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European and American Perspective on Migration

*Comments on the book by Piotr Mazurkiewicz Two Towers and a Minaret.
Migrations from a Catholic Perspective, En Route Books and Media,
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Abstract: The article is a reflection on the problem of immigration based on the book by Piotr Mazurkiewicz entitled “Two Towers and a Minaret. Migrations from a Catholic Perspective (En Route Books and Media, Saint Louis MO, 2024). The reflection undertaken deals with the situation in America and Europe and focuses mainly on security, cultural, identity, demographic and ethical issues that are an implication of the influx of immigrants. Both the author of the article and Piotr Mazurkiewicz adopt the perspective of Catholic social teaching.

Keywords: Piotr Mazurkiewicz, migration, Catholic social teaching

Introduction

On both sides of the Atlantic, the topic of migration provokes much emotion especially on the economic, political, and moral levels. The discussions taking place in Europe and the United States are not identical, but they are complementarity. In this volume, Professor Rev. Mazurkiewicz offers a discussion of the migration crisis in Europe from a Catholic perspective, which is of relevance for Americans.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2241) exhorts developed nations “to the extent they are able, to welcome the foreigner.” The political authorities, of course, in the interest of the common good may require “various juridical conditions, especially with regard to the immigrants’ duties toward the country of adoption.” Most notably, the migrants should “respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying civic burdens.”

I. The American Situation

Due to the mass movement of migrants, the question is whether the United States has exceeded its capacity to “welcome the foreigner,” and, in turn, has endangered the common good of the American people. According to the American government’s Current Population Survey (CPS), since March 2022, the immigrant or foreign-born population (legal and illegal) has grown by “5.1 million, the largest two-year increase in American history” [Camarota, Zeigler 2024]. In January 2022, the Pew Research Center broke down the statistics on immigration in the U.S., stating that “[s]ince President Joe Biden took office in January 2021, his administration has acted on a number of fronts” [Krogstad, Gonzales-Barreara 2022] to boost the numbers of refugee and migrant admissions and reduce the number of deportations.

Security concerns have been raised. In February 2024, the Pew Research Center noted a “shift in migrants’ origin countries” from Mexico or the Northern Triangle nations of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras to in December 2023, while 54% of encounters involved citizens of countries other than these four nations [Gramlich 2024]. For example, there was “a sharp increase in encounters with citizens of China...nearly 6,000 encounters with Chinese citizens at the south-western border in December 2023, up from around 900 a year earlier” [Gramlich 2024]. Revelations of the U.S. House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), led by Chairman Rep. John Moolenaar, related reports on the CCP’s military escalation with Taiwan, and information concerning increases of Chinese men at the border of military age, have all together raised concerns [NBC 2024].

Some argue that “America is weathering the worst mass border migration event in the nation’s history” [Bensman 2023]. Many attribute the rise to what they describe as the current administration’s “open-border” policy. While border policies have not been abolished in the United States, and border laws remain in place, millions of migrants enter with little or no checks or procedures, and with government support. For example, in May 2024, according to a House committee data release, there are “45 cities whose domestic airports have received flights carrying hundreds of thousands of inadmissible aliens the Biden Administration authorized to fly over the border into the interior of the country.” [Bensman 2024] And according to a recent documentary, an “open-borders coalition” is massive, well-funded and well-organized by the United States Government working together with UN Agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and, yes, even cartels play a role [Phillipp 2024].

Some contend that politicians, in the past, have agreed that the law should be enforced, but disagreed about what the law should be; but today the U.S. government is violating American law with impunity. They claim that tax dollars are being used to fund the creation of a global immigration infrastructure that facilitates migration to the U.S. from various places of origin and transit and then provides resettlement benefits and packages *en route* (e.g., debit cards, cash handouts, housing, clothes, food). The money moves from government agencies to a sprawling network of NGOs, rendering the money difficult to trace [Philipp 2024].

In response, upon arrival in the United States, some governors who disagree with the open-borders policy have sought to bus or fly immigrants to sanctuary cities and enact new state-level laws “to deter illegal immigration and enhance enforcement of immigration law” [Vaughan et al. 2024] Despite federal jurisdiction over the borders of the United States, Attorney Generals from 26 states formed a multi-state coalition to push Congress to grant state officials the power to perform immigration functions *in lieu* of the federal governments’ refusal to act [Mason 2023].

