

giance or loyalty to those who temporarily exercise the authority of the executive branch of government rather than to the country and its Constitution which they are sworn to defend [emphasis added].”

Much of the popular support for MacArthur's position came from the limited experience Americans, in contrast to Europeans, had had with limited wars, partial victories, and outright defeats. Many Americans, perhaps a majority, shared MacArthur's view that “there is no substitute for victory” and that victory was within America's grasp if only those cowards and traitors in the administration would unshackle the military. In the supercharged atmosphere that then prevailed, this had a powerful appeal, but in the more sober mood of the Senate inquiry that followed, the hollowness of MacArthur's strategic reasoning was embarrassingly evident. The idea that there is no substitute for victory is, of course, nonsense. A professional soldier might have been expected to be familiar with Clausewitz's aphorism, upon which his reputation rests, that war is the continuation of politics by other means; it is not an exclusively military enterprise.

In Manchester's biography we have, at least, the essential explanation of

MacArthur and his relationship to the American republic. He was the embodiment of the warrior-hero, he was the antithesis of the organization man. This, combined with his strategic sense, earned him a reputation as one of the greatest of America's military commanders. The nimbus of glory with which his feats and self-dramatization had surrounded him removed MacArthur from all normal accountability to either civilian or military superiors. His declamations, often puerile in substance, made an enormous impression on an American people troubled by the complexities of the war and outraged by the tergiversations of Acheson and Truman. At seventy-one, MacArthur's capacity for mischief was unlimited as he faced a situation ready-made for his particular brand of reckless militarism. The result of his crusade was to deepen American doubts and to tighten the cold war straitjacket that bound American foreign policy for a generation. Manchester portrays a man who, in strengths and weaknesses, was very much like America—or at least like whatever it is about America that, fifteen years later in Vietnam, led to a repeat of so many of the blunders that destroyed Douglas MacArthur, and so much more.

although they depend, of course, on certain assumptions about the meaning of democratic rights, and on that not everyone is in agreement. It is here that Gastil stimulates and provokes, for he approaches the inevitable controversies in a tough-minded and uncompromising manner.

Constitutional democracy is a product mainly of the last two centuries, but Gastil argues vigorously that its claims rest on venerable traditions of individual dignity and responsibility. Democracy, he says, may or may not produce a society more wise, more efficient, or more conducive to human happiness than other methods of government, but the freedom associated with it is a major “value-in-itself,” one that should hold a primary, though not necessarily exclusive, priority in assessing political systems.

People have a right, he suggests, to live under a government whose rulers are responsible to them in fair, meaningful, and periodic elections and in which the rights of criticism and demand are kept alive through the mechanisms of free speech, free association, and participation (direct or indirect) in policy formation. No élite, however enlightened or well-intentioned, has the right to rule in the name of the people; a fundamental democratic principle is the right of the majority, within constitutional limits, to be wrong but still to prevail. Most particularly, no élite has the right to suppress dissent, which, Gastil argues, is a natural condition of man-in-society. He is wisely skeptical of regimes that ignore democratic processes on the basis of a presumed social consensus which makes provision for opposition unnecessary; if consensus truly exists, he notes, it can be expressed freely through democratic channels.

It is refreshing to see freedom defended in these forthright and unambiguous terms. Gastil has little patience with those who would subordinate political and civil liberties to such other social goals as national unity or rapid economic development. Freedom is not a luxury, he suggests, nor is it simply a peculiar preoccupation of Western European culture. (In this regard, he pointedly criticizes Andrew Young's apologies for oppressive Third World regimes.)

Gastil is suspicious of arguments that suggest a contradiction between political freedom and “freedom from want.”

## Freedom in the World: Political Rights and Civil Liberties 1978 by Raymond D. Gastil

(Freedom House; xi+335 pp.; \$20.00)

### James A. Nuechterlein

A reader could, if he were unwise, view this book simply as a handy reference work on the comparative state of political and civil liberties around the world as of January 1, 1978. It is that, but it is very much more as well. Raymond Gastil has added to Freedom House's annual Comparative Survey of Freedom a number of descriptive and analytical essays on the fundamental issues associated with the definitions of democracy and freedom. The essays (by Gastil and by political scientists Richard W. Cottam, Robert A. Dahl, Herbert J. Ellison, and Giovanni Sartori) transform a

handbook into a stimulating study in contemporary political thought and practice.

