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Republic Act No. 1425
An Act to include in the curricula of all public and private schools, colleges and universities courses on the life, works and writings of Jose Rizal, particularly his novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, authorizing the printing and distribution thereof, and for other purposes.¹
Congress of the Philippines

Philippines. Congress. "Republic Act No. 1425: An Act to include in the curricula of all public and private schools, colleges and universities courses on the life, works and writings of Jose Rizal, particularly his novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, authorizing the printing and distribution thereof, and for other purposes." Third Congress of the Philippines: 12 June 1956.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Republic Act No. 1425, popularly known as the Rizal Law, directs all public and private schools, colleges, and universities to include in their curricula courses or subjects on the life, works, and writings of Dr. Jose Rizal, particularly the novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. The Board of National Education is given the mandate to carry out and enforce the purpose and intent of the Rizal Law.

Written by Jack Victor M. Nera; Edited by Frederick N. Castillo

WHEREAS, today, more than any other period of our history, there is a need for a re-dedication to the ideals of freedom and nationalism for which our heroes lived and died;

WHEREAS, it is meet that in honoring them, particularly the national hero and patriot, Jose Rizal, we remember with special fondness and devotion their lives and works that have shaped the national character;

WHEREAS, the life, works, and writings of [Jose Rizal](#), particularly his novels [Noli Me Tangere](#) and [El Filibusterismo](#), are a constant and inspiring source of patriotism with which the minds of the youth, especially during their formative and decisive years in school, should be suffused;

WHEREAS, all educational institutions are under the supervision of, and subject to regulation by the State, and all schools are enjoined to develop moral character, personal discipline, civic conscience, and to teach the duties of citizenship; Now, therefore:

Be it enacted by the [Senate](#) and [House of Representatives](#) of the Philippines in [Congress](#) assembled:

Section 1. Courses on the life, works, and writings of Jose Rizal, particularly his novel *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, shall be included in the curricula of all schools, colleges and universities, public or private: Provided, that in the collegiate courses, the original or

unexpurgated editions of the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* or their English translation shall be used as basic texts.

The Board of National Education is hereby authorized and directed to adopt forthwith measures to implement and carry out the provisions of this Section, including the writing and printing of appropriate primers, readers and textbooks. The Board shall, within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate rules and regulations, including those of disciplinary nature, to carry out and enforce the provisions of this Act. The Board shall promulgate rules and regulations providing for the exemption of students for reason of religious belief stated in a sworn written statement, from the requirement of the provision contained in the second part of the first paragraph of this section; but not from taking the course provided for in the first part of said paragraph. Said rules and regulations shall take effect thirty (30) days after their publication in the Official Gazette.

Sec. 2. It shall be obligatory on all schools, colleges and universities to keep in their libraries an adequate number of copies of the original and unexpurgated editions of the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, as well as of Rizal's other works and biography. The said unexpurgated editions of the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* or their translations in English as well as other writings of Rizal shall be included in the list of approved books for required reading in all public or private schools, colleges and universities.

The Board of National Education shall determine the adequacy of the number of books, depending upon the enrollment of the school, college, or university.

Sec. 3. The Board of National Education shall cause the translation of the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, as well as other writings of Jose Rizal into English, Tagalog, and the principal Philippine dialects; cause them to be printed in cheap, popular editions; and cause them to be distributed, free of charge, to persons desiring to read them, through the Purok organizations and [Barrio](#) Councils throughout the country.

Sec. 4. Nothing in this Act shall be construed as amending or repealing section nine hundred twenty-seven of the [Administrative Code](#), prohibiting the discussion of religious doctrines by public school teachers and other person engaged in any public school.

Sec. 5. The sum of three hundred thousand pesos is hereby authorized to be appropriated out of any fund not otherwise appropriated in the National Treasury to carry out the purposes of this Act.

