INTRODUCTION

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Within the last several decades, Antonio Gramsci's concept of subaltern social groups has elicited widespread attention across diverse fields of study. Ranajit Guha and the group of English and Indian historians who founded the South Asian Subaltern Studies Collective are largely responsible for introducing themes related to the Gramscian concept into current intellectual discussions.[1] In the first issue of *Subaltern Studies*, published in 1982, Guha credits Gramsci—and his notes on subaltern groups—as one of the major influences in the founding of the research project.[2] The aim of the collective, as he explains in the preface, is to challenge elitist historiography and to illuminate aspects of subaltern history that have been ignored and neglected in the field of South Asian studies. Between 1982 and 2005, the Subaltern Studies Collective published twelve volumes of *Subaltern Studies*.[3] In 1988, Guha and Gayatri

[1] The founding members of the Subaltern Studies Collective included Shahid Amin, David Arnold, Gautam Bhadra, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Partha Chatterjee, David Hardiman, and Gyanendra Pandey. See Ranajit Guha, introduction to *A Subaltern Studies Reader, 1986–1995* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), xvn9.

[2] Ranajit Guha, "Preface," in *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, ed. Ranajit Guha (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), vii. Cf., Ranajit Guha, "Gramsci in India: Homage to a Teacher," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 16, no. 2 (2011): 288–295.

[3] Ranajit Guha served as the principal editor of the series from 1982 to 1988 and edited the first six volumes, under the title *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982–1989). After Guha's retirement, different members of the collective edited each volume, with varying subtitles. Oxford University Press, Delhi, published volumes 7–10 (1993–1999). Columbia University Press, New York, published volume 11 (2000), and Permanent Black, Delhi, published volume 12 (2005).

Chakravorty Spivak published a selection of the seminal essays from the series, with a foreword by Edward Said, under the title *Selected Subaltern Studies*,[4] and in 1997 Guha published *A Subaltern Studies Reader, 1986–1995*, which includes some of the most influential essays from the series.[5] Separately, Spivak's widely influential intervention "Can the Subaltern Speak?," published in 1988, had a significant impact on the development of the original subaltern studies project, motivating new lines of research, while also provoking critiques.[6] The publications that drew on *Subaltern Studies* made a significant impact in the 1990s, and their influence reached beyond India and South Asia. Its focus on nonelite, subaltern history encouraged the founding of the Latin America Subaltern Studies Group in 1993[7] and the analysis of subaltern history in Ireland, Africa, the Middle East, and the United States. In 2015, Alf Gunvald Nilsen and Srila Roy published *New Subaltern Politics: Reconceptualizing Hegemony and Resistance in Contemporary India*, which presents a critical dialogue with *Subaltern Studies* and a return to Gramsci.[8] Today the term "subaltern studies" no longer refers exclusively to the publication series launched by Guha but encompasses a recognizable mode of investigation in cultural studies, literature, sociology, anthropology, and history that focuses on the politics and activity of subordinated social groups, often overlapping with the concerns of postcolonial criticism.[9]

Although hundreds of books and articles have been published on various aspects of subaltern studies since the 1980s, with ubiquitous references to Gramsci, there has been relatively little critical engagement with his integral texts, contributing to distortions and

[4] Ranajit Guha, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).
[5] Ranajit Guha, ed., *A Subaltern Studies Reader, 1986–1995* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).
[6] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313. The insights and contributions of Spivak's powerful intervention are revisited in Rosalind Morris, ed., *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).
[7] Ileana Rodríguez, ed., *The Latin American Subaltern Studies Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).
[8] Alf Gunvald Nilsen and Srila Roy, eds., *New Subaltern Politics: Reconceptualizing Hegemony and Resistance in Contemporary India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[9] Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography," *Nepantla: Views from South* 1, no. 1 (2000): 9–32; and Gyan Prakash, "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism," *American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (1994): 1475–490.

limiting the full import of his original contribution.[10] This is largely due to the fact that a substantial portion of his writings on subaltern groups has been unavailable in English, including a complete translation of Notebook 25, "On the Margins of History (The History of Subaltern Social Groups)," the "special" thematic notebook he devoted to the topic. Prior to the publication of *Subaltern Studies*, Gramsci's writings on subaltern groups were poorly studied, even among Italian scholars.[11]

Early editors and scholars of the *Prison Notebooks* largely overlooked the significance of Gramsci's treatment of subaltern groups. For instance, in the first Italian edition of the prison notebooks, edited by Felice Platone, Gramsci's notes on subaltern groups received secondary importance. Platone, confronted with the difficult challenge of making the textual labyrinth of Gramsci's notebooks accessible to a mass audience, organized them according to dominant themes. Gramsci's original manuscripts consist of thirty-three notebooks, amounting to 2,848 handwritten pages: four notebooks of translations and language exercises, eight miscellaneous notebooks consisting mostly of first drafts of notes, four mixed notebooks partitioned into distinct sections (miscellaneous notes, monographic blocks of notes, and/or translations), and seventeen monothematic notebooks, or what he described as "special notebooks," which include second drafts of notes organized according to specific topics. Platone arranged the notes according to dominant and recurring themes, eliminating material that appeared too fragmentary, repetitive, or incomplete.[12] Excluding the translation notebooks, first draft notes, and other documentary details that appear in the original manuscripts, Platone assembled Gramsci's notes in six thematically organized volumes, which were published by Einaudi between 1948 and 1951:

[10] On this point, see, *inter alia*, Joseph A. Buttigieg, "Sulla categoria gramsciana di 'subalterno,'" in *Gramsci da un secolo all'altro*, ed. Guido Liguori and Giorgio Baratta (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1999), 27–38; Timothy Brennan, "Antonio Gramsci and Postcolonial Theory: 'Southernism,'" *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 10, no. 2 (2001): 143–187; Marcus E. Green, "Gramsci Cannot Speak: Representations and Interpretations of Gramsci's Concept of the Subaltern," *Rethinking Marxism* 14, no. 3 (2002): 1–24; Cosimo Zene, "Self-Consciousness of the Dalits as 'Subalterns': Reflections on Gramsci in South Asia," *Rethinking Marxism* 23, no. 1 (2011): 83–99; and Peter D. Thomas, "Refiguring the Subaltern," *Political Theory* 46, no. 6 (2018): 861–884.
[11] Buttigieg, "Sulla categoria gramsciana di 'subalterno,'" 27.
[12] Felice Platone, "Prefazione," in *Il materialismo storico e la filosofia di Benedetto Croce*, by Antonio Gramsci (Turin: Einaudi, 1948), xx–xxii; Valentino Gerratana, *Gramsci: problemi di metodo* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1997), 61.

Il materialismo storico e la filosofia di Benedetto Croce (1948)
Gli intellettuali e l'organizzazione della cultura (1949)
Il Risorgimento (1949)
Note sul Machiavelli sulla politica e sullo stato moderno (1949)
Letteratura e vita nazionale (1950)
Passato e presente (1951)

Gramsci himself devoted a "special notebook" to the topic of subaltern social groups, inscribing "On the Margins of History (The History of Subaltern Social Groups)" on the title page. Diverging from Gramsci's own organization, Platone assembled six of the eight notes from the special notebook along with twenty notes on a range of topics from nine other notebooks and placed them together in the appendix of the volume titled *Il Risorgimento*, suggesting that Gramsci's treatment of subaltern groups had secondary importance, was exclusively connected to the Italian Risorgimento, and was not necessarily a recurring theme and independent category of analysis.[13] In addition, details such as the chronology of composition, revisions, and indications of the structure and development of the original manuscripts are imperceptible in the thematic edition, preventing one from seeing how Gramsci worked—how he recorded, organized, and revised his ideas. Though Platone's edition of the prison notebooks lacked the necessary textual elements for one to conduct a rigorous philological analysis of Gramsci's integral texts, its thematic structure provided an accessible and readable compilation of the prison writings, which received widespread attention and helped facilitate the dissemination of Gramsci's ideas. Yet the thematic edition generated a number of controversies regarding Gramsci's legacy: Philological disputes emerged concerning the editorial erasure of his fragmentary method of writing, and these disputes connected to larger debates pertaining to suspicions of editorial and textual manipulation to shape his legacy in accordance with the political goals of the Italian Communist Party under Palmiro Togliatti's leadership.[14]

[13] Antonio Gramsci, *Il Risorgimento*, ed. Felice Platone (Turin: Einaudi, 1949), 191–196, 199–203, 217–220.
[14] On the political and philological debates regarding the Platone edition of the Prison Notebooks, see Joseph A. Buttigieg, "Philology and Politics: Returning to the Text of Antonio Gramsci's Prison Notebooks," *Boundary 2* 21, no. 2 (1994): 98–138; Paolo Capuzzo and Sandro Mezzadra, "Provincializing the Italian Reading of Gramsci," in *The Postcolonial Gramsci*, ed. Neelam Srivastava and Baidik Bhattacharya (New York: Routledge, 2012), 34–54; Guido Liguori, *Gramsci conteso: Interpretazioni, dibattiti e polemiche, 1922–2012* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 2012),

Compared to the scholarly discussions that generated around the Gramscian notions of hegemony, culture, civil society, and the state that developed after the publication of the Platone edition, the concept of subaltern groups was widely overlooked. In Italy, the analysis of subaltern groups received limited but significant attention among a small group of scholars. In the pages of the Italian journal *Società*, anthropologist Ernesto de Martino published an article in 1949 titled "Intorno a una storia del mondo popolare subalterno" (A history of the popular subaltern world) that explores the discrepancies between bourgeois cultural forms and those of the colonized, the semiproletarian, and peasants—what he calls the "popular subaltern world," a phrase Gramsci did not use.[15] De Martino's article developed into an exchange with Cesare Luporini, who pointed out that Gramsci had not espoused the prolongation of traditional cultural forms but advocated overcoming them.[16] With connections and departures from Gramsci, de Martino developed a body of work on what became known as "subaltern cultures," which focuses on topics from folklore, shamanism, and mysticism to archaic and syncretic popular religiosity.[17] His research contributed to various developments in Italian anthropology and was critically extended by Alberto Mario Cirese[18] and Luigi M. Lombardi Satriani[19] in studies on folklore and subaltern cultures.[20] Following these early publications, British historian Eric Hobsbawm, who started reading Gramsci in Italian as early as 1952 and attended the first Gramsci conference in Rome in 1958, published an article in *Società* on the concept of

89–96; Emanuele Saccarelli, *Gramsci and Trotsky in the Shadow of Stalinism: The Political Theory and Practice of Opposition* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 36–37.

