

of terrorism on various regimes. Authoritarian regimes, we are told by Irving Louis Horowitz, are more likely than democratic ones to be destabilized by the assassination of a key leader. Most of the writers, however, seem to see terrorism as a grave threat to democratic governments. This may be so, but it is important to realize that despite the IRA, the Red Brigades, the Baader-Meinhof gang and our own terrible assassinations, terrorism has not forced today's major democracies to alter any of their basic policies or their democratic frameworks.

Wardlow's book has a more practical orientation than Crenshaw's, presenting sections on hostage negotiations and counterterrorism policies and procedures, as well as a good overview of the role of terrorism in revolutionary war. He also discusses the role of the media, positing quite correctly that a potential exists for a symbiotic relationship between the media and the terrorist. The media in an open society gives the terrorist access to the theatre in which he plays. At the same time, however, media coverage prevents the romanticization of the terrorist, inhibits the spread of rumors, and helps assure that the response of the authorities will not be overzealous.

International Violence, a collection of essays and papers from an international conference in Nigeria in 1980, offers a broader and somewhat more disconnected look at violence. In an opening essay called "The Parameters of Violence," Yohan Alexander, one of the volume's editors and someone who has written widely on the subject of terrorism, nevertheless runs afoul of the problem of defining political violence. In his case he elects to call it "an elastic, goal directed phenomenon that...is perpetuated to influence the behavior, attitudes or predisposition of its target(s)." He further states that violence "seeks to violate the organic connection that exists between the human condition and its echo in our imagination"—an observation as puzzling to the reader as it would be uninspiring to the terrorist.

The book includes a series of essays on the sources of violence, case studies of violence in various parts of the world, and perspectives on violence from various disciplines of the social sciences. In one essay an economist presents a theoretical model of violence that treats it as input into a "social production function" and assumes further more that the violent individual calculates marginal rates of utility for continuing to engage in violent behavior. In another selection, equally strange, a psychiatrist tells us that "violence in terror, civil disobedi-

ence and war is not an expression of unique psychological characteristics but a reflection of stereotyped, agitated tissue responses to stressful stimulus."

One of the most provocative case studies is offered by Ernst Halprin, who concludes an analysis of insurgencies in Latin America by stating that a "unified Central American revolutionary elite" has emerged that is working toward the goal of a "United Socialist Central America." Halprin sees this elite as far more dangerous than the Baader-Meinhof gang, the Weathermen, or the Italian Red Brigades, all of whose members he regards as pathological types. "These are not psychopaths acting out," he says, "but a political elite seriously and realistically engaged in the conquest of power, methodically and rationally employing terrorism as a means of struggle."

Although these books offer a wide array of views, opinions, and perspectives and, together with some of the work of Brian Jenkins and David Kupperman, would make a good library on terrorism and violence, it is unfortunate that some of the authors didn't focus on terrorism from the standpoint of what it can tell us about the con-

ditions under which individuals use violence, particularly about the role that organizational structure plays in it all. One of the remarkable aspects of our time is that organizations—be they terrorist groups, a secret police, or an army brigade—can get people to do so much. Perhaps we need to follow the terrorist's trail, not just to catch him but to find out what he can tell us—in his aloneness, his deviancy, his commitment to extraordinary behavior—about why violence can be so easily legitimized. For the terrorism that threatens us all may not be the bomb thrower, dangerous as he is, but the institutions that somehow legitimize acts of incredible destruction and cruelty.

THE SOURCES OF MODERN ATHEISM

by Marcel Neusch
(Paulist Press; 264 pp.; \$9.95)

Edward J. Curtin, Jr.

Does God exist? It's the old question, whose answer was once beyond dispute. For the few who gave it any thought there were the

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traditional "proofs"; for most there was unquestioning acceptance.

But the old social and symbolic worlds have collapsed before scientific and technological developments, and the traditional order of the West has yielded to a slow but seemingly irreversible secularization. The conscious and reasoned rejection of God that was once the arch-enemy of Christian orthodoxy has generally been replaced by "a way of life," as Neusch notes, "characterized by indifference and a practical rejection of God." Yet the question persists, acquiring urgency in an age of systematic doubt and relativity.

Neusch, an Assumptionist priest and philosopher at the seminary of Avignon, France, agrees with Nietzsche that God is dead for more and more people: They rarely give Him a thought; they live without reference to Him except perhaps at what Sartre called the "big moments" of life. Christian believers too have succumbed to the zeitgeist. Distrustful of rational discourse, they make no effort to prove God's existence, though they talk of him a great deal. Rather than engage the serious arguments of atheists, they are satisfied to proclaim their belief or bear witness to it, dismissing reason as an anachronism.

