



LIFE AND WORKS OF *Rizal*

GEED 10013



POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
College of Social Sciences and Development
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY



**INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR
GEED 10013: Life and Works of Rizal**

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COURSE OVERVIEW

GEED 10013: LIFE AND WORKS OF RIZAL

As mandated by Republic Act 1425, this course covers the lives and works of our heroes who lived and died for the ideals of freedom and nationalism. A major focus of discussion would be Jose Rizal's life, works, and ideas particularly his *Noli me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, and his political essays. This course seeks to develop a sense of moral character, personal discipline, civic consciousness, and duties of citizenship in the Filipino youth.

Due to the challenges of the COVID-19 Crisis, faculty members of the Department of History of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines have been tasked with developing modules to be disseminated to students who do not have a stable internet connection and/or lack the necessary tools to facilitate online learning. Using this modular approach, the faculty member designated to teach this course will provide the reading materials that students need to examine, understand, and evaluate. As discussions were already limited, questions were asked at the end of each lesson to guide the students to learning.

This module is divided into five (5) units with a total of twelve (12) lessons. It uses a different set of reference materials as compared to what was indicated in the course syllabus. The reason for this is that the course instructor considered the difficulty that the students could encounter in accessing these materials online and in public libraries.

For Unit 1, it will give a better understanding of the RA 1425 and explain the major issues surrounding the bill and its passage into law, and reflect on the impact and relevance of its legislation throughout history. In Unit 2, the students will have the opportunity to distinguish the importance of concept such as Nation, Heroes, and Nationalism by studying the lives and ideas of selected Filipino heroes. On Unit 3, it will expound on the following economic, political, and social events of the 19th century: opening of the Suez Canal, opening of ports to world trade, rise of the export crop economy and monopolies, rise of the Chinese mestizo and the Inquilinos, liberalism, the Cadiz Constitution, and the history of friar estates in the Philippines. While Unit 4, it focuses on the family background of Jose Rizal, his life and experiences as a young boy and as a student. And lastly, Unit 5 shall examine the major writings of Rizal as a contributing factor in the process of transforming him from a propagandist to a radical. As the previous unit dealt with his life story, this unit will cover the ideals and principles of Rizal as extracted from his writings.

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COURSE OUTCOMES

GEED 10013: LIFE AND WORKS OF RIZAL

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Discuss Jose Rizal's life within the context of the 19th century Philippines in relation to international events.
2. Understand the context that produced Rizal and other nationalists.
3. Analyze Rizal's various works, particularly the novels *Noli me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*.
4. Organize Rizal's ideas into various themes.
5. Demonstrate a critical reading of primary sources from various personages relevant to the formation of nationalism.
6. Interpret the values that can be derived from studying Rizal and other nationalists' life and works.
7. Display an appreciation for education and love of country.



I INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

GEED 10013: LIFE AND WORKS OF RIZAL

Note: Please do not write anything unnecessary on these instructional materials. Use a clean sheet of bond paper in answering your activity/assessment either in a type-written or hand-written format (please see the appendices for the sample template). When doing a hand-written work, make sure that your penmanship is ***legible***.

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UNDERSTANDING THE RIZAL LAW

Overview

Filipino students may be wondering about why they are still obliged to study the life and works of Jose Rizal as part of their college degree, despite having studied the life and writings of our national hero in their basic education. Some of them may see it as the repetition of the discussions they have had and doing it again would just be a waste of time and effort. It is therefore a great surprise for them that, upon entering college, they will be mandated by a law to study the life and works of Jose Rizal without any idea on the legislative processes this law underwent so that a course on the heroes life and works would be incorporated into the Philippine educational system.

On June 12, 1956, President Ramon Magsaysay signed the bills proposed by Senators Claro M. Recto and Congressman Jacobo Gonzales. The act of President Magsaysay converted the bills into a law known as Republic Act 1425 or the Rizal Law. It entrusted the teaching of the life, works and writings of Jose P. Rizal, in particular his *Noli me Tangere* (*Noli*) and *El Filibusterismo* (*Filli*) in the secondary and college levels. This law hoped that the teaching of Rizal's life would strengthen the students' nationalism, patriotism and their sense of appreciation to the role of national heroes in the historical development of the country. The process through which this measure was tackled in both houses of Congress was not easy as the Catholic Church and other groups opposed the bills. Thus, in order to fully appreciate and understand this law, it is necessary to study the reasons why there was a necessity of it and the context through which it was discussed in Congress.

