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The Tribune as a Tool of Japanese Propaganda 1942-1945

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The *Tribune* as a Tool of Japanese Propaganda, 1942-45

RICARDO TROTA JOSE

An earlier article in *Philippine Studies* [38 (1990): 3-27] discussed the *Tribune* at the beginning of the Japanese Occupation in January 1942 and the early difficulties under Japanese control. The present article investigates more deeply the nature of the Japanese control of the *Tribune* and its function as a propaganda tool of the Japanese.

ARTICLES, FUND DRIVES, CONTESTS AND RIDICULE

The *Tribune* issues had unalterably changed after 5 January 1942. The first issues under Japanese rule shrank to tabloid size, half that of the prewar paper. Pages dropped to four, but so did the price—₱.05. Some of the prewar features remained in the first few weeks like American-syndicated comic strips ("The Lone Ranger," "Fritzie Ritz," "Donald Duck," "Tarzan," "Mutt and Jeff"), "Dorothy Dix Says" (etiquette), and a few others.

But the news was completely different. News about the fighting at Bataan was virtually non-existent. Editorials and columns vanished and instead proclamations, military orders and warnings were published in bold print: The Japanese military must be accepted; Filipinos must not hurt or kill Japanese soldiers, under pain of death; if the culprit could not be found, ten men from the neighborhood would be held responsible instead. Jorge Vargas's and other prominent politicians' agreement to collaborate with the Japanese, calls to support the Military Administration, the rapid achievement of "normal" conditions and Japanese victories everywhere received front page news.¹

1. *Tribune*, 5 January 1942. The rest of this section is based largely on various *Tribune* issues, and other sources as noted.

The *Sunday Tribune Magazine* reappeared on 18 January 1942, but it was a poor excuse for a magazine. It was no longer in rotogravure (it was probably too expensive) and contained subtle propaganda, as well as practical tips ("Recipes in Keeping with the Times") and pictorials. But it was printed on newsprint, in tabloid format similar to the regular *Tribune*.

At first Filipino writers tried to write in the styles they had learned before the war. The 15 January 1942 issue was headlined "US Aircraft Carrier Sunk, Tokyo Claims," which implied uncertainty of the actual fact. Later issues dropped the word "claims" and considered all communiqués gospel truth.

Even in the comics one detects a subtle sense of propaganda. The "Mutt and Jeff" cartoons showed the duo clowning around in the Army. In one strip, Jeff strikes an officer and is told he will be court martialed. Jeff beams, believing "court martial" synonymous with field marshal. He is shocked when he is dragged off to the brig.²

Readers naturally were shocked or angry at the change in the *Tribune*. One irate reader gnashed his teeth and confided to his diary: "The staff, although unchanged now is rooting for the Japanese, deprecating the Americans! . . . To write and voice the supposed sentiments of the people, when those who were writing tried only to express the views of the Japanese, of course was resented."³ Another wrote that the *Tribune's* new stand was "indeed a surprise to us, although we knew that the papers were censored by Japanese military officials, they had not been placed under Japanese control and we could not understand why Don Alejandrino should publish anti-American editorials."⁴ A "mute indignation" was felt against the staff.

Before the coming of the Japs, the press was the indisputable symbol of nationalism. . . . It was therefore difficult to reconcile this tradition with what had taken place at that first interview of the Japanese at Parañaque. This complete about-face of the Filipino press without the publisher giving due notice to the subscribers and readers why they had become the mouthpiece of the Japanese invaders caused considerable dismay. The public waited in vain for the staff to walk out in protest.⁵

Once the *Tribune* began reporting according to the Japanese propaganda lines, it maintained the same character until the end. Feeling the importance of continued exposure, the Japanese made the *Tribune* come out seven days a week. Gone was the Sunday day off. (This

2. *Tribune*, 17 January 1942.

3. Eliseo Quirino, *A Day to Remember* (Manila: Benipayo Press, 1961), p. 52.

4. Marcial P. Lichauco, *Dear Mother Putnam* (N.p.: privately printed, 1949), p. 108.

5. Quirino, *A Day to Remember*, p. 52.

policy lasted until June 1943, when, perhaps due to economic problems, the Monday issue was dropped.) As conditions settled in Manila, the number of pages grew to eight, with an eight-page "magazine" on Sunday. The price went up to ₱.10, but there it was to stay until the American air raids started.

