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Clearing the Air: The Basic Conflict

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Book Reviews

CLEARING THE AIR

THE BASIC CONFLICT: DEMOCRACY VERSUS COMMUNISM.

By Melchor P. Aquino. Manila: Research Institute of the Philippines; Far East Publishing Corporation, 1960. 91pp.

Since the Philippines attained her independence some fifteen years ago, various international problems have confronted our young nation. Among these problems were the Korean War, the civil strife in Indonesia, membership in the SEATO, trade with Red China, establishment of missile bases in the Philippines, and a host of others. Practically all of these problems, however, are the direct results or manifestations of one worldwide, all embracing conflict: the conflict between Democracy and Communism.

The ultimate reduction of all our present and recent foreign policy issues to this basic issue, and the straightforward analysis of this basic issue, constitute the greatest value of the book under review. Separate issues, specially when they involve vastly differing objects, tend to distract the mind and draw it away from the main trunk of the problem. Mr. Melchor P. Aquino, diplomat, political commentator and journalist, in his concise and unflinchingly direct style, insulates the reader from this danger.

Mr. Aquino's book starts provocatively with a chapter on the slipshod conduct of Philippine foreign policy." Entitled "Diplomacy by Ear", the chapter evokes both pain and laughter and at the same time gives the reader a sense of terror at the stark tragedy that lies waiting. Then follow chapters of straight, stimulating and incisive probing into the questions of neutralism, trade and amity ties with Red China, and diplomatic relations with Russia. But the most gripping part of the eight-chapter monograph is the last chapter on the question of missile bases and national survival.

In this last chapter, Mr. Aquino quotes from Allen Drury's novel, **ADVISE AND CONSENT**:

"If it (nuclear war) did happen, Senator (Richardson)", the nominee (Leffingwell) said quietly, "nothing would be left of the world."

"And if it did not, and we found that we had yielded ourselves beyond redemption simply because of the fear that it might, nothing would be left of us," Arly said with equal quietness.

Mr. Aquino says in this last chapter: "The faith of the Gordon Deans and the Senator Richardsons is the answer of free men to the counsel of fear of the Bob Leffingwells and the Toynbees. And when one comes right down to the bedrock of the concept and system of collective security, it is an act of faith." Indeed, the author states in his preface that his monograph is, in a true and profound sense, a statement of faith. But after reading the book, one is tempted to add that it is also a statement of logic and common sense.

JEREMIAS U. MONTEMAYOR

THE ARCHIVES OF CHRISTENDOM

READINGS IN CHURCH HISTORY. Volume I: From Pentecost to the Protestant Revolt. Edited by Colman J. Barry, O.S.B. Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1960. xx, 633 p. \$7.50.

This book fulfills a great need of students of Church history. In any field of history, but more particularly in this, there is no substitute for an acquaintance with the sources.

The documents presented in this volume are of great interest. Together, they present the most varied collection that this reviewer has seen assembled in one convenient volume. A chart at the back of the book gives the correspondences between the parts of the book and those of six standard Church-history texts. This will be of great assistance to the student. It is, in fact, chiefly for the seminary student that this book is intended, although it will also be most useful in college and even graduate courses.

Church history will remain largely unintelligible unless viewed against the broader background of general history. It is therefore pleasing to note that Father Barry has given breadth to his collection by the inclusion of non-ecclesiastical documents which are nevertheless essential for an understanding of Church policy and practice. Thus, the section on "The Assault in the East" includes an excerpt from the Koran; the section on "The Medieval Synthesis" includes several documents on the guilds.