

**LANGUAGE POLICY AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY  
FOR ADVANCEMENT<sup>1</sup>**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

I deeply appreciate this opportunity to share with you some insights which I have been able to gain from a life-long interest in the study of language and in the problem of national language. My insights are not those of a specialist in linguistics, for my interest in this discipline, although it has stretched over a period longer than the lifetime of many of you, has not been as close as your interest has been. However, my interest in the question of national and official language has been more close and consistent, because of my personal involvement in it. Moreover my involvement in other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities has enhanced and broadened the range of my experience. So you will kindly allow me, in the course of this discourse, to refer to some events or happenings in my personal history that may be pertinent in elucidating a point or reenforcing an argument.

It has not been given to many men to live through two military regimes – one foreign and one native, to witness the birth of one commonwealth and two republics, to have direct cognizance of the proceedings of three constitutional assemblies that gave birth to three forms of government. I lived through much of the American colonial regime, toiled and suffered through the entire Japanese occupation and, like you, have just emerged from the martial law regime and into a unique form, so we are told, of presidential/parliamentary government. And having lived through the middle and late American colonial, the Commonwealth, the occupation Republic, the post-liberation Republic, the turbulent years of the fifties and sixties, and the era of constitutional authoritarianism, also means having witnessed the vicissitudes of the national language movement. This I have been privileged to witness in person at close range.

**2. LANGUAGE POLICY AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR  
ADVANCEMENT**

The title which I have chosen for this speech, 'Language Policy and Equality of Opportunity for Advancement', should provide an adequate umbrella for all the topics which I shall take up with you.

Those who have followed the history of the movement for an autochthonous national language have noted that the leaders have tried to identify it with the nationalist and independence movement. Two leaders of the movement that finally imposed Tagalog as the basis of the national language, Manuel L. Quezon and Lope K. Santos, were die-hard Tagalog nationalists, although in the case of Quezon, he was, as late as 1922, advocating English as the sole official language, it being the language of the literature of freedom. Two other leaders, Norberto Romualdez and Jaime C. de Veyra, both Visayans

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**from Leyte, were Spanish-educated scholars who were members of the Real Academia Española de la Lengua and were believers in developing a national language for the country in accordance with the Spanish model.**

**As the movement for independence was revived after the passage of the Jones Law in 1916 and following the end of World War I, the movement for an autochthonous national language also gained momentum. It first appeared in the advocacy of the use of the vernacular as medium of instruction in the lower schools and culminated in the language provision in the 1935 Constitution. What happened in the 1934 Constitutional Convention is now of historical record. Against the convention decision, taken in plenary session without vote, to develop and adopt a common national language based on existing native languages, the text was revised to read "based on one of the existing native languages". The final version was at the behest of Senate President Quezon, who was not a delegate to the Convention, and was accompanied by a noisy sloganeering campaign for 'One nation, one flag, one language'.**

Come to think of it, identical slogans were being used in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, Military-Fascist Japan, and later on, Falangist Franco Spain – all totalitarian nationalist states – to unify the people of those countries to undertake projects to enhance the nation's power and prestige. In the case of Nazi Germany, this slogan was to justify the unification of all German-speaking peoples, including those of the Sudetenland, which then formed part of Czechoslovakia, and to justify the claim for Nordic superiority over all other races and the anti-Semitic pogroms launched relentlessly. In the case of Fascist Italy, it was to justify the predatory ventures into Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), a land of 'inferior dark people'; and in the case of Japan, to prove the superiority of the Yamato race in its claim to leadership in the 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere'.

