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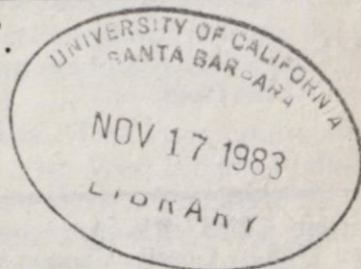
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.... AND THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST.



Stereotyping the Russians

ANTHONY UGOLNIK

Native Americans: Dancing on the Edge

JON MAGNUSON

The Grenada Invasion

Balancing Political Loyalties

Montreal Film Festival

The Christian CENTURY

VOLUME 100, NUMBER 33, NOVEMBER 9, 1983

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OF RUSSIAN extraction and of the Eastern Orthodox faith, **Anthony Ugolnik**, who calls himself "thoroughly American," is in a unique position to evaluate our perceptions of the Russians, especially in light of the recent downing of KAL Flight 007. Dr. Ugolnik is associate professor of English at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Jon Magnuson, who writes on an aspect of Native American spirituality, is Lutheran campus pastor at Oregon State University in Corvallis. He has written previous articles for the Century on related topics.

Discussing the seemingly endless problems among Jews, Muslims and Christians concerning Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock is **Thomas Idinopulos**, professor of religion at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

IN THIS ISSUE

In the editorial section, attorney and consultant **James Avery Joyce** reports from Geneva on the difficulties of verification in nuclear arms negotiations.

The ramifications of "Memogate" are pointed out by **J. Patrick Dobel**, associate professor of politics at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Dr. Dobel specializes in the history of political thought and the relation between ethics and politics.

Analyzing "Christian film criticism" at the recent Montreal Film Festival is **Gerald E. Forshey**, who teaches humanities at Malcolm X College in Chicago.

Next week: our fall book issue, featuring an interview with Frederick Buechner by Kenneth L. Gibble.

Credits: **Religious News Service**, p. 1020.

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Depardieu) whose sister committed suicide after being raped. He returns repeatedly to the spot, then heads for a nearby tavern to brood and wait for the rapist to slip and reveal himself. The dock worker's mission is complicated by his meeting with a slumming rich man, with whose sister (Nastassia Kinski) he falls in love.

The film's tone reminds one of a Tennessee Williams play as revised by Stéphane Mallarmé. Visually, the picture is dominated by reds and blues, as if these

colors had some abiding interest and significance in themselves. Beineix's visual style reminds one of Odilon Redon's 19th century paintings, but instead of presenting improbable beings forced to live in probability, he invests probable people with improbable psyches.

Despite such promising material, Beineix fails because his film presents only the most banal generalities about sex and class, revenge and hope; it is stylish but devoid of meaning. (R) *Triumph Films.*
Gerald E. Forshey.

BOOKS

The Way of the Sacred Tree.

By Edna Hong. Augsburg, 204 pp., \$8.95 paperback.

Edna Hong is a gifted writer, a skilled translator and a well-respected thinker whose distinguished career, together with that of her husband Howard, has enhanced the reputation of highly regarded St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. Until now the Hong's have been best known for their monumental translation of the complete works of Søren Kierkegaard. In *The Way of the Sacred Tree*, Edna Hong has turned to a new subject, the story of the Dakota Indians in the early 19th century (when many Scandinavian immigrants came onto the Dakota territory). It is a fresh subject, yet one with which she has been familiar for many years. She has been collecting stories about the Native Americans and their contact with white immigrants in order to be able to tell them to her grandchildren, around the campfire in the wilderness area of northern Minnesota during the summer. In preparation for this book, Hong also conducted extensive research in the archives of the historical societies in Minnesota and South Dakota, and consulted with experts on the subject.

The Way of the Sacred Tree is a story of the Dakota tribe told through the eyes of Kaduza and his family. Hong captures the feel of Native American life (subjectivity being truth, as Kierkegaard attested, in matters of religion and ethics), and portrays attitudes toward Native Americans that were typical of the white settlers at the time. She proposes ways that such attitudes can be affected and, yes, transformed by the Christian gospel. Thus, when Kaduza asks one of his people why he is not making war on the white men, suspecting that the reason may be because he is married to a white woman, he is given the following reply: "I love my wife, but she is not the reason I am not making war on the white men. My reason is Jesus Christ. He is my brother. He says all men are brothers." And when a white missionary visits the prison where many of the Dakota tribe are being held captive, he tells them that "their chains are not the worst chains that hold them," because they are also "bound in the chains of sin." When

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Christianized Dakotas await death by hanging, they say to the witnesses, "Do not mourn for us. Let your tears be tears of joy, for this is not a day of defeat but a day of victory. We have made our peace with God and now go to be with him forever."

