

# **THE MAKING OF A NATION**

**Essays on Nineteenth-Century  
Filipino Nationalism**

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# Contents

Introduction .....	1
1 The Historian's Task in the Philippines .....	7
2 Rizal in the Context of Nineteenth-Century Philippines .....	16
3 Higher Education and the Origins of Nationalism .....	35
4 The Authenticity of the Writings Attributed to Father Jose Burgos .....	44
5 Published Sources on the Cavite Mutiny .....	71
6 The <i>Noli Me Tángere</i> as Catalyst of Revolution .....	91
7 Propagandists' Reconstruction of the Philippine Past .....	102
8 The Propaganda Movement, Literature, and the Arts .....	119
9 Economic Factors in the Revolution .....	126
10 Wenceslao E. Retana in Philippine History .....	134
11 Philippine Masonry to 1890 .....	156
12 Filipino Masonry in Madrid, 1889–1896 .....	168
13 Recent Perspectives on the Revolution .....	178
Notes: Introduction .....	210
Essay 2 .....	211
Essay 3 .....	214
Essay 4 .....	216
Essay 5 .....	224
Essay 6 .....	229
Essay 7 .....	230
Essay 8 .....	233
Essay 9 .....	234
Essay 10 .....	235
Essay 11 .....	242
Essay 12 .....	248
Essay 13 .....	252
Index .....	263



# 2

## Rizal in the Context of Nineteenth-Century Philippines

Though the origins and development of Filipino nationalism cannot be understood simply by studying Rizal and his nationalist thought, neither can it be understood without giving him central attention. But like any seminal thinker's, Rizal's evolving nationalist thought must be studied within the context of his times. The purpose of this essay is to single out some major economic, political, cultural, and religious developments of the nineteenth century that influenced Rizal's growth as a nationalist and conditioned the evolution of his thought. Without an understanding of that milieu one can scarcely understand Rizal's enduring importance to the Filipino people nor the relevance of his ideas and ideals today. One of the ironies of the cult rendered to Rizal as a national hero is that often his words, rather than his thoughts, have been invoked without any consideration of the historical context in which they were spoken or of the issues they addressed. Thus, it has been

possible alternately to portray the American colonial system as the fulfillment of Rizal's aspirations, to picture him as an ineffectual reformist unable to bring himself to accept the national revolution envisaged by Bonifacio, and to invoke him as patron of the ideals of the Marcos New Society.<sup>1</sup> To sum it up in a phrase used by Renato Constantino in a different context, it has often been "veneration without understanding," hence, no veneration at all.

### Economic Development

The flowering of the nationalist movement in the late nineteenth century could scarcely be possible without the economic growth which took place in nineteenth-century Philippines, particularly after about 1830. The growth of an export economy in those years brought increasing prosperity to the Filipino middle and upper classes who were in a position to profit by it, as well as to the Western—chiefly British and American—merchants who organized it. It also brought into the Philippines both the machinery and the consumer goods which the industrialized economies of the West could supply, and that Spain could not, or would not, supply. The figures for Philippine foreign trade for the beginning, middle, and end of this period are significant of what was happening.<sup>2</sup>

Year	Exports (in pesos)	Imports (in pesos)	Total Trade (in pesos)
1825	1,000,000	1,800,000	2,800,000
1875	18,900,000	12,200,000	31,100,000
1895	36,600,000	25,400,000	62,000,000

Philippine exports in this burgeoning economy were agricultural products, and a rapidly growing population needed increased amounts of rice. Thus, those who controlled large rice-, sugar-, and abaca-growing lands in Central Luzon, Batangas, parts of the Bikol region, Negros, and Panay profited the most. These included not only the Filipino hacenderos of Pampanga, Batangas, and Western Visayas, and the friar orders owning the large haciendas of Bulacan, Laguna, and Cavite, but also the *inquilinos* of the friar haciendas. By this time, many of these *inquilinos* were equivalently hacenderos in their own right, passing on from one generation to the next the lands they rented from the friar hacienda, and farming them by means of their share-tenants or *kasamá*. To the latter they stood in a semifeudal relationship little different from that which existed

between owner-hacenderos and their tenants.<sup>3</sup> The prosperity which the new export economy had brought to some may be illustrated by the case of Rizal's Chinese ancestor Domingo Lam-co. When he had come to the Biñan hacienda in mid-eighteenth century, the average holding of an inquilino was 2.9 hectares; after Rizal's father had moved to the Calamba hacienda, the Rizal family in the 1890s rented from the hacienda over 390 hectares.<sup>4</sup>