As a young man newly graduated from college, and having been brought up in the nationalist tradition, I was carried by the euphoria that attended the birth of the Commonwealth and was not too concerned with the effects of the last minute change in the language provision of the Constitution. I barely missed being appointed to represent the Ilocano language in the newly created Institute of National Language. Assemblyman Norberto Romualdez (Leyte) and Benito Soliven (Ilocos Sur) recommended me to President Quezon, but since he did not know me personally, he appointed Ex-Senator Santiago A. Fonacier instead. Except Cecilio Lopez, all the men he appointed were his close friends or acquaintances and contemporaries: Filemon Sotto for Cebuano, Jaime C. de Veyra for Samar-Leyte, Felix Salas Rodriguez for Hiligaynon, Casimiro Perfecto for Bicol, and Hadji Butu for Moro-Maguindanao. Lopez was not known to Quezon very well, but he had high academic credentials, so he was appointed to represent Tagalog. A year later, two were added: Zoilo Hilario to represent Pampangan and Jose I. Zulueta to represent Pangasinan. In the meantime, for reasons not yet clear, Filemon Sotto did not accept his appointment and Isidro Abad was named in his place.

Failing to be named member of the Institute, I was appointed technical assistant for Ilocano, thereby becoming the first classified civil service employee of the Institute. Having no civil service eligibility, however, I was given only a temporary appointment pending my passing an appropriate examination, which was given about the middle of 1937. I topped the Technical Assistant in Linguistics Examination, which was also passed by Pura Santillan Castrence, Teodoro A. Agoncillo, Felixberto B. Viray, and Virginia Gamboa-Mendoza. Dr. Castrence decided to stay with the U.P. faculty, but the three others joined the technical staff of the Institute: Agoncillo for Tagalog, Viray for Pangasinan, and Gamboa-Mendoza for Pampangan. Others were appointed subsequently: Pilar Garces for Cebuano, Fe Jaucian for Bicol, Guillermo Santiago-Cuino for Hiligaynon, and Hortencia Agudo for Ibanag and Ivatan.

After the proclamation of Tagalog as the sole basis of the projected common national language on 30 December 1937, on the recommendation of the Institute of

National Language, a major change in the board took place. Obviously pressure was brought to bear on Quezon to replace Lopez with the most outspoken advocate of Tagalog as national language with the claim that he already had a ready-made grammar of Tagalog that could be adopted by the Institute. Since he was in a hurry to obtain results in the national language movement during his term of office as Commonwealth President, he named Lopez as Secretary and Executive Officer and appointed Lope K. Santos to represent Tagalog.

The replacement of Lopez by Santos as Tagalog representative was an important turning point in the history of the national language movement. With his adequate training in contemporary linguistics and his broad perspective of the language problem, derived from long study, much of it in foreign universities, Lopez was believed competent in leading the movement toward a successful end with the least dissension. But when the leadership was taken over by Santos, a purist and prescriptivist, the movement took on a definitely narrow direction. In their late fifties and born with only one year between them, Quezon and Santos were in a hurry to impose the Tagalog-based language as the common national language. Both the grammar and the dictionary were to be prepared and published within two years after 30 December 1937, and the language was to be taught in all the schools beginning in June 1940. There was one time when Quezon chided Santos for coining new words for words already in common use, but that was because it would delay the propagation of the language in non-Tagalog areas.

The Institute of National Language adopted the *Balarila* in a form largely as submitted by Lope K. Santos. There was no opposition of record or suggestions for major revisions. On the whole it was a prescriptive grammar, modelled after the Spanish grammar of Philippine languages with which all members of the board (except Hadji Butu) were familiar, and even if a member or two had doubts about its suitability, they did not articulate those doubts; it was adopted after a short study and examination. The language assistants, especially those who possessed civil service eligibility, had misgivings about adopting a highly prescriptive grammar, but they were not members of the board and so their opinions were not taken into consideration.

It was this *Balarila* that gave rise to the first serious practical objections to the imposition of the Tagalog-based language as the common national language. And it was the *fanatical* defense of it by the Institute of National Language and the unwavering adherence to its principles and rules by officials of the language institute that have caused widespread opposition to the Tagalog-based national language throughout the land during the post-war and pre-martial law years. It has been described as a prison cell which has confined the language and prevented it from natural growth. It is the opinion of many observers that if it were not for the *Balarila* and its fanatical adherents, the national language movement would, after four decades, have made tremendous progress.

Many observers have been wondering why the leadership of the Tagalog-based language movement has not taken steps to accommodate the more important objections to the *Balarila*. Among these are: (1) Why adopt exclusively the pre-Spanish Tagalog script, when there are phonemes in other Philippine languages which could usefully be included? (2) Why coin new terms for terms that are already in general use just because these terms are of foreign origin? (3) Why purify the language when what the language needs now is growth, development, and enrichment through assimilation of neologisms?

