

\* \* \* \* \*

Patricio N. Abinales and Donna J. Amoroso. *State and Society in the Philippines*. Pasig City: Anvil Publishing Inc., 2005. Originally published in 2005 by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 353 pp.

This book will be an indispensable material in any class on Philippine history, society, and politics. There is no similar publication that skilfully synthesizes the most recent and relevant scholarships on the Philippines using the state-society framework. It traces the roots of the Philippine state's weakness that is "manifest in uncollected taxes and uncontrolled crime, bloated bureaucracies and denuded forests, low teacher salaries, and high emigration rates" (1). Parallel to this analysis is the effort to present the various forms assumed by the society's unending call for better governance. In ten tight chapters, Abinales and Amoroso were able to lucidly argue the quilt-like formation of the Philippine state where the "mixture of plunder and professionalism" resulted in "small patches of good governance adjoined to larger patches of corruption and inefficiency" (184).

Though the authors' arguments were unassailable, the book however, sustains some details that can bedevil the reader:

1. The word "Philippines" in the book's title for its Philippine book paper edition is misspelled. "Philippines" is spelled with a single, not double, "l" as what is printed on the book's spine. Raul Roco's first name was also misspelled as Paul (282). Gregorio Sancianco, one of the earliest Filipino propagandist, was renamed as Pedro Sanciangco (106).
2. Notwithstanding the shades of Zaide in the supposedly mere factual statement that the Philippines "is the most Catholic of Asian countries (currently almost 83 percent) (3)," the statement is still statistically off the mark. Since the authors spoke of the nation's number of Catholic in percentage and not its total number, then they should have been aware that East Timor is 90 percent Catholic and thus the most Catholic of Asian countries percentage-wise. If, however, what the authors meant to say is that the Philippines has the most number of Catholic among Asian countries, then they could have been right. In fact,

the Philippines has the third largest Catholic population in the world with its 69 million Catholics, next only to Brazil and Mexico.

3. Without any apparent pattern or rule on which foreign or Filipino words or place-names will have a parenthetical guide to pronunciation, the authors sometimes ended up giving the wrong guide to enunciate a word. For example, Luzon, according to the book should be pronounced as loo-ZONE. This is quite unheard of. Random House Webster's College Dictionary says that Luzon should be pronounced as lōō zon'.
4. Abinales and Amoroso wrote that "when occasionally a governor tried to enforce his authority, the orders' threat to desert the parishes en masse exposed the state's dependence and ended the attempt" (67). It can be added that when push comes to shove, the religious authorities then were not averse to resort to more forceful—and sometime murderous—means. One can readily recall the case of Governor General Fernando Manuel Bustamante y Bustillo who, together with his son, was killed in 1719 by a friar-instigated mob right inside Malacañang. In a much earlier period, there was Governor General Diego Salcedo. In 1668, he was imprisoned by the "Augustinian commissary of the Inquisition, Father Jose Paternina, and sent off to Mexico to stand trial, but died on the voyage" (Schumacher 1997, 116).
5. In discussing the origins of the Philippines' weak state, the book talks about the religious orders' "friar power" as reflected in the expansion of the *haciendas* (landed states). This gives the impression that all members of the religious orders engaged in the hacienda business. The Franciscans, however, did not own any hacienda. And this explains in part why in areas where the Franciscans were, like the Bicol region, there were hardly any revolts rooted in agrarian issue. When the Jesuits returned in 1859, they too were made to renounce "all rights to the property which had been theirs before their expulsion, as well as all their former parishes" (Schumacher 1997, 15).
6. Regarding the founding of the Escuela Normal (the full name is Escuela Normal de Maestros), the book says that

it was “duly established in 1865 by the Jesuits” (93). This statement left some important things out. The Escuela Normal de Maestros was founded in 1863 by the government and then entrusted to the Jesuits (Schumacher 1997, 15). It was only in 1865 that the normal school was inaugurated (Corpuz 1989, 1: 500).

7. The book also reiterates a commonly-held, yet still largely under-researched and unexplored notion on why Spain kept the Philippines as a colony: “What kept the Spaniards in the Philippines was the value of Manila as a staging post for religious missions, especially to China and Japan . . . (71). However, is there any study that can show how many religious missions were formed in the Philippines and then sent to China and Japan? The argument that Spain retained the Philippines to serve as a staging point for missionary activities to China and Japan is based more on plans than actual pursuits. Proof of this are the memoranda sent to the king of Spain expressing this imperial desire. See for example the memoranda of the following: Capt. Diego de Artieda (1573), the Augustinian order (1573), Governor Francisco de San Sande (1576), of prominent Manila citizens through Father Alonso Sanchez, SJ (1586), and Hernando de los Rios Coronel (1597). Religious orders driven by their own zeal might indeed venture to evangelize China or Japan, like the 1598 attempt of six Franciscans and 20 other Filipinos who ended up getting crucified by Japanese authorities. Yet the Spanish monarch, Philip II, as early as 1588, ordered that “there must be no adventuring in China or anywhere else” (de la Costa 1965/1992, 30). Philip III in 1609 would make a similar decision in response to then-Governor and Captain-General Juan de Silva’s plan to invade Japan. He stressed that “The Governor and Captain-General of the Philippine Islands must always maintain good relations of peace and friendship with the Emperor of Japan . . . . Under no circumstances must he risk the reputation of our Arms and State in those seas and Oriental nations” (Philip III, 1609). Histories are still needed to validate the assertion that Spain kept the Philippines as a colony because it can serve as a staging post of its imperial activities in East Asia.

