

GRAMSCI AGAIN?: CONTEXTUALISING GRAMSCI TRANSLATIONS IN TURKISH

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Abstract

Translation of one text into another language does not take place in an intellectual and political vacuum and speaks to a certain socio-political context. In this respect, this paper aims to contextualize the first translations of Antonio Gramsci's Prison Notebooks (Quaderni del carcere) into Turkish and French through understanding the political and economic debates taking place that time within the Left circles in Turkey and France. Prison Notebooks were a series of notebooks written by Antonio Gramsci, when he was imprisoned by the Mussolini regime in 1928. The notebooks were written between 1929 and 1935, when Gramsci was released from prison on grounds of ill health, and were first translated into English in the 1970s. As Anderson notes, through the term 'hegemony', Gramsci aims to theorize not only the necessary condition for a successful overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat and its allies (e.g., the peasantry), but also the structures of bourgeois power in late 19th- and early 20th-century Western European states in Prison Notebooks (Anderson, 1976)[1]. The aforementioned theoretical framework more or less reflects the debates within the Turkish left in the 1970s, and, therefore, it comes as no surprise that Prison Notebooks is translated into Turkish as early as 1975 by Adnan Cemgil, a prominent within Turkish Labour Party. Cemgil has first been convicted in 1950 due to protesting against the Turkish involvement in Korean War and continued his political life in Turkish Labour Party in the aftermath of 1960 coup d'etat.

On the other hand, in France, Gramsci is considered as one of the great marxist theorician from the time of Lénine. His thought is actual but the access to translations of his writings are very limited. The first translations of Antonio Gramsci's Prison Notebooks into French has been edited by Felice Platone. This translation, which was incomplete, has been published by Giulio Einaudi in Turin between 1948 et 1951. Meanwhile, editors of the Prison Notebooks have been lost and today, Gallimard is the only editor. Nevertheless, the person who has most informed about these translations is Robert Paris (1979, p. 5) [2], the interpreter of this texts: "The French "reading" of Gramsci, which presses the analysis of superstructures and the theory of intellectuals, thus seems to be shaped both by the situation of intellectuals under the Fifth Republic, and by the political state of the French left".

Therefore, this paper aims to find out the particular context and economic and political debates within the Turkish and French Left in the 1970s that made the translation of Prison Notebooks possible and meaningful into Turkish and French.

References

- [1] Anderson, P. (1976), 'The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci', *New Left Review* 100, pp. 5-78.
- [2] Paris, Robert (1979), "Gramsci en France", *Revue française de science politique*, n°1, pp. 518.



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