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## **Occupation: The Later Years** **by Benito J. Legarda Jr.**

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# Book Reviews

BENITO J. LEGARDA JR.

## **Occupation: The Later Years**

Quezon City: Vibal Publishing House, for De la Salle University-Manila, 2007. 263 pages.

When college students were asked in a history class at the Ateneo de Manila to read some chapters of Benito Legarda's previous book *Occupation '42*, several commented that they enjoyed reading the stories in the book. They also said that there should be more history books written this way. *Occupation: The Later Years*, a continuation of *Occupation '42*, is thus a welcome addition to the list of books written by Filipinos on the Japanese occupation of the Philippines. Like *Occupation '42*, it is not a comprehensive history of the occupation years but a collection of the author's articles from a column in the weekly *Philippines Free Press*. It is written in an informal journalistic style that appeals not only to the public but also to students who complain that most history books are written in a formal and boring manner.

Most of the author's articles were arranged not in the order of publication but in the chronological sequence of events, starting from 1943 to the early days of liberation in 1945. Other articles with certain themes that encompass a wide time span have been grouped separately. There are sixty chapters that are grouped into three parts. Part I, "Resignation and Hope," includes chapters 1 to 18; Part II, "Refuge and Resistance," includes chapters 19 to 22; and Part III, "The Terrible Cost of Freedom," contains chapters 23 to 60. One notices, however, that some facts have been repeated several times in different chapters. For instance, the information about Ramon Oriol being a victim of the Kempei Tai has been repeated in at least three

chapters. Maybe a separate chapter should have been written about Oriol and other victims with similar experiences.

Having lived through the occupation years, the author gives his recollection and personal impressions of certain events in most of the chapters. The author's other sources of information include: the wartime diary of the author's father, materials from the papers of the author's mother, interviews with the author's other family members and friends; and from books personally chosen by the author on the occupation years. In some chapters, the author offers a book review of some noteworthy books on the occupation years such as Venicio Jalandoni's *A Silent Sacrifice*, Frank Ephraim's *Escape to Manila; From Nazi Tyranny to Japanese Times*, Eliseo A. Rio's *Rays of a Setting Sun*, Lourdes Montinola's *Breaking the Silence*, and several others that are discussed in chapter 50, "Readings for the Festival of Death."

Some chapters pay tribute to certain personalities such as Benito Soliven, Venicio Jalandoni, Trinidad P. Legarda, Luis Taruc, and Manuel Colayco. Both Soliven and Jalandoni served in Bataan, participated in the Death March, and were incarcerated at Camp O'Donnell in Capas, Tarlac. Soliven was a well-respected political figure who died in January 1943, while Jalandoni survived the occupation years. The author recounts that at the end of the war, upon seeing that his house had burned down, Jalandoni declares: "To me the destruction did not matter as much as the prospects of the rebuilding. I looked forward to tomorrow" (9). According to the author, Jalandoni is indeed a "worthy member of our greatest generation" (ibid.).

Trinidad Legarda, the author's mother, was the chairman of the General Geronimo Convalescent Home for released prisoners of war. In 1943 this home lacked a sufficient supply of food and medicine for its inmates. Despite these problems, Mrs. Legarda tried her best to brighten the lives of the former soldiers. She invited them to her birthday celebration in her home on 28 March 1943.

Luis Taruc, the former commander of the Hukbalahap, turned out to be a good friend of the author's mother. The author, however, had only met Taruc a few years ago during a symposium held by the National Historical Institute on the Battle of Manila. In chapter 22, "A Wartime Leader Passes Away," the author describes Taruc as a "Filipino patriot and tireless champion of social causes," who "has a secure niche in Philippine history" (92).

Manuel Colayco was the head of the Manila unit of the Allied Intelligence Bureau. He used the nom de guerre Edwin C. Weal. During the

liberation years, he was one of two Filipinos who helped the Flying Column reach the Santo Tomas Internment Camp. He was hit by a grenade that led to his death on 10 February 1945. The author describes Colayco as the "first Filipino martyr of the Battle for the Liberation of Manila."

The author mentions one well-known rabid supporter of the Japanese, Pio Duran. The latter was a former classmate and good friend of the author's father, Benito Legarda Sr. Duran was instrumental in the release of Ramon Oriol, a good friend of the author's father, from the hands of the Kempei Tai, as well as the release of the author's father who was also detained by the Japanese. After the war, when Duran was captured by the American CIC, the author's father did all his best to return the favor that Duran did for him during the occupation years.

Although the author does not mention it, one finds in the incomplete trial record of Pio Duran the name of Benito Legarda Sr. as a witness for the defense of Duran. Duran was a treason indictee who had a hard time securing the approval of judges in the People's Court to grant him bail. Duran's treason case would drag on, long after the January 1948 amnesty proclamation granted by Pres. Manuel Roxas to the political, economic, and cultural collaborators. It would be interesting to know the views of the author on the Filipino collaborators during the occupation years. Does he believe them to be guilty of treason or not?

