

Dr Cragg, formerly assistant Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, and an Islamicist, begins with a rather vague account of the Zionist movement, of the phases of Jewish settlement in Palestine, and of the State of Israel. He then counterposes the Palestinian tragedy, in a chapter punctuated by long cullings from the Palestinian poets. The book moves into a discussion of the paradoxes generated by Zionist fulfillment in Israel: Zionism's attempt to liquidate the Jewish diaspora, and Israel's dependence on the diaspora as a going concern; the ambivalent relationship between Zionism and Judaism; and the way in which Palestinianism mirrors Zionism. Dr Cragg then examines the Masada image of the holocaust trauma in Israel's struggle for survival. In conclusion, he asks whether there might not be a Palestinian vocation of suffering, the dignified and magnanimous acceptance of which could evoke Israel's conscience and provide a spiritual resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Dr Cragg relies heavily on a number of very general Zionist works, but doesn't seem to have consulted any serious analytical literature, such as Walter Laquer's definitive *A History of Zionism* (N.Y. Schocken, 1976). Nor is any Palestinian equivalent referred to. The book is additionally permeated by a deep suspicion of the Arab world. We are informed, for instance, that "the Arab mind is well used to nourishing itself on visualized situations . . . and using the imagination to dream their actuality" (p 61) and that "the Arab, it has been said by one of them, 'wages his wars on the battlefield of rhetoric' ". The Eurocentricity implied by this antipathy towards the "Arab mentality" dictates more sympathy for the essentially European ideology than for the "oriental" Palestinian cause.

Dr Cragg gives oriental Jews in Israel, nearly 45% of the economically active Jewish population of Israel in 1977, a mere passing mention. Surely the failure of European-immigrant-dominated Zionism to cater to the needs of oriental Jews

in Israel, and their consequent economic and cultural alienation, is a major paradox of Zionism. And surely the continuing forced proletarianisation of the Palestinian peasantry under Israeli rule ought to be examined as a major determinant of Palestinian consciousness and the character of its resistance to Zionism. The growing dependence of the Zionist State on cheap Palestinian labour, quite at odds with the classical Zionist ideology of labour by Jews for Jews, is yet another striking paradox not mentioned.

The book fails to note the existence of the Zionist and anti-Zionist Jewish Left in Israel, nor does it mention the "Peace Now" movement, initiated and led by young Israeli Army reserve officers, under whose aegis thousands of Jewish Israelis demonstrated for peace before Sadat's peace initiative had been dreamed of. The Land Day demonstrations in March 1976, a landmark in the history of popular Palestinian resistance to Zionism within Israel itself and the Occupied Territories, and the Palestinian national consciousness of "Israeli Arabs" which Land Day demonstrated, are also not deemed worthy of mention. In writing about the P.L.O., Dr Cragg presents a caricature – a monolithic, homogeneous organisation with a pathological hatred of Jews. The P.L.O. in fact comprehends a variety of organisations holding various attitudes towards Jews living in Palestine, the nuances of which bear examination.

By far the finest sections of the book are those dealing with the ambivalent relation of Zionism to Judaism, and with the tension created by the biblical loyalties of Arab Christianity on the one hand, and the fact that the descendants of the biblical heroes confront it as alien conquerors. The few pages devoted to the discussion of these issues, however, do not moderate the major shortcomings of the book as a whole – its extreme abstraction, the dearth of concrete data, and the highly significant aspects of Jewish life in Israel and of Palestinian life simply not mentioned.

I couldn't help feeling that the real

protagonists of the drama Dr Cragg discusses – Israeli Jews and Palestinians made of flesh and blood, leading concrete lives and having complex and varied class-interests – bear no resemblance to the abstract “spiritual” creatures delineated in the

book. And the proposed solution of the problem is, not unlike the hypothetical “Arab mentality”, a solution feasible “on the battlefields of rhetoric”, and nowhere else.

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**CHRIST IN A CHANGING WORLD** by Tom F Driver. *SCM Press, 1981. pp xi + 183*  
**£5.95.**

In this book Tom F Driver (who is Paul J Tillich Professor at Union Theological Seminary, New York) challenges the traditional Christian beliefs that Christ was a final revelation of God; that God achieved man's salvation once for all through Christ; and that Christ is the centre, model and norm for humanity. Driver is therefore obliged to reject classical christology. His two main reasons for rejecting it are, in my opinion, invalid. First, he maintains that it entails morally reprehensible attitudes such as anti-semitism and anti-feminism. But no such entailment exists. On the contrary a true understanding of the Incarnation and of Christ's virginal conception requires attitudes that are opposite to those that Driver rightly deplores. Secondly, Driver claims that the relativism characteristic of our age renders traditional christology unacceptable. 'Relativism' is a complex idea that Driver does not examine with sufficient care; but if it is taken to signify the view that an absolutely unique and normative revelation of God within history is impossible it must be rejected as an assumption that conflicts totally with the Christian message in its original form. Chiefly I find Driver's own christology inadequate and, moreover, perplexing. This is what he says on p 165; 'We are not concerned with a singular Christ who came "once for all" and whose claims are therefore universal, essentially the same for the church and the world and for all times and places. We are concerned with many Christs. There are many because Christ is the human form of actual encounters between God and the world'. On this view

the sheer identity of Christ considered merely as a human individual disappears.

Nevertheless, this book has value and significance in three respects. First, it reminds us that Christ is not absolute in the sense that he gave rules that solve all moral problems in all circumstances, or in the sense that we can achieve perfection by re-enacting his life (which would be manifestly impossible). Christ is absolute primarily in the sense that the hypostatic union conferred on his humanity a permanent relation with God that is absolutely unique and unsurpassable. Secondly, this book is valuable in reminding us that the claim for Christ as one who is normative for humanity cannot be substantiated unless we take full account of his saving work, not only in the past, but also in the present and the future. These two truths hang together. Thus *imitatio Christi* consists, not merely in following (in so far as this is possible) the example set by the human Jesus in his past life on earth, but also, and even more, in being transformed by him in the present through the Holy Spirit who inspires us with the hope of achieving perfection in the life to come. Yet the book is chiefly significant for showing how far human ingenuity can go in reconstructing christology (and thereby Christianity) in order to meet what are thought to be our moral needs in the light of distinctively modern presuppositions (such as those indicated by the terms 'relativism' and 'pluralism') that we are thought to hold.

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