8. In discussing the secularization of Philippine parishes in the late eighteenth century, Abinales and Amoroso wrote that this was made more urgent when “the Jesuits had left the Philippines” (103). The use of the word “left” connotes that the Jesuits voluntarily relinquished their posts and left the colony. Historians however, usually use the word “expulsion” (Schumacher 1997, 5) or “expelled” (Corpuz 1989, 1: xiii, 242) when describing the Jesuits’ departure from the Philippines that was ordered by the anti-Jesuit liberal authorities in Madrid.
9. The label to a photo showing a mock garrotting of a man states that garrotting is “the usual method of public execution in the Spanish Philippines” (105). This can only be true after the 1832 royal decree prohibiting the use of hanging—then the usual mode of executing convicts—and replacing it with the garrotte (Montero y Vidal 1887-1895, 2: 537).
10. Questions can be raised when the authors wrote “The ilustrados effort to shape the future was embodied in the Propaganda Movement waged in Manila and Europe by the *organization* La Solidaridad” (105) (emphasis added). Readers will of course assume that the La Solidaridad mentioned here is the propagandists’ newspaper edited at first by Graciano Lopez Jaena and later by Marcelo H. del Pilar. The problem however in using the word “organization” is that there is in fact an organization called La Solidaridad founded in January 1, 1889—almost a full month ahead of the founding of the newspaper *La Solidaridad*—in Barcelona and officered by Galicano Apacible, Graciano Lopez Jaena, Manuel Santa Maria, Mariano Ponce and Jose Ma. Panganiban with Jose Rizal as honorary president. The organization La Solidaridad made some limited propaganda efforts in Barcelona (Schumacher 1997: 132, 157-158). Though some members of this association wrote and worked for the newspaper, it is distinct from the newspaper *La Solidaridad* (Schumacher 1997: 157-158). Describing *La Solidaridad* as the Filipino propagandists’ newspaper, rather as an organization, would have been apt and precise.

11. In the book's glossary, *pasyon* is defined as a "play based on the life of Christ (a particular play)." This is a confusing definition since *sinakulo* or passion play, can also be similarly described. The authors could just have restated their earlier definition of *pasyon*, i.e., "biblical stories including the life, death, and resurrection of Christ" (111).

Even if in no certain way will the length of this list affect the conclusions drawn by Amoroso and Abinales, it will be helpful for the readers of the book's future edition—which undoubtedly there will be—if these seeming weaknesses in details sustained by the book will be addressed.—**JOEL F. ARIATE JR.**, UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, THIRD WORLD STUDIES CENTER, COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES-DILIMAN.

## REFERENCES

- Corpuz, O.D. 1989. *The roots of the Filipino nation*. 2 vols. Quezon City: AKLAHI Foundation, Inc.
- de la Costa, Horacio. 1965/1992. *Readings in Philippine history*. Makati City: Bookmark, Inc.
- Montero y Vidal, Jose. 1887-1895. *Historia general de Filipinas desde el descubrimiento de dichas islas hasta nuestros dias*. 3 vols. Madrid: Imprenta y Fundacion de Manuel Tello.
- Philip III. 1609. Decree of Philip III on peaceful relations with Japan. Document No. 140. *Documentary sources of Philippine history*, 12 vols., ed. Gregorio F. Zaide and Sonia M. Zaide, 4: 25. Metro Manila: National Book Store, Inc., 1990.
- Schumacher, John N. 1997. *The propaganda movement, 1880-1895: The creation of a Filipino consciousness, the making of the revolution*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Jovito Salonga. *The Task of Building a Better Nation*. Mandaluyong: Kilosbayan, 2005. 443 pp.**

Jovito Salonga, former senator and statesman, is one of the few politicians who can command great respect from the public and motivate them to support the goals of nation-building. Salonga's idealism and indisputable integrity never fail to inspire the Filipino people. His latest book, *The Task of Building a Better Nation*, was released in an opportune time when the controversies of the 2004 Philippine