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 The conscious and reasoned rejection of God that was once the arch-enemy of Christian orthodoxy has generally been replaced by "a way of life," as Neusch notes, "characterized by indifference and a practical rejection of God."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, Constantantine Christianity. "This criticism," he writes, referring to Sartre, is really a service to the Christian. In 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.

Fifty 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.

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. Huelner

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 autors 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,
economic course.

accelerates the downward spiral.

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development of high technology in the U.S.,
Japan, and Western Europe will only widen
the technological and economic gulf and
heighten existing tensions.

Global Stakes concludes with a collection
of short essays setting forth the views of
several government, business, and ac-
ademic leaders. All support the basic theme
of the book: Vigorous development of new-
wave technology is essential, the alternative
being loss of international competitiveness
and economic decline. The final essay by
Jean Saint-Geours, special advisor to the
prime minister of France, echoes this theme
but also raises some disturbing issues. The
labor force is already unemployed in most
of the industrial world. Robotics and similar
technologies tend to create less employment
than they eliminate in other sectors. Saint-
Geours expects unemployment to "grow
dramatically in France"—and France not
alone among industrial nations. As for the
Third World, catastrophic unemployment
is already producing widespread human
misery and political instability. Accelerated
development of high technology in the U.S.,
Japan, and Western Europe will only widen
the technological and economic gulf and
heighten existing tensions.

Global Stakes would be a better book if
it gave more attention to these critical is-
sues, but that failing should not be over-
emphasized. The authors have provided
information, insights, and analysis that will
be of inestimable value in the great debate
over the national and international problems
that high technology is likely to cause. What
is disturbing is that this debate has yet to
begin. [W]

**The Bells of the Kremlin**

by Arvo Tuominen

edited by Piltti Helakanen

(University Press of New England; xvi + 323
pp.; $20.00)

**The End of the Russian Land**

Commune 1905-1930

by Dorothy Atkinson

(Stanford University Press; xii + 457 pp.;
$29.50)

Thomas M. Magstadt

Arvo Tuominen is not exactly a household
name in the United States, but the last sur-
viving member of the Comintern Presidium
under Stalin—he died in 1981—may gain
at least a modicum of posthumous recog-
nition. Tuominen's claim to fame within
the world Communist movement was his
leadership role in the Finnish Communist
party from its beginnings in 1918—a role
he shared with Otto Kuusinen, the wily old
Bolshevik who was one of Stalin's chief
theoreticians during the tumult of the Great
Terror. Tuominen's ten-year political im-
prisonment in Finland in the 1920s also
undoubtedly raised his stock in the eyes of
the fawning true believers who surrounded
the demigod in the Kremlin.

Like Kuusinen, Tuominen managed to
live through the purges despite a proximity
to the dictator that was usually lethal. Like
Kuusinen, he witnessed the inside workings
of Stalin's awesome political machine. Un-
like Kuusinen and the rest of Stalin's hench-
men, however, Tuominen has left a public
record of his experiences. For obvious rea-
sions there are few first-hand accounts of
the personalities and pathologies that shaped
this extraordinary period in Soviet (and
world) history.

In 1939, Tuominen miraculously escaped
from the web of terror Stalin had woven
around all the leaders of foreign Communist
parties who were residing in the USSR
during those years. His friend and compatriot
Kuusinen was apparently instrumental in
extricating him. When Stalin was preparing
to attack Finland in 1940, Tuominen, by
now safely ensconced in Sweden, was called
upon to head a Soviet-installed quisling