Editorials resumed later in 1942, sporadically at first. On the surface, the *Tribune* looked like a regular paper. There was straight news, both local and foreign; there was a provincial news section, occasional comics or cartoons, classified ads, columns and features.

The regular columns were "Our Tomorrow" ("Our Today" after the declaration of independence) by "E. M." (Emiiru Masatomi), which generally called for collaboration and attacked fence-sitting. Another was "Off and On" by "Maharajah" (F. B. Icasiano), which exhibited a genuine pro-Japanese tone. (The column was "off" in November-December 1943 because Icasiano was attending the Greater East Asia Press Conference in Tokyo).

Less regular were the columns of "Don Juan de la Cruz," who also called himself "Commentator," and commentaries by "Ignacio Javier" (Leon Ma. Guerrero). These presented comments favorable to Japan and its war effort, based on the communiqués. One (disgusted) reader wrote that Juan de la Cruz's works were "the last word in journalistic revilement."⁶

One of the regular features in 1942 was "Home Front," edited by the Grau sisters, which carried practical tips for the home, such as recipes, tips on house care and work, and general practical suggestions to ease life in those hard times. Economic realities could not be concealed from this column, much as Japanese propaganda tried to portray a "normal" Philippines. One column, about coconut savings banks, said these

were needed to keep bills of the two smaller denominations because the children have found out that they cannot buy anything with them. It is reported that for this reason the youngsters are in the habit of tearing up the 1-centavo and 5-centavo bills that come their way.

Another spoke of the difficulty of feeding pigs, since there were virtually no leftovers from meals. It suggested that householders could give their pigs dishwater instead!

A minute version of the society page continued to appear throughout the war, in a column titled "Brevities." Also edited by the Grau

6. Manuel Buenafe, *Wartime Philippines* (Manila: Philippine Educational Foundation, 1950), p. 162. Don Juan de la Cruz's son must have been writing too, because there are a few columns by "Juan de la Cruz, Jr."

sisters, it contained news on marriages, debuts, baptisms, parties, engagements and what have you, for families which could still afford the luxury.

The letters to the editor section, "Public Pulse," made a comeback in November. Here, ostensibly, readers could express opinions, but most of those published praised the government. Other letters reflected the conditions of those times—complaints about increased prices, profiteers, thefts in trains and markets, and dishonesty. One letter complained about "human excreta scattered over the sidewalks." Another about the stench of Mulawen bridge (new name of Quezon bridge), and still others about rejection of the ill from hospitals, due to lack of medicines. Despite these, though, it is possible most of the true feelings of the people did not make it into print for the mail was being censored.⁷

The classified ads also gave a picture of the economic situation which could not be censored. In early 1942, most of the ads were of transportation, vehicles and ships leaving for other parts of Luzon or for the Visayas. As the war wore on, the "wanted to buy" ads outnumbered the "for sale" ads. What generally were being sought were real estate (sound investments for those with money) or scrap iron, wire, and other war materials (for the buy and sell business and selling to Japanese). Personal ads continued from the prewar days, a number being cryptic.

The Japanese tried to play down crime stories, to give an impression of stability, and managed to kill the big stories of ambushes, shootings and guerrilla raids. Small-time crimes, though, robberies, killings and the like (usually not connected with the Japanese at all) were published in "Police Notes." Despite these realities, the *Tribune* editorialized: "Most of us who are complaining are forgetting how they felt at this time two years ago."⁸

Other regulars were "Sports Flashes," news on boxing, basketball, and other harmless tournaments, the daily KZRH radio schedule (all other radio stations in Manila were closed), movie and stage ads, which could give a sense of normalcy. On Sundays "Follow the Ponies" gave tips to racing aficionados. On a more cultural level was "Theater Week" by "Eddie's Aunt" (Eddie Infante), a review of what

7. See ADVATIS Translation No. 29, Brief of Prisoners Pending Courts Martial; Report on Censorship of Internal Mail, 1943, p. 8 for typical figures of censored mail; January 1943, for example, lists 241,942 items checked, of which 1,644 were censorable: 20 for gross misrepresentation of the Japanese, and one each for exceedingly pro-US statements and "expressing obstructionist tendencies," among other things.

8. *Tribune*, 4 February 1944.

was going on on the local stage. In January 1943, a Japanese artist introduced "The Boy 'Pilipino'," a comic strip whose main character was a boy devoted to the New Philippines and Japan. Apparently the humor was not well taken or understood, because it did not last a month. With the establishment of the Manila Shimbun-sha, daily Japanese lessons appeared in a corner of the back page. These lessons stalwartly held on until December 1944, when the war returned to the Philippines.