But on the friar haciendas, rising prosperity had also brought friction between inquilinos and haciendas as lands grew in value and rents were raised. A combination of traditional methods and modernizing efficiency led to disputes, ultimately over who should reap the larger part of the fruits of the economic boom. Eventually, this would lead to a questioning of the friars' rights to the haciendas. But it is a gross misnomer to speak of the Revolution as an "agrarian revolt" in the modern sense. For it would not be the *kasamá* who would challenge friar ownership, but the prosperous inquilinos. And their motive would be as much political as economic—to weaken the friars' influence in Philippine political life.<sup>5</sup>

### Political Developments

Economic development, as it largely took place under non-Spanish initiatives, had important political consequences as well. Modernizing Filipinos saw the colonial policies of Spain as not only not the causes of the existing economic prosperity, but increasingly as positive hindrances preventing further progress and even threatening what had already been achieved. In Spain Liberals succeeded Conservatives at irregular intervals as one or the other proved incapable of coping with the problems of governing the nation. The instability of these governments made it impossible to develop any consistent policy for the overseas colonies. Worse, both parties used the Philippines as a handy dumping ground to reward party hangers-on with jobs. Hence, each change of government brought another whole new mob of job-seekers to the Philippines, ready to line their pockets with Filipino money before they would be replaced by still others. Thus, Filipinos were deprived of those few positions they had formerly held in the bureaucracy while the vast majority of Spanish bureaucrats had no interest in, or even knowledge of, the country they were supposed to be governing. If the Spanish bureaucracy had always been characterized by graft and corruption, at least those bureaucrats of an earlier day had often remained in the country. If they too had often lined their own pockets, they had

not been completely indifferent to the welfare of the Philippines where they were making their home. But with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and relatively easy passage between Spain and the Philippines, most became birds of prey, staying only long enough to feather their nests.<sup>6</sup>

Far worse in many ways than the corruption of the government was its inability to provide for basic needs of public works, schools, peace and order, and other prerequisites to even a semimodern economy. Created to rid the provinces of the bands of *tulisanes*, the Guardia Civil not only failed to achieve this end, but became an oppressive force in the provinces, harassing farmers and using their position for personal profit, as Rizal depicts so vividly in his novels.<sup>7</sup> The antiquated system of taxation in effect actually penalized modernization, and the taxes never found their way into the roads, bridges, and other public works needed for agricultural progress.<sup>8</sup> Finally, highly protective tariffs forced Filipinos to buy expensive Spanish textiles and other products instead of the traditional cheaper British ones.<sup>9</sup> In the face of a system that was both exploitative and incapable of producing benefits for the colony, liberal nationalists and even conservative upper-class Filipinos increasingly no longer found any compelling motive for maintaining the Spanish colonial regime, as it became more and more clear that reforms would not be forthcoming. To a nationalist like Rizal the decision to separate from Spain had been made long since; it was, as the Spanish prosecutors noted in 1896 (with substantial correctness though with little respect for due legal process) a matter of when and how the Revolution should come.<sup>10</sup>

### Cultural Development

A key factor in the emergence of nationalism in the late nineteenth century was the cultural development consequent on the rapid spread of education from about 1860. It has become a commonplace to speak of the role of ideas learned by the European-educated *ilustrados* in the emergence of the nationalist movement. But it was not just this handful of Filipinos who were important, nor was it only the European intellectual atmosphere which stimulated nationalism. In many respects, the spread of higher education among middle- and lower-middle-class Filipinos who could not afford to go abroad was more important for propagating the liberal and progressive ideas written about from Europe by Rizal or Del Pilar. The creation of a limited but substantial number (some 5 percent

perhaps) of Filipinos in all parts of the country who could communicate in Spanish made possible for the first time in history a movement that was both regional and national in scope.<sup>11</sup>

One of the major influences on the educational developments of the nineteenth century was the return of the Jesuits. Expelled from the Philippines and the rest of the Spanish empire in 1768, they finally returned in 1859 to take charge of the evangelization of Mindanao. Having escaped, because of their expulsion, from the general decline that in the early part of the nineteenth century afflicted the Philippine church and the system of education that depended on it, they returned with ideas and methods new to the Philippine educational system. Asked by the Ayuntamiento to take over the municipal primary school in 1859, they renamed it Ateneo Municipal and opened it to Filipino students as well as the Spaniards for whom it had been founded. By 1865 it had been transformed into a secondary school that offered a level of instruction beyond the official requirements and more approximated today's college than high school. Aside from Latin and Spanish, Greek, French, and English were studied. At the same time such a role was given to the natural sciences that Rizal has the Filósofo Tasio say, "The Philippines owes [the Jesuits] the beginnings of the Natural Sciences, soul of the nineteenth century."<sup>12</sup>

