

# The Filipino Broadcasters on Overseas Propaganda Radio in World War II

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The use of radio broadcasting for propaganda in the Second World War is well known. In the Philippines, the pre-war KZRH was taken over by the invading Japanese forces, who changed its call letters to PIAM and used it to try to win the hearts and minds of Filipinos. Counter-propaganda was heard on the short-lived resistance stations Voice of Freedom and Voice of Juan dela Cruz as well as shortwave signals emanating from the US and other countries.

Also recorded in historical accounts is the work of some Filipinos who broadcast on PIAM, Voice of Freedom and Voice of Juan dela Cruz. Little is known, however, about the work of Filipinos in overseas propaganda radio stations, such as that of Carmen Ligaya on KGEI in San Francisco, California, who was the US's answer to Tokyo Rose; of at least seventeen others who also broadcast on KGEI; and of Norman Reyes on the Zero Hour on Radio Tokyo. Their experiences, previously under-examined, indicate the extent by which radio broadcasting has since been a tool for shaping public consciousness, particularly in wartime.

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Stories about the use of radio broadcasting for propaganda and intelligence gathering in both the First and Second World Wars are rather well known, as there are numerous historical accounts that document the role broadcasting played in both wars. While in its experimental stage of development as a medium of mass communication, radio was used by both the United States and Europe for coded military communication in World War I. As a propaganda channel, it is perhaps best remembered for President Woodrow Wilson's use of radio in appealing to the Germans to remove their Kaiser. It was heard throughout the United States and Europe, giving the United States a transoceanic voice and the image of an emerging world power (Barnouw, 1966).

Before World War II began in 1939, the technology of shortwave radio had already made possible the transmission of broadcast signals across continents. This made it an indispensable tool in the propaganda machinery of both the Allies and the Axis powers in fighting a global war. The Nazis acknowledged that the German revolution would not have been possible without the state-controlled radio and the airplane (German Propaganda Archive, n.d.). On the other hand,

while American commercial radio had been on shortwave since the 1930s, the American government joined the shortwave battle only in 1941, a few months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7. When the US finally brought shortwave radio into its arsenal of war weapons, it took over several stations throughout the country for the duration of the war (Barnouw, 1966).

Radio broadcasting, as well as other media, has since been a mainstay in propaganda programs around the world, whether in war or in peace, but particularly in war or situations of conflict, molding public opinion and mobilizing public responses in support of or in opposition to opposing parties. A historical study of how radio broadcasting was first used as propaganda tool in war may reveal some of the tactics that were employed then and even today.

## **WWII radio in the Philippines**

In the Philippines, several radio stations were heard on the air during the war, including those listened to clandestinely, and all were engaged in a propaganda battle. Realizing the inevitable march of the Japanese into Manila, General Douglas MacArthur, commander of the United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE), ordered on the final days of 1941 the destruction of major radio transmitters to prevent their use by enemy hands (Reyes, 1995). The portable radio equipment of pre-war KZRH was commandeered and brought to Corregidor where the USAFFE regrouped. Out of the KZRH equipment a makeshift radio station was built and went on the air on January 5, 1942. MacArthur christened the station the Voice of Freedom. Its job was to “propagate favorable news for the Allies and create anti-Japanese feelings and propaganda until such time as the American forces shall liberate us” (S. Cheng, private papers, n.d.). Unable to repel the aggressive advance of the Japanese, the combined Philippine-American resistance surrendered and the Voice of Freedom was silenced in early May 1942.

On the other hand, as soon as the Japanese forces entered Manila on January 2, 1942, their propaganda corps immediately worked to build a radio station, ironically also from remnants of the dismantled equipment of the pre-war KZRH. In less than two weeks, on January 14, they went on the air with programming that was markedly different from pre-war radio while keeping the call letters KZRH (Terami-Wada, 1984). Exactly a year and nine months later, they changed the call letters to PIAM, which stood for Philippine Islands A Manila. The Japanese-controlled station was on the air for almost three years (Ampil, 1986). It had relay stations outside the capital—the PIBC, which stood for Philippine Islands B Cebu, the PICD, for Philippine Islands C Davao, and the PIDI, for Philippine Islands D Iloilo (Broadcast Media Council [BMC], n.d.).