While there are various justifications for the current administration’s approach, the most obvious ones are allegedly tied to assisting the Democratic Party win elections. Yet, others insist that the issue is about the human rights of migrants and their protection from cruel and inhumane treatment, and so border rules should be ignored like Jim Crow laws, in the past. Certain business owners and consumers view increased migration as something economically positive since it brings cheap labor, while public school boards believe that increases in immigrant children mean increases in money for educational purposes, at a time when many are exiting the public school system.

Others disagree. They argue that the key issue is not migration *per se*, but massive uncontrolled and illegal migration, which does not permit for orderly assimilation into society, understanding that any given migrant brings with him or her a heritage (e.g., familial, cultural, legal, and religious). Some argue that the “NGO migration industrial complex” and the individuals, who lead it, are exploiting the migrants and are driven by greed, in light of the enormous grants involved. Similarly, others claim that American enemies (e.g., globalists, radical Islamists, communists, terrorists) are using massive migration to change the social and cultural dynamics within the country. In other words, massive disorderly, unsafe,

illegal migration creates civil disorder, allows insurgents to enter, and otherwise injects chaos, exemplified by the dire situations (e.g., overcrowding) in the key sanctuary cities (e.g., New York, Washington DC). Still others underline how mass migration changes economic conditions in a way that promotes the growth of the welfare state given the enormous amounts of low-skilled immigrants. Others question the justification of climate change often given as to why people are on the move, instead of the carefully orchestrated plans being developed by NGOs working with governments, UN entities, and cartels. Many more point to migrant connections with foreign terrorist groups, cartels, gangs, crimes, illegal drugs, and human trafficking.

Unfortunately, open discussions about the issues are difficult. Objections to mass migration movements are frequently dismissed with censorship talking points alleging that such discussions illustrate anti-Christian, anti-immigrant, xenophobic and racist bias.

II. European Situation

The issues above are very different from those discussed by Professor Rev. Piotr Mazurkiewicz regarding the European context. The reason for this might have to do with the fact that border controls have been officially abolished in the European by agreement, namely between the “Schengen Area” countries. Yet, like the United States, Europe is in the midst of another mass illegal migration problem (non-Europeans), recently described as chaotic:

More than 36,000 migrants arrived in the Mediterranean region of Europe from January to March this year, nearly twice the number compared with the same period in 2022, according to the latest figures from the UN’s refugee agency (UNHCR). It is the highest number since the refugee crisis that peaked in 2015 and continued into the first months of 2016, when the arrival of more than one million migrants on Europe’s shores led EU solidarity to collapse into bickering and border chaos [Nor Haq et al. 2023].

After many years of negotiation, in 2024, the European Parliament adopted reforms to the European asylum and migration system. The ten legislative acts which constitute the new framework include procedures and rules pertaining to: asylum and migration management; return of persons; resettlement and humanitarian issues; situations of crisis and *force majeure*; as well as screening, reception and qualifications. The reforms are being promoted as a system that will be “more

effective and increase solidarity” amongst EU member states, only time will tell [Consilium 2024].

Mazurkiewicz takes the reader into the labyrinth of underlying issues and questions, many of which are unresolved, and in some quarters, not even discussed. e describes the bundle of issues as the challenges of the two towers and minaret, symbolic for the Christian religion (e.g., church steeples), secularism (e.g., Eiffel Tower), and Islam (e.g., minaret). What Mazurkiewicz discusses is the very topics Hanson laments that most Americans have not ignored or otherwise not addressed, in the midst of mass migration, namely radical changes in terms of demographic and cultural influences.

Chapter one addresses the distinction between cultural diversity as a social fact and multiculturalism as a Marxist ideological tool. Mazurkiewicz notes that the latter “seeks to break up traditional national communities into conflicting communities: ethnic minorities, immigrant minorities, new minorities.” It is worth recalling here that Peter Sutherland called on Europe to move toward a multicultural union, which requires the active engagement of politicians and their partners to promote a specific model of relations between peoples and communities.

