

A Political Philosophical Understanding of Jose P. Laurel's Concept of Filipinism: A Qualitative Research

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Abstract: This is a qualitative research attempts to study the works of Dr. Jose P. Laurel in his concept about Filipinism. The research attempts to determine the JPL's political philosophy as foundation of Filipinism. It also aims to find out the works of JPL in Citizenship and Nationalism in order to attain his idea of Filipinism. Furthermore, it identify the different works of JPL as supported by other Nationalist in order to present his idea of Filipinism among the people whom he served. The work of Laurel were subjected to documentary analysis. Results showed that political philosophy of JPL is rooted from his faith and love for his country. It also shows that we must practice our citizenship and nationalism to obtain what Jose P. Laurel envisioned for us which is assertive nationalism or more commonly known as Filipinism. Lastly, it showed that Filipinism is the universality and love for the common people. It is the mainspring of all good Filipinos' efforts to bring about social, political, and economic reforms. It is also the incorruptible love of country and people, the courageous taking up of the cause of the people and heedful of their cries, uniting of one's self with them. No other people can love the Philippines better than the Filipinos themselves. The research recommended certain pointers and steps directed to the research can be strengthened so that it can be included in the curriculum.

Keywords: Political Philosophy, Nationalism, Citizenship, Filipinism

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Introduction

Political philosophy is the study of fundamental questions about the state, government, politics, liberty, justice and the enforcement of a legal code by authority. It is Ethics applied to a group of people, and discusses how a society should be set up and how one should act within a society. Jose P. Laurel is considered as one of the political philosopher in the Philippines. He has many contribution in the formation of the 2nd Republic of the Philippines and even at present as Social scientist. He even recognized the relevance of citizenship and nationalism to form Filipinism.

Citizenship is the status of a person recognized under the custom or law as being a legal member of a sovereign state or part of a nation. A person may have multiple citizenships and a person who does not have citizenship of any state is said to be stateless. Nationality is often used as a synonym for citizenship in English notably in international law although the term is

sometimes understood as denoting a person's membership of a nation. In some countries nationality and citizenship can have different meanings.

Nationalism is a range of political, social, and economic systems characterized by promoting the interests of a particular nation or ethnic group, particularly with the aim of gaining and maintaining self-governance, or full sovereignty, over the group's homeland. The political ideology therefore holds that a nation should govern itself, free from unwanted outside interference, and is linked to the concept of self-determination. Nationalism is further oriented towards developing and maintaining a national identity based on shared characteristics such as culture, language, race, religion, political goals or a belief in a common ancestry. Nationalism therefore seeks to preserve the nation's culture. It often also involves a sense of pride in the nation's achievements, and is closely linked to the concept of patriotism. In these terms, nationalism can be considered positive or negative. In some cases, nationalism referred to the belief that a nation should be able to control the government and all means of production.

It can be inferred from the previous paragraphs that there were two basic components of Filipinism. Through the combination of citizenship and nationalism the said concept can be attained. Just like the concept of Jose P. Laurel's of Filipinism. *Filipinism* is the assertion of one's national birthright with patriotism defined as love of country as a primary element. It takes the form of a passion for self-development alone. A colonized people cannot hope to be developed by its masters except along lines that suit the vanity and cupidity of the masters. For a nation to find itself and its souls and achieve its God-given destiny, it has to develop itself with as little help from outsiders as possible.

An outstanding attribute of Filipinism is civic duty and social responsibility motivated by national self-respect. By loving justice and greatness, the people must make themselves worthy of reforms then effectuate the necessary reforms and finally make sure that the sun of liberty shines undimmed over the whole nation. The supreme ideal is to have one flag, one heart, one soul, one language.

The researcher would like to analyzed the works of JPL in order to further understand the concepts of Filipinism. The researcher assume that this study is relevant to Filipinos because it can define themselves as one nation. It can also serve as a reference on how to develop the said values. It will also serves as guidance towards self-reliance and sufficiency to attain progress and unity.

Specifically, the research attempts to determine the JPL's political philosophy as foundation of Filipinism. It also aims to find out the works of JPL in Citizenship and Nationalism in order to attain his idea of Filipinism. Furthermore, it identify the different works of JPL and other Nationalist in order to present his idea of Filipinism among the people whom he served.

Review of Related Literature

Jose P. Laurel's Political Philosophy Foundation

According to Agpalo (1965) political philosophy is a reflection on man and government. It is a theoretical and systematic answer to the following questions: What is the nature of man, the basic unit on and for which government is established? Given human nature, what is the best form of government, and what should be its ends? What are the forces or factors which undermine and tend to destroy the best government, and what forces make for its preservation and maintenance?