In the first several months of the occupation, radio signals other than those of the Voice of Freedom were heard by the people. KZRC in Cebu, which, unlike the stations in Manila, continued airing until the Japanese overran the province in May 1942, picked up and relayed the broadcast of the Voice of Freedom. In addition, its station manager, American Harry Fenton (Segura, 1975), went into lengthy denunciations of the Japanese on the air (Trent Smith, 2001).

The Voice of Juan dela Cruz went on the air about a week after Corregidor fell in early May 1942 (Hartendorp, 1967). It was a mobile station, constantly on the move to elude the Japanese, but its luck ran out in September 1942 and its broadcasters were executed by the Japanese (Alfonso, 1972). The Voice of Juan dela Cruz was picked up by KGEI in San Francisco, California, which acknowledged its anti-Japanese broadcast (“The Voice of Juan dela Cruz,” 1945).

KGEI was the station reportedly most listened to by Filipinos during the war. Broadcasting from the American west coast city of San Francisco on shortwave, it was owned by General Electric International but was taken over by the American government to use for counter-propaganda against the Japanese and the Axis powers (Enriquez, 2008). Other pro-Allies shortwave stations were secretly monitored in the Philippines, such as the BBC Radio, Radio Chungking and Radio New Delhi (Intelligence Reports, Regular Series, 1941-1945, n.d.; Records of the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service [FBIS], n.d.), but it was KGEI that was the most consistent source of alternative news for Filipinos at this time. Listening to KGEI or any shortwave station was forbidden by the Japanese and those caught were tortured or even executed (Philippine Reports, 1949-1950).

## **Filipinos in WWII radio**

Our memories of the Voice of Freedom include those of the announcers, namely Carlos P. Romulo, Leon Ma. Guerrero, Norman Reyes and Francisco Isidoro. Romulo was then a newspaperman and at the same time the general manager of the then Far East Broadcasting Corporation, operators of pre-war KZRM and KZRF (Romulo, 1943). Both Guerrero and Reyes were with pre-war KZRM, Guerrero as a news commentator (“Jamboree Premiers Modern Idea in Radiocast,” 1939) and Reyes as an announcer (Reyes, 1995). Isidoro was a Philippine Army lieutenant who translated all the English copy to Tagalog and read them on the air (Ongpauco, 1982). The writers were Guerrero and Salvador P. Lopez. Lopez wrote the memorable piece “Bataan Has Fallen” on April 9, 1942 when the joint Philippine-American forces surrendered Bataan to the Japanese. The piece was read on the air by Reyes, followed by Isidoro’s Tagalog translation titled “Sumuko na ang Bataan” (Ongpauco, 1982). We all know that years after

the war, both Romulo and Lopez became presidents of the University of the Philippines, while both as well as Guerrero also became diplomats.

Lesser-known to have played a role in the Voice of Freedom were pre-war KZRH technician Simeon Cheng and chief engineer Ted Ince, an American, who also went on air prior to the war using the name Ted Wallace. They both handled the technical requirements of the Voice of Freedom to keep it on the air. Cheng was a Chinese national who studied and worked in the Philippines, then became a Filipino citizen after the war. Cheng's role was particularly dangerous. He stole into Manila every time the Voice of Freedom transmitter needed a part, then smuggled the part back to Corregidor (S. Cheng, private papers, n.d.).