Sec. 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved: June 12, 1956

End Note:

[1.](#) FN Republic Act No. 1425, originally House Bill No. 5561 and Senate Bill No. 438, was approved by the Philippine Congress on 12 June 1956.

http://opinion.inquirer.net/inquireropinion/columns/view_article.php?article_id=63584

LOOKING BACK **Teaching Rizal**

By Ambeth Ocampo
Inquirer

First Posted 01:51am (Mla time) 05/02/2007

MANILA, Philippines -- While most teachers and students are on vacation and preoccupied with finding ways to spend the time and get around the summer heat, I have been teaching two large classes on Philippine history. So far, we have been coping with the daily grind and the course work. The students have endured field trips to Intramuros and museums, and they even pretend to find my stale jokes funny.

In my introduction to the course, I realized that it has been half a century since Claro M. Recto and Jose P. Laurel sponsored and fought for the passage of Republic Act 1425, better known as the Rizal Law. This is the law that made the study of the life, works and writings of Jose Rizal compulsory in all schools in the Philippines.

In the past half-century, other compulsory courses have been revisited, reviewed and, as in the case of Spanish, dropped or made an elective or course of the student's choice. In the collegiate level, therefore, only the following courses remain required and compulsory by law: Land Reform and Taxation, National Service (formerly the ROTC), and the Rizal course.

It is amazing that I have been teaching this course for two decades and have only read the law, hurriedly, once or twice. The last time the government took notice was in 1994 when then President Fidel V. Ramos ordered the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) "to immediately and fully implement the letter, intent and spirit of Republic Act No. 1425 and to impose, should it be necessary, appropriate disciplinary action against the governing body and/or head of any public or private school, college or university found not complying with said law."

Memorandum Order 247 was issued by Ramos following reports that some schools were not complying with the law mandating the teaching of the life and works of Rizal. It was even rumored that some schools did not teach Rizal or his works, so it was deemed appropriate that the teaching of Rizal be renewed and strengthened in preparation for the centennial of his death in 1996 and, of course, the centennial of the Declaration of Philippine Independence in 1998.

In order to appreciate the importance of RA 1425, we must remember that it originally had two versions, one from Congress, the other from the Senate and thus, one has to go through the thick volumes of the Congressional Record and the Record of the Senate for the transcriptions of the heated debates that went into the crafting of the law as we have it today. There is also a lot of materials related to the law in the newspapers of the period that record the opposition of the Catholic Church to the bill, which equals its current opposition to artificial methods of birth control.

Going through the preamble of RA 1425 we see the reason for such legislation:

“Whereas, today, more than other period of our history, there is a need for a re-dedication to the ideals of freedom and nationalism for which our heroes lived and died.

“Whereas, it is meet that in honoring them, particularly the national hero and patriot, Jose Rizal, we remember with special fondness and devotion their lives and works that have shaped the national character.”

Nobody will argue over nationalism, although in a discipline such as history that is both informative and formative, the issue of nationalism requires a second look. When Teodoro Agoncillo declared, in the 1960s, that “there is no Philippine history before 1872,” he changed the way a whole generation looked at history. He argued that primary sources before that turning point, the execution of Gomburza, was written largely by Spaniards, for Spaniards. Thus, what we had before 1872 was not Philippine history but the history of Spain in the Philippines.

Following Agoncillo’s rewriting of Philippine history from a Filipino viewpoint came the classic nationalist works of Renato Constantino that also captured the imagination of the generation of the First Quarter Storm.

RA 1425 was meant to honor Rizal and other heroes. As a matter of fact, Ramos in preparation for the Philippine Centennial called for a consultative meeting of historians in order to draft a law that would officially declare National Heroes. Contrary to popular belief, there is no law making Rizal our national hero. He is such by tradition and acclamation. At best, Rizal was made “official” when the Department of Education in the 1950s made a list of distinct icons of national nature: the national tree is narra, the national flower is sampaguita, the national animal is the carabao, the national hero is Jose Rizal, etc.