First the handbook. Freedom House provides brief summaries and comparative ratings of 155 nations in the categories of both political rights and civil liberties. The nations are individually rated on a scale from one to seven in each category (the bases for the ratings are clearly explained) and are then described overall as being free (43 nations), partly free (48), or not free (64). The summaries and ratings appear evenhanded and free of ideological bias,

Authoritarian regimes, he intimates, are not necessarily more economically productive than democratic ones. As for presumed "preconditions of democracy," Gastil recognizes that, other things equal, a high level of socioeconomic development correlates positively with democracy, but he quite correctly emphasizes that the latter is not simply a function of the former and that many variables other than economic development are involved in the creation of a democratic ethos. One applauds his rejection of deterministic models and his respect for historical particularity, as well as his appreciation of the role of ideas in formation of political culture.

Gastil is careful not to identify freedom with capitalism. Democracy can function, he argues, under a variety of economic systems, although he does note that no existing society is both truly socialistic (in the classic definition of government ownership and control of the means of production) and truly democratic. Democratic socialism remains, in that sense, a possible ideal but not a present reality.

It is a disturbing mark of our time that some of the most dismissive approaches to freedom come from the ranks of Western intellectuals. Robert Dahl shrewdly explains how it is that precious liberties can come to seem uninspiring and even boring!

"Familiar, imperfectly achieved, clearly insufficient to insure a good society, trivialized over many generations by rhetorical overkill, [liberal freedoms] are easily taken for granted as an inheritance of quite modest significance. Their value no doubt appears greater to those who have lost them or have never had them."

It is regrettably true that the most impassioned contemporary defenses of human rights come, as Dahl's analysis suggests, not from those who have them, but from those who have been deprived of them.

One of the problems of human rights is that their defense doesn't always keep unexceptionable company. Nowhere is the rhetoric of democracy and freedom more frequently invoked than in the United Nations, which, for all its usefulness, and even necessity, is among the world's premier sources of moral hypocrisy. Even Jimmy Carter's human rights crusade, although of a clearly less suspect moral character, is not without its ambiguities. At times Carter's quali-

fications and exceptions to the imperatives of freedom seem almost random in their selectivity, but at others they are clearly related to the national interest (we need the support of certain authoritarian allies) and to world interests of peace and war (how hard can we pressure the Soviet Union on human rights without wrecking détente?).

Gastil is not unaware of these and other complexities in the defense of political and civil liberties. He understands about reasons of state and he avoids dogmatic and absolutist positions. There are situations, he concedes, where some form of "circumscribed democracy" may be the best available

option for a given society; and he correctly distinguishes between authoritarian regimes, which are willing to concede the autonomy of the private realm, and totalitarian ones, which aspire to absolute control of both policy and culture. Gastil is further aware that, in any case, the United States cannot and should not impose freedom on those who resist it.

But he is unabashed without being unsophisticated in promoting democracy as a desirable world ideal, and in that, as well as in his cautious optimism concerning freedom's prospects, he provides a marvelous tonic for tired or timid democrats.

## Reading Scripture Through the Prisms of the Poor

### Frontiers of Theology in Latin America

Rosino Gibellini, editor

"...for the first time do we have available a collection of theological texts that offers the reader a comprehensive survey of Latin American liberation theology."—GREGORY BAUM

"This book is an exquisitely sensitive collation of seminal articles on liberation which help the reader reach beneath the surface phenomena and rhetoric to the methodological and substantial issues of this major contemporary theology."—SIMON E. SMITH, S.J. Paper \$9.95

### Mission to Latin America

Gerald M. Costello

"Gerald Costello has performed an incalculable service to the church and to society by writing the living history in their own words of the generous, impetuous, loving and ingenuous North Americans—priests, nuns, and lay people—who swarmed to Latin America in response to the call of Popes Pius XII and John XXIII. It was one of the most remarkable episodes in the 2,000-year life of the church..."—GARY MacEOIN Paper \$9.95

### Christology at the Crossroads A Latin American Approach

Jon Sobrino, S.J.

"The thoroughness of the author's survey, the fulness of his documentation, and the persuasive power of his own affirmations make clear that **Christology at the Crossroads** will not leave us stranded at the crossroad but will start us down exciting and demanding new paths"—ROBERT McAFEE BROWN Paper \$12.95

### Jesus Christ Liberator A Critical Christology for Our Time

Leonardo Boff

In this distinctive Latin American contribution to the developing 'crisis in Christology,' Boff writes: "Christology thought out and vitally tested in Latin America must have characteristics of its own." For Boff, Christ of the Gospels must come as Liberator or He does not come at all Paper \$9.95

At your bookstore or direct from the publisher. Write for complete catalog today



**ORBIS BOOKS**

Maryknoll, NY 10545