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The Anti-Communist Third World: Carlos Romulo and the Other Bandung

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This article revisits the Bandung Conference and Third Worldism through an intellectual history of the Filipino diplomat and intellectual Carlos P. Romulo. By examining Romulo's work during, before, and after Bandung, it argues that Third Worldism must be understood in its original sense—as a negation not only of Western imperialism but also of Soviet Communism. In examining the anti-Communist undercurrent of Bandung, the article hopes to recover a vision of the Third World that opposed various forms of totalitarianism. Although anti-Communism is usually associated with the fascism of McCarthyism, I contend that Romulo's liberal, Asianist anti-Communism forms a normative vision for a more equitable world order.

Keywords: anti-Communism, Bandung, Third World, Carlos P. Romulo, Cold War, Philippines, diplomacy

For many, Third Worldism was simply an opposition to Western colonialism, which is hardly surprising. Most of the countries that gathered at the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, were former colonies of the West; and many of the leading lights of that event, from Indonesia's Sukarno to Egypt's Gamal Abdul Nasser, were prominent critics of Western colonialism and neocolonialism.¹⁾ However, it is inadequate to focus only on the anti-Western rhetoric of Third Worldism, for the concept involved the charting of a road independent of two systems: Western imperialism and Soviet Communism. Despite this, contemporary historiography largely ignores Third Worldism's challenge to the Communist "Second World"—a tendency pronounced in both general twentieth-century histories and contemporary revaluations of Bandung. "The Bandung philosophy," writes the conservative twentieth-century historian Paul Johnson (2000, 489–490), "was for the new nations to create their own industrial bases as fast as possible, making

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1) For a general history of Bandung, see Mackie (2005). For a book that examines individuals who have been under-researched in Bandung, see McDougall and Finnane (2010).

themselves independent of “imperialism,”” which, for Johnson, is a negation of the West. The progressive historian of Marxism David Priestland (2009, 374) acknowledges that the Bandung participants saw themselves as independent of the Western First World and the Communist Second World, but ultimately concludes that “The conference agreed on the need to escape economic dependence on the First World. . . .”

In a volume examining the legacies of Bandung, Christopher J. Lee (2010, 10) writes that the Bandung participants based their solidarity on a “shared history of Western aggression.” In a chapter from the same volume, Michael Adas (2010) views Bandung’s Afro-Asia solidarity as an “assault” on the West’s civilizing mission. Elsewhere, Lee (2009, 82) notes, “The historical importance of Bandung is that it points to the interconnected world created by western imperialism and anti-colonial resistance. . . .” In these studies, the Second World, if mentioned at all, is a mere afterthought. It is thus unsurprising for Roland Burke (2006, 949) to observe that in Bandung historiography, “few studies devote much attention to those aspects of the conference outside the categories of colonialism, the politics of Afro-Asian solidarity, and the evolution of non-aligned movement [*sic*].”

While anti-Western interpretations of Bandung are not entirely incorrect, they are also incomplete, revealing how contemporary postcolonial theory may create a tunnel vision that places Third Worldism in a binary relationship with Western colonialism.²⁾ In contrast to these one-sided studies, Pang Yang Huei (2009, 83) posits a “fractured” approach to the history of Bandung, emphasizing that the success of the conference lay in preventing both the United States and Russia “from creating monolithic blocs.” From this perspective, the conference curbed the power of both systems by creating independent geopolitical solidarities. The political threads competing in Bandung were multifaceted; thus, the conference cannot be reduced to singular narratives, such as its being an assault on the West.

Certainly the critique of Western imperialism was more refined in Bandung as this had been—and still is—the primary locus of postcolonial nationalism. However, I hope to show that anti-Communism, the “other Bandung,” was an incipient and radical discourse that cannot be ignored, especially if one wants to capture the textured Third Worldism that began to emerge in Bandung. Third Worldism’s twin negation of the First

2) The “postcolonial” reading of Bandung (common among American scholars), with its attendant focus on racial distinctions and the cultural matrices that inform these, can be traced to the beginning of Bandung historiography. The African American novelist Richard A. Wright’s 1956 first-person account *The Color Curtain* is, indeed, fodder for trendy, yet empirically barren, courses on race and postcolonial studies (largely en vogue in American academia). For an analysis and critique of Wright, see M’Baye (2009).

World and the Second World was not mere rhetoric. The Third World was in many ways the first of the many “third ways” of the twentieth century, much like the resurgent European Social Democracy of the immediate postwar period, which was both anti-fascist and anti-Soviet. There is, as such, a need to grapple with a hitherto unacknowledged ideological current that informed the rhetoric of the Third World: anti-Communism (which I define, narrowly, as opposition to Leninist Bolshevism).³⁾ Given the McCarthyite brush that has tainted criticisms of Communism, it is difficult to confront the latent and, at times, explicit anti-Communism of the Bandung Conference and Third Worldism. To excavate the anti-Communist genealogy of Third Worldism, however, does not necessarily entail playing fire with reactionary politics. On the contrary, beyond providing a fuller historical account, this allows progressive scholars to examine the antitotalitarian potentialities embedded in Third Worldism.

A more holistic understanding of Third Worldism requires an unpacking of its anti-Communist underside. To this extent, I examine the writings of the Filipino diplomat and public intellectual Carlos P. Romulo, a leading figure in the Bandung Conference and vocal exponent of Third Worldism. While the fulcrum of my analysis is Bandung, I also attend to the ideas that radiated into global intellectual debates in its wake. Romulo, both before and after Bandung, wrote eloquently against Western colonialism and Soviet Communism, and for this he was duly acknowledged as a leading voice of the Third World. I contend that Romulo should be understood as an Asian equivalent of European pre-McCarthyite critics of Communism, locating him within a global intellectual history of liberal anti-Communism. I posit what may seem like an oxymoron for contemporary readers: that Romulo represented a progressive anti-Communism, which, while condemning Leninist strategy and ideology, did not reject certain principles of socialism such as economic planning. More important, this anti-Communism spurned the witch hunts and repressive policies of McCarthyism, criticizing the latter for merely replicating the terror tactics of Communists.

Concomitantly, I contend that Romulo’s anti-Communism forms part of an Asianist worldview. It was an approach to postcolonial politics that saw in Asian solidarity a means to transcend the aggressive international posturing of international Communism and the

3) Anti-Communism, as such, refers to opposition to a specific political model that emerged in the aftermath of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution that split world socialism into the Social Democrats of the Second International and the Communists of Lenin’s Comintern (Third International). Anti-Communism here should not be taken as a critique of philosophical “communism” or abstract Marxist theory, but of the historical Leninist Communism, premised on the creation of vanguard parties composed of professional revolutionaries—a model implemented on vast swathes of the earth until the collapse of the USSR. (It has become common, in studies of Communism, to refer to “Big C” Communism.)

more established Western imperialism. For Romulo, Asianism was a mutable project, able to absorb foreign principles such as liberalism while remaining grounded on the concerns of largely postcolonial societies.

Beyond documenting a forgotten intellectual history, I seek to examine Romulo's thoughts as constitutive of a normative vision for the Third World. This vision remains important today despite the collapse of the Cold War's tripartite division of the world. Many states of the contemporary Global South remain caught between reactionary imperial formations from above (the IMF, the WTO, etc.) and repressive revolutionary movements from below. Romulo's own country, the Philippines, is threatened by both neo-liberal policy (see Bello *et al.* 2006) and a Maoist Communist movement that has not only refused to repudiate Stalinism (see Liwanag 1992)⁴⁾ but has also committed atrocious acts of violence against its own members and other leftists (see Abinales 2008; Garcia 2001).⁵⁾

In many respects, this article advances and complements the work of Augusto Espiritu (2006, 177), who has previously argued that "Romulo's ostensibly nationalist, anticolonial, and antiracist views, and his simultaneous hostility to communism and enthusiasm for the free market—which has proved more enduring than socialist visions of the Third World—need to be seriously reread and reexamined, both for their pitfalls as well as for the critical perspectives they raise." Despite his sympathy for Romulo, however, Espiritu dismisses the diplomat's anti-Communism as part of a "transcript that American empire" had "written for him" (*ibid.*, 179). In what follows, I hope to show that Romulo's anti-Communism was more than an imperial script. I propose to interpret it instead as an integral element of a coherent, liberal worldview that opposed various forms of domination. Rather than simply being a form of Americanism, Romulo's anti-Communism reflected a deeply rooted Asianist perspective, critical of foreign intervention in Asian affairs.

4) This article presents Stalin as genuine leader of the proletariat. It is part of a larger work called "Stand for Socialism against Modern Revisionism," which Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) Chairman Armando Liwanag (nom de guerre of CPP founding Chairman Jose Maria Sison) published during the "great rectification campaign" that purged the Party of all those who deviated from the Party's original doctrines.