Under the direction of the Jesuits too was that other new educational institution, the Escuela Normal de Maestros. It was opened in 1865 to provide Spanish-speaking teachers for the projected new primary school system. The Escuela Normal represented a hope of progress in the minds of many Filipinos, just as it would be opposed by those for whom modern education for Filipinos posed a danger to the continuance of Spanish rule.<sup>13</sup> Rizal's picture of the trials of the schoolteacher in the *Noli*, if not perhaps typical, was certainly not completely a caricature. Jesuit sources frequently complain about the opposition that the graduates of the Normal School met from many parish priests.<sup>14</sup> If further concrete proof were required, one need only read the book published in 1885 by the Franciscan Fr. Miguel Lucio y Bustamante. Here he denounced "[itong] manga maestrong bagong litao ngayon, na ang pangala, i, *normal*" and proclaimed the danger of studying, and especially of learning Spanish. For, he declared, "ang mga tagalog, ang mga indio бага, aniya, na humihiualay, o pinahihiualay sa calabao, ay ang cadalasa, i, naguiguiguing masama at palamarang tauo sa Dios at sa Hari."<sup>15</sup>

More than in the primary schools, however, it was in the secondary schools that the ideas of nationalism were to awake, even among those who had never gone to Europe. While still a university



student in Manila, Rizal would write in his *Memorias* that through his studies of literature, science, and philosophy, “the eyes of my intelligence opened a little, and my heart began to cherish nobler sentiments.” And more explicitly, speaking of his fifth year at the Ateneo, through these studies “my patriotic sentiments greatly developed.”<sup>16</sup> When already in Europe, he would write to his Austrian friend Ferdinand Blumentritt, concerning the young Filipinos in Spain:

These friends are all young men, *criollos*, mestizos, and Malays; but we call ourselves simply Filipinos. Almost all were educated by the Jesuits. The Jesuits have surely not intended to teach us love of country, but they have showed us all that is beautiful and all that is best. Therefore I do not fear discord in our homeland; it is possible, but it can be combated and prevented.<sup>17</sup>

It was not that the Ateneo taught nationalism or the liberal principles of progress. But in imparting to its students a humanistic education in literature, science, and philosophy, in inculcating principles of human dignity and justice and the equality of all men, it effectively undermined the foundations of the Spanish colonial regime, even without the Spanish Jesuits wishing to do so. If they did not draw all the conclusions to their principles, many of their Filipino students would do so. The eyes of these Filipinos had been opened to a much wider perspective than their narrow Philippine experience before they ever set foot in Europe, and they no longer would accept the established order.

As the chapter of Rizal in *El Filibusterismo* on a class in the university or his passing remarks in the *Noli* show, the Filipino nationalists were much less appreciative of the other educational institutions, run by the Dominicans. No doubt the weight of tradition hung much heavier on these than on the newly founded Jesuit schools and it would only be later in the century that they would begin to modernize.<sup>18</sup> Yet one has to remember that the early nationalist leaders among the Filipino clergy, like Fr. Jose Burgos and Fr. Mariano Sevilla, came from the University of Santo Tomas without ever having studied abroad. Moreover, such later key figures as Marcelo del Pilar, Emilio Jacinto, and Apolinario Mabini obtained their education in San Jose, San Juan de Letran, and Santo Tomas. As early as 1843, the Spanish official Juan de la Matta had proposed the closing of these institutions as being “nurseries . . . of subversive ideas.”<sup>19</sup> Though the accusation of subversion was often rashly bestowed on Filipinos, especially priests,

it is clear that the university was communicating something that stirred up the sparks of nationalism.

