Book Reviews

Social Research and Totalitarianism

Soviet Sociology. Historical Antecedents and Current Appraisals. ALEX SIMIRENKO, Ed. Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1966. 384 pp. $7.95.

The reappearance of sociology in the Soviet Union, after a hiatus of about 30 years, has set Western social scientists to wondering what sort of contributions to the field might be expected from that quarter. Presumably to help satisfy this curiosity, Alex Simirenko has gathered together 20 selections and published them along with introductory material of his own. Nearly half the selections deal with the "historical antecedents"—the prerevolutionary thinkers Mikhailovsky and Kovalevsky and the Russian Marxists and Soviet political leaders Plekhanov, Lenin, Bukharin, Trotsky, and Stalin. The relevance of such selections is doubtful; these men, with the partial exception of Kovalevsky, were social philosophers and social actors rather than social researchers, and there is, in any event, very little continuity between their ideas and what is now being printed as Soviet sociology. Of course, what Lenin and Stalin, in particular, said and did has had a considerable effect upon the discipline as it has been practiced (and not practiced) in the Soviet Union, but that can hardly be attributed directly to the stimulation of their sociological theories.

The second half of the book examines and displays contemporary Soviet sociology itself. The Western observers of the field are agreed that the ideological and political atmosphere of Soviet society is less than hospitable to autonomous, probing, and outspoken social research; but within this consensus, they can be roughly divided into "optimists" and "pessimists"—those who believe that Soviet sociology nevertheless can produce creditable results and those who believe that it cannot. The pessimists are represented by Leopold Labedz and Lewis S. Feuer, whose position is, in the words of the latter, that "the organs of independent political reasoning have atrophied in the Soviet Union from compulsory disuse," and that conditions have not changed enough to expect a regeneration. Arvid Brodersen, George Fischer, and editor Simirenko (whose contribution is the only previously unpublished item) are more hopeful, chiefly because they believe that the Soviet regime has now recognized the potential usefulness of sociological findings as the foundation for a social engineering which could replace the method of terrorism in administration. In the volume's outstanding article, Paul Hollander strikes a reasonable-sounding balance. His study of what has actually emerged from Soviet sociological work so far, excellently summarized here, prevents him from being especially enthusiastic; on the other hand, perhaps bearing in mind the cases of other sciences, he is unwilling "to suggest that there is an *inherent* incompatibility between sociological research and a totalitarian society," and he convincingly sketches the limits within which sociology is apt to function.

If, however, one is to judge from the three specimens of work by Soviet sociologists themselves which are included (all of them previously available in English), the pessimists seem to have the better of the argument—though perhaps not for the reasons they give. One article, by G. Osipov and M. Yovchuk, is largely programmatic, but it does indicate the difficulties under which Soviet sociologists operate when it implies that Marx, Engels, and Lenin have already stated all the general sociological propositions there are, and then goes on to assert that these have been "time-tested and . . . proved by the entire process of historical development." The other two are empirical studies, and what they bring out above all is the methodological crudity of Soviet sociology. Here, for example, is the entire description of sampling procedures in "Soviet workers' attitude toward work," by A. G. Zdravomyslov and V. A. Iadov (originally published in 1964):

> . . . we began by selecting enterprises representing the most typical branches of Leningrad industry. At these enterprises we chose 2,665 workers, aged 30 and under, by the technique of random selection of district sampling [a mistranslation of "stratified random sampling"], with consideration of the work performed.

Perhaps the editor did not choose the finest showpieces of Soviet sociology (oddly enough, in his introduction, he makes brief reference to another article which is far superior to those he did select); but from my own reading in the field, I can vouch that such vague statements are quite typical.

The last article—"The vitality of the baptismal ceremony under modern Soviet conditions," by D. M. Aptekman (1965)—unwittingly reveals a basic methodological problem that is not touched upon by any of the Western commentators. The author interviewed 352 Soviet parents to find out why they had had their children baptized. Significantly, the interviewees are often identified (again, quite typically) by their initials, sex, occupation, education, and place of employment. While its data are not without value, about half the report is devoted to discussing the measures that have been or should be taken to combat religious practices. Thus:

> Councils on atheism, which include representatives of party, Komsomol [the Communist youth group], and trade-union organizations, have been established . . . . Recently, these councils have done much to explain the harmfulness of religious ritual and to drive it out of the lives of men. It is planned to intensify this work. It has been proposed to civic organizations that they interest themselves more deeply in the lives of the working people, giving special attention to families in which children are expected, and assisting in placing children in preschool institutions . . . . A Communist and a Komsomol have no right to maintain any connection with religion. . . . they are required to engage in active propaganda of the scientific world view among the people with whom they have constant contact in home life, and not to permit deviations from their principles of party loyalty with respect to world view . . . . The work done by party and civic organizations has already yielded its first results. In 1964 the number of religious baptisms diminished by more than 35 percent from the 1963 figure.

