

The Muslims in the Philippine Public and Private Secondary School History Textbooks: A Content Analysis

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The printed page "is still the only known time machine that can create the events of the past and open up the vistas of the future" (De Boer and Dallmann; 1970:3). It satisfies the needs that the most recent media cannot fulfill. Unquestionably, the printed page is one of the most important agents of change and a powerful instrument in shaping the human minds for it reaches millions of people still untouched by electronics. Words, spoken or written, have soul and body. It is a living thing of blood and fire, capable of infinite beauty and power. The printed page transmits and preserves knowledge and social values. Men may go through many revolutions and material changes, but the basic truths and elemental values that they believe in are preserved and passed on through the printed page.

In the schools, the textbook is a powerful agent of education. It is the most widely used teaching aid in existence. It brings into the classroom the exact words of authorities in all branches of learning from the earliest times to the present day. It is a rich source and potential channel of learning; by the same logic, it can be utilized to sow and propagate an incomplete model of reality. Thus errors, inaccuracies, and distortions in school textbooks can be as destructive as the messages which they transmit. Any mistake and misrepresentation of reality through the school textbooks would be a disservice to truth, peace, and the well-being of the nation.

The Existing Philippine History Textbooks

Filipino historians, academicians, and scholars acknowledge historical distortions embodied in the school text and reference books. Thus over the years, there exist a decisive desire among concerned Filipinos to re-examine and re-direct Philippine history and culture (see Phil. Daily Inquirer; Oct. 11-13, 1988:1; Bula; 1990:12-27). In addition to historical distortions, errors and prejudices were deliberately carried over all these years in-between covers of the printed page, specifically on the part of the Muslims. A number of studies reveal this fact (see Bula; 1990:12-27). Various recommendations were given to delete and rectify these prejudices, errors, and distortions but years have passed and still no corrections have been made. School text and reference books are being published; the old ones are revised; new editions are printed and circulated all over the country; yet the "glaring" errors, distortions, and prejudices on Muslim history and culture remained uncorrected.

No less than Minerva K. De Jesus, the editor-in-chief of the Instructional Materials Corporation (IMC) under the Dept. of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS)--its publishing arm, says that "the difficulty in meeting the demand for textbooks has hampered efforts to correct the distortions found in manuscripts." De Jesus further acknowledges that the IMC editors have limited access to historical information, and that "deadlines have been prohibitive on their own research that often their work has kept them from closely editing the texts" (Bula; 1990:6). Ladies and gentlemen, the danger of distortions and erroneous interpretations are too great!

The task assigned to me is to content-analyze Philippine Public and Private Secondary School History Textbooks. I would like to handle the subject in this order: first, I will show the extent of coverage each book has on Muslim literature; second, I will present the errors, distortions, and prejudices on Muslim history and culture; and third, I will relate the implications of the first two to Islam, to the Muslim and Christian minds, to integration, and to education.

A. Extent of Coverage

My 1990 study, where I analyzed thirty-nine public school textbooks in English, Filipino, and Social Studies used in grades 1 to 6 and in first year to fourth year high school, reveals that only eighteen books or less than half contain information about the Muslims. The maximum number of pages that have been spared on the Muslims in a book is about 17 pages (only one book has this much) and most fall in the bracket of about three to six pages in a book; there are two books with only a sentence and two with 5 sentences each. This manifests that almost nothing on or about the Muslims are written in the Philippine public school textbooks. Most of the information given are repeatedly cribbed from book to book.

In relation to this situation, Bashier Salic in his doctoral dissertation (1990) content-analyzed seven first year history textbooks. His findings reveal that only 2% to 3% of the contents of each textbook is devoted to Filipino Muslim history.

In this paper, eleven history books used in both public and private secondary schools were analyzed. Of the eleven books, only one book has about ten pages on the Muslims; one has nine; two has eight; three has six; three has four; and one has about two pages. The books have 3,194 pages in all. Out of this number, only about sixty-seven pages are on the Muslims which is 2.09%. The books show that only 1% to 3% of the content of each book is on the Muslims. Ten of the books have errors, distortions, and prejudices about the Muslims. Similar to my 1990 study, the repetition of the subjects greatly reduces our knowledge on the Muslims in the textbooks.