[15] Ernesto de Martino, "Intorno a una storia del mondo popolare subalterno," *Società* 5, no. 3 (1949): 411–435.

[16] Cesare Luporini, "Intorno alla storia del 'mondo popolare subalterno,'" *Società* 6, no. 1 (1950): 95–106; Ernesto de Martino, "Ancora sulla 'storia del mondo popolare subalterno,'" *Società* 6, no. 2 (1950): 306–9; Cesare Luporini, "Ancora sulla 'storia del Mondo Popolare Subalterno,'" *Società* 6, no. 2 (1950): 309–12.

[17] Fabrizio M. Ferrari, *Ernesto De Martino on Religion: The Crisis and the Presence* (Bristol, CT: Equinox, 2012). Giovanni Pizza, "Gramsci e de Martino: Appunti per una riflessione," *Quaderni di Teoria sociale*, no. 13 (2013): 77–121. Cf. Giovanni Pizza, *Il tarantismo oggi: antropologia, politica, cultura* (Rome: Carocci, 2015).

[18] Alberto Mario Cirese, *Cultura egemonica e culture subalterne: rassegna degli studi sul mondo popolare tradizionale* (Palermo: Palumbo, 1971). A partial English translation of Cirese's essay "Concezioni del mondo, filosofia spontanea e istinto di classe nelle 'osservazioni sul folclore' di Antonio Gramsci" (1976) appears as "Gramsci's Observations on Folklore," in *Approaches to Gramsci*, ed. Anne Showstack Sassoon (London: Writers and Readers, 1982), 212–247.

[19] Luigi M. Lombardi Satriani, *Antropologia culturale e analisi della cultura subalterna* (Messina: Peloritana, 1968).

[20] For a bibliography of work published in Italian up to 1975 on Gramsci and subaltern cultures, see Alberto Mario Cirese, "Scritti su Gramsci e le culture subalterne," in *Intellettuali, folklore, istinto di classe: note su Verga, Deledda, Scotellari, Gramsci* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976), 142–44.

subaltern classes in 1960.[21] Hobsbawm had been working on the idea of history "from below" in his book *Primitive Rebels* (1959)[22] and later discovered that his interests "were parallel to those of Gramsci" after reading Gramsci's notes on subaltern groups.[23] These early works on subaltern groups, though significant, did not generate a wide international audience and largely remain unavailable in English.

Outside of Italy, the Platone edition served as the primary source for initial English translations of Gramsci's prison notebooks. The publication *The Modern Prince, and Other Writings*, edited and translated by Louis Marks (New York: International, 1957), was the first anthology of Gramsci's writings to appear in English. This relatively slim volume consists of short selections from three of the six volumes included in the Platone edition, along with four of Gramsci's preprison essays.[24] In the Anglophone world, *The Modern Prince* presented an image of Gramsci and of the prison notebooks that informed more than one generation's interpretation of the Sardinian revolutionary's thought and texts. The editorial distortions contained in the Platone edition were exacerbated in *The Modern Prince*, contributing to misconceptions of Gramsci's understanding of Marxism, how he studied in prison, and the lexicon of the prison notebooks.[25] For instance, *The Modern Prince* does not include any notes from the thematic notebook on subaltern groups, but it includes a long note from the special notebook on the "Introduction to the Study of Philosophy," where Gramsci discusses "the 'subaltern' character of certain social strata," "the subaltern mass," and the "religion of subalterns." In these instances Marks translated the Italian *subalterno* as "subordinate," instead of "subaltern," obscuring Gramsci's category of subaltern groups.[26]

[21] Eric J. Hobsbawm, "Per lo studio delle classi subalterne," *Società* 16, no. 3 (1960): 436–49. The article was later published in Spanish as Eric J. Hobsbawm, "Para un estudio de las clases subalternas," *Pasado y Presente*, nos. 2–3 (1963): 158–167.
[22] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959).
[23] Eric J. Hobsbawm, "Grazie ai quaderni sono uno storico," *La Repubblica*, April 27, 2007.
[24] *The Modern Prince, and Other Writings* contains selections from *Il materialismo storico e la filosofia di Benedetto Croce* (1948), *Gli intellettuali e l'organizzazione della cultura* (1949), and *Note sul machiavelli sulla politica e sullo stato moderno* (1949). For a list of the contents derived from Platone's edition included in *The Modern Prince, and Other Writings*, see David Forgacs, "Le edizioni inglesi di Gramsci," in *Gramsci nel mondo: atti del convegno internazionale di studi gramsciani. Formia, 25–28 Ottobre 1989*, ed. Maria Luisa Righi (Rome: Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, 1995), 9–29.
[25] Due to a number of distortions, *The Modern Prince* is considered among the most flawed translations of Gramsci. See Derek Boothman, "A Note on the Evolution—and Translation—of Some Key Gramscian Terms," *Socialism and Democracy* 14, no. 2 (2000): 115–130.
[26] Gramsci, *The Modern Prince, and Other Writings*, 69–70. See Notebook 11, §12, in this volume.

The most valuable and widely known anthology of Gramsci's prison writings in English appeared in 1971 with the publication of *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International, 1971). The volume provides an extensive selection of Gramsci's prison notes, along with meticulous annotations, presenting greater historical and philological detail than either the Platone edition or *The Modern Prince*. With no intention of reproducing Gramsci's complete notebooks, Hoare and Nowell-Smith included a large compilation of notes drawn from five of the six volumes of the Platone edition.[27] Though they consulted a copy of Gramsci's original manuscripts, in their words, "broadly speaking, [they] followed the lines laid down in [Platone's] Einaudi edition," organizing the anthology according to dominant themes, but also departing from the Platone edition when necessary.[28] Recognizing (or suspecting) the importance of Gramsci's notes on subaltern groups, Hoare and Nowell-Smith departed from Platone's thematic arrangement in a pivotal way. They placed two of Gramsci's notes on the methodical criteria of examining subaltern groups as the opening portion of a long section they titled "Notes on Italian History." The two notes are followed by a compilation of notes related to the Risorgimento. Though they did not identify subaltern social groups as a theme requiring specific consideration, their placement of the notes generated remarkable interest, directly influencing the project of subaltern studies and alerting other Anglophone readers to the presence of the concept in Gramsci's thought. However, the arrangement of the notes provided little indication that Gramsci developed "subaltern social groups" as a distinct category that appears throughout the *Prison Notebooks* or that he devoted a single notebook exclusively to the topic.

In 1975, Gramsci's complete prison notebooks appeared in print for the first time with the publication of the Italian critical edition *Quaderni del carcere*, edited by Valentino Gerratana (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), in coordination with the Gramsci Institute. Gerratana reproduced Gramsci's eight miscellaneous, four mixed, and seventeen thematic special notebooks in the chronological order of their

[27] *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* does did not contain any notes from the volume titled *Letteratura e vita nazionale* included in the Platone edition.
[28] Hoare and Nowell-Smith, acknowledgments and preface, in A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International, 1971), viii, ix, xi, xii.

composition, as well as providing detailed descriptions of Gramsci's four translation notebooks. Using textual evidence and dates contained in the manuscripts, Gerratana numbered the notebooks in sequential order from 1 to 29. The numbering of the notebooks presented a number of challenges, since Gramsci often worked simultaneously in different notebooks and in some instances added to them after a considerable period of time. In his miscellaneous notebooks, Gramsci wrote first drafts of notes, many of which he later crossed out, though retaining their legibility, after he copied or revised them in monothematic "special notebooks."[29] Gerratana labeled the first-draft notes as "A texts," the notes Gramsci did not copy or cross out as "B texts," and second-draft notes as "C texts." The composition of C texts ranges in character. In some cases, Gramsci used several A texts as the basis for a single C text, and in other instances he divided a single A text into different C texts. The degree of elaboration from A to C texts also varies, as Gerratana describes, "ranging from cases in which the text of the first draft is barely recognizable in the second draft, enriched by remarkable additions, to other cases in which the A text is simply repeated verbatim in the corresponding C text."[30] After each A text, Gerratana provides the notebook and page numbers of the corresponding C texts, documenting the location of the second draft notes. Similarly, in the special notebooks, after each C text Gerratana provides the notebook and page numbers of the corresponding A texts so the reader can locate the first draft of notes. With the exception of excluding the four translation notebooks and including Gramsci's lists of books and drafts of letters in the critical apparatus, Gerratana's critical edition presents a philological reproduction of Gramsci's complete notebooks. This method of presenting Gramsci's texts, as Gerratana explains, provides "a reading tool that allows one to follow the rhythm of development in which Gramsci's research unfolds in the pages of the Notebooks."[31] Since its publication, Gerratana's critical edition has become the authoritative text of Gramscian scholarship, supplanting the Platone edition, and serving as the model text for critical editions of the *Prison Notebooks* in French, German,

[29] Gramsci uses the description "special notebooks" at the beginning of Notebook 15 to describe his thematic notebooks.
[30] Valentino Gerratana, "Prefazione," in *Quaderni del carcere*, by Antonio Gramsci, ed. Valentino Gerratana, 4 vols., edizione critica dell'Istituto Gramsci (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), xxxvii.
[31] Gerratana, xxxv.

and Spanish, as well as Joseph A. Buttigieg's English translation (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992, 1996, 2007).

