

the social sciences can play in the context of historical research is undoubtedly important. Alternatively the social sciences risk becoming a large gallery of theories and concepts relating to completely abstract causal analogies and potentially unnecessary to the understanding of historical and social phenomena.

2. Against evolutionary sociology and structural-functionalism

In order to develop their ideas, both scholars react to the theoretical paradigms of their times. Whereas Gramsci, consistent with the evolutionistic conceptions of the social science in the nineteenth century, strongly opposes Marxist determinism, Tilly harshly criticizes the functionalist paradigm, which is the natural continuation of nineteenth-century evolutionism. In particular, Charles Tilly feels compelled to question the approach of Durkheim who, with his emphasis on differentiation processes seen as the peculiar traits of modernity, would strongly influence the subsequent development of social theory in a functionalistic sense.

Sociology and Marxism, for Gramsci, have reached a state of stagnation. They have abandoned their original ideological function dissolving in the positivist framework. Sociology has become the science of the particular, engaged in producing detailed descriptions and sterile classifications. It has become an a-moral, a-political and a-historical science. It represented an attempt to create a method for historical-political science subordinated to evolutionistic positivism, an effort to describe and classify historical and political facts in accordance with the logic of natural sciences. It therefore represents the effort to experimentally obtain the evolutionary laws of human society, in order to produce predictions on the future of humanity. Yet, Gramsci observes, sociological laws have rarely had a causative significance, yet they risk falling into tautology by describing an event or a series of events and, through a mechanical process of abstract generalization, they risk turning a mere relationship of similarity into a law (Gramsci 1977a, *PN11*, 159-163).

Actually, everything is born from a need, which Gramsci does not hesitate to define «somewhat childish and naïve» way to solve the practical problem of the predictability of historical events. Since the natural sciences seem to have the ability to predict the evolution of natural processes, also sociology has been regarded as scientific only when it was able to predict the

future of society, thus going back to the essential cause of socio-historical events. But even Marx, in his *Thesis on Feuerbach*, has the opportunity to criticize this simplistic concept, because in the human world only «struggle» may reasonably be expected, not its concrete moments that are usually the result of conflicting forces, not reducible to some static quantities, because, inside them, quantity continuously becomes quality (ibid., 173).

Obviously, Gramsci's knowledge is limited to the sociology developed by classical theorists such as Montesquieu, Comte, Spencer and Durkheim. The conditions of their approach are essentially based on the belief that society, despite the diversity of cultural forms and social organizations, obeys an essential and objective order recognizable in a body of laws that bind certain structural elements in a harmonious whole. The task of sociology is, therefore, to identify those social relations that take place in such order. But the problem about the concept of science lies for Gramsci in understanding whether and to what extent it can offer "certainty" of the objective existence of reality outside the subjects. According to Gramsci, scientific work has two fundamental aspects: one that constantly rectifies the world of knowledge by developing complex principles of induction and deduction, and another one that uses this complex instrumental apparatus to distinguish what is necessary from what is arbitrary, that is transitional. Within this logic, all that is determined by all men, and therefore independent from the point of view of any individual or group, becomes objective. Yet, also this certainty is actually a world vision, therefore ideological. Objectivity is a non-sense if we think of it in absolute terms, while its value increases in its relationship with real social conditions. It is a unifying but not always absolute element.

Scientific truths are never final. Otherwise, science itself would cease to exist as such to become an extension of the already known. Therefore, even science is nothing but a historical category, that is, a movement in constant development that does not allow any form of «metaphysical unknowable», thus reducing the unknown to a simple «non-knowledge», which also means «not yet known». If we accept this assumption, what matters in science is not so much the objectivity of reality but the men who devise their research methods and rectify their material means of detection and discrimination through the mediation of technology. Considering science as the basis of life, as a worldview *par excellence* that places man in the face of reality as it is, is still a mistake, because science itself is an ideology, e-

ven if in the world of superstructures it plays a privileged role, due to the particular importance, the widest extension and the continuity of development that its reaction has on the structure. (ibid., 68).