5) Naturally, scholars and activists in the Philippines have placed more emphasis on the power of international forces, as these are, indeed, more powerful than a fledgling Communist movement. However, the Communist Party itself reproduces this binary by claiming to be the vanguard against imperialism. In Romulo's writings on anti-Communism, it is clear that criticizing the problem must come in tandem with criticizing so-called solutions. I have presented this dual rejection of Communism and elitism in the Philippines in a previous work (Claudio 2013a).

Liberal Anti-Communism

A progressive anti-Communism was invigorated amid increasing evidence of atrocities committed by the Soviet Union and, to a lesser extent, Red China. This thinking emanated from Western—mostly European—intellectuals beginning in the late 1930s and early 1940s, but it radiated outward and shaped mid-twentieth century global debates.⁶⁾ Romulo articulated an antitotalitarian opposition to Communism that mirrored these debates. A brief intellectual history of postwar liberal anti-Communism during and after Bandung, thus, helps set his opposition to Communism in context.

Non-fascist opposition to Communism arose almost directly after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917.⁷⁾ Unlike the McCarthyism of the United States in the 1950s, this opposition began with leftists. As early as 1920, for example, Leon Blum, chair of the Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (SFIO, or French Section of the Workers' International), opposed participation in Lenin's Communist International. Blum argued that Bolshevism was the "first time in the history of socialism" when "terrorism is not merely a final recourse, not an extreme measure of public safety to be imposed on bourgeois resistance, not as a vital necessity for the revolution, but as a means of government" (quoted in Judt 1998, 67). For Blum, it was the Communists' "emphasis on dictatorial terror" that distinguished them from socialists (*ibid.*).

The common defense of Communism—the one most constantly forwarded by Trotskyites—is premised on the claim that Stalin betrayed the noble vision of Lenin.⁸⁾ However, Blum's argument reveals that the violence of the USSR can be traced to its foundation. Prisons for political prisoners arrested by an unaccountable secret police (Lenin's Cheka, which would eventually become the NKVD) were the brainchild of Lenin. Under Lenin, the Cheka would administer the various gulags that would become emblematic of the USSR's systematic terror. In the early 1920s, socialists in the USSR relaunched a prison aid organization called the Political Red Cross. Prior to 1917, the organization had publicized and lobbied against the imprisonment of socialists under the Czar. With Lenin's regime imprisoning the same socialists under similar conditions, the organization

6) The history of European anti-Communism here is far from exhaustive. It does not, for example, include the diverse history of anarchist anti-Communism, which would include leaders such as Emma Goldman. These forms of anti-Communism do not resonate as clearly with Romulo's work. What I have done, instead, is to summarize the history of European anti-Communism based on a pantheon of anti-Communist thinkers discussed by contemporary anti-Communist historians such as Tony Judt (1998; 2011) and François Furet (1999).

7) By non-fascist anti-Communism, I simply refer to the anti-Communism outside the ambit of Hitler and Mussolini.

8) A typical example of this is Ernst Mandel's (1995) biography of Trotsky.

was resurrected and became integral in publicizing the crimes of the Leninist regime (Applebaum 2003, 14). Thus, the socialists sidelined by Lenin may be considered progenitors of non-fascist anti-Communism.

Lenin designed the totalitarian system of governance that Communist Parties the world over would inherit, and much of liberal anti-Communism has been a reaction to the all-encompassing dogma of the Leninist vanguard party—a party that seeks to be the vehicle of History and ultimate representative of the proletariat. The critiques of systems such as Lenin’s would eventually fall under the blanket term “antitotalitarian thought.” The characteristic of totalitarianism, as the Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski (2008, 762) notes, can be found in “such formulas as Lenin’s: people may be executed for views that may ‘objectively serve the interests of the bourgeoisie.’” Under this system, there is neither law nor a set criminal code, only what the Party deems objectively errant at a given moment. The Leninist Party’s ability to determine counterrevolutionary guilt, based on the whims of its central authority, was the basis of the arbitrary justice system that informed the show trials of Stalin. Noting this inherent violence of Leninism and its inextricable connection to Stalinism, George Orwell (2002, 111) remarked in 1939:

It is probably a good thing for Lenin’s reputation that he died so early. . . . The essential act is the rejection of democracy—that is, of the underlying values of democracy; once you have decided upon that Stalin—or something *like* [emphasis in original] Stalin—is already on the way.

Despite objections from leftists such as Blum and Orwell, the Bolshevik revolution would, until the 1940s, be treated as a victory not only of the Communists but of the majority of leftists from various tendencies. After 1917, Eric Hobsbawm (1996, 74) explains, “Bolshevism absorbed all other social-revolutionary traditions, or pushed them to the margins of radical movements.” The rise of fascism in Europe, moreover, created an enemy that allowed different leftists to unite either as Communists or as fellow travelers. During the Spanish Civil War and World War II, Communism became intimately associated with the anti-fascist cause, thus allowing Communists and fellow travelers to dismiss anti-Communists as fascists.⁹⁾

By the late 1930s, however, evidence of the show trials and purges, in which high-ranking opponents of Stalin were publicly forced to confess to bogus crimes against the revolution, had already leaked into the Western European press. In 1937, for instance, pro-Soviet French intellectuals were already on the defensive, arguing for the necessity of the “Inquisition” that was occurring in the USSR (Judt 2011, 102). A turning point for

9) For an analysis of how Communism’s association with the anti-fascists blunted critiques of the Soviet Union and its allies, see Furet (1999).

anti-Communism occurred in 1940, when the Hungarian ex-Communist journalist Arthur Koestler published the novel *Darkness at Noon*, dramatizing the imprisonment, torture, confession, and execution of Bolshevik leaders through its main character, Comrade Rubashov—an amalgam of revolution-era Bolshevik leaders purged by Stalin.¹⁰ Together with Orwell, Koestler would become one of the leading anti-Communist voices on the British Left (Koestler settled in the United Kingdom after World War II).

The thread uniting intellectuals such as Koestler and Orwell (along with other prominent liberal and socialist anti-Communists of the time such as Ignazio Silone, Raymond Aron, and Albert Camus) was their condemnation of the authoritarianism of both the far Left and the far Right. This was a distinctly postwar perspective, produced by these intellectuals' engagement with two extremes that defined the century's first decades. Koestler and Orwell, for instance, were as committed to resisting Generalissimo Franco's fascism as Stalin's Communism (Koestler served jail time in Spain, while Orwell fought with antifascist Trotskyites).

Anti-Communists such as Orwell and Koestler expanded their critiques of totalitarianism to denounce the repressiveness of all forms of imperialism. As Christopher Hitchens (2003, 27) notes, Orwell's journalism from Paris immediately after the war, which criticized Charles de Gaulle's extension of Vichy-era colonial policies in Indochina, stressed "what might be termed the 'Third World' dimension of the struggle against fascism." At roughly the same time, Koestler, according to biographer Michael Scammell (2009, chap. 22, sec. 5, para. 7), was writing political essays, consistently examining "the way the Soviet system had evolved from a radical experiment in socialist revolution into a classic case of reactionary imperialism." The categorization of the Soviet Union as imperialist would become a crucial debate in Bandung.

Despite the onset of the Cold War and the concomitant mainstreaming of McCarthyite anti-Communism, many intellectuals held the torch for liberal anti-Communism in Europe. The philosopher Bertrand Russell, who many times expressed sympathy for socialism and Marxism, nonetheless grew critical of Communism's illiberalism as the Cold War deepened, bringing him closer to the likes of Koestler and Orwell in the immediate postwar years.¹¹ In France, Albert Camus's isolation from mainstream French intellectual life (which ultimately led to a break with his good friend Jean-Paul Sartre)

10) Rubashov's "manner of thinking," notes Koestler (2005, 479), "was modeled on Nikolai Bukharin," and "his personality and physical appearance a synthesis of Leon Trotsky and Karl Radek." For Koestler's own comparison of the fictional account of *Darkness at Noon* with the firsthand account of former head of Soviet intelligence General Walter Krivitsky, see the second volume of Koestler's memoir, *The Invisible Writing* (2005, 483–488), first published in 1954.

11) See chapter 24 of Scammell's 2009 biography of Koestler.

was occasioned by his growing disillusionment with Communist revolutionary rhetoric. From 1945 until the late 1950s, he published philosophical essays condemning rhetoric that justified revolutionary violence in favor of a political Utopia (Judt 1998, 94–95). Viewed from the perspective of European Cold War-era intellectuals, therefore, anti-Communism takes on a new intellectual depth beyond simply the witch hunts in the United States.

