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The Inscrutable West: What Does The West Want?

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testimony given by the first American bishops to the respect and affection with which many parishes received back their Spanish pastors.

It would of course be equally a prejudgment of the case to take the position that since the Catholic Church is a divine institution, and since Spain brought the Catholic Church to the Philippines, there could have been nothing wrong with the Spanish clergy or with their actual conduct of affairs before or during the Revolution, and that even to suggest the possibility of the contrary is not only an act of black ingratitude to Spain but treason to the Church itself. The fallacy of such an argument is obvious.

The chapter which Prof. Majul devotes to the actual debate on the church-state question at Malolos is one of the best in the book. His analysis of the various arguments proposed in the context of the political theories of the proponents can scarcely be bettered. The present reader found the entire work most stimulating, and hopes that Prof. Majul himself or other scholars will develop some of the exciting possibilities which it opens up.

H. DE LA COSTA

THE INSCRUTABLE WEST

WHAT DOES THE WEST WANT? By George Catlin. Phoenix House. London. 1957. Pp. 150.

IT is perfectly clear what kind of a world the communists want. But what kind of a world does the West want? There seems to be considerable doubt on this point even among westerners themselves—a weakness that may well prove fatal; for as Mr. Catlin observes, “we cannot long remain in competition against those who know their minds, if we do not.”

Mr. Catlin readily concedes that there is little hope of an agreed answer if the problem is posed at the level of ultimate ethical values. Ever since the break-up of medieval unity the

diversity of opinion in the West as to the final meaning of man and the universe—and even as to whether man and the universe have a final meaning—has grown to such an extent as to become well-nigh irreconcilable. However, he believes that general agreement exists, or at any rate can be worked out, with reference to a broad political objective; that is, the kind of political order which western men conceive to be necessary in order to achieve or preserve their ultimate values—whatever these values may turn out to be. Admittedly a pragmatic and logically unsatisfactory way of going about it, but under the circumstances the only obviously feasible one.

We must, then, try to determine what Mr. Catlin calls “the political means to any ends.” Of these, the most generally acceptable would seem to be the maintenance of civil peace, internal and external; for without peace, particularly if the alternative to peace is a nuclear war, any further objective which civil society may have would be impossible of attainment. This Mr. Catlin conceives to be the “agreed function” of the state, and on this assumption he is able to restate the problem thus: “In the present stage of technical and military development, and short of a war of conquest to set up a *pax Sovietica* or *pax Atlantica*, before which war the imagination boggles, the issue would seem to be one of ways and means of Peaceful Coexistence of Governments—or is it of Peoples?—perhaps accompanied . . . by Peaceful Change. What are the chances of this, and what are the conditions?”

Is such peaceful coexistence possible between the western nations and the communist countries? Mr. Catlin distinguishes the question into four “separable issues,” *viz.*, coexistence with (a) communism in general, (b) specific Marx-Leninist communism, (c) Soviet Russian policy as it is, and (d) Soviet Russian policy as it might be. He feels “optimistic” about (a) and (d), not optimistic about (b) and (c).

Mr. Catlin’s optimism about (a) is based on his understanding of communism in general as simply “a pattern of living in which most goods are held in common and so enjoyed.” He considers this kind of communism “entirely respectable,” and points to its successful practice by monastic communities and certain North American tribes. Hence, he sees no indisputable objection to communism in general provided only it be voluntarily embraced. One fails to see the force of this reasoning. Mr. Catlin presum-

ably means *state* communism; but what warrant have we for concluding that because religious or primitive communities are able to practice communism successfully, communism can be successfully established in a modern state, even on a voluntary basis?

Mr. Catlin is on safer ground when he points out that Marx-Leninist communism is "a bird of a different feather." It is not merely an economic system but a view of life, a view of life which justifies and indeed demands a ruthless totalitarianism with which the West cannot possibly come to terms. Since this is the form of communism practiced by Soviet Russia, Mr. Catlin finds little prospect of a stable long-term settlement between Soviet Russia and the West as long as Russian policy is controlled by men who think and act in the full Marx-Leninist tradition. However, he does not (or did not at the time of writing) think that this would always be the case. There was a possibility that the Red Army might have different ideas; that if officers like Zhukov were given a greater say in the framing of Soviet policy, a peace between Russia and the West might be negotiated which would not be merely a cold war. Apparently, Mr. Krushchev thought so too, with the result that General Zhukov has, rather quickly, been "retired."

But if peaceful coexistence between the West and Russia is not feasible at the present time, what remains? The cold war remains. What are the objectives in this war? As far as the West is concerned, and quite possibly Russia too, the principal objective is to prevent a shooting war, because in a shooting war with nuclear warheads it is quite obvious that nobody would win. In order to prevent a shooting war, the West must in Mr. Catlin's view organize a political order which would (a) deter Soviet Russia from attempting aggression and (b) convince Asian nations to join it.

With regard to (a) Mr. Catlin feels that the western nations cannot present a sufficiently solid front against communist aggression unless they establish some kind of federal supra-national government with effective police powers. To do so they will have to abandon finally and irrevocably the state system which took shape in Europe after the Reformation, along with its concomitant doctrine of unlimited state sovereignty. This is a tall order, but Mr. Catlin apparently believes that it can be done.

Of greater interest to us in this part of the world is what Mr. Catlin proposes the West should do to get the peoples of Asia to throw in their lot with the commonwealth of free nations rather than with the communist bloc. He begins with the observation that the struggle between Russia and the West for Asia is first and foremost a conflict of *ideas*, a "battle for the minds of men." But if this is the case, then we cannot limit the discussion to the realm of "political means to any ends"; we must of necessity discuss the ends themselves. Mr. Catlin must transcend the terms of his problem. This, much to his credit, he cheerfully proceeds to do.

Imperialism—or, more precisely, the hearty detestation which Asians have rightly or wrongly conceived against the economic and political domination exercised by the "imperialist" nations in Asia during the past three centuries—places the West under an initial disadvantage. Mr. Catlin would have the West wipe out this disadvantage by an unequivocal and effective renunciation of all imperialist aims. Such a renunciation implies, necessarily, recognition of the equality of all men, irrespective of race and color.

But what does equality mean? What is the precise construction that must be put on that noble if scarcely self-evident statement that "all men are created equal"? After a highly stimulating discussion of this problem, Mr. Catlin concludes that what "equality" really means or ought to mean is not egalitarianism but brotherhood—a brotherhood which, while recognizing natural differences and inequalities between man and man, seeks to provide equal opportunities for all within a policy held together by a common set of values.

Here we are back again, therefore, to the problem of final values. It is inescapable. It must be faced. What makes brothers? What shall make them live as brothers? What is man for? What his first beginning and his last end?

It is perhaps the principal value of Mr. Catlin's essay that it demonstrates the essential weakness, and indeed the impossibility, of a merely political solution to the basic problems confronting East and West.