Jose P. Laurel may not have the stature of Plato or Cicero, but he did reflect on man and government, expounding his ideas even on such specific topics as the proper relationships among the branches of government, between the national and local governments, between the church and the state, between the administration and the opposition political parties, between conservatism and radicalism, and among the states of the world, as well as the role of morality in government, law, and politics. More significantly, Laurel had organized and systematized his political 163 164 Asian Studies ideas in at least four works-s-the Birkenhead Manuscript' written at Sugamo Prison in 1954, Political and Moral Orientation' of 1949, Bread and Freedom' of 1953, and Thinking For Ourselves' in 1958. It is for this latter fact that Jose P. Laurel can rightly be called a political philosopher.

As stated in JPL's work entitled Pro Deo et Patria written Sugamo Prison, Tokyo on December 25, 1945 there are 10 basic principles of Political Philosophy. These principles are (1) I believe in one Eternal God, Creator and Sustainer of the Universe; (2) There is no power but of God: The powers that be are ordained of God; (3) I am a Christian and as such hold that every man is man's brother and equal; I am against any discrimination on account of race, creed or color; (4) Man lives in a triple world: physical, intellectual and moral; To live a purposive and fruitful life he must abide by laws that govern this triple world; (5) The foundation of good government is morality: The basis of morality is righteousness which is divine; (6) Freedom is a divine endowment and is not a matter of grant or concession by the earthly powers that be; (7) The fruitful enjoyment of freedom does not depend upon any fixed political formula but upon the observance of freedom's own inherent limitations; (8) The essence of republicanism is popular representation and control; Republicanism vitalized by state socialism is the best form of government for the Filipinos in this epoch; (9) Until the unity or religion is achieved, the Church and the State must remain completely apart and separate; and (10) Not mere material prosperity or physical prowess but intellectual development and moral perfection should be the goal; National planning is essential if the Philippines is to extricate herself from her present condition of helplessness and puppetry and if she is to play a more effective role in the moral integration of the world and the establishment of universal peace.

Citizenship and Nationalism as Foundation of Filipinism

As an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Jose P. Laurel's in 1939 during the time of President Manuel L. Quezon the Code of Citizenship and Ethics was established. Executive Order No. 217 states the 16 Code of Ethics which comprises of (1) Have faith in Divine Providence; (2) Love your Country; (3) Respect the Constitution; (4) Pay your Taxes; (5) Safeguard the Purity of Suffrage; (6) Love and Respect your Parents; (7) Value your Honor; (8) Be Truthful and Honest in Thought and Action; (9) Lemad a Clean and Frugal Life; (10) Live up to the Noble Traditions of our People; (11) Be Industrious; (12) Rely on your own Efforts; (13) Do your Work Cheerfully, Thoroughly, and Well; (14) Contribute to the Welfare of your Community; (15) Cultivate the Habit of using Goods Made in the Philippines; and (16) Use and Develop our Natural Resources.

Jose P. Laurel on Nationalism in 1931 suggest that Love of country is not shown by words but by deeds not an occasional virtue to be exhibited now and then. It is an unflinching determination to serve and defend one's country at all times and at all costs. A nation will not long endure if it is wrought in the midst of foreign and exotic ideals. Just as a free will not grow straight, strong, and luxuriant unless it is native to the soil and air, so a nation will not acquire girth and strength unless its roots are planted deep in its own traditions. Nationalism should not be permitted to degenerate into *jingoism* or anti-foreignism or a fanatical rejection

of foreign influences that are useful, desirable, and conducive to speedier economic progress or to the surer preservation of free institutions.

Jose P. Laurel's and Other concept of Filipinism

According to the thoughts of Jose P. Laurel of Filipinism in 1945 every Filipino has the responsibility over the freedom they experienced. Freedom has a price that needs to be paid off. Social responsibility should also be given with utmost relevance that will help this nation attain its highest potential in terms of deepening the rich stream of Philippine history; studying the lives of Philippine heroes like Mabini, Rizal, Bonifacio, Tandang Sora, Del Pilar, Lopez Jaena, Jacinto, Luna, Burgos; loving and appreciating Philippine traditions. It only implies that no other people can love the Philippines better than the Filipinos themselves.

Filipinism is the universality and love for the common people. It is the mainspring of all good Filipinos' efforts to bring about social, political, and economic reforms. Filipinism is incorruptible love of country and people, the courageous taking up of the cause of the people and heedful of their cries, uniting of one's self with them. No other people can love the Philippines better than the Filipinos themselves.