LESSON 1

Republic Act 1425

Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson the student should be able to:

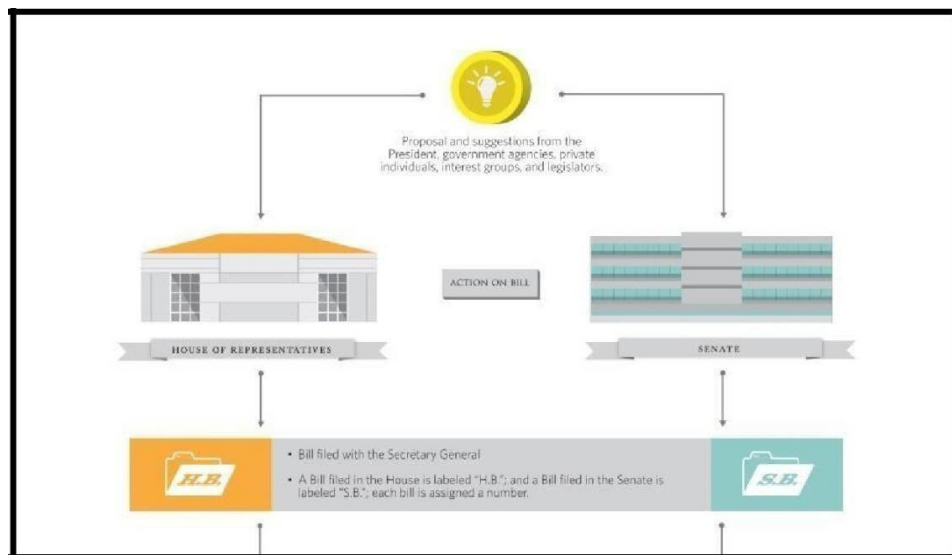
- Understand the compelling reasons why RA 1425 was enacted into law;
- Examine the differing points-of-view of the pros and the antis, including the Catholic Church in the passage of RA 1425; and
- Evaluate whether RA 1425 was able to achieve the purposes of its enactment some at 60 years later.