With the declaration of independence in 1943, Tony Velasquez drew a daily comic strip, "KALIBAPI Family," which among other things subtly reminded Manilans and provincianos that provincial life was better than staying in the city with its numerous problems. For a short while, too, there was a small section "Assembly Doings," which summarized how many bills had been passed and how many would be introduced that day (it did not state what the bills were, though). Occasionally there would appear illustrations of "Our Leading Personalities" by Gat and the other staff artists.

No matter how "normal" some of the features may have seemed, or how economic problems were reflected in columns, it was the news and editorial comment that set the tone of the paper. Since much of this was propaganda and Japanese-style newspaper writing, it created an unsavory reputation among many readers.

Foreign news came from Domei or official Japanese Army or Navy communiques. The communiques, which were issued in Tokyo, "imitated classical Japanese painting—artistically foggy with lots of blank spaces." As much as possible, in the early part of the war, announcements of victories were timed to coincide with Japanese holidays, hence, the official report of the surrender of Singapore was on 11 February, Kigensetsu (the anniversary of Japan's foundation). Army Day, 10 March, brought news of the capitulation of the Netherlands East Indies. April 29, the Emperor's Birthday, had announcements of the beginning of the final artillery barrage on Corregidor (although the island fortress would not fall for another week). A foreign observer in Tokyo noted that the communiques were "couched in ready-made formulas and pompous ideograms," such as "invincible navy," "Japan's wild eagles," and "hero-gods."⁹

Naturally, defeats were played down or ignored. There was no news of the 18 April Doolittle bombing of Tokyo. The battle of Midway, a grievous defeat for the Japanese Navy, was reported as a victory, several days after the event. The withdrawal of Japanese forces

9. Robert Guillain, *I Saw Tokyo Burning* (New York: PBJ Books, 1982), pp. 38, 45, 56. Guillain was a French correspondent for Havas (French news agency) in Tokyo.

from Guadalcanal in February 1943 received no mention at all. D-day, the massive invasion of France in June 1944, merited a one-column story: "Foe Air Troops Wiped Out in Normandy." The decisive battle of the Philippine Sea, where the Japanese lost their effective naval air forces, was inverted and turned into a victory: "Enemy Loses One Battleship, Five Aircraft Carriers." Actually, the Americans did not lose any major ships that day. While underground papers screamed about the surrender of Italy in 1943, the *Tribune* placed it below the fold: "Mussolini Forms New Government as Badoglio Surrenders." The fall of Saipan, first of Japan's prewar territories to be lost, was couched in vague terms: "The enemy finally broke through our last resistance line in the southern part of the island with the result that the war situation on that island now indicates complicated aspects."

An underground paper, *The Liberator*, summed up the *Tribune's* war news:¹⁰

Their forces do not retreat. They only 'advance to the rear' 'to shorten their communication lines.' Sometimes they call it 'disengaging tactics,' or 'moving to prepared positions.'

American landings are always 'repulsed by crack Japanese units' with 'heavy casualties on the part of the enemy.'

Damage caused by American air raids is always 'slight.'

All American air raids are either 'nuisance' or 'terror raids' and their bombings are always 'indiscriminate.'

Whenever American submarines attack, they always hit Jap 'hospital ships' and their bombs invariably hit 'ambulance trains.'

There are always industrial or railroad strikes and shortages of either coal or manpower in the United States.

A rift always exists between the U.S. and Britain or between Washington and Chungking.

Every Japanese plane which fails to return to its base either dives into a military objective or blasts itself against an enemy plane.

Their war dispatches all come from the 'frontlines' although we have it on good authority that in most instances printed victories of the Jap forces are concocted either in the Manila office of the Domei News or in the TVT building.

The Anglo-Saxons are fighting in this war to exploit and enslave all Asians while the Japanese are in it to 'liberate' them, including the Koreans and Formosans, we hope.

They are 'sons of heaven' although they look like sons of guns to us.

Local news in 1942 played up collaboration and collaborators. Tojo's promise of independence for the Philippines, Quezon's supposed death

10. *Liberator*, October 1944, p. 10.

(in March), and the return to normalcy in business and in the provinces. Late 1942 brought news of antiguerrilla drives and executions, the KALIBAPI and the Neighborhood Associations, Radio Taiso and the creation of the Manila Shimbun-sha. Speeches of officials were published, as were executive orders and other official policies.