A. Extent of Coverage

	With Distortions	No. of pages	Estimated no. of pages on the Muslims	%
First Year				
1. LIPUNAN		140	2	1.42
2. Araling Panlipunan		236	6	2.54
Second Year				
3. KASAYSAYAN		219	6	2.73
4. KABIHASNANG ASYANO		319	4	1.25
Fourth Year				
5. KABIHASNAN IV		332	6	1.8
6. The World (Conceptual-Chronological Approach)		202	8	3.96
7. World History (In Asian Setting)		581	8	1.37
8. World History (A Chronological Approach)		411	9	2.18
9. Man's Culture - Past, Present, Prospect		349	10	2.86
10. The Philippines and Her Neighbors, Far and Near		211	4	1.89
11. World History		194	4	2.06
	10	3,194	67	2.09

B. Errors, Distortions, and Prejudices

At this point, let us bring into the open the distortions, errors, and prejudices on the Muslims deliberately carried over in between covers of the secondary school history books. I decided not to analyze those that pertain to historical distortions because all Filipino historians knew those better than I do. Those on Islam and the Muslims are my concern. I will deal only on the most important and sensitive subjects for lack of time.

Most of the books say that Islam is a religion founded by Prophet Muhammad (salallaho alaihi wasalam - peace be upon him). This statement is not only a grave mistake but a distortion. Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) never claimed to have founded Islam much more to be God. Allah (subhana hu wata Allah) commanded the Holy Prophet, being the seal of all the prophets, to propagate Islam universally. Islam is the chosen religion of Allah. He said in His most Holy Qur'an, Qur'an nul Kareem (S.5-V.4):

This day have I
Perfected your religion
For you, completed
My favor upon you,
And have chosen for you
Islam as your religion.

This reveals the uniqueness of Islam from other world religions. It is not named after any mortal or nation nor is it the product of any human mind but it is Allah's chosen religion for the Muslims. It should not be equated with Christianity which was named after Christ, with Buddhism after Buddha, with Judaism after Juda, with Zoroastrianism after Zoroaster, with Taoism after Lao Tzu, with Hinduism, and the other isms. The colonials and the western authors patterned by Filipino writers always let it appear that Islam was founded by Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) and thus they use the term Muhammedanism in place of Islam see (Shahani, et al; 1974:313). This is strange to Muslims and therefore must cease in use since the word suggests worship of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) which is a misnomer and a grave offense to the highest degree committed against Islam and its believers - the Muslims. Islam as a religion means complete submission and obedience to Allah's Will and Laws. And a Muslim (definitely not Mohammedan!) is one who completely submits and obeys Allah's Will and Laws.

Gregorio Zaide and Senator Leticia Shahani in their books wrote that Prophet Muhammad spread his religion by force of arms--by fire and sword. To quote Zaide, he says "after

Muhammad's death, his successors propagated Islam by fire and sword eastward across Asia to China and westward to Africa and Spain in Europe" (Zaide; 1986:221-222; 1985:132). Shahani's version says "close friends of Mohammed and his successors zealously set out to expand Islam into the neighboring countries by force --by fire and sword" (Shahani et al; 1974:315). Farce! isn't it? Islam is a religion of peace. The Prophet as well as his followers engaged in wars in defense of Islam and freedom. Non-Muslim writers deliberately propagate this idea because of the rooted hate and prejudice inherited from the colonials.

The First Year SEDP (Secondary Education Development Program) book says the Imam are Muslim religious leaders who do not have political powers. Islam, unlike other world religions does not separate religion and government. It is one and the same. In Islam, a believing and practicing Muslim who is a scholar in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith is the most appropriate religious and political leader. As it has always been emphasized, Islam is a way of life; everything is within it; every human activity is related with each other and it always starts and ends in religion --Al-Islam.