Some say that Gramsci comes to a complete formulation of the philosophy of praxis also through a systematic critique of the Marxist positivism of Bukharin who, in his *Historical Materialism: A System of Sociology*, clearly expounds his deterministic conception based on the belief of the existence of laws of historical necessity (Bukharin 1921, en.tr. 1965). According to Gramsci, Bukharin's is a vulgar interpretation of Marxism in which the concept of the dialectical development of history disappears. Whereas idealist philosophy focuses on metaphysical categories, in Bukharin's sociology, ideas are replaced by empirical, as well as abstract and a-historical, canons and classifications. For Bukharin, economic processes operate regardless of the human will and therefore, according to Gramsci, outside history. By eliminating the dialectical relationship between economic processes and human consciousness, Bukharin dismisses the active element in the historical processes of the collective will. For Gramsci, instead, laws are always tendential laws, in the sense that they do not reveal what is fixed and immutable but always trends and possibilities. From this point of view, the deterministic Marxism of Bukharin becomes fatalistic, thus sanctioning the inertia of the masses and their subordination to historical regularities. For Gramsci, on the contrary, Marxism does not condemn the masses to a condition of cultural liability but aspires to human emancipation achieved through the adoption of a critical and historical methodology.

Whereas positivist Marxism emphasizes a certain historical mechanicism by eliminating the role of politics in the process of social transformation, for Lenin, the Russian Revolution demonstrates the ability of politics to produce mobilization and transformation. By supporting the primacy of politics, he actually supports, like Gramsci, a certain dialectical relationship between economic structure and ideological superstructure. From this perspective, Gramsci focuses on the role of the superstructures, following the approach outlined by Lenin. He does not downsize the historical role of economic structures; rather, he restores a proper balance between economic processes and political processes. The relations of production no longer act in the wake of general and autonomous laws; they are regulated and altered by human consciousness. The economical moment of social consciousness constitutes the negative phase, a sort of «realm of necessity» in the ascend-

ing process of the subaltern classes toward a hegemonic situation, which instead represents the positive phase, that is, the «realm of freedom» (see also Nardone 1971). In reality, Gramsci develops and overcomes Leninist thought by focusing more on the element of cultural and ideological rather than on political hegemony. According to him, certain superstructural elements, such as social awareness, culture, ideology represent both a tool and an aim of the revolutionary process. In this sense, the concept of «hegemony» is equal to that of ideological and cultural direction. The proletariat must become the ruling (that is hegemonic) class well before becoming the dominant class (Gramsci 1977b). The supremacy of a social group in fact manifests itself as «domination» and as «intellectual and moral direction». This group can and have to exercise a role of leadership before gaining power. From this point of view, Gramsci is aware that the Russian revolutionary experience is not exportable to the West, where no transformation process can be separated from the consent of the masses. In this sense, an ideological revolution acts as a precondition of the political (and social) revolution (see Portelli 1972).

What is needed in the West is the formation of a «historical bloc» determined by an organic unity between structure and superstructure, in the sense that the complex set of ideological superstructures is a reflection of the social relations of production. Between the two elements there exists a need for reciprocity, which is precisely the real dialectical process (Gramsci 1977a, 48). The historical bloc is not a sort of amalgamation or alliance between different classes, but a hegemonic situation in which social cohesion is ensured by a new conception of the world (superstructural dimension) and a dominant social group (structural dimension). In this context, the dominant power of a given social group is not guaranteed by violence and by the monopoly of the means of production, but mainly by a more subtle process of gaining consensus in relation to other social groups. What seems to be of interest to Gramsci is not so much the organization of class relations, but the mechanisms through which this organization is created and perpetuated (Tamburrano 1969). Only through the establishment of a new intellectual order, subaltern social groups can be de-alienated. In this context, Antonio Gramsci's humanist and historicist conception is consolidated, and his philosophy of praxis becomes pure humanism, that is, a kind of dialectic anthropology in which knowledge is reduced to historical social relations that are political and ideological. For Gramsci, humanism corresponds, therefore, to the process of structuring human knowledge on the ba-

sis of the organized will of men. Rather than “nature”, people are “consciousness” that develops through practical activity within a given historical context of organized social relations.