In 1943, the big news was Tojo's first visit (the second visit did not receive as much publicity), preparations for independence and then the independence ceremonies. The death of Don Alejandro Roces was front-page news, but the ambush of Alejandro Jr. and his wife was neglected.

Nineteen forty-four brought up defense preparations—blackout practice, air raid shelters and the like. As the Americans approached and air raids began, the Americans were painted as the enemy who threatened Philippine independence and who insisted on bringing the war to a "peaceful" Philippines. Fence-sitters were constantly lambasted. It was now time to take sides and act.

Like the communiques, many stories were distorted. Crowds in parades were always happy and appeared by the thousands. The Emperor's birthday, 1943, reported eighteen million Filipinos paying homage to the Emperor. This was two million beyond the prewar census of sixteen million! Tojo's welcomers (all were required to attend) were reported as 100,000 when actually they could not have been more than 10,000. Those who attended the parade in his honor a few days later were at most 50,000, but the *Tribune* reported 400,000.¹¹

Other stories carefully omitted unsavory truths. Vicente Barranco covered the first train to Legaspi, a big propaganda affair which marked the repair of all bridges blown up by the USAFFE in December 1941. During the trip, the train had to stop because a bridge had been blown up by the guerrillas. The passengers, including several VIPs, had to wait for a train to come up from Legaspi. The party crossed the river by boat, and then took the other train to Legaspi. The story as published had no mention of this. As far as it was concerned, it was a successful trip.¹² One day the *Tribune* proudly announced that the Japanese had donated 10,000 cases of milk to be sold at prewar prices for undernourished children. Unstated was the fact that the milk had come from the United States and was meant to be distributed for free! Another story reported imported rice arriving in Manila for Filipinos. Actually it was simply rice transferred from north Luzon, and it probably was for the Japanese soldiers.¹³

11. Buenafe, *Wartime Philippines*, p. 191.

12. Barranco interview. His story appeared on 25 March 1943.

13. Buenafe, *Wartime Philippines*, pp. 163-64.

Occasionally the propaganda backfired and a much publicized news item would be quietly phased out when the truth became apparent. One celebrated case involved raising money for a plane for Japan. One Filipino sent in ₱5 with that, and on 9 May 1943, the *Tribune* excitedly announced that "many support fund drive to donate plane to Japan." Many of the *Tribune* staff donated—the reporters ₱1 each, Icasiano and Bautista ₱5, and Roces ₱10. As the days went on, the donations grew with contributions of a few centavos. The list became so shameful that it was relegated to the inside pages and eventually dropped. The last time it appeared, on 14 May the list of donations reached a grand total of only ₱708.21. This was not enough even for a single propeller! (Consider, though, the year-end fund drive which raised ₱96,000 in two weeks.)¹⁴

The *Tribune* dropped all possible sources of intelligence to the enemy. The first director general of the Military Administration, Yoshihide Hayashi, remained unnamed for his entire term, although his photograph appeared regularly. General Masaharu Homma, Commander in Chief of Japanese military forces in the Philippines, also remained anonymous. The weather was also considered a security item, and was accordingly dropped in late 1942. So secret was the weather that when the great flood of November 1943 struck, and the *Tribune* was constrained to come out with a smaller, one page-issue for two days, it gave a lame excuse of "mechanical difficulties." The flood was never mentioned at all, and even the fund drive for the relief of flood victims, sponsored by the paper, simply stated that it was for victims of "the recent emergency." (Oddly, a series of stamps was overprinted with the word "Baha" to raise money for the flood victims.)¹⁵

Propaganda was placed wherever it could. In late 1942, slogans were placed at the bottom of the front page, appealing to people to "Work Every Day the True Independent Way," or proclaiming that "Sampaguita is the Flower, Nippon the Friend," "The Rising Sun of Japan is the Shining Sun of Asia" and "The ABC of the New Order is Act, Build, Collaborate." The short witty sayings found in "Splashes" were used once in a while: "To those who seek freedom: A man and a wife can be happy only when they mutually lose some freedom."

14. Malay interview, 17 August 1983; Armando J. Malay, *Occupied Philippines* (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1967), pp. 116–17 and Lichauco, *Dear Mother Putnam*, pp. 98–99 give more information on this incident.

15. *Tribune*, 16 and 17 November were the one-page affairs. In spite of the flood, the headlines were: "2 Foe Cruisers, 1 Destroyer Sunk" and "3 More War Vessels Sunk" respectively.

