

PHILOSOPHY IN THE SOVIET UNION: A SURVEY OF THE MID-SIXTIES. Compiled and edited by *Ervin Laszlo*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel. New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968. viii, 208 pp. \$10.00.

Two reasons usually given for not studying Soviet philosophy are that it is "sheer nonsense" and that it is "irrelevant for any purpose." In the introductory essay to the volume under review J. M. Bocheński contends that Soviet philosophy is both philosophically interesting and "an important factor in the phenomenon of Communism." He adds that the situation in philosophy in the Soviet Union has improved steadily since 1947 and especially since 1950, and that it is unfortunate that of approximately twelve thousand persons teaching philosophy outside the Soviet Union only a few dozen "manifest any degree of academic knowledge of Soviet thought" (pp. 1-2).

The purpose of Dr. Laszlo's book is to acquaint the philosopher and the student of Soviet affairs with the various aspects of this thought and its recent accomplishments, and to provide evidence that this thought is of philosophical as well as social importance.

The book contains thirteen articles, of which ten are systematic studies and three are concerned with the relation of Soviet and Western thought. The academic affiliations of the authors represent eleven institutions in four Western countries and West Berlin. The reader is presented with Soviet achievements in philosophical fields ranging from the philosophy of man (Helmut Fleischer) to logic and scientific method (D. D. Comey and W. F. Boeselager), and with discussions of ideological coexistence (Gustav Wetter) and East-West dialogue (Bocheński and Laszlo). All but two of the articles originally appeared in *Studies in Soviet Thought* between 1963 and 1966; T. J. Blakeley's on atheism and Comey's on logic were first published in the first 1966 issue of *Inquiry*. Ten of the thirteen authors are editors of *Studies in Soviet Thought* and regular contributors to that periodical.

It is questionable whether the evidence of the articles supports Bocheński's contention regarding the value of Soviet thought. The authors often tend to find Soviet presentation "abrupt," "irritating" (p. 22), and lacking in lucidity (p. 27). Why is it necessary for Richard De George to say that after Stalin's death Shishkin "of course" changed his original proposal for a course in Marxist ethics (p. 49), for Laszlo Revesz to say similarly that "of course, legal scholars are now reproached for not taking up" the question of the difference of leadership in the dictatorship of the proletariat and in the people's state (p. 133), or for Blakeley to tell us that logicians "recanted" after Stalin's linguistics statement (p. 81)? Why, finally, does Bocheński, in arguing for philosophical dialogue, give only discussions of Zeno's paradoxes, Zinoviev's consideration of philosophical problems of many-valued logic, and, in general, only work in logic as examples of "decent work" in Soviet philosophy (pp. 190-91)? Surely he could find a greater variety, since it is a contention "constantly made in *Studies in Soviet Thought*" that "there are among the thinkers of the Soviet Union . . . many men who do not deserve to be judged as inferior to their colleagues in other countries" (p. 190). I am not suggesting that Bocheński is mistaken, but rather that the book does not substantiate this view. This is particularly obvious in the case of formal logic: we are told again and again (e.g., pp. 3, 79, 190, 191) that Soviet contributions in this field are "valuable" (p. 3), even "brilliant" (p. 79), yet no article on such logic is included.

The editor, who has shown good taste and sense in leaving the introduction to Bocheński while he reserved the final study for himself, should have exercised less

restraint in editing the articles to organize them into book form. They are clearly articles published on different occasions and for different purposes. Further, some of those either originally in German or by native German speakers are in an English style which at least a publisher's editor should have corrected.

One might also question Laszlo's policy in making his selections. Granted that all major philosophical fields and even more (always with the exception of formal logic) are covered, some of the articles are really reports or books reviews, as, for example, De George's essay on ethics (although it does review a basic text) and Boeselager's on dialectical methodology. On the other hand, T. R. Payne's article on Soviet psychology is a fascinating study, although it indicates a greater knowledge of psychology than of Soviet Marxism. Together with Fritz Rapp's excellent discussion of Soviet legal theory and Wetter's and Bocheński's brilliant, more purely philosophical, essays, it gives distinction to a book which would otherwise be a useful but expensive secondary text for a course in Soviet thought.

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AMERICAN AND SOVIET SOCIETY: A READER IN COMPARATIVE SOCIOLOGY AND PERCEPTION. Edited by *Paul Hollander*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969. xviii, 589 pp. \$8.95.

In the introduction the editor of this reader goes to some lengths to explain that the originator of the book was a publisher who suggested he do a reader on Soviet society, an idea which he rejected; but the idea of a *comparative* reader appealed to him, and when the theme of cross-national perception was added, he accepted it.

The underlying *idea* of this book is basically sound and intellectually productive: it is to provide assessments by American and Soviet sociologists or social scientists (or what passes for them in the Soviet Union) on their own society and its characteristics and problems, and then to have comments on the other society. This gives us a fourfold classification: American views on American society, American views on Soviet society, Soviet views on American society, and Soviet views on Soviet society. These then are presented in eight major parts: social values, beliefs, and ideologies; the polity; social stratification; the family; marital and sexual relations; social problems (including crime and juvenile delinquency, discrimination against ethnic minorities, leisure, the effects of alcohol, mass culture, youth, old age, rural and urban areas, population movement and imbalances, and the decline and survival of religion); appraisals of sociology; and "Are the Two Societies Becoming Alike?"

This is a monumental program. The rub comes in filling that fourfold table, because at that point the editor is at the mercy of the available materials. The result is a hodgepodge, and a difficult (and often tedious) book to read. The availability of materials varied widely, making selections quite difficult in some instances (American views on American society) and perhaps too easy in others where the choice of materials was very limited. The most interesting and perceptive portions of this reader are the general and specific introductions the editor has written to present the book and the materials.

It is interesting to note that most American authors represented are academicians, whereas the Soviet group consists of a few academicians but mainly journalists and other writers. The difference reflects the relative development of the