The Gerratana edition, for the first time, provided a complete reproduction of the special notebook "On the Margins of History (The History of Subaltern Social Groups)," which appears as Notebook 25 in the chronological sequencing of the notebooks. In addition, the Gerratana edition provides a production of all the first draft notes (A texts) on subaltern groups in Gramsci's early notebooks, as well as the B texts, which appear in only one draft. However, as Buttigieg pointed out several years ago, even among Gerratana and the group of scholars at the Gramsci Institute who worked on the critical edition, Gramsci's treatment of subaltern social groups and classes largely went unnoticed. The thematic index of the Gerratana edition, for instance, does not include entries for subaltern social groups or subaltern classes.[32] The passages related to the topic fall under other categories.

After the publication of the Gerratana edition, two additional thematically organized, annotated anthologies of the prison notebooks appeared in English, providing further accessibility to Gramsci's texts and revealing more insight into his writings on subaltern groups. Along with several of Gramsci's preprison essays and theater reviews, *Selections from the Cultural Writings*, edited by David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985) provides an important selection of Gramsci's notes on language, literature, folklore, and journalism, many of which connect to the theme of subaltern groups. In a section on "People, Nation and Culture," the volume includes a translation of a note on utopias and philosophical novels from Notebook 25. Crucial passages of Gramsci's notes on religion, economics, science, translatability, and Benedetto Croce appear in *Further Selections of the Prison Notebooks*, edited by Derek Boothman (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1995). In a selection of notes on religion, Boothman includes a translation of the first note in Notebook 25, which is devoted to the religious and political leader Davide Lazzaretti. Both volumes utilize Gerratana's critical apparatus and provide references to the original placement of the notes in the critical edition. Similar to previous collections, Gramsci's treatment of subaltern groups is not a theme captured in the anthologies, and

[32] Buttigieg, "Sulla categoria gramsciana di 'subalterno,'" 27.

it is difficult to discern the thematic emphasis of Gramsci's own organization of the notes. This is not a criticism but meant to point out that the topic of subaltern groups has not been captured in previous thematically organized editions of the prison notebooks. All thematic editions of the notebooks, including this one, contain unavoidable shortcomings, for it is impossible to capture every motif in anthological form. Anthologies of the prison notebooks, as Buttigieg argued some years ago, "serve the important function of making Gramsci accessible to a broad range of readers. Average readers cannot, and will not, become interested in Gramsci if their only way of encountering him is through a complete critical edition of the prison notebooks."[33] However, it is only with a philologically accurate reproduction of the complete prison notebooks that one can see how particular ideas and concepts emerge in Gramsci's thinking and become recurring motifs and topics of analysis.

THE EMERGENCE OF "SUBALTERN SOCIAL GROUPS" IN THE *PRISON NOTEBOOKS*

Almost immediately after Fascist authorities arrested Gramsci in Rome on November 8, 1926, he began to formulate plans to study in prison. In his initial letters, he requested specific books on a range of topics,[34] and thanks to his friend Piero Sraffa, who opened an unlimited account for him at the Sperling and Kupfer bookstore in Milan,[35] Gramsci was able to acquire books and journals according to his interests, which he did throughout his incarceration, albeit within the confines of prison restrictions.[36] Because it took over two

[33] Buttigieg, "Philology and Politics: Returning to the Text of Antonio Gramsci's Prison Notebooks," 112.

[34] See Gramsci's letters to Clara Passarge (mid-November 1926), Tatiana Schucht (December 9, 1926), and Piero Sraffa (December 11, 1926). All references to Gramsci's prison letters correspond to Antonio Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, ed. Frank Rosengarten, trans. Raymond Rosenthal, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

[35] Sraffa sent Gramsci a letter on December 13, 1926, informing him of these details, but the letter is not preserved. However, the contents of the letter can be deduced from Gramsci's letters to Sraffa on December 17 and December 21, 1926, and to Tatiana Schucht on December 19, 1926. See Valentino Gerratana, "Gramsci e Sraffa," in *Lettere a Tania per Gramsci*, by Piero Sraffa, ed. Valentino Gerratana (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1991), xxiiin17.

[36] Gramsci was able to purchase and receive a variety of books and periodicals in prison. However, prison authorities sometimes withheld his requests because of their political nature. For instance, Gramsci's initial request to receive an Italian edition of Trotsky's autobiography—*La mia vita*—was denied, and in September 1930 he wrote directly to Mussolini to obtain permission to receive a copy, which was eventually granted, as noted in his letter to Tatiana

years for him to receive permission to take notes in his prison cell, his initial plans for the prison notebooks emerge in his letters. One of the topics that consistently animated his thinking was the idea of studying the history of Italian intellectuals, which progressively expanded over time, emanating many of the dominant themes in the notebooks, including the analysis of subaltern groups. In a letter to his sister-in-law Tatiana Schucht, written on March 19, 1927, he outlined what would amount to be the first description of a research program for the *Prison Notebooks*. In the letter, he describes the "monotony" of his daily life and the difficulty of studying, even though he was reading a great deal.[37] Using a phrase from Goethe, he expressed his desire to produce something *für ewig* (i.e., "for eternity"): "I am obsessed (this is a phenomenon typical of people in jail, I think) by this idea: that I should do something *für ewig*, following a complex concept of Goethe's. . . . In short, in keeping with a preestablished program, I would like to concentrate intensely and systematically on some subject that would absorb and provide a center to my inner life."[38]

He outlined four topics he intended to study: (1) The development of Italian intellectuals, "their origins, their groupings in accordance with cultural currents, and their various ways of thinking, etc." Referring to his essay "Some Aspects of the Southern Question," which remained unfinished at the time of his arrest, he asked Tatiana: "Do you remember my very hasty and quite superficial essay on southern Italy and on the importance of B. Croce? Well, I would like to fully develop in depth the thesis that I sketched out then, from a 'disinterested,' '*für ewig*' point of view."[39] (2) A study of comparative linguistics. (3) A study of Pirandello's theater. And (4) an essay on the serial novel and popular taste in literature. There is, he explains to Tatiana, "a certain homogeneity among these four subjects: the creative spirit of the people in its diverse stages and degrees of development."[40] Though the phrase "creative spirit of the

Schucht on December 1, 1930 (see Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 1:363–366). In October 1931, Gramsci wrote another petition to Mussolini, asking for permission to continue receiving several periodicals and to receive a number of books. Drafts of these petitions appear in Notebook 2. See the "Description of the Manuscript" in Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 1:526–528.

[37] In a letter written to his mother on February 26, 1927, Gramsci explained that he read "six newspapers a day and eight books a week, plus illustrated and humorous magazines." Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 1:77.

[38] Gramsci to Tatiana Schucht, March 19, 1927, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 1:83; see p. 85n3 for an explanation of Gramsci's reference to Goethe.

[39] Gramsci to Tatiana Schucht, March 19, 1927, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 1:83–84.

[40] Gramsci to Tatiana Schucht, March 19, 1927, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 1:84.

people" (*spirito popolare creativo*) never appears in the *Prison Notebooks*, the idea of the relationship between intellectuals and the people in the formation of a "public spirit"—as a common way of thinking, feeling, and mode of life—becomes one of the major motifs of the notebooks, touching on the topics of philosophy, culture, common sense, and folklore, among others.[41] Though the meaning of "creative spirit of the people" is open to interpretation,[42] the idea presents an opening for the analysis of subaltern social groups, in that Gramsci sought to understand the relationship between the history of Italian intellectuals and the development of the Italian people in their "diverse stages and degrees of development," including the lowest strata of society, namely, subaltern groups and classes.

Around the time Gramsci described his research project to Tatiana in March 1927, he filed the first of several unsuccessful requests to obtain the permanent use of pen and paper in his prison cell. Without the capacity to "take notes," he explained to Tatiana, "I can't study in an orderly fashion."[43] Forced to postpone his research, he decided to study languages,[44] and throughout the rest of 1927 and the early part of 1928 he continued to "read all the time," as he put it, requesting specific books from the Sperling and Kupfer bookstore, perusing his personal library, reading up to eight books a week from the prison library, as well as newspapers and magazines.[45] As he explained to his sister Teresina in February 1928, "I can read, but I cannot study."[46]

After the show trial against him and twenty-one other members of the Italian Communist Party, held in Rome between May 28 and June 4, 1928, Gramsci received a sentence of twenty years, four