The Manila Shimbun-sha sponsored contests which followed the basic propaganda lines: contests for slogans to be used in the paper, essay and novel contests on building the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, on collaboration and on the history of Philippine-Japan relations. Other contests were for songs and music, marches for the New Philippines and a speech contest on Philippine independence. All received much publicity.

Photographs were also sometimes made to lie, to fit propaganda aims. Posed shots of Japanese in church, or playing with children were obvious; one photo of a church missed by a Japanese air raid was used as an example of how Japanese pilots deliberately did not hit churches and other cultural places. (Photos of the Sto. Domingo church ruins, hit by Japanese bombs in December 1941, were not published though). On 13 May 1944, a photo labeled as an American plane, breaking up under anti-aircraft fire, was splashed on the front page. In actuality it was a Japanese plane (it was one of the war's famous American photographs). Another photo showed American ships supposedly fleeing from Japanese forces, but there was no indication that the fleet was fleeing. It may have been advancing as well!

The Japanese writers brought with them a strange new literary style which was ridiculed by some Filipinos. Using Japanese images, they wrote items such as: "Thousands of tiny Filipino flags waved and swished ever so tenderly and yet so expressively, as if to keep time with the pulse beats of the 500,000 [sic] people who had gathered in front of the Legislative Building." This was during the independence ceremonies. When the "magic words" proclaiming independence were uttered, "the throng gave way to tears of joy." One diarist noted that this

was the height of bombast. The writer was indulging in daydreaming when he claimed to have seen tears. On the contrary, the corralled throng was impatient. The people were more concerned with the heat, the difficulty of transportation and the mud on the ground. Only the imaginative reporter seemed to be serious about the affair. Smart alecks drove away the tedium with remarks that were uncomplimentary to the affair and the personages participating. The broadcasts of the proceedings were met with quips and wisecracks.¹⁶

Another very Japanese item:

If we drop a pebble onto the calm surface of a lake, concentric circles radiate from it extending outward according to the force with which we drop the stone. This figure of speech gives us a good idea of what the

16. *Tribune*, 15 October 1943; Buenafe, *Wartime Philippines*, p. 207.

neighborhood association will be. Each association will be like one of the concentric circles which will inevitably extend to the entire nation.¹⁷

The *Tribune Sunday Magazine* was similar in many ways to the *Tribune*, aside from size. It followed the same propaganda lines, albeit on a deeper and more cultural and philosophic level. Japanese writers wrote essays justifying the Greater East Asia War, or did features on Japanese culture and history, while Filipinos wrote articles on Filipino history and culture, including folk tales and histories of Philippine-Japanese relations, the Philippine flag, the Revolution of 1896 and the Philippine-American war. There also were poems, short stories, commentaries on current affairs, and Mang Kiko's "From My Nipa Hut."

The *Sunday Tribune Magazine* dropped out in early 1944, and was replaced by a separate publication, the *Tribune News Weekly*, which carried straight news, both international and local, a map of the world and a few commentaries. "From My Nipa Hut" remained, for Icaiano was editor of the *News Weekly*.

A total of five rotogravure specials came out during the occupation, similar in format to the prewar *Sunday Tribune Magazine*, but mainly pictorial features on the war, the Japanese armed forces, as well as reportage of Japanese successes, in words and pictures. The first was a supplement on the Emperor's birthday, 1942; the next was on 27 May 1942, Navy Day. The third came out on the anniversary of the start of the Greater East Asia War, 7 July 1942 (the anniversary of the beginning of Japan's war against China). The fourth appeared on 8 December 1942, containing a chronology of the war. The last supplement appeared on 14 October 1943, Philippine Independence Day under the Japanese. In addition, the 25 December 1942 issue of the paper featured a colored map of Greater East Asia. That for 12 September 1943 contained a Philippine flag, in color.

Few people were naive enough to believe the *Tribune*. "Baloney," "utterly despicable," "wishful thinking" were some expressions describing the way readers felt about the news in the paper.

The Japanese indulge in self-deception," wrote Victor Buencamino, head of the National Rice and Corn Corporation. "False items will only make the people lose faith in the paper. They should read the story of the boy who kept shouting 'Wolf! Wolf!' even when there were no wolves. . . . Propaganda is effective only when it appears authentic."¹⁸

17. *Tribune*, 7 January 1943.

