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Editor's Introduction

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To help rethink the conventional narrative of the Second World War in the Philippines, Nicole CuUnjieng delves into intellectual history by analyzing José P. Laurel's political thought, which exceeds the brief period when he served as Philippine president from October 1943 to August 1945 under Imperial Japan; yet that period provided him the chance to put his thoughts into action. While unmasking the contradictions in Laurel's thinking, CuUnjieng contends that his overriding concern was nationalism, specifically "national survival," in a time of war that he had expected would be prolonged for a few more years. He seized the opportunity to rekindle nationalist sentiment, which in his view US colonial rule had suppressed. Concomitantly he subscribed to eugenicist thinking and the power of education in improving the vigor of the Philippine nation-race and in civilizing non-Christian groups in the country. Far from atypical were his racialized understanding of society and belief in the inevitable race war between the Orient and the Occident—in view of which the Orient needed to "unmask the true nature of Western imperialism," which Laurel deemed as violating human equality under natural law, justifying Pan-Asianism, and propelling the Philippines back to the "Oriental fold." His anti-Western critique was intertwined with notions of universalism, scientific progress, and Pan-Asian solidarity, which he regarded as the framework for national freedom. Even after the Second World War and despite his debacle with postwar collaboration charges, Laurel maintained his anti-Western nationalism. He also played a strategic role in the enactment of the Rizal Law.

The national and the international also meet in Nina Trige Andersen's article, which traces three major currents in the history of Filipina migration to Denmark characterized by contrasting modes of arrival, which have determined the diverse social conditions faced by different generations of migrants. Guest worker immigration started in 1960, and acquired its own momentum as Filipinas encouraged others in the homeland to work in hotels in Denmark. In 1973 it was stopped, followed by a period when marriage and family reunification became the major mode of entry until the late 1990s, when the *au pair* system was introduced. Andersen's transnational "Philippine

history of Denmark” pivots around “The 49ers,” a group of forty-nine women who were contracted in Manila to work for a year as chambermaids in the newly opened Hotel Scandinavia, arriving in Copenhagen in 1973 a mere twenty-one days before labor migration was stopped. Many from this group found ways to extend their stay in Denmark by working in private homes. In this context Danish labor unions were conflicted: some advanced protectionism while others favored internationalism. Although Filipina workers joined labor unions, they were not given equal rights; yet in organizing hotel and restaurant workers the unions found Filipinas to be strategic. Unionizing au pairs, however, has been nearly impossible because, strictly speaking, au pairs are not considered workers but as participants in cultural exchange—exploited, but creative enough to extend their stay as undocumented workers who are constantly on the move from one job to the next. Au pairs are deemed to have compromised the Filipina image, but some 49ers, rather than distancing themselves, assist au pairs as they have discerned a shared history, moving them to overcome generational divides.

In a research note, Peter-Ben Smit examines Gregorio Aglipay’s contextual exegesis of Jesus’ life and seven last words on the cross from the interpretive lens of politics and colonial history. While Aglipay’s exegesis may be seen as too extreme, Smit argues that it carried the influence of European critical strategies and served as precursor of contemporary exegeses that are consciously contextual. This radical interpretation of scripture, of course, cannot be divorced from the fervent antifriar sentiment that animated the Philippine revolution. Hence, Smit’s research note also sheds light on this aspect of the history of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, whose establishment must be understood against this revolutionary backdrop.

Stuart Schlegel’s highly personal reminiscences of William Henry Scott (1921–1993)—Scotty to those who knew him—is a tribute to a scholar who made an incalculable impact on Philippine historiography. But Scotty was not only a well-respected historian, but he was also an Episcopal lay missionary who left a mark on the people of Sagada. Scotty is also fondly remembered for standing up against the Marcos dictatorship. Schlegel recalls Scotty’s humanity, acerbic wit, broad ranging intellect, and devotion to the Philippines, all of which rested on Scotty’s core commitment as a Christian.

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