The globalization of an initially European liberal anti-Communism occurred through the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), established in 1950 as a cultural front to resist Soviet propaganda. Older European intellectuals such as England's Bertrand Russell and Italy's Benedetto Croce gave the organization its gravitas, but its intellectual direction came primarily from young anti-Communists such as Koestler, Aron, Sidney Hook, and Silone (Judt 2005, chap. 7, sec. 4, para. 21). The CCF formally operated in 35 countries and sponsored cultural publications established to rally intellectuals, mostly on the Left, against Communism (*ibid.*, chap. 7, sec. 4, para. 22).¹²⁾ The CCF's Office for Asian Affairs was run out of New Delhi, with Bombay newspaper editor Prabhakar Padhye serving as its Secretary (Office for Asian Affairs, Congress for Cultural Freedom 1955, 2). As Secretary, Padhye marketed and distributed CCF publications such as Stephen Spender's literary and political review *Encounter* (*ibid.*, 56) and set up regional conferences (*ibid.*, 3). One such conference was held in Rangoon in 1955, with over 35 participants from various countries in South, Southeast, and East Asia (*ibid.*, 3).¹³⁾

In the Philippines, Padhye recruited the journalist and fictionist F. Sionil Jose, who in June 1960 attended the CCF's 10th anniversary in Berlin along with Raul Manglapus (Jose 2013)—a diplomat who had accompanied Romulo to Bandung five years earlier.¹⁴⁾ Like the European anti-Communists of the CCF, Jose is an intellectual who has remained sympathetic to socialism and class politics while condemning the practices of Communist Parties.

12) The CCF, as it is now widely known, was funded by the CIA, though its members did not know of this when they joined the congress. According to Judt (2005, chap. 7, sec. 4, para. 6), this fact is not as serious in retrospect, because writers such as Koestler, Aron, and Silone “did not need official American encouragement to take a hard line against Communism, and there is no evidence that their own critical views about the US itself were ever toned down or censored to suit the paymasters in Washington.” The same can be said of Filipino CCF member F. Sionil Jose, who is routinely accused in the Philippines of being a former CIA agent.

13) The proceedings for the conference do not state whether there were participants from the Philippines. This was, however, unlikely, because, as I show below, the first interaction of the CCF with Filipino intellectuals was in 1960.

14) Manglapus is a minor, but important, character in our story. He wrote the final communiqué's section on cultural relations and was a close associate of Carlos P. Romulo. See Thompson (1956, 226–227).

With money from the CCF, Jose established the literary and political quarterly *Solidarity*, for which Romulo contributed articles. With the same money, he also set up the publishing house Solidaridad. The first book issued by the new publishing house was Romulo's *Identity and Change: Towards a National Definition* in 1965.¹⁵ In 1970, Solidaridad published Romulo's *The Asian Mystique: A Clarification of Asia's New Image*. (These books, as I discuss below, are key texts in which Romulo discusses his nuanced approach to Communism.)¹⁶ At around the same time, in 1964, the entrepreneurial Jose also opened Solidaridad Bookstore in the Ermita district of Manila. Romulo was the guest of honor at the bookstore's opening (*ibid.*).

There is no evidence that Romulo, like Jose and his subordinate Manglapus, ever became a member of the CCF. However, the closeness of Romulo to these figures and to endeavors financed by the CCF reveals that Romulo occupied an intellectual space similar to that of the Congress.

Romulo, the UN, and the Third Force

Carlos Peña Romulo is the most prominent diplomat in Philippine history. At the height of his political career, his aplomb was greater than that of some of the presidents he served. As noted by Gregorio Brillantes (2005, 94–95), a doyen of Philippine journalism and literature, Romulo did “more to enhance the country's image abroad than any other Filipino in his time.”

Born in 1899 and educated at the University of the Philippines and Columbia University, he began his career as a journalist and publisher. During World War II, he served in the US Army as General Douglas MacArthur's press officer, delivering lectures in the United States about the Pacific War. Under MacArthur, Romulo rose to the rank of colonel in 1942 and brigadier general in 1944 (University of the Philippines–Reserve Officers' Training Corps n.d.).¹⁷ It was, however, after the war, as the Philippine chief

15) Interview with F. Sionil Jose, Manila, March 1, 2013.

16) Naturally, because formal relations between Filipino intellectuals and the CCF began after Bandung, one cannot argue that the CCF directly influenced the anti-Communism of Filipinos in the conference. Nonetheless, the latter association of these intellectuals with the CCF points to the resonance between their thinking and that of liberal anti-Communists in Europe. People such as Manglapus and Jose would not have been recruited by the CCF had they been ideological opponents of the Congress. Moreover, as noted earlier, my concern here is not just Bandung itself but the anti-Communist Third World that Romulo articulated before and after it.

17) Numerous sources and interviews state that Romulo, until his death, insisted on being addressed as “general.”

diplomat to the United Nations, that Romulo became a prominent figure in global politics. From 1949 to 1950 he was president of the United Nations General Assembly, and he would remain a fixture in the United Nations until his retirement in 1984 (Espiritu 2005, 10). With the exception of a brief stint as president of the University of the Philippines from 1962 to 1968, Romulo devoted his postwar professional life to the foreign service, serving as Secretary of Foreign Affairs for Presidents Elipidio Quirino (1950–52), Diosdado Macapagal (1963–64), and Ferdinand Marcos (1968–84).¹⁸⁾

Viewed from the perspective of the unrelentingly nationalist Philippine Left,¹⁹⁾ Romulo is an inconsequential figure, a pro-American glitch in the broader narrative of the Philippine nation. Very few left-wing intellectuals, especially those from the University of the Philippines—then, as now, a hotbed of anti-American nationalism—recall Romulo as a prominent Third Worldist. Commenting on his tenure as UP president, Jose Maria Sison, the founding chairman of the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines, and his wife, Juliet de Lima, dismiss Romulo as a “chief agent of cultural agencies of the US government” (Sison and de Lima 2008, 54). Francisco Nemenzo (2013, interview with author), a prominent Marxist professor during Romulo’s term as university president (who would himself become UP president in the 1990s), claims that campus nationalists were barely cognizant of Romulo’s role in Bandung and ignored his claims of being an anticolonial intellectual. Nemenzo adds that progressives at the university viewed Romulo as a subpar intellectual who was more adept at sweet-talking the intelligentsia than producing relevant scholarly work. Reinforcing Romulo’s reputation as a pseudo-intellectual was the widespread belief that most of his writings had been penned by ghostwriters, whose egos the diplomat stroked as enticement to work for him.²⁰⁾ The Romulo that emerges is at best a dilettante opportunist, and at worst an embodiment of reaction.²¹⁾

18) See Espiritu (2005, 9–45) for an overview of Romulo’s career and intellectual history. For an account of Romulo’s retirement, see Brillantes’s (2005) intimate and eloquent portrait of an old, sickly Romulo, disgraced after his association with Marcos (89–98, “Delights and Difficulties of a Diplomat”).

19) See Claudio (2013b) for an analysis of the Philippine Left’s contradiction-laden relationship with nationalism.

20) Four anonymous sources who knew Romulo confirm that much of the diplomat’s writings in the mid-1960s was penned by the Marxist intellectual Petronilo Bn. Daroy—a close friend of Jose Maria Sison’s. Other ghostwriters mentioned by my sources include the nationalist historian Renato Constantino, Romulo’s protégé Salvador P. Lopez (who allegedly wrote Romulo’s Pulitzer-Prize winning book), and the historian Cesar Majul. Despite this, one source close to Daroy notes that Romulo’s ghostwriters wrote some of the material but many times also took dictation directly from Romulo. Moreover, the same source emphasizes, Romulo, a former journalist and literature instructor, edited all the works himself. Romulo’s books can thus be seen as reflecting his own views.

21) As Resil Mojares (2006), through his intellectual history of the nineteenth-century Hispanophile and pseudo-intellectual Pedro Paterno shows, serious intellectual histories of dilettante nationalists are revelatory of broad intellectual patterns.

Perhaps the outright dismissal of Romulo stems from the evolving and contradiction-ridden nature of his politics. Filipino leftists ignore Romulo not only because of his anti-Communism, but also because he was never as categorical about his geopolitical positions as the more prominent nationalists of the left-wing canon. The Maoist Communist Party and other leftists influenced by it, Patricio Abinales (2001, 193–228) notes, derived their categorical anti-Americanism from the nationalist and anti-American senator Claro M. Recto—Romulo’s political *bête noire*. As a result, the Philippine Left remembers Romulo as an opportunist and American lapdog, ignoring the various nuances in his positions that made him indeterminable and difficult to place within neat binaries such as anti-American/anti-Filipino, nationalist/American lapdog, or revolutionary/reactionary.

