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Encyclopedias of the Philippines

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Book Reviews

ENCYCLOPEDIAS OF THE PHILIPPINES

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE PHILIPPINES. Edited by Zoilo M. Galang. Second and third edition. Exequiel Floro. Manila. 1950-1958. Twenty volumes.

There are, for practical purposes, at least two authoritative encyclopedias of the Philippines. Neither one is called by that name, but both are in fact encyclopedic in scope and authoritative in content. One was published in Washington in 1900, the other in New Haven about 1955.

The first of these is entitled: *El archipiélago filipino: colección de datos geográficos, estadísticos, cronológicos y científicos relativos al mismo, entresacados de anteriores obras ú obtenidos con la propia observación y estudio*. It was published by the United States government in Washington in 1900, but was prepared by the Jesuit Fathers of the Manila Observatory and of the Philippine Mission of the Society of Jesus. The first volume (containing 708 pages of text and an additional 170 plates on unnumbered pages) consists of nine treatises (*tratados*), namely: *Corografía, Etnografía, Estado de cultura, Notas histórico-cronológicas, Orografía, Etnografía, Giognosia, Fitografía, and Zoografía*. The second (containing 469 pages of text and an additional 137 plates, figures and graphs) consists of three treatises namely: *Climatología, Focos sísmicos, and Variación cíclica del magnetismo terrestre en Manila*. Besides these two volumes, there is also a larger but thinner volume containing an Atlas of the Philippines. All three volumes were prepared under the direction of Father Jose Algué S.J., Director of the Manila Observatory.

The second, compiled fifty-five years later (and this time in English), is a four volume "handbook" not printed but multigraphed, and not really published but rather "produced as working papers" by the Human Relations Area Files Inc. (HRAF) at Yale University in New

Haven, Connecticut. There are 56 monographs in this series, each one produced under a subcontract by a different university. Among the universities that have contributed monographs to this series are Yale, Harvard, Chicago, Indiana, Stanford, Cornell, California, N.Y.U., Columbia.

The four volumes on the Philippines are monograph number 16 in this series, (monograph number 5 of the University of Chicago). It bears a modest title (*Area Handbook on the Philippines*). It was produced under the general editorship of Dr. Fred Eggan, with Drs. Evett D. Hester and Norton S. Ginsburg as co-supervisors with Eggan, and with Dr. Robert B. Fox and Father Frank Lynch S.J. as directors of research. The research staff, besides the above, consisted of Father Jacques Amyot S.J., Moises Bello, Charles D. Callender, John Donoghue, Charles R. Kaut, Melvin Mednick, Stella Paulskas, Richard K. Pope, Willis E. Sibley, George H. Smith Jr. All of these were connected with the Philippine Studies Program of the University of Chicago.

Volume I contains eight chapters: General Character of the Society, The Land, Modern History, Culture History, The People, Language, Demography and Settlement, Social Organization. Volume II contains two chapters: Organized Religion, and Education. Volume III contains six chapters: Communications, Artistic and Intellectual Expression, Political Structure, Health and Sanitation, History and Character of the Economy, Agriculture. Volume IV contains eight chapters: Fishing, Mining, Forestry, Industry, Transportation, Overseas Trade, The Ilocano, The Moros. This last volume also has a General Bibliography. In addition, several of the chapters throughout the four volumes have their own specific bibliographies. Except for the last two chapters, most of the material was taken from the Tagalog-speaking provinces.

The four volumes are paginated continuously. There are 1775 pages (exclusive of the general bibliography). Included in these pages are 16 maps, 13 figures, and 269 tables.

The scholarly character of these two works is unmistakable. Both, within the limitations of their respective scope and date of publication, are invaluable mines of information and may be recommended to scholars for ready reference.

Compared with these two works, the twenty volume production that calls itself the *Encyclopedia of the Philippines* is a travesty of scholarship. It contains some very valuable material, mixed, unfortunately (we might even say drowned) "with baser matter."

The first edition of this *Encyclopedia* (printed by Vera and Sons) appeared in ten volumes in 1935-1936. (Even on this point of date, the second-third edition under review is inaccurate, referring to its own

first edition as of 1934-35.) After the Japanese War, a second edition was prepared but the plates were destroyed in the fire that burned down the McCullough printing establishment in October 1949. The second edition was therefore never published. A third edition was promptly prepared, with the first two volumes appearing in 1950 and the last four in 1958.

The first (10-volume) edition of this *Encyclopedia*, despite obvious deficiencies and inaccuracies, did seem to make an honest effort at presenting factual information on things Philippine, even if the effort was inadequate to the intention. This honest effort to present factual information is, unfortunately, not so evident in the 20-volume edition under review.

In the first place, there is little or no attempt at a systematic approach to the subjects under discussion. Neither is there an attempt to give brief concise information on matters listed under an alphabetical (or a subject) heading, such as for instance is found in the *Britannica* or other standard encyclopedias. Instead we find a collection of speeches, of "sayings," of articles sometimes valuable, more often worthless. The *Encyclopedia* is long on rhetoric, short on facts, figures, or arguments.

The result is that one cannot go to this "encyclopedia" for reliable information on Philippine archaeology, ethnography, orography, or almost anything else. Such information is either not given or, when given, not reliable or not easily found.

