

A BRIEF REPORT OF OBSERVATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

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(Under the auspices of the Board of Scholarship and Exchange of Professors for Southeast Asia and with full cooperation of the University of the Philippines, a tour of observation was made of the educational systems and cultural institutions of Indonesia, Malaya, Thailand, Burma and Hongkong. The observation covered the period from May 13 to June 23, 1955.)

One of the most disturbing developments in Southeast Asian countries visited is the rampant infiltration of communistic elements in the secondary schools and colleges and the presence of favorable social and political climate for the growth of communism. In Indonesia and Burma, the government of Red China is the one recognized. Such recognition, it appears, is giving great encouragement to the growth of communism in those countries. In the book-stores of the countries visited works and publications dealing with the principles, activities and achievements of communism are sold openly to the public. Here are some of the titles for sale: *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* (in 3 volumes); *Promise of New China*; *The A.B.C. of Communism*; and *The Communist Manifesto*. There are stores which are sole distributors of communist publications and propaganda. Two years ago, the Peiping government created 2,300 scholarships for the Indonesian youth to study in the universities in Red China. With these scholarships many youths have gone to study in the China mainland. Dr. Lin Yu Tang, former prospective president of a proposed university in Singapore, found out that there were many communist students in that city. It was understood from a high educational authority in Singapore that there were about 5 or 9 Chinese high schools in the city in which the communist students had infiltrated. At the time of our observation in Bangkok the police forces were making systematic efforts to screen out the schools which were suspected of communistic leanings. In the University of Rangoon it was learned that a large portion of the student body are communists or are sympathizers of the communist elements. Many students leave Hongkong to study in Red China because of their inability to get admission in the University of Hongkong. Only last month (June, 1955) about a thousand students from Indonesia and Malaya left their countries to study in the universities in China.

In the light of these development in the countries mentioned above, it is believed imperative that the Free World must make aggressive steps to deflect the flow of students who will be future leaders in these countries from the universities in Red China to the universities in the democratic countries. Unless we act early and decisively enough, the future leaders in those countries will be those who will have been indoctrinated

in the ideologies of Communism. The situation is aggravated by the fact that the vital needs of these countries are for leaders in every field. Restrictive educational policies during the colonial era prevented the development of leaders or a strong middle class. The situation becomes more disturbing when it is re-called at this juncture that most of the stalwart defenders of American democracy in the Philippines today are those who were educated in the United States at their own expense or are products of the "pensionado" system inaugurated early during the American regime.

The immediate implication of these observations is for the Department of Education to exercise greater care in the supervision and inspection of private schools, especially those under alien control. The University of the Philippines would do well to watch carefully for the possible uses of the fraternities and sororities as a means for infiltration of the communist elements.

Observation of the educational systems in the countries visited revealed divergence in the policies of the school and in standards of instruction maintained by different institutions. This is as expected, however, on account of their different historical backgrounds and the varied influences that had been brought to bear upon them from colonial powers. Thus, Indonesia is groping for a new pattern of educational system, trying to do away with the Dutch traditions and slowly expanding towards the American practices. In Malaya and in Hongkong the influence of the British educational system is still very patent. In Thailand and in Burma new educational systems are being evolved aiming to make their schools more responsive to the demands and needs of their people. (A detailed report of the educational systems is still presently under preparation.)

In the light of divergent educational practices and in the desire to promote greater cultural cooperation among the educational institutions in the area the organization of Asian universities was suggested to the presidents and ministers of education who were interviewed. The proposal was received favorably and enthusiastically. It is therefore suggested that the University of the Philippines, with the support and cooperation of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippine Government, sponsored the formation of the Association of Asian Universities in the immediate future. It is believed that the ground has been prepared for such organization and all that is necessary now is to initiate and take action in the line already indicated.

On account of the common racial origin with the Indonesian and because of the great potentialities of Indonesia both in natural resources and in man power it is suggested that a closer cultural cooperation be maintained with that country. At this time the schools of Indonesia are in dire need of teachers of English since the Dutch language was discarded in the schools and the English language is required as second language from the secondary schools through the university. As an expression of goodwill and a good neighbor policy it is suggested that the Philippine government make an offer to the Indonesian government to send Filipino teachers of English who can teach in the Normal Schools, colleges and

universities. If the Indonesian government will be willing to accept the offer, at least 100 Filipino teachers should be sent every year for a period of five to ten years. Such a proposal, if realized, will mean a rapid development of the English language in one of the most populous countries in Southeast Asia.

In the desire to get some ideas that maybe of help in the organization of the Institute of Asian Studies in the University of the Philippines some observation was made of the Cornell Research Center in Bangkok, which is an extension of the Far Eastern Studies in the Cornell University, and of Rangoon-Hopkins Research Center in Rangoon University, which is an extension of the School of Advanced International Studies of John Hopkins University. The former is concerned primarily with the training of students who are majoring in Asian Studies in Cornell University. The students do their research work in the different countries in Southeast Asia, writing their thesis for Ph.D. degree under the supervision of the Cornell Research Center in Bangkok. The Rangoon-Hopkins Research Center is interested in the development of inter-university relation as a means of promoting closer cultural cooperation among the educational institutions and peoples in Southeast Asia.