Nonetheless, a major factor in giving nationalism the form it actually took was the experience of Filipino students in Spain. Seeing the liberties enjoyed in the Peninsula, they became all the more conscious of the servitude which their people suffered. On the other hand, the more perceptive saw the backwardness of Spain in comparison with other European countries, the corruption and futility of the Spanish political system, and the system's inability to promote even the welfare of Spain, much less that of her colonies. Many who came to Europe still in hope of reform and modernization in the Philippines came to realize that this could never be achieved under Spanish rule and that the Filipinos must look to themselves.<sup>20</sup> "Umasa [Filipinas] sa sariling lakas," as Rizal would say, turning his back on Europe and returning to his own country to carry on the struggle there.<sup>21</sup>

One final cultural factor involved in the rise of nationalism was the interest in the Filipino past, largely inspired by the European, especially German, preoccupation with history and ethnology. In the German universities of the nineteenth century, and to a lesser extent in other European countries, modern historical method was examining the origins not only of the European nations themselves, but of other peoples as well. Rizal was the principal, though by no means the only, Filipino to see the importance of such historical investigation for the creation of a national consciousness among his countrymen.<sup>22</sup> Fr. Jose Burgos had already emphasized the need for Filipinos to look to their heritage, and it was from him that Rizal had learned that concern. To this concern Rizal joined an historical consciousness formed by German historiography, applying modern historical method to the investigation of that heritage. In the preface to his edition of Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, his most important historical work, Rizal outlines the process by which he had come to seek a foundation for his nationalism in the historical past and emphasizes the importance of history to the national task.<sup>23</sup>

In his annotations to the book, Rizal seeks out all the evidence of a Filipino civilization before the coming of the Spaniards and tries to show how the intervening three centuries have meant decline rather than progress. At the same time he emphasizes Filipino values, contrasting them with the Spanish and extolling the accomplishments of his people. If from a scientific historical point of view, Rizal proves too much and veers toward the opposite distortion from that of friars who had denied all civilization to the pre-His-

panic Filipinos, he did lay a historical foundation in his Morga and other essays for a national consciousness and pride in the race which was to prove important for the future.

### Religious Developments

The growth of education was producing an ilustrado class, not to be completely identified with the wealthy, as the examples of Mabini and Jacinto show. These ilustrados were increasingly antifriar, at times even anticlerical or anti-Catholic. A simplistic historiography has attributed this hostility to the "abuses of the friars" or to the influence of Spanish anticlericalism.<sup>24</sup> Both of these factors no doubt played their part. There were indeed abuses on the part of some friars. There is, however, little or no evidence that these were committed more in the latter part of the nineteenth century than at an earlier period, rather the contrary.<sup>25</sup> The reason for this attitude among the ilustrados is to be sought elsewhere—in the intermingling of the political and the religious so characteristic of the Spanish Patronato Real, most especially in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

As Spain became less and less willing or able to promote the happiness and prosperity of the Philippines, the Spanish colonial government leaned more heavily on what had always been a mainstay of Spanish rule—the devotion of Filipinos to their Catholic faith. The sentiment that animated many a Spanish official was expressed with brutal frankness by Gov. Valeriano Weyler in 1891:

Far from religious exaggeration being an obstacle in the Philippines, it should be supported, so that the influence of the parish priest may be what it should be. . . . Religion can and should be in Luzon and the Bisayas a means of government which is to be taken advantage of, and which justifies the necessity of the religious orders.<sup>26</sup>

For this reason, even the most anticlerical of Spanish governors maintained that it was necessary to support the friars by every means. Writing a confidential memorial for the use of his successor in 1872, Rafael Izquierdo expressed the key ideas of this policy:

The religious orders have their defects, their vices and their difficulties, but in the Philippines they have two qualities which from the political point of view are so great and so important that they oblige us to prescind from whatever may be alleged against them. One of these qualities is their unshakeable devotion to Spain; the other is their influence on the natives, which even in the weakened state in which it is today, is still sufficiently great to consider it a preserving factor.<sup>27</sup>

His successor, Juan Alaminos, likewise an anticlerical, could not sufficiently emphasize the importance of the friars. No one, he felt, could deny their patriotism, "which verges on fanaticism, and they make the Indio believe that only in loving the Spaniards can he save his soul in the next life."<sup>28</sup>

That patriotism and the undeniable influence that the friar parish priest had on the ordinary Filipino, rather than those often-recited but little-documented abuses of the friars, explain why the friars inevitably became the main target of the Filipino nationalists, and of Rizal in particular.<sup>29</sup> The same may be said concerning the friar haciendas. For instance, although the Rizals had a land dispute with the Dominican hacienda of Calamba, the real issue was something bigger—to be able to show that the Filipino was the equal of the Spaniard, even if the Spaniards be friars. For Filipinos to win a lawsuit against a powerful friar order meant eventually to nullify that influence of the friars which the Spanish government so emphasized as a means to control the *indios*.<sup>30</sup> On that point Rizal and his fellow nationalists were in agreement—from a different point of view—with Governors Weyler, Izquierdo, and Alaminos.

