

*Labor Productivity in Soviet and American Industry.* By WALTER GALENSON. Columbia University Press. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. 1955. xiv+273 pp. 45s.

Professor Galenson's study is mainly devoted to a comparison of pre-war output per wage earner year in certain Soviet and American industries. Soviet pre-war productivity is estimated to have averaged 40 per cent. of that in the United States. The sample covers nearly a third of Russian pre-war industrial employment, but because of the uneven level of technical development in Soviet industry, conclusions about the general level of industrial productivity must be tentative. Nevertheless, it is clear that, although Russian pre-war productivity achievements were well below those of America, they were good by British standards in several industries.

As there is no Soviet production census, the Soviet data were assembled from various technical and government publications. Professor Galenson has shown great ingenuity in collating these—a task requiring considerable knowledge of Soviet administrative practice. In general, the Soviet employment data seem to cover the same production units as the output data and the productivity estimates are more valid than one would normally expect from non-census information, but where there are discrepancies in coverage or the employment figures are the author's estimates, there are unknown although probably small risks of error. The estimates for machinery industries are particularly vulnerable to error, because Soviet data only indicate the main output of an industry, whereas the American census shows secondary products which may represent as much as a third of output. In such cases, Galenson simply assumes that the proportionate importance of secondary products and spare parts is the same in both countries.

Professor Galenson also deals with productivity trends from 1928 onwards, and makes some guesses about the future. It is extremely difficult to quantify the overall rate of growth of Russian industry in terms of a significant comparison with Western countries but the estimates confirm that Russian industrial productivity growth from 1928 to 1940 was much more rapid than anything in American experience. For the post-war period, the evidence is very scanty, and the problem complicated by wartime Soviet losses, but it seems that American productivity rose considerably more than Soviet between pre-war and 1950, when account is taken of the large increase in Soviet working hours.

A. MADDISON.

*Henry George.* By CHARLES ALBRO BARKER. Oxford University Press. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. 1955. xvii+696 pp. 57s. 6d.

This volume is not only a first-rate biography, it is also a fascinating case study in economic and social propaganda. As professional journalist, social reformer, writer, orator, political campaigner, and many other things besides, Henry George's energies were mainly spent in the twilight zone that separates "practical" from "scientific" contributions to economic and social affairs. His greatest work, *Progress and Poverty*, is an excellent example of analytic thinking arising from a preoccupation with contemporary practical problems. Therein lay much of the strength of its appeal, which, reinforced by George's literary skill, religious fervour, and emotional intensity made it the most widely read social critique of its day.

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Professor Barker has all the necessary enthusiasm for his task without the usual concomitant tendency to gloss over the weaknesses or to exaggerate the importance of his subject. In view of the extent of George's influence and the adulation he inspired this is no mean achievement. Professor Barker delineates George's historical background and his intellectual development with infinite care, and then conducts us through the numerous channels of George's later life—his tours as lecturer and reporter in Ireland, England, Australia and elsewhere, his later publications, and his political campaigns up to his "martyrdom" in 1897. George's impact on his generation was truly remarkable, for he enlisted the support of wealthy businessmen, labour leaders, eminent scientists, clergymen of all denominations, and leading politicians in many countries. His relations with the academic economists of his day are of special interest to readers of this journal. He exerted a powerful influence on such men as Wicksteed, Clark and Fetter (whose name Professor Barker omits), though they soon rejected his specific doctrines, and even so conservative an economist as J. L. Laughlin acknowledged, in 1892, that Henry George had "stimulated interest in political economy . . . to an extent not to be assigned to any other writer" in America. But while Professor Barker pays detailed attention to socialism, the land reform movement, and the fiscal, political and moral legacies of George's career, there is no thorough-going attempt to assess his place in the history of economic thought. In view of the wealth of material provided, perhaps this complaint is sheer ingratitude.

The author has largely dispensed with footnotes, giving instead a 45-page bibliographical appendix. On page 557 there is a possible confusion between Simon Newcomb and Simon Nelson Patten, but otherwise there are no serious misprints.

A. W. COATS.

*Les Classes Sociales aux États-Unis.* École Pratique des Hautes Études. Centre d'Études Économiques. *Études et Mémoires*. 15. By F. Bourriez-Gregg. Librairie Armand Colin. Paris. 1954. pp. 234.

It is remarkable that we have neither an adequate contemporary social history of the United States (the Beards' work remains standard) nor a satisfactory general account of the American system of social stratification. Perhaps some members of the younger generation in American social history and sociology will in time make good these deficiencies. Meanwhile, along with Kurt Mayer's brief *Class and Society* (New York, 1955) and the collection of articles and excerpts edited by Reinhard Bendix and Seymour M. Lipset, *Class, Status, Power* (London, 1954), the present work will serve European and even American scholars as an introduction to the problem of the American class system.

Its limitations, however, are many. It appears to depend upon the incomplete resources of French libraries. Its historical sections are cursory and stereotyped. The author attributes undue significance to certain American inquiries into popular attitudes towards class phenomena, which were executed with extreme disregard for the larger context in which these attitudes developed. The book attempts an analysis of that context but its slight treatment of political problems and its nominal attention to the American economy preclude any substantial or new interpretations. Its value in fact