My disenchantment with the Tagalog-as-national-language movement was slow in forming but quite steady in development. Before the Pacific war I had written and published articles endorsing the decision of the Institute in recommending Tagalog as basis of the national language. One language for all Filipinos is desirable; so the non-Tagalogs should forget their regional biases and help propagate the Tagalog-based national language. This was the thrust of my argument. However, certain misgivings began insinuating themselves into my mind. After the *Balarila* had been adopted in 1939, Malacañang issued an executive order directing the teaching of the national language based on

the *Balarila* in all public schools beginning in 1940. In the Institute itself, the Tagalog staff was increased from one to half a dozen language assistants. The work of the non-Tagalog assistants was relegated behind the overriding need to propagate Tagalog all over the land. As a matter of fact, they were made to feel that their services as assistants for their languages was probably no longer necessary since what was needed now was the propagation of Tagalog, as the *Balarila* had been prepared originally as a grammar of Tagalog. In the view of the leaders of the movement, a puristic form of Tagalog was to be propagated, as presented in the *Balarila*. It was to be a single-minded, one-track movement.

There was even pressure to replace the director of the Institute, since he was a Visayan from Leyte and therefore could not be an effective leader of the movement. However, after the Japanese forces occupied Manila early in 1942, and the Philippine Executive Commission was established by the Japanese military to replace the Commonwealth government which had fled the country, the director decided to report for work and was re-appointed to his old position by the Chairman of the Executive Commission.

I was beginning to feel out of place as assistant for Ilocano, but since I was also chief clerk, I also decided to report. However I decided to stay only until I felt my services as administrative assistant were no longer needed. That was when Director de Veyra was replaced by Lope K. Santos and the Institute was completely Tagalized. The non-Tagalog members of the board had been left out earlier through elimination of their item in the appropriations act.

In the beginning of the occupation of the country, the Japanese military command banned the use of English, since it was the language of the enemy, and encouraged the use of Tagalog and Niponggo. But on realizing that most of the civil and military administrative personnel knew English — having studied in British and American colleges and universities — and were not conversant in or had only a smattering of Tagalog, the Japanese military administrators had to restore English as an official language. They even found it necessary to publish periodicals in three languages, like the *Shin-Seiki-Bagong Araw-New Era*, and later on new periodicals exclusively in English like the *Philippine Review* and *Pillars. Filipina* was a bilingual English-Tagalog magazine which came out late in the occupation. But the Tagalog language movement took courage from the initial policy of the invaders to push through the Tagalog movement without any let-up.

Before the war the opposition to the *Balarila*-based national language could not come out in the open because of the commanding personality of Quezon on the national scene. During the enemy occupation, although the opposition grew stronger, it became muted because of the nature of military rule and its bias in favor of the Tagalog-based national language. As a matter of fact although by law the Tagalog-based national language would become one of the official languages along with English and Spanish on 4 July 1946 or Independence Day, the Constitution of the Japanese-sponsored Republic, which was established in October 1943, specified Tagalog for development and propagation as the national language. But the underground opposition was getting very impatient, and were it not for the widespread destruction that came in the wake of the reconquest of the Philippines in 1944-1945, the anti-Tagalog language movement would have exploded soon after the liberation of the country from the Japanese. The distressed population had to attend to something more immediate in their lives than the language problem.

I remember that during the war even some of the staunch advocates of Tagalog began to deplore the conduct and management of the movement. Before he withdrew as director in 1943, Jaime C. de Veyra showed me an exchange of correspondence he had with Assemblyman Gregorio Perfecto, one of the staunchest advocates of Tagalog, who himself had been a leading member of the Constitutional Convention of 1934. After arguing for the expansion of the *Abakada* by including the phonemes *f* and *z* and *v* and *sh* since these had become assimilated into the national idiom, Assemblyman Perfecto continued:

