

# **SPEECH OF THE HONORABLE JOSE YULO DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUND- ING OF THE COLLEGE OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES**

Nothing can be more thrilling than the first sight of home upon one's return after so many years of absence. It is then that precious memories crowd to one's mind, and uncontrolled emotions, mixed with the feeling of joy and thanksgiving so overwhelm the spirit that the returning traveller for some moments, at least, even loses the power of speech. This is exactly what is happening to me now. It is in anticipation of this eventuality that I have decided to scribble a few thoughts for this auspicious occasion—the commencement of our celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the College of Law, University of the Philippines.

Forty years are but a fleeting moment in the life of an institution. But forty years constitute a pretty long time in the life of man, and being one of those privileged persons who enrolled in this great College when it first opened its doors in 1911, I need not tell you how happy I am to have lived through all the forty years and to have watched and felt the record of achievement of its graduates, and still be able to join you in the celebration of that memorable event.

To reminisce a little, we were some 130 odd students who enrolled at the beginning of the school year 1911-1912, upon the opening of the College in a modest residential building at the corner of Isaac Peral and Nebraska in Ermita. I can still recall how, on a sunny afternoon in July, 1911, all of us, 130 odd students, gathered for the first time in the ground floor of that building to receive our first baptism of legal knowledge from the hands of a young assistant attorney in the Office of the Attorney General, who later became Secretary and then Dean of the College, and Mentor of most of its early graduates,—dear and unforgettable George C. Malcolm, than whom no other single individual could claim greater contribution to the setting of the exceptionally high standard of instruction which to this day distinguishes our College from other similar institutions. The class was a motley crowd of young people coming from different high schools and colleges, with but one lady student whom I think you all know. From that group emerged two graduating classes, the Class of 1914, which took the three-year course, and the regular Class of 1915. Another group of some twenty odd students coming from the YMCA Law School also enrolled in that year, and this group later became the first graduating class of the College of Law in 1913. Thus began the activities of our Alma Mater—with student material including a large sprinkling of working students, and with professors composed almost entirely of law lecturers drawn from the best legal minds then available—justices of the Supreme Court, judges, legal officers and outstanding practitioners.

When one reaches a milestone in his life history, it is customary that he should take stock of what he has accomplished in the past, and then make a careful revision of the plans that he should follow for the future. In the case of the College of Law, University of the Philippines, it may be asked, what has it accomplished during the last forty years of its existence? As a part of the State University and mainly supported by public funds, has it served the purpose of its creation, has it accomplished the mission entrusted to it? And what of the future? In the face of the challenging times, what course, what guiding principles should it adopt in order to fulfill its duty to the people?

If the maintenance of a high standard of instruction were the only criterion of success, then there is incontrovertible evidence that the College of Law has fully succeeded in accomplishing its aims and purposes. The records of the Supreme Court constitute the best proof that this College has been consistently turning out, year after year, a set of graduates properly prepared to face the final test for admission as qualified members of the Bar. The real criterion of success, however, is not the record of the graduates as they step out of the portals of an institution of learning. It is in the field of the actual application of the learning that its graduates had imbibed in their college days that prove the real worth of such institution. Judged by these standards, the College of Law, University of the Philippines, should lead all others of its kind.

If the People of the Philippines today instituted a case against the College of Law for an accounting of its trusteeship in the preparation of men and women not only for the exercise of the legal profession, but also for leadership in public affairs, the evidence would be overwhelmingly conclusive of the efficient and successful management of that trusteeship. Exhibit "A" would be the quality of the graduates that it has produced during all these years, the long roll of graduates that it can offer who have distinguished themselves in outstanding public service to the country and to the body politic. The record will disclose for instance, that since it turned out its first graduates in 1913, the College has produced more chief executives of the nation than any other institution of learning in this country: one President of the Commonwealth, two Chief Executives during the dark days of the occupation, and two Presidents of the Republic since its inauguration. For the Legislative Department, the College has produced three Speakers (one, while the legislature was unicameral) one Senate President, and countless legislative leaders and outstanding legislators who have, from time to time, graced the Halls of Congress. In the judiciary, graduates of this institution now constitutes an absolute majority in the highest court of the land—there are exactly seven out of eleven justices of the Supreme Court—who are graduates of this College. Besides, we have also the Secretary of Justice, five members of the Court of Appeals, a large number of judges scattered all over the country, legal officers from the highest to the lowest ranks, outstanding law practitioners, professors of law, educators, social workers, and even successful farmers, businessmen and industrialists. And to top it all, this institution itself is now, and for a good many years past has been, under

the leadership of one of its first graduates, as its Dean, while a few others have made and are making no little contribution in the framing of the policies of the Mother Institution as members of its Board of Regents. Well may we say therefore, and with just pride, that the influence of this college is felt in no small measure, in the high councils of this government, through the participation of its graduates in the actual direction of the affairs of Government in all its branches.