For centuries, the Mindanao Muslims had been ruled by politicians. The religious group locally called the Ulama were never given the chance to politically lead their people, again because of the colonial influence of the separation of the church and the state and which was designed for their divide-and-rule policy, and which furthermore divided the Muslims and the Christians on one hand and divided the Muslims on the other hand. Thus, under the politicians who used their brother Muslims as an instrument for their selfish ends, the Mindanao Muslims lagged behind for centuries--this very reason obliged the ulama group to save the Muslims from centuries of darkness and deceit. Thus, in 1988, the Meranao ulama group organized and registered their political party named "OMPIYA (Reform) PARTY" and they braved and struggled their way to the 1988 local elections, all in the name of reform towards an Islamic Ummah (community). The OMPIYA PARTY was led by Meranao theologians, lawyers and jurists, and educators who

mostly acquired their Islamic knowledge and education from different countries of the Arab world. Presently, the Vice Governor of Lanao del Sur, three of the Board Members, two municipal mayors, the City Mayor and the vice mayor and seven of the councilors were the victorious candidates of the OMPIYA PARTY. And we can see with our naked eyes that there was a change! There had been an undeniable spectacular change in the city of Marawi. Record proves that what was not accomplished by local politicians for decades was done by the ulama in barely two years. This is a strong manifestation that the ulama is the designed religious and political leader in Islam.

Senator Shahani, with her co-authors in their book *Man's Culture - Past, Present, Prospects*, tell us that the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) were collected by his disciples which were made into the Kor'an. They say: "the Koran is made up of speeches and sayings of Mohammed" (Shahani et. al; 1974:314). Qur'an literally means reading or recitation. The Holy Qur'an is the Infallible word of Allah revealed to Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) through Jibreel (Angel Gabriel). The most Holy Qur'anul Kareem says:

What thing is most weighty in evidence? Say:
Allah is witness between me and you: This Qur'an
hath been revealed to me by inspiration that I may
warn you and all whom it reaches. (S. 6-V.19)

(This is) the revelation of the Book in which there
is no doubt-from the Lord of the Worlds. (S.
32-V.2) The Revelation of the Book is from Allah
the Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom. (S. 46-V.2)

These verses reveal that the Holy Prophet is only an intermediary for the reception and communication of Allah's revelations.

The Holy Qur'an nuf Kareem was revealed in fragments and in piecemeal, from time to time, which lasted for twenty-three years, thirteen in Makkah (Mecca) and ten in Al-Madinah (Medina). It is addressed to all humanity, without distinction of race, region or time. It seeks to guide men in all walks of life; spiritual, temporal, individual, and collective. It speaks of the best rules relating to social life, commerce, marriage, inheritance, penal law, international law, and so on. It has directions for everybody, every place and for all time.

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) was an unlettered man, thus Allah (subhana hu wataallah) committed every Revelation to the Holy Prophet's memory and heart. During his lifetime, he appointed scribes and recorders of the revelations he had received. As soon as he received a verse, he immediately communicated it to his disciples and asked them not only to learn it by heart -- in order to recite it during the service of worship--but also to record it and to multiply the copies under his supervision. He checked and authenticated them. By the time the Revelations were completed, the Muslims were in possession of the complete compilation of the Holy Qur'an, many owned it by heart. They were recited, memorized, and used for all daily purposes. After the Prophet's death, Abu Bakar, the first Caliph entrusted Zayd Ibn Thabit, Muhammad's Chief of Revelations, to compile a standard and complete copy of the Holy Qur'an in the same order as authorized by the Prophet. "The final and complete version was checked and approved by all Muslims who heard the Holy Qur'an from the Prophet and committed it to their memories and hearts. This was done less than two years after Muhammad's death when Revelations were still fresh and alive in the minds of scribes, memorizers, and other Muslim companions of the Prophet" (Abdalati; 1986:219).

Scholars, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, confirm the authenticity of the Holy Qur'an. It stands today as it first came down, and as it always will be. It has not been corrupted in any kind and its complete preservation is beyond doubt for Allah Himself said:

We have, without doubt, sent down the Qur'an, and
We will assuredly guard it (from corruption).
(S.15-V.9)

The statement on page 36 of Araling Panlipunan I which says "Folk Islam ang nalinang na relihiyon nila sapagkat nahaluan na ito ng katutubong kaugalian at tradisyon" (Folk Islam is their 'developed religion because it is mixed with native behaviors and traditions) is dangerous to the Muslim young minds.