Usted me recuerda que nuestros tagalistas se aferran a la **idiosincracia de la lengua**, que no permite juxtaponiciones al modo de griego y latin y que **hay que tener en cuenta la mentalidad y oído tagalo**. Creo, sin embargo, que la **formación y el desarrollo del idioma** deben realizarse no dentro del círculo tagalo o tagalista, sino en el empleo horizonte nacional. \*\*\* El tagalo no ha de ser más que una base. Un punto de origen. La célula inicial. Como habrá de ser, en definitiva, nuestro **idioma nacional**, es imposible prover. Pero los autores de la constitución, **conocedores del hecho** de que la rigidez de la Academia Española es la principal causante de la pobreza del vocabulario español, mientras el empleo de un criterio liberal en la adopción de voces extranjeras ha permitido que en las últimas ediciones de Webster se definiesen al rededor de medio millón de palabras, decidieren que el lenguaje nativo que se seleccionará sirviese únicamente de base para el idioma nacional, y no sea el mismo idioma nacional, para que sus limitaciones características no fueran un obstáculo para la formación de un idioma moderno, adecuado para expresar todas las ideas de las civilizaciones presentes y capaz de servir los intereses del progreso, de seguir los futuros descubrimientos y invenciones, y de adaptarse a las más insospechadas modalidades culturales y sociales que en el porvenir, adquiriesen nuestro pueblo y la humanidad. (Yabes 1973:28)

In reply Director de Veyra wrote in part:

Probablemente, en este tiempo (y reducida en cuatro la personalidad del Instituto), no sería oportuno provocar la cuestión del alfabeto; mas tarde quizás, y sería conveniente oír a los elementos opositores (que sean muchos y fuertes), antes de formar una decisión. Entre tanto, es de celebrar que aparte el asunto cuantos, como usted, tengan amor, razón y autoridad para ser oídos. (Yabes 1973: 28)

When I decided to quit the Institute of National Language where I spent a goodly portion of my young manhood, I felt no desire to go back to my job after the war was over. I felt there was no future for me, a non-Tagalog, in that office. If I went back and was accepted, I would have no fair opportunity for personal advancement, by reason of the language I had been born into, as compared to the others who had been born into Tagalog. So I decided to seek employment elsewhere, where there was more equality of opportunity for personal advancement.

After the restoration of the Commonwealth early in 1945, I joined the Office of Information under the Secretary of Instruction and Information as feature writer. Later when the Office was transferred to the Office of the President and a new Division of Cultural Publicity was created under it, I joined the outfit as historical researcher. During the three years that I spent in Malacañang, I was able to broaden and enrich my experience to a greater extent than I had during the several years I spent as assistant for Ilocano at the Institute of National Language. I also felt I had a greater opportunity for personal advancement. I was promoted twice when I was there, not on the basis of the language I had been born into but on my other qualifications as a first grade civil service eligible, which I had acquired, and that included my knowledge of English. In other words, my knowledge of English placed me on an equal footing with other Filipinos regardless of the languages we had been born into. On the other hand, the Tagalog language movement gave unfair advantage to the native speakers of Tagalog to the detriment of the non-Tagalogs.

This principle of equality of opportunity for advancement, either for individual citizens or for ethno-linguistic groups, is the hallmark of a truly just and democratic Philippine society. Another characteristic of a just and democratic Philippine society is social mobility, which allows a member of society to scale the social ladder in accordance

**with his competencies**, not the language he had been born into. When we speak of human rights, we refer not only to civil and political rights but to economic, social and cultural rights, and these are already protected under two international covenants adopted by the United Nations. These, along with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, are also known as the International Bill of Human Rights. Aside from these international documents, we have the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, which contains a detailed enumeration of the rights of the citizens, popularly known as the Bill of Rights.

It should be interesting to find out how this principle of equality of opportunity for advancement has worked out in actual practice. In some government tests, where knowledge of Pilipino is now a test area, how many have been pulled down and missed making the passing mark, because they were not born into Tagalog, and how many have been pushed up by their greater knowledge of Tagalog because they had been born into it? Where competition is very keen, as in the tests for the foreign service, which offer very desirable employment opportunities, it should be interesting to find out how the Tagalog and non-Tagalog examinees fared on the basis of their native languages. It would be fair to say that the principle of equality of opportunity works in the test areas conducted in English, but that in the area in Pilipino the principle works to the advantage only of the examinees born to Tagalog. It is also fair to say that in securing government jobs, the Tagalogs hold unfair advantage over the non-Tagalogs, not by reason of intellectual abilities, but by reason of being native to Tagalog.

