

# The Case of JOSE AVELINO

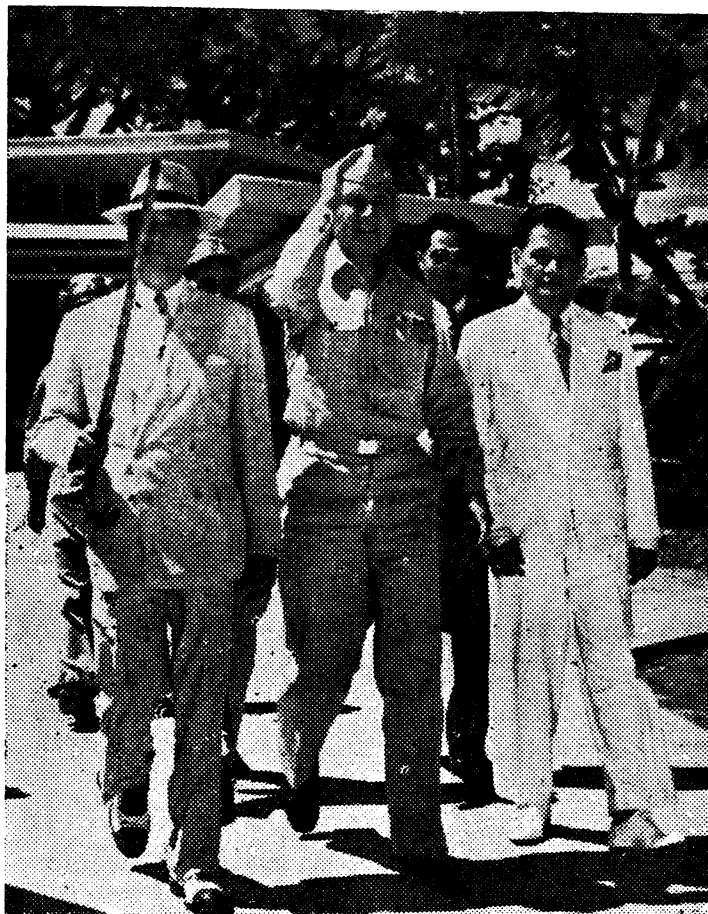
By TIMOTEO L. ROBLES

Vice-President Negros Press Club, Bacolod City

The case of Jose Avelino is the study of one victimized with blind vindictiveness by two forces that grouped their strength together to achieve a common objective. It is a known fact that were it not for the unholy alliance between the Quirino Liberals and Nacionalistas in the Senate, Avelino would still be the most powerful figure in the Philippines today. Within the councils of the Liberal Party, he is logically the successor of its founder, the late President Manuel A. Roxas.

## AVELINO'S DOWNFALL ONLY A SETBACK

To wreck Avelino politically, six Liberal (Quirino) senators aligned with the six Nacionalista senators. As the titular head of his own party, Pres. Quirino should not have permitted connivance with the Opposition. It is clear that, in his madness for reelection and moved by the selfish desire to eliminate a possible rival for the Liberal Party Convention, the President did everything to down Avelino. The then Senate President, ever popular within the party ranks would defeat Quirino—and Quirino knew it. Ten Liberal senators voted for Avelino, and only six were for Quirino. In a Government in which the Liberal Party is in power, and ten among the sixteen Liberal senators reiterated their confidence in the then Senate President Avelino, the people's vote of confidence was expressed through their chosen representatives in the Senate. As the campaign manager during the 1946 elections that made the late Roxas President, and Quirino just came with the Roxas landslide, Avelino had proven himself a leader—the maker of Presidents. If Quirino is now the President of



Avelino is shown in this picture with the late President Roxas and Maj. Gen. Eugene Eubank of the US Army.

the Philippines which came by accident (upon the death of his predecessor), he could not be the leader of the Filipino people unless he could win the Presidency in an election contest.

## QUIRINO AND AVELINO AS PARTY MEN

Pres. Quirino inherited the titular leadership of the Liberal Party when Pres. Roxas died. But ever since Roxas and Avelino founded the Party in 1945 (Avelino has always been the president of this party. Avelino has proven himself a true Liberal all the time. On the other hand, Quirino has shown very little capacity of a just leadership responsible to a political or-

ganization. On many occasions, Quirino's disloyalty to his party was clearly shown when he fraternized with the Opposition (Nacionalistas) Party. He appointed Senator Cabili, then a Nacionalista, to the Cabinet without consulting first his fellow Liberals. (Because of some oppositions, however, Cabili did not land in the Cabinet—but it is enough that Quirino, a Liberal, launched an appointment of a Nacionalista senator). Quirino sanctioned the fusion of his Party with the Nacionalistas in the Senate, which resulted in the elevation of Minority (Sen. Diokno) to Acting Senate Presidency. In one of his trips to

Mindanao, Quirino launched his candidacy without the party convention. Avelino on the other hand, remained faithful and loyal to the Party. Even the Party Headquarters at Azcarraga, Manila, used by the Roxas-Quirino campaign during the 1946 elections is what Avelino is using now for his own headquarters — and it seems Quirino does not contest this occupation by Avelino of Liberal Party Headquarters chosen by the party founder, President Roxas.