There is no such thing as Folk Islam for the Muslims. Islam is Islam as revealed by Allah and propagated by Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). The Holy Qur'an and the Hadith (traditions of the Holy Prophet) laid down what is Islamic and anything not within these is contrary to Islam, and therefore absolutely unislamic.

Two sentences are worth mentioning from the second year book KASAYSAYAN; it says: "Ginagawa ang pag-aayuno sa pamamagitan ng hindi pagkain at pag-inom simula sa pagsikat hanggang sa paglubog ng araw" (Fasting is done by not eating and drinking from daybreak until sunset) on page 176; and "Ang lahat ng tao ay naliligo sa dagat upang hugasan ang kasalanang ispiritual at maging malinis sa pagharap kay Allah" (Everybody takes a bath in the sea to wash away spiritual sins and to be clean to face Allah) on page 177.

Islamic fasting is not only complete abstinence from food and drinks, but it includes abstinence from smoking and intimate intercourse before the break of dawn until sunset. It also includes strict refraining from thoughts of lust and thinking, speaking, and doing harm toward self and others.

Fasting is a form of discipline and training.

The statement on going to the sea for spiritual cleansing is

very erroneous and un-Islamic. This is not true to the Muslims. Muslims cannot perform the prescribed worship and glorification of Allah (prayer) without first fulfilling the conditions of the prescribed wudu' (washing or ablution). Taking a bath before the Eid prayers and the congregational prayer is Sunnah (optional) in Islam. If a Muslim performs it, he gets blessing for it; if he does not do it, he earns or losses nothing. Obviously, everybody likes to be blessed. It is emphasized that bathing is with clean water, and nowhere had it been mentioned to do the bathing in the sea.

The Kabihasnang Asyano (1989:230,235), Lipunan (1981:21), and the books of Zaide talk of polygamy and divorce. This is a very controversial subject which needs elucidation because this bears dislike towards Islam.

Polygamy

Polygamy is the most abused and corrupted aspect of Islam by non-Muslims, especially the Westerners. They think that a Muslim man is possessed by physical passions and has an asset of a number of wives and concubines. This conception is exaggerated partly by sensational motion pictures and cheap paperback stories, and partly by the irresponsible behavior of some Muslim individuals, and to a great extent because of the distortions of the mass media. Inevitably this results to that unmoved barrier that walled apart millions of people who were unfortunate from not seeing the radiant lights of Islam and its social philosophy.

Non-Muslims know and understand that in Islam monogamy is the norm and polygamy is an exception.

Whether non-Muslims accept it or not, polygamy has been practiced throughout human history, it has lived to this very moment. It is in practice from East to West by various people in diverse forms, some of which are legal and some illegal and

hypocritical; some in secret and some in public. Islam and the Muslims did not create polygamy: it can be traced everywhere and in all ages of history. Islam did not abrogate polygamy but rather treated it in a very realistic and practical way because this phenomenon will continue to live and be practiced. Islam instead sanctioned it on conditions and restrictions. The Holy Qur'an says (S. 4-V.3):

If ye fear that ye shall not
Be able to deal justly
With the orphans,
Marry women of your choice,
Two, or three, or four;
But if ye fear that ye shall not
Be able to deal justly (with them),
Then only one, or (a captive)
That your right hands possess.
That will be more suitable,
To prevent you
From doing injustice.

This is the only verse in the Holy Qur'an on polygyny. It is very obvious that it does not encourage it; it only permits it, conditionally. This verse has a social philosophy.

This verse was revealed when the Muslims were engaged in wars. A large number of widows, orphans and unmarried women were left without any income or care or protection for themselves. If at that time, monogamy had still been the rule, what options would have been left to the millions of women who had no hope of getting a legal husband for security. Under this pressing circumstance, it was but logical to allow women to get legal security, thus Islam resorted to allowing polygyny.