[41] Fabio Frosini, *Gramsci e la filosofia: saggio sui Quaderni del carcere* (Rome: Carocci, 2003), 31–34; Giorgio Baratta, "Spirito popolare creativo," in *Dizionario gramsciano 1926–1937*, ed. Guido Liguori and Pasquale Voza (Rome: Carocci, 2009), 794.
[42] Giorgio Baratta, *Le rose e i quaderni: il pensiero dialogico di Antonio Gramsci* (Rome: Carocci, 2003), 29. Cf., Cosimo Zene, "Inner Life, Politics and the Secular: Is There a 'Spirituality' of Subalterns and Dalits? Notes on Gramsci and Ambedkar," *Rethinking Marxism* 28, nos. 3/4 (2016): 540–562.
[43] Gramsci to Tatiana Schucht, April 11, 1927, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 1:95.
[44] On May 23, 1927, Gramsci explained to Tatiana that it was impossible for him to engage in "real study." As such, he wrote: "I have definitively decided to make the study of the languages my main occupation; after German and Russian, I want to systematically take up again English, Spanish and Portuguese." Gramsci to Tatiana Schucht, May 23, 1927, *Letters from Prison*, 1:112.
[45] Gramsci to Tatiana Schucht, February 19, 1927, *Letters from Prison*, 1:75. Cf., Gramsci's letters to Tatiana Schucht, April 4, 1927, p. 92; Giulia Schucht, May 2, 1927, p. 109; Tatiana Schucht, May 23, 1927, p. 113; Giuseppe Berti, August 8, 1927, p. 127; Tatiana Schucht, October 3, 1927, pp. 145–146; Tatiana Schucht, November 14, 1927, pp. 152–153; Tatiana Schucht, December 12, 1927, pp. 159–161; Tatiana Schucht, January 9, 1928, p. 169.
[46] Gramsci to Teresina, February 20, 1928, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 1:177.

months, and five days. Due to his poor health, in July he transferred from Rome to the Special Prison for the infirm and disabled in the city of Turi. He was initially placed in a cell with five other political prisoners, but after his brother Carlo filed a petition on his behalf, he obtained his own cell.[47] Though another request for the use of pen and paper in his cell was denied, he arranged to have his books sent to Turi in December 1928.[48] Following prison regulations, his books were deposited in the prison storage room, and he was permitted to check out three to five items at a time.[49]

In January 1929 Gramsci finally received permission to write in his cell, giving him the ability to take notes for the first time and to proceed with his project of producing something "from a 'disinterested,' '*für ewig*' point of view." On January 14 he wrote to Tatiana: "Quite soon I will also be able to have writing materials in my cell and thus my greatest aspiration as a prisoner will be satisfied."[50] On February 8, 1929, exactly twenty-six months after his arrest, he outlined the first research program of the *Prison Notebooks* with a list of sixteen "Main Topics" on the first page of the "First Notebook":

1. Theory of history and of historiography.
2. Development of the Italian bourgeoisie up to 1870.
3. Formation of Italian intellectual groups: development, attitudes.
4. The popular literature of "serial novels" and the reasons for its continued success.
5. Cavalcante Cavalcanti: his position in the structure and art of the Divine Comedy.
6. Origins and development of Catholic Action in Italy and in Europe.
7. The concept of folklore.
8. Experiences of prison life.
9. The "southern question" and the question of the islands.
10. Observations on the Italian population: its composition, function of emigration.
11. Americanism and Fordism.
12. The question of the language in Italy: Manzoni and G. I. Ascoli.
13. "Common sense" (cf. 7).

[47] See Gramsci's letters to Carlo Gramsci, August 13, 1928, and September 11, 1928, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 1:216–218, 223–224.
[48] Gramsci to Tatiana Schucht, December 17, 1928, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 1:237–239.
[49] Gianni Francioni, "Come lavorava Gramsci," in *Quaderni del carcere: Edizione anastatica dei manoscritti*, by Antonio Gramsci, ed. Gianni Francioni, vol. 1 (Rome-Cagliari: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana-L'Unione Sarda, 2009), 39–45.
[50] Gramsci to Tatiana Schucht, January 14, 1929, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 1:241–42.

14. Types of periodicals: theoretical, critical-historical, of general culture (dissemination).
15. Neogrammarians and neolinguists ("this round table is square").
16. Father Bresciani's progeny.[51]

Except for the omission of "Pirandello's theater," the sixteen main topics enrich and expand upon his initial study plans of 1927. Several of the topics (such as 2, 3, 4, and 16) deepen the examination of the relation between intellectuals and popular spirit, with an added emphasis on the dissemination of ideas and the formation of modes of thinking (6, 7, 13, 14). The focus on the "southern question" (9), which he had originally articulated in connection with the study of intellectuals, now appears as a separate line of inquiry. The list also introduces the new topics of "prison life," which eventually appears more prominently in his letters than in the notebooks, and "Americanism and Fordism" (11). Many of the topics appear prominently in the early miscellaneous notebooks and later become the organizing themes for some of the monothematic "special notebooks." However, the list of "Main Topics" does not constitute the final program of the *Prison Notebooks*. Over time as he proceeded with his work, Gramsci modified the focus of his research, integrating new areas of analysis and splitting some topics into separate lines of inquiry. Though it is not yet apparent, his treatment of subaltern groups emerges out of his investigation of several of the themes included in the "Main Topics."

The day after he composed the list of "Main Topics" Gramsci wrote to Tatiana, explaining that, now that he could record his ideas in a notebook, he wanted "to read according to a plan and delve more deeply into specific subjects and no longer 'devour' books." "For the time being," he wrote, "I'm only doing translations to limber up: and in the meantime I'm putting my thoughts in order."[52] He spent four months doing translations before returning to Notebook 1.[53] As he put his thoughts in order, he explained to Tatiana on March 25

[51] Antonio Gramsci, Notebook 1, "Main Topics," in *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 1, ed. Joseph A. Buttigieg, trans. Joseph A. Buttigieg and Antonio Callari (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 99. References to the *Prison Notebooks* follow the standard abbreviation system: Notebook number, note or section number (§); year of publication, page number.

[52] Gramsci to Tatiana, January 29, 1929, *Letters from Prison*, 1:245–246.

[53] Gramsci started his first notebook on February 8, 1929, with a list of main topics. Evidence suggests that he wrote his first notes in Notebook 1 in June 1929, though he may have written up to eight notes in Notebook 2 in February 1929 and then returned to the notebook in May 1930. See Giuseppe Cospito, "Verso l'edizione critica e integrale dei 'Quaderni del carcere,'" *Studi Storici* 52, no. 4 (2011): 881–904, 897.

that he decided to focus "chiefly" on three subjects: "(1) Italian history in the nineteenth century, with special attention to the formation and development of intellectual groups; (2) the theory of history and historiography; (3) Americanism and Fordism."[54]

Gramsci began entering notes in Notebook 1 no earlier than June 1929, which can be deduced from the dates of the published sources he cites.[55] Although Notebook 1 and his other miscellaneous notebooks do not appear to have a systematic structure, he utilized a number of recurring terms and phrases as heading rubrics, indicating cursory patterns of categorization. Many of the notes address topics he had previously identified in his study plans, such as intellectuals, types of periodicals, Americanism, Father Bresciani's progeny, folklore, and so on, which appear as rubrics throughout the notebook. He also introduced new subjects and rubrics that do not appear in the list of "Main Topics," such as Machiavelli, the Risorgimento, and Lorianism, which in time develop into themes for "special notebooks." Of the 158 notes that compose Notebook 1, Gramsci eventually used 107 as first drafts (A texts) that he incorporated as second drafts (C texts) in thirteen out of the seventeen thematically organized "special notebooks," including Notebook 25.[56] Though the phrases "history of subaltern social groups" and "history of subaltern classes" do not appear in Notebook 1, the theme is present in the notebook.

By the end of May 1930, Gramsci had filled Notebook 1, utilized part of Notebook 2, and began working on Notebook 3 (the third miscellaneous notebook) and Notebook 4 (the first "mixed" notebook). Continuing with the mode of working he developed in Notebook 1, most of the entries in Notebook 3 are derived from the systematic review of books and periodicals he received in prison, including those he had acquired prior to obtaining permission to write in his cell. Notebook 3 generally follows the research program outlined in Notebook 1 but also expands beyond it with the introduction of new lines of inquiry. In the first thirteen notes, he comments on several articles and a few books largely related to the topic of intellectuals. In §14, likely written in early June 1930, he used the phrase "subaltern classes" (*classi subalterne*) for the first time. Unlike the

[54] Gramsci to Tatiana, March 25, 1929, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 1:257.
[55] Joseph A. Buttigieg, "Notebook 1 (1929–1930): Description of the Manuscript," in Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 1:372.
[56] Buttigieg, "Notebook 1 (1929–1930): Description of the Manuscript," 366. A texts from Notebook 1 appear as C texts in Notebooks 10, 13, 16, 19–28.

previous thirteen notes, the note does not contain any bibliographic references, and compared to the particularities documented in the preceding notes, he records several theoretical reflections on the history of subaltern classes. Under the heading "History of the dominant class and history of the subaltern classes," he wrote:

> The history of the subaltern classes is necessarily fragmented and episodic: in the activity of these classes there is a tendency toward unification, albeit in provisional stages—but this is the least conspicuous aspect and it manifests itself only when victory is secured. Subaltern classes are subject to the initiatives of the dominant class, even when they rebel; they are in a state of anxious defense. Every trace of autonomous initiative, therefore, is of inestimable value. In any case, the monograph is the most suitable form for this history, which requires a very large accumulation of fragmentary materials. (Notebook 3, §14)

Prior to this moment, Gramsci had not used the phrase "subaltern classes" in his writings. He used variations of the term "subaltern" (*subalterno*, *subalterne*, *subalterni*) literally and figuratively in his pre-prison writings (from as early as 1917 to 1926) and in Notebook 1 (1929–1930)—to designate subordinate positions, mostly with respect to military and state-bureaucratic functions—but he had not used the phrase "subaltern classes" (*classi subalterne*) prior to this point.[57]

Aside from the misconception that he secretly used "subaltern classes" as code for "proletariat" to elude prison censors,[58] scholars have generally assumed Gramsci coined the expression. But in fact the phrase "subaltern classes" (*classi subalterne*) had been used in Italy as early as the eighteenth century to classify subcategories and "subaltern species" (*subalterna specie*),[59] and it had been employed in the mid- to late nineteenth century to identify and describe the

[57] For a thorough documentation of this point, see Guido Liguori, "Subalterno e subalterni nei 'Quaderni del carcere,'" *International Gramsci Journal* 2, no. 1 (2016): 89–125. Gramsci used the phrase "subalterni" as early as 1917. See Antonio Gramsci, "Caratteri italiani" (March 5, 1917), in *Scritti, 1910–1926*, ed. Leonardo Rapone, vol. 2, edizione nazionale (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 2015), 156. Gramsci used the term "subaltern" in a number of instances in Notebook 1 but not with respect to class or social status. See, for example, Notebook 1, §43, §48, §57, §61, §139.