The voice behind the Voice of Juan dela Cruz was that of eighteen-year-old Carlos Malonzo. Malonzo was not a professional broadcaster but after witnessing a Japanese sentry slap an elderly Filipino woman for failing to bow to him, and upon the demise of the Voice of Freedom, he and his friends stole P50,000 worth of goods from Japanese supply warehouses, sold the items in the black market, and used the proceeds to buy equipment to launch the Voice of Juan dela Cruz (Alfonso, 1972). The Japanese caught up with him and eight of his colleagues after two months of broadcast and then executed them ("The Voice of Juan dela Cruz," 1945; Alfonso, 1972), but his wife, Violet Brown and a few others who escaped arrest continued the broadcast for another two months (BMC, n.d.).

In the meantime, the Japanese recruited to PIAM Filipinos who worked in pre-war radio. Ironically, Leon Ma. Guerrero was one of them. Using the pen and radio name Bienvenido Javier (Malay, 1967), which echoed his pre-war pen name Ignacio Javier ("Filipinos Who Yap for the Japs," 1944), Guerrero did not have much of a choice but take the Japanese order after his release from imprisonment at the Capas Internment Camp following his capture at Corregidor (Malay, 1967). As fate would have it, the station manager of the pre-war KZND, Vero Perfecto, joined Guerrero at PIAM (F. Magpayo, personal communication, March 25, 2000 & August 18, 2001). KZND was operated by the Commonwealth government of Manuel L. Quezon to prepare people for the war (Trinidad, 1986).

Like Guerrero, the majority of other Filipinos who worked in the Japanese-controlled station were forcibly recruited by the Japanese (F. Trinidad, personal communication, March 16, 2000). The more familiar names were those of singer Fidela Magpayo, better known to us as Tiya Dely, and Yay Panlilio, a Filipino-American journalist. Among the other Filipinos and Filipino-Americans whose stints at PIAM were less well known were staff announcers Harry Johnson,

Simoun Almario, Gavino Tabuñar Jr., Amado Pe, Zacarias Nuguid, Gonzalo Rialp and Marcelo Victoriano; news commentators Clodualdo del Mundo and Mauricio Santos, who announced the news in Tagalog, Manuel Esposo in Spanish, and Bienvenido Potenciano and Alfredo Saulo in English; program manager Monserrat Iglesias; announcers Georgina Escamilla, Alma Corro, Vicente Coloso, Manuel Buenafe, Pablo Hidalgo, Quisling Calderon and Myrtle Listen; and scriptwriters Amadeo Dacanay, Rizalino Castro, Hernando Ocampo, I.V. Mallari, Manuel Viray, Alfredo Cabasal, Angelo Castro, Demy Alejandro Jr., Porfirio Miraflores, Liberato C. Poblador and Carmelo Mendoza (“Filipinos Who Yap for the Japs,” 1944). Among the musicians were pianist Jose V. Carreon and Polish-Filipina singer Nellie Bialovlovsky, who used the radio name Ginger (F. Magpayo, personal communication, March 25, 2000 & August 18, 2001).

Some of them performed the risky task of gathering intelligence for the guerilla resistance while working in the station, braving the danger to themselves and their families. Panlilio (1950), for one, broadcast coded messages to Corregidor during the early part of 1942. When tipped off by Hernando Ocampo that the Japanese had found her out, she quickly and directly addressed Corregidor on the air and then fled to join a guerilla group a few minutes before the Japanese came for her (Marking, 1958).

## Carmen Ligaya on KGEI



**Carmen Ligaya**, or Alberta Stumbough in real life (OWI-NARA, n.d.).

The work of a few Filipinos on overseas propaganda radio during the Second World War seems to have been mostly forgotten. One of them was Carmen Ligaya, who began broadcasting on KGEI probably sometime in 1944. Her real name was Alberta Stumbough, a Filipino-American married to an American teacher. They were living in Davao when the war broke out. The Japanese took her husband and held him in the Sto. Tomas Internment Camp while she escaped to the hills (San Diego, 1957). In the mountains she organized a guerilla women’s auxiliary corps and trained them in first aid for two years (Records of the Office of War Information [OWI-NARA],

n.d.). It is not clear how she made it to San Francisco except for a line in a US newspaper saying she was evacuated (Records of the Office of War Information [OWI] [NARA], n.d.). By whom, when and how was not mentioned. It may be surmised, however, that she remained in Mindanao after her husband was captured, and from there she may have been smuggled out of the country by one of the American submarines to Australia, and from there she headed to San Francisco.

