tem are presented clearly and concisely. The consequences of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (the design and passage of which owes much to the author) are carefully laid out. So too are the problems the 1980 act did not solve, for example, the specialist versus generalist controversy, the role of families, the public image. Much material is presented in tabular form, and some of this—like the career sketches offered in the introduction and the "Dilemmas of Personnel System Design" after chapter four—adds a valuable third dimension to the work. Because of its comprehensive and systematic approach, the book will be required reading for many years for anyone involved in thought, talk, or action on this subject.

Staffing for Foreign Affairs also contains a number of important insights, most notably that, however great the diversity of the tasks assigned to those in the foreign affairs field, their principal difference lies in whether they are carried out overseas or in Washington. This distinction cannot fail to have a major impact on the whole pattern of selection, training, assignment, and promotion that is at the heart of any personnel system.

Mr. Bacchus's ideal for overseas work is not much different from that of the established Foreign Service. He emphasizes traditional diplomatic skills, although he does point out that, ironically, just as the Foreign Service's stress on the diplomat as manager was reaching its peak, the size of U.S programs to be managed was decreasing. His description of what is required of Washington's foreign affairs bureaucrats focuses on the "new issues agenda." For a role model he chooses the "policy synthesizer"—one who is adept at blending all the different interests within the Executive's expanded foreign affairs community *and* public and congressional concerns, thus producing an effective and defensible foreign policy.

The Foreign Service Act of 1980, with its Foreign Service/Civil Service system, is seen by the author as a major step toward a personnel system designed to meet this dual need. First, it provides for greater continuity in Washington and for increased specialization among those who work in Washington and overseas; and it makes possible, although it does not guarantee, a personnel management system run by personnel professionals.

Much of this makes eminent good sense. But before we are able to pass final judgment on who and what our foreign affairs professionals should be, we need another book—one on the same subject by an overseas professional. Mr. Bacchus's view is primarily from Washington, and Washington is only half of the foreign affairs equation. The overseas half has a point of view too, and this is not well represented in the present volume.

This matter of the key roles in foreign affairs and the kind of person best fitted to play them brings us to an argument that parallels the one about career professionals versus political appointees as ambassadors. No one denies that the ideal is to combine knowledge of the United States, its interests and policies, with skill and experience in dealing with foreign peoples and problems. Personifications of the ideal are rare, however, and the real question is whether it is easier to teach politicians about foreigners or professional diplomats about America.

The answer, of course, varies with the people involved. You can teach some politicians (and "policy synthesizers") about foreigners and some professional diplomats (and other expatriates) about America. Others you cannot. But you can never—if our foreign policy is to have any rationality and consistency at all— have two separate groups going their own way, one synthesizing in Washington and one persuading and negotiating in the field. The idea that this kind of personnel approach, even when modified to provide for exchange and integration, is desirable grows out of the false concept of the nature of policy-making held, often understandably, by those who feel themselves closest to and most keenly aware of that most sacrosanct of government functions.

Today, policy has the absolutist flavor that theology had in the Middle Ages. National decisions are assumed to be the product of an inspired but rational structure crowning the public cosmology. Once pronounced by the learned doctors, policy can be readily carried out by well-trained technicians and specialists; in medieval terms, by parish priests, wandering friars, and cloistered monks. But then a Francis of Assisi, a Peter the Hermit, or a Martin Luther springs up, or a Black Death, Mongol invasion, or industrial revolution comes along and it becomes quickly apparent how ephemeral and transitory is established theology/policy. The churches finally learned that the word and the act are inseparable; it's time governments did too. If Foreign Service Officers would benefit from a knowlege of how hard it is for the State Department to respond to congressmen who, in turn, must respond to their constituents, so too would Washington policy synthesizers benefit from a knowledge of the derision, incredulity, and hostility with which many of their high-tech syntheses are greeted around the world.

However, Mr. Bacchus cannot be faulted for not having written a different book. What he did produce is comprehensive, generally balanced, and thoughtful. All Americans and non-Americans interested in how we carry on our foreign affairs will benefit from it—and most particularly our career diplomats. :WV

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE MODERN WORLD
edited by Peter Merkl and Ninian Smart
(New York University Press; ix + 276 pp.; $30.00)

John E. Becker

Although the editors express the hope that this book will be a "major crossing" of the artificial boundaries between two disciplines, the boundaries seem for the most part to remain intact. The "ground-breaking" essays of the first section, with the exception of Raimundo Panikkar's "Religion or Politics: The Western Dilemma," are sketchy, salting discussions of nationalism with a few loosely used religious terms. Panikkar posits an existential dilemma: "Religion without politics becomes uninteresting, just as politics without religion turns irrelevant." Panikkar likes neologisms, "sempeternity," and "advaitic," but his discussion is stimulating and en-

"Bertram, who do you know who would send us an un-recycled Christmas card?"

PUNCH

courages us to go on to read section II: "Of Particular Tribes and Mortal Gods."

We are immediately waylaid by Gary Lease's discussion of "The Origins of National Socialism." He cites an earlier article in which he proposed "a description and definition of religion that culminated in the statement that religion represents 'the ultimate act of an imperialistic totalitarianism which must claim for itself validity for all reality' " He is, as of this essay, unrepentant: "Religion and nationalism in their final apex and development are the same." At this point it is hard to hope for much insight from the rest of the book. There are essays of widely varying interest on Ireland, Poland, Japan, Pakistan, and Israel. Each is somewhat self-enclosed, with its own approach, without any reference points that might tempt comparison. One feels that not only are the boundaries between disciplines intact, but between scholars as well.

What do any of these writers have to do with one another other than the wish to participate in a symposium? Barbara Metcalf's essay on Pakistan seems the most informative, and David Biale's "Mysticism and Politics in Modern Israel" has an urgency for Americans, with their profound involvement with the State of Israel and their puzzled detachment from the "Gush Emunim's blithe neglect of the Arabs in the occupied territories." "There is no doubt," says Biale, "that the leaders of the Gush Emunim believe that if Jews settle throughout the land of Israel, the groundwork will be laid for the Messianic peace with Israel's Arab neighbors."

The final section, "Of Human Loyalty and Alienation," takes a broader view. Leonard Greenspoon explains the Canaanite roots of the warrior God of Israel and points out that the insistence on God's battling for Israel displaces the warrior-hero myths of other cultures. Edward Linenthal's essay on the transformation of the American soldier from moral hero to murderer by the vision of Mylai brings the book home to us, at last. Kees Bolle concludes the collection with an essay on materialism, using Marx as simply an archetype of a basic Western myth: The quality of life is completely determined by its material conditions. He then broadens our perspective, showing that this is becoming a worldwide myth, persisting, as does Marxism, in spite of all contrary evidence and all scientific scrutiny. Unfortunately, though these latter essays finally begin to approach the topic of the book, they float like clouds above the rest, unattached, interesting in themselves but of little help in getting the rest of the book into some sort of focus. **WV**

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