In the world of academe, the same questions also apply. In the determination of academic honors, how many have missed it because of low grades in Pilipino, and how many have made it because of high grades in the subject? In other words, how many have been pulled up or down because of their grades in Pilipino? Understandably enough, Tagalog instructors are inclined to give better grades in Pilipino to students native to Tagalog than to those who are not native. Therefore the determinant is the language one is born into, not the intellectual performance. One student graduates only cum laude because his grades in Pilipino made him miss the magna by only a fraction of a unit; while another graduates magna because his average pushed him to magna level by a similar fraction of a unit. Even infinitesimal fractions count for much in the determination of academic honors, and academic honors are something highly valued in civilized society.

Still in the world of academe, in employment opportunities there, it would be interesting to find out how many non-Tagalogs are employed in Pilipino departments in colleges and universities. These departments seem to be the exclusive preserve of the Tagalogs. And with Pilipino prescribed as the medium of instruction in social studies courses, how many non-Tagalogs would be eased out of these courses and replaced by Tagalogs? Having already this tremendous advantage in Pilipino departments and in social studies courses, the Tagalogs will still have open to them the science and mathematics and humanities and arts departments. One might call that an unfair advantage in employment opportunities.

In the world outside academe and government, let us take up some practical matters. The Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards contests offer prizes in two divisions: English and Pilipino. Although theoretically open to all Filipinos, in actual practice the contests in Pilipino are almost exclusively the preserve of native-born writers in Tagalog, while in the contests in English both Tagalogs and non-Tagalogs can qualify. So while keeping a preserve of their own, the Tagalog writers can still participate in the contests in English and manage to win many prizes. Clearly, the non-Tagalogs cannot claim equality of opportunity in these contests or in similar contests vis-à-vis the Tagalogs who, by reason of birth, have an original built-in advantage.

As it has developed, the Tagalog-as-national-language movement strikes at the very core of the cause of human rights. Although desirable, the movement for an autochthonous national language has been permitted to violate the principle of equality of opportunity for advancement. Inability to compete with other persons for the attain-

ment of social good because of lack of equality of such opportunity is humiliating to a man's sense of dignity as an individual human being. 'Even in exceptional situations that sometimes arise', Pope John Paul II said in one of his speeches during his recent visit in the Philippines, 'one can never justify violation of the fundamental dignity of the human person or of the basic rights that safeguard this dignity.' (*Newsweek*, March 2, 1981, page 8). When by reason of birth one is deprived of equality of opportunity for advancement in life, then indeed he is deprived of his opportunity to enhance and improve the quality of his life.

This is the result when the puristic form of a regional language, native speech of only a little over one fifth of the national population, is imposed on the rest of the country, as official and national language and as medium of instruction. This is the result when leaders of the movement refuse to broaden the language base and make more resilient the rules, especially on phonetics and orthography, thereby keeping it practically the same as that spoken in and around the Tondo area in pre-Spanish times.

Earlier I quoted then Assemblyman Gregorio Perfecto (later Justice of the Supreme Court) as deploring the parochial attitude of many Tagalistas in not willing to 'adulterate' the Tagalog mentality and phonetics by adding foreign sounds to the phonetic system. He said that the growth and development of the national language would be realized not from the narrow purview of the Tagalistas or Tagalogs but from the wider and more ample purview of the nation, concluding that the basic language should offer no obstacles to the development of a modern language adequate for the expression of all the ideas of the present civilization and capable of serving the interests of progress and of furthering future discoveries and inventions. In fine he wanted the national language to be developed for the use of the complex and progressive civilization of the future, and such development cannot be generated by only a few Tagalistas but by the whole nation. Language development lies mainly with the people, not with a few language experts.