[58] On this point, see Marcus E Green, "Rethinking the Subaltern and the Question of Censorship in Gramsci's Prison Notebooks," *Postcolonial Studies* 14, no. 4 (2011): 387–404.

[59] See, for example, Cristoforo Tentori, *Saggio sulla storia civile, politica, ecclesiastica, e sulla corografia e topografia degli stati della Republica di Venezia*, vol. 4 (Venezia: G. Storti, 1785), 79.

status of lower, subordinate social classes.[60] Gramsci's use of the expression in the notebooks is consistent with the way others regularly used it to designate the position of lower classes. Because he never cites a source for his use of the expression, he must have adopted it from material he had previously read or became familiar with during his incarceration. For instance, "*classi subalterne*" appears in the work of Vincenzo Gioberti[61]—whom Gramsci discusses in a number of places in the notebooks, though never in relation to subaltern classes.[62] In contrast to the conventional use of the phrase, however, Gramsci develops "subaltern classes" (later "subaltern social groups") into a category of analysis to examine the conditions and politics of subordinate social groups and classes. However, Gramsci never provides a precise definition of "subaltern," "subaltern social groups" or "subaltern classes" in the *Prison Notebooks*. He does not conceive them as a single or homogenous entity, which is why he consistently refers to them in the plural.[63]

As already apparent in Notebook 3, §14, he views the history of subaltern classes as "fragmented and episodic." Subaltern classes are opposed to the dominant class, and they "are subject to the initiatives of the dominant class," implying that they lack relative political power. Yet they are not passive, as they "rebel" against their conditions and anxiously defend themselves. Here Gramsci also points to the underlying impetus of his investigation: that is, the analysis of subaltern classes incorporates an examination of the elements necessary for them to transform their conditions and liberate themselves, noting that their unification "manifests itself only when victory is secure."[64] Because written history often distorts or erases the activity of subaltern classes, the "autonomous initiatives" of subaltern classes are difficult to trace and, according to Gramsci, of "inestimable value." The note, albeit only four sentences, reveals a number of points concerning the history of subaltern classes that

[60] See, for example, Celso Ferrari, "La nuova teoria dello stato nella filosofia del diritto," ed. Filippo Serafini, *Archivio giuridico* 58 (1897): 206–24, specifically 212n2.
[61] See, for example, Vincenzo Gioberti, *Del primato morale e civile degli italiani*, vol. 1 (Brussels: Meline, Cans e compagnia, 1843), 28; Vincenzo Gioberti, *Introduzione allo studio della filosofia*, vol. 1 (Losanna: S. Bonamici e Compagnia, 1846), 172.
[62] See, for example, Notebook 1, §88; Notebook 2, §62; Notebook 10, §43.
[63] Joseph A. Buttigieg, "Subaltern Social Groups in Antonio Gramsci's Prison Notebooks," in *The Political Philosophies of Antonio Gramsci and B. R. Ambedkar: Itineraries of Dalits and Subalterns*, ed. Cosimo Zene (New York: Routledge, 2013), 35–42.
[64] On this point, see Marcus E. Green, "Gramsci Cannot Speak: Representations and Interpretations of Gramsci's Concept of the Subaltern," *Rethinking Marxism* 14, no. 3 (2002): 1–24, and Massimo Modonesi, *The Antagonistic Principle: Marxism and Political Action*, trans. Larry Goldsmith (Boston: Brill, 2018), chap. 2.

eventually expand into a broader analysis of the dynamics of sociopolitical subordination.

Notebook 3, §14, marks an innovative moment in the *Prison Notebooks* in that Gramsci initiates a new line of inquiry that he had not previously identified. Soon after writing the note, he began to use the phrase "history of the subaltern classes" (*storia delle classi subalterne*) as a recurring rubric, which appears in sixteen additional notes in his miscellaneous and mixed notebooks. After its initial appearance, the rubric appears in Notebook 3, §18 and §90, and later in Notebooks 4, 6–9, and 15, written in the period from June 1930 to May 1933. The notes range in substance from short memoranda and bibliographic references to theoretical reflections, addressing historical periods from ancient Rome and the medieval communes to the period after the Italian Risorgimento. He refers to slaves, plebeians, common people, the protoproletariat of the medieval communes, peasants, and the modern industrial proletariat as subaltern classes. After June 1930, the phrase "subaltern classes" (and later "subaltern social groups") becomes a permanent element of Gramsci's lexicon, overlapping with other lines of inquiry, and appearing in related notes under various rubrics ("Past and present," "Custom and laws," "Types of periodicals," "Popular literature"). In Notebook 3, for instance, he also introduced the rubric "Utopias and philosophical novels" as a new line of inquiry to investigate the literary genre of utopian writing as an indirect representation of the "aspirations of the masses."[65] The notes appear unconnected to the analysis of subaltern classes in their first draft form, but their connection is later revealed when he included them in Notebook 25.

In the composition of Notebook 25, which Gramsci began in the summer of 1934, he utilized Notebook 3, §14, as the basis for the second note of the notebook. Changing the title from "History of the dominant class and history of the subaltern classes" to "Methodological criteria," he made some minor changes and additions in the second draft of the note:

> The history of subaltern social groups is necessarily fragmented and episodic. In the historical activity of this group there is, undoubtedly, a tendency toward unification, albeit in provisional stages; but this tendency is continually broken up by the initiatives of the dominant groups

[65] Notebook 3, §69; cf. Notebook 3, §71, §75, §113.

> and, therefore, manifests itself only when a historical cycle has run its course and culminates in success. Subaltern groups are always subject to the initiatives of the dominant groups even when they rebel and rise up; only "permanent" victory breaks their subordination, but not immediately. In fact, even when they seem triumphant, subaltern groups are only in an anxious defensive state (as can be demonstrated by the history of the French Revolution up to, at least, 1830). Every trace of autonomous initiative by subaltern groups, then, should be of inestimable value to the integral historian. This kind of history, therefore, must be handled in the form of monographs and for each monograph one needs to gather an immense quantity of material that is often hard to collect. (Notebook 25, §2)

The references to the French Revolution and the notion of the "integral historian" are new additions to the note, but the most significant change is Gramsci's shift from the use of the phrase "subaltern classes" to "subaltern social groups." In his book *Gramsci: problemi di metodo*, Gerratana points out there are some instances in which Gramsci used the word "class" in A texts and replaced it with "social group" in C texts after mid-1932.[66] This change in terminology, Gerratana argues, is likely due to Gramsci's "increased vigilance against prison surveillance" and not the "replacement of the Marxist concept of class struggle with the sociological methodology of the dynamics of 'social groups.' "[67] With respect to Notebook 25, Gramsci replaced "subaltern classes" with "subaltern social groups" or "subaltern groups" in all instances but one. However, the changes in terminology clearly do not indicate Gramsci's attempt to conceal his references to "class." For instance, in the revision of Notebook 3, §14, as Notebook 25, §2 (July-August 1934), Gramsci clearly replaced "subaltern classes" with "subaltern social groups." But in Notebook 25, §4—composed from Notebook 3, §16 and §18—he replaced "subaltern classes" with the phrases "subaltern groups" and "subaltern social groups," but the note also contains the phrases "popular classes" (*classi popolari*), "ruling class" (*classe dominante*), "class rule" (*dominio di classe*), and "proletarians" (*proletari*). Similarly, Notebook 25, §5, contains the phrases "subaltern classes," "subaltern groups," and "ruling classes" (*classi dirigenti*). Variations of the phrases also appear much earlier in Notebook 4: §38, subaltern group or subaltern grouping (*raggruppamento subalterno*)

[66] Gerratana, *Gramsci: problemi di metodo*, 22–24.
[67] Gerratana, 22, 23.

(October 1930); §59, subaltern classes (November 1930); §87, subaltern social group (May 1932); §95, subaltern classes (August-September 1932). The phrase "subaltern classes" also appears in the notebooks as late as 1935 in Notebooks 27 and 29. As these examples demonstrate, Gramsci clearly did not disguise all references to the word "class" in the *Prison Notebooks* after mid-1932. In some instances the variants of "subaltern classes" and "subaltern social groups" appear as overlapping categories. As Giorgio Baratta has suggested, the change in terminology points to a greater emphasis on the heterogeneous nature of subalterns, stressing the problematic issue of the relationship and difference between "the categories of 'people,' 'classes' and 'social groups.' "[68] Such distinctions are manifested in the ways classes are constituted in specific historical contexts and in relation to other contributing forms of disaggregation and marginalization, such as relations of race, religion, and gender, among others, which Gramsci briefly mentions in Notebook 25. "The category of 'subalterns' is therefore," according to Baratta, "traversed by a stratification and differentiation that must be taken into account to avoid falling into indeterminate abstractions."[69] Similarly, as Guido Liguori argues, the category of "subaltern" provides an enrichment of traditional categories of Marxism (i.e., bourgeoisie/proletariat), in that it intertwines class analysis with the structural, cultural, and ideological specificities of social position and subjectivity.[70] In this sense, it is possible to make distinctions between subaltern classes struggling for hegemony, such as slaves, plebeians, peasants, and the proletariat, and between the marginal and peripheral elements in those classes, i.e., subaltern social groups.

