

BOOK REVIEWS

COMMUNISM AND THE CONSCIENCE OF THE WEST. By Fulton J. Sheen, Garden City Books, Garden City, New York.

Recently, Roman Catholic Bishop Fulton J. Sheen made his debut on television. His message as *TIME* magazine puts it: "man yearns for life, truth, and love. The human form of these things are imperfect, ephemeral. But in God, man finds pure life, pure truth, pure love—that is the definition of God." When one reads any of Bishop Sheen's written works, he does not have to go very far to note that what he has read might have as well come forth from the Monsignor's lip's in ordinary conversation. His simplicity of thought, facility of expression, and irrefutable logic are consistently maintained in his simplest utterances and in his more serious writings, making immediately evident the undoubted sincerity and conviction which characterizes the man himself.

In "Communism and the Conscience of the West," this all the more becomes apparent. In his prefatory remarks, the one idea in this book, he says is "that the philosophy of communism and to some extent the Revolution of Communism are on the conscience of the Western world." A singular proposition is laid before the reader, whose acceptance or rejection becomes immaterial from the viewpoint of whether to continue reading the book or not, i.e., the reader has to proceed to find out the outcome of which can be foreseen. Here, distinction has to be made. One with a preconceived idea of the subject will discover the same complemented or refuted. One who is entirely ignorant and thus devoid of any formed opinion, will in effect be subjected to a new philosophy. But "Communism and the Conscience of the West" does not only deal with the present condition obtaining in the Western World, for then, Bishop Sheen's work would be limited in sphere and afford little comprehension to those lacking the proper background with respect to its history, philosophy and basic defects. The decline of historical liberalism, and the rise of the antireligious spirit which comprises Chapter I of the book, covers the period from the Scripture to the present Korean conflict. It however, scarcely contains any dates. As a matter of fact, only three dates

appear, 1834, 1842, and 1917, none of which refer to any significant event but only in reference to the time a book was written, or a warning was made or a statement advanced. In this respect, the author becomes a novel historian, although that is not so if we are to consider that he is a philosopher first. Thus, one does not lose sight of the rise and fall of certain schools of thought in which the author has found a suitable and appropriate background for the subsequent chapters.

The question is asked—"Is Communism the enemy of the Western World?" In answer to the question, Bishop Sheen found it necessary to make a distinction. What is meant by Western civilization? "It may mean, first of all, Christian civilization with its emphasis on human rights as an inalienable gift of God, its stress on the value and dignity of the human person because fashioned after the Divine Image, its affirmation of liberty as a derivative of the spirit and intelligible only within law and not outside of it, and finally the sacramental use of creation aided by redemptive grace to attain the glorious liberty of God. On the other hand, Western civilization may mean our materialistic, bourgeois, capitalistic civilization descended in part from the French Revolution, which affirms that man is only a highly evolved economic animal, that evil is due to ignorance and can be cured by education, that the primary purpose of man is either to acquire wealth or enjoy pleasure." Communism is an enemy of the first, but not the second to which it is related, as putrefaction is to disease. The author adds that Communism is not to be feared "just because it is anti-God, but because we are God-less; not because it is strong, but because we are weak, for if we were under God, then who can conquer us?"

To answer many other questions or explain the nature and state of things, an attitude, a philosophy, a scheme, a defense, in short in all propositions, Bishop Sheen has resorted to the same process of thought—a distinction is made if and when necessary, the premises be analyzed and conclusions drawn therefrom, strictly in accordance with the scholastic philosophy and logic advocated by the Western clergy.