In what follows, I hope to show that it is precisely the evolving nature of Romulo’s thought that makes him crucial to an understanding of a concept such as the Third World, which is in itself a nuanced, contradiction-ridden, and evolving category. Romulo may not have been the most prominent delegate at Bandung based on historical accounts; other leaders such as Sukarno are certainly more prominent figures in global history. Nonetheless, Romulo represents a crucial strand in the plural narratives present at the conference. To reiterate Pang’s point, Bandung is best understood as containing a plurality of postcolonial positions, contradicting, intersecting, and mutually reinforcing.

A revisiting of Romulo’s legacy requires a different vista, a perspective broader than that of the domestic politics of postwar Philippines. In doing this, I neither seek to exonerate Romulo for his various dalliances with reaction nor do I aim to reconstruct him as a hero. Many times, he was, indeed, hopelessly pro-American, as when he allowed research that would benefit the US Army in Vietnam to be conducted at the UP (Nemenzo, interview with author, 2013).²² Moreover, Romulo’s lifelong commitment to liberalism was severely compromised when he became a loyal minister of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Nonetheless, Romulo was a genuine voice of the Third World and one of the most articulate exponents of the concept.

That the Filipino diplomat was a close US ally is a given. But in his UN career he made efforts to continually signal his affinity for former colonies. In votes where the main protagonists were the United States and Russia, Romulo naturally sided with the Americans. However, in votes that pitted “small nations” (a term Romulo used for the

22) Nemenzo was part of an independent review panel (the Committee to Review External Programs) on Romulo’s projects with US agencies and discovered that the University of the Philippines’ Institute of Hygiene had a US Navy-funded project studying mosquitoes that caused inflammation of the male genitals. This breed of mosquitoes could distinguish between Asians and Caucasians and infected only the latter. Nemenzo’s expose came after the coalition Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism (MAN) revealed that research on napalm had been conducted at the UP’s Los Baños campus.

pre-Bandung Third World) against powerful ones, Romulo took the side of the former. In discussions about the wording of the UN Charter, for instance, the Big Powers wanted the Charter to state that non-self-governing nations should aspire only toward self-governance. Romulo led the delegates who wanted to insert the word “independence.” Big powers such as England, France, and Russia opposed Romulo and his allies, while the United States abstained from the vote. The Philippine proposal eventually won (Romulo 1986, 38–44).

In the case of the partition of Palestine to create the state of Israel, Romulo opposed the proposal, claiming that it was “repugnant to the valid nationalist aspirations of the people of Palestine” (*ibid.*, 67). This was obviously a position contrary to the United States’. Manila, having been threatened with a withdrawal of aid, eventually ordered Romulo to support the formation of Israel. Romulo saw the actions of the United States as arm twisting, and until his death he maintained his views concerning the dangers of partition (*ibid.*).

Finally, Romulo contradicted the United States on the issue of veto power in the UN. According to Romulo, the leitmotif of his 38 years in the UN was the struggle to revise the UN Charter and to limit the veto power of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. For his entire UN career, he was at loggerheads with the United States on the issue of the veto (*ibid.*, 53). Even during his time as Marcos’s foreign minister, Romulo argued for a review of the charter to prevent the abuse of the veto. All these proposals were shot down by the United States (Romulo 1982, 6).

Crucially, even the United States did not view Romulo as its lapdog. A declassified CIA document from 1949 notes that “Although the Philippines generally supports US policy in the UN, there has been some deviation largely owing to Romulo’s championship of dependent peoples of Asia, for whom he has become a leading spokesperson” (Central Intelligence Agency 1949, 13). It was Romulo who began to craft an explicitly anticolonial foreign policy for the Philippines. Before Romulo, the document adds, “Philippine policy toward colonial peoples has [*sic*] been limited to expressions of sympathy for national aspirations. . . .” With Romulo at the helm of foreign policy, however, the Philippine delegation to the New Delhi conference on Indonesia in January 1949 played a leading role in pushing the UN to support Indonesian independence (*ibid.*).

Robert Trumbull (1949, E5), who served for more than three decades as a *New York Times* international political commentator, observed that the New Delhi conference—the first time Asian countries “had come together on a matter of common concern”—was a landmark moment that sent a message concerning Asia’s desire to “play a stronger role in international affairs.” This manifested in a call for a permanent pan-Asian organization—a Romulo proposal, which drew massive applause from the audience (*The*

Washington Post 1949a, 1). Jawaharlal Nehru and Romulo, for Trumbull (1949, E5), were “two of the strongest figures” in the conference. A few days after the end of the proceedings, the two leaders delivered interviews that were “in contrast to the deliberately moderate tone of the conference itself.” Summarizing their statements, Trumbull noted that Nehru and Romulo “warned the West” that Asia’s peoples had “definite objectives” and were “determined to obtain these by concerted effort if necessary” (*ibid.*). One objective was economic independence: for Asian countries to cease being mere suppliers of raw materials to Western countries.

New Delhi foreshadowed Bandung. Even before he was elected president of the UN General Assembly, Romulo was already a prominent pan-Asianist who styled himself as a representative of formerly colonized peoples. In this regard, he was capable of criticizing his erstwhile superpower ally. In May 1949, for instance, Romulo and Chinese UN delegate Dr. Lee Wei-kuo condemned the United States for halting the delivery of Japanese reparations to wartime opponents (the United States was seeking to prioritize Japan’s economic recovery) (*The Washington Post* 1949b, 4). Romulo declared that he was “flabbergasted” by the decision and blamed the United States for paving the way for Japanese revanchism—the primary victim of which would be Asia (*The New York Times* 1949a, 2).

Romulo’s anti-Communist credentials allowed him to criticize US foreign policy without fear of being branded a Communist sympathizer. On March 2, 1950, for example, he sent a personal and confidential letter to US Secretary of State Dean Acheson condemning the United States’ decision to recognize Emperor Bao Dai’s government in Vietnam; he viewed Bao Dai as a puppet of French colonialism. In supporting Bao Dai simply because he was an anti-Communist, Romulo (1950, 2) wrote, the United States “may have unwittingly espoused even the demonstrated iniquity of colonial imperialism.” The decision, moreover, gave Communists “the enormous advantage of plausible and logical insistence on anti-Communism being pro-imperialism,” reinforcing the notion that only Communists were anti-imperialists (*ibid.*, 3–4). Consistent with his self-aggrandizing style, Romulo, who viewed himself as a mediator between Asians and the West, declared that US policy in Vietnam would lead to “the virtual isolation of American policy from the sentiment of Asian countries” (*ibid.*, 4). Most surprisingly, Romulo explained that Ho Chi Minh was a potentially independent Communist who “could make all sorts of trouble for Stalin” (*ibid.*, 5). In the meeting with Acheson that followed, Romulo told the Secretary that Ho Chi Minh was a patriot who would refuse to simply become a tool of Mao or Stalin (Acheson 1950, 1). He advised Acheson to negotiate with Ho Chi Minh and suggested that France and the United States assure the Communist leader that Vietnam would gain independence (*ibid.*, 2).

Romulo believed he spoke from a position of authority, because he claimed to know Ho Chi Minh personally. In a likely fabricated account, the diplomat said he met Ho Chi Minh in 1948 after a UN meeting in Paris (various accounts, however, state the Vietnamese revolutionary was in Vietnam in 1948, having last been in Paris in September 1946). Hearing that Ho Chi Minh was in the city, Romulo claims, he sought out the Vietnamese leader. They met in a “small bistro in a by-way in Paris” (Romulo 1986, 114) and spoke about Philippine history, with Ho Chi Minh discoursing fondly about General Emilio Aguinaldo’s struggle against Spanish and American colonizers. Romulo considered the Vietnamese leader to be a “true patriot” who was forced to seek assistance from the USSR only because the United States refused to support his anticolonial cause (*ibid.*, 124).²³ This story may be apocryphal, or Romulo (or his wife, Beth Day, who posthumously edited the book) may have confused the date. Nonetheless, Romulo’s praise for Ho Chi Minh reveals his sympathy for national liberation movements, despite their affiliation with Communism.

Romulo’s letter and subsequent meeting with Acheson revealed his prescience. He knew that Vietnam would not support a puppet regime. Moreover, the engagement with Acheson exhibited Romulo’s nuanced anti-Communism. For Romulo, anti-Communism was not to be viewed as an automatic endorsement of imperialism. To resist Communism, one had to acknowledge its appeal to anticolonial nationalism—a perspective Romulo gained through his advocacy for Asian independence. This perspective was not inconsistent with what Romulo had already said in public. The previous year, he had explained his vision for an anti-imperialist *and* anti-Communist Asia.

