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THE LAST OF THE INNOCENTS

by

Bantorn Suksamran

- * "Democracy in the Philippines" is an awkwardly written book by Diosdado Macapagal, 66 years old, former president of the Philippines.
 - * peddling dictatorship in the Philippines — dismissed the bid for asylum as an April Fool's Day joke.
- * It was published by:
 - R. J. Cusipag*
 - P. O. Box 427*
 - Downsview, Ontario*
 - Canada*
- * The book was launched with a dash by the author for political asylum.
 - * *The book, for all its stodgy lawyerese — "assuming without conceding" — can not be brushed aside as lightly as that.*
- * Not every book gets launched that way.
 - * "Democracy in the Philippines" is badly written, but important.
- * *Diosdado Macapagal was politely denied asylum by the United States Embassy in Manila, where he sought refuge just after the book came off the press, on April 1.*
 - * Macapagal was the Chief Executive of the Philippines, and president of the controversial constitutional convention.
- * Foreign Secretary Carlos P. Romulo — who has more grace than Mr. Macapagal in writing books and in
 - * He gives new, revealing insights into the confused and severely censored period that followed the imposition of martial law in September of 1972.
 - * He presents, for instance, the pathetic scene of two respected Filipino legislators — Lorenzo Sumulong and Emmanuel Pelaez — addressing a cowed Senate, whose galleries had been emptied by armed soldiers.

* Sumulong and Pelaez said:

"Martial law does not abrogate human rights! It is always safer to go by constitutional processes!"

* But the Press of Manila — free, once upon a time — had already been padlocked.

* The military had scrapped the writ of habeas corpus, due process, and civil rights.

* The military had reached into the Senate itself and had arrested Senators Benigno Aquino, Jose Diokno and Ramon Mitra — along with about six thousand others.

* The book is significant because it provides a reputable basis for what have been — up till now — rumors, unverifiable under the strictures of martial law.

* The Filipinos, for example, were not allowed to know what happened to the proceedings of their constitutional convention, after the arrest of independent delegates.

* But now the very president of that convention asserts that the origins of the Marcos constitution are those of a bastard, and that even the Journal of the Convention has been falsified, to give a semblance of legitimacy.

* One grave flaw of this book is the way it belabors what the author claims is the fundamental issue:

"The illegal and illegitimate manner under which President Marcos imposes and maintains dictatorial rule."

* Mr. Macapagal rehashes — page after page — the fine constitutional points on Mr. Marcos' usurpation of power, in collaboration with the military.

* But he lacks the literary grace of brilliant Filipino constitutionalists like Senators Lorenzo Tañada, Jovito Salonga, or Jose Diokno.

* "The Marcos regime is unconstitutional... It suppresses human rights... It maintains prison camps... It is increasingly corrupt" — but constitutional arguments, in the face of a Supreme Court that has abandoned its independent role, are pointless!

* The reader of "Democracy in the Philippines" knows — in the striking language of Senator Diokno — that President Marcos has indeed fashioned for himself a throne of bayonets.

* What the reader would like to know is Mr. Macapagal's dispassionate assessment of how long he can sit on those bayonets.

* There is no such assessment.

* There is a candid appeal to the military to remember their allegiance to constitutional values.

* There is a grim but thought-provoking comment on how President Marcos named the generals who plotted with him in the crackdown: Generals Ver, Rancudo, Diaz, Montoya, Zagala, Espino — and Colonels Cojuangco and Gatan:

"All things end... It is hoped they have not thereby been exposed to grim reprisal."

* There can be no doubting the validity with which Mr. Macapagal warns:

"President Marcos' refusal to provide for a peaceful, orderly, and constitutional transition of power, after he goes, is setting the stage for turmoil in the Philippines."

* Mr. Macapagal has the weight of costly human experience in saying:

"If President Marcos persists in treating the Philippine presidency as an inheritance which he can will on — then civil strife is in the cards."

* Macapagal may have the constitution, but the bayonets are on the side of Marcos — at least for now.

