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Responses to the Signs of the Times, by Josol

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mented, alongside personal interviews and memoirs. Significantly, personal letters are not an abundant source, but their lack is supplied by several official reports, and the story moves ahead. Possibly, a minor drawback is the narrow perspective, perhaps unavoidable in a biography.

A wider perspective could have explicated Halsema's place in Philippine history. We seldom advert to it, but policies for the new colony succeeded precisely because of people like him. Men who did what they did we seldom consider, for example Conant, the man responsible for introducing the new Philippine currency (\$1=P0.50); Ferguson, the executive secretary who made things move in the Governor's office; the chief of police, who made sure law and order prevailed in the country; the unnamed secretaries who drafted the laws for the fledgling National Assembly, whose members, steeped in the Spanish legal system, were still unfamiliar with the American lawmaking processes, etc.

Critics of the Philippine colonial past could perhaps think twice before mouthing inane generalizations. Colonization is never an unmixed evil, for even with the most heartless exploitation, the colony profits and develops in the end. This is best seen in Rizal and his peers, men who were the inevitable result of Spanish rule. But, we must not forget, colonial policies depend on the unsung government officials who implement them from day to day, the ears and the eyes, the hands and the feet that translated theory into reality. E.J. Halsema was one of these. This is the message of the biography written by his son.

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Responses to the Signs of the Times. Selected Documents: Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines. By Abdon Ma. C. Josol, CSsR. Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1991. xiii, 380 pages.

The injunction of the Roman Catholic Church to read the "signs of the times" and work for social justice in the modern world, emphasized in the work of Vatican II and subsequent papal encyclicals, is clearly reflected in the pastoral letters of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) since the late 1960s. The bishops' positions on social issues from 1967 to 1991 dominate the contents of the thirty-five pastoral letters selected by Josol. Issues of justice, poverty, violence, and human rights in Philippine society are discussed in twenty-two of the pastoral letters, while other concerns such as the eradication of graft and corruption, treatment of minorities, the exploitation of women, the degradation of the environment, and the Philippine international debt are examined in ten pastoral letters. In addi-

tion, the bishops discuss various aspects of the electoral process, ranging from encouraging Filipinos to support the 1971 Constitutional Convention to an unprecedented condemning of the Marcos regime's handling of the 1986 presidential vote.

Josol's selection of documents also includes the CBCP's positions on issues of family values. In two pastoral letters, the bishops present the church's teachings with respect to marriage; in several others they touch on the country's population problems and reiterate the church's stance on family planning, underscoring the illegality of abortion in the Philippines. While recognizing that rapid population growth exacerbates other social ills, the CBCP remains silent on the inability of natural family planning methods to significantly reduce family size. Instead the bishops emphasize the redistribution of wealth by advocating greater social justice.

The CBCP, in separate letters, also deplors the manipulation of human rights abuses, and warns Catholics about the aggressive proselytizing of fundamentalist groups. Both letters address threats to the church. The manipulation of human rights reporting poses a threat to the church's moral authority because Task Force Detainees, organized during martial law under the auspices of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines and one of the largest human rights monitoring organizations in the country, concentrates its efforts on documenting abuses of the government and military while, by and large, ignoring abuses of the New People's Army. The bishops call for greater evenhandedness in reporting abuses. The CBCP similarly condemns the "vicious attacks on the Catholic Church" by fundamentalist groups, whose numbers and converts grew significantly in the late 1980s. The bishops point out the errors of the fundamentalists, advise Catholics to avoid fundamentalist "ecumenical" prayer groups, but at the same time, commit the Catholic church to becoming more relevant in the lives of the faithful.

The pastoral letters are organized into three sections based on whether they were issued in the pre-martial law period (1967-72); during martial law, including the period from 1981 until Marcos' ouster from power (1973-86); and after martial law from the beginning of Corazon Aquino's presidency to the conclusion of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (1986-91). Each section is preceded by a "situationer" of readings selected by Josol and a "summary view" by Bishop Julio X. Labayan for sections one and two and by Bishop Jesus Varela for section three. In addition Josol provides a brief introduction (four pages), a brief reflection (seven pages), and a summary paragraph introducing and concluding each pastoral letter. The situationers, summary views, introduction, and reflection are designed to provide the reader with a framework for understanding the historical context in which each of the three sections of pastoral letters were written, whereas the summary paragraphs provide both overviews and recaps of individual letters, as well as relate each letter to social, religious, and political themes of

for the Philippine scene, authority in the contemporary world, which has excellent sections on authority in the family, the school and the church, and the Christian approach to "Marxist Analysis." The essay on "The Problem of Unbelief" is particularly relevant to the Philippines. Fr. Lauer has an interesting essay on G.K. Chesterton. The essay on Phenomenology is an excellent summary of the current trends in Philosophy in the Philippines. The editor has a summary of the essays and of the Curriculum Vitae of Fr. Lauer. Also included is a bibliography of the publications of Fr. Lauer.

After the Wars. By Anthony Lake et al. New Brunswick, U.S.A. and Oxford, U.K.: Transaction Publishers, 1990. x, 111 pages.

Although *After the Wars* is primarily concerned with reconstruction in Afghanistan, Indochina, Central America, Southern Africa, and the Horn of Africa, there are particularly relevant lessons for development and reconstruction in the Philippines. The authors provide valuable and timely analysis of the differing problems of polity and economy confronting the governments of these countries. They offer many practical ideas, not some grand outside reconstruction plan, both to stimulate and assist local planners as they address the futures of their nations and to encourage continued attention to these countries' needs in the international community. It is here that the relevance for Philippine planners is most perceptive—reconstruction from within rather than reconstruction from without.

The authors bring impressive credentials to their task of analysis. Anthony Lake was director of Policy Planning at the U.S. Department of State; Selig Harrison is a senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Nayan Chanda is the editor of the *Asian Wall Street Journal*; Benjamin Crosby is a professor at the Center for Political Economy in San Jose, Ecuador; Mark Chona, for many years was political adviser to President Kuanda of Zambia; Jeffrey Herbst is assistant professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs; Carol Lancaster is assistant professor in the School of Foreign Service of Georgetown University.

Cyrus R. Vance calls it "... a stimulating book. It rightly challenges us to reexamine our responsibility to help affected Third World nations rebuild in the aftermath of the Cold War. We have both a moral obligation and a self-interest in doing this."