In this connection it should be interesting to note that in seminars, symposia, workshops and other group projects on language development sponsored by the Institute of National Language since the war, the participants have invariably been Tagalogs. I am not aware of any non-Tagalog being invited to these Institute of National Language sponsored activities as active participants but merely as spectators. The Tagalogs lay down the law and rules, the non-Tagalogs just follow and comply. Regardless of their intellectual gifts, they are only as enlisted men obeying orders coming from the High Command. That is neither participatory nor democratic.

The problem then is how to reconcile the desirability of an autochthonous common national language or lingua franca for the various ethnolinguistic groups and the protection and enhancement of the various human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The first step is to recognize the plain fact that we are a multiethnic, multilingual, and multireligious society. The next step should be to set up a political organization that respects and does not violate such ethnolinguistic and religious diversity.

It is very obvious that a strong unitary government like that of the late Shah (1953-1979) of Iran would fail in resolving the problem. Neither that of Turkey under the strong leadership of Kemal Ataturk (1923-1938); nor that of Egypt of Gamel Abdul Nasser or of Anwar Sadat. There is justification for a strong central government if there is an appreciable measure of autonomy at the regional, provincial and municipal level, so that there will be leverage or balance between central power or authority and local autonomy or self-government.

I suppose the most satisfactory political set-up – both for the growth of an autochthonous common national language or lingua franca and for the protection and enhancement of the basic human rights, including equality of opportunity for advancement – is either maximum regional autonomy or full federalism. Over the last forty years I have been advocating a Federal Union on the international level and over the last twenty years I have been advocating full federalism on the national level. The first may not be

realizable soon, at least not within this century, but the second may come within this century or within the lifetime of many of us.

A federal world government—what with the conflicting interests of the various nation states—would be extremely difficult to form; but a Federal Philippine Republic should be much easier to establish. Although a minor movement in the 1971 Constitutional Convention, which was led by Delegate Antonio de las Alas of Batangas, it has grown stronger and is now led by Delegate Salvador Araneta of Manila. The two leaders of the movement may not agree as to details; and I myself have a slightly different plan. Their plans may be excellent in theory but may be difficult to implement.

My plan is more practical because it takes into consideration the realities of the present situation. The country is now divided into twelve regions (13 including the National Capital Region), two of which (Regions IX and XII) have been given some form of autonomy, including an elective regional assembly and an appointive executive council. All that is necessary is to extend the same autonomy to the remaining regions, but with the executive council elective like the regional assembly. All the regions deserve the autonomy already enjoyed by Regions IX and XII.

This set-up will be more democratic than the political set-up in France under the Fifth Republic of Charles de Gaulle. France is divided into twenty-three regions including that of the national capital, Paris. But the regions in France are not political subdivisions but only developmental areas; the important political divisions under the central government are the *départements*, which exercise only a limited autonomy under the central government. If we follow Regions IX and XII, all the remaining regions will become political divisions, enjoying a fuller measure of autonomy or self-government. This set-up I have in mind for the Philippines should be a more democratic set-up than that in France and therefore more in keeping with our long struggle for freedom, independence and democracy.

After an experiment of ten to fifteen years of regional autonomy, then we should advance to full federalism. In securing autonomy for the regions, it is not necessary to elect a constitutional assembly to amend the Constitution; all that is needed is an act of parliament, as in the case of Regions IX and XII, which were established as autonomous regions by the President exercising his emergency legislative powers. But to change into full federalism, a Constituent Assembly has to be elected to propose amendments to the Constitution.

In my scheme for a federal government, there are ten states excluding the federal district constituting Manila and surrounding cities and towns. Four are in Luzon, three in the Visayas, and three in Mindanao. The states generally are co-extensive with the main ethnolinguistic areas in order to enable the inhabitants to develop their regional cultures so that they can contribute more effectively to the development of a rich national civilization. Under the existing scheme there are five regions in Luzon, three in the Visayas, and four in Mindanao—twelve in all, plus the National Capital Region. Of course, I would prefer my own scheme, but I have no objection to the present regional set-up which could take care of future population increases and economic, social, and technological development. I would only suggest that the new Aurora Province be requested to join with either Region II or Region III, with which it has common boundaries.