The Way of the Sacred Tree is a valiant attempt to identify and give fitting expression to those intrinsic values of Native American culture that have remained obscure for too many generations. Much of it is compelling, particularly the Dakotas' conversation about the attitudes of the white settlers. But the book is fiction, and its author has exercised her right to have it come out the way she wants. The book sometimes creates the impression that the best thing for Native Americans is conversion to Christianity. In the end, the story of Kaduza and his family is only the subplot of *The Way of the Sacred Tree*. The plot concerns the adjustment of Christian sensibility to the presence of the Dakota people. And, as Hong's project eloquently testifies, that adjustment is still occurring.

Walter Capps.

Living Issues in Ethics.

By Richard T. Nolan and Frank G. Kirkpatrick. Wadsworth, 387 pp., \$14.95.

In 1959 at a fashionable New England college I introduced a course with what I believed to be an engaging title: "Problems in Christian Ethics." It quickly became very popular, probably because the students thought it might provide a last-gasp answer to the enormous problems raised by the changing world of the '50s and '60s.

For both professor and students, the course provided a wonderful opportunity to work out one's point of view on ethical issues. But the major pedagogical stumbling block came in attempting to assign

appropriate readings for the juicy subject matter. I either assigned the students a dozen different books to cover the course material, or I prohibited them from reading anything, insisting that the course's substantive content would come from the lectures. Now, after all these years, the problem has been solved. *Living Issues in Ethics*, a new book by Richard T. Nolan and Frank G. Kirkpatrick, fulfills admirably the need for a one-volume text discussing the basic problems in ethics and dealing with them in both a theoretical and a practical way. It is a solid book, totally contemporary and aware of the latest developments in Christian ethical thinking.

In a lucid and engaging way, the authors present the following topics: "The Search for a Moral Philosophy," "Personal Identity and Fulfillment," "Health and Sexuality" and "Social Ethics." They engage the reader in subject matter ranging from "The Ingredients of a Moral Philosophy" to an insightful rendering of the history of that philosophy, as well as problems of femininity, varieties of love, marriage and the family, medical ethics, moral sexual conduct, obligations of the political order, the socialist alternative, the demand for expression versus the right to privacy, the dilemmas of dissent, sexual justice, energy and ecology, "life-boat" ethics, "just-war" theory, and many, many others. Each chapter contains a review and a section on suggested readings.

The book is so good that I plan to use it in next year's "Problems in Christian Ethics."

William A. Johnson.

RECENT ARRIVALS

Luther in Mid-Career—1521-1530. By Heinrich Bornkamm. Fortress, 709 pp., \$44.95.

Just in time for Luther's 500th birthday, Fortress plops a two-pound package of expensive but valuable pages on the desks of those who want to go beyond the superficial. Bornkamm was one of the great Luther scholars of his day, a historian who knew theology and wrote well. He died in 1977, but daughter Karin, a Bielefeld University historian, edited and completed the work. Translator E. Theodore

ALL FAITHFUL PEOPLE

Change and Continuity in Middletown's Religion

Theodore Caplow,
Howard M. Bahr, and
Bruce Chadwick

with Dwight W. Hoover,
Laurence A. Martin, Joseph
B. Tamney, and Margaret
Holmes Williamson

This book reports on the changes in religious life that have taken place in "Middletown" in the fifty years since this Midwestern community was first immortalized by the Lynds. The research team—assessing such factors as number of churches per capita, church attendance, and belief in an afterlife—conclude that religion seems to have become more, rather than less, important in Middletown since 1929.
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Reviewers

Gerald E. Forshey is associate professor of humanities and philosophy at Malcolm X College in Chicago. Walter Capps is professor in the Institute for Religious Studies at the University of California in Santa Barbara. William A. Johnson is canon theologian at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine in New York City.