Bishop Sheen, however, is not content with the presentation of problems and questions. He has dealt at length in the second half of the book on the solution to the problem of Communism. Chapter Six—"How to Meet Communism" is perhaps the most important part of the book viewed from a practical standpoint. Since Communism is a philosophy of life, it permeates all forms of human endeavor, and here, the author saw it fit to particularize,—to face Communism and devise remedies against it in its political, economic, educational, spiritual and moral aspects. The following excerpt is an example of his treatment of "profit sharing between capital and labor":

"Labor would be within its rights in making such demands, because hired labor has a double aspect: individual and social. It has an individual character because John Smith labors and John Smith is tired at the end of a day. But labor has a social side, because John Smith has helped to create social wealth in conjunction with other workers. He is part of a combination of finance, labor and management. For his individual contribution, he should receive a living wage sufficient to support a family, and for his social contribution, his constantly increasing contribution to the common good, he ought to receive a share in the wealth he helps to create. Wages compensate him for his contribution by the clock; but he receives no recompense either for his co-operation with capital and management in the production of new wealth, or for his contribution to the common good. This could be remedied by giving the workers some share in the profits, management and ownership of the industry. Profit sharing should not be in the shape of a bonus given at Christmas, which is paternalistic; but an agreement by which employees will become participating shareholders should be a normal and legitimate feature of the contract of employment so as to make the worker more a partner than a servant. This dignifying of the worker has been inhibited generally in two ways: by the slowness of capitalists to perceive its merit before the government began taking excess profits to pour through bureaucracies in which neither capital nor labor shares. Also, by a lack of statesmanship on the part of labor leaders who constantly demand more and more and more, which may kill the goose that laid the capitalistic egg, instead of seeking the more flexible, realistic and sounder principle of participating in earnings."

Bishop Sheen bids the reader to "heed the heavenly recall to the spirit" in the last chapter in "Our Lady of Fatima and Russia." Unless one disbelieves in God, many will praise this chapter for the undeniable strength of compulsion. To clergymen and laymen, politicians and businessmen, "Communism and the Conscience of the West" is a must, not as a reference, nor as a guide, but as a "crusader" like its author.

Adelfo Maceda

COMMENTARIES ON THE REVISED PENAL CODE. By Guillermo Guevara. 4th ed. Filipino Book Dealers Assn. Pp. 887. P25.50.

Readers and students of law are agreed in one unanimous opinion—that the field of textbook commentaries on the law has

been more than adequately covered. During the last 4 or 5 years, a surprising plethora of textbooks dealing with the subject of law has inundated the legal field, so much so that the average student has, understandably, learned not to accept these books at more than their face value.

One particular branch of Philippine law has not proved to be an exception to this state of affairs. In the field of Criminal Law, a number of authors have attempted to "enrich", as they are wont to say, the field of legal jurisprudence with their golden nuggets of wisdom. All this is not to say that these authors fall short of their avowed aim, but the point is that one cannot help but notice that the law student invariably approaches a new textbook with varying degrees of cynicism and wariness.

However, there are some noteworthy books on Criminal Law which one can truthfully say deserve the usual words of praise and recommendation inevitably found in the foreword. One such book is Judge Guillermo Guevara's Commentaries on the Revised Penal Code.

The author has been a judge of the Court of First Instance and a prosecuting attorney, and at present is a professor of Criminal Law and criminology and a law practitioner. He is also a member of the committee on the revision of the Penal Code. Out of this fourfold source, the experience gained by the author has resulted in this eminent work on Criminal Law.

This book is a work of much care and study. The style is severely simple but scholarly. In the arrangement of its material, the author's aim is toward clarity and conciseness. There is none of the dogmatic or ornate manner in the author's exposition.

The author starts with a particular provision, then proceeds with an exhaustive and analytical discussion of the provision, citing authoritative decisions of the Supreme Court and of the Court of Appeals illustrating the provision in point. The discussion is comprehensive but concise, laying stress on the elements, general rules and exceptions of each particular crime. Where the drift of discussion is controversial and authorities differ in opinion, the author has not hesitated to give his own opinion, citing authorities and positive doctrines of law to support his opinion. A particular example of this may be found in his exhaustive treatment of treason as defined and penalized by the existing Code provisions and amendatory laws.

Another welcome feature of this work is its incorporation of the latest laws and acts changing or dealing with our criminal laws. Painstaking research and compilation has marked this book in its every page. And finally, one notes that throughout the whole book, the author has not only dealt with the bare provisions but also the basic philosophy underlying its promulgation.

To repeat the well-known cliché, this book will be of great value to practitioners and students alike.

Felix Gaerlan