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## Aristocracy of the Mind

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## **Aristocracy of the Mind: A Precious Heritage**

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this was especially seen in the dire lack of priests and missionaries needed to continue the work so heroically started by the missionaries in the preceding centuries. The wonder is not that the missions in Negros were so woefully neglected; rather, that these missions continued to thrive, and from small mission centers they became civil towns.

Fr. Martínez deserves to be congratulated for his detailed research, paving the way for further study of Negros. From now on, anyone who wants to study the history of this island must start from his essay. Especially commendable is his critical use of the sources and statistical data. Perhaps one might ask whether some lines could have been added to explain the neglect of Negros by both the colonial administration and the metropolitan government in Spain.

This is an important study and one hopes that a completely revised English edition is forthcoming.

*José S. Arcilla, S.J.*

ARISTOCRACY OF THE MIND: A PRECIOUS HERITAGE (A BIOGRAPHY OF JORGE BOCOBO). By Celia Bocobo Olivar. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1981. 114 pages.

In a commencement address in 1948, Jorge C. Bocobo said that

Aristocracy of the intellect is the true aristocracy and is worthy of honor and respect. It should measure success, not in terms of lands, houses, automobiles and a large bank account but by helpfulness to others, by having rendered service to the poor, by having stood for righteousness at any cost. It fights wrong and oppression in every form.

In this biography of her father, Celia Bocobo Olivar, successfully depicts him as such an "aristocrat of the mind."

Jorge Bocobo was born 19 October 1886 in Gerona, Tarlac. His early education was in the private and public schools of Tarlac. In 1904 he went to the United States in the first group of government pensionados, where he studied law in Indiana University. In 1907, with a bachelor of laws degree, he returned to the Philippines. After working for four years as a law clerk in a government office, he began his long career in the University of the Philippines as a lecturer in its law school. In 1924, he succeeded George Malcolm as dean of the U.P. College of Law. For ten months in 1927-28, he was Acting President of U.P. during the absence abroad of Rafael Palma and in 1934, upon the death of Rafael Palma, Bocobo was elected President by the Board of Regents. After five years as U.P. President, he became Secretary of Public Instruction in President Quezon's cabinet, in which he remained until the war. During the war, from 1942 to 1944, he served as Justice of the Supreme

Court of the Philippines. When the Americans occupied Manila in 1945, Dr. Bocobo was detained as a political prisoner for ten months and then freed for lack of sufficient evidence. After the war, he achieved the monumental success of his long public life: he was chairman and chief contributor of the Commission which produced the Civil Code of the Philippines in 1948. The biography says little of his declining years which ended in 1965.

This biography by his daughter portrays Jorge Bocobo as an eminent jurist, an ardent nationalist, a dedicated Protestant, a scholar and a persistent moralist. He was never in politics but almost always in public life. He was a loving family man, did not accumulate wealth for himself, was irreproachable in his private life and gave a sterling example of the moral character and self-discipline which he practised and preached so assiduously that, as dean of the U.P. Law College, he earned for himself, as his daughter writes, the sobriquet of "The Gloomy Dean." He was a prolific writer of newspaper columns, of essays, of novels and of poems and a translator into English of the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* of Jose Rizal. His students at U.P. became leaders of the country and penned the glowing tributes to his teaching and example which are reprinted in the numerous appendices to this book.

This biography is one long panegyric on Jorge Bocobo, as is to be expected from a loving daughter. But something seems to be missing. He was never in politics but in his long public life it is naturally expected that he had his share of controversies. Except for those he encountered as the "gloomy dean" of the U.P. College of Law, there is no mention of others in this biography. The thirty-six pages of appendices to the book, however, give us a few hints that not all of Bocobo's public life was sweetness and light.

The appendices constitute a long series of honors, awards, citations, appraisals and tributes to Jorge Bocobo. In one of them, Judge Guillermo Guevara mentions:

Another ruling passion of his life was the maintenance of the integrity of the public school system in the Philippines. He opposed and fought vigorously any attempt of the hierarchy to introduce compulsory religious instruction in public schools as part of the curriculum under any form or pretext (p. 86).

In another, Leopoldo Yabes, when a U.P. student in 1933, wrote:

If Dean Bocobo does not believe in democracy — and he has made the whole world know that he thinks democracy is a sham and would prefer some kind of dictatorship, a Fascism, it is because he honestly believes so, and not because of political considerations, as some would insinuate (p. 89).

Juan A. Cabildo, writing in turgid style in 1934, says of Bocobo:

He may be the prayer-maker de luxe, a disciple of the Lord's annointed

preaching his brand of messianic delusion, a Jeremiah with battle-cries and hysterical sputterings, an extravagant emotion-squeezer with his usual playhouse fustian and his naive ethical cocksureness and flabby moralizing . . . but the cardinal fact must here be admitted that our gloomy Dean has done his part in this tragic-comedy that we call life, and his performance has been achieved in the best of his faith and ability. . . (p. 95).

Which give the truer picture of Jorge Bocobo: the biography proper or these excerpts from the appendices? We do not know, but it is significant that Mrs. Olivar has included these appendices in her own book. It can be said, at least, that though the daughter has written a beautiful tribute to her father, there is still awaited a critical biography of Jorge Bocobo.

*James J. Meany, S.J.*

SAKADA: FILIPINO ADAPTATION IN HAWAII. By Ruben Alcantara. Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1981. 202 pages.

In Hawaii 1981 was most decidedly the Year of the Sakada, the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the arrival of the first Filipino workers in that state. This historical occasion was celebrated in many ways: Filipino dancers journeyed to Hawaii to perform, as did scholars to attend the Second Conference on Philippine Studies. Mrs. Marcos cut a few ribbons, mayors and plantation managers made a few speeches, and second and third generation Filipino-Americans sang a few songs. And several new books were published, of which Ruben Alcantara's *Sakada: Filipino Adaptation in Hawaii* is one of the best.

Alcantara is a sociologist, but sociology is after all, present day history, and this book is a very fine combination of the two disciplines. The modern historian looking back over this era may see it in rather impersonal terms, focusing on Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association hiring practices, wage levels, immigration laws, union organization. These issues are background for the central focus of Alcantara's work, which deals more intimately and personally with people's experiences and with their own perceptions of the changes brought about by the flow of history and by the adaptation process that Filipino workers in Hawaii, and their families, underwent in their new environment. A very vivid picture of the "feel" of daily life during this process emerges from Alcantara's fine interweaving of the factual information referred to above, the type of statistics sociologists commonly favor (how many houses had indoor bathrooms, how many had refrigerators, etc.), and the personal feelings, memories, and perceptions gleaned from what seems to be a very thorough and fascinating set of interviews. Alcantara has succeeded in getting *inside* the history of the sakadas, and he brings his readers there as