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## **Muslim Separatism, by W.K. Che Man**

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MUSLIM SEPARATISM: THE MOROS OF SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES AND THE MALAYS OF SOUTHERN THAILAND.

By W.K. Che Man. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press / New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. xviii, 240 pages.

The author, a Muslim Thailander, sees political separation of the Muslim minorities from the Kingdom of Thailand and from the Republic of the Philippines as defensible not only on sociohistorical grounds but also as a practical possibility. This view supposes an affirmative answer to several more basic questions, for example: Can one be fully a Muslim only by living as a member of a closed society under Islamic law? Is the supposition that all non-Muslim cultures are morally decadent systems that corrupt Muslims an objectively defensible one? Is separatism the best course in today's world for the Muslims themselves?

Muslims take advantage of up-to-date medical remedies, industrial techniques, and material conveniences produced in the West. When they send their youth abroad to be trained as doctors, engineers, and experts in other fields, these of necessity absorb many of the general cultural and intellectual views of Europe and America. It was possible for Islam to shut itself off into a ghetto in previous centuries, but it is not possible today.

Classical Muslim jurists divided the world into two zones, *dār al-Islām* (territory of Islām) and *dār al-hārb* (territory of war). Muslims and those obedient to Muslim rulers inhabit Islamic territory. The rest of the world is made up of non-Muslims or "infidels" with whom Muslims must in theory wage war until the whole world is subject to Islām. Unfortunately Che Man adopts this division when he uses the technical term, *dār al-Islām*, in a context of "struggle," "opposition to government," and "resistance" (p. 44). He even cites, seemingly with approval, a Filipino Muslim officer who, when asked about the schooling of Muslim children, said, "Our children need to know two things: to understand Islam and to know how to fight" (p. 92).

In several places he expresses regret that Christian workers are preferred to Muslims in plantations and industrial corporations. This is attributed to prejudice in Thailand and to a long-standing relationship between entrepreneurs and Christian Filipinos in the Philippines. Probably the real reason would lie in the bad name a few Muslims who take the law into their own hands have given to their peaceful and law-abiding coreligionists.

It is stated but not proved that Muslims in the Philippines are denied their right to trust and to benefits enjoyed by other Filipinos and that "Filipino nationalism . . . regards Christianity as an essential ingredient" (p. 174). Even if Muslim rights were really violated by the laws and institutions of the Philippines (which is never shown), the methods to correct such an injustice should always be moral. Organizing armies and arousing and arming the population are means that bypass the country's legal structure and awaken contempt for law and authority. Civil disobedience may be employed only after legal remedies have been exhausted. Moral means, moreover, must always

include respect for the principle of proportion and the keeping of protest under responsible leadership.

For Muslims living in today's pluralistic world it is important to see what is of positive value in cultures and religions other than their own. To know what other people value is not necessarily to agree with it or adopt it. If they take this attitude, as many do already, they may come to see the rest of mankind, not as people to be fought against, but as including many with whom they could cooperate in matters of social justice, the guaranteeing of basic human rights, and national development.

Disagreement with some of the presuppositions of the book is not meant as a denial of the valuable historical information it summarizes, especially in the first and second chapters, and the many useful tables that accompany the text (The Shafi'ites-p. 17-are not a sect but a legal school.)

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**BIKOL-ENGLISH DICTIONARY.** By Malcolm W. Mintz and Jose del Rosario Britanico. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1985. 555 pages.

Dr. Malcolm W. Mintz holds a doctorate in linguistics from the University of Hawaii. Jose Britanico, a well-educated native Bikol speaker, was a member of the hospitable family that welcomed Mintz into their Naga City home for two years to enable him to master the Bicol language. When Jose died at an early age, his brother Carlos, succeeded him and took over the coordination of research efforts in Bikol. Mintz also taught for a time at the Ateneo de Naga College, and some of his colleagues there became consultants in the formation of the dictionary. Mintz, besides speaking fluent Bikol, has also mastered the Malay language and written a dictionary for it. He is also familiar with other Austro-Indonesian languages. He is presently teaching at Murdoch University in Western Australia.

This is an excellent dictionary. I have been using it continually for the past five years and have found it quite complete and most useful. First, of all it has 15,000 Bicol entries that are clearly and succinctly explained in English. This is matched by a detailed index (157 pages) from English to Bikol. It has a map of the Bikol region, and its front cover is decorated with the Pre-Hispanic Bikol alphabet that Mintz discovered in Spain. There are many dialects of the Bikol language, and the one treated in the dictionary is the Naga dialect because it is the one that is understood most widely. This is because for centuries Naga was the ecclesiastical, educational and political center of the region and a large number of pamphlets, novenas, metrical romances, the *Pasion* and newspapers were printed there.

This dictionary can be very useful and valuable for all. It has, moreover,