The other chapters point to some details that many have not noticed regarding the occupation years, such as the following: (1) the Bataan Death March, which took place in 1942, became known to the outside world only in January 1944; (2) a big storm occurred in 1943; (3) local films could not be produced in the latter part of the occupation years because by then celluloid had become a critical item; (4) prewar American films were reshowed during the latter part of the occupation years; (5) the Cebu Area Command, under the leadership of Capt. James Cushing, was responsible for sending the Z Plan of the Japanese Navy to the Allied forces in Australia; (6) the commandeering of all types of vehicles by the Japanese even affected the funeral arrangements of some families, like the Legardas; (7) it was not yet dark when the First Cavalry Division reached Manila on 3 February 1945; and (8) Manila was the only Allied capital in the Pacific that was destroyed during the liberation years.

The author clearly explains the major battles during the liberation years. He discusses D-Day for the Allied forces in Europe, the Battle of the Philip-

pine Sea, the Battle for Leyte Gulf, the American offensive in the Visayas and Mindanao, the taking of Ipo Dam on 17 May 1945, and the Besang Pass victory on 14 January 1945. He says that one should pay more attention to our victories rather than to our losses.

Several chapters were devoted to the liberation of Manila or the “Rape of Manila.” In Chapter 48, “Manila Holocaust: Massacre and Rape,” the author states that the killing of innocent civilians by the Japanese in Manila was “deliberate and methodical” (188). As Richard Connaughton, John Pimlott, and Duncan Anderson state in *The Battle for Manila* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1995), the Japanese announced that all Filipinos, including women and children, in Manila were to be considered as “guerrillas” and therefore must be killed. This announcement allowed the Japanese soldiers to indulge in the mass murder of Manila’s noncombatant civilian population, many of whom sought sanctuary in schools, hospitals, and convents.

According to the author, “Filipinos are a forgiving and perhaps forgetful lot” (xiv). How true! Former President Quirino said it all when he pardoned the remaining Japanese war criminals in the Philippines at the end of his term. This was then considered as a magnanimous gesture on the part of the president, considering that the Japanese killed his wife and some of his children during the liberation of Manila. But then one agrees with the author that we “owe it to our hallowed dead to keep alive the memory of their suffering” (247).

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RAQUEL A. G. REYES

## **Love, Passion and Patriotism: Sexuality and the Philippine Propaganda Movement**

Singapore: National University of Singapore, 2008; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008. x, 304 pages.

Raquel Reyes’s *Love, Passion and Patriotism* commences with an account of the sexual dalliance of the Filipino *ilustrado* Jose Panganiban with a married Spanish woman while he was a medical student in Barcelona. Such displays of manliness through sex promoted camaraderie and solidarity among the

young and virile *ilustrados* abroad. They somehow equated such occasions to patriotic love, for it was through these expressions of love, passion, and sex that they were, in fact, asserting Filipino manliness—and identity—in the face of racist colonial prejudices and insults.

The object of this study is clearly defined: Filipino *propagandistas* who lived and immersed themselves in Europe for no less than eight years. They could enjoy unperturbed dedication to their studies in Europe primarily because they were sustained by their affluent and influential families in the Philippines.

Chapter 1 opens with 1869 Manila, how the political and cultural changes that occurred there influenced the ideals—and ideas relating to sex and love—of these young propagandistas and how “Spain” and Catholicism permeated and governed different aspects of colonial life: conduct, speech, manner of dressing, social decorum, even courtship. *Urbanidad*, defined as a shift from archaic precolonial practices to a more cosmopolitan, European way of life, was a consequence of living in a modernizing city with an emerging bourgeois population. It was in Manila, the point of origin of these propagandistas, where they were exposed to propriety and conventions relating to courtship, marriage, and monogamy as well as to the licentious side of urban living: prostitution, sexual diseases, and *querida* relationships.

Chapter 2, entitled “Encountering *La Parisienne*: Juan Luna and the Challenge of Modern Femininity,” clearly reflects a double standard when it comes to men and women. While modernity and worldliness form a man’s character, they have an adverse effect on women. However, a sophisticated woman would, in fact, pose a debilitating threat to the sanity of men, as reflected in the case of Juan Luna and the wife whom he had slain. Various paintings by Luna are explored and analyzed as a reflection of the development of his personal, social, and even thought life abroad. The colors and contrasts used by Luna in his paintings are said to accentuate class consciousness in relation to social respectability.

In Chapter 3, the setting moves to Spain, where the young *ilustrados* became disillusioned with the backwardness of Spain and the ignorance of its citizens, a sharp contrast from the glorified Spain represented in the colonies. Rightly so, the first subheading of this chapter is “Disenchantment.” Through the essays of Antonio Luna, the propagandistas’ notion of *amor propio* or patriotic manhood is scrutinized. Writings that include abject criticism and negative observations of Spain at that time were perceived, accord-