

# philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

---

## **Reply of John N. Schumacher to Floro Quibuyen's Response to the Review of His A Nation Aborted**

Prefatory Note

*Philippine Studies* vol. 50, no. 3 (2002): 435–437

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

---

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at [philstudies@admu.edu.ph](mailto:philstudies@admu.edu.ph).

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>

## Reply of John N. Schumacher to Floro Quibuyen's Response to the Review of His *A Nation Aborted*

### Prefatory Note:

In its previous issue, *Philippine Studies* carried Floro Quibuyen's response<sup>1</sup> to John N. Schumacher S.J.'s review<sup>2</sup> of his book, *A Nation Aborted: Rizal, American Hegemony, and Philippine Nationalism*.<sup>3</sup>—With this brief reply from Fr. Schumacher, *Philippine Studies* puts this discussion to a close in its pages.

Most scholarly journals do not allow such replies as Quibuyen's—the book and the review stand on their own merits, and the intelligent scholar makes his own judgment. Since *Philippine Studies* has seen fit to do so, however, I have no intention of wasting anyone's time with a point by point reply. To do so would be to write another longer article pointing out new errors he has introduced. I just wish to make a few remarks:

1. A fundamental difference between Quibuyen and me is that I am a historian and am primarily interested in facts, empirically established. He is a political philosopher, and primarily interested in theories. He sees me as an "empiricist" (I would say instead that I use the empirical method) while he uses the method of "critical hermeneutics." But of course, every historian who is not a mere

1. Floro Quibuyen, "Rizal and Filipino Nationalism: Critical Issues" (*Philippine Studies* 50, no. 2 [2002]).

2. John N. Schumacher, S.J., "Rizal and Filipino Nationalism: A New Approach" (*Philippine Studies*, no. 4 [2000]).

3. Floro Quibuyen, *A Nation Aborted: Rizal, American Hegemony, and Philippine Nationalism* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999).

chronicler applies "critical hermeneutics" (though not necessarily in its post-modernist sense) to understand what may be behind written texts. Where we differ is rather that I would check my hermeneutical findings—critically; that is, to see if they are compatible with the empirical evidence.

2. Perhaps being a political theorist is one reason why he so often cites authorities instead of facts. Frankly, I am not impressed by a historian's arguments from authority, even if they come from "Vatican foreign ministers," (or popes for that matter) from philosophers like Marx and Gramsci, Fanon (if he was a philosopher), from "other distinguished professors of history," (even if Iletto has dedicated one of his books to them), from "militant student organizations during the so-called First Quarter Storm," even if Quibuyen was a member. (In passing, François Furet did not say Marx was a historian, but "acknowledged his valuable insights," which I and most historians would accept, while recognizing that for Marx, facts still had to yield to his ideology if in conflict). Nor would I hesitate to reject statements of Rizal, who in his Morga more than once erred, distorted certain facts—he was after all writing "propaganda," whether or not one wishes to call this a lie. He was by no means a liar, like Pio Valenzuela or Graciano Lopez Jaena, but he wrote things which less involved persons might call a lie. Unlike Quibuyen, Rizal recognized his own fallibility, and willingly published Blumentritt's critique of his lack of objectivity on certain points and his anachronistic judgments as the prologue to his book.
3. A book devoted to Rizal's ideas cannot successfully be written without reading all his writings, in their historical context, and in their originals in some half a dozen foreign languages, as well as seeing Rizal in conjunction with the original writings of Marcelo H. del Pilar. How can one differentiate the positions of Rizal and Del Pilar, without reading the writings of the one with whom Rizal most interacted in his struggle? (Del Pilar's books appear neither in the references for the Philippine Studies article, nor in the bibliography of Quibuyen's original book). Thus Quibuyen can deny the obvious meaning of one text I have adduced in my article to show that assimilation was merely a strategy for Del Pilar, who was totally committed in the long range to separation from Spain, just as clearly as were Rizal and Bonifacio. Not having read Del Pilar, he ignores all the other letters where Del Pilar makes similar separatist assertions.

4. Lest this insistence on all their writings in their original seem overly pedantic, it is a recognized fact among historians that the English translations done under the auspices of the Jose Rizal National Centennial Commission are not only often ungrammatical, but even unintelligible. This happens even in those done by a scholar like Dr. Encarnacion Alzona, not because she did not understand the language, but because she was unacquainted with the broad cultural, philosophical, and religious context which was second nature to Rizal. What I have stipulated above, I did forty years ago for my Ph.D. dissertation, together with reading the seven volumes of *La Solidaridad*, among other Spanish and Filipino sources, and the results appeared in my book, *The Propaganda Movement*, in 1973. Though this book appears in Quibuyen's bibliography, he could not have read it very carefully to make some of the erroneous assertions not only of his book, but of his article replying to me.
5. Finally, we must mention the loosely used word "genocide." Quibuyen citing the 1948 Genocide Convention definition, conveniently ignores the crucial words "with intent." To intend to wipe out a people, whether they be a primitive tribe of a thousand in the Brazilian jungles so as to seize their land, or a nation like Bosnia, or a people like the Jews under the Nazis, is genocide. The numbers are irrelevant; it is the intention and its execution. Millions died in World Wars I and II, but no one would call this genocide. In spite of a few generals in the Philippines, distorted and taken out of context by Quibuyen, no American government wanted to wipe out the Filipino people. To quote myself in a recent article, "Even the worst of the Americans wanted Filipinos alive, not "ethnically cleansed"—who else would work the fields, for the US export economy to be promoted, and who would buy the manufactured goods of the US?"