A letter of Paciano Rizal to his brother Jose in Europe, written at the height of the Calamba hacienda dispute, is significant in this regard. He wrote in reference to a rumor he had heard that Archbishop Nozaleda, then in Europe, had proposed friar support for reforms to the Filipino nationalists there, in the person of Del Pilar, in order to end the antifriar campaign of *La Solidaridad*.

If the Hacienda of Calamba has any part in the compromise, I will tell you the opinion of the majority of the people. The people do not desire to appropriate to themselves this Hacienda, because . . . the hacienda was handed over to the order in [1833] approximately by Asanza. But they likewise know (because of the lack of title-deeds) that those lands did not have the extension which they now wish to give them. In this situation the most just and equitable thing is to mark the limits of this Hacienda so as to declare free of all rent those lands not included in the sale or cession, and to return the money wrongly collected for these. This is what ought to be done in strict justice. . . . If the compromise in the above sense will not injure *the cause which you are upholding*, you can propose it so as to put a halt to the unbearable situation in which the people find themselves; if it would be harmful, I will always believe that interests of a secondary order should be subordinated.<sup>31</sup>

The cause that Rizal is spoken of as upholding, and to which economic interests were to be subordinated, was of course the opportunity for Filipinos to run their own affairs and eventually to throw off the yoke of Spain completely.

One can see here the paradox of Philippine Catholicism at the end of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, the ordinary Filipino who had not gone to Manila or abroad for higher education remained in the traditional religious practices and beliefs of his forefathers and continued to look up to his friar parish priest as father of his people and protector against oppressive government officials. So much was this true that during the Revolution one of the great sources of division was the sorrow with which the ordinary Filipino saw his friar parish priest imprisoned and taken away.<sup>32</sup> In some cases, notably among the Guardia de Honor, this even led to violent opposition to the Revolution; in others, to such a paradoxical situation as that of the Dominican parish priest of Orion, Bataan, who had taken refuge in the church tower with Spanish soldiers when the fighting broke out. When the Spanish troops could no longer hold out, Father Herrero came down to arrange for surrender. As he himself later told the story,

On seeing me, as if at a signal all immediately sheathed their bolos, knelt down, and broke forth in a deafening shout: "Viva ang Santisimo Sacramento, salamat sa Dios!, because—they added in the same language—in spite of our continuous rapid-fire, the Father is unharmed." As I came down from the choir to pass to the convento, another spontaneous shout broke forth from all who filled the place, as they separated into two files, shouting: "Viva ang Paring Cura! Viva!"<sup>33</sup>

On the other hand, the Filipino ilustrado educated in Europe found the Catholic practice of his day childish and incompatible with modern ideas. As Rizal puts it through the mouth of Elias in the *Noli*:

Do you call those external practices faith? Or that business in cords and scapulars, religion? Or the stories of miracles and other fairy tales that we hear every day, truth? Is this the law of Jesus Christ? A God did not have to let Himself be crucified for this, nor we assume the obligation of eternal gratitude. Superstition existed long before this; all that was needed was to perfect it and to raise the price of the merchandise.<sup>34</sup>

What was more, for the nationalists religion had come to signify a means to perpetuate the status quo, to maintain Spanish power in the Philippines. Rizal expressed his own mind in a letter to Blumentritt:

I wanted to hit the friars [but] since the friars are always making use of religion, not only as a shield but also as a weapon, protection, citadel, fortress, armor, etc., I was therefore forced to attack their false and

superstitious religion in order to combat the enemy who hid behind this religion. . . . God must not serve as shield and protection of abuses, nor must religion.<sup>35</sup>

The picture of the religious environment in which nineteenth century nationalism came to maturity would be incomplete, above all for Rizal, without the Filipino clergy. Not only were Rizal and his fellow Propagandists partly the heirs of the conflict between Filipino secular priests and Spanish friars that had led to the martyrdom of Fathers Burgos, Gomez, and Zamora in 1872; it was also in that conflict that the seeds of nationalism, which were to come to full flower among the Propagandists, had first been sowed. Just as one cannot understand Bonifacio without knowing Rizal, whose thoughts he imbibed and rephrased in more popular language, so one cannot understand Rizal without knowing the influence of Burgos on him. Rizal prolonged the incipient national consciousness, of which Burgos was the most articulate spokesman, into the full-blown nationalism which led to the Revolution. He would hint at that influence in a slightly fictionalized passage in an early chapter of the *Noli*. In the novel Ibarra, just back from his studies in Europe, passes by Bagumbayan, where the three priests had been executed in 1872. Though in the novel the priest is referred to as an old man for the sake of the story, Burgos, with