## THE CASE AGAINST AVELINO

One of the issues against the Nacionalista Party during the 1946 elections was the commission of grafts and corruption in the Government, then headed by Pres. Osmeña. There were grafts in the distributions of the UNRRA (Relief) goods, ECA, and others. When Roxas became President, so we have seen, more grafts were committed this time, in almost all branches of the Government: in surplus goods, in the PRA-TRA, in immigration, in Internal Revenue, etc. It would seem that whoever is in power there is always graft and corruption; this is unavoidable.

When Quirino and Avelino parted ways, and the Liberal Party was split, it is implied that Avelino's faction represented graft and corruption. An injustice is done to Avelino. Unproved charges were instituted against him without giving him a chance to defend himself. This resulted in his suspension as member of the Senate. Well, Avelino, being a good soldier, had to take it. But, how about the cases against Acting Senate President Cuenco and Senate President Pro-tempore Aranz? Charges, more serious

than those filed against Avelino, were filed against these gentlemen. Why are they still there? Why are not they removed from their positions? Why are they not suspended. Like Avelino? Senators Cuenco and Arranz, of course, happen to be Quirino men—and that makes it different. Avelino's faction, Quirinistas say, represent graft; what do these Quirinistas say about the activities of their party's campaign manager, Speaker Perez, who everybody now knows is the "Chinese immigration wizard?"



Avelino, left, and Vicente J. Francisco, Vice Presidential candidate of the ALP.

Another case against Avelino is that electoral frauds during the elections of 1946 and 1947 were committed, and Avelino, being the campaign manager of the Liberal Party during both elections, so it is said, was responsible for these frauds. To him, as campaign manager, falls the burden of being blamed for whatever anomalies there had been. However, common sense tells us that Avelino, like any other man, could not have stayed in any one place at the same time to direct polling places and commit frauds. If he ever did in one place, then somebody has to file charges against him. We have Courts of Justice. But—for the sake of argument, let's say, Avelino did commit frauds during those elections, then it would be just too bad for the Liberal Party, for we would have right now a different set of senators — all Nacionalistas. To blame Avelino for electoral frauds in the last two elections, therefore, is a challenge to all the present Liberal Party senators in not resigning from their positions. If they don't resign, they believe their elections on the level—and no fraud; and so we have no case against Avelino on electoral frauds.

**QUIRINO A FAILURE**

After more than a year in office, President Quirino has not come up to expectations. Starting within his own party where rifts among the leaders mounted day by day, instead

of discouraged, to the chief magistracy of the land, Quirino resolved to continue the program of his predecessor's administration, did Quirino do it? For instance, there is the Huk problem. Roxas outlawed the Huks; but Quirino gave them Amnesty, so confident the Huks won't bother anymore. Huk Supremo Luis Taruc came down from his mountain lair not as a captured bandit but as a hero; he was feted in the President's Dewey Boulevard home and at Malacañan—then he was seated as Congressman to enable him to collect his salary. Taruc is back to the hills now. Had Quirino followed Roxas policy on the Huks—and that is to outlaw them, there would be no greater expansion of the dissident activities to many parts of the country, because these would be checked up by the law enforcing agencies of the Government. So peaceful the country was with Quirino's Amnesty to the Huks, that His Excellency never thought the possibility of the Huk's ambush of Mrs. Quezon's party.

The present Administration is using Government funds very extravagantly, and in most cases, public money is squandered and spent on useless projects. The Ilocanos have been reputed to be very thrifty; Pres. Quirino, however, is an exception. There is that misuse of the so-called PACSA funds. Establish-

ments of consulates and embassies in places where there are only a handful of Filipinos residing is another unnecessary extravagance of this Government. That never-to-be-forgotten Vigan junket during which the Government shouldered the expenses of transporting hundreds of government officials, personal friends, and even representatives of foreign government in Manila — there could be no reason for such a junket even if Quirino were President. Two other junkets to the South, one to Mindanao and another to the Bicol regions, during which Quirino, as usual, took along a big delegation, mostly newspapermen to accompany him, were made and the Government spent a good amount of money, because the President had to charter a luxury liner for such a big delegation. During late Pres. Quezon's time, and during the President's inspection trips to the South he never wanted so many people with his party, and he never chartered a luxury liner. The Government had six Coast Guard Cutters, aside from the Presidential yacht "Casiana". We have still these boats now, but the thrifty Ilocano would not have anything to do with cheap vessels. Besides, on another purpose, by chartering a luxury liner which is owned by a friend in the Senate is helping this friend boost his shipping business. The liner

now is advertised as "The President's Choice."

Nepotism is rampant in the present Quirino government. His brother, Judge Antonio Quirino was made the purchaser of an inferior quality of Russian cement for the Cebu Portland Cement Co. A relative, a priest (Rev. Osmundo Calip) was sent to Hawaii, at Government expense (the Gov't. spent P1,398.00 for the air passage of the priest), the purpose of which was only to extend spiritual assistance to Filipino laborers in Hawaii, mostly Ilocanos; as if Hawaii Filipinos are short of priests among them. An Ilocano is appointed to head the Bureau of Library. Prospero Sanidad, who is not an engineer is the

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big boss of all district engineers in the country—he is the Secretary of Public Works and Communications; and he is an Ilocano.