The person credited with coining the term “Third World” in its contemporary geopolitical sense is the French demographer Alfred Sauvy, who in 1952 compared former colonies to the “third estate” (the people) of the French Revolution (*The Economist* 2010). In a 1949 speech at the University of Chicago, however, Romulo had already used the term “third force” to describe Asia—“the most dynamic region in the world,” which was “interposed between the two great powers” (*The New York Times* 1949b, 16). A little over a week before he was elected president of the General Assembly, Romulo (1949, 13) had published a version of this Chicago speech in *The New York Times*. As in his conversation with Acheson, Romulo conceded that Communism appealed to colonized peoples, particularly in Indochina, where “the Communist party was identified with the nationalist struggle, first against the Japanese and later against the French.” For Romulo, “the methods and principles of communism have an appeal” for peoples who, by virtue

23) Ho Chi Minh’s attraction to Communism was obviously more complex than this. It is, however, true that he did not start out as an enemy of the United States and that he was a nationalist before a Communist. For an introduction to Ho Chi Minh’s thinking, see Bello (2007).

of their colonial history, “may be led to believe that they have nothing to lose from aligning themselves with communism, which generously promises plenty for all and loudly professes its irreconcilable antagonism to the colonial system” (*ibid.*, 68). It was in this context that Romulo would put forward liberalism and human rights as an alternative to the Communist system.

A few years before the conference, Romulo had already outlined the Asianist version of anti-Communism that he would take to Bandung. Speaking at Johns Hopkins University in 1952, Romulo (1953, 249) declared that the threat of Communism was more pronounced in Southeast Asia, because the region was in “a position of vital strategic importance to the whole free world.” Citing Lenin, who believed that “the road to Europe lies through Peiping and Calcutta,” Romulo argued that “Southeast Asia is the last remaining roadblock to Soviet hegemony in the whole of Asia” (*ibid.*). Foreshadowing the anti-imperial language of Bandung, he added, “The struggle against Communism and Soviet imperialism may well be won or lost in Southeast Asia” (*ibid.*, 250). Romulo’s comments may sound exaggerated today, but it is important to recall that he made them in the context of the Korean War—a war he believed evidenced Soviet-Chinese aggression.

Romulo was right about his assessment of the Korean conflict. The most recent scholarship based on recently opened Soviet archives proves that Stalin, with Mao’s support, encouraged Kim Il-Sung’s invasion of South Korea in a reckless attempt to drag the United States into a protracted Asian conflict (Pantsov and Levine 2012, 383). Romulo was thus justified in going to Bandung with deep suspicions about the Chinese delegation. Indeed, Communism could threaten the stability of Asia, and Romulo would make this point eloquently during the conference.

The Anti-Communist Bandung

That the Philippines participated in the Bandung Conference is a function of Romulo’s view that the event would transcend the narrow anti-Western perspective that many had already associated with it even before its commencement. Indeed, even within the Philippines, President Ramon Magsaysay—a staunch US ally—was initially hesitant to send a delegation. It was, however, Romulo who convinced the pro-American president that the Philippines had a place in the conference (Molina 1961, 408).

In his oft-cited book *The Meaning of Bandung*, Romulo (1956) sets out to correct the popular perception that Bandung was simply a challenge to Western power. He begins by decrying how the US press prejudged the conference, noting the popular belief shortly before its commencement that it would degenerate “into an anti-Western politi-

cal demonstration” (*ibid.*, 5). In response to the misinterpretations of the Western press, Romulo’s goal was to outline Bandung’s “unpublicized nuances” in order that “its historical import and flavor may be better appreciated” (*ibid.*, 6). He emphasized that the countries in the conference were not homogeneously anti-Western, and that they reflected “different shades of political persuasion” (*ibid.*). Early on, Romulo was critical of the simple East vs. West binary that subtended interpretations of Bandung. Very few contemporary historians have listened to him.

The tendency to homogenize the Bandung narrative as anti-Western was not only the myopia of the pre-conference Western press. This narrow-minded interpretation is replicated in current Bandung historiography. For example, according to Burke (2006, 949–950), the focus on the anti-Western aspects of the conference has led scholars to ignore Bandung’s contribution to human rights discourse. He contends that studies easily assume that the anticolonial ethos of the conference translated into a critical attitude toward “Western” human rights. Burke demonstrates, however, that human rights discourse was essential to the vocabulary of Bandung, and that the latter’s debates mirrored those in the United Nations over the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (*ibid.*, 950–957). Of more importance for this article, Burke posits that criticism of the Soviet and Chinese governments, forwarded by conference delegates such as Romulo and Sri Lankan Prime Minister Sir John Kotelawala, “raised arguments with important consequences for human rights and democracy” (*ibid.*, 958). Simply stated, anti-Communism and human rights were intimately linked in the minds of some “Third World” strategists as early as 1949. In this regard, the Asia-Afro debates concerning Communist imperialism and totalitarianism foreshadowed intellectual shifts in Europe. As Tony Judt (2005, chap. 18, sec. 1) notes in the case of Western Europe, human rights discourse did not enter mainstream international discourse until the late 1980s, amid the discrediting of Communist totalitarianism.

In the conference, the anti-Communism of many of the delegates was immediately palpable. Initially, Chinese delegate Zhou Enlai forfeited his right to deliver an opening speech. “But as the addresses proceeded, and when some countries went out of their way to express their attitude to Communism,” recalls Kotelawala (1956, 181) in his memoirs, “Chou En-lai rose and said that he reserved his right to deliver an address of his own.” C.P. Fitzgerald (1955, 113), an Australian historian watching the proceedings, noticed a conciliatory Zhou, who claimed he was not in Bandung to promote Communist ideology. For Fitzgerald, Zhou’s speech represented a “marked change of attitude, if not policy” on the part of the Chinese premier. Kotelawala (1956, 181), on the other hand, claimed that Zhou’s comments were “satisfactory,” “but what was more satisfactory” was that Zhou “should have been forced to make them.” Zhou was placed on the defen-

sive because of the pervasive anti-Communist sentiment at Bandung—a sentiment immediately perceptible to the Philippine press, though neglected in accounts from neutralist countries such as India.²⁴ The leading weekly news magazine *Philippines Free Press* (1955, 69) began its report on the first two days of the conference as follows:

Outright anti-communist speeches were delivered at the opening of the Afro-Asian conference in Bandung, Indonesia, by Iraq's Foreign Minister Fadhil Jamali, Pakistan's Prime Minister Mohammed Ali, the Philippines' Carlos Romulo, and Thailand's Foreign Minister Prince Wan Waithayakon. It was clear from the speeches the conference would not develop into a communist propaganda vehicle. For example, Ambassador Romulo, while criticizing Western colonialism past and present, warned that communist imperialism is today a great danger to the new nations in Asia and Africa.

The report added that Zhou was “surprisingly mild in his speech Tuesday” (*ibid.*).

The *Free Press* (*ibid.*) also declared that Romulo found the conference “more than reassuring,” because many countries shared the sentiments of the Philippines against “communist domination.” It added that Zhou, surprised by the turn of events, was “forced to sit back and listen to unsparing attacks against communism” (*ibid.*). It is in this context of hostility to Communism that we should situate Romulo's (1956, 11) famous quip that Zhou “had taken a leaf from Dale Carnegie's tome on *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.”

The opening speeches, however, would not be the last time Bandung delegates attacked Communism. In September 1955, writing for the local Philippine press, Romulo (1955, 34) recalled that one of the most dramatic parts of the conference was the “fight over communism and colonialism.” Serious debate went into the definition of colonialism to be placed in Bandung's final communiqué. The communiqué is a pathbreaking document, which, beyond articulating the “Bandung spirit” of Asia-Afro solidarity, also allowed for a radical redefinition of colonialism. It condemned “colonialism in all its manifestations” and affirmed that “alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of human rights . . .” (Final Communiqué of the Asian-African Conference, Section D, Article 1). In his newspaper account (a clearer and more detailed account of the colonialism debate than *The Spirit of Bandung*), Romulo reported how the conference arrived at this definition.

The debate began when Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhamad Fadhil Jamali “opened up the heavy artillery against Soviet imperialism” (Romulo 1955, 34). However, “Powerful forces” (Zhou and the neutralist Nehru)²⁵ wanted to block any reinterpretation of colo-

24) See, for example, Appadorai (1955), which makes no mention of Zhou's reaction to anti-Communist speeches.

25) Romulo singles out these two in *The Meaning of Bandung*. See Romulo (1956, 10).

nialism. For them, there was “only one form of colonialism—Western,” and “Nothing else counted” (*ibid.*). The Philippine delegation and a majority of the conference’s participants supported Jamali. Romulo narrates:

We took the position that the conference must condemn all colonialism, both overt and potential. *We were opposed to every form of domination, subjugation, or the exploitation of peoples* [emphasis mine]. Everyone present knew we referred to communism.