Perhaps as a reaction to all this, Constantino wrote the landmark 1968 essay “Veneration without Understanding” which he delivered as the second in the Annual Jose Rizal memorial lectures. In this essay, Constantino suggested, among other things, that Rizal was an American-sponsored hero. It is this essay that always crops up whenever people debate on who should be the “national” hero, Rizal or Andres Bonifacio. This is not a historiographical issue but an ideological or political trap, that leads to debate without end.

(Conclusion on Friday)

http://opinion.inquirer.net/inquireropinion/columns/view_article.php?article_id=63978

LOOKING BACK **The fight over the Rizal Law**

By Ambeth Ocampo
Inquirer

First Posted 01:53am (Mla time) 05/04/2007

MANILA, Philippines -- While writing the conclusion of this two-part column, I caught a story on CNN regarding a new hurdle for prospective immigrants to the United States. Aside from an English proficiency test, they now have to pass an oral history test before they are granted US citizenship. Americans were not comfortable with the history pop quiz, considering this better suited for “Jeopardy” than the US Immigration and Naturalization Service. A review class was shown with the teacher reminding the students about the colors of the American flag. While most knew it was red, white and blue, someone added yellow into the mix. Knowledge of history, it was argued, made a better citizen.

We are ruled by many laws, yet we rarely read these if only to gain an appreciation of their spirit and intent. Republic Act 1425, better known as the Rizal Law, was passed to teach Filipino students nationalism or love of country as expressed in the life and writings of Jose Rizal. The preamble states that it is the duty of schools “to develop moral character, personal discipline, civic conscience, and to teach the duties of citizenship.” On those general terms, there is nothing controversial except that one of the means to that end was to make Rizal’s “Noli Me Tangere” and “El Filibusterismo” required reading in schools. Considering the novels, in part, anti-Catholic, the Church could not accept these as “a constant and inspiring source of patriotism with which the minds of the youth, especially during their formative and decisive years in school, should be suffused,” as the law states.

Going through the novels with a fine-tooth comb, specific passages were deemed offensive to the Catholic faith. Church spokesmen argued that Catholics could read selected passages from Rizal’s work, but to compel Catholics to read Rizal’s novels in its “unexpurgated” or uncensored version was to force heresy on them and violate their freedom of conscience. Catholic schools put up a good fight and even threatened to close down if the Rizal bill was passed. Claro M. Recto calmly told them to go ahead so the state could then nationalize all the schools and teach what it wanted. The Church retreated but threatened to “punish” erring legislators in future elections. Recto was undaunted.

A compromise was suggested with a proposal to use “expurgated” versions of the novels as textbooks, with the “unexpurgated” copies to be kept under lock and key in the school libraries, to be used or made available only at the discretion and or approval of higher school officials. Recto pushed ahead. He did not want an adulterated reading of the novels, he did not want a watered-down bill and declared, “The people who would eliminate the books of Rizal from the schools would blot out from our minds the memory of the national hero. This is not a fight against Recto but a fight against Rizal. Now that Rizal is dead and they can no longer attempt at his life, they are attempting to blot out his memory.”

Section 1 of RA 1425 states: “Courses on the life, works and writings of Jose Rizal, particularly his novels, shall be included in the curricula of all schools, colleges and universities, public or private; Provided that in the collegiate courses, the original or unexpurgated editions or their English translations shall be used as basic texts.”

It is clear from this that students are to read either the original Spanish or translations of these, and that they should be read whole and unedited, yet a compromise is also found in the law: “The Board of National Education is hereby authorized and directed to adopt forthwith measures to implement and carry out the provisions of this Section, including the writing and printing of appropriate primers, readers and textbooks. The Board shall promulgate rules and regulations, including those of a disciplinary nature, to carry out and enforce the regulations of this Act. The Board shall promulgate rules and regulations providing for the exemption of students, for reason of religious belief stated in a sworn written statement, from the requirement of the provision contained in the second part of the first paragraph of this section; but not from taking the course.”

It is not well known that an exemption from the reading of the novels, based on religious belief, is available, but not exemption from the course. To date nobody has applied for this exemption. Besides, anyone who wants to avail himself of it won't know how to go about it.

