed to men, not to things." (Notebook 1)

8- "Patient and systematic 'repetition' is the fundamental methodological principle. But not a mechanical, material repetition." (Notebook 1)

9- "Finding the real identity underneath the apparent differentiation and contradiction and finding the substantial diversity underneath the apparent identity is the most essential quality of the critic of ideas." (Notebook 1)

10- "The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born."  
(Notebook 3)

11- "But it is one thing *to be* particular, another thing *to preach* particularism." (Notebook 3)

12- "An idea is not efficacious unless it is expressed in some way, artistically-that is, in a particular manner." (Notebook 3)

13- "Every innovation is repressive for its adversaries, but it unleashes latent forces in society, it empowers and exalts them, and hence it is expansive." ((Notebook 3)

14- "One equals one is an abstraction, but nobody is led to think that one fly equals one elephant."  
(Notebook 4)

15- "Art, morality, philosophy 'serve' politics; that is, they are 'implicated' in politics, they may be reduced to a moment of it but no vice versa: politics destroys art, philosophy, morality."  
(Notebook 4)

- 16- "The people themselves are not a homogeneous cultural collectivity but present numerous and variously combined cultural layers that, in their pure form, cannot always be identified within given historical popular collectivities." (Notebook 5)
- 17- "It is necessary to establish clearly what is meant by "interesting" when talking about art." (Notebook 5)
- 18- "Art itself is interesting; it is interesting in itself, in that it satisfies one of the necessities of life." (Notebook 5)
- 19- "The great intellectual, too, must take the plunge into practical life and become an organizer of the practical aspects of culture, if he wants to remain a leader; he must democratize himself, be more in touch with the times." (Notebook 6)
- 20- "In reality, one reads a book because of practical impulses, and one rereads certain books for artistic reasons: the aesthetic emotion never arises on a first reading" (Notebook 6)
- 21- "In mass politics, telling the truth is, precisely, a political necessity." (Notebook 6)
- 22- "The intellectual function cannot be cut off from productive work in general, and the same is true for artists-unless they have effectively shown themselves to be "artistically" productive." (Notebook 6)
- 23- "Destruction is difficult; indeed, it is as difficult as creation." (Notebook 6)
- 24- "The destroyer-creator is the one who destroys the old in order to bring to light, to enable the flowering of the new that has become "necessary" and presses implacably on the threshold of history." (Notebook 6)
- 25- "Books are a nation and not just one component of culture." (Notebook 6)
- 26- "In politics, once the "war of position" is won, it is definitively decisive." (Notebook 6)
- 27- "The aim of political action is, precisely, to bestir the great multitudes out of passivity." (Notebook 7)
- 28- "This distinction between form and content is just heuristic because material forces would be historically inconceivable without form and ideologies would be individual fantasies without material forces." (Notebook 7)
- 29- " "Human nature" is the "ensemble of social relations" is the most satisfying answer, because it includes the idea of becoming-man becomes, he changes continuously with the changing of social relations-and because it negates "man in general"." (Notebook 7)
- 30- " "Reality" exists independently of the thinking individual." (Notebook 7)
- 31- "In obedience there is an element of command, and in command there is an element of obedience (self-command and self-discipline)." (Notebook 8)
- 32- "A periodical, like a newspaper, a book, or any other medium of didactic expression that is aimed at a certain level of the reading or listening public, cannot satisfy everyone equally; not

everyone will find it useful to the same degree. The important thing is that it serve as a stimulus for everyone; after all, no publication can replace the thinking mind.” (Notebook 8)

- 33- “ Ideas are great to the degree that they are feasible. Great ideas, in other words, make a relation that is immanent in the situation clear, and they do so to the extent that they show concretely the course of action by means of which an organized collective brings that relation into the open (creates it) or, having brought it into the open, destroys it by replacing it.” (Notebook 8)
- 34- “The approach that must be adopted is this: one’s follower has to be able to discuss and uphold his position when faced with capable and intelligent adversaries and not just with unsophisticated and unprepared people who are convinced “by authority” or by “emotion.” The possibility of error must be declared and accepted without thereby compromising one’s position.” (Notebook 8)
- 35- “The content of art is art itself.” (Notebook 8)
- 36- “one must destroy the prejudice that philosophy is a difficult thing just because it is the specific activity of a particular category of learned people, of professional or systematic philosophers. It is therefore necessary to show that all men are philosophers.” (Notebook 8)
- 37- “Is philosophy independent from politics?” (Notebook 8)
- 38- “The only justifiable enthusiasm is that which accompanies the intelligent will, intelligent activity, the inventive richness of concrete initiatives which change existing reality.” (Notebook 9)