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Ethnic Cleansing in the Philippines

by herb mantawe

Ethnic cleansing is not limited to the more familiar genocidal practices in Serbia and Rwanda. Less brutal though equally effective in eliminating ethnic rivals is the Putonghua approach. In China's case, the systematized use of its national language, Mandarin, has marginalized the other mainland languages.

Interestingly, the mainland languages not favored by their government are called dialects, as if they were not worthy of existence in the first place, only of its contempt. The same is true in the Philippines.

The Philippine government has hardly ever wavered in its campaign to eradicate its non-Tagalog population through language conversion. First it went through the motions of developing a national language called Filipino. Armed with provisions in the defect-ridden 1987 Constitution that nakedly favor Tagalog, the Philippine government busily prepares for the final destruction of all non-Tagalog culture groups.

Its greatest task has been to prevent educated non-Tagalogs from being able to read and write in their own mother language. This has been accomplished through the schools which allow only Tagalog and English from the primary up to the tertiary level.

Nearly as critical has been the conspiracy to degrade the image of the provinciano in the mass media. Mainly, this continues to be accomplished by the constant depiction on television, the movies, newspapers and radio of non-Tagalogs as lowly-civilized oafs whose only hope for improvement is by staying in Manila.

Much as Manila treats the provinces as its colonies, the better it will be to control them once their languages have been replaced by its very own Tagalog. Keeping the provinces poor and coercively promoting Filipino-Tagalog there go hand in hand under the present colonialist framework.

But why in the name of nationalist nonsense do we allow things like these? Even the Soviet Union did not impose a national language on its republics nor does the United States have one today. And those who bother to be really fair about it have several to accommodate its ethnic groups. India has 15; Singapore and Switzerland have four; Belgium and Canada have two; etc.

Only through pluralism can the death of the cultural identities of non-Tagalogs be averted. Most importantly, the Filipino national language has to be thrown away with the garbage. In its place should be regional official languages. As a demonstration of their resistance to Manila's colonial rule, localities in the Visayas and Mindanao are already exercising their language rights.

Language apartheid as practiced in the Philippines can end now. Let us reject the Filipino identity being forced on us by Manila as a vision of Tagalog supremacy. The alternative is the

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For your comments:
mantawe@pacific.net.ph

terminal decline of the languages they
 consider inferior.

Major Mother Tongues of the Population:
 Censal Years 1960, 1975 & 1990

| Language | 1960 | 1975 | 1990 | CY % |
|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| Tagalog | 5,694,072 | 10,019,214 | 16,911,871 | 21- 23- 28 |
| Cebuano | 6,529,882 | 10,262,735 | 14,713,220 | 24- 24- 24 |
| Ilocano | 3,158,560 | 4,685,896 | 5,923,511 | 11- 11- 9 |
| Ilongo | 2,817,314 | 4,204,825 | 5,656,103 | 10- 9- 9 |
| Bicol | 2,108,837 | 2,507,156 | 3,519,236 | 7- 6- 5 |
| Waray | 1,488,688 | 1,945,005 | 2,437,688 | 5- 4- 4 |
| Pampanga | 875,531 | 1,442,607 | 1,897,378 | 3- 3- 3 |
| Pangasinan | 666,003 | 948,820 | 1,164,586 | 2- 2- 1 |
| Others | 3,748,817 | 5,633,313 | 8,335,523 | 13- 12- 13 |

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 Jed Pensar and Herb Mantawe. Philippines.