Powerful support came from Ceylon’s Prime Minister, Sir John Kotelawala, who with the caliber of a world leader could set aside restricted regional loyalties for a greater cause. Turkey’s Deputy Prime Minister Fatin Rustu Zorlu also was a real fighter for democracy and so we were able to show the conference—meaning representatives of half of mankind—that we spoke for the security and interests of all. And all finally rallied to stand with us—condemning not only Western colonialism but colonialism “in its various forms.” (*ibid.*)

Perhaps no statement better encapsulates Romulo’s vision for a Third World that served as a dual negation of both the First and Second Worlds. It is a vision that, like those of the European anti-Communists discussed earlier, condemned all forms of domination and totalitarianism. Naturally, Romulo was delighted that his views received much support in the conference, particularly from Kotelawala, who until then was a known neutralist like Nehru (*ibid.*). In his speech, the prime minister asked the delegates to consider the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe (Kotelawala 1956, 187). “Are not these colonies as much as any of the colonial territories of Africa or Asia?” he asked. If the conference was united against colonialism, he added, “should it not be our duty to declare our opposition to Soviet colonialism as much as to Western imperialism?” (*ibid.*, 188).²⁶⁾ Kotelawala thus affirmed Asia and Africa’s solidarity with the occupied peoples of countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia.²⁷⁾ Hearing Kotelawala’s remarks, Nehru and Zhou took umbrage,²⁸⁾ and the two issued a statement extolling the values of neutralism (Romulo 1956, 31). Nehru followed this up with a speech, which Romulo immediately refuted (*ibid.*, 33).

Romulo’s response to Nehru is one of the most eloquent speeches of his career. First, he pointed out that the expansionist nature of global Communism was “not a charge made by non-Communist countries” but “the explicit declaration of international com-

26) The latest account of the crushing of Eastern Europe is Anne Applebaum’s (2012) magisterial *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe, 1945–1956*.

27) The comparison is prescient, especially since, like Third World countries, the states of Eastern Europe would also launch resistance movements against a foreign occupier. It is thus apt to trace continuities between the struggles of Asian anticolonialists in Bandung and those of Vaclav Havel and Lech Walesa. The latter too were “postcolonial” leaders.

28) There was a brief confrontation between Nehru and Kotelawala after the latter’s speech. Despite this, Kotelawala says he and Nehru remained “best friends” (Kotelawala 1956, 187).

munism” (*ibid.*, 188). Moreover, he noted that Communist Parties did not respect elections and merely used these for propaganda purposes (*ibid.*, 82). And, echoing Blum’s comments on Leninist terror from 1919 (see above), he explained that Communism’s “schism with socialism is based upon the fact that Communists see violence as the sole means of achieving social reform” (*ibid.*).²⁹ He then reminded the audience of the 1950 Chinese attack on South Korea, which was condemned by 50 countries at the UN (*ibid.*, 83). Quoting statements from Chinese officials about the need to encourage and organize armed rebellions in other Asian countries, he argued that China had violated the non-aggression principles of the UN (*ibid.*, 84–88). Peaceful coexistence with China, he believed, was impossible. In concluding the speech, he declared, “What we fear now is the new empire of communism on which we know the sun never rises. May your country India, Sir, never be caught by the encircling gloom” (*ibid.*). Once again, Romulo was prescient. Exactly five years after Bandung, after China had seized Indian border territory, Nehru called China’s methods “coercive” and labeled the Communists in India “a destructive opposition factor” (Nehru, interview with Frasser 1960).

Writing 30 years after Bandung in his memoirs—long after he and Nehru had become good friends—Romulo (1986, 139) recalled the debate in Bandung:

I warned Nehru in my debate with him that there would be an aggression against India from the North. He didn’t believe me. He said that I was wrong. That the Chinese were not aggressors and that we should speak of peace, brotherhood, neighborliness, and not make any statement about aggression. Yet, within four years, China attacked India’s borders.

Several years after that when I was invited to New Delhi by Nehru for a lecture series and I went to call on him, he was already ailing. As I entered his bedroom he said:

“General Romulo, how right you were at Bandung! And how wrong was I.”

Despite their eventual rapprochement, however, Romulo and Nehru in Bandung represented two differing perspectives on the ossifying Cold War. For much of the 1930s and 1940s, the Indian leader was an ardent student of Marxism. Even when he became critical of official Communism in the 1950s, when he criticized the religious dogmatism of Soviet leaders, he was never an outright anti-Communist and continued to admire certain aspects of Soviet socialism such as public education and health care (Martyshin 1989, 131–133). Like Romulo, however, Nehru held a position that was at the crossroads

29) The similarity here with Blum is crucial. Romulo did not condemn socialism as a whole and was cognizant of the broader history of socialism, whereby the issue of using terror as a political strategy became a crucial delineating line between the socialists of the Second International and the Communists of the Third.

of multiple ideologies, reflecting a syncretic and flexible political worldview. For Orest Martyshin (*ibid.*, 121), the three pillars of Nehru's worldview were Western liberalism, ideas of national liberation, and Marxism. With the exception of Nehru's more sympathetic approach to Marxism, therefore, Romulo and Nehru already had much common ground, even when they were each other's interlocutors.

The Afterglow of Bandung

Upon returning from Bandung, Romulo (1955, 35) wrote of anti-Communism as a source of solidarity among many Afro-Asian nations. Summarizing the sentiments of the anti-Communists in the conference, he said:

We are anti-communist because we know communism endangers our liberties. That our position happens to be that of the United States or of most countries of the West, is only because the ideals of freedom as enshrined in the Magna Carta of England, the Declaration of Independence of the United States, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man by France, are universal.

Once again, Romulo posited the intimate relationship between human rights discourse, anticolonialism, and anti-Communism. In his mind, this was not a Western position but an Asianist one.

In the wake of the Bandung Conference, Romulo continued to articulate his views on the intimate connection between anti-Communism, anticolonialism, and human rights. And the CCF-funded Solidaridad Publishing House continued to make these writings available to a wide audience. Romulo's dedication to human rights, anti-Communism, and anti-imperialism stemmed from a liberal commitment to freedom. He was a quintessential mid-century liberal, who, because of his liberalism, condemned colonialism. Ironically, this liberalism was cultivated through a life immersed in the West. Romulo's anticolonialism and love for Western liberalism, however, are not contradictory. As Dipesh Chakrabarty (2012, 141) notes, the critical/discursive weapons of the colonized—liberalism and Marxism—were embedded in the very cultures of the imperial powers. Colonialism brought with it the seeds of its own demise.

It was in this regard that Romulo was both an advocate of Western liberal principles and an antagonist of Western colonialism. In *Identity and Change*, Romulo (1965, 69) explains:

Colonialism was a contradiction of moral principles in politics; in terms of the 20th century, colonialism was some kind of saurian moment remnant of the [*sic*] political evolution—a monster that failed to develop with other sub-species of the Western liberal tradition.

If Romulo loved the West, it was not only because he trusted Western democratic governments but also because he believed in the ideals that emanated from the West's political history. These ideals, however, are not exclusive to any country, and Romulo could thus view his liberalism as an integral facet of his Asian identity.

In *The Asian Mystique*, Romulo (1970, 11) says that democracy, which he construed in its liberal sense, is not “a national property.” It is a concept that can “yield to the necessities of a particular social context” and can therefore be truly Asian. “Asians,” he explained, “deplore the readiness of America to claim as pro-American any of their leaders who affirm the democratic way of life.” Any Asian duplication of “Western life,” as such, would inevitably “be a forgery.” In the CCF-funded *Solidarity*, he notes that, like Jose Rizal and other Filipino nationalists of the nineteenth century, Filipinos need to be “cognizant of our social, political, and economic situation but without any timidity to study, confront, analyze and integrate into national intelligence the best values and aspects of other civilizations” (Romulo 1967, 36).

Romulo saw the future of Asian politics as open-ended, flexible, and provisional. Democracy would allow Asians to build their own unique political systems, which was not the case with Communism. In contrast, “totalitarian communism does not accept any deviation” and its adherents must be “in complete conformity with the official doctrine” (Romulo 1970, 10). Indeed, *pace* the earlier reference to Kolakowski, Communism establishes objective class enemies who are lesser beings according to its tenets.³⁰ Moreover, as the case of Eastern Europe proves, Communist governance is inflexible, hence the crushing of the 1968 Prague Spring. Unlike the strictures of Communism, Romulo (*ibid.*) argues, the “liberal imagination” is premised on “the principles of tolerance of differences.”

For Romulo, then, it was no surprise that many former colonies at Bandung would be anti-Communist. After all, who better to understand the trappings of a new form of colonialism than those previously colonized? Romulo (1965, 78) believed “It is foolish to think that, after fighting the Dutch, the British, the French colonial regimes, Asians will now accept willingly Communist totalitarianism.” Anti-Communism in Asia, then, was not so much pro-Western apologia but a properly Asianist and postcolonial position. It is not—contrary to Espiritu's claim—an imperial script aped by US allies such as Romulo.

