Book Reviews

The Soviet Citizen. Daily life in a totalitarian society. Alex Inkeles and Raymond A. Bauer. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1959. xx + 533 pp. $10.

This book is testimony to the skill of social scientists; yet if social science were everywhere as competent and as free as we should like it to be, there would have been no need to write the book.

By 1950 it had become amply apparent that we knew very little about one of the most powerful industrial societies in the world, and especially about how it worked as a social system and about public and private opinion within it. Furthermore, it had become clear that Stalin was not interested in letting any information of these kinds leak out. For this reason the Harvard project on the Soviet social system was formed; it was financed by the U.S. Air Force to the extent of approximately $1 million. Clyde Kluckhohn, the anthropologist, was general director of the project, and Alex Inkeles and Raymond Bauer, sociologist and psychologist, respectively, were director and codirector of research.

In 1950 there was only one large source of relatively untapped information on the Soviet social system: the emigrés from the Soviet Union, who at that time were still to be found in great numbers in Western Europe. The Harvard research team in 1950 and 1951 conducted 764 long interviews and obtained completed questionnaires from nearly 3000 different emigrés. These were the basic new materials of the Harvard project and of this volume.

But consider the problem. There was no convincing way to project statistically from these emigrés back to the population of the Soviet Union; indeed, there was every reason to suspect that the emigrés differed in important ways from the people they left behind. Certainly the emigrés' feelings about the Soviet regime could hardly be assigned to the whole of the Soviet people. Furthermore, most of the emigrés had come out of the Soviet Union between 1943 and 1946, some of them still earlier. They knew very little about the U.S.S.R. as it was during the late years of Stalin, and they knew the striking changes that took place after Stalin's death only from hearsay and newspapers.

The members of the Harvard research team were admirably mature and restrained in their use of these data. They said quite properly that the material represented only "additional information" to be added to the standard sources. It could properly be used to illuminate some differences between subgroups in the population—for example, to compare some of the opinions and experiences of less educated with those of more highly educated persons—but not to project to the population as a whole. Some of the statistical materials in this book, as well as the fact that 8 years were spent in its preparation, testify to how much work was put in on the new materials, to try to determine, so far as possible, from internal evidence what could confidently be projected and how this matched other existing information.

Used in that way, and not depended on for too much, the emigré data were of important assistance. In 1951, before the Soviet Union was opened up to travel and exchange of materials, the data were more important than they are now.

This is the second general report of the Harvard project (in addition to two volumes of narrower scope and a number of small publications). The first general volume, *How the Soviet System Works* (Bauer, Inkeles, Kluckhohn, 1956), was concerned with the broad operating dynamics of the social system. The present book focuses on the individual, how he lives, and what he presumably likes and dislikes in Soviet society. It presents more of the tabular data from the interviews than any other of the project's publications, but the data are still put together in the only way we know to study a society to which we have very limited access—balancing source against source, fact against fact, new generalizations against old, and using what we have learned of accessible systems to help us interpret the inaccessible ones.

Inkeles and Bauer do a useful service in pointing out that the Soviet Union is both a totalitarian state and a vast industrial state, and that Soviet life and changes in it are related to interaction between these two over-arching systems. Thus, one can find evidence to support either Bertram Wolfe's analysis of the U.S.S.R. as a grim dictatorship, unchanged and unchanging, committed to destroying the free world, making treaties and agreements only as tactical maneuvers (this is the totalitarian face of the system), or, for Isaac Deutscher's somewhat more optimistic picture of an industrial society which contains the conditions for inevitable, gradual democratization, and which needs and seeks peace and stability (this is the public visage of the industrial system). But Inkeles and Bauer doubt that either position is the whole truth, or that either system is entirely in control. The question is not, they say, whether totalitarianism or industrialization will triumph, but rather how the two will resolve their relationship.

The crucial change in Soviet society, as Inkeles and Bauer see it, is that the main outlines of the system now seem to enjoy the support of popular consensus. Soviet policy was long aimed at securing reliable behavior regardless of how the person felt about what he was doing. The new policy, however, is to improve living standards, reduce terror, build pride in the strength of the regime—all with the intention of achieving broader support. Inkeles and Bauer feel that the tactic has been successful.

There is little apparent effect of ideological disaffection. There is some evidence of inter-class hostility, but the authors feel that such hostility is not dangerously high, could hardly find political channel for expression anyway, and can easily be manipulated by the regime by keeping the "haves" slightly insecure and the "have-nots" slightly hopeful. They find that discontent and alienation tend to focus selectively on leadership rather than on the full range of Soviet institutions. But,

on the other hand they do not feel that Soviet society shows signs of cleavage on a party and nonparty line. Rather, they see the party man gaining more respect as there comes to be less need to fear him. And they argue that one of the strengths of totalitarianism is that it co-opts into its ranks precisely those individuals who under other circumstances, would be "natural leaders."