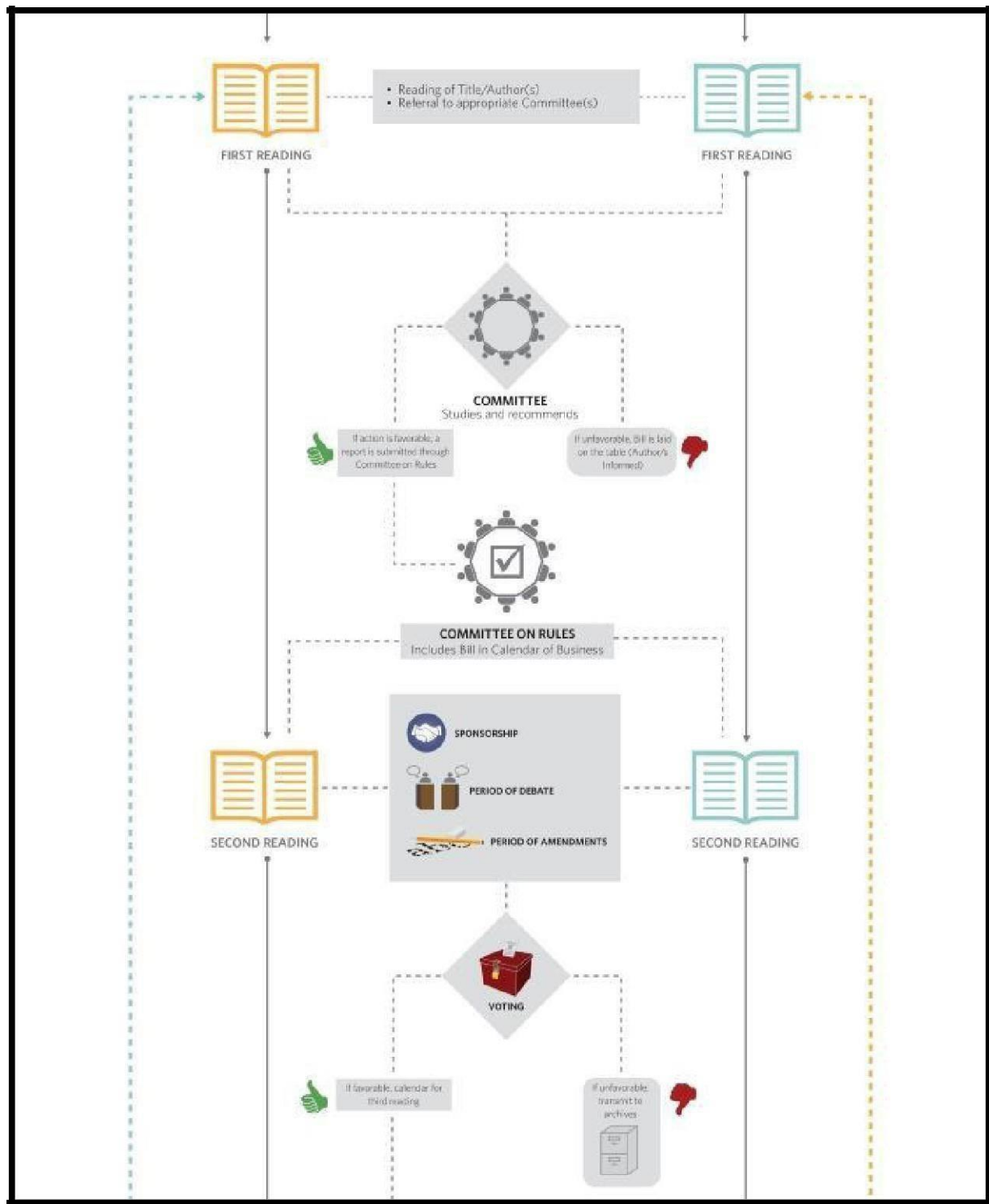
Course Materials

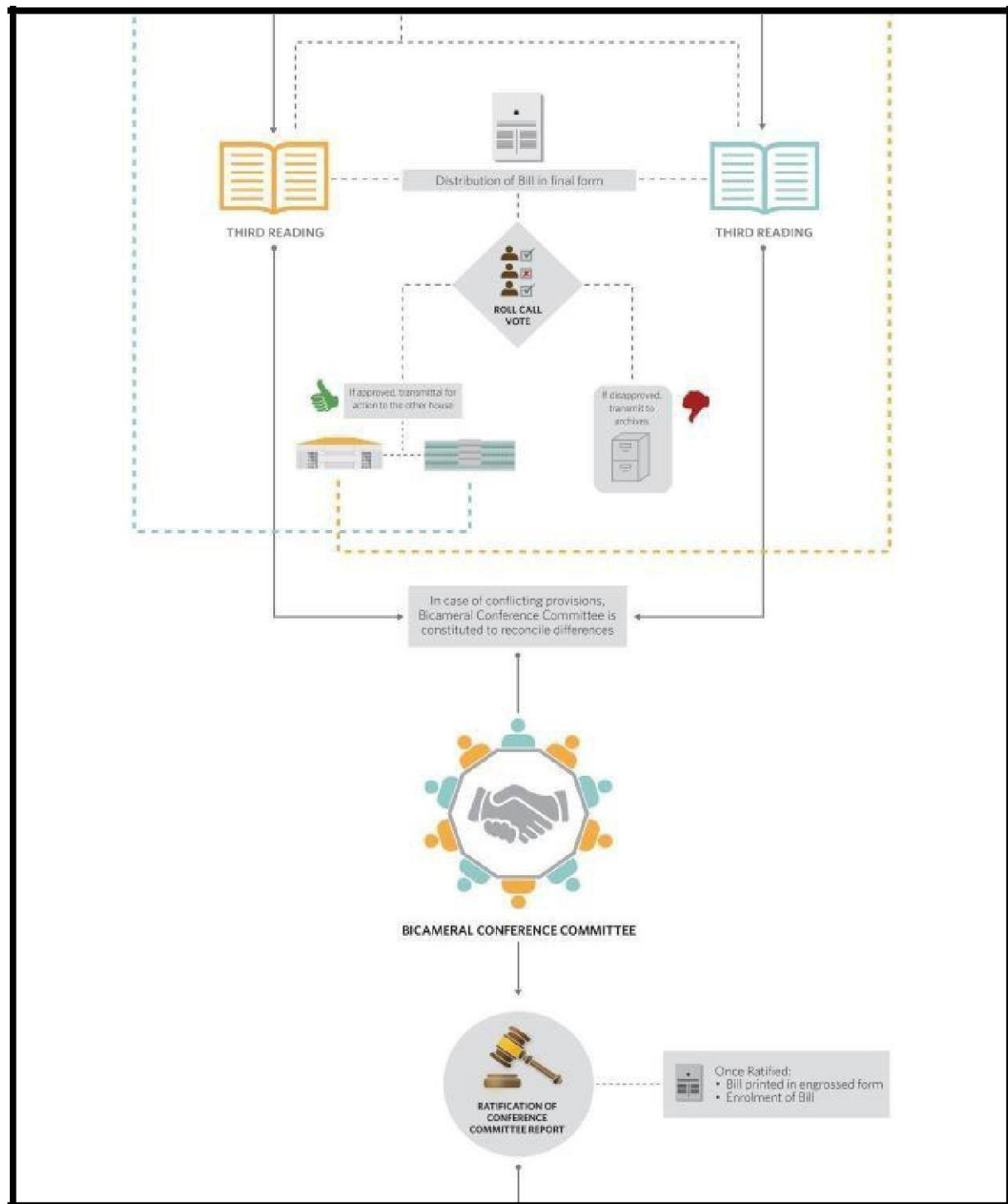
The educated nationalists like Jose P. Laurel and Claro M. Recto wanted that nationalism and patriotism would flourish among the youth. Thus, they envisioned to educate them about the ideals of Jose Rizal so that the future generations would be able to independently stand and govern the country, away from foreign impact. Thus, the idea to teach the unexpurgated versions of Rizal's novels—*Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*—which were considered as “constant and inspiring sources of nationalism”.