Filipinism is about expediency and conservation of personal energy amid the life of scarcity and rare abundance. It signifies empathy to the less educated. It is a way of reaching out. It is a means of patronage for the family members and relatives who were denied the opportunity to step a foot inside the halls of education, a mode of social blending. Filipinism is truly about the Filipino family, their uncompromising love, and concern for each other. The willingness to sacrifice personal comfort and happiness in order to bring a taste of the good life to their family. It is about their bond, and generally in all modesty a bond that maybe regarded as perpetual and unbreakable. Filipinism is more than language, again it is about the Filipino sensibilities, it is about a culture (Lupac, 2014).

According to Recto in 1984 Filipino Nationalism is nourished by a sense of history. It is of its essence to know profoundly the past, so that we may be in complete openness with the men who made that history and in intimate communion with their thoughts, their deeds, and their noble lives. We must examine carefully from a nationalist perspective all aid offered, all loans granted, all programs suggested by foreign governments and institutions. Only then can we begin to rid ourselves of our unfortunate inability to see the contradiction between our interests and theirs, a feeling which is today the most serious aspect of our colonial mentality.

Material and Methods

Research Design

The study made use of documentary analysis of research to analyze the life and works of Dr. Jose P. Laurel. Qualitative Research is the primary method that the researcher employed. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and documents. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research (Calmorin and Calmorin, 2007).

The data were gathered through the existing works, thoughts and writings of Dr. Jose P. Laurel. The references gathered were his thoughts about Pro Deo et Patria, Ang Bayan Higit sa Lahat, JPL on Filipinism and JPL on Nationalism. Moreover, the books written by other authors about the life and works of JPL were also considered as a valuable source of data in this research. Analysis of pertinent document was employed. Document analysis is a form

of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic. Analyzing documents incorporates coding content into themes similar to how transcripts are analyzed.

Results and Discussion

Using the data and methodologies acquired by the researchers, the following results were obtained as presented by the tables below.

1. To determine the JPL's political philosophy as foundation of Filipinism.

According to Laurel, *"If law should be taken away, all things will fall into confusion."*

The quotation implies that there should be a norm that the citizen should abide. Laws are the very foundation of a society to maintain balance among its people. Law is a system of rules that are created and enforced through social or governmental institutions to regulate behavior. Law as a system helps regulate and ensure that a community show respect, and equality among themselves. State-enforced laws can be made by a collective legislature or by a single legislator, resulting in statutes, by the executive through decrees and regulations, or established by judges through precedent, normally in common law jurisdictions. The law shapes politics, economics, history and society in various ways and serves as a mediator of relations between people.

The law is like the boundary between the government's prerogative or authority and the people's liberty.- **Jose P. Laurel**

The law sets boundary between responsibility and freedom. JPL suggest that freedom is a divine endowment and is not a matter of grant or concession by earthly powers that be. The fruitful enjoyment of freedom does not depend upon any fixed political formula but upon the observance of freedom's own inherent limitation. It only means that even if we are free we are still bounded by our civic responsibility. Our duty as Filipinos is to serve our fellow Filipino and to help our country progress.

"There is one eternal God, Creator and Sustainer of the universe."- **Jose P. Laurel**

This principle is derived from JPL's Pro Deo et Patria. It is one of the basic principles of JPL of his political philosophy. It implies that the foundation of good government is morality. The basis of morality is righteousness which is divine. Righteousness is an inner impulse by which we act or refrain from acting out of respect and reverence for law and out of purity of motives, without fear or anticipation of reward.

The basic principle political philosophy of JPL is evident on his writings. He states that every generation must bear in mind that the path to a healthy political and economic growth and progress lies in balancing and synchronizing the development of social and economic forces so as to avoid the over development. To summarize it the political philosophy of JPL is rooted from his faith and love for his country.

2. To find out the works of JPL in Citizenship and Nationalism in order to attain his idea of Filipinism.

"Under modern condition, with economic productivity as the paramount concern of every nation. An unhealthy man is not only an unhappy man, he is also a forfeited economic asset of the country."- **Jose P. Laurel**

As the statement of JPL above implies that citizenship is about democratic participation, which can channel legitimate frustrations and grievances and bring people to focus on matters of common concern. Citizens are active politically. Citizenship status, under social contract theory, carries with it both rights and duties. In this sense, citizenship was described as a bundle of rights primarily, political participation in the life of the community, the right to vote, and the right to receive certain protection from the community, as well as obligations.

“How can we love our country? Not by words but deeds.”- Jose P. Laurel

As stated by Laurel we, the Filipinos today, are a free people. We should think and act as free men not freed men. We must confidently and courageously depend upon ourselves. We should fully assume the grave responsibility of seeking, devising, carrying out, and maintaining what’s best for every Filipino. We must act in accordance to our civic responsibility. He also exhorted the Filipino people to cultivate and practice an assertive nationalism in order that they may develop a sense of national integrity, a national soul, as it were, which could then embolden every Filipino to fight for his rights and liberties and once won, to defend them at all times.