The sociological impact of these problems is evident. Gramsci *de facto* approaches a historical and humanist sociology of knowledge where there is a complete subordination of social phenomena to the critical consciousness of the masses (Gallino 1970; Pizzorno 1970). He agrees with the materialistic principle of the social (and structural) determination of knowledge, but he is also convinced that this knowledge, while reflecting objective historical conditions, cannot be objective in the same way. Historical objectivity is in fact achieved through an intersubjective consensus among men. In this sense, objectivity is always humanized and historicized. Only through a historical analysis it is possible to demonstrate objective reality, always seen as «humanly objective» or «historically subjective», where the concept of objectivity is declined as a «universal subjective». In fact, «man knows objectively in so far as knowledge is real for the whole humankind historically unified in a unified cultural system». But this process of historical unification can only occur if the internal contradictions afflicting society disappear, as they are a precondition for the establishment of social groups in the struggle for hegemony through the development of different philosophical and ideological systems. «There is then a struggle for objectivity (to get rid of the partial and fallacious ideologies) and this fight is the same struggle for the cultural unification of mankind». It therefore seems clear that there can be no objectivity that is free of man, as stated in a certain metaphysical materialism. «We know reality only in relation to man and, since man is also historical development, knowledge and reality are also a historical development, and also objectivity is a development» (1977a, *PN11*, 181-182).

The same attention to the processes of organization and mobilization of the proletarian masses and the same criticism of a certain sociological mechanism is recognizable in the work of Charles Tilly. According to him, the analysis of social change undertaken up to date, with rare exceptions, are mostly contaminated by theories and concepts developed in the nineteenth century. Yet those scholars came to build their intellectual equipment through a careful observation of the social reality in which they were immersed, characterized by profound demographic changes, by changes in modes of production and ways of organizing power. They focused on the concept

of “differentiation” understood as a dominant social process in the modern era, and developed conceptions of society largely organized around the idea of a delicate balance between the dynamics of differentiation and integration. According to Tilly, social sciences should adopt a new toolbox that can enrich our understanding of large-scale structures and social processes, leaving behind the kind of architecture used to understand intellectual structures and processes of a bygone era.

He undertakes this difficult path by wondering if and how the comparison between places, peoples, cultures and between social structures and processes over time may give a contribution to this ambitious intellectual mission. He analyzes a dense historical and sociological literature focusing on the comparative analysis of wide socio-historical structures and processes with the aim of demonstrating the inadequacy of old concepts and classical theories for an understanding of contemporary societies. First, he wonders what qualifies the concept of differentiation: undoubtedly the typical dynamics of modern urbanization, occupational specialization, expanding markets, widespread forms of education and in general all those processes that seem to create the conditions for an increasingly clear distinction between human beings. Second, he wonders what qualifies the concept of integration instead: in this regard, sociological literature refers primarily to a sense of similarity between individuals of the same society that originates from shared beliefs and traditions, from respect for authority, the generalized fear of any form of moral deviance and, generally, from all those cultural habits (and attitudes) that encourage individuals to reproduce the existing social structure (and system of power). According to this dichotomic perspective, if the various and inevitable processes of differentiation do not correspond to a boost directly proportional to the process of integration, the way is clear for various forms of social disorder which, on a small scale, can take the form of popular violence, madness, immorality, and crime, while, on a large scale, it can be expressed through different historical forms of rebellion, insubordination, and conflict. It seems clear that this emphasis on the concept of social order has been instrumental in reproducing, even in the social sciences, a certain model of society. «A victory of differentiation over integration produced a threat to bourgeois security» (Tilly 1984, 4). In sociology, this knowledge gives strength to the great dichotomies that have been proposed by the classics of social thought: status and contract, society and community, primary and secondary groups, mechani-

cal and organic solidarity. Each of these formulas displays the theoretical tension between differentiation and integration.

A superficial reading of the massive social changes occurred in the nineteenth century, in Tilly's view (1984, 11-12), resulted in at least eight «pernicious postulates» that gripped twentieth-century social thought. These assumptions are based on the following principles: 1) «society is a thing apart», in the sense that the world is divided into several societies that have more or less autonomous cultures, power structures and socio-economic structures ; 2) «social behavior results from individual mental events» variously conditioned by life in society; in this sense, the explanation for social behavior is reduced to an analysis of the impact of society on individuals; 3) «social change is a coherent general phenomenon» and, therefore, it can be explained as a whole, as if it were a monolithic block; 4) «the main process of large-scale social change leads distinct societies through a succession of standard stages», each stage is more advanced than the previous one; 5) «differentiation forms the dominant, inevitable logic of large-scale change»; 6) «the state of social order depends on the balance between processes of differentiation and processes of integration or control», meaning that, when social differentiation is too rapid or excessive, it tends to produce disorder; 7) «a wide variety of disapproval behavior – including madness, murder, drunkenness, crime, suicide, and rebellion – results from the strain produced by excessively rapid social change»; 8) «illegitimate or legitimate forms of conflict, coercion and expropriation stem from essentially different processes» of change and disorder on the one hand, and of integration and control, on the other.