The two statesmen, including Congressmen Jesus Parades and Arturo Tolentino, believed in rekindling the kind of life that Rizal led and the visions he had for his country among the youth. This is because the youth shall serve as the leaders of the future generations. And as leaders of the future generations, they shall lead the country to its destiny. The lawmakers firmly believed that the aspirations of Rizal for his country are relevant across allepochs.

This discussion on this lesson was adopted from the PowerPoint presentation of Mc Donald Domingo M. Pascual titled *RA 1425*. It is the humble hope of the discussion to present the process through which the Rizal Law was debated before its enactment into law so that the study of the course would be more meaningful to the students.







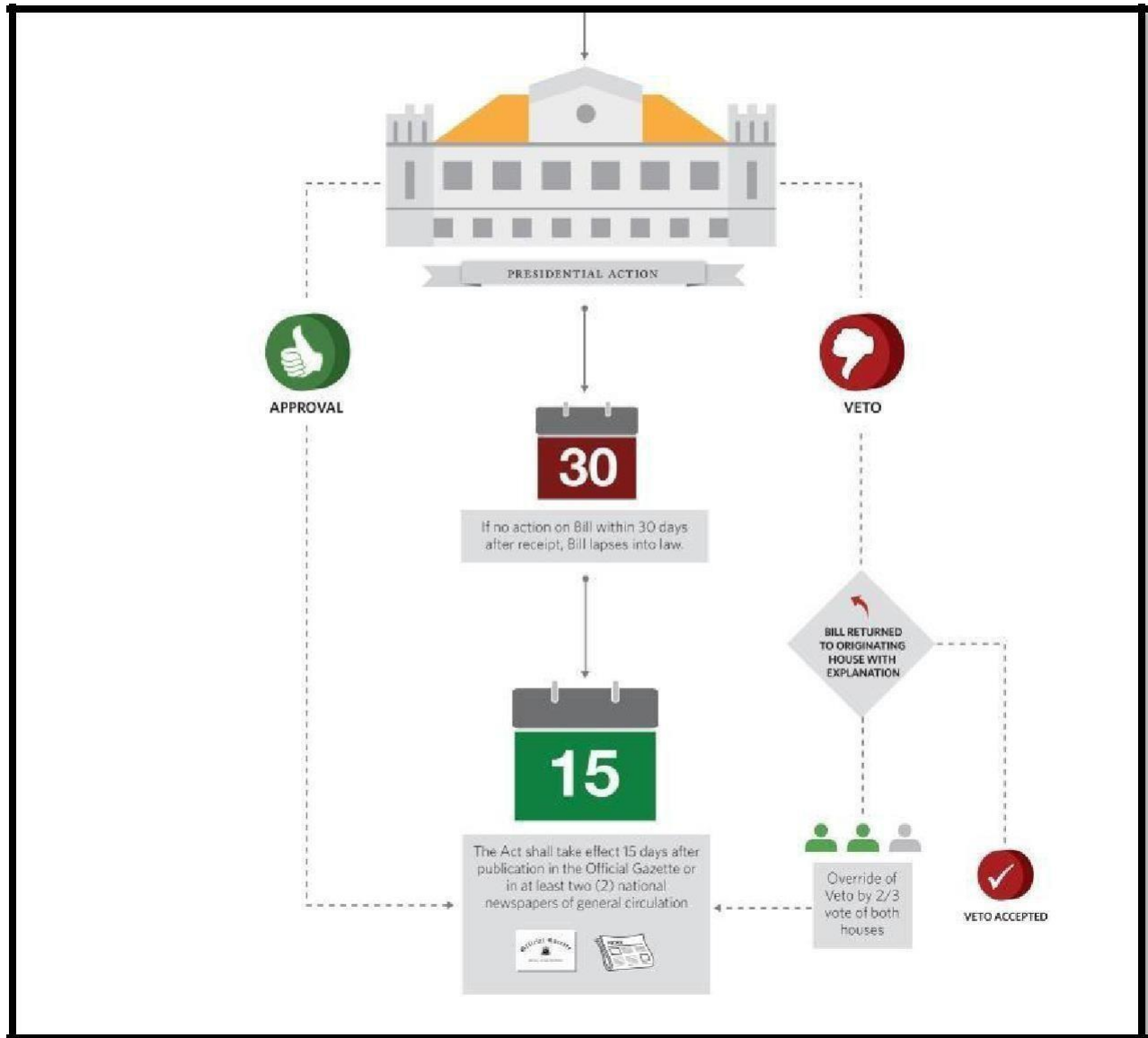


Figure 1: The diagram of the legislative process from: “The Legislative Branch”. The Official Gazette, <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/about/gov/the-legislative-branch/>.

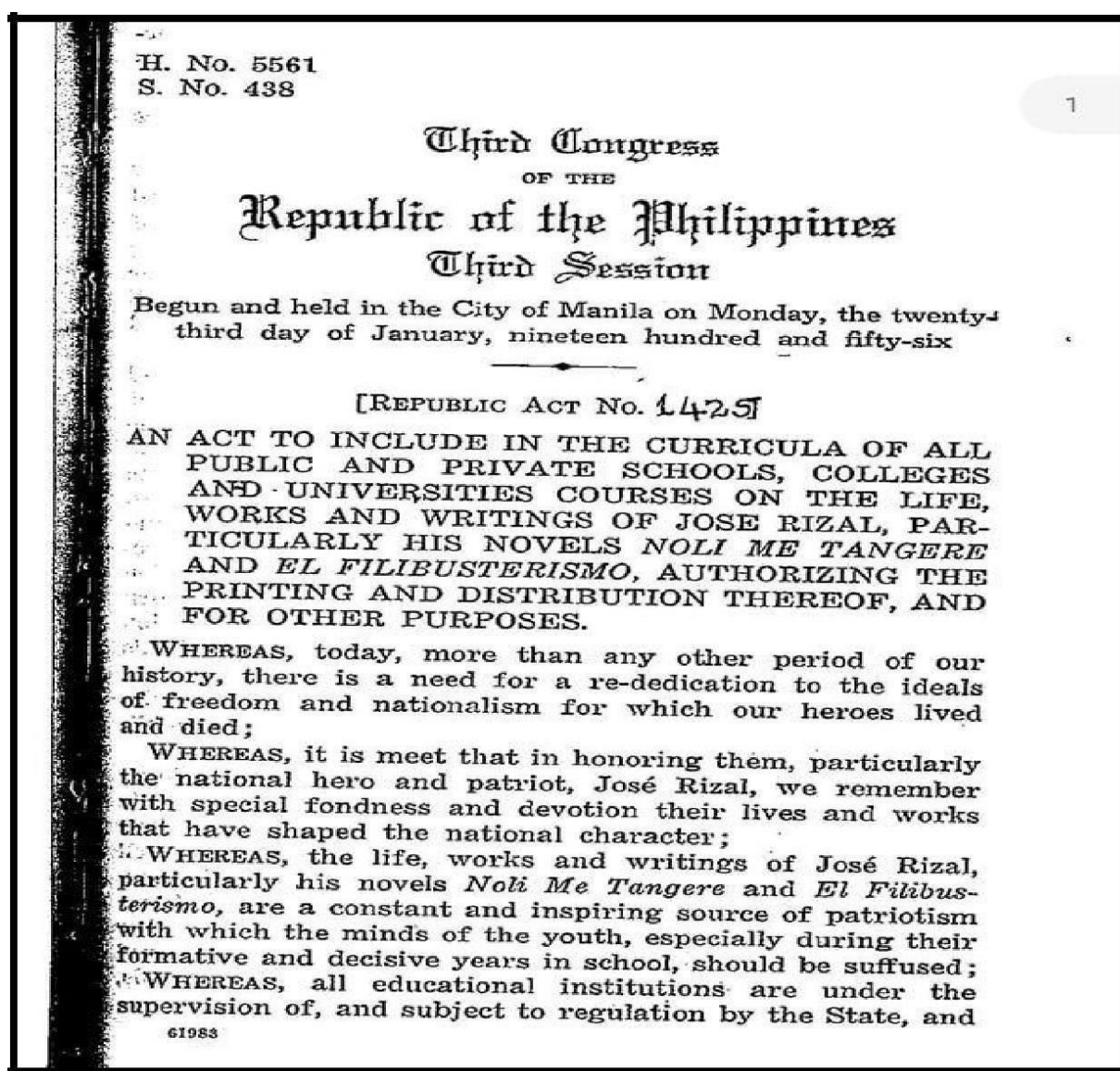
The Controversies Created by the Rizal Bills

