

State Church's point of view it might be justifiable to treat them both as anarchists, but a dispassionate researcher, as Professor Kline indeed is, should not have failed to see that Tolstoy's criticism of religion bore a highly positive approach. One could also question whether Bakunin's own atheism could really be traced as far back as the ancient philosophers Epicurus and Lucretius, as Professor Kline states (p. 14). Also somewhat strange, and much out of line with accepted criticism, is his interpretation of Turgenev's Bazarov as an ideal man of the future (pp. 103 ff.).

The author seems to have omitted what I would term one of the central ideas in Berdiaev's religion, his concept of justification by faith, which reminds one of Luther rather than of Russian Orthodoxy, and is witness again to the influence of Western Europe on Russian thought.

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THE SOVIET ECONOMY: MYTH AND REALITY. By *Marshall I. Goldman*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968. xv, 176 pp. \$4.95.

PLANNING AND PRODUCTIVITY UNDER SOVIET SOCIALISM. By *Abram Bergson*. Pittsburgh: Carnegie Press, Carnegie-Mellon University, 1968. Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York. 95 pp. \$4.00.

The Soviet Economy: Myth and Reality is presumably intended as an elementary guide for nonspecialists to the development and problems of the Soviet economy, with each chapter headed by a myth of various degrees of naïveté. Thus chapter 6 begins with the myth "The Soviet Union is a land of milk and honey where communism has brought fulfillment and tranquility to everyone," and this is duly disproved.

The author knows his subject, and there are many valid and well-founded arguments scattered throughout his pages. But why preface a discussion of living standards with so absurd a "myth"? The style, too, sometimes degenerates into "pop" language, as in "The whoosh of economic growth" (p. 10) or where Stalin's probably deliberate mishandling of agricultural statistics becomes "comparing onions and cheddar cheese" and leads to a "fancy before-dinner appetizer" or "economic indigestion" (p. 25). Far be it from me to discourage humor, but such a style is not too helpful to understanding.

There are other complaints to be made. Soviet prices are indeed poor measures of "economic worth," but this is as much or more because they do not reflect either utility or scarcity, which Goldman does not mention, as it is because of the non-inclusion in costs of a charge for capital or land. The picture of war communism in chapter 3 confuses syndicalism, which Lenin fought against, with all-around nationalization and centralized control over resources, which Lenin strongly supported in 1919–20. On page 26 we read that because prices were low the peasants bought back some grain in 1926–27 after having sold it to the state; but there were no compulsory deliveries in 1926–27, so the author should explain why they sold it in the first place. Then he asserts that in 1920–27 the rate of growth was 5 percent; but it was several times higher than that, owing to the speed of recovery from the ruin of war and civil war.

Goldman argues that if the prerevolutionary growth rates were extrapolated, Russia would have developed satisfactorily if no Bolshevik revolution had taken

place. Statistically he has a good case. However, this assumes that the moderates who made up the Provisional Government could have maintained the necessary political stability, or alternatively that the tsar could have adapted his regime successfully to the needs of the modern world. Since the revolution happened because, *inter alia*, these assumptions were invalid, one is uneasily aware of the limits of extrapolation.

Goldman's picture of living standards is fair, but it is surprising to learn that "the well-equipped Russian home has a samovar" (p. 50); and he surely overstates the purchasing power of the Russian worker by converting his wage into dollars at the official rate. His descriptions of the role of the party, the trade unions, and the character of the bureaucracy are clear and balanced. The chapter on planning is concise and well written, though the reader may conclude that the reform of the system after 1965 is more thoroughgoing than in fact is yet the case. The Russians do *not* "seem to be beyond the point of returning to the system they once knew" (p. 141).

Goldman's book has some value as an introduction to the subject, but it is aimed somewhere below the level of an intelligent freshman. Its author has shown himself to be capable of much better things.

Bergson's is a very different book. The author's reputation as one of the world's leading experts on the Soviet economy, and particularly on Soviet statistics, is well known to most of this journal's readers. In addition, he is a major figure in the area of welfare economics. His views on the efficacy of Soviet planning must therefore command both interest and respect. His analysis shows us, in words and in figures, relative inefficiencies in the Soviet system. Bergson's statistical computations seem to me to be beyond criticism. The problem is to relate the figures to the analysis of specifically Soviet features of Soviet economic performance. Let us agree, with Bergson, that the Soviet Union's factor productivity is below half that of the United States and almost identical with that of Italy. What do such figures tell us about the relative efficiency of the Communist system? It is undeniable that certain well-known irrationalities in Soviet economic management help to explain the gap between the USSR and the United States. But the United States is superior also to countries that do not labor under the handicap of Soviet-type planning. Furthermore, within the USSR itself it seems likely that the Baltic states have a factor productivity double that of the Central Asian republics, though all share the same system. How does one isolate the relevant factors? It would plainly be wrong to conclude that the adoption of the United States system would bring to the Soviet Union the same factor productivities as the United States, but the careless reader might do so. This is not an argument against making comparative calculations. It is a necessary and valuable exercise, and who better than Bergson can guide us through the statistical jungle. He does issue a number of warnings about the meaning of the comparisons, and his analysis of actual Soviet procedures is sound and persuasive throughout. It is not he, but those Gerschenkron called "the modern breed of reckless quantifiers," who may misuse the conclusions. To take a politically neutral example, it is most useful to measure and analyze the superior productivity of Swedish shipyards as compared to Britain's, but quite another matter to identify the percentage of this superiority that can be ascribed to the obsolete structure and attitudes of British trade unions.

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