In the second place, the editing is unscholarly. Often there are no bibliographical data. Speeches are reproduced, often without information as to when the speech was delivered, or whether, and when or where, it was published. In Volume I (Literature), a very large portion of the book (81 pages) is devoted to a listing of Filipino proverbs—but the proverbs are in English; we are not given the original, and no mention is made of where the proverbs come from. In Volume XVI (History) we are given much-reduced reproductions of seven maps of the Philippines. The sources are not given. One of them is merely entitled "Map printed in Manila, 18th Century." It is obviously Father Murillo Velarde's map of 1734, but that fact is not indicated.

Thirdly, little or no attempt (except in some exceptional cases) has been made to bring information up to date. On Philippine art (Volume VII) we find the same inadequate article (by Fabian de la Rosa) that had appeared in the 1935 edition. How much better it would have been to reprint de la Rosa's article (for its historical value) and to print after it a thorough, up-to-date treatment on Philippine art by the outstanding authority on the subject, Fernando Zóbel. On the Catholic Church, the same article (by Father Fray Serapio Tamayo O.P.)

appears in the 1952 volume as had appeared in the 1935 edition: which, besides being out of date, is swallowed up in a highly tendentious and inaccurate article on religion in the Philippines (by Camilo Osias).

And this takes us to the fourth, and possibly the worst defect of this *Encyclopedia*: its tendentiousness. In the volumes on literature, on biography, and especially on religion, we find essays or speeches or other material highly anti-Catholic in tone and content, and containing no factual or informational value. To mention one instance; on page 213 of Volume X (religion), a chapter entitled "Sacred Tolerance" turns out to be, not a scientific or historical treatise on religious toleration, but a sermon, highly personal and emotional, with the following footnote following its title: "The general acclaim accorded the address, "Sacred Tolerance", delivered by Jorge Bocobo at the Annual Session of the Supreme Council of the Thirty-third and Last Degree, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, has prompted the Supreme Council to have the address printed for free distribution as a form of public service."

Perhaps that footnote should be enough commentary on the scholarly status of this "encyclopedia."

If other commentary were needed, perhaps it would be sufficient to mention that the editor, Mr. Zoilo Galang, on the title page of Volume X, gives his qualifications as follows: "Author of *The Best Thing in the World, Unisophical Library, The Small Still Voice, Perlas ng Silangan, Life, Death and Immortality*." To these qualifications, he adds (in Volume XII) the fact that he is author of such works as *Bucking the Tides, Roses and Crosses, Meanwhile, and Masonic Lectures*. But in Volume I he gives as his qualifications the fact that he is author of *Modern Filipino Readers* (elementary school textbooks?) and that he is the "Founder of Unisophy."

"Unisophy" is a subject to which one third of the volume on Religion (Volume X) is dedicated. While only a few pages are devoted to the Roman Catholic Church, the religion of the overwhelming majority of Filipinos, and only a few pages are given over to Aglipayanism or to the *Iglesia ni Kristo*, both religions with considerable mass following, fully one third of the volume (84 pages) is devoted to explaining the tenets, ideals, symbols and insignia of the religion which Mr. Galang tells us he founded — Unisophy. Chapter VII in that section, which is entitled "Key to Immortality," will give an idea of the type of articles one finds in this amazing *Encyclopedia*. The opening paragraph of the chapter is as follows: "Here, therefore is the real fountain whose living waters meander to the one Temple of Peace and Power: Unisophy — the Universal Philosophy, the key to a fruitful ministry, the Life True and Beautiful, the Life Serviceable, the Life Immortal." (X 365).

Perhaps, after that, we may be excused from taking this *Encyclopedia* seriously.

And yet, to be fair, we must mention that there is valuable material scattered somewhat thinly and unpredictably through the various volumes. Volume I, for instance, contains in facsimile the entire *Doctrina Cristiana*, the first book printed in the Philippines. Volume XVI (History) contains the very valuable essay on Philippine Cartography prepared under the direction of Father Miguel Selga S.J. for the Census of 1939 (but without the accompanying maps, for which that essay was an introduction!). The essays by Epifanio de los Santos, Luis Montilla, José Bantug, and a few others, carry the weight of their authors' authority (if we were only told where or when these essays were first published, if published at all!). In Volume VII (Art), that splendid lecture on Filipino "Musical Instruments and Airs of Long Ago" delivered by the late Honorable Norberto Romualdez is reproduced, with the original illustrations and diagrams and musical notations. This reviewer vividly remembers hearing that lecture, with Don Norberto now on his feet, now seated at the piano to illustrate the Filipino tunes of long ago. If only the *Encyclopedia of the Philippines* were filled with monographs such as this one!

But that is a vain wish, and this *Encyclopedia* must be regarded as unscientific, unscholarly and tendentious. It does contain valuable material, however, and like the little donkey of Iriarte's fable, it occasionally "hits the spot."

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

AMERICAN POLICY IN THE PHILIPPINES

THE UGLY AMERICAN. By William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick. W. W. Norton and Co. New York. 1958. Pp. 285.

I

Despite certain defects, this is a book that cannot be ignored. It makes the reader want to take a second look at American methods actually being used in Southeast Asia.

There is one class of people, among others, who will not like this book—the communists. The book brands communism as "the face of the devil." It points out that communism has duplicated the ritual, faith, dedication, zeal and enthusiasm of the Catholic Church, and points out the obvious conclusion: that "both faiths cannot exist in this world at the same time."