During the same period in which Gramsci began working on Notebook 3, he also started working on Notebook 4. In Notebook 4, he introduced a new method of organizing his notes: he devoted portions of the notebook to specific themes, setting aside segments of it for homogeneous blocks of notes. Gianni Francioni has described Notebook 4, as well as Notebooks 7–9, as a "mixed" notebook, distinguishing it from the wide-ranging miscellaneous notebooks and

[68] Giorgio Baratta, *Antonio Gramsci in contrappunto: dialoghi col presente* (Rome: Carocci, 2007), 121.
[69] Baratta, 123.
[70] Guido Liguori, " 'Classi subalterne' marginali e 'classi subalterne' fondamentali in Gramsci," *Critica marxista*, no. 4 (2015): 48; Cf. Guido Liguori, "Tre accezioni di 'subalterno' in Gramsci," *Critica marxista*, no. 6 (2011): 33–42; Guido Liguori, "Conceptions of Subalternity in Gramsci," in *Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Mark McNally (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 118–133.

the monothematic "special" notebooks.[71] Gramsci divided Notebook 4 into three thematic sections ("Notes on Philosophy. Materialism and Idealism. First Series"; "Intellectuals"; and "Canto 10 of the *Inferno*"), with the rest of the pages devoted to miscellaneous notes. All three thematic sections are reflected in the list of "Main Topics" in Notebook 1. Though "Notes on Philosophy" does not appear in the list by name, the theme emerges out of Gramsci's focus on the "theory of history and of historiography." As Gramsci pointed out earlier in his letter of March 25, 1929, his focus on "the theory of history" was motivated by reflections on Bukharin, Marx, and Croce,[72] which he reconceived and retitled as "Notes on Philosophy. Materialism and Idealism." The series, which fills the largest portion of Notebook 4, opens new areas of inquiry and presents new discoveries. Gramsci criticizes the "double revision" Marxism experienced due the influence of idealism (as exemplified by the work Croce, Gentile, Sorel, and others) and the "vulgar materialism" of positivism and scientism, as expressed in work of "official" Marxists such as Bukharin.[73] This two-pronged critique of idealism and positivist materialism provides the foundation for his conception of Marxism as a philosophy of praxis,[74] which directly connects to his analysis of the history of subaltern groups. In a matter of months, Gramsci extended the "Notes on Philosophy" as a distinct line of inquiry, later devoting sections of Notebook 7 (November 1930–December 1931) and Notebook 8 (November 1931–May 1932) to the second and third parts of the series, deepening the focus of his original research program.

In addition to the "Notes on Philosophy," Gramsci continued to pursue his study of intellectuals. In a letter to Tatiana on November 17, 1930, he explained how his work on intellectuals had branched into different lines of inquiry. "I've focused on three or four principal topics, one of them being the cosmopolitan role played by Italian

[71] Francioni, "Come lavorava Gramsci," 46; Gianni Francioni, "Quaderno 4 (1930–1932): Nota introduttiva," in *Quaderni del carcere: Edizione anastatica dei manoscritti*, by Antonio Gramsci, ed. Gianni Francioni (Rome-Cagliari: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana—L'Unione Sarda, 2009), 8:6.

[72] In his letter to Tatiana of March 25, 1929, Gramsci writes: "On the theory of history I would like to have a French book published recently: Bukharin—*Théorie du matérialisme historique* . . . and *Oeuvres philosophiques de Marx* published by Alfred Costes—Paris: volume 1: *Contribution à la critique de la Philosophie du droit de Hegel*—volume 2: *Critique de la critique* against Bruno Bauer and company. I already have Benedetto Croce's most important books on this subject." Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 1:257–58.

[73] Notebook 4, §3, §40; 1996, pp. 140, 188–189.

[74] Notebook 4, §37, §38; 1996, pp. 176–188.

intellectuals until the end of the eighteenth century, which in turn is split into several sections: the Renaissance and Machiavelli, etc."[75] He goes on to explain that "the subject presents itself differently in different epochs" and has the potential to extend to the days of the Roman empire, laying the foundation for an "introduction to a number of monographs."[76]

During the period in which he described his work on intellectuals to Tatiana, Gramsci made his first attempt to catalog the topics that encompassed his wide-ranging analysis. On the first page of Notebook 8, written between November and December of 1930, under the heading "Loose notes and jottings for a history of Italian intellectuals," he describes the "provisional character" of his study, making clear that it "may result in independent essays but not in a comprehensive organic work," that the "notes often consist of assertions that have not been verified, that may be called 'rough first drafts,'" which may be discarded after further study. Given these points, he writes, "one should not be put off by the enormity of the topic and its unclear boundaries."[77] After stressing the provisional nature of the notes, he mapped out twenty topics under the heading "Principal Essays" to document the themes included in his expanded investigation of intellectuals:

> Development of Italian intellectuals up to 1870: different periods.—The popular literature of serial novels.—Folklore and common sense.—The question of literary language and dialects.—Father Bresciani's progeny.—Reformation and Renaissance.—Machiavelli.—School and national education.—B. Croce's position in Italian culture up to the World War.—The Risorgimento and the Action Party.—Ugo Foscolo and the formation of the national rhetoric.—Italian theater.—History of Catholic Action: Catholics, integralists, Jesuits, modernists.—The medieval commune: the economic-corporative phase of the state.—Cosmopolitan function of Italian intellectuals up to the 18th century.—Reactions to the absence in Italy of a culture that is national-popular in character: the futurists.—The unitary school and its significance for the entire organization of national culture.—"Lorianism" as one of the characteristics of Italian intellectuals.—The absence of "Jacobinism" in the Italian

[75] Gramsci to Tatiana, November 17, 1930, *Letters from Prison*, 1:360.
[76] Gramsci to Tatiana, November 17, 1930, *Letters from Prison*, 1:360.
[77] Notebook 8, "Loose notes and jottings for a history of Italian intellectuals"; 2007, p. 231. According to Gianni Francioni, Gramsci made his first entry in Notebook 8 between November and December of 1930. Gianni Francioni, *L'officina gramsciana: ipotesi sulla struttura dei "Quaderni del carcere"* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1984), 142. Cf. Cospito, "Verso l'edizione critica e integrale dei 'Quaderni del carcere,'" 900.

> Risorgimento.—Machiavelli as a technician of politics and as a complete politician or a politician in deed.[78]

Continuing on the next page, he added "Appendices: Americanism and Fordism." His discussion of the provisionality of his notes and the outline of his research program provide insights into his mode of working and the labyrinthine structure of the *Prison Notebooks*. In addition to repeating some of the themes included in the list of "Main Topics" outlined in the opening of Notebook 1, the topics included in the catalog of "Principal Essays" reflect many of the recurring rubrics and major themes he had explored in his earlier notebooks, suggesting that the seemingly disparate notes—from the notes on the medieval commune, Machiavelli, and the Church to the notes on the Action Party, Croce, and Lorianism—are a part of a broad historical analysis of intellectuals. The statement that the study "may result in independent essays but not in a comprehensive organic work" suggests that his wide-ranging and expansive analysis would not be constructed according to an overarching system or grand theory, but rather according to the particular manifestations of the activity and function of intellectuals in specific historical contexts, which he would treat separately. The list of "Principal Essays" also demonstrates Gramsci's attempt to provide an inventory of his work to date and to provide a provisional structure, but with "unclear boundaries," leaving his analysis open to further exploration and discovery. As already noted, Gramsci began using the phrase "the history of the subaltern classes" in June 1930. The topic is obviously absent in his revised research plans of November 1930, though it remained a consistent theme in his miscellaneous notebooks. After outlining the "Loose notes and jottings for a history of Italian intellectuals," Gramsci set Notebook 8 aside for approximately a year, for unknown reasons, returned to working on Notebook 4, and then began working on Notebooks 5–7 soon after.[79]

By the summer of 1931, Gramsci started and nearly completed seven miscellaneous and mixed notebooks (Notebooks 1–7), and three translation notebooks (A–C).[80] He had also compiled the catalog of "Principal Essays" on the first page of Notebook 8 and filed

[78] Notebook 8, "Loose notes and jottings for a history of Italian intellectuals"; 2007, p. 231–232.
[79] Gramsci likely started Notebook 5 in October 1930 and Notebooks 6 and 7 in November–December 1930. See Cospito, "Verso l'edizione critica e integrale dei 'Quaderni del carcere,'" 899–900.
[80] Gerratana, "Prefazione," in *Quaderni del carcere*, ed. Valentino Gerratana, xxiii.

a portion of Notebook 9 with Russian translation exercises. In late July 1931, his health and concentration began to weaken. He described being "dominated by a great listlessness," suffering from "intense migraines," and being unable to concentrate.[81] On August 3, during this moment of weakness, he explained to Tatiana the trajectory of his project on intellectuals and the difficulties he confronted in pursuing his work:

> One might say that right now I no longer have a true program of studies and work and of course this was bound to happen. I had set myself the aim of reflecting on a particular series of problems, but it was inevitable that at a certain stage these reflections would of necessity move into a phase of documentation and then to a phase of work and elaboration that requires large libraries. I'm completely wasting my time, but the fact is, I no longer have any great curiosity in specific general directions, at least for now. Let me give you an example: one of the subjects that has interested me most during recent years has been that of delineating several characteristic moments in the history of Italian intellectuals. This interest was born on one hand from the desire to delve more deeply into the concept of the State and, on the other to understand more fully certain aspects of the historical development of the Italian people.[82]