Aside from reason of war, there are individual circumstances where marriage to more than one wife may be preferable to loathsome alternatives. For example, where the first wife is chronically sick or disabled or very old. The woman is not able to fulfill her marital responsibilities. Some husbands

cannot manage this situation. A second marriage may serve as a solution acceptable to all three parties. In the case of a barren wife, where the husband very much wants children, a second marriage may serve as solution. Divorce may be avoided if parties agree on a second marriage of the man. Marriages sometimes are unsuccessful. A husband loves another woman, the wife may not wish to be divorced out of respect of her husband and wish to stay with him for the security of marriage, for herself and the children. The second woman may not also wish to break up the man's first family. In circumstances like these where both women could accept a polygamous marriage, there is no need to face divorce on the one hand or an extra-marital affair on the other. Majority of the non-Muslims think of polygamy in the context of a harem of glamorous young women, not as a solution to some of the social problems. It must be understood that polygamy is a practice not to be condemned without thinking of its uses and possible benefits in any society - morally and physically. "The main concern of Islam is to maintain the dignity and security of the individual, and to protect the integrity and morale of society" (Abdalati; 1986: 190).

Polygamy is a precautionary measure applied to check negligence and infidelity, hypocrisy and insecurity, immorality and indecency in the Muslim society. It is a means to solve difficult social problems on a realistic and responsible basis. "It is not an article of Faith in Islam nor is it an injunction; it is merely a permission from God, a solution of some of the most difficult problems in human relations" (Ibid., p.196). Under normal circumstances, monogamy is not only preferable but is the rule.

Islam permits a man to have more than one wife on the condition that he will be able to deal equitably with his wives in the matter of food, drink, housing, clothing and expenses, as well as in the division of his time between them. A Muslim man who will not be able to fulfill all these obligations with justice and equality is prohibited by God from marrying more than one woman, God said (H.Q., S.4, V.3):

...But if you fear that you will not be able to do justice (among them), then (marry) only one ...

This is the Islamic "polygamy" which non-Muslims abhor and to which they react with hostility, not realizing their own men taking a number of girlfriends "without restrictions and without any legal or moral accountability, either in respect to the woman or to the children she may bear as a result of this irreligious and immoral plurality of extra-marital relationships" (Al- Qaradawi: 193).

Divorce

When the Islamic marriage does not properly function and it cannot be overcome by reconciliation, divorce is applicable. However, before taking this final and desperate step, some attempts must be made in the following order:

1. Husband and wife must try to settle their dispute and solve their problems between themselves.
2. If they fail, two arbitrators, one from the husband's relations and the other from the wife's, must be delegated to try to pacify them and reconcile their differences.
3. If this attempt is unsuccessful, only then, can divorce be applied.

If the couple is decided for a divorce, they will be given three months and ten days waiting period. This is to clarify whether the woman is or is not expecting a child. Secondly, it is a cooling-off period during which the relatives and other members of the family or of the community may try to help towards a reconciliation. All possible means must be exhausted. During this period, the husband remains responsible for the wife's welfare and maintenance. If the couple is reconciled they may resume the marriage relationships at anytime within the

waiting period. When the waiting period is over and there is no way for an appeasement, only then does divorce become applicable. This is the normal procedure if the husband is the one seeking divorce or if the divorce is by mutual consent.

On the other hand, if the wife is the one seeking for divorce against the wishes of the husband, she may take her case to the court and obtain divorce.

Marriage in Islam is not a mere contract between two parties; it is solemn and sacred. "It is a contract to which God Himself is the First Witness and the First Party; it is concluded in His Name, in obedience to Him and according to His ordinances. It is a decent human companionship, authorized and supervised by God. It is a Sign of His blessings and abundant mercy" (Abdalati; 1986:202). The Holy Qur'an says (S. 30-V.21):

And among His Signs
Is this, that He created
For you mates from among
Yourselves, that ye may
Dwell in tranquility with them,
And He has put love and mercy
between your (hearts)!
Verily in that are Signs
For those who reflect.