The next two sections have to do with making the novels available. Section 2 directs schools to keep “an adequate” number of copies of the novels in their libraries. Do school libraries today have enough on the shelves to serve the entire school population? What is the intent of the law, to make copies available free for every student or merely keep enough for reference?

Section 3 adds that the Board of National Education should have the novels translated into the major Philippine languages, “cause them to be printed in cheap, popular editions; and cause them to be distributed, free of charge, to persons desiring to read them, through the Purok organizations and the Barrio Councils throughout the country.”

Can we go to our “barangay” [villages] today and get copies of Rizal's novels for free? I doubt it. But returning to the law and knowing how it came to help us appreciate the rationale for having Rizal taught in schools today.

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Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu.

<http://opinion.inquirer.net/inquireropinion/columns/view/20080221-120379/Rizal-Law-not-being-followed>

Looking Back Rizal Law not being followed

By Ambeth Ocampo
Philippine Daily Inquirer
First Posted 23:06:00 02/21/2008

While the Senate is now looking for other anomalies to investigate, of course in aid of legislation, maybe we should go back to the laws of the land that have not been fully implemented. I'm sure there are a lot of these around, but just recently I was reviewing some specific provisions of Republic Act 1425, more popularly known as the "Rizal Law." This law turned half-century last year, and one wonders how much of it has been complied with, how much of it is continuously being applied. True, Jose Rizal is studied in school, but the manner of teaching is inconsistent, the textbooks and reading materials while voluminous vary a great deal in quantity and quality.

The last time RA 1425 came to public attention was when then-President Fidel V. Ramos ordered the Commission on Higher Education to fully implement the Rizal Law. Memos were exchanged, opinions were sought, then the issue was forgotten. One wonders about the real state of the teaching of Rizal in Philippine schools, colleges and universities today.

Young people today are different from the youth half a century ago. Can we force Generation X to read the novels when their generation is more attuned to moving pictures than hard text? Would it help if the "Noli" and "Fili" were available as graphic novels or short YouTube video clips? With the continuing decline in English and the nearly extinct reading proficiency in Spanish, how can we make Rizal's novels better known, better read? I'm thinking aloud here and soliciting suggestions.

I read through the law last year to prepare for a seminar on the teaching of the Rizal courses, and I noted that Section 1 of the law says: "Courses on the life, works and writings of Jose Rizal, particularly his novels 'Noli Me Tangere' and 'El Filibusterismo,' shall be included in the curricula of all schools, colleges and universities, public or private; Provided, That in the collegiate courses, the original or unexpurgated editions of the 'Noli Me Tangere' and 'El Filibusterismo' or their English translations shall be used as basic texts."

When my students took their Noli/Fili test last week, I saw that many had the versions of the novels I required: Soledad Lacson Locsin for those who read English and those of Virgilio S. Almario for those who preferred to read in Filipino (the original Spanish is the best, of course, but nobody opted for it). Walking on the aisles as they took the test, I saw students with the awful "komiks" [comic-book] version. Others came with their high school textbooks, actually dated primers, readers and textbooks that provided chapter summaries and guide questions.

Some downloaded material from the Internet -- chapter summaries again -- while a minority studied in groups and came with such very detailed notes on every character and event in the novels that I think they missed the point. It pained me to think that they read Rizal to pass the test rather than for pleasure, but then that is what the law requires.

I did not stress the fact that there is a little-known escape clause in the law that grants exemption from the reading of the novels based on religious belief, but not from the course. We are told that until now nobody has applied for this exemption simply because anyone who wants to avail of it will not know how to go about it. I have challenged students to make history and test the limits of the law. So far, no takers.

What has not been complied with are two sections of the law making the novels available and accessible: “It shall be obligatory on all schools, colleges and universities to keep in their libraries an adequate number of copies of the original and expurgated editions of the ‘Noli Me Tangere’ and ‘El Filibusterismo,’ as well as Rizal’s other works and biography. The said unexpurgated editions of the ‘Noli Me Tangere’ and ‘El Filibusterismo’ or their translations in English as well as other writings of Rizal shall be included in the list of approved books for required reading in all public or private schools, colleges and universities. The Board of National Education shall determine the adequacy of the number of books, depending upon the enrollment of the school, college or university.”