From 1941 until the end of the war, KGEI addressed mainly Filipinos, Australians and others across the Pacific Ocean, including American soldiers. Its purpose was to keep up the morale of guerillas resisting the Japanese, that of American forces fighting all over the Pacific, and to assure Filipinos under Japanese rule that the Americans would return. The programming was a mix of news, commentary, music and light banter. Carmen Ligaya's daily program was titled *Music America Sings*, though she also played records of Filipino songs on the air (San Diego, 1957). Between the musical numbers she addressed her homeland, as one newspaper in the US put it, and kept alive in the Filipino people hope that the American armed forces would drive out the Japanese invaders (Edson, 1944; OWI-NARA, n.d.).

The American press in 1944 and 1945 hailed Carmen Ligaya as an effective competition to Tokyo Rose (also spelled as Tokio Rose). Tokyo Rose gained both fame and notoriety by addressing American soldiers on the air from Tokyo, playing American popular music, and speaking words that demoralized American and Australian forces fighting in the Pacific (Edson, 1944).

Postwar investigation nailed Japanese-American Ikuko Toguri (also Iva Ikuko Toguri D'Aquino, upon marrying Portuguese-Japanese Felipe D'Aquino), as Tokyo Rose. Toguri was visiting Japan when the war erupted. Stranded, she found work, initially as a clerk at the Tokyo radio station, to survive. However, subsequent testimonies of the American soldiers and broadcasters she worked with in Tokyo revealed that, while Toguri indeed worked as an announcer on the Japanese shortwave program *The Zero Hour*, she never broadcast anti-American propaganda. She also never used the name Tokyo Rose, which turned out to be a generic name given by the Allied Forces in the South Pacific to several English-speaking female broadcasters of Japanese propaganda ("Monologues of an Otaku," n.d.). *The Zero Hour* was produced by three Allied soldiers held prisoners by the Japanese. With a broadcast background, they were handpicked by the Japanese and brought to Tokyo to produce a program whose target audience was the Allied soldier fighting in the Pacific. It played American music and read messages from Allied prisoners of war, which perhaps explains why it became quite popular (Keene, n.d.).

One significant feature of the radio propaganda techniques of the Second World War protagonists, for both the Allies and the Axis powers, was the use of women broadcasters whose principal target audience was the enemy soldier. The idea was to seduce the enemy with an enticing female voice, music from the soldier's homeland, and information about prisoners and casualties of war. The assumption was that the soldiers were homesick and longing to hear a friendly female voice. The female announcer's principal goal was to demoralize the enemy soldiers. One technique was to suggest that their wives and sweethearts back home had left them for other men.

Among the better documented of these women radio propagandists, apart from Tokyo Rose, was Axis Sally. Axis Sally was an American who broadcast radio propaganda of the German Third Reich. Her real name was Mildred Gillars. On her program titled *Home Sweet Home*, she called herself "Midge on the Mike." The GIs called her Axis Sally, a name they also used to refer to another female announcer for Fascist Italy, the Italian-American Rita Zucca (Weider History Group HistoryNet.com, n.d.). This means that not only was Axis Sally a name created by the GIs, it also referred to a composite of at least two women. This is also the case with Tokyo Rose, a name the American GIs in the Pacific gave to around a dozen English-speaking female broadcasters of Japanese propaganda (Keene, n.d.), including Manila Myrtle, or Myrtle Listen, a Filipino-American, who broadcast on PIAM her program titled "Memory Lane" (St. George, 1945).