18. Victor Buencamino, "Manila Under Japanese Occupation," pt. 2, *Bulletin of the American Historical Collection*, October-December 1979, p. 12.

The propaganda was not effective. No lie, one writer noted, "however great and obvious, was too much for the *Tribune* and its sister publications. Abuse, vituperation, and fairy tales were their main stock in trade."¹⁹

It was more for curiosity than for information that people read the paper. Some readers read their papers upside down, in public, indicating that the news was inverted. One writer believed that whenever the *Tribune* made "a statement adverse to the American air force, an American raid is sure to follow." Even newsboys sometimes joined in the fun. "Balitang cochero! Balitang cochero!" they shouted.²⁰

Buencamino also noted: "Facts are easier to believe than what appears in paper and ink. Slapping, bayonetting—all these sink deeper into one's being than words." It was fairly easy to disprove much of the local news. On 28 January 1942, the *Tribune* condemned the American night bombing of UST. But everybody knew it was Nielson field in the south that had been bombed.²¹

Stories were either too fantastic to believe or completely false. Gen. Homma's entry into Manila on 3 June was reported as having been attended by many welcomers. The truth was

there were very few and the majority were forced to attend the parade. The people did not applaud the troops. There was none of the usual fanfare and cheers from the crowd. Men, women and even children looked on grimly, sadly.²²

The readership responded with several jokes to ridicule the paper. One had Saint Peter letting war casualties into Heaven. A Japanese soldier came in, having died in the Battle of Guam. Saint Peter retorted: "Scram, you liar! You can't fool me. I read the *Tribune*." Pugo and Tugo, the irrepressible comedy duo, joked one day: "Who sank the American Navy?" asked Pugo. Tugo's guesses—the Japanese, Italians, Germans—all proved wrong. Tugo gave up. "Who?" "The *Tribune*." DOMEI became an acronym meaning Department of Most Erroneous Information, or was simply "Dummy news." Slogans used by the *Tribune* were not spared. Parodies arose, such as "America Indoctrinizes, Nippon Parasatizes," "Co-Prosperity is a Made-in-Japan Balloon, It deflates too soon!" and "Nippon—Starvation, Democracies—Liberation!"²³

19. Buenafe, *Wartime Philippines*, p. 162.

20. Buencamino, *Manila Under Japanese Occupation*, part 1, (July-September 1979), p. 13.

21. *Ibid.*, part 3 (January-March 1980) p. 28.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Lichauco, *Dear Mother Putnam*, p. 138.

Guerrilla papers, unregistered shortwave radios and rumors provided alternate sources of information which short-circuited the Japanese attempts to control news, and further exposed the false war reports of the *Tribune*.

Sometimes, however, the *Tribune* itself would (deliberately or not is unknown) lapse and place the Japanese in a bad light. "Public Pulse" and "Home Front" told of the economic situation. An interview between Paulino Santos and guerrilla leader Salipada Pendatun brought out embarrassing questions about the Japanese, such as why they were staying on even with the Philippines independent.²⁴

There were, too, typographical errors which destroyed the substance of certain items. On 27 May 1943, a wayward "s" slipped into the right place. Instead of reigning as the protector of Greater East Asia, the Japanese Navy instead "will resign forever. . . ." And on 5 November 1944, a "t" was dropped from the headline, resulting in "AIWAN, PI BATTLES." The closeness of "Aiwan" to the Tagalog "Ewan" (I don't know) is intriguing.

So, the *Tribune* continued on, with all its propaganda and its overlooked utilitarian features amidst a skeptical, disbelieving audience, naughty typesetters and guerrilla staffers.

THE END AND A BEGINNING

As the war continued, and deteriorated for Japan, the *Tribune* maintained its role as mouthpiece for the Japanese. War news remained lopsided, but between its lines the careful reader could discern the true state of affairs. Other sections of the *Tribune* were useful. "Home Front" columns were clipped and filed for reference, the sports features were entertaining, and the features on Philippine history and culture interesting, if not tainted by propaganda. But it was the headlines, the war reportage and news on collaboration, all the falsehoods and hypocrisy, so different from actual conditions, that remained in the eyes of the readers.²⁵

By September 1944 the *Tribune* was beginning to feel the pinch of the worsening economic conditions. "Pay no more" it said under the price. Opportunistic newsboys were obviously charging more than ₱0.10. People still bought the paper, maybe not to take seriously, maybe for entertainment, maybe for collecting. The first air raid on

24. *Tribune*, 22 April 1944.