Neusch is convinced, however, that in light of the lucid and compelling arguments of serious atheists, words are indeed necessary, though admittedly not sufficient. This book is his fair-minded effort to initiate a dialogue with some of the most influential atheists of the past century: Feuerbach, Marx, Freud, Nietzsche, Sartre, Garaudy, and Ernst Bloch. In a series of interlocking, expository essays he both presents their arguments for atheism and points up the power of their reasoning. There is an irony here. Neusch assures us in his preface that the meaning of the human person—the answer to which the question of God depends—"is nonetheless beyond doubt: in its hidden depths the human entity is a passion for all that has become possible in Jesus Christ"; yet he makes a doubtful case, if an intellectually courageous one.

Certain themes emerge from the atheistic argument: God is an illusion produced by the imagination; He serves as a consolation in a cruel world; He curbs the will, reducing people to dependent children; He is an ideological construct of the ruling classes. All of these conceptions reduce the transcendent God of tradition into an immanent or human "god." In Feuerbach's words, they turn theology into philosophy. Neusch, nevertheless, presents these ideas clearly and fairly, pointing out both strengths and weaknesses. His approach is disarming: He

begins by agreeing. Atheistic thinkers were right to attack the idolatrous beliefs of conventional, Constantinian Christianity. "This criticism," he writes, referring to Sartre, "is really a service to the Christian." There are many travesties of true Christianity that Christians themselves must reject. Atheists have brought these to the fore. But there is another Christianity, the authentic and prophetic kind. It is upon this Christianity that Neusch rests his case.

It is, however, a weak case, confusing and contradictory. On the one hand, Neusch asserts that believers "in our day are quite ready to do without this God of the gaps" (an extremely dubious assertion); on the other, he repeatedly implies that belief in an answer-man God has been a defining characteristic of conventional Christianity. Are we therefore to assume that conventional Christianity is no longer the dominant form of Christianity? He could not legitimately say so, though it is obvious he wishes it were so. He tells us that "we live in a cultural environment in which atheism, both theoretical and practical, is becoming ever more widespread." Yet he also tells us that indifferent, unthinking unbelief rather than conscious and reasoned rejection is the predominant characteristic of the postatheistic age. Which is it? Are people thinking their way to atheism or accepting it through intellectual default? On these issues Neusch is confused, and he confounds the reader.

When he eventually gets to the question of God's existence, he has a hard time answering it affirmatively. "The God question will emerge from oblivion only if we first dispel our forgetfulness regarding our own existential questions." A dialogue with atheists, Neusch tells us, must revolve around a discourse about man. And this is not easy, for to discuss the meaning of man leads inevitably to the question of death, which brings us back to the question of God. "A few stammerings may be the best we can achieve," he writes. In the end it is not possible to "prove" the existence or nonexistence of God. "But is it not basically implied in the act of trust in the reality of the world? Is not 'faith in god' (in the broad sense of the phrase) which is a confident assent to an ultimate foundation and meaning—is it not a 'logical' prolongation of the fundamental trust we give to reality?" Yes, it is; he's right. It is not specifically Christian, but it is a plausible conclusion to a logical line of reasoning. Still, it passes over today's crisis.

Forty years ago George Orwell noted that one of the props of Western civilization—the belief in individual survival after death—had been knocked away and that the big

hole left by its disappearance deserved our attention. Belief in God in the West has always been tied to belief in life after death. Both beliefs were tied to a stable social order that could engender confidence in "reality." The traditional leap of faith was rooted in a viable social and cosmological belief system integral to people's experience of the world. That order is dead. Not only does death live, but nuclear terror has replaced the sacred canopy of reassurance. The problem is that the act of trust in the reality of the world is today's great problem. Though Neusch has done us a service in reintroducing the challenging thought of some leading atheists, he can take us no further. It is not his fault. —WV

GLOBAL STAKES: THE FUTURE OF HIGH TECHNOLOGY IN AMERICA
by James Botkin, Dan Dimancescu,
and Ray Stata

(Ballinger Publishing Co.; 237 pp.; \$17.50)

Albert L. Huebner

The United States is emerging from its worst recession since World War II. Overall statistics on the performance of industry during the slump are consistent with its severity: significantly lower output, high unemployment, and sluggish investment of capital.

A second look reveals a far more complex picture. While the automotive, steel, and farm-machinery industries were struggling to survive, most of the new high-technology companies experienced a boom, its limits chiefly imposed by the dead weight of the rest of the economy. And no matter how strong the recovery, heavy industry will never be the same; some of the jobs lost in autos and steel have been lost forever. The future belongs to the high-tech industries, and the future can be bright only if the growth of those industries is vigorous enough to offset declines elsewhere.

Global Stakes evaluates the prospects for transition from an industrial economy to what the authors call an information economy. They argue that effective international competition in high technology is a prerequisite for successful transition and that the U.S., for all its past technological leadership, is now in trouble.

The rise in high technology coincided with deteriorating standards in primary schools and high schools, which produced "children who for the first time were less well-educated than their parents." Math and science education has declined so badly that most students entering college do not have the option of pursuing a degree in, say,