

Mr. Damasco and his Democracy

By Jose C. Balagapo

WHEN the newer trends of teaching hit the shore of Samar and in its wake flapped the democratic practices there was rejoicing in the ranks. They argued that there would be easier relation between teachers and supervisors. For more than two decades, supervisory personnels of the Bureau of Public Schools considered themselves privileged people and as such enjoyed blanket authority to supervise teachers activities in and out of school. The Supervisors at that time were "Lords of what they survey." Naturally the teachers regarded them as "demons" who were not only equipped with horns but also were out to "liquidate" them.

The new trends of Supervision which is a part of the trend came an announced after liberation when it was slowly injected into the system. Nobody then like to teach for the reason that the teacher's pay was not commensurate with the work done. It was a soothing balm that enhanced the teacher's entry into the service and when the government promised to hike the salary of the teachers every lettered person vied for the teaching post whether qualified or not.

But the teachers of Samar went into real cheering in the early part of the school year 1953-1954 when during a series of workshops in the province, the new look in the teaching service was officially put to its paces.

"Democracy should be practiced in the field. The teachers should be regarded as co-workers in the profession and not merely robots whose obedience are blind and whose opinions consequently are not respected. To the teachers belong the responsibility of the care of the child's moral and educational welfare, a task the Supervisor has nothing to claim to his credit. Supervisors must bear in mind that the teachers are the most important ingredient in any supervisory body. Without them the supervisor will not exist."

"The pupils are the owner of the school plant. In no case will they be denied the use of them. Teachers must remember that without the pupils, schools cannot be called such. The child should be guided along democratic patterns. Let us find out whether the pupils who did nothing have learned nothing in their stay." Ad infinitum. . .

Who "dictated" this new policy to the teachers in Samar? Mr. Eliseo Damasco, now the Acting Division Superintendent for Samar is directly responsible for the new practices of democracy in the province. He was at that time an Academic Supervisor.

Mr. Pascasio his boss at that time was loud in his praise for this Supervisor. "I brought Mr. Damasco from the Division of Lanao to disseminate the new trends of teaching in the province. I know that he is progressive as he is capable and he will not allow ideas to pass unnoticed. I have been with him long enough to know what is inside him. His passing the Division Superintendent examination proves my contention."

Mr. Damasco is a shy fellow and is troubled by an acute inferiority complex. But zeal in his crusade of democratic trends dissolved his timidity and set his tongue wagging with the new idea. Were he the politico type he might have achieved an official ceiling higher than he has reached today.

Recently lady luck did smile at him when the provincial board created a position of assistant Division Superintendent of schools. Without thinking twice the appointing power chose him for the position. And with the transfer of Mr. Pascasio to Cebu the total responsibility fell on his shoulders.

Mr. Damasco is not much of a talker. Oratory is not his forte. But when he writes anything for the consumption of the field, his piece rings with clarity and purity of the language.

Mr. Damasco put plenty of common sense in his deliberation. One time in Borongan during the initiation period of the workshop a Supervisor unwittingly asked him a question: Shall we allow children to sleep in the room?

As characteristic of him, Mr. Damasco answered with dispatch and caution: Mr.— if you face the problem professionally I think there will be no need for asking me that question. You know answers to questions are not always found in books and one of these is yours. My answer to that question is like yours as long as you reason professionally.

His predilection for other things besides teaching trends are easily noticed in the teachers family poli-

tics. He would not scold much less reprimand an erring subordinate and some self-appointed critics would allude the action on his "immaturity." Actually he does only what he preach to the letter. Democracy is the theme he would say and scolding and reprimanding would do the teacher no good at all. He would invoke Lincoln when he thinks some one needs a "flogging" and the flogging would not be done because "I might have done the same thing myself if I were in his place."

Many believe that his interpretation of the new trends of teaching is superflous and needs checking somewhere. That such "catch" words as mass promotion, total and partial integration should be given to moderation because many think that these new trends violate grossly some laws of learning. Actually Mr. Damasco does not compel any one to do his bidding. "If you are not ready to do any new trend teaching, by all means cling to any other and make it good." This assertion not only win plaudits of educational

centers but also give chances to skeptics to revise their thinking.

Old timers in the teaching profession may find faults with Mr. Damasco's democracy in the class room. They may even attach the "poor result of the teaching today" to this new kind of teaching; they may yet point juvenile delinquency as a direct result of too much school democracy.

Whatever comes after his "controversial" effrontery is anybody's guess; to some his efforts may have produced negative result but to some they must have achieved positive ones. But all the heckling will never improve the situation. What we want today he says are men with ideas accompanied by the zeal to do it.

Ideas of education says he in this world and in all ages may differ sharply but when it comes to the ultimate aim, they are all govern by the same denominator — the acquisition of knowledge. Timid Mr. Damasco is not after it.

Poems

1. CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

*I have
My Christmas card
Embossed within my heart,
Wishing you all the best of luck...
Dear folks!*

2. GOD SET ME FREE

*Out in this world God set me free
As free as birds up in the tree!
Out of His Scheme, I ought to see
And enjoy Life as it should be...
In my search for Truth and Beauty
I'm perplexed with uncertainty...
But certainly His Word shall be
The Truth to guide my Soul to Thee!*

3. CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS

*O Divine Child!
Accept my humble offerings
To Thee —
my Golden Love,
my Frankincense of devotion,
my Myrrh of sufferings
and mortification...
Amen!*

By EPIFANIO T. RAMOS

POEM SEEKING RELIEF

*typhoon x
powered by what
hit this land...
the truth who denied.
the victims now could
not as ghosts remain;
they must...why not.
but silence they chewed
like a wilted leaf;
theirs the crucifixion
of a pledge not yet.*

EXPLORATION

*could conscience spear
the heart; forget calvary.
i asked. yes...came
not from lips of saints
and virgins unsmiling, but
from every lightning and thunder...
oh, time! is earth now too
deadly for residence. if...
then give me the strength
to explore the sacred wounds
and claim love with all
its thorns and paroxysm.*

By Wilfredo Obligacion