25. Malay interviews; Raymond Quetchenbach, "The Leyte Landing and the Japanese Controlled Press," *Leyte-Samar Studies*, (XI:2, 1977) shows how much could be read between the lines in reportage (or nonreportage) of the Leyte landings.

Manila, on 21 September 1944, brought an unchecked inflation of prices. The *Tribune* had to keep up. The next day, when it reported the raid, it still cost ten centavos but had shrunk to two pages. When it regained its four-page format on the twenty-third, its price had doubled to ₱0.20.

The air raids increased. Leyte was invaded and the Battle of Leyte Gulf was fought. The *Tribune* continued, publishing extras within hours of a raid with ridiculous claims of victory. The reports of American ship and plane losses were laughable and so obviously false that people cursed it more. But with liberation so close it probably did not matter.

Economic pressures forced the *Tribune* to shrink further. In November it withered in size, and in December the shrunken four-page tabloid cost ₱0.50. By January the paper had dropped to two pages, and cost ₱0.50, "pay no more." It is not sure whether people were still buying the paper since money was tight and conditions abnormal. Even the staff was no longer reporting to work regularly. Everyone was busy fending for himself.²⁶

And still the *Tribune* screamed Japanese successes, not in the Pacific any more, but in China and Burma, and it continued to report grievous American losses in Luzon and even Leyte! (Leyte had been secured by American forces in December, but the *Tribune's* last issue heralded "Foe Losses in Leyte Mounting"!) A small group of Japanese remained to the end to keep the newspaper running. Others had been drafted and had been pulled north or east of Manila with the bulk of the Japanese forces. Most of the Mainichi Shimbun-sha personnel had withdrawn to Bayombong, planning to go to Tuguegarao where they believed a company plane would rescue them. A few remained in Manila and were absorbed into the defense forces. Still others joined forces in the Ipo Dam area. A total of fifty-two died, either in combat or of wounds or sickness.²⁷

The newspaper continued publishing until 3 February 1945. Maharajah (Icasiano) continued to write to the end, discussing writers, the New Leaders Association and profiteering, as if nothing else was happening around him. "Brevities" announced a baptism and a wedding as late as 2 February and "Sports Flashes" could still report the outcome of a basketball game held on 1 February. The Nippongo

26. Barranco interview, Malay interviews.

27. Mainichi Shimbun-sha, *Tozai Namboku* [The Four Directions] (Tokyo?: Mainichi Shimbun-sha, n.d.), p. 98; pp. 112-302 are reminiscences on those who died in the Philippines, and articles on the travails of life at Ipo Dam and in North Luzon. Interview with Capt. Hitomi, 6 June 1985, raises the company plane story.

corner had disappeared, but the *Tribune* continued adding ciphers to its figures, stating on 3 February that the Americans had suffered 10,000 casualties in the Leyte campaign. American units in the Clark Field area "are still engaged in a death struggle with the Nippon forces" and Japanese troops were stopping the southward drive of American forces at Guimba, Nueva Ecija.

But the southward drive was not stopped, because later that day American soldiers entered Manila amidst much Filipino rejoicing. The *Tribune* never appeared again. As a finishing touch the Japanese set fire to the TVT building on Florentino Torres. Its offices burned, records lost and presses destroyed, the *Tribune* was dead. Its staff tried to survive in the battle of Manila where a few were wounded. Victorino Lorico suffered a shrapnel wound in the Intramuros area.²⁸

Already gone were Amando Dayrit and Rafael Roces of prewar days. Both were executed because of their guerrilla activities. Don Castillo Yñigo and Pablo Viray, who had continued to work for the *Tribune* during the Occupation but sidelined with the guerrillas, had also been executed. Pedro Aunario, advanced in years, died a natural death in January 1945. "Mang Kiko" (F.B. Icasiano) was to die under ironic and tragic circumstances. Seeking safety with Japanese forces in Antipolo, he was killed by Japanese soldiers who probably did not know who he was, or saw him as just a bother and another mouth to feed. Alejandro Roces and his son, of course, had been gone for over a year.²⁹

But with the death of the *Tribune* also went the Hodobu, Manila Shimbun-sha (Philippine Publications, Inc.) and Japanese control. Despite the destruction in Manila, the press was once again free, perhaps its freest ever. The big papers, presses in ruins, were stilled, and the field was thus wide open to anyone. "Any newspaper editor, reporter, proofreader, or advertising solicitor who could dig up a Platen press and a box of type could put out a paper — and did."³⁰

Vicente Navarro of the *Tribune* staff issued *The Victory* from his typewriter, as early as 8 February 1945, when fighting was at its peak. The next day, the US Office of War Information put out *Free Philip-*

28. Malay interview, 22 June 1984.

29. Ibid. "Liling" Roces' and Dayrit's role in the guerrilla resistance is mentioned by J.B.L. Reyes, "The Free Philippines Group During the Japanese Occupation" (Paper read at National Historical Institute, 17 September 1981) and Teodoro Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years* (Quezon City: R.P. Garcia, 1965), pp. 685-86.