According to Sen. Claro M. Recto, the author of the original version of Senate Bill No. 438, the study of the great works of our foremost national hero is an inherent love for the country. He said that the reading of Rizal’s novels would strengthen the Filipinism of the youth and foster patriotism. With this purpose, he pushed for the compulsory study of the life, works and writings of Jose Rizal among the students of schools, colleges and universities, public or private.

On April 17, 1956, Senator Jose P. Laurel, the sponsor of the bill, tackled SB 438 with the title *An Act to Make Noli Me Tangere and El Filibusterismo Compulsory Reading Matters in All Public and Private Schools, Colleges and Universities and for Other Purposes*. As the chairman of the Senate Committee on Education, Senator Laurel expressed his reverence to Rizal through the following words: “*The hero’s [Rizal] greatness lies not only in his intense patriotism, exemplary conduct and behavior as a Filipino, the courage of his conviction and the utter disregard of the*

dangers to his life during those hectic days when he was preaching the gospel truth of justice, Filipinism, not only in his great acts but also in his great thoughts and ideas which were expressed and spread over in practically all pages of his novels" (quoted from Rosales, Sinag Vol. 1).

He firmly believed that the greatness of Rizal, as well as his intense love for his country and people, could only be fully appreciated by the Filipinos if they would have adequate knowledge about his sufferings and injustices. Rizal's writings would open the minds of the Filipinos to the ruthless effects of colonization. And, by exposing the Filipino youth to the ideas of Rizal, they would be able to learn how to live the Rizal way that is characterized by strong love for country and strong desire to build a great nation. The Filipino youth must consider it as a sacred duty to study the great dreams and aspirations of Rizal for his country. The teaching and reading of the novels of Rizal should be made into a law so that, through their knowledge and understanding of the hero's works, they would acquire a light that would guide them when the country would experience another period of peril or darkness.



all schools are enjoined to develop moral character, personal discipline, civic conscience and to teach the duties of citizenship; Now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Courses on the life, works and writings of José Rizal, particularly his novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, shall be included in the curricula of all schools, colleges and universities, public or private; *Provided*, That in the collegiate courses, the original or unexpurgated editions of the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* or their English translation shall be used as basic texts.

The Board of National Education is hereby authorized and directed to adopt forthwith measures to implement and carry out the provisions of this Section, including the writing and printing of appropriate primers, readers and textbooks. The Board shall, within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act promulgate rules and regulations, including those of a disciplinary nature, to carry out and enforce the provisions of this Act. The Board shall promulgate rules and regulations providing for the exemption of students for reasons of religious belief stated in a sworn written statement, from the requirement of the provision contained in the second part of the first paragraph of this section; but not from taking the course provided for in the first part of said paragraph. Said rules and regulations shall take effect thirty (30) days after their publication in the *Official Gazette*.

SEC. 2. It shall be obligatory on all schools, colleges and universities to keep in their libraries an adequate number of copies of the original and unexpurgated editions of the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, as well as of Rizal's other works and biography. The said unexpurgated editions of the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* or their translations in English as well as other writings of Rizal shall be included in the list of approved books for required reading in all public or private schools, colleges and universities.

The Board of National Education shall determine the adequacy of the number of books, depending upon the enrollment of the school, college or university.

SEC. 3. The Board of National Education shall cause the translation of the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, as well as other writings of José Rizal into English, Tagalog and the principal Philippine dialects; cause them to be printed in cheap, popular editions; and cause them to be distributed, free of charge, to persons desiring to read them, through the Purok organizations and Barrio Councils throughout the country.

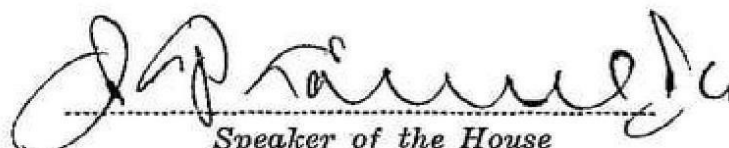
SEC. 4. Nothing in this Act shall be construed as amending or repealing section nine hundred twenty-seven of the Administrative Code, prohibiting the discussion of religious doctrines by public school teachers and other persons engaged in any public school.