30) This would explain, for instance, why the latest research on Red Army terror reveals that in 1920 alone, Lenin's forces executed 50,000 White soldiers and their allies (see Scammell 2013, 12). To belong to the “wrong class,” of course, was life-threatening during the period of Mao's red guards. The latest biography of Mao, which is the first to examine Soviet sources on the Great Helmsman, establishes that he rose to power within the Comintern as a firm supporter of Stalinism (see Pantsov and Levine 2012).

The dovetailing of anti-Communism with pan-Asianism is not without precedent. As Pankaj Mishra (2012, 246) notes, Japanese intellectuals in the 1930s often saw the Soviet Union and the United States as “Western” threats to China. This critique of Communism—part of the rhetorical arsenal of Chinese and Indian nationalists as well as pan-Islamists—was part of a broader pan-Asian polemic against Western modernity (*ibid.*, 254). Romulo, a secularist,³¹ did not appropriate many of the spiritual underpinnings of this position (the first chapter of *The Meaning of Bandung* is titled “The Spiritual Offensive,” but it barely talks about religion or spirituality). Moreover, though a great admirer of Gandhi as a peaceful anticolonialist, Romulo was not disposed to extolling the values of spirituality over liberalism.³² Nonetheless, it is important to emphasize that his vision of the Third World as a dual negation of Western colonialism and Soviet Communism has clear Asianist antecedents.

Since the twin bases of Romulo’s anti-Communism were liberalism and Asianism, it is unsurprising that he had a strong aversion to anti-Communism’s illiberal, American offshoot: McCarthyism. Like colonialism, McCarthyism betrayed the liberal principles Romulo held dear. For McCarthyites, he observed, “everything progressive, because it proposed change, was tagged as Communist subversion” (Romulo 1965, 83). Romulo worried that applied to international relations, McCarthyism would become a tool for neocolonialism. Speaking once more as an anticolonial Asianist, Romulo explained, “The communist danger became an excuse for intervention; the politics of fear became the politics of the West.” He added that McCarthyites did not understand Asian nationalism. Under the spell of this false philosophy, the West “failed to be discriminating,” and what they did not understand “tended to be propagandized as Communistic . . .” (*ibid.*, 76).

Even later in his life, Romulo would brag about recognizing McCarthyism as a misguided, temporary fad (Romulo 1986, 141–142). Reflecting on his career in the United Nations, he recalls his admiration for UN Secretary General Trygve Lie, who was attacked by the Russians for allegedly being a US lapdog and by McCarthy for allegedly being a Soviet lapdog (*ibid.*, 58). “Apparently the American public never appreciated the irony of an international servant who was simultaneously being vilified by Russia and the shameless Senator McCarthy,” he quipped (*ibid.*, 59). Like the Third World, Lie was caught between First World America and Second World Russia. And like imperialists, Senator Joseph McCarthy did not understand the nuances of provisional alliances that emerged in international affairs.

31) One of his top priorities when he became president of the UP was to promote secularism on campus (Epistola 1985, 395).

32) See Romulo (1964), which is a compilation of his 1964 Maulana Azad lectures in New Delhi. Interestingly, it was his interlocutor at Bandung, Nehru, who invited Romulo to deliver these lectures.

Romulo's liberal opposition to McCarthyism was strengthened by his international work, and he brought this attitude back to the Philippines. When Romulo assumed the presidency of the UP, one of his first acts was to take a strong stand against on-campus McCarthyism, seeking to end the witch hunts against student activists that had occurred during his predecessor's term (Epistola 1985, 395). True to his human-rights liberalism, Romulo opposed all forms of extremism, oppression, and control of free speech.

Romulo's refusal to crack down on student radicalism surprised many. The university's Board of Regents had nominated him to serve as president believing that he would combat campus activism and Communism (*ibid.*, 394). And yet, even Nemenzo—a staunch critic of Romulo—cannot recall a single crackdown on student radicals. Benjamin Muego (interview with author, 2013), Chair of the UP Student Council in the academic year 1984–85, likewise recalls a very permissive president. Muego, who was a champion debater like Romulo in his youth, developed a close fraternal relationship with the university president—a relationship that did not sour even when Muego became involved in radical politics.

In 1966, Muego became a charter member of Senator Lorenzo Tañada's Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism—a broad nationalist coalition that included Sison and his fellow Communist militants (Muego himself was not a member of the Communist Party). And in July 1967, Muego, along with Sison, De Lima, and 13 others went to Communist China upon the invitation of the All China Youth Federation. As a member of MAN (an organization critical of Romulo) and a close ally of Sison's Kabataang Makabayan, Muego became a prominent student activist. Despite this, he remained close to Romulo. Muego finds this striking in retrospect:

Given his [Romulo's] background (if indeed he was an agent of US imperialism) and given the degree of supervision he had over us, he could have very easily said, "I want you to ease up, because it's hurting my fundraising in the US." He didn't. And he knew what we were doing; the papers would carry our pictures with slogans, and burning effigies and flags.

Whenever Muego saw Romulo, the diplomat would simply give him a "fatherly slap on the back" and joke "make sure you're behaving, okay?" And that was the end of it. In retrospect, Muego is surprised at how much anti-Americanism Romulo tolerated on campus given the amount of fund-raising he was doing in the United States.

Romulo, adept at the art of persuasion, did not need to repress. Muego, like Nemenzo, claims Romulo "co-opted" many progressive intellectuals—most of whom, he confirms, became ghostwriters for the university president. Unlike Nemenzo, however, Muego ascribes this co-optation to more than opportunism. He claims that intellectuals were attracted to Romulo's genuine liberal humanism and his vision of creating a national

university.³³⁾ For example, he explains that Romulo's main speechwriter, Petronilo Bn. Daroy, who eventually became a close ally of Sison and the Communist Party, was "enamored" with Romulo because both men were true liberals. Similarly, Muego claims that nationalist intellectuals such as the historian and public intellectual Cesar Majul wrote speeches for Romulo not simply for career advancement, but because they saw in the president someone who valued intellectual work.

Although the influence of liberalism in the Philippines is not the topic of this article, it is important to note how liberalism, through its permissiveness, paved the way for the emergence of radical politics. One can hardly imagine, for instance, the blossoming of the radical nationalism that would inform the anti-Marcos movement without reference to the University of the Philippines. And had liberals such as Romulo and his protégé Salvador P. Lopez not led this university, nationalist dissent on campus would likely have been repressed. Romulo may have betrayed his liberal principles when he worked for Ferdinand Marcos, but Marcos's downfall—one triggered by the work of nationalist militants—was already prefigured by the intellectual climate he helped nourish.³⁴⁾ Even Romulo's morally bankrupt decision to support Marcos, however, must be understood in the broader context of his commitments as an internationalist and Asianist.

Building the Third World through a Dictator

The tragedy of Romulo's career lay in his struggle to operationalize his vision for the Third World while the divisions of the Cold War intensified. As the tensions between the United States and the USSR deepened, it became more difficult to maintain a third way; states had to choose. On the part of the United States, its position of "preserving freedom" in postwar global politics metamorphosed into a paranoid policy of anti-Communist containment, which led it to support violent right-wing regimes such as the apartheid regime in South Africa, the Pinochet regime in Chile (at the expense of the democratically elected Allende), and Diem in Vietnam. Conversely, the Soviet strategy of financing national liberation movements (even as it crushed nationalist dissent in places

33) It was under Romulo's term, for instance, that the UP established its Department of Filipino. During his term, Romulo also attempted to raise funds that would allow more local intellectuals to go to the United States for further education. Romulo's intellectual contributions as university president cannot be tackled at length in this paper, but it is important to note that the "American Boy" in the country's national university was able to distance himself from this caricature.

34) For an analysis of the connections between nationalist liberalism and the radical politics of the 1970s, see Abinales (2001), particularly the chapter "Filipino Marxism and the 'National Question.'"

such as Poland and Hungary) led many to champion the Communist cause. Fidel Castro's Cuba, for instance, which initially attempted to curry favor from both the United States and the Soviet Union, quickly became a beneficiary of Khrushchev's largesse and thus the Soviet Union's ally—a replication of a decision made earlier by Ho Chi Minh's Vietnamese revolution.

Even Nehru's, Sukarno's, Josip Broz Tito's, and Kwame Nkrumah's Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), founded in 1961 in the afterglow of Bandung, could not stay neutral for long. The movement fractured over the position of Castro's Cuba to support the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It was for this reason that Romulo, although sympathetic to Nehru and Sukarno, was always critical of the NAM (Romulo 1982, 28).

How did Romulo navigate the increasing divisions of the Cold War? As a bureaucrat, he could only do so much. Within the divisions of the Cold War, the Marcos regime in the Philippines quickly became one of the United States' most prominent client regimes (see Bello *et al.* 1977; Bonner 1987) and a bedrock for containment in Southeast Asia. As someone who tied his fortunes to those of the state, Romulo had to operationalize his ideas under the ambit of a US-backed dictator. The endeavor was ultimately quixotic.

