

**BOLSHEVIK IDEOLOGY AND THE ETHICS OF SOVIET LABOR: 1917–1920: THE FORMATIVE YEARS.** By *Frederick I. Kaplan*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1969. ix, 521 pp. \$10.00.

This book opens with a highly controversial working hypothesis, namely, that there is some sort of direct correspondence between Bolshevik ideology (which means for the author Marxist-Leninist philosophy) and Soviet labor policy in the years immediately following the October Revolution. Most people will agree that there has to be some correspondence between Marxist-Leninist ideology and Communist politics. However, this correspondence is generally seen as between the ideology as a whole and political comportment as a whole. Therefore, few would be inclined to agree with such statements as this one: "Men, according to Lenin, must reflect the external world and its law as accurately as possible. A close identification with external authority is thus demanded psychologically by Lenin's theory, especially his theory of reflection" (p. 18). As one reads on, however, it becomes clear that the author owes almost nothing to the analytic tradition; he is rather using a kind of *Wissenssoziologie*. Therefore, the first chapter's description of Bolshevik ideology—and it is quite competently done—is to be seen not as a matrix for understanding the subsequent 500 pages; it rather sets the scene—supplies the reader with a signpost, so to speak.

The bulk of the book is devoted to a workmanlike and thoroughly documented description of what happened to Russian labor in the course of the "Bolshevization" of Russia in the critical years immediately after the October Revolution. The last section, "The Ethics of Soviet Labor," contains what is novel in Kaplan's view of the matter, and there is no doubt that he could have benefited from the conceptual apparatus used by Sartre in his *Critique de la raison dialectique*. It is "extero-conditioning" that he is talking about, and he is claiming that the *subbotniki*, the inscrutability of Communist Party plenipotentiaries, and other such psychosocial factors served the party in forming an institutionalized group out of the seriality of the Russian work-collective. The ideology serves in this process to give this institutionalized group the semblance of what Sartre calls *groupe en fusion*. There is, therefore, little point in trying to establish a one-to-one correspondence between a thesis of the ideology and an act in the political realm. However, it is relatively easy to make the case that the ideology occasions a "cast of mind" in the leaders, which influences the underlings not so much as the result of indoctrination or "brainwashing" (which also play a role) but as the result of the comportment expected of them. The beauty of this method of *Verstehen* is that it takes account of the complexity of the phenomena to be explained. Its danger lies in the fact that its validity depends on the accuracy of the interpreter's understanding of the ideological tenets being dealt with. Thus, in the present instance, it is clear that Kaplan's interests are mainly epistemological and/or psychological. Very important ontological considerations are not included.

All in all, however, Kaplan has made a laudable effort. It would be interesting to see similar analyses of agricultural policy or foreign policy.

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