30. Armando J. Malay, "When Manila had Scores of Papers," *Deadline*, October 1952, p. 18. The discussion of the postwar papers which follows is largely based on this source.

*pin*es, utilizing the presses of Carmelo and Bauermann, which had fortunately not been burned. Navarro set up his own regular, printed newspaper, the *Victory News* on 19 February, and several ex-*Tribune* men joined him. Roberto Villanueva, Ernesto del Rosario and Anacleto Benavides set up the *Manila Post* in March, broke away when they got into a disagreement with the publisher, and set up another newspaper, run by them, the *Chronicle*.³¹

Dave Boguslav, now released from the UST internment camp, joined the *Chicago Sun* as a correspondent. Joe Bautista would eventually join the Roces's *Manila Times*.

The Roces family met and decided to revive Don Alejandro's newspapers. The Ramon Roces press, which had printed *Liwayway* and its sister magazines, was intact. Since the name of the *Tribune* was too badly tainted, the Roces family decided to resurrect the *Manila Times*, which Don Alejandro had bought long before the war. Its maiden issue appeared on 27 May, as a weekly. By September it had become a daily. Boguslav was asked to edit the paper, which he agreed to do. Few of the original *Tribune* staffers came back, as they were busy with their own papers, but later many returned. Vicente Guzman, formerly of the *Bulletin* but with the *Tribune* during the Occupation, decided to stay with the *Times* rather than return to the *Bulletin*.³²

Tribune writers had no difficulty getting jobs after the war. It seems there was no stigma attached to most of them, no grudge held against them by the public. Malay, fearing the US Army Counter Intelligence Corps wanted him for collaboration, went to its office in Bilibid Prison. He was not wanted and was told to go home. "There was much demand for services of experienced newsmen. . . . People seemed either to have forgotten or forgiven." The paper was dead, the Japanese were defeated and the *Tribune* had killed no one.³³

At least three of the *Tribune* men would have their past catch up with them. Roberto Villanueva was investigated by the CIC, but the findings were not enough to warrant the filing of an indictment. Joe Bautista was accused of treason for being editor of the *Tribune*, for the article praising Tojo, for signing the joint declaration of the Greater East Asia Press Conference, for an article endorsing Laurel's declaration of war and for his article in the *Philippine Review*. The case was dismissed one day after the first hearing, because "the necessary two

31. Ibid.

32. Luis Serrano, *History of the Manila Times*, Philippine Colophon, March-June 1966, p. 14.

33. Malay interview, 23 February 1984.

witnesses to the overt act are not available." It is possible that Dave Boguslav may have interceded for Bautista as well.³⁴

Vicente J. Guzman, KALIBAPI spokesman, Board of Information member and *Tribune* writer, faced more problems. He was indicted on three counts: speaking for the KALIBAPI, uttering pro-Japanese statements after his 1943 trip to Japan, and being a member of the Board of Information. A ₱20,000 bail was set, and hearings were set in 1946. The case dragged on, to be finally resolved by Roxas's amnesty proclamation.³⁵

The rest of the staff settled down in their new newspapers. The *Tribune* was dead, but out of its ashes rose the *Manila Times*. And it was to the *Times* that many of the former *Tribune* men and women returned. The spirit of the original "independent Filipino daily," before it was tainted by the Japanese occupation, lived on.

34. Memo for Solicitor General, 11 March 1946, re: Roberto Villanueva, Folder 277-9; People of the Philippines vs. Jose P. Bautista, People's Court Case No. 3525, Information, and Motion to Dismiss, all in People's Court records, U.P. Archives; Malay interview, 22 June 1984.

35. People of the Philippines vs. Vicente J. Guzman, People's Court Case No. 1851, information and petition for dismissal, 14 February 1948, People's Court Records, U.P. Archives.