Regarding the various interpretations of pluralism, Mazurkiewicz considers: 1) the relativization of culture and the missing objective criteria to evaluate them; 2) the policy of assimilation and the condition that migrants renounce their own cultural identity and blend in with the dominant culture; and 3) the intercultural approach promoted by the Catholic Church, which assumes culture diversity as a social fact and understands that each culture presents its own answer to the question of the mystery, of God and the mystery of man. This perspective is grounded in theology, anthropology, the communion of persons, and the unity of humankind, which constitute the lens to evaluate culture, understanding that readiness for intercultural dialogue implies the existence of a strong cultural identity so that dialogue avoids relativism and syncretism.

In contrast, multiculturalism is an ideology that assumes culture cannot be evaluated. It has many tenacles that might: 1) call into question democracy and majority rule, claiming that it is a form of discrimination against minorities; 2) promote affirmation action programs for various minority groups, even the exemption of these groups from certain laws of the host country in the name of preserving their own culture; 3) advance the building of a “new society” with no fixed culture;

4) deny the existence of fundamental or universal ethical norms; 5) promote equality in way that eliminates discussions about culture; 6) promote movement and change devoid of any reflection on the direction coupled with a quasi-religious belief in progress; 7) demonstrate hostility toward Western civilization, especially its Christian roots, historical identity, nationhood, national sovereignty, citizenship, and all other foundations of a democratic freedom-based political order; 8) nurture, identify, and mobilize the “oppressed classes” at the service of the revolution and destruction of culture according to the strategy of Gramsci and others; and 9) reject the concept of integration entirely.

As a result, multicultural rhetoric has provoked the transformation of modern democracies in Europe. Mazurkiewicz underlines that notions of the political left and right have been virtually replaced with conflicts between internationalists and nativists, and the question of truth has become devoid of social meaning in a post-truth era, where freedom of thought and speech lose significance while skepticism and emotions rule the day. In the absence of objective criteria, of course, law ceases to be law and disputes cannot be resolved peacefully. Consequently, force becomes the law and the stronger (e.g., political, financial, social) rise up with their partners to silence opponents through shame and derision. This, in turn, has led to polarization between two opposing camps, where the conflict fought is on the moral and political levels, between pro-Western civilization and anti-Western civilization.

Chapter two considers Europe’s identity within the context of migration processes from the perspective of the “majority community and dominant culture of the Old Continent,” understanding that both individual identity and collective identity carries affirmations of one’s distinctiveness or uniqueness and even a negation or rejection of other people (e.g., aliens, strangers, foreigners), as well as a sense of belonging to a group or people considered one’s own.

Mazurkiewicz gives an example of the two forces at work in the formation of the European identity as possessing “certain elements of the Hellenistic, Roman or Judeo-Christian traditions as one’s own, but also the dissociation from others,” (e.g., Asia in the East, the barbarian world of the West, from Byzantium, and the world of Islam). Yet, the reality of strangers is almost never totally negative, since one can always learn something from them, which is often described as openness. With reference to the idea of development of Catholic doctrine, Mazurkiewicz contends that the key consideration has to do with the nature of the model of change,

dependent on whether it is a continuation rather than a negation, a growth rather than self-destruction.

He underlines the three acts of migration: 1) leavening one's homeland; 2) the journey; and 3) the challenges upon arrival, before considering the terminology of migration (e.g., refugees v. migrants; post-colonial migrants, labor migrants, family migrants), with an emphasis on the emotivism called "post-colonial syndrome." It is a guilt associated with "whether Europe, by conquering and subjugating other continents, brought civilization, economic development, and Christianity, or rather, destroyed their rich cultures. Abused them economically, and, having ruined them, cast them aside."

With the assistance of empirical data, he considers the various economic aspects of migration and then moves to a discussion of the models of integration (limiting immigration, permissive immigration without assimilation, and permissive immigration with active policy of social, cultural, and linguistic assimilation), understanding that the term "assimilation" has largely been replaced with "integration," the language of multiculturalism.

In the case of the United States, he relies upon authors like Samuel Huntington and others, who discuss the past, where America was "primarily a continent of settlers who created a cultural form into which later arriving immigrants had to fit," due to a series of factors: entrepreneurship and risk taking; the motivation to become American; voluntarily returning to their country of origin because they did not want to become American; dispersal of migrants across the US; lower rates of immigration; and migrant engagement in American wars.