Gramsci's acknowledgment of the inevitable limits of his studies and of the necessity of "large libraries" to provide further elaboration and documentation reveals greater insight into how he viewed the provisionality of his work. The letter also provides an additional indication of his widened investigation of intellectuals, which he acknowledges connects to the state and to the development of the Italian people, echoing his letter from 1927 on the theme of the "creative spirit of the people." All three investigations, which are apparent in Notebook 25, intersect with the analysis of subaltern social groups. In order to explain the emergence of "national" Italian intellectuals after the eighteenth century, he explains to Tatiana that he must begin with the formation of "'cosmopolitan' ('imperial') intellectuals" of the Roman Empire through the Papal-Christian promulgation of "imperial intellectual cosmopolitanism." Echoing points he made to himself in late 1930 in the pages of Notebook 8 regarding the provisionality of his work and the project of writing individual essays, he explains to Tatiana: "As you can see, this

[81] Gramsci to Tatiana, July 20, 1931, and July 27, 1931, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 2:46, 47.
[82] Gramsci to Tatiana, August 3, 1931, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 2:51–52.

subject could result in a whole series of essays, but for that intensive scholarly research has to be undertaken. The same thinking applies to other studies. You must also keep in mind that the habit of rigorous philological discipline that I acquired during my university studies has given me perhaps an excessive supply of methodological scruples."[83] Immediately after writing the letter, Gramsci suffered an internal hemorrhage caused by tubercular lesions in which he coughed up blood and experienced sharp chest pains, fever, and heavy sweats.[84] It took more than a month for him to recover from the immediate symptoms, though the effects were long term.[85] Tatiana became aware of Gramsci's health crisis sometime after August 17. In the meantime, concerned that Gramsci had abandoned his studies, she sent Piero Sraffa a transcription of his letter from August 3. In response, Sraffa suggested that Gramsci could complete a first draft of the work on intellectuals using a "few dozen fundamental texts" and then perfect it later, filling in the blanks when he had freedom and access to libraries. In a somewhat joking reference to Gramsci's "excessive supply of methodological scruples" as a barrier to his studies, Sraffa implied that Gramsci was overburdened by his philological rigor. "At one time," Sraffa wrote, "Nino always lectured me that my excessive scientific scruples would prevent me from writing anything: I was never cured of this disease, but is it possible that ten years of journalism did not cure him?"[86] Tatiana relayed Sraffa's comments to Gramsci in a letter on August 28, and in a reply, written on September 7, Gramsci assured her that he had not given up his work. In response to Sraffa's comments, Gramsci explained to Tatiana that his journalistic writings amounted to "fifteen or twenty volumes of 400 pages each, but they were written for the day and, in my opinion, were supposed to die with the day."[87] His description of the ephemerality of his preprison writings lies in stark contrast to his letter from 1927 where he described his desire to produce *für ewig* (for eternity) in prison, which, in his mind, required "rigorous philological discipline" and

[83] Gramsci to Tatiana, August 3, 1931, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 2:52.
[84] Gramsci describes his health crisis to Tatiana in his letters of August 17, 1931, August 24, 1931, August 31, 1931, and September 7, 1931, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 2:54–68.
[85] In a letter to his sister Teresina on February 20, 1933, Gramsci described the events of August 3, 1931, as a "serious crisis" in which he had been unable to "get back on track." Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 2:274.
[86] Piero Sraffa to Tatiana Schucht, August 23, 1931, in Sraffa, *Lettere a Tania per Gramsci*, 23.
[87] Gramsci to Tatiana, September 7, 1931, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 2:66.

"intensive scholarly research." His letter from September 7 also provides insight into his expanded study of intellectuals:

> The research I have done on the intellectuals is very broad and in fact I don't think that there are any books on this subject in Italy. Certainly there exists a great deal of scholarly material, but it is scattered in an infinite number of reviews and local historical archives. At any rate, I greatly amplify the idea of what an intellectual is and do not confine myself to the current notion that refers only to the preeminent intellectuals. My study also leads to certain definitions of the concept of the State that is usually understood as a political Society (or dictatorship, or coercive apparatus meant to mold the popular mass in accordance with the type of production and economy at a given moment) and not as a balance between the political Society and the civil society (or the hegemony of a social group over the entire national society, exercised through the so-called private organizations, such as the Church, the unions, the schools, etc.), and it is within the civil society that the intellectuals operate (Ben. Croce, for example, is a sort of lay pope and he is a very effective instrument of hegemony even if from time to time he comes into conflict with this or that government, etc.).[88]

Here Gramsci provides a clear explanation of the relationship between his investigation of intellectuals, hegemony, and the state. As he proceeds to discuss his work, he uses the phrase "integral State" (*Stato integrale*) to describe his expanded notion of the state as a unity of political and civil society.[89] Though the letter does not mention the history of subaltern social groups, the relationship between the state, intellectuals, and the "popular mass" that Gramsci describes here becomes a major element in his analysis of subaltern groups.

After his health crisis, Gramsci gradually returned to his notebooks. By November 1931 he finished the second series of "Notes on Philosophy" in Notebook 7 and started the third part in Notebook 8. He stopped working on translations in early 1932, continued to work on Notebook 8 through May 1932, and started work on the last thematic block of notes (on the Risorgimento) in Notebook 9.[90] During this period, likely in March or April, he returned to the opening pages of Notebook 8 and drafted a revised research program. On

[88] Gramsci to Tatiana, September 7, 1931, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 2:66–67.
[89] Gramsci to Tatiana, September 7, 1931, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 2:67. Cf. Antonio Gramsci, *Lettere dal carcere*, ed. Antonio A. Santucci (Palermo: Sellerio, 1996), 459.
[90] Francioni, "Come lavoro Gramsci," 48.

the third page of the notebook (the second recto page) under the heading "Groupings of subjects," he listed the following ten items:

1. Intellectuals. Scholarly issues.
2. Machiavelli.
3. Encyclopedic notions and cultural topics.
4. Introduction to the study of philosophy and critical notes on a *Popular Manual of Sociology*.
5. History of Catholic Action. Catholic integralists—Jesuits—modernists.
6. A miscellany of various scholarly notes (Past and present).
7. The Italian Risorgimento (in the sense of Omodeo's L'età del Risorgimento Italiano, but emphasizing the more strictly Italian motifs).
8. Father Bresciani's progeny. Popular literature. (Notes on literature).
9. Lorianism.
10. Notes on journalism.[91]

This revised research program marks a critical moment in the arrangement of the notebooks and a new stage in Gramsci's mode of working. After composing the "Groupings of subjects," he began to organize, revise, and expand his earlier notes according to the themes included in the list—as well as according to some of the topics included in the earlier research programs outlined in Notebooks 1 and 8—in what he called "special notebooks," which he devoted to monographic themes.[92] Gramsci eventually devoted special notebooks to nine of the ten themes included in the "Groupings of subjects."[93] The substance of this redrafted work plan was, in the words of Valentino Gerratana, "essentially the final plan of the Notebooks, though modified in the course of further work with some enrichments and variations."[94] From this point until September 1933, Gramsci's work largely revolved around the composition

[91] Notebook 8, "Groupings of subjects"; 2007, p. 233. For the dates and details pertaining to Notebook 8, see Joseph A. Buttigieg, "Notebook 8 (1930–32): Description of the Manuscript," in *Prison Notebooks*, by Antonio Gramsci, vol. 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 547–550.

[92] At the beginning of Notebook 15, written in February 1933, Gramsci uses the phrase "special notebooks" (*quaderni speciali*) to describe the "division of material and groupings" of his thematic notebooks. See Notebook 15; Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, 1748.

[93] Of the ten topics included in "Groupings of subjects," Gramsci devoted special notebooks to all of them, except to (6) "A miscellany of various scholarly notes (Past and present)." It is likely this is a topic he retained but was unable to return to, because there are dozens of notes under the "past and present" rubric scattered throughout the miscellaneous and mixed notebooks.

[94] Gerratana, "Prefazione," xxv.

of five special notebooks, in addition to three new miscellaneous notebooks:

Notebook 10 The Philosophy of Benedetto Croce	April 1932–June 1935
Notebook 11 (Introduction to the Study of Philosophy)	June-July–December1932
Notebook 12 Notes and Loose Jottings for a Group of Essays on the History of the Intellectuals	May–June 1932
Notebook 13 Brief Notes on the Politics of Machiavelli	May 1932–November 1933
Notebook 14 (Miscellaneous)	December 1932–March 1935
Notebook 15 (Miscellaneous)	February–September 1933
Notebook 16 Cultural Topics. I.	June-July 1932–mid-1934
Notebook 17 Miscellaneous	September 1933–June 1935[95]

With the exception of Notebook 10, the topics of the first five special notebooks are reflected in the list of "Groupings of subjects." Though "The Philosophy of Benedetto Croce" is not included in the list, Gramsci had previously identified it as a topic of his research plans in his letter to Tatiana from March 19, 1927, and in the list of "Principal Essays" in Notebook 8 written in 1930. In addition, Croce's philosophy is a major feature in the "Notes on Philosophy" series in Notebooks 4, 7, and 8, which Gramsci incorporated into Notebooks 10 and 11. As he began to collect and organize his miscellaneous notes according to single themes, he integrated the analysis of subaltern groups into his discussions of philosophy (Notebooks 10 and 11), the politics of Machiavelli (Notebook 13), and culture (Notebook 16). And he continued to examine aspects of subaltern groups in two of his new miscellaneous notebooks (Notebooks 14 and 15).

