

In the end Benne reduces his thesis to these simple terms: No socialist society has room for any religion other than its own secular dogma; only a capitalist society allows religion to flower. Capitalism, moreover, is consistent with Judeo-Christian teachings if it is a partner of the people; and man can have no hope for the future without vigorous spiritual renewal. "Perhaps," suggests Benne hopefully, "the Divine response is near." [WV]

**THE WAR OF THE DISPOSSESSED:
HONDURAS AND EL SALVADOR,
1969**

by **Thomas P. Anderson**

(University of Nebraska Press; 203 pp.; \$15.95)

Miles L. Wortman

The chief value of this good, academic study of the 1969 El Salvador-Honduran war is that the event is sufficiently distant to judge dispassionately as a historical event. But it is as much about today's crisis, the region's complexities, and its almost hopeless dilemma as it is about that hundred-hour conflict.

The region is full of dreams. There is the 160-year-old dream of a united Central American entity, a return to the unity enjoyed under the Spanish crown. The dream endures despite racial distinctions, regional antipathies, periodic border wars—in short, despite a lack of commonality save the dream itself. In the first half of this century the dream led Hondurans to invite Salvadorans into their labor-short banana fields and mines. The Salvadorans came, fleeing political oppression, seeking land, full of ambition. Some followed the custom of their own country and squatted on uncultivated land. They prospered and xenophobia developed among the Hondurans.

The same dream led to the creation of the Central American Common Market with its promise of increased regional cooperation and prosperity. El Salvador prospered. Cheap but well-made Salvadoran shoes pushed out Honduran-manufactured or handmade shoes in every town in that country.

Another Central American dream, of healthy populations—a dream we all share—led to efforts by national governments and international organizations for health care, vaccinations,

health education. And population grew—from 1.4 million in El Salvador in 1930 to 2.5 million in 1960. There are 4.8 million today, with a density eight times that of the United States. In Honduras, half the population today is unproductive, under fifteen years of age, a weight on the economy.

The dream of industrialization, of investing in factories, using foreign loans, developing exports to support these populations, failed with the rise in oil prices in the '70s that made production costly.

The dream of industrial agriculture, to make the land produce more in gross terms than the grain the peasants farmed, was ruined by the oil price rise, by higher fertilizer costs, by the pressure of the large agrarian populations for land, and by the greed of large landholders who refused reform and thus faced revolution.

Finally, there is the dream of the cleric, to find social justice in lands where the economic equations do not support subsistence.

Some of these dreams died in the 1960s and a reaction set in. In Honduras populist groups pressured for relief, for agrarian reform; and the pressure was turned against the easiest target—the foreigner, the Salvadoran peasant who occupied Honduran land. Xenophobia distracted peasant and labor groups from more important domestic problems. Politicians dragged out old border issues. Salvadoran success in the Common Market was decried. In both countries horrible jingoism arose; small incidents excited passions as newspapers misinformed their clientele. A prewar euphoria developed as the problems and the lost dreams were set aside in order to face "the enemy."

Most North Americans remember the resulting 1969 war by its facetious title, the "Soccer War," because it was sparked by disagreement at a football match. It seemed a comic opera affair, lasting a hundred hours, killing a couple of hundred soldiers—not very important as wars go. We ignored the two thousand civilians killed and the many more refugees.

And in the early '70s of Watergate and Vietnam we forgot Central America. The reports of 130,000 Salvadorans shipped home from Honduras, the "dispossessed" of the book's title, were not important. Wasn't this a usual occurrence in Latin America?

The border between Honduras and

El Salvador was closed. Population pressure in El Salvador grew, made worse by the repatriated refugees. The Common Market was dead, Salvador's prosperity became depression, unemployment soared, food and energy prices increased. The euphoria at the onset of the war became anger at the failure in both countries and frustration at mounting domestic problems.

Anderson links the 1972 political turmoil in El Salvador, the electoral fraud, the coups and countercoups, to the failure of the war. With all dreams of democracy dead, small terrorist operations began. Private armies financed by large farmers, businessmen, police and military officials responded, killing first peasants, then land reformers, some priests, then some nuns and an archbishop. In the uninhabitable mountains between Honduras and El Salvador, the "haunt of many criminals of both nations" before 1969, guerrilla groups formed. Oil made life more expensive for the peasantry. Resistance grew. Population swelled. Repression increased. Toward the end of the '70s help for the guerrillas came from the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. The dreams died.

The Anderson book is a careful, analytical study of the causes and the effects of the 1969 conflict. It is also about today. [WV]

WOMEN IN THE TWO GERMANIES
by **Harry G. Shaffer**

(Pergamon Press; xiii + 204 pp.; \$26.00)

Margery Fox

Long interested in women's progress under socialist systems, Shaffer has produced a rigorous and well-documented study of women in East Germany (the German Democratic Republic) and West Germany (the Federal Republic of Germany), a study that has the exceptional merit of comparing women who share essentially similar cultural backgrounds but who live under different social systems.

Women in West Germany have had to fight independently for their rights in the absence of either a supportive political ideology or a socio-religious tradition that fosters equality; it is a state that gives priority to individuals. Any profound sex role changes in West Germany would have to evolve gradu-