Then there is the now famous P5,000-bed, purchases of costly furnitures for his daughter and his son. If the President spent his own money for his children, it's alright. But it's the people's money that he is spending for his family. Our past Presidents never did this. More abuses were made when Pres. Quirino issued diplomatic passports to his friends and relatives, mostly women, who allegedly smuggled diamonds into the country, thus depriving the Government of a substantial revenue from these luxuries. So terrible was Quirino's government has been that the Congress of the Philippines was compelled to do what this august body never did before, to the country's three Presidents: Quezon, Osmeña, Roxas. Quirino is the first in the rank of Philippine Presidents to have been **IMPEACHED**. It took the Philippines only 14 years what the United States of America "accomplished" in 89 years. Since the American Republic in 1776, only one impeachment case against its President was registered — and that was Pres. Andrew Jackson in 1865. In both impeachment cases however, conviction never materialized but it is enough that such a move was made by the country's law-making body that found its own President guilty of abuses of all kinds.

#### THE NACIONALISTAS MADE A MISTAKE

As stated earlier in this article, President Quirino wanted the split of his own Liberal Party. Without the split he could not continue in office, because he would lose to Avelino in the nomination. If they had teamed up, say Quirino for President and Avelino for Vice-President, the Liberal Party is indeed impregnable. Quirino would be placed in an embarrassing position when he loses in the Convention. His choice was

either to retire from his office after his term expires, thus giving way for Avelino; or fight it out with Avelino but not through any Convention—but on some tactics. He chose the later. The result now is, the split. Quirino wanted this split.

The Nacionalistas, too, wanted the split of the Liberal Party. Naturally, when its own house is intact it is always a pleasure to see the other house across the street divided. The seemingly impregnable position of the Liberal Party was the Opposition's big problem. The split of the Liberal Party became a blessing to the Nacionalistas. As a matter of fact the Opposition helped a great deal to cause the split. Why not? If the Nacionalista did not join with the Quirino Liberals, Avelino would not have been out; and hence, no split. That there is a split now, the Nacionalistas have better chances of winning in this election. The Nacionalistas made a mistake in accepting the invitation of a **LIBERAL PRESIDENT** to oust Avelino, another Liberal. Since its defeat to Roxas's Liberal Party in 1946, the Nacionalistas have been trying the slow hard way to regain power. It has made wonderful progress, because in the 1947 elections a Nacionalista Senator and Congressmen were elected. But since the Opposition's connivance with a faction of the enemy Party just to defeat the other faction, this Nacionalista Party is also **GUILTY**. However, I could not blame the Nacionalistas much. It wanted power which it had missed for so long, and here was the chance to get that power. The infamous entente cordial between the Quirinistas and the Nacionalistas made some Opposition men become chairmen of key Committees in the Senate, and other powerful positions. It made them obtain good slices of the porkbarrel. It made one of its member, as already mentioned above, acting Senate President. A quick rise to power indeed, rather than the honorable



Before the split — Avelino, Quirino and Perez.

hard way.

Side by side with the Opposition's guilt in helping effect Quirino's persecution of a fellow Liberal, there is the Nacionalista's candidate for the Presidency, Dr. Jose P. Laurel, who remains a controversial figure. Personally, I believe that collaboration as an issue is already dead when Roxas was elected in 1946, and Camilo Osias was elected Senator in 1947. As a matter of fact, I hold my opinion that Laurel did his best to serve his country during those dark days. Whoever was in Laurel's shoes during the occupation would probably have done what Laurel did. Laurel's role to help the people during the Occupation, however, did not do the people any good. As an Administrator Laurel failed. He did not prevent the Japs from killing and torturing innocent persons; he did not protest when the Japanese confiscated Philippine Currency Notes and put into circulation the Jap Military Notes without funds; he did not protest when the Japs commandeered trucks, horses, and other personal properties of Filipino individuals; he permitted the Japs to monopolize all the rice supply away from the Filipino producers. There is an argument that Laurel under those circumstances could not have done otherwise. Then why

was he there in the Jap-sponsored Philippine Republic, was he to help his people? or the Japanese? If he truly served the best interest of the people, he should have complained and protested against injustices done by the Japanese. If such protests were not heeded, then Laurel should have done the next best thing: resign from his position under the Japs, and went to the mountains to join the guerrillas — then, he would have better served his people. Laurel never resigned; he never even complained. As the leader of a people, therefore, Laurel is not capable; as an administrator, he is a failure.

Furthermore, Laurel's name will always be synonymous with collaboration; his name always stinks with all the ills of the past. He is hated by those who fought the Japs. Those demonstrations to him at Cebu City and in Camarines prove that Laurel never had the people's confidence in him. Laurel belongs to the past. He has had his chance already and he did not play his role well. Definitely, he is a has-been in the Philippine politics. Besides, the Filipino people would not have anything to do with Laurel's so-called "secret formula". What the country needs today is a genuine, constructive, and open (and not secret) formula of government administration.