When asked why he thought Romulo supported Marcos even after the declaration of martial law in 1972, Muego speculated it was because Romulo refused to leave the public limelight. Phrased differently, Romulo did not want to end his career as a diplomat. Speaking to the journalist Brillantes (2005, 95) in 1984, a dying Romulo explained that he was primarily nonpartisan. "My main preoccupation," he said, "has been foreign relations and not domestic partisan politics. It is with that overriding concern that I have served all the Presidents, from President Quezon to President Marcos."³⁵ This does not exonerate Romulo. As a member of Marcos's cabinet, he would have been aware of the widespread repression during the dictatorship, especially after the declaration of martial law in 1972. He surely would have known of the persecution of student activists at the university he once led. It is, thus, unsurprising that Romulo's break with his former protégé and successor as UP President, Lopez, was a result of the former's collaboration with the dictator. In 1980 Lopez called Romulo's life a "tragedy," claiming that Marcos's chief diplomat had turned his back on the principles he stood for, namely, "human rights," "democracy," and "press freedom" (Espiritu 2005, 41).

Despite the inadequacy of his defense of simply being a bureaucrat, Romulo's statements nonetheless provide us with a glimpse into his thinking. His priority, above all, was the formation of the Third World. From the beginning of his diplomatic career,

35) It was his main preoccupation, but he was not completely detached from partisan politics. He attempted to become the presidential nominee of the Liberal Party in the early 1950s.

Romulo sought to construct a foreign policy grounded on the concerns of Asia and other decolonizing states. He took offense whenever someone cast doubt on his credentials as an Asianist. His famous debate with Nehru in Bandung, for example, was triggered when Nehru questioned the credibility of Asian leaders supporting the US-backed Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO, founded in Manila in 1954). According to Romulo (1986, 139), Nehru's comments "got me," which led to his extended rebuttal of the Indian leader. Romulo's reputation as "America's boy" was obviously a sensitive spot for him. And in his career after Bandung, he would attempt to distance himself from this image. More important, after Bandung he would continue his career as an advocate of the Third World. A post in the Marcos government allowed for this.

In the second of his two posthumously published memoirs, he recalled that Marcos was a "receptive and able ally" in his goal of forwarding an independent Philippine foreign policy. "We agreed that it was time for our former colony to distance itself from the towering shadow of its old patron, the United States" (Romulo 1988, 137). In the 1970s, the Philippines opened diplomatic relations with China and the Soviet Union, "independent of the US position" (*ibid.*). Romulo, in fact, claimed that Richard Nixon credited him with the idea of opening diplomatic relations between China and the United States in 1972 (Romulo 1986, 155).³⁶ Though at no point did he retract his criticisms of Communism, Romulo began to espouse a more pragmatic approach to relations with Communist countries.

The shift to a more independent foreign policy reflected Romulo's changing views in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At the time, he no longer believed that Asian nations could be divided between a non-aligned bloc and those, like the Philippines, that supported the United States. In a speech following the conferment of an honorary degree from the University of the East, an unusually humble Romulo (1969, 51) reflected on the changes in Philippine foreign policy since Bandung:

In recalling the events of the 1950's, especially with reference to Bandung, I consider it one of the little ironies of our time—and I did not foresee it then when I clashed with Jawaharlal Nehru in the Bandung Conference—that the positions of India and the Philippines would somewhat change, one moving slightly to the other's position. But this would be a story of the 1960's after India was to suffer, as she did, the trauma of military aggression by Communist China, and the Philippines was to begin to realize the full implications of her one-sided policy.

He concluded that both India and the Philippines would likely "move nearer to each other, and to the rest of Asia, moving in the same direction" (*ibid.*).

What did Romulo's shift in orientation mean in terms of concrete policy? Beyond

36) The claim is difficult to verify. I cannot find evidence of Nixon either affirming or negating it.

opening ties with new states, it meant turning the United Nations into a venue for Asian and Third World solidarity. During a trip to India in 1969, Romulo drew attention to India and the Philippines' joint support of policy recommendations from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (*The Indian Express* 1969). At the time, UNCTAD was led by Raul Prebisch, one of the left-wing pioneers of dependency theory in economics, which called for the economic independence of peripheral countries in a world economic system.³⁷⁾ In India, Romulo rehearsed the ideas of left-wing Third Worldists, echoing UNCTAD's critique of unfair tariff policies that protected First World markets from Third World goods (*ibid.*). He also congratulated the Indian government for nationalizing its banks in a bid for economic self-sufficiency (*The Hindustan Times* 1969).

Moreover, as Marcos's foreign minister, Romulo participated in the formation of the ASEAN, which he viewed as "an Asian Third World grouping" (Romulo 1988, 153). One of ASEAN's primary goals was ensuring "freedom from interference in the internal affairs of the countries of the area by outside Powers" (Romulo 1972, 9). Of course, ASEAN then was spearheaded by brutal domestic dictators such as Marcos and Suharto. But for Romulo, ASEAN was a concretization of his Asianist worldview. As a diplomat wedded to the nation-state, he saw developing world solidarity through the narrow lens of state-to-state relations. His notion of protecting states from external threats allowed him to justify dictatorial threats from within. Ironically, it was Romulo's dedication to Third Worldism that made him a servant to a US-backed dictatorship. Close to his death, he wrote a final justification for his support of Marcos: "If only he would be judged by his conduct of foreign relations, Marcos would go down in history as an excellent leader of the Filipino people" (1988, 153). It was almost a plea for forgiveness.

Romulo eventually resigned from the Marcos administration in 1983. The assassination that year of oppositionist Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino triggered a political and economic crisis—one that would lead to the dictator's ouster. The crisis gave Romulo an excuse to leave. After his final appearance at the UN in 1983, an ailing Romulo said he was "heartsick." Speaking from a hospital bed in the United States, the 85-year-old admitted defeat: "For the first time in 37 years, I appeared before the United Nations with my head bowed in shame. . . . It was hard for me to explain. . . . I have done my best building up Philippine prestige abroad. That prestige has been destroyed" (quoted in Brillantes 2005, 89).

37) For a discussion of dependency theory, the Third World, and the legacy of Prebisch's UNCTAD, see Bello (2006, 32–58) and Connell (2007, 139–164).

Conclusion

The broad, democratic Left shies away from anti-Communism by virtue of the position's intimate association with reaction. Anti-anti-Communism—the equation of all criticisms of Leninism with fascism³⁸⁾—has prevented a progressive reinterpretation of the phenomenon, thus allowing the terms of the discourse to be dictated by the modern-day heirs of McCarthy on the Right. Indeed, anti-Communism has a dark history, particularly in Southeast Asia.³⁹⁾ But, as with most ideological constellations, anti-Communism does not come in one strain. As I outlined earlier, opposition to Leninism began on the Left. A committed socialist like Blum, for instance, believed Bolsheviks had betrayed their socialist cause.

Romulo was not a man of the Left. Nonetheless, his views mirrored those of liberal and socialist anti-Communists—views that the statesman articulated in the language of Asian solidarity. That he was an anti-Communist is not as scandalous as a contemporary progressive might assume. Removed from the paranoia and propaganda of the Cold War, elements of Romulo's anti-Communism would not be controversial in the context of the contemporary democratic Left. In the Philippines, for instance, progressive scholars publishing in progressive journals have replicated his criticisms of Communism's inflexibility and its disdain for democratic structures such as free elections.⁴⁰⁾

Romulo's oeuvre, however, goes beyond merely proving that anti-Communism could transcend its fascist associations. In this article, I hope to have shown that liberal anti-Communism was essential to the birth of Third Worldism and the solidarities it produced. It is, thus, his unique synthesis of liberal antitotalitarianism and Asianism that makes Romulo an important figure in global intellectual history. That Romulo betrayed his ideals when he became a servant of the Marcos dictatorship does not negate the relevance of his ideas. His views constitute an alternative, if provisional, Asian modernity—one that undermines totalitarianism in all its forms.

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38) According to Francois Furet (1999, 209–265), the ability of Communists to pass off their critics as fascists, or abetting fascism, was the legacy of Stalin's united front policy during World War II. Communist propaganda, especially under the supervision of Willi Munzenberg (Communism's Goebbels and one of the first mentors of future anti-Communist Arthur Koestler), turned the followers of Stalin into the ultimate symbols of anti-fascist resistance. Under this rubric, it became easy for Munzenberg to dismiss the Soviet Union's critics as abettors of German and Italian fascism.

39) The 1965 mass murder of members of the Communist Party of Indonesia is the most egregious example. See Kammen and McGregor (2012) for the latest scholarship.

40) See, for example, Quimpo (2005) and Putzel (1996).

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