Sociologists acquire data through the direct or indirect questioning of individual respondents more than from any other single source. So long as their Soviet colleagues obtain information in the context implied by this passage, one is bound to suspect that the responses are not likely to be reliable—and that may well be the fundamental obstacle to the development of sociology under Soviet conditions.

ROBERT A. FELDMESSER
Dartmouth College,
Hanover, New Hampshire

Processes of Analysis

Introduction to Real Analysis. CASPAR GOFFMAN. Harper and Row, New York, 1966. 174 pp., illus. $7.50.

A first course in the calculus develops intuitions about differential phenomena in mechanics and geometry. These intuitions are useful if two conditions are satisfied: (i) some reality is associated with the concepts of instantaneous rates of change, of the content of figures with irregular boundaries, of extreme values, and of approximation; and (ii) simple cases of the phenomena can be computed. It is too much to expect that the subtleties of careful mathematical exposition of these ideas will be mastered. Since the presence of singularities in physical situations is still beyond the student's experience, there is little motivation for a precise study of limiting processes.

The situation changes with the second course. Whether the student now has primarily mathematical interests or anticipates the use of mathematics in others fields, the methods of analysis must be more clearly understood. Physically significant singularities do exist; the computing machine has made the nature of a convergence process a very practical matter; the spread of statistical models in all fields makes analytical probability a basic tool. Goffman's text provides a judicious choice of topics and an agreeable style of exposition with which to make the shift toward sophistication. Before uniform convergence is introduced the functions $nx/(1 + n^2x^2)$ are shown to converge nonuniformly to 0, and the principle of condensation of singularities is exhibited. The theorem on uniform approximation of continuous functions by polynomials is reached via the famous Bernstein polynomials, and a page is devoted to describing their probability properties. The last chapter gives an account of Fourier series for Riemann integrable functions in the perspective of orthonormal series. It concludes with Fejer's theorem on the uniform convergence of the means of the Fourier partial sums for a continuous function.

Along the way the author develops the standard special functions and their functional equations, functions of bounded variation and the Stieltjes integral, power series, including Abel's theorem and one of its converses, and the fundamental results of the differential and integral calculus. The real number system and its topology are disposed of in 26 pages. The exhibition of analytical pathology for its own sake is avoided. There are a large number of exercises, some of which extend the main line of the text.

There is solid fare for a semester course here, and a nonmathematician who is curious about how the calculus lives at home might find some pleasure in the book.

LEON W. COHEN
Department of Mathematics,
University of Maryland, College Park

Young Emissaries

Volunteers for Peace. The First Group of Peace Corps Volunteers in a Rural Community Development Program in Colombia, South America. MORRIS I. STEIN. Wiley, New York, 1966. 272 pp., illus. $7.95.

Four months after President Kennedy established the Peace Corps on 1 March 1961, the first contingent arrived at Rutgers University to be trained by CARE to work with Colombian villagers in a program of community development. Morris I. Stein tells the story of these 62 young men—why they volunteered, how they were screened and trained, what they accomplished on their missions, and how they were affected by their experience—and discusses the usefulness of psychological measures in predicting their performance.

The book pioneers in several ways. U.S. commitments to developing nations have made the "overseas American" a subject of increasing concern. Anthropologists have documented attempts to introduce "western" innovations into traditional societies. But aside from a dozen interview surveys of returned Americans, little quantitative research on such agents of change has been published. Stein took measurements of the Peace Corps group six times: at the beginning of training, after six months in the field, after one year in the field, on completion of service, six months later, and one year later. Around these statistics, enriched with quotations and case histories, he builds an account that is coherent and scientifically sound.

Especially intriguing is the promise of a personality typology for improving the selection process and predicting effectiveness. The personality types were derived from self-descriptive rankings of 20 paragraphs based on "needs" in Murray's system of personality—achievement, affiliation, dominance, order, and so on. By a "*Q*-factor analysis," nine-tenths of the trainees could be categorized in five main types. At the end of two years, three supervisors who had close contact with the volunteers and their communities rated the volunteers' effectiveness. The "action-oriented" type, surprisingly, scored the lowest—significantly lower than the "intellectually oriented" or the "socially oriented." Five of the seven action-oriented volunteers had frequently had problems that needed administrative intervention; not more than one-fourth of the other types presented such difficulties. Yet at the outset, the Final Selection Board had accepted all trainees of the action-oriented type and had rejected one-fifth to one-third of the other groups. Why the discrepancy? The Selection Board, Stein suggests, may have been impressed with the achievement orientation and self-confidence of this type. In the field, however, the essential task was to help *others* organize so as to achieve their own goals, and the action-oriented person might lack the patience to share control with others.

The data also suggest the typology as a "moderator" variable (D. R. Saunders) to improve selection. For the total group, only the letters of reference and the Final Selection Board's overall rating correlated significantly with effectiveness in the field. But within certain types, ratings by instructors and psychiatrists as well as test scores correlated significantly with performance. Knowledge of Spanish (instructors' rating) showed no correlation with effectiveness. More important, Stein suggests, was a sincere desire to communicate.

Another pioneering aspect of the study is the plotting of changes over time. The author sees the volunteers