Things have greatly changed in America, due to the emergence of three "alternative assimilations" and related issues: 1) the migrants feeling more African-American, than American (e.g., Haitian immigrants); 2) the self-isolation of large communities concentrated in particular regions (e.g., Cubans in South Florida, Islamic groups in the Detroit area, Mexicans in the Southwest); and 3) the emergence of diasporas, whose members identify with their homeland.

As to the question of whether there is a moral obligation to take migrants, he does not offer an affirmative response. Instead, he destroys the underlying assumptions, contending that the vast majority of migrants prefer to work and live in their own countries, which means that the first human right is the

right to remain at home, not the right to be welcomed in another country. He emphasizes that a serious migration policy requires actions and initiatives to address the causes that trigger migration, and recognizes the conditional acceptance of migrants based on domestic law, something the Catholic Church has underlined. In other words, there are limits to hospitality (e.g., cultural, social, economic, security), something recognized in Sacred Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium.

On the contrary, globalists, are promoting a right to freedom of movement based on the idea of global citizenship, but it is an ideological view based on Marxist thought where the immigrant is substituted for the proletariat, and a secularized version of the Christian notion of man as a pilgrim on journey to his transcendent homeland is replaced with the idea that everyone is a pilgrim in search of a paradise on earth. From this viewpoint, the real task is to build a world without borders, promote a humanity without divisions oozing with unlimited compassion.

Returning to the question of identity, Mazurkiewicz underlines that the individual and collective sense of belonging, recognized in Catholic social teaching, has a history since it comes from a family, village, community. It also is the depository for the basic heritage of language(s), traditions, and values, all bound up with a nation's history and identity. These elements are so essential that he contends that there is a "right to cultural dominance of the titular nation" that must co-exist with "openness, a culture of hospitality, and a willingness to enter into dialogue with other cultures." A balance must be achieved between the new minority and the cultural majority with a discernment as to what particular customs of a foreign culture should be recognized in Western society (e.g., burqa, female circumcision, polygamy, arranged child marriages, honor killings, voice of imams through megaphones). The issue is delicate and difficult conversations are necessary in light of the fundamental differences between Christian and Islamic visions of man and the world, as well as the ongoing discussions about universal ethics and the common language of international human rights.

Chapter three studies Europe's religious demography and begins with an interesting discussion about the illusion of a universal détente that has been established through European "integration" (using multicultural terminology). This integration, however, exists in a democratic vacuum and as such has led to the disintegration of EU politics, where a type of enlightened managerial class exists. Negotiations take place between two interested parties, on the one side, professional

politicians, and on the other side, lobbies of industries and the financial sector. The politicians, so concerned with their own careers and appeasing others, are incompetent to solve real political problems.

Europe's religious demographics are changing. The fastest growing religion is Islam, thanks to the large numbers of Muslims that have migrated to Europe and their high fertility rates. Moreover, the proportion of unbelievers are on the rise, while Christianity is in decline. Many attribute the decline in Christianity: 1) to the emergence of the European Union, where the ideology of secularism dominates from above through laws and regulations with the assistance of a culture of consumerism and moral permissiveness (e.g., divorce, free love, abortion, contraception, euthanasia, surrogacy, transhumanism); and 2) to the religion of Islam, which continually grows from below due to migration and demographic trends, raises issues about a future Europe (e.g., minarets, polygamy, arranged child marriages, honor killings, sharia law).

Mazurkiewicz underlines that the Catholic Church understands what the hollowing out of the European identity means; it continues to promote evangelization initiatives. The Church appreciates the key changes to be twofold: (1) the rejection of Christianity and the substitution of ideas that claim to offer a new meaning of life and human history (e.g., Enlightenment, Rationalism, Secularism, Free Masonry, and Radical Islam); and (2) the rejection of Christianity *per se* and the promotion of its key values (e.g., human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity), often times in a distorted fashion.

As Christians are squeezed out of the public square, Islam fill that space as the sole religion, but with an important propaganda strategy – the bludgeon of Islamophobia – wielded against critics of Islam, coupled with ongoing use of violence as a justified means of behavior. With the missing European collective identity, where only human and civil rights remain, a bridge does not exist to the Muslim communities, and therefore, the Islamization of Europe is foreseeable.