In early 1933, Gramsci's failing health once again interrupted his work. In February, he described his state of health as "catastrophic," with failing strength and the inability to react to his physical

[95] These dates are based upon a compilation of Francioni's dating by Giuseppe Cospito. See Cospito, "Verso l'edizione critica e integrale dei 'Quaderni del carcere,'" 903–904.

complaints.[96] On March 7, he fell to the floor, was unable to stand on his own, and was bedridden for over a week.[97] To help nurse him back to health, Gustavo Trombetti, a fellow prisoner and communist, assisted Gramsci for about two weeks before receiving permission to permanently stay in his cell. Gramsci was initially examined by the prison doctor and then examined by an outside doctor on March 20, who recommended that Gramsci be transferred to a hospital or clinic.[98] In October, the Fascist government granted him permission to move to Giuseppe Cusumano's health clinic in the city of Formia. He left Turi on November 19, and with the help of Trombetti, he ensured his notebooks were not left behind.[99]

Gramsci entered Cusumano's clinic on December 7, 1933. After several months, he resumed working on the notebooks. Though still considered a prisoner, he received a higher level of freedom in Formia than he had previously enjoyed in Turi. He obtained permission to walk outside, under police surveillance, and he had access to all of his notebooks at the same time, whereas previously he was permitted to possess three to five items (books and notebooks) in his cell at any given time. With access to all of his notebooks, he was able to organize his notes more productively. From approximately mid-1934 to mid-1935, he continued to work on Notebooks 10, 14, 16, and 17, and he started twelve new special notebooks:

Notebook 18 Niccoló Machiavelli. II.	mid-1934
Notebook 19 (Italian Risorgimento)	July-August 1934–February 1935
Notebook 20 Catholic Action—Catholic Integralists—Jesuits—Modernists	July-August 1934–early 1935
Notebook 21 Problems of Italian National Culture. I. Popular Literature	July-August 1934
Notebook 22 Americanism and Fordism	July-August 1934
Notebook 23 Literary Criticism	July-August 1934
Notebook 24 Journalism	July-August 1934

[96] Gramsci to Tatiana, February 13, 1933, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 2:270.
[97] For Gramsci's description of this health crisis, see his letter to Tatiana, February 13, 1933, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 2:281.
[98] Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, 2:281n1.
[99] Giuseppe Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary* (London: New Left Books, 1970), 281–282; Gianni Francioni, "Il bauletto inglese: appunti per una storia dei 'Quaderni' di Gramsci," *Studi Storici* 33, no. 4 (1992): 713–741.

Notebook 25 On the Margins of History. History of Subaltern Groups	July-August 1934–early 1935
Notebook 26 Cultural Topics. II.	Late 1934–early 1935
Notebook 27 Observations on "Folklore."	Early 1935
Notebook 28 Lorianism	Early 1935
Notebook 29 Notes for an Introduction to the Study of Grammar.	April 1935 (?)[100]

With the exception of Notebook 25, all of the special notebooks are organized according to themes he had already identified in his research plans. The composition of Notebook 25, in this sense, represents one of the novel developments to emerge out of the "unclear boundaries" of the *Prison Notebooks*. Though the analysis of subaltern groups is clearly present in his early notes, prior to the composition of Notebook 25 Gramsci had not mentioned the topic as a major area of focus in his letters or notebooks. Unlike the other sixteen special notebooks, Notebook 25 is the only notebook devoted to a single theme that does not appear in the list of "Main Topics" on the first page of Notebook 1 or in the "Principal Essays" and the "Groupings of subjects" outlined in Notebook 8.[101] In the process of compiling the other special notebooks and sifting through the hundreds of pages of miscellaneous notes he had composed over the previous five years, Gramsci likely became aware of the recurring presence of subaltern groups in his analyses and decided to capture it in a monographic notebook.

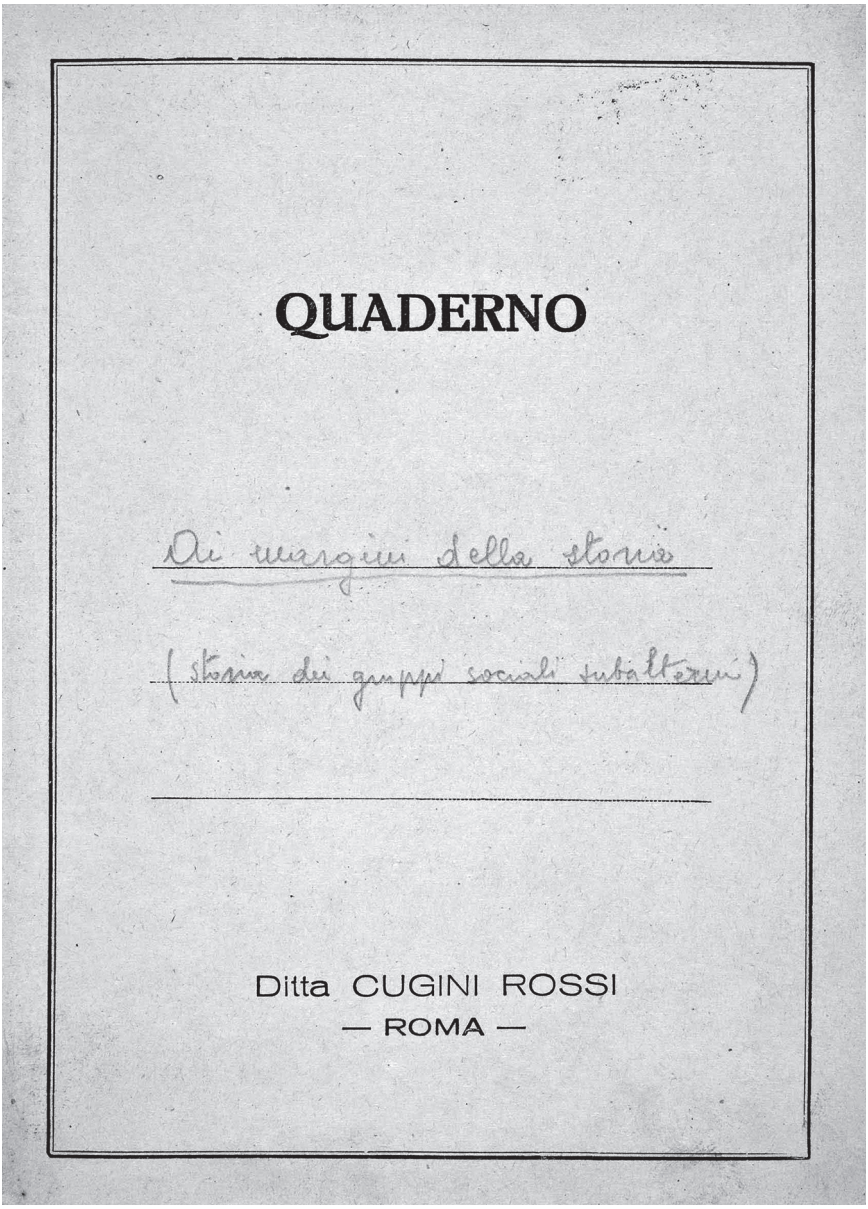
Notebook 25 consists of eight notes (C texts), which are derived from fourteen first draft notes (A texts) from Notebooks 1, 3, and 9. Only four of the original first draft notes were labeled with the rubric "history of the subaltern classes," and only those four A texts contain the phrase "subaltern classes" or "subaltern groups." The ten other first draft notes (A texts) that compose the notebook do not contain the phrases "subaltern classes" or "subaltern groups," and their various headings ("Davide Lazzaretti," "Political development of the popular class in the medieval Commune," "Utopias and philosophical novels," and "Spartacus") are not explicitly connected to the history of subaltern groups. It is only with Gramsci's

[100] These dates are based upon a compilation of Francioni's dating by Giuseppe Cospito. See Cospito, "Verso l'edizione critica e integrale dei 'Quaderni del carcere,'" 903–904.
[101] Buttigieg, "Subaltern Social Groups in Antonio Gramsci's Prison Notebooks," 35.

placement of the notes in Notebook 25 that their significance to his analysis becomes apparent, which underscores the fact that his investigation of subaltern groups is more extensive than the mere appearance of the term suggests. Notebook 25 contains a series of observations on subaltern groups from ancient Rome and the medieval communes to the period after the Italian Risorgimento, in addition to discussions of the state, intellectuals, and the methodological criteria of historical analysis, and reflections on utopias and philosophical novels, as well as brief comments on race and women.

In addition to these analyses, Gramsci also incorporates discussions of subaltern classes in his investigations of folklore (Notebook 27) and grammar (Notebook 29). Even though the composition of Notebook 25 as a monographic notebook distinguishes the study of subaltern social groups as a distinct line of inquiry, the notebook is insufficient unto itself, for its composition and contents intersect with multiple lines of research that make up the overall project of the *Prison Notebooks*. Following the rhythm of Gramsci's thought, it becomes apparent that the emergence of "subaltern social groups" as a category of analysis in the notebooks is thoroughly intertwined with and a product of his method of working, in which he pursued multiple lines of inquiry, continually enriching, revising, and reconceiving the direction of his investigations, which produced new discoveries and insights, as he attempted to reveal "the creative spirit of the people in its diverse stages and degrees of development."

SUBALTERN SOCIAL GROUPS



This is the title page of the special notebook Gramsci entitled "On the Margins of History (The History of Subaltern Social Groups)." He wrote the title in pencil on the first and second line of the box printed on the first page inside the notebook. The rectangular box is printed in blue ink with the heading "Quaderno" (notebook) at the top and "Ditta Cugini Rossi – Rome –" on the bottom, indicating the company that produced the notebook. Unlike his earlier notebooks, composed at Turi prison, this notebook does not contain any prison seals.