According to Jose P. Laurel, *“We should realize that national and individual progress can only be attained through work, more work, and more hard hard work”*.

As Jose P. Laurel stated in his writing entitled *The Country Above All the Philippines* we have abundant resources, gifted to us by a generous Providence, we have idle manpower by millions, we have a population which our land and resources can comfortably sustain. The challenge to his generation, therefore, is to put our available manpower to work on the resources of the country to produce abundance enough for all, but also in the fullest atmosphere of freedom.

As visioned by Laurel if we are able to vigorously advocated economic independence, harping on the necessity of industrialization, economic planning and democratization of the national economy, all done to ensure the economic development of his beloved country. The combination of citizenship and nationalism is vital in attaining the idea of JPL of Filipinism. To summed it up, we must practice our citizenship and nationalism to obtain what Jose P. Laurel envisioned for us which is assertive nationalism or more commonly known as Filipinism.

3. To identify the different works of JPL in order to present his idea of Filipinism among the people whom he served.

In accordance to Laurel, nation must nurture the seeds of moral discipline within itself. Also, He believed that Nationalism precedes Internationalism. *“Internationalism is not possible until nationalism had established itself”*.

Internationalism is a political principle which transcends nationalism and advocates a greater political or economic cooperation among nations and people. It is also the principle of cooperation among nations, for the promotion of their common good, sometimes as contrasted with nationalism, or devotion to the interests of a particular nation. To foster Filipino Nationalism we must shake the foundations. Seek knowledge, understanding and thinking critically about roots of socioeconomic-political predicaments in our homeland; educate ourselves, expose lies or hidden truths and fight ignorance of our true history. Learn

from our nationalist heroes, intellectuals, Asian neighbors and other nations; therefrom to plan, decide, act for the common good of the native Filipino majority.

“Filipinism means to make a deep and thorough study of the social and economic problems of the self-help efforts”.- **Jose P. Laurel**

As suggested by JPL, for Filipinism to prosper we must drink deep from the rich stream of Philippine history. We must study the lives of Philippine heroes like Mabini, Rizal, Bonifacio, Tandang Sora, Del Pilar, Lopez Jaena, Jacinto, Luna, Burgos. We must love and appreciate Philippine traditions. We must make ourselves familiar with Philippine geography, economy, society, and politics. We must study, learn, appreciate, and love our country, the Philippines, together with her culture, and all she stands for.

“Filipinism has to be different from the selfish individualism (lacking in honest, social concern) of the native businessmen/entrepreneurs of the past who used nationalism to advance solely their own private interests”.- **Claro M. Recto**

It must be in the heart and mind of every Filipinos which relates the matters of national interests both economic and political; for each Filipino to ultimately and most importantly, demand from his national leadership honest concern and action for the impoverished native Filipino majority such as Christian, Muslim, and the forgotten ethnic minorities, the native common good. The primary task for us native Filipinos, despite numerous impediments, is to raise our nationalist consciousness, through self education or by formal/informal education, beginning with a recognition and appreciation of our colonial mentality and exerting a conscious effort to discard it.

Jose P. Laurel and Claro M. Recto’s concept of Filipinism is supported by the thoughts of Lupac in 2014 which suggest the positivities of Filipinism and the possibility of transcending it to National-ism. It may safely be deduce that Filipinism is borne by scarcity and rare abundance; the need to complement each other; by patronage; respect; responsibility; tolerance; conservation, prudence and expediency. These elements were brought about by a common bond, that is, the sense of belonging and sharing. If the latter can be harness on a national level, to make each social unit of a family feel and actually be made as part of a whole through transparency, consultation and true participation in dealing with national issues particularly its effect on the ordinary Filipino's way of life, then maybe Filipino Nationalism can become the collective meaning of Filipinism, unbreakable, perpetual.

Conclusions

1. Every generation must bear in mind that the path to a healthy political and economic growth and progress lies in balancing and synchronizing the development of social and economic forces so as to avoid the over development. To summarize it the political philosophy of JPL is rooted from his faith and love for his country.
2. The combination of citizenship and nationalism is vital in attaining the idea of JPL of Filipinism. To summed it up, we must practice our citizenship and nationalism to obtain what Jose P. Laurel envisioned for us which is assertive nationalism or more commonly known as Filipinism.
3. Filipinism is the universality and love for the common people. It is the mainspring of all good Filipinos’ efforts to bring about social, political, and economic reforms. It is also the incorruptible love of country and people, the courageous taking up of the cause of the people

and heedful of their cries, uniting of one's self with them. No other people can love the Philippines better than the Filipinos themselves.

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