Since no society can exercise total social control, these eight postulates encompassing the complexity of social beliefs, are for Tilly the result of misjudgements, and, most importantly, social behavior is not (or at least not exclusively) the result of the impact of society on the minds of individuals, but the result of the relationship between individuals and social groups. Social change is not quite a coherent and comprehensive process, but a useful general term to describe a series of interrelated processes. And, finally, stage theories of social change «disappear at the first observation of the real social life» (ibid.). These fallacious beliefs have led to the development of an artificial division between the social forces that push towards order (society, integration, satisfaction, legitimate control, progress, normality) and social forces that push towards disorder (individual mental events, disinte-

gration, tension, violence, decadence, abnormality). It is a dichotomic and Manichean framework that serves to affirm the fragility of social order and the consequent necessity and justification for forms of control and repression. It *de facto* expresses «the will of the power-holders – actual or would-be – to improve the people around them, by means of coercion and persuasion, at a minimum cost» (ibid., 13). But if this theoretical framework is actually inappropriate to grasp historical and social phenomena, besides hiding a clearly ideological substrate, how should we act to improve the logic and the tools of social analysis? Tilly has no doubt: «We should build concrete and historical analyses of the big structures and large processes that shape our era» (ibid., 14). Such analyses should not be abstract, but concrete, rooted in time and space, and they should be historical, that is, temporally limited to a specific era that inevitably affects the sequence of events and social behavior. Of course, stating that the eight postulates are wrong (or pernicious) is not enough; we need to explain the reasons why we say so. It is therefore worthwhile to explain this position.

The great achievement of sociology as an academic discipline has been based on the belief in the existence of a separate reality called “society”. Only the configuration of an intellectual entity distinct from any other could justify the existence of a body of specialized researchers, thus conferring on the discipline its substantial autonomy as a “science of society”, separate from all other sciences, particularly philosophy. Based on these premises, the scholars of the nineteenth century devised a discipline that had its own method, its own epistemology and a full conceptual apparatus. The same spirit would later originate a sort of division of labor among scholars who claimed to belong to one of the many disciplines that could be somehow related to the polyhedric system of the social sciences. In particular, the sociological task was to study modern and affluent societies. This aim, however, prompted social scientists to outline mostly fictitious structures and processes, starting with the totally artificial distinction between state and society, where society is anything that the state is not, even if enclosed in the geopolitical boundaries of a state.

The difficulties lie, in fact, in the very attempt to establish the boundaries of this delimited system called society. Is it really possible to identify these boundaries and, in particular, to ensure that they remain stable over time and space? How is it possible, *inter alia*, to determine these boundaries? As Tilly observes (ibid., 23), we cannot guarantee *a priori* that the boundaries

existing between nation-states or certain local communities will also mark the boundaries of interpersonal relationships, of a specific production system, of a delimited system of shared beliefs and, in general, of all those aspects that give meaning to an experience in society. Yet, without this guarantee, «the idea of a society as an autonomous, organized, interdependent system loses its plausibility» (ibid., 25). Rather, it would be convenient to abandon the idea of society as an autonomous system by adopting the alternative idea of «multiple social relationships», some of which are made on a local scale (from state to community), others on a global scale.

With reference to the second postulate, namely, that social behavior is largely determined by mental events, Tilly argues that it is undoubtedly convenient to think of the cognitive (individual) dimension as closely related to social life, or even as the crucial dimension to explain social behavior itself. Based on this conviction, it becomes easy to group individual consciousnesses into a single global mindset. Twentieth-century researchers relied heavily on this postulate. This is demonstrated by the increasing use of research techniques making use of questionnaire which provide statistical distributions of individual mental attitudes aggregated in social structures. Yet these research methods could be misleading because they generally confuse individual orientations with the sociologically relevant element of “social ties”. Life in society is not an expression of the sum of social atoms, but of a multitude of relationships, which should then divert attention to the construction of substantial informal social networks. Of course, Tilly comments (ibid., 27), the individual human being does exist and has its own specificity, in the sense that every individual social actors perceive their belonging to a network and their participation in various forms of relationship in different ways. Social relations are nothing but abstractions of multiple interactions between individuals. Yet, that is precisely the point: we don't make abstractions from individual behavior, but from a set of individual behaviors that simultaneously involve two or more social actors.