Nor do the authors feel that nationalism or separatism is now at white heat among the nationality groups in the U.S.S.R. Instead, they see the peasant's values, centered on nationality, family, and religion, being replaced by those of the industrial society. To be sure, this too has its built-in tensions. For one thing, in order to give incentive, the regime has encouraged a cult of success, an upward mobility, a thirst for more education than the present system can provide. Ultimately the regime must come to grips with this by making manual labor more rewarding, both materially and psychologically. There has been bitter discontent with some of the conditions of Soviet industry—the enforced tempo of work, the terrible squeeze of work norms and piece rates, the harshness of labor regulations, and political interference with industry. But here the evidence is that conditions have changed notably for the better, and that workers are becoming better adjusted and satisfied.

In fact, throughout the data presented in this volume is the recurring theme of improving adjustment. Examining their data by age groups, Inkeles and Bauer find that the young people consistently react *more affirmatively* than their elders to what they consider to be the positive aspects of the system and *less violently* against the negative aspects. Each successive generation seems to take the system more for granted. Examining changing values in child care, the authors find that the traditional values of religion, respect for custom, and love of heritage are apparently being replaced by more secular values—adjustment, security, and so forth—which are more likely to produce a tractable citizen.

How might a fundamental change come about in the Soviet system? The authors suggest three ways. It might result from an internal conflict over the succession; from a break-up of the Soviet satellite empire; or from the gradual industrial maturing of the country. It is pointed out that either of the first two possibilities would be more likely to lead toward greater totalitarianism than toward greater democracy. The third type of change is one the authors feel must be considered very seriously. Indeed, they cite some of the changes already made in that direction since Stalin's death. But they point out that a change away from Stalinism is not necessarily a change *toward* democracy. The new Soviet society forged by Khrushchev, they say, "is perhaps less totalitarian, less absolutist, even less dictatorial. It is no less autocratic and certainly not *more* democratic, in the sense of acknowledging the supremacy of law and of individual rights. But such a society is more, not less, a challenge to the free world." This society represents a greater challenge because the leaders have succeeded in making adjustive changes without sacrificing the basic features or the intent of the system, and have gained greater efficiency, broader support from the citizenry, and a better profile before the world.

To a reader who feels that "everything will come out all right," this will be small encouragement. To a person (if one still exists) who believes that the Soviet Union is trembling on the brink of revolution, this book will not be a pleasant experience. But for anyone who wants a mature and perceptive examination, albeit from a distance, of the social psychology of the Soviet citizen, the Inkeles-Bauer book is recommended reading.

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Communist Economic Strategy: The Rise of Mainland China. A. Doak Barnett. National Planning Association, Washington, D.C., 1959. 106 pp. $2.50.

In 1956 the National Planning Association's International Committee organized a project to examine the economics of competitive coexistence, and this volume is the fourth in a series of country and area studies. The author, born and brought up in China, has served in the Far East as news correspondent, foreign service officer, and associate of the American Universities' field staff in Hong Kong.

While developing and documenting his central thesis that Communist China has already become an important participant in the economic competition between Communist and Western blocs, A. Doak Barnett takes full cognizance of the many difficulties inherent in the use of Chinese Communist statistics and in the assessment of Chinese Communist progress reports. In fact, although the book went to press several months prior to the recent down-grading by the Peking Government of their own previous claims, there is no evidence that these rectifications will in any sense damage Barnett's arguments. What emerges, rather, is a sober justification for his presentation of a China which, quite apart from its extravagant claims, is nevertheless making remarkable progress in a crash effort to industrialize itself.

Generally, Barnett's findings fall far short of being a reassurance for the West or for underdeveloped countries which, like India, are seeking to modernize through democratic rather than totalitarian means. Peking's policies have involved purges, suppressions of individual freedom, revolutionary upheaval, and economic hardship. And yet there is no doubt, according to Barnett, that "Peking's first Five Year Plan has put Communist China into the forefront of underdeveloped nations in terms of their rates of over-all growth. Especially startling, perhaps, has been the regime's decision to embark on foreign aid programs of its own to other underdeveloped countries."

If the annual increase in the gross national product during the first Five Year Plan was close to 7 or 8 percent, Barnett maintains, then the rate of growth in China has probably been close to double that of India. Contrary to a widely held assumption, moreover, the Chinese Communists have largely carried the burden of economic development themselves, for concrete assistance from the Soviet Union has been somewhat limited. The implications for further development during the second Five Year Plan, initiated in 1958, are difficult to assess, especially in view of the many over-inflated claims of last year, but the probable outcome, Barnett believes, should not be underestimated.

In conclusion, Barnett argues that Communist China's economic and industrial base will probably continue to grow at a comparatively rapid pace; that the Chinese Communists will con-