Will we find enough copies of the novels on the shelves of libraries to serve entire school populations? What was the intent of the law? To make copies available for free for every student? Or just enough for reference? Section 3 makes this clear:

“The Board of National Education shall cause the translation of the ‘Noli Me Tangere’ and ‘El Filibusterismo,’ as well as other writings of Jose Rizal into English, Tagalog and the principal Philippine dialects; cause them to be printed in cheap, popular editions; and cause them to be distributed, free of charge, to persons desiring to read them, through the Purok organizations and the Barrio Councils throughout the country.”

This last section is a financial bonanza for textbook publishers. Now, try walking into your barangay hall and ask for “Noli Me Tangere.” We have so many laws and yet we continue to craft new ones. With RA 1425 as an example can’t we just make sure old laws are fully implemented before we resume investigation in aid of legislation?

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Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu.

http://www.filipiniana.net/read_content.jsp?filename=PRR002000013&page=1&epage=1

**(Kautusan ni Emilio Aguinaldo na nagtatakda sa ika-30 ng Disyembre bilang araw ng pagluluksa para kay Rizal at sa iba pang bayaning Pilipino, 20 Disyembre 1898) Emilio Aguinaldo appoints by Decree 30th December to be a day of national mourning for Rizal and other Filipino patriots, 20 December 1898
Emilio Aguinaldo y Famy**

(Kautusan ni Emilio Aguinaldo na nagtatakda sa ika-30 ng Disyembre bilang araw ng pagluluksa para kay Rizal at sa iba pang bayaning Pilipino, 20 Disyembre 1898] Emilio Aguinaldo appoints by Decree designating 30th December to be a day of national mourning for Rizal and other Filipino patriots, 20 December 1898). Malolos, Bulacan, 20 December 1898.

Folder No. 385, Document No. 1, Roll No. 25 of the Philippine Revolutionary Records

BUOD: Ipinag-uutos ni Pangulong Emilio Aguinaldo na ituring na pambansang araw ng pagluluksa ang ika-30 ng Disyembre para kina Dr. Jose Rizal at sa iba pang bayaning Pilipino na pinagpasakitan ng rehimeng kolonyal ng Espanya.

Isinulat ni Julius Cesar I. Trajano; Inedit ni Raymund Arthur G. Abejo

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Pres. Emilio Aguinaldo decrees that the 30th of December shall be a day of national mourning for Dr. Jose Rizal and other Filipino nationalists, who were persecuted by the Spanish colonial regime.

Written by Julius Cesar I. Trajano; Edited by Raymund Arthur G. Abejo

**G. EMILIO AGUINALDO AT FAMY PRESIDENTE NANG GOBIERNO
REVOLUCIONARIO NG FILIPINAS AT PANGULONG HENERAL NG CANIYANG
HOCBO**

Sa paglingap na ninanasa nang bayang Filipinas, at paghahayag nang mahal at dalisay niyang adhica, ay inuutos co:

Una. Alangalang sa manga daraquilang filipinong uagas magsilingap sa tinubuang bayan na si [Dr. Rizal](#) at iba pa na pinasaqitan nang lumipas ng capangyarihan castila, ay itinuturing na arao ng pagluluksa nang boong sangcapoloan ang ica30 nang Diciembre.

Icalaua. Dahil dito'y mula pa sa tanghalian nang ica30, ay ilaladlad ang ating bandila hanggang calahatian lamang nang tagdan, pinacatanda nang pagluluksa.

Icatlo. Sa Maghapon Nang ica30 nang Diciembre ay ualang pasoc ang lahat nang sacop Nang Gobierno Revolucionario.

Icalat at ihayag ito upang mataho nang lahat. Lagda sa Malolos ica20 nang Diciembre nang 1898.

Emilio Aguinaldo