In the organization of the Institute of Asian Studies in the University of the Philippines two things would seem necessary:

(a) development of university personnel who will be specialists in certain phases of Asian life, who by their scholarship, can attract students from the Southeast Asian countries and from the United States.

(b) development of courses which are oriented to Asian civilization and which can constitute a core of studies for those who would like to specialize in Asian affairs.

The development of specialists in Southeast Asian culture among our faculty members may require the revision of the standing regulations of the university regarding teaching load so as to enable faculty members to do more studies and research on Southeast Asia. This may mean a reclassification of our faculty members into research faculty and teaching faculty members. The organization of courses in Southeast Asia may necessitate the revision of the existing curricula in the university especially, in social studies and humanities, which have been greatly influenced by American universities. If we are to attract Asian students and American students to study Asian affairs the University must offer something that is distinctive rather than an extension of American educational patterns.

As part of their nationalistic tendencies, the school systems in Southeast Asia are using the vernaculars as media of instruction in the lower grades and are systematically developing their national languages. Indonesia and Thailand are using their national language as media of instruction in the secondary schools and in the universities. Systematic efforts are being exerted to translate many of the works written in the foreign languages into the native tongues.

In comparison with the practices in other countries, our use of English as the medium of instruction in the schools keeps our students in contact with the social and cultural advancement in the world and provides them with a means of communication for international relations.

However, it creates a gap between the leaders and the people. Our leaders of thought do not have a medium of communication with the masses. They cannot exert much influence because they have been trained in the foreign language which the common people cannot understand.

To enable the masses and our future leaders to have a common medium of communication, it is necessary to develop our national language systematically. Our colleges and universities must teach the national language. This will be an extension of the requirement in the national language which is now taught in the secondary and elementary schools. As a first step in this direction, the University of the Philippines, as the state sponsored institution supposed to implement national policies, should take the leadership in prescribing the national language as one of the required subjects in all the curricula of the state university.

The specific recommendations are as follows:

1. It is recommended that efforts be exerted to make the Philippines a center of culture and education in Southeast Asia, as a measure to deflect the flow of potential leaders among the universities in Red China to the institutions of a democratic country. The Philippines seems to be the logical center, because of our racial identity with the people and the suspicion that the white race is the personification of colonialism and imperialism. This implies serious study on the part of the University of the Philippines and of the Department of Education of the national government. Such a project will need the support of the Philippine government, the American government, and of the institution and foundations in the Free World. The costs is great, but the stake is high.

2. To forestall the infiltration of communistic elements in our schools and colleges, the Department of Education should supervise closely private schools, specially those run by aliens. The textbooks used should be carefully examined. There should be a supervisor in the Bureau of Private Schools who know the language used in the alien schools, and who can do effective supervision and inspection of schools that may breed communism.

In colleges and universities, the authorities should closely guard the use of fraternities and sororities as possible media for the infiltration of communistic doctrines and techniques.

3. The University of the Philippines with the support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and/or some philanthropic foundations abroad should lead in the organization of the Association of Asian Universities.

4. As an expression of goodwill and a means to promote cultural cooperation with the Indonesians, the Philippine government should offer to the Indonesian government the services of 100 Filipino teachers of English for a certain length of time. At least 100 Filipino teachers should be sent annually to Indonesia to teach English in the teacher training institutions and colleges and universities.

5. The Philippines should exert efforts to develop the national language by making it a required subject in colleges and universities. This is deemed necessary to equip the intellectual leaders of the country with a medium with which they can communicate their ideas and thoughts to the masses.

6. In the organization of the Institute of Asian Studies the U.P. should take a leading role. This it should do by producing men who can devote more time to productive scholarship. This will require the revisions of the regulations on teaching load and the creation of two types of staff—the research professors and teaching professors.

7. The U.P. should gradually revise its curriculum and institute more courses with definite orientation toward Asian culture and civilization. This is necessary if the U.P. is to be made the center of learning for the Asians.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Public Works and Communications
BUREAU OF POSTS
Manila

SWORN STATEMENT

(Required by Act 2580)

The undersigned, GEORGE H. WEIGHTMAN, Editor of the Philippine Sociological Review, (title of publication), published QUARTERLY, (frequency of issue), in ENGLISH (language in which printed) at the DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WELFARE, UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES (office of publication), after having been duly sworn in accordance with law, hereby submits the following statement of ownership, management, circulation, etc., which is required by Act 2580, as amended by Commonwealth Act No. 201:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Post-Office Address</i>
<i>Editor:</i> GEORGE H. WEIGHTMAN	Department of Sociology and Social Welfare, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City
<i>Assistant Editor:</i> SOCORRO C. ESPIRITU	University of the East, Azcaraga, Manila
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<i>Owner:</i> PHILIPPINE SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY	
<i>Printer:</i> R. P. GARCIA PUBLISHING COMPANY	999 Dapitan St., Manila
<i>Office of Publication:</i> DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WELFARE, University of the Philippines	Department of Sociology and Social Welfare, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City

In case of publication other than daily, total number of copies printed and circulated of the last issue dated July, 1955.

1. Sent to paid subscribers	100
2. Sent to others than paid subscribers	400

TOTAL 500

(Sgd.) GEORGE H. WEIGHTMAN
Editor

Subscription and sworn to before me this 13th day of October, 1955 at Manila, the affiant exhibiting his Residence Certificate No. A-4738290 issued at Quezon City on September 13, 1955.

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