The Regional Autonomy scheme or the Federal Government plan will be more effective in helping develop and propagate the common national language. With a broadened base, it can allow for the assimilation of concepts, principles, terms and other language elements from the various regions of the country and from foreign lands. The Tagalog purists obviously will no longer be the czars of national language development, since they will no longer be able to continue imposing their will on the rest of the nation. Inevitably dialects of the common language will appear in some areas of the country, because dialects reflect the existence of subcultures. But that is to be expected particularly in an insular archipelago like ours. However, that can be minimized through mass edu-



cation and mass culture by means of mass communications media. Certainly that is a more acceptable scheme than for a few Tagalog purists dictating from their seats of authority their inflexible and unchangeable rules for the development of the language about which they betray a proprietary relationship mentality. Since the common national language will no longer be the exclusive property of the Tagalistas or Tagalogs, then the whole nation, headed of course by the leaders of the regions, will participate actively in its propagation and development.

When I decided not to go back to the Institute of National Language after the war, I thought I would never again be involved actively in national language activities. But when I was secretary of the Graduate School (I was earlier assistant head of the department of English and the first head of the newly created department of Humanities, U.P.), President Carlos P. Romulo created a new department of Pilipino and Philippine Literature and appointed me as first chairman of the department. By then (1966) my views on federalism were well known on campus and after I had reiterated my proposal, at a formal symposium late in 1967 at the National Y.M.C.A., for the establishment of a federal republic as a solution to the language problem, a powerful Tagalog writers' organization passed a resolution asking President Romulo to dismiss me from the chairmanship of the department and to split the department into two independent departments, one devoted exclusively to the study and propagation of Pilipino and the other to the remaining Philippine languages and literatures. I opposed the split as divisive and harmful to national unit. As for my ouster, Romulo told my detractors that my competence as professor and researcher was unquestioned and as a citizen I was entitled to express my views on public affairs; so there was no ground for my dismissal from office.

From the time I left the chairmanship in 1969 after I was appointed dean of the Graduate School by President Salvador P. Lopez, the department has been left intact, taking charge of studies and research and teaching of all Philippine languages and literature, not only Tagalog. We can achieve the desired goal of national unity not by superimposing one ethnolinguistic culture over the others but by seeking areas of agreement among them. In other words, national unity in diversity, not national unity in massive uniformity.

From this discussion then it is crystal clear that language policy should not favor one ethnolinguistic group over the other ethnolinguistic groups. Cases in point are those of Switzerland and Singapore. Despite the clear dominance in numbers of the German-speaking Swiss, who constitute more than sixty percent of the population, French, Italian, and Romansch, which are the languages of the minority groups, are also official languages along with German. And in Singapore, there are four official languages, despite the preponderance of the Chinese constituting about eighty percent of the population: English, Malay and Tamil are also official languages. In these states, there is an attempt to be fair to the language minorities.

Close to the Philippine experience is that of India. Years ago, that multilingual subcontinent flared up in bloody language riots against the imposition of Hindi as the All-India language and the phasing out of English. To restore Indian national unity, English was legislated back as an associate official All-India language some years ago. Speakers of Bengali, Telugu, Tamil, Bihari, Marathi and the other major languages would not want their languages to be relegated to the background in favor of Hindi, which is the native language of only about thirty-five percent of the population of India. Indians prefer English as the unifying language in India because it is neutral, because it does not compete with any of the native languages, and therefore offers equal opportunity for all Indians for advancement. Hindi can benefit only the Hindi-speaking population.

### 3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion this we can say: Language policy should never be made an instrument

for the oppression of minority groups or for the curtailment of their rights and fundamental freedoms. I feel strongly about this matter, perhaps more so than some other people, because my sense of fairness and of justice became sharpened through the crucible of the Japanese military occupation and the authoritarian martial law regime. Language nationalism can never be made to justify the violation of the democratic principle of equality of opportunity for advancement. What the Pope has said can bear repeating: 'Even in exceptional situations that sometimes arise, one can never justify any violation of the fundamental dignity of the human person or of the basic rights that safeguard this dignity'.

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