* Diosdado Macapagal is a conservative of the deepest stripe.

* It is startling to hear him warning:

"For Filipinos to see and realize now that America will support a dictatorship in the Philippines — because it perhaps believes that under such dictatorial leadership American interests will not be jeopardized — this will mean a bitter disillusionment, for Filipinos."

* For a man of Diosdado Macapagal's generation — who still assumes that an Embassy of the United States offers some sanctuary — this remark is significant.

* It means younger Filipinos — who cherish freedom, but now remain silent under the lash of martial rule — are losing their naive faith in an America that preached of freedom.

* When Marcos goes, so will part of current U.S. policy of disguised support for this right-wing dictatorship.

* The Filipinos are the last of the innocents in Asia.

Editor's Note:

This review of "Democracy in the Philippines" was printed in The Bangkok Post on April 14, 1976.

CAUTION: WOMEN WORKING!

* In 1950, women made up only 28% of the U.S. work force.

* In 1960, they made up 33% of the U.S. work force.

* By mid-1975, women made up 40% of the work force in the United States.

* The increase in overall female employment in the U.S. since 1970 is due partly to delayed marriage and to rising divorce rates.

* Married women have made the difference in the general employment trends since World War II.

In 1940, 13% of married women — living with their husbands — had outside jobs.

The figure rose to 22% in 1950.

By 1970, the figure was on par with the rate for women without husbands — 40%.

* Older married women — beyond the child-bearing ages of 25 to 44 — were the first to respond to increased postwar job opportunities in the United States.

* Recently, employment has decreased among women aged 55 and over, while it has increased among women aged 25 to 44.

* The rate of employment among women aged 25 to 44 in 1974 was 52%.

* Among women aged 45 to 54, the employment rate in 1974 was 55%.

* Employment rates have grown phenomenally among young American married women aged 20 to 24 — from 37% in 1964, to 54% in 1974!

* Both cause and effect of this growing number of young married women in the work force is the dramatic decline in the nation's fertility.

* The average number of children per woman in the U.S. has fallen to the historic low of 1.9 in 1974. This means that the average woman in the United States has, at most, 2 children.

* Enjoying the stimulation of their careers, and the fruits of dual family incomes, many young American working wives are postponing childbearing.

- * Over the past decade, labor force rates have also jumped among young mothers of even pre-school children — children who are under six years old.
- * The average American male worker earned \$11,300.
- * Higher earnings for men come with accumulated work experience and seniority, while work careers of women are interrupted by pregnancy and child-rearing.
- * The rates have jumped from 24% to 37% — mothers of pre-school children, in the work force.
- * *Women are consistently paid less for the same work than men of the same education, age, and experience.*
- * Here, rising costs of childbearing have played a strong role.
- * The U.S. Presidential Population Commission, in 1969 estimated the direct costs of raising a first child from birth through college, as \$40,000.
- * The U.S. Census Bureau survey of May 1974 found that women—with a year or more of college graduate work — received three-fourths the earnings of men who were similarly educated.
- * *By staying at home until that child's 14th birthday, the average mother would forgo \$58,400 in earnings.*
- * Women's concentration in services has had one compensation:
- * The most important factor in increased female employment in the United States has been the post-World War II growth in the service sector of the economy — especially such traditionally female fields as teaching, clerical work, retail trade, and nursing.
- * *they were less affected by the recent recession than men, who predominate in manufacturing and construction.*
- * Among professionals, the proportion of women remained static at 40%, despite the overall rise in female employment.
- * Unemployment rates in the United States remain higher for women than for men.
- * Despite their much-heralded breakthrough into traditional male preserves, women, in 1974, still comprised only:
- * *7% of U.S. lawyers and judges*
- * *10% of physicians and surgeons*
- * *31% of college teachers.*
- * It is clear that despite World War II, despite the Vietnam War, and despite the Women's Liberation Movement, American women still face discrimination in the job market.
- * Over half of all women workers are still concentrated in low-paying jobs.
- * In 1973, the average American woman — working fulltime — earned \$6,500.

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