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Review

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Book reviews

nationales Jahrbuch für Religionssoziologie (1966), and also leans in places on Luckmann's *The Invisible Religion*, while Chapter 7 draws on a little-known but brilliant piece in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (Spring 1967) on the varied reactions of the neo-orthodox and of the thorough-going secularizers to the crisis induced by secularization and pluralism.

The result is not an anthology but a sustained work, in which the relation of religion to world-building, to legitimation, to the central problem of meaning (above all in the face of death) and to alienation is stated in the first half, and then worked out historically in an account of the secularization process. In this account Berger stresses the dialectic character of religion *vis-à-vis* society and man, and the paradoxical *contribution* of Judaism and Christianity (especially Protestantism) to the secularizing process as well as to the possibility of *de-legitimation*. The radical transcendence of God disenchanting the empirical world, relativized the claims of divine kings, opened up a 'space' for history as the arena of divine and human action (thereby turning man into an individualized actor), contributed to ethical rationalization and later to wider processes of rationalization, and also made for a differentiation of the church from other institutions which defined an area of the profane eventually capable both of successive enlargements and of facilitating religious pluralism.

The crucial summary of this whole argument is to be found on pages 124–125. Berger there argues that religious legitimations have lost their plausibility for large segments of society, creating a crisis for social institutions as well as for individual biographies. Secular alternatives may partially legitimate social institutions and history but they are hopelessly inadequate at providing meaning and legitimation for individual crises, of which death is the most important. The special Christological theodicy lost plausibility since

it required man to see himself as sinful, while the collapse of alienated elements in the Christian world view released movements of thought which reappropriated society as a human product, but at a cost in existential anxiety, anomie—and revolution. The alienations of religion had staved off anomie and chaos at the price of masochism and the reification of eternal structures and immutable roles; the anomie of secularity staved off alienation and immutability at the price of anxiety and ultimate meaninglessness.

The rest of the book amplifies what the secularization process means for traditional religious contents and institutions. The key focus here is on the transition from a religious monopoly in reality-definition to religions competing on an open consumers' market. Here Berger draws on an analogy with free enterprise (i.e. the competing denominations) and thus relates ecumenism to cartelization (p. 134 et seq.). Presumably this is a rather naughty comparison, but nevertheless the account of increasingly similar bureaucratized hierarchies cooperating over common problems of economic rationality and in the sales promotion of marginally differentiated confessional heritages (varnished by psychological therapy) to variable clienteles is very nicely put together. Ecumenically minded clergy would certainly find it worth discussion. Broadly this particular sequence is parallel to the sequence of the book as a whole: from monopolies in belief to leaps of faith to mild religious 'preferences' cautiously expressed (even repressed) in a pluralistic, competitive situation.

I trust my student will read it: twice.

David Martin
L.S.E.

Against All Reason

Geoffrey Moorhouse Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1969 xiii + 436 pp. 63s.

Some writers who set out to understand the religious life get no further than a sense of awe. What often emerges is an

enraptured travelogue; an all-in monastic tour with the odd pause for divine contemplation. This attitude is partly a result of the Romantic movement, but another explanation can be found within the Catholic Church itself. As Mecklin has argued, the canonization process provides an important means of institutionalizing certain personality types and thereby shaping group values. In this sense, the population 'at risk' for sainthood contains a high proportion of Religious: hence their status as curiosities.

Moorhouse's book can best be described as a work of *verstehen*. While based on an empathetic 'reading into' the monastic life, it succeeds in retaining a degree of objectivity and criticism. In fact, more than a third of the book comprises an appendix containing 'The Usages of the Cistercian Monks of the Strict Observance'. This should provide a readily available source of data for organization theorists. Etzioni, for example, often cites the religious order as a limiting case of normative compliance, but there is little substantive research in this area.

Despite some minor factual inaccuracies—for instance, the link between Protestantism and Orthodoxy was not conceived 'two or three years back' (p. 14) but at least as early as 1716—there is an interesting description of Taizé and a useful synopsis of the main features of monastic development. The growth of Protestant monasticism over the past one hundred years is contrasted with the 'new dissolution' of Catholic religious communities. The latter is exemplified in the growth of secular institutes, the ageing population structure of many groups, and the decline in female vocations, particularly in the case of nineteenth-century foundations. Of these, Goddijn has laconically remarked that they have 'endeavoured to stifle the young women of the twentieth century into the corsets of the nineteenth'. There are valuable statistics here which are difficult to come by elsewhere, and Moorhouse comments critically on some of them.

The complexity and variety of the contemporary religious life and the changes which are rapidly occurring are all seen as evidence of a turning-point in its development, but perhaps it is significant that the three central chapters are on 'Prayer', 'Obedience', and 'Vocation'. The chapter on vocation contains long quotations from questionnaires which are more in the nature of case studies than previous theologically-oriented questionnaires of Religions. One nun refers to her convent as an 'experimental laboratory': Moorhouse's book suggests that sociologists might equally find it so.

Michael Hill
L.S.E.

The Doukhobors

George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic
Faber & Faber 1968
382 pp. 55s.

The complex and turbulent history of the Doukhobors has been partially discussed in a number of works which have ranged in style and intention from prescriptive analysis to sensationalistic journalism. Woodcock and Avakumovic attempt to shed an even and objective light on the whole history of the sect, and succeed admirably in this difficult task.

The Doukhobors emerged in the Ukraine in the middle of the eighteenth century. They believed that every man possessed some measure of the divine spirit, and should be guided by the promptings of the spirit alone. They were pacifist, intermittently communistic, and rejected the authority of the state, the priesthood, and the bible. Somewhat paradoxically, they submitted themselves to the authority of rulers who were drawn from a restricted lineage, and who were regarded as manifestations of the deity.

The Doukhobors' pacifism rendered them subject to persecution throughout the nineteenth century. On hearing of the sect, Tolstoy hailed them as true Christian communists and publicized