Thus the conception that a Muslim man may divorce and leave his wife at his mere caprices is a grave distortion of the Islamic institution of divorce. It is taken only as a last resort. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

Of all the things God has permitted, the one He most dislikes is divorce.

Some of the books reveal to us that Islam recognized prophets Abraham, Moses, Christ, and others, but they are regarded as minor prophets (see Zaide & Zaide; 1985:132; Kabihasnang Asyano, 1989:230). This is a statement propagated

by non-Muslim writers to sow hatred towards Islam. Belief in all the prophets of Allah is one of the six articles of faith in Islam.

God raised Messengers among every people who brought the religion--Islam--which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) propagated. All Messengers stand equal with each other. Islam makes it necessary to have implicit faith in all of the Prophets of Allah. There is no difference between Muhammad and the other Prophets (peace be upon all of them) and we have been ordered to believe equally in all of them. However, in spite of this equality, they have differences, which are the following:

a. The Prophets of the past came to certain people for certain periods of time, while Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been sent for the whole world and for all time to come.

b. The teachings of those Prophets have either disappeared altogether from the world, or whatever of them remain is corrupted and cannot be followed. Muhammad's (peace be upon him) teachings are preserved and are followed correctly and confidently. His message was for all peoples and for all ages.

c. The guidance imparted through the Prophets of the past was not complete. The most perfect code of guidance was imparted to mankind through Muhammad (peace be upon him), the Last of the Prophets. All previous codes were automatically abrogated. He who follows Muhammad (peace be upon him) follows all the Prophets, for whatever was good and eternally workable in their teachings has been embodied in his teachings. Muhammad's (peace be upon him) teachings are absolutely perfect, free from any defect or error. It is meant for all the children of Adam, the entire human race. After him no Prophet will

appear among any people till the Day of Judgment.

Now, as to the prejudices. Books used in the third year level (this is on economics) never mentioned of Muslim contributions to the country's economy. It never appeared in the books that the God given gifts, the beautiful Lake Lanao and the Agus River of the Meranaos are earning billions of dollars for the National Power Corporation, even if at the expense of the welfare of the Meranaos; and that these brought industrial revolution in the land of promise--Mindanao, which is now the land of fulfillment. Has the books introduced the Philippine Amanah Bank, or has it made known that the Philippine National Bank in Marawi City is one of the highest earning PNB banks in the country? What with the petro dollars coming in?

The books authored by Senator Shahani (1974;313) and Gregorio and Sonia Zaide (1988:227) use a small g for God when it refers to God Allah. It is universal that once the Supreme God is being referred to in writing, the big G for God, the Most High, is being used.

Not showing in the books the contemporary Muslims is a show of prejudice. All that you and I can see and read in the books are the pre-colonial and colonial images of the Muslims (see Salic; 1990:82). Thus, non-Muslims do not read the real picture of a Muslim. Non-Muslims still think of Muslims as uncultured and not their equal; on the other hand, Muslims look at themselves as helpless, inferior, and unfortunate citizens in a Christian country, thus the walls between them will never be shattered. Instead, the walls become thicker and stronger.

The number of pages spared on the Muslims in the history books is a prejudice in itself --2.09%. Almost nothing can be read about the Muslims in the books. Its meagerness is aggravated by errors and distortions. The contents of the books present offensive and unacceptable norms in Islam and the Muslims. They do not present the ideal and realities of Islamic tenets and Muslim history and culture. The textbooks present

concepts that alienate the Muslims from their own religion, history, and culture. This has also been stressed in other studies done by Muslim scholars (see Bula; 1990:12-27). This can mean that the non-Muslim young minds will never get to know and understand the Muslims who are in their midst, much more to learn to appreciate them as they are. Thus the distance between the Muslims and the Christians keeps on getting wider and bridging the gap between them becomes all the more difficult. The prejudices will never bind brotherhood among all Filipinos.

Besides these, there are general observations and findings the researcher likes to point out.

The legacy of the colonial past is still very much alive as clearly manifested in the way the Philippine secondary school textbooks picture the Muslims in Mindanao.