SEC. 5. The sum of three hundred thousand pesos is hereby authorized to be appropriated out of any fund not otherwise appropriated in the National Treasury to carry out the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,


President of the Senate


Speaker of the House
of Representatives

61883

Figure 2: A reproduced copy of RA 1425 from: "Republic Act No. 1425." Official Gazette, <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/1956/06jun/19560612-RA-1425-RM.pdf>

Reactions to the Passage of the Rizal Bills

Soon, the bills became controversial. The Catholic Church began to express its vigorous objection on the passage of a law that would make Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* as compulsory reading matters in all schools, colleges and universities in the Philippines. The Church alleged, in a pastoral letter, that the novels of Rizal do not promote nationalism but more of criticism against it. It further alleged in that letter the presence of 170 passages from the *Noli* and 50 passages from the *Fili* which intend to diminish its good image.

The Catholic Church strongly opposed due to the following reasons: (1) show open criticism to the Catholic Church; (2) in the "compulsory" teaching of the unexpurgated versions of Rizal's *Noli* and *El Fili*, a teacher would have the tendency to discuss—or worse, to criticize—certain Church doctrines; and, (3) the inevitable criticism of Church doctrines might lead to the jeopardy of the faith of people.

The Catholic Action of Manila (CAM) was one of the principal organizations that initiated campaigns against the bills. Its two attempts were to release articles of resistance daily, instead of weekly, through the *Sentinel*, its official organ, and to convince the Catholics to write the senators and the congressmen to junk the bills. Fr. Jesus Cavanna, a speaker on the symposium organized by CAM, lambasted Rizal's novels by saying that the *Noli* and *Fili* "...belong to the past and it would be harmful to read them because they presented a false picture of conditions in the country at that time. *Noli Me Tangere* is an attack on the clergy and its object was to put to ridicule the Catholic faith. The novel was not really patriotic because out of 333 pages, only 25 contained patriotic passages while 120 were devoted to anti-Catholic attack" (quoted from Rosales, Sinag Vol. 1).

On the otherhand, the Catholic Church, though, honored Rizal with these words: "Among the many illustrious Filipinos who have distinguished themselves in the service of their country, the highest place of honor belongs to Rizal. And justly so, for Rizal possessed to an eminent degree those virtues which together make up true patriotism." In its pastoral letter dated April 21, 1956, the Catholic Church paid homage to Rizal's greatness by stating that "*Rizal loved his country not in words alone but in his deeds. He devoted his time, his energies and the resources of his brilliant mind to dispelling the ignorance and apathy of his people and combating the injustices and inequalities under which they labored. When his salutatory activities fell under the suspicion of the colonial government and he was condemned to death as a rebel, he generously offered his blood for the welfare of his country*" (quoted from Rosales, Sinag Vol. 1)

From the Rizal Bills to the Rizal Law

As the meddling of the Church was felt by the lawmakers, the members of the Senate and the House of the Representatives started to engage in heated discussions. It became an extremely controversial issue that it resulted to the misunderstanding and quarrel of those who were overwhelmed by their emotions.

One of those who strongly opposed the SB 438 was Senator Francisco "Soc" Rodrigo who claimed that the reading of the unexpurgated versions of Rizal's novels as against the conscience of the Catholics. He believed that nationalism and patriotism are important and must be promoted, yet promoting them should not be done at the risk of endangering the harmony between the Church and the state. Senator Rodrigo viewed the measures as unjust and unwise because of the use of compulsion that might put the Church in an awkward situation since religious issues have always been considered as "sophisticated matters". In his vehement opposition against S.B.

No. 438, Senator Rodrigo told, “...*I cannot allow my son who is now 16 to read the Noli Me Tangere and El Filibusterismo lest he lose his faith.*”

Another senator who expressed his opposition to the passage of the bill was Senator Decoroso Rosales. He believed that approval of the bills would lead to the closure of Catholic schools all throughout the country, and a political party might be inevitably put up by the Catholics to show their strong resentment to the law.

Defense for Senate Bill 438

Sen. Claro M. Recto, the author of the original version, averred that Catholic schools would never close since they are the sources of the Church's income, as well as its religious and political powers. And if a political party would be set up, it would be divided into two—the political party to be headed by either Sen. Rodrigo or Sen. Rosales and the party to be composed of Filipino Catholics who do not only believe in God and serve Him but also possess a strong love for their country and believe in serving her.