In any case, during the war, the composite of women broadcasters called Axis Sally and the other amalgam called Tokyo Rose were considered in the US a serious threat to the morale of the Allied forces. In the United States East Coast, the Voice of America fielded a German-American woman named Margaret, who beguiled the German soldiers the same way Axis Sally did the American and British troops (Israels, n.d.; OWI-NARA, n.d.). In the West Coast, addressing the Pacific, Carmen Ligaya matched the popularity of Tokyo Rose, judging by the bulk of Carmen's fan mail from servicemen in the Pacific (San Diego, 1957)—from the Aleutians in the north to New Guinea in the south (Edson, 1944; "Charming Carmen Battles Tokio Rose," 1945). Unfortunately, beyond these details, we do not know anything more about Carmen Ligaya.

## **Norman Reyes on the Zero Hour**

The program of Iva Toguri, who called herself Orphan Ann on the air—Ann for "announcer"—was a segment on the Zero Hour on Radio Tokyo. The program, which reportedly had a huge following in the Pacific, including American

soldiers, was produced, written and announced by three broadcasters plucked from Japan-occupied territories and brought to Tokyo to broadcast propaganda. The men, who were told to broadcast for the Japanese or face execution, were Australian Army Major Charles Cousens, American Army Captain Wallace “Ted” Ince (General Records of the Department of State, n.d.), and Philippine Army Lieutenant Normando Ildelfonso Reyes. Major Cousens was captured in Singapore while Captain Ince (known on pre-war Philippine radio as Ted Wallace) and Lieutenant Reyes (better known to us as Norman Reyes) were taken at Corregidor. Cousens was a veteran announcer and a highly regarded news commentator in Sydney while both Ince and Reyes were announcers on pre-war radio in Manila – Ince on KZRH, where he was also chief engineer and Reyes on KZRM (De Asis, 1979).

Under the watchful eye of the Japanese Army, Reyes produced and directed the program titled *Life in the East* beginning 15 October 1942. On 31 March 1943, the daily program *Zero Hour* was launched on the air. Initially, Norman Reyes hosted it alone, reading the news and playing jazz and other popular American music. Six months later, Cousens, Ince and Toguri joined him in the program. Cousens read messages for prisoners of war, followed by Toguri who played classical and semi-classical music and read a script prepared by Cousens. Toguri’s segment was followed by the news read by Ince. The program’s final segment was composed of jazz and popular music with Reyes as the announcer. Reyes also substituted for Cousens, Toguri and Ince on weekends. Almost two years later, on 12 August 1945, the *Zero Hour* went on the air for the last time, a few days after the second atomic bomb destroyed Nagasaki and a few days before Emperor Hirohito announced Japan’s unconditional surrender to the Allied forces. Radio Tokyo was shut down immediately following the Emperor’s speech (“The Zero Hour,” n.d.).

Norman Reyes’s autobiography, *Child of Two Worlds: An Autobiography of a Filipino-American... or Vice-Versa*, does not mention his experience in Radio Tokyo (Reyes, 1995). We can only guess his reason for avoiding in his book this particular chapter in his life, which he endured against his will and probably preferred to forget.

## **The forgotten Filipinos on KGEI**

On the other hand, to forget was perhaps not the intention of the Filipinos who worked on KGEI during the war, but little is known about them today. Perhaps the only book that writes extensively about KGEI is another autobiography written by one of its commentators during World War II, William Winter (1994). Winter’s book ignores the Filipinos on KGEI, while a magazine article

in 1957 clearly puts him and some eighteen Filipinos in the same time period in the station. That article was written by one of those Filipinos, Greg San Diego (1957).

