

For Freedom of The

Y O U T H

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IN THE REALM of socio-economic and political affairs, twentieth century Philippines has been, thus far, an era of moral conflict and uncertainty. The wave of tyranny, terrorism, murder and massacre has engulfed us all. These are just "covers" of the root "problem" which bewilders the Philippines. Beset with all kinds of illness, she is hopelessly perplexed. The sickness starts with a "land virus" till it spreads to the social, economic, and political aspects of the Philippines.

Through all this, only the youth have stood defiantly to cry and say something the youth, who for so long, have been put aside simply because they are young and don't know much about life. Let their elders plot their future and shape their life accordingly, where the ideals of peace, progress and the triumph of reason and decency reign supreme! Great indeed! But why can't the youth shape their own life? Why curtail the freedom to be oneself, to be the mouthpiece, the conscience and the hope of the fatherland?

By now, perhaps, their stubbornness have been rewarded as their ideals have become somehow clearer, though still intangible, through the common faith in a sincere reform of the unjust socio-economic and political structure. The youth hopefully, dubiously, assent to the stand that the threatening instrument of destruction may yet prove the key to the welfare of the Philippines. But the ideal of colonial progress thus revived can't be identified with the ideal abandoned recently by the youth simply because it is meaningless. The youth's new faith cannot bury and ignore the harrowing experiences of exploitation and injustice by both foreign and native exploiters of rich human and natural resources of our country.

The ideal youth believe in progress only when there is freedom in which the youth are capable of developing. The youth believe that with development, understanding of their needs and how to achieve them fully, follow. The more the youth do this, the freer they become. Freedom here means more than just having a choice. The youth who can choose to shape their life in either of the two ways which lead to death, one by submissive and permissive attitude to the status quo, and the other by being dislocated and misoriented in their education, are not free! Choices amount to being free only when they are choices which offer the possibility of fulfillment.

Freedom is the capacity to develop and to shape this nation into a healthy land of fulfilled individuals where there is the opportunity of every member of society to achieve his needs as a human being.

The ideal youth believe not in freedom from everything, for nothing! Its goal is not to place in which conflict and hardship have stopped to trouble and stir society, but rather a milieu in which goodwill and effort may solve the conflicts. It is a freedom from whatever obstructs the youth's development and progress in a free society.

Today, however, the youth have adopted the attitude of being always right in their stand and the object of their gripes to be always wrong. It seems fruitless to conduct a dialogue with them! Stark arrogance and pride paint the faces of the "conscience" of the nation. Respect and discretion have been supplanted with hate and prejudice. "Character assassination" and uncontrolled thirst for adventure and "sense of duty" have become a cult and a fad. What, for God's sake, have they eaten? Will the youth carry on reform that way? Are they justified? Reform, they say, must start from within. Thus, purify first the within! But, is it justified to carry on reform with this "polluted attitude?" Isn't that an abuse of freedom?

Youth's freedom is necessarily geared to their fulfillment. Self-denial and self-frustration made possible the achievement of this goal. They have denied themselves comfort in sitting inside the classroom when they go to the barrios or when they join justified demonstrations and pickets with the determination to achieve the proper treatment to the ailing heart of their fatherland. They have put down vainglory and considered themselves the dregs of the unjust society. Reasonably?

Hostility, arrogance, insolence, and "degrading behavior" are but patterns that come when the youth's needs and concern for the future have not been fulfilled and have not been properly offered by their elders. If a just socio-economic and political structure is achieved, the youth will indeed be self-actualizing and self-transcending; the youth will become the true hope of the fatherland, an ideal and mature youth!

To be free in the context of the youth's vocabulary is not to be deprived of the expression of discontent, anxiety, and the meaninglessness of life. Problems

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thoughts

*i see traces of the
heaviness of my head in
the thoughts of my
street-dancing (around
and closing).
thoughts*

*thoughts
thoughts
i clear the traces
then mark where a
youth's i-thinks were
are.*

*my thoughts crowd on
some little intimacies
pregnant with blue –
impressions
yes, in some little
conscious square
atmosphere.*

– teresita b. bayno
ab 2

FOR FREEDOM OF

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arise when not all the members of society share equally and justly the opportunities God has given to this Christian nation. How can the youth expect to live in a Christian society when majority of the members of society are virtually doomed to be slaves, misfits, unfortunates, and thus not allowed to share equally the opportunities to develop into a full-grown, mature Christian? Again and again, riots and violence that have marred the youth's ideal name only show that something must be wrong! And the wrong lies in the fact that there is no FREEDOM given to each Filipino to be himself and above all to be a Christian. There is no freedom to share equally the free bounty of nature. And there is even no freedom to be the youth of the fatherland!

The ideal youth are they who are armed with FREEDOM to be just what they are destined to be: The mouthpiece, the conscience, and the hope of the Filipino people. This could be achieved if we propel the attitude of sincere and open REFORM. Unless we become what we claim to be – a Christian society of equal freedom and opportunity – the future of the Philippines will be hazardous. Only if Philippine society is willing to pay the price of REFORM can we be assured together with the youth, of the enjoyment to live and be fulfilled in a just society!

PEEPHOLE

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into bed. Passion had always overwhelmed me but then I constrained myself to jostle the flowing temptation. For, you see, when the hallucinogens descended on this generation, they found me among the virile young men who vented all their concupiscence on the breasts of restless, uncomplaining young women, whispering sweet-nothings on the latter, their faces rubbing smoothly of warmth. The advent to these "stirrers" had throttled my propensity to instant, natural urges.

I did not tell my brother of the discovery. When I went to school that morning, Kim reminded me once again about toys and candy. Mrs. Go was always there, at the doorstep, to see me leave, and, of course, to bid me good-bye. It must have been with repulsion that I did not anymore feel her sincerity as she

bade me goodbye. It was the shocking memory that telling afternoon that I now felt how loathsome she was. Freak, I said. I was not really certain if it's being genuinely me but I did just that, thought just that, period. For in the first place, I had always been seeking the normal, proper direction of life, this worldly life that downed this generation to near-naught. A generation not knowing that distance between nothingness and existence is a yawning gap. From zero of existence to zero of existence: that's one simple fact I and everyone else know of life, that is, in between creation and annihilation one dwells on brevity, the finite, perfunctory process. That's why people have fallen into error because of this ignorance.

That Sunday my brother was out. I was reading the Theories of State when Kim barged into the room. She was laughing and grinning all the while. I did not understand at first. But then she pointed toward the position of the hole in the wall. And it was then that Mrs. Go and I talked – heart to heart with each other. With all the sobriety in her she told me:

You know, life is one vast peephole, wherein one probes into the stark, raw, inner recesses of man; the cold, hard realities of man. Orthodoxy is always the demarcation line drawn between two extremes. Falling into these extremes renders one to be mocked a freak and what other filthy things one can muster.

Then we stared at each other, speechless, conveying ourselves through the eyes. She broke the stony silence:

Yes, people have gauged other people according to the explicit. But I also feel love, know how to understand, and have a soul like everyone else.

Her words put me spell-bound. I sat plastered on the corner set, wearing a blank stare, my thoughts drifting. The lightness in the heart now superseded the heaviness that was then preponderant.

When I went back to my room, I could feel the tide of awakening that crept into my body. The dry air that now nonchalantly nestled on my skin seemed to invigorate me as the vast flood of luke-warm sweat kept flowing out, washing away the stain, the stain of soul. A tangle of thoughts hovered in my mind as I busied myself thinking of a way to rid of the hole in the wall while the faint sunlight filtered thru the window sills that brought the dry air into my senses and bathed me with renewed exhilaration.