The debates on the Rizal bill also ensued in the House of the Representatives. House Bill No. 5561, the identical version of SB No. 438, was filed by Representative Jacobo Gonzales of the First District of Laguna. In his sponsorship speech, Congressman Gonzales said, “*The bill merely declares Jose Rizal's Noli Me Tangere and El Filibusterismo, in their original edition or in their unexpurgated English and national language versions as compulsory reading matters in all public and private schools, colleges and universities. The bill selects the writings of Rizal because he is the greatest of our national heroes, the staunchest apostle of nationalism, the greatest man the Malayan race has ever produced and a universal genius and hero of humanity. We have chosen the Noli and the Fili for in their pages we see our lives as before a mirror—our defects as well as our strengths, our virtues as well as our vices. Knowing these, our consciousness as a people is stirred and we learn to prepare ourselves for painful sacrifices that ultimately lead to self-reliance, self-respect and freedom. The Noli and Fili mirror Philippine life, true today as it was during the time of Rizal, only the dates and names have changed*” (quoted from Rosales, Sinag Vol. 1).

Meanwhile, Radio Commentator and Former Cong. Jesus Paredes (of Abra) expressed opposition to the manner through which the objectives of the bills would be attained. He said that “*the bill [HB 5561] would violate of [sic] Section 927 of the Revised Administrative Code.*” He likewise stated “*that [the] Catholics had the right to refuse to read them as it would ‘endanger their salvation.’*”

Amendments of the Bills

To resolve the issues, amendments of the bills were respectively proposed in both houses of Congress. Senator Jose P. Laurel penned the amended version of SB 438. His version was thus entitled, *An Act to Include in the Curricula of All Public and Private Schools, Colleges and Universities Courses on the Life, Works and Writings of Rizal Particularly His Novels No li Me Tangere and El Filibusterismo, Authorizing the Printing and Distribution Thereof, and for Other Purposes*. In the House of Representatives, the amended version was authored by Congressman Arturo Tolentino. He appealed to his colleagues with the following statements: “*I appeal to the members of this House, both those who spoke in favor of the Gonzales bill as originally worded and those who spoke against the bill to agree to reason, to give something of their original contention, so that we may meet in the middle ground, not for our own sake, not for the pride of having won in the halls of this Congress but for the sake of our people who must remain united,*

for the leaders of the people must not think of their own personal victory or glory but of the unity of the people whom they represent. There can be no true nationalism when the people are divided. It is incumbent upon the leaders of the people to preserve unity among the people, for nationalism flowers... in the hearts of the people.... I appeal to you. Let us vote unanimously... as an example to our people. I have every reason to believe that the people listening to us all over the country will unite as we do when we vote as one in this bill. Let us not think of which side will win; let us just think that with this bill, the Filipino people will win because they will continue to remain whole and cohesive. Within these walls, this substitute bill represents the victory of reason and wisdom; outside these halls, it means the triumph of a united Filipino people” (quoted from Rosales, Sinag Vol. 1).

Provisions of the Amended Versions as Stipulated in the Official Gazette (pp. 1-3)

Deleted – Penalty to be imposed for any public or private school, college and university and the head and teachers of the school found guilty of violating, failing to comply with or circumventing the provision of the law.

Replaced with – Authorization for the appropriation of the amount of P300, 000.00 for the printing and distribution of the copies of the novels and other writings of Rizal in their English, Tagalog and principal dialect translations.

Added –Nothing in the Act shall be “construed as amending or repealing section nine hundred twenty-seven of the Administrative Code (Official Gazette,

Provided – The Board of National Education is hereby authorized and directed to adopt measures to implement and carry out the provisions of Section 1 of the Act, including the writing and printing of appropriate primers, readers and textbooks.

Many lawmakers still hoped that the amended versions would not pass but President Ramon Magsaysay, one of the presidents oftentimes opposed by Recto due to the former’s policies, signed them into law on June 12, 1956.

Assessment

Instruction: Discuss the item thoroughly. Write the question before each answer. Your answer should contain at least three (3) paragraphs of not less than four (4) sentences each. You may write your answers in Filipino. Do not forget to write your full name in the upper left corner of the paper and your course, year and section below it while the name of your professors should be indicated in the upper right.

1. Do you think that the passage of the Rizal bills into a law warranted the objectives that the sponsors conceived in 1956? Explain your answer.
2. Do you think that the objectives were attained thereafter and that their attainment resonated until the present? Expound your answer.

Note: Please do not write anything unnecessary on this instructional material. Use a clean sheet of bond paper when answering your activity/ assessment task either in a type-written or hand-written format (please see the appendices for sample template). When doing a hand-written work, make sure that your penmanship is **legible**.

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