KGEI was a shortwave station in San Francisco, California, owned by General Electric International. It beamed its signals to Asia across the Pacific Ocean to promote the GE brand name in electric appliances and other electronic products. In September 1941, the US military took over the station to air counter-propaganda against the Japanese (Winter, 1994). It was illegal in the Philippines to listen to KGEI and other shortwave stations during the war. In fact, the Japanese required the Filipinos to register their radio sets, upon which the sets were rigged to disable their shortwave receivers. However, many hid their radio sets and avoided registration, so that less than half of the estimated 80,000 sets—which another estimate put at 100,000 (“1940 Upped Philippine Radio,” 1941)—were registered (Ampil, 1986). This implies that as many as 40,000 to 50,000 sets may have tuned in to KGEI in the Philippines during the war, not counting those that were reportedly secretly rigged back by Filipino technicians to re-enable shortwave receivers.

Six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor and the bombing of the Philippines within hours of each other, the US government created the Office of War Information (OWI), which consolidated US government information services during the war. It took over management of KGEI and the newly organized Voice of America and established an overseas branch for propaganda campaigns abroad (OWI-NARA, n.d.). It was the OWI that offered San Diego a job at KGEI, where he joined the Philippine division, which, alongside the Thai, Burmese, Korean and Chinese divisions, produced and aired programs aimed at audiences in East and Southeast Asia (San Diego, 1957).

San Diego (1957), whose on-air name was Domingo Gregorio, relates that he was among three Filipino news analysts and commentators who wrote their own scripts in English and read them on the air. The others were Dr. Hilario G. Marquez, a prominent pathologist in San Francisco, who was Tio Kiko on the air, and Patricio Megino, a graduate of San Francisco State Teachers College, who was Andres Patricio on the air. They also translated their news analysis to Tagalog and read the same on the air. Their program was titled simply “Philippine Commentary.”

Apart from entertainment programs on KGEI, including those of Carmen Ligaya, San Diego writes that the broadcasts, aimed at audiences in the Philippines, included several hours of news a day. The fifteen-minute daily newscast in English, simply called “Philippine News,” was prepared by two Americans, Bill Neitfield and Bob Lucier, who actually merely rewrote

news supplied by the OWI headquarters in Washington, D.C. sent through teletype. Filipinos Jaime V. Catuira, whose on-air name was simply Mariano, and Jose Guerrero, or Eddie Ramos in real life, translated the news to Tagalog and read them on the air. They were assisted by Paciano B. Sanchez, Florencio Marquez, and Marcelino Tanjuatco (San Diego, 1957).

Another set of daily newscasts, San Diego continues, was translated to nine other Philippine languages by nine Filipinos. Titled "Victory for the Philippines," the translations were written and read on the air by Vicente Dagao in Ibanag, Ted Estonilo in Ilocano, Alberto Bautista in Pangasinan, Max Pabalan in Pampango, Fermin Cariño in Tagalog, Bart Belasco in Bicolano, Diosdado Olam in Hiligaynon, Cenesio Docdor in Cebuano, and Nasim Kiram in what San Diego termed the Moro language. The broadcasts encouraged Filipinos listening back home, particularly the guerillas, to continue resisting the Japanese. The Filipino broadcasters assured listeners that the war would be won and a better life awaited them (San Diego, 1957).

Apart from their work at KGEI, Olam and Docdor also worked as translators for the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service (FBIS). The FBIS was another wartime creation of the US Government in 1941. It established listening facilities to monitor, record, translate, transcribe, and analyze shortwave radio programs from Europe, Asia, and Latin and South America, including those from belligerent, occupied, or neutral countries. The FBIS had listening posts all over the United States, including one in San Francisco, as well as in London and several other foreign locations, where foreign broadcasts were intercepted, monitored, recorded, and transcribed. Broadcasts in languages other than English were translated. The materials were then sent to the FBIS head office in Washington, D.C. via teletype, cable or mail for further analysis and editing, then released to appropriate government agencies and the press. After the war, in 1946, the FBIS was renamed the Foreign Broadcast Information Service and put under the Central Intelligence Group of the National Intelligence Authority, which a year later became the Central Intelligence Agency or the CIA (FBIS, n.d.).