The third postulate is based on the belief that social change is essentially a coherent phenomenon. Nevertheless, Tilly observes, it would be really amazing to discover that a single and recurrent social process has historically governed the same logic of change on a large scale. The point is that social scientists don't have to explain some specific regularity such as the acceleration of falling bodies or the movement of celestial bodies. In the

social world, constantly uniform dynamics that can be explained, do not exist. Of course, «Many large-scale processes of change exist; urbanization, industrialization, proletarianization, population growth, capitalization, burocratization all occur in definable, coherent ways. Social change does not» (ibid., 33).

The fourth postulate is grounded in the notion of a sort of social evolution based on a succession of stages. «Social scientists once used stage models of social change as freely as blacksmith use their hammers» (ibid., 41). The various theories of modernization, of economic and political development are formulated by referring to such interpretative scheme, which is so effective at the organizational level of logical thinking, as it is flawed and misleading at the level of a concrete analysis of the processes of social change. It is based on an evolutionary macro-theory that wedges historical development in artificial mechanisms and in a progressive logic that is actually much less uniform than the one intended in prevailing sociological frames.

The idea underlying the fifth pernicious postulate, that differentiation alone can be identified as a kind of master process from which all others descend, is similarly misleading. The development of naturalistic and evolutionistic conceptions undoubtedly urged this belief, which, even in the nineteenth century, seemed justified by the occurrence of certain phenomena, such as social complexity, the increasing division of labor, the expansion of markets, which were easily ascribable to mechanisms of differentiation. All societies seemed destined to stumble along the same conceptual and organizational path that goes from simple to complex. Only the most diversified societies seemed destined to survive. Even Talcott Parsons, who at an early stage of his intellectual activity seemed to depart from certain evolutionist models, ended up embracing them. In 1937 he began his famous work, *The Structure of Social Action*, with a quote from Crane Brinton: «Who now reads Spencer? [...] We have evolved beyond Spencer» (Brinton 1933, 226-227, quoted in Parsons 1937, 1). Parsons is therefore convinced that the Spencerian approach based on the idea of unilinear evolution, following an utilitarian and positivistic scheme, is to be considered definitely outdated, and nevertheless, at the end of his intellectual career, he seems to explicitly recall the concept of organic evolution. As he writes in an essay within a text specifically dedicated to comparison in the social sciences:

If human “history” consisted of a population of essentially unique “cultures”, as has been alleged, this consideration would indeed virtually eliminate the relevance of “comparative method”. But empirically, this simply is not the case; history consists rather, like the system

of organic species, of an immensely ramified “inverted branching tree” of forms at many levels of system reference.

What ties the “branches”, forms, and levels together into a macro-system, is in the first instance common genetic origin. This is to say that differences among subsystems have, by and large, arisen through processes of differentiation from what in some sense have been “more primitive” forms. The human socio-cultural universe is by no means so variegated as, at least superficially considered, the organic seems to be, but it is by no means narrowly constricted (Parsons 1971, 102)

Also Parsons, in the above passage, besides recovering a clear evolutionist approach, embraces the idea of differentiation seen as the dominant social process. Tilly’s (1984, 48) criticism of this postulate should not be understood as a denial of the importance of the process of social differentiation in socio-historical development. In his view, this awareness cannot be crystallized, thus hiding a reality that is also characterized by significant dynamics of de-differentiation, as clearly demonstrated by the various aspects of phenomena that have been conceptualized under the term “globalization”. Actually, we cannot speak of a master process from which the others arise. The historical development is so complex and varied that any attempt to identify a dominant distinctive element would risk, as often happened, contaminating the analysis of concrete historical and social processes.

This critical consideration brings us to the sixth pernicious postulate based on the assertion of an oppositional dialectic between differentiation and integration, constituting the grounds on which the game of establishing social order would be played. Excessive or too rapid differentiation processes are therefore carriers of situations of structural disorder, which can be faced by increasing the integrative pressure guaranteed by social control and the subsequent repression by the political and moral authority of a given society. The result of this postulate is likely to be tautological as it relies on propositions such as «differentiation produces disorder whereas is equivalent to the absence of order». Actually differentiation undoubtedly produces tensions, but such tensions do not represent necessarily a threat to social equilibrium. Let’s think about the dialectical conflict between capital and labor. Without it, Western societies would probably not have had a real social pressure towards democratization that is nothing but the aspiration for a new order of solidarity.

