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Filipino Culture: Freedom, Nationhood and Culture

Review Author: Miguel A. Bernad

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Book Reviews

FILIPINO CULTURE

FREEDOM, NATIONHOOD AND CULTURE. A Collection of Speeches Delivered from 1954 to 1959. By Raul S. Manglapus. Foreword by Horacio de la Costa S.J. Carmelo and Bauermann Inc., Publishers. Manila. 1959. Pp. xi, 215.

When we first came to the Ateneo de Manila to begin teaching in 1939, we found the boys enthusiastically learning a new college song. It had everything that a college song should have: verve, imagination, a touch of bravado, and a catchy jazzy rhythm. It was called "Blue Eagle—the King," and it is still sung by Ateneans as enthusiastically today as when first written twenty years ago. The man who wrote the words and the music (who was later to write the campaign songs for President Magsaysay) was Raul Manglapus, then a student of our school of law, and a recent B.A. graduate of our college of arts and sciences. His enthusiasm for jazz coexisted with a greater enthusiasm for profounder things: for the classics, for philosophy, for theology, for the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum*. It was more than a merely academic interest in the academic things, for he had imbibed from his professor, the late lamented Father Joseph Mulry S.J., a profound concern for the improvement of the social order. His graduation picture in the Ateneo *Aegis* significantly bears the caption: "This is Raul, the man who walks with kings but has not lost the common touch."

The man who applied that well known line to Raul, his friend Francisco Romualdez, lost his life during the Japanese Occupation. Raul very narrowly missed losing his. He was imprisoned by the Japanese in Fort Santiago, in a crowded cell made hideous by Japanese brutality. Raul's conduct made a deep impression on one of his fellow prisoners, a prominent businessman, Hans Menzi. Upon his release from Fort Santiago, Menzi went to the Ateneo de Manila and asked for instruction and for baptism in the Catholic Church.

Fort Santiago was then, in a manner of speaking, a haunt of Ateneans. Among those imprisoned at the time were several Jesuits: Father Mulry, Father Keane, Father Doucette of the Observatory, Father (now Bishop) Kennally, Brother Abrams, Brother Bauerlein, Father Jaime Neri, and our own colleague on this Quarterly, Father de la Costa. Father Mulry was released after a month, Father de la Costa after two; the rest were taken to concentration camp; but Father Neri was condemned to death for espionage (of which he was innocent) and disloyalty to the Japanese regime (of which he was guilty); the death penalty was commuted to life imprisonment at Muntinlupa, a sentence shared by Manglapus, Enrique Albert and others. From Muntinlupa they staged a spectacular escape which can fill a vivid page in the telling.

The point is, that if Manglapus can talk well, he has done something more than talk. He is made of hero's stuff, and has suffered for Freedom, Nationhood, and Culture—the things he speaks about in this volume of speeches.

Of Manglapus' oratorical powers, one example may suffice. In 1939 he was chosen to represent the Ateneo de Manila in an inter-university oratorical contest sponsored by the Civil Liberties Union and attended by the President of the Commonwealth, Manuel Quezon. The judges awarded the first prize to a brilliant speaker, himself an Atenean, who represented another university. But Quezon disagreed with the judges. The old statesman was impressed by what Manglapus had said, and the distinguished way in which he said it, about the peasants in central Luzon, the *kasama*, slaves of an anachronistic land tenure system and slaves of usury. Quezon gave a special award to Manglapus in a ceremony at Malacñang.

That was undergraduate oratory, but it gave promise of what was to come. The Undersecretary (and later the Secretary) of Foreign Affairs, and the much traveled man in Asia, Australia, America and Europe, has fulfilled that promise. His speeches are witty, pleasant, relaxed, but he has always something important to say. As Father de la Costa says in the Foreword, these speeches have a unity among them because they represent not only principles that have been inherited, but principles that have been thought out and lived.

Of the speeches included here, some merit special attention. One, on our foreign policy in Asia, was delivered before the Manila Harvard Club in September 1955 ("Four Frustrated Forecasts"). Another ("Of Chickens and Subsistence") describes how our foreign policy differed from that of the United States (Cebu Rotary, October 1955). A third ("The Technique of Intervention," College Editors Guild, Manila, December 1955) describes the techniques of communist infiltration from Red China. A fourth, "How High the Wall" (Na-

tional Eucharistic Congress, December 1956) is on Church-State relations. A fifth ("Asian Development and the Conscience of America"), delivered before the World Affairs Council at San Francisco in May 1958, is a forthright but well balanced statement on Philippine-American and American-Asian relations. Finally, there are a number of speeches which attempt to define the nature of Filipino culture and the scope of nationalism. Of these, three are noteworthy: "Some Lessons from Asia" (Manila Junior Chamber of Commerce, January 1959); "Culture, the Broad and Narrow" ("Chronicle Student Tour," Manila, May 1956); and "My *Ropa Vieja* on Nationalism" (Manila Rotary, June 1956).

This book has the disadvantages of a collection of speeches. Some of the material is trivial, much of it ephemeral, and all of it is piecemeal. But if the discourse is disconnected, the thinking is not. Mr. Manglapus thinks soundly, expresses his ideas clearly and forcefully—and if we may judge from past performance, the service that he gives to his principles is no mere lip-service.

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

THE SEATO ROUND TABLE

THE SOUTH-EAST ASIAN ROUND TABLE. A Symposium on Traditional Cultures and Technological Progress in South-East Asia. SEATO. Bangkok. [1959]. Pp. i-viii, 152, ix-xiii.

Of the South-East Asian Round Table held in Bangkok from 27 January to 2 February 1958, we have already spoken (somewhat adversely) in our *Bangkok Diary* published in these pages (VII, August 1958, 338-347). With the printed (abridged) proceedings before us, we may be permitted to add a few more remarks on the subject, particularly since we have been asked the favor of a review by the Public Information Officer of SEATO at Bangkok, a well-known Filipino journalist, Mr. Vicente Albano Pacis.

There were two things about the Round Table which deserved special commendation. The first was that it was well conceived: a conference at which fifteen men from various countries could sit down and discuss the problems of Asia—fifteen men chosen not by their own countries, and therefore not for political or other irrelevant reasons, but chosen by the chairman for their own personal worth as scholars and thinkers. The second was that the subject matter under discussion ("The Impact of Modern Technology upon the Tra-