The FBIS cooperated with the OWI, which in San Francisco managed the KGEI, and apparently shared human resources, such as Olam and Docdor who translated monitored foreign broadcast material from Hiligaynon and Cebuano, respectively (FBIS, n.d.). That there was material to be translated from said languages indicate that PIDI in Iloilo and PIBC in Cebu were producing their own programming in Hiligaynon and Cebuano in addition to relaying the programming of PIAM.

## History and radio propaganda

Like Carmen Ligaya, no other records about Olam, Docdor and the other Filipinos on KGEI seem to have survived, so we know nothing more about them and many who were in radio whether here in the country or abroad during the war. Radio was a relatively new phenomenon during the period, yet it was extensively used for propaganda and rather effectively, judging by the enormity of the effort exerted by all parties to the war, to exploit and at the same time tame it. Everyone understood the ability of radio propaganda in winning or losing the support of combatants and civilians alike. In justifying the control of shortwave listening in the Philippines, the Japanese described “a hostile broadcast... as much a weapon as a hostile plane” and propaganda deadlier than enemy bombs (as cited in Hilario-Soriano, 1948). If indeed that is true, understanding the dynamics of propaganda and its use of the radio and other media as weapons of war is as critical today as it was then, and searching for the stories of the likes of Carmen Ligaya and the others will perhaps help us understand it a little better.

It is interesting to note the continuity of such propaganda strategies with the use not only of radio but all media, to the period after the war and until today, although today one needs to be much more critical to discern the more subtle, and thus more insidious, propaganda in media content. It should be noted that propaganda comes not only in the discourse of news, commentary and similar texts. Then as well as today, our romance with American pop culture in the form of popular music and other genre of media texts has made us inclined to accept truth claims proffered by American media that now seems to dominate the cultural life of a significant part of the planet. The radio diet during the American colonial period of jazz and fox trot, sassy humor in American English, and the narratives of American democracy continue to find resonance today in radio and TV’s pop and rock music, sitcoms, soaps and reality TV, and news, documentaries and talk shows, not to mention Hollywood films.

While it may be argued that the same media bears counter-discourses that challenge the seeming naturalness of the truth claims of dominant texts, the latter proliferates considering the powerful hold of the American economic and political structures on today’s globalizing media. In the Philippines, this grip on public consciousness began long before the war, such that in the contest for the Filipino’s mind and heart, the Japanese lost to the Americans in the arena of propaganda, long before firepower settled the war.

Broadcasters, whether conscious or not, whether in war or peace, bear the contending discourses of propaganda or truth claims that privilege a particular

way of looking at reality, such as what the stories of Carmen Ligaya and other Filipino broadcasters during the Second World War tell us.

Finally, the narratives of these Filipino broadcasters uncover some ironies of war that some would perhaps rather forget. While Norman Reyes is well remembered for the Bataan Has Fallen broadcast, his participation in overseas propaganda radio, namely the Zero Hour on Radio Tokyo, seems to have been obscured, principally by himself by disregarding it in his autobiography, possibly because of the inconsistency of his war experience. Reyes's story is not unique, though. As mentioned above, Leon Ma. Guerrero, who was his fellow broadcaster on the Voice of Freedom, was also compelled to work on Japanese-controlled radio. So was Vero Perfecto, who was the station manager of pre-war KZND, the call letters of which stood for National Defense. Several of PIAM's broadcasters constrained to join the station were young intellectuals trained in English letters prior to the war, including literary writers I.V. Mallari, Bienvenido Potenciano, Manuel Viray and Hernando R. Ocampo, who later became a painter and one of our National Artists. Others who became well-known writers and broadcasters were Alfredo Saulo, Clodualdo del Mundo, Angelo Castro, Gavino Tabuñar, Simoun Almario and Tiya Dely. Like Reyes on the Zero Hour, they, on PIAM bore the contradiction of their convictions and their survival.

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