This brings us to the seventh pernicious postulate that is essentially based on the “equivalence” of different forms of disorder. Whole generations of social scientists, in fact, have seen very different phenomena – such as

crime, family instability, social movements and in general all those behaviors disapproved by the classical bourgeois culture – as similar expressions of social disorder. All are explained in terms of a sort of social malfunction brought about by too rapid changes, whose solution requires intense collaboration between social classes and political analysts. Some scholars consider these “problems” as the inevitable cost of social development:

The very fact that modernization entrails continual changes in all spheres of a society means of necessity that it involves processes of disorganization and dislocation, with the continual development of social problems, cleavages and conflicts between various groups, and movements of protest, resistance to change. Disorganization and dislocation thus constitute a basic part of modernization and every modern and modernizing society has to cope with them (Eisenstadt 1966, 20).

This approach is clearly misleading because it assumes that an ordered society is also a static and non-conflictual society, thus neglecting the role of conflict in the production of social change.

All the postulates highlighted by Charles Tilly, therefore, are based on a clear separation between the sphere of order and that of disorder, which, in real political application, is reflected in the eighth and final postulate that relies on the distinction between legitimate force (that of established power) and illegitimate force, that is an expression of social disorder. All forms of challenge to power, from forms of rebellion to organized social movements, become illegitimate, while phenomena such as war, repression, prison, forms of taxation and, generally, all those phenomena aimed to produce integration by the dominant power become legitimate. As Tilly reminds us (1984, 56), these distinctions are fictitious and analytically impractical because the same actions may fall on either side of the demarcation line and only a political opinion (ie ideological) separates them. Let’s think of a resistance movement against a foreign occupation: the actors involved will be considered terrorists by the political elites of the occupying power, and heroes of freedom by most of the people who are against the occupation. Even theoretically, the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate force is likely to be mind-numbing, firstly, because it tends to reinforce the already refuted idea of the continuing tension between differentiation and integration, and secondly, because it tends to separate social phenomena that have many aspects in common, and that are generated from similar conditions. In reality, the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate use of force, at least when forms of collective action are concerned, derives from

the forms of historical development of nation-states and from the way power is organized within them.

3. History meets the social sciences

The critical sociology of Antonio Gramsci takes shape in the rejection not only of positivist Marxism but also of Benedetto Croce's idealist philosophy. As a theorist of bourgeois liberalism, Croce played in Italy the same role Hegel played in Germany (Salamini 1981, 27). The human and historicist components of Croce's philosophy become a useful conceptual tool for Gramsci in his criticism of the Marxist mechanicism of the Second International. Although fascinated with Croce's statement on the historical importance of human values, Gramsci clearly distances himself from the Italian philosopher on the question of the role actually played by the masses in the process of historical determination. Croce's idealism is in fact unable to resolve the conflicting relationship between theory and praxis. According to Gramsci, by raising the concrete reality of social conflict to the level of ideas, the philosophy of Benedetto Croce becomes an ideological apparatus that justifies the existence of abstract, purely speculative and essentially a-historica values. When meta-historical values are regarded as absolute values, then metaphysics and pure theory take the place of real conflicts happening among men. As Salamini observes (*ibid.*, 28), Gramsci's criticism of Croce's idealism can be summed up in four basic points: the concept (and conception) of historicism, the definition of philosophy, the conception of dialectics, and the relationship between theory and praxis.

Gramsci and Croce seem to agree on the historical and immanent role of ideas as well as on their criticism of theories not grounded in historical facts, but Croce, unlike Gramsci, gives a metaphysical value to history. When Croce says that ideas generate action and that man is the real creator of history, he actually refers to a hypostatized, that is, not historically determined, man (Croce 1907, *en.tr.* 1914; 1915). In Gramsci's opinion, men are the protagonists of concrete struggles, which are structured into real historical processes, by facing the objective reality of social contradictions. If for Croce historical creation is reduced to a history of ideas and concepts, Gramsci, like Marx, see historical processes mainly as praxis, that is, practical activity. Ideas become concrete in objective social conditions, and the history of science is not metaphysics, but a tool for creating historical con-