In response, Mazurkiewicz considers the call for representative government, as a possible response, which is only possible at the national level, where nation-states are held accountable, and the proposal for a new type of national pact, which would incorporate certain elements of various religious groups (e.g., Sharia law for Muslims). Difficult discussions are underlined, namely those, which consider the similarities and differences between religions and the relationships between them. He considers

the argument that Christianity is a pure religion versus Judaism, a religion and nation; Islam, a religion and legal system; Buddhism, a religion and doctrine of wisdom. Those embracing such discussions seek to determine whether something is an admixture to a religion, and therefore can be renounced. After considering Judeo-Christian theocracy, he studies the disappearance of Christianity in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Palestine, with reference to data pertaining to fertility, population growth, persecution, internal displacement, labor and educational discrimination. He emphasizes that the consequences are an increasing concentration of Islam in the Middle East, but not a corresponding re-Christianity of Europe, since the majority of migrants in Europe have been Muslim.

Chapter four considers the development of a policy on religion and religious communities within the EU. Mazurkiewicz gives reasons why such a policy would be of interest. One, there are theocratic countries with spiritual/political leaders, and others dominated by ideology, equivalent to a secular religion (e.g., China, North Korea). Two, there are political benefits in utilizing religion for political purposes. Three, concerns about social conflict and possible violence could justify policy making with a view to promoting “integration.” There are many unresolved issues, however.

The preliminary question, of course, regards the nature of religion: how should it be defined? Whether the state has the competence to take up the question (no competence, mixed competence, or total competence)? Whether the EU, an intergovernmental organization, has the competence vis-à-vis member states to take up the question (directly, indirectly, or not at all)? Are there any elements of a policy on religion via EU primary law (e.g., disputes regarding the drafting and interpretation of EU treaties) or EU secondary law (e.g., prohibitions against homophobia, interpreted as a prohibition of any moral evaluation of homosexual acts; research funding for human embryonic stems cell, interpreted as destruction of human embryos)? Whether migration and accession policies are being used as tools of policy on religion (e.g., via the ideology of multiculturalism in the name of cultural enrichment; via intentional changes in religious demography)? Whether EU’s external policy shapes policy on religion and religious communities (e.g., omitting reference to the religious affiliation of a rapist or knife wielding perpetrator; not mentioning the religious affiliation of persecuted Christians in the Middle East, choosing to refer to such victims as religious minorities to avoid giving the impression that the EU favors Christians)? Whether religious policy is being made through legal cases issued by the Court of Justice of the EU (e.g., *Brüstle*

Case) or the non-EU body the European Court of Human Rights (e.g., Lautsi Case) that binds Europeans? Whether in times of COVID new policies regarding religion were created with the restrictions on churches and religious communities? Assuming that religious lessons from various religious communities and churches promote extremism, whether educational institutions can create courses about religion that are “neutral,” and if so, whether they should oblige students to take them, and if so, what this might mean for the field of law (e.g., secular theocracy or sacralization of statutory law)?

Conclusion

In the end, we should not be surprised by those seeking to create global empires, and we should ask whether the European Union experience is being used as a sort of petri dish of what is being planned on a global level. Hanson, with reference to Ancient Greece and Rome, and other examples (e.g., Islamic Caliphates, the Mongols, the Ottomans, the British, Napoleon, Stalin, Hitler), contends that globalization or imperialism is not new. At various times, national borders have collapsed and customs, languages and languages have been spread, mostly by force. It is a “recurrent, cyclical, and at best a morally neutral phenomenon, at worst a destroyer of local customs, traditions-citizenship” [Hanson 2021: 270-271].

Unsurprisingly, the empires have imploded, sometimes quickly due to various reasons, including “overreach, financial insolvency, military defeat, corruption, bankrupt ideology, demographic calcification, rampant inflation, sheer inefficiency, and bloated bureaucracy” [Hanson 2021: 271]. That the European Union might serve as a case study with which to investigate the interplay between the new migration model and state commitments to managing borders should be something of interest to many Americans, especially those who appreciate and desire to maintain their clearly defined borders, shared traditions, culture, and history.

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