The textbooks extol the Spanish conquest, their christianization venture and their influences towards their christianized Filipino allies. They conceal colonial treacheries, oppressions and exploitations. They immortalize the majority who readily gave up their lands as well as their culture and who instead became vassals of Spain and proudly embraced Christianity. They glorify the bravery of Christian heroes, but they deny the Muslims who gallantly defended their homeland, religion and culture. Most of the books deliberately conceal to acknowledge and spell out that the first nationalists and patriots were the Muslims. They refuse to show to the Filipinos that the Muslims were the first rulers of the archipelago, that they were the ones with an organized government, with a rich culture, and a religion before Legazpi's plunder of Manila. If these were clearly emphasized in the textbooks, especially in the elementary level, the non-Muslims will learn to understand, appreciate and love the Muslims.

The books analyzed reveal that no one book ever referred to the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith as basis of their writings on Islam and the Muslims.

There are still a lot of prejudices that we can discuss but since time is not giving us much chance, we have to move on.

The Philippine History books used in the secondary public and private schools still carry and propagate in their contents the centuries-old colonial prejudices and inaccuracies made on Islam and Muslim history and culture. Practically nothing positive and significant can be found about the Muslims in the history books. The books reveal dishonesty and insincerity of the government in its so-called program of "integrating the Muslims into the main body politic." There is almost no attempt on the part of the government to let the Muslims be objectively known and properly understood by the majority of Filipinos. The writer's assessment leads to one thing: the textbooks are used as an instrument of subjugation. Education was utilized by the Spaniards and the Americans as an instrument of colonial policy. The Americans employed it to pacify the Christian Filipinos. In return, the Filipino majority is using the public school textbooks in alienating the Muslims from their faith and true identity. The fact that the prejudices and the distortions on the textbooks have not been corrected from colonial times to this very moment is a clear evidence and manifestation. The government has been aware of the distortions and prejudices in literature on or about the Muslims but is has not exerted effort to rectify them. I'll not be sorry to say that since no amount of ammunition can phase out the Mindanao Muslims, little by little, the young Muslim minds are being alienated from their religion and culture by slowly eroding Muslim ideals (values) from the textbooks and substituting them with unacceptable norms. Vestiges of Muslim nationalism and patriotism are concealed from the history textbooks. Historical truth is covered up in order to suppress tracing back of Muslim identity and their glorious past and origin. They are deliberately made to completely disappear piecemeal from the textbooks as can be perceived in the new editions of the textbooks. This is one way to subjugate the Muslims in a subtle way. Renato Constantino (1966:2-3) expresses this when he said that "the most effective means of subjugating a people is to capture their minds . . . The molding of man's mind is the best means of conquest."

The writer's assertion is strengthened by the fact that qualified and responsible Muslims are not represented in the Textbook Board.

Conclusion

In spite of the proliferation of computers, the printed materials are here to stay as the most potent channel of education. There is no surer way of transmitting and preserving values and attitudes than through the written literature. Men may go through many revolutions and material changes but the basic truths and elemental values that they believe in are presented and passed on through the printed pages. Therefore, Philippine public and private school textbooks must be re-written and re-directed. Christian and Muslim history and culture must be presented in such a way that one is not oppressive and exploitative of by the other. It must not in any way and in any form bring cultural confusion and alienation. The school textbooks, therefore, must be utilized to infuse in the minds of the young the feeling of pride in the Filipino cultural heritage which includes that of the Muslims.

Education policy- and decision-makers of today should take reference from history in order not to keep repeating the errors of the past. It has to be realized that the past is crucial to recognize the present. In the efforts of achieving peace and understanding, textbook writers must reflect and choose to record and emphasize values reflective of the real Muslim character. They have to start from the grade school level so that the young minds, while understanding their religious and cultural differences, will learn to appreciate and respect their common ancestry and common destiny. In that way, we can present and correct any further or future misconceptions, prejudices and inaccuracies. Proper inclusion of the Muslims in the textbooks should be objective and impartial for it is through textbook materials that Muslim heritage is preserved and its

ideals and aspirations are given form and meaning. They provide a lasting picture of Muslim life and culture. They are a means of breaking the barriers of time, space and cultural differences.

