

whom secrets had been revealed in the last times. He identified with 'the priests and religious leaders of these ancient civilisations' who 'were also their scientists and philosophers. They had shunned subjective approaches to a knowledge of God, the trance-like states in which direct communion with divinity was supposed to be attained. . . . Their fervent belief in one God had led them to scrutinise the operation of things on earth and the movement of the stars in the heavens, and to record their observations in precious documents which, though marred by time, still held secreted within them some of

the fundamental truths discoverable about God's creation'. But Polytheism 'accepted the idea of contrary and contradictory causes in nature which it associated with false gods'. In the coming reign of Christ his saints would rule with him over mortal men. They would roam about the stars and appear on earth only at intervals, but they would direct the course of history in the millenium. This was perhaps a prophecy of the domination of the world by intelligent scientists with a Protestant ethic, but Newton made a mistake in identifying this with the reign of Christ.

GEORGE EVERY

A SEVENTH MAN, by John Berger and Jean Mohr. *Penguin*, 1975. 238 pp. including some 160 photos. £1.

It is difficult to enter another person's world, to see how it feels and its facts are constructed. This book does that. It gives us something of the experience of a particular kind of male migrant worker in Europe—the peasant from one European country who finds work in the urban centres of another.

There is no work for him at home. Being enterprising, he goes abroad to save enough to change his life on his return. Medically examined before entry to see if he is strong and healthy enough, he will do the unpopular manual work and probably live in a kind of barracks: 'You could call us the niggers of Europe'.

This is a convenient situation. A migrant of this kind is an ideal component for capitalism, part of a labour force that can be brought in or sent home as required. Rotated with his fellows, his only function is to work: his family have been left behind, he comes ready-made, and in sickness and old age will again be the responsibility of his own country. Most of the money sent home finds its way back in one way or another—the poorer countries are in a permanent state of economic dependence. Troublesome migrants can be sent home and receive little support from the trade unions—they are regarded as inferior by the indigenous population.

The migrants are not encouraged to

settle permanently. They do not want to anyway. Their values and hopes belong to the past they remember and the future they want to make when they return. The present has been blocked out for them. They are not recognised as anything now, not even as people making sacrifices. They have no life but work.

When the migrant finally returns home the situation there will not have changed. There will still be no work for him, he has learnt no skills and his experience is of no use in the village. In a few years' time he or one of his family will have to go abroad again.

These are the bones of the situation this book describes with insight and subtlety. The text (as readers of John Berger would expect) is very fine: a mixture of imagination, crisp statements, figures and quotations. The photographs too (mostly by Jean Mohr) speak expressively: we are made to realise that a picture of a Yugoslav boy brings him to us but defines his absence for his migrant father. Looking at these pictures and the descriptions of the metropolis and what is happening in it makes our world seem strange and alien. We are living in a kind of dream (or nightmare) from which the authors of this book want us to wake up, by showing how what has become our normal world uses and denies not only the migrant but us as well.

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