The role of this College in our national life, however, must of necessity project itself much further into the future, for at this moment, we are at the cross-roads of our history as an independent and free-loving nation. We are living amidst the storm and stress of a troubled world. Hardly have we emerged from the havoc and destruction of the last war when we find ourselves again faced with the imminent danger of another world holocaust, brought about by conflicting ideologies struggling for world supremacy, which the joint efforts of all the peace-loving nations appear to be powerless to prevent.

Within our own borders, we feel the rising tide of this ideological movement ever threatening to destroy and to deprive us of our cherished institutions, the freedom and the democratic way of life which we have attained only through the very blood and the countless sacrifices of our people. And the movement is going on over yonder hills and in nearby plains, where our brothers are being lured by the glowing promises of an ideology whose failure is skillfully hidden behind the protecting folds of the iron curtain. There they are fed with false hopes of a promised world, which unfortunately, democracy, beset as it is with the harassing problems constantly thrown against it by its enemies, in spite of its good intentions, has as yet been unable to fully insure to the common man.

I dare say that there is no group of men and women better qualified to help and assist strengthen the principles of Democracy in this country and in preserving our way of life for the nation, than the graduates of this College and you who are still under the guiding influence of this, our beloved institution. For it is the men trained in the solid principles of law and justice that can fully comprehend the advantages of a democratic form of government, where the people do really rule, and where the sanctity of life, of liberty, and of property is the underlying essence of its very existence. It is for you, therefore, to lead in the crusade for the defense of democracy against the increasing surge of subversive doctrines now threatening to undermine the faith of our people in their government.

We have heard time and again proclaimed by our constituted authorities that our main problem today is the maintenance of peace and order—the peace and tranquility that can enhance the growth of a social structure which would guarantee to every man, woman, and child, however lowly their station in life, equal opportunity to earn their just share in the wealth of the land. To restore and keep such peace and tranquility, the forces of the government are now waging a relentless campaign against lawless elements who have become unwitting instruments of the enemies of freedom and demo-

cracy. While there is every indication that such campaign will ultimately, and soon, I hope, restore normalcy throughout our farms and countrysides, we must not forget that one cannot entirely wipe out the effect, without uprooting its cause. It is essential therefore that we restore the faith of our people in their government by removing the causes that have rendered many a peaceful and God-fearing community a fertile field for the propagation of doctrines inimical to our freedom and our cherished institutions.

To do this, it is to the common man that our efforts should be directed for it is he who can save this country from falling prey to the clutches of communism. To save him from insidious propaganda, his faith in the goodness of his fellowman should be restored. "Live and let live" should be given a fuller meaning by actual deeds, not by mere lip service,—and immediately. Reforms in the social structure must be initiated as promptly as possible with a view to affording equal opportunity to all people to follow some gainful occupation that could render to every workingman security of earning a decent livelihood for himself and his loved ones. Happiness and contentment are the only antidotes to lawlessness and desperate attempts against constituted authority. We should have learned by now that the privileged few who are enjoying the fat of the land cannot be secure in their possessions unless there is peace and contentment among the masses.

The productive resources of the nation should therefore be harnessed to the fullest extent, if we wish our country to meet this challenge of the times. I know our government is doing its utmost to meet this challenge, under the heaviest odds that can be imagined. Every ounce of its energy is being directed to the early realization of this objective. But alone, it will be powerless. It needs the decided support and united cooperation of all elements of the population in order to succeed. All of us must rally as one man to the side of our government, and only then may it accomplish the superhuman task of preserving democracy and all that it means, for our people and our posterity. I trust the College of Law and its loyal alumni and students will not fail the nation in this respect.