If the government through its educational arm continues to be indifferent towards correcting the distortions, inaccuracies and prejudices made on Islam and the Muslims in the public and private school textbooks, it is not at all honest and sincere in "integrating the Muslims into the main body politic." Physical power and military conquest do not necessarily mean victory, which it is in the molding of the minds. Education is a potent instrument in religious and cultural struggles. It plays a peculiar role in the preservation and transformation of any society. It is the political power that controls education and those who control education control the society. It cannot be denied that those who control the state try to use the educational system to advance their goals, specifically political. No less than the deposed President Ferdinand E. Marcos had said that for: "Whatever reforms we may seek and in whatever sector, if it does not begin with education, these reforms are bound to fail."

The integration program of the government has not been successful because the government itself is still influenced significantly by colonial prejudices, historical distortion and national psychology which has not altered the sense of non-importance of the Muslims who had been negatively referred to in literature and history as the "Moros" and the infidels.

Recommendations

Let me offer these recommendations:

To the DECS:

1. Immediate revision of elementary and secondary school textbooks should be undertaken.

Prejudices, distortions and inaccuracies made on Islam and Muslim history and culture must be rectified.

Historical truth of Muslim achievements should be properly reflected in the textbooks. Give the Muslims what are due to them in Philippine history. Concealment of historical facts is a deceit!

2. Officially include separate courses on Islamic religion, history and culture in the tertiary level of education. Any student throughout the country, whether in private or government schools, must at least take nine (9) units on the Muslims for him to graduate from college.

3. Qualified and responsible Muslim scholars should be made members of the Textbook Board. Any school textbook to be printed which contains selections on the Muslims submitted for tryouts should be approved by a corps of Muslim scholars.

To the Textbook and Instructional Material Writers:

1. Islam and Muslim history, and culture should be totally integrated in the Philippine school textbooks. They should be given equal share, treatment, and presentation in the textbooks and other instructional materials. It is in education where the core of integration lies. Books and instructional materials should not demonstrate a scenario which treats the Muslims as second class citizens, primitive people, or as an exotic tourist attraction. It should not contain derogatory connotations on the Muslims. It should not alienate them from their cultural identity.

2. The Muslims deserve and ought to be acknowledged as the first Filipino heroes, patriots

and nationalists. Their bravery and heroism in defense of the country against the encroachment of the oppressive and exploitative colonizers should be properly acknowledged in Philippine history books. They were the Filipinos who offered the earliest and the longest national resistance against Western imperialism.

To Educators:

Educators must possess accurate and adequate knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Islam and Muslim history and culture.

To the Government:

The Muslims must always be considered as an "immovable" part of the mainstream of Philippine society for they will forever remain a part of it. History made them an inseparable part. It is worthwhile quoting Alunan Glang (1969):

Here, in the Philippines the Muslim Filipino was born - and here, will he die. It is this country which has witnessed the pain and glory of his struggles - as he wrote down with his blood the meaning of his existence, and nurtured it to life with his tears. His story echoes through the centuries with the cry of an unvanquished spirit seeking to root down his identity in the beautiful land that gave him birth - and if here he saw the night, it is here, just as well, where he knows the brightness of the day.

To this land therefore, which is his heart, his cradle, and his grave, the Muslim Filipino dedicates his entire being - and into it he pours all his hopes for the future.

To a Muslim:

I urge you to do your part. If you do not lift a finger to do something on the distortions, errors and prejudices in the existing school text and reference books, your children's children will be alienated from their Islamic identity. You will answer for this in Allah's presence. If you do not act, who will?

Recommendations are endless. Various scholarly studies about the Muslims in all aspects - social, political, economic, educational, religious, cultural, etc. have been undertaken, with enlightening, logical and noble recommendations. As to their realization, it is just unfortunate that only the selected few implementing body has the power to put them into action. This paper hopes that the government through its educational arm be sincere and honest in showing to the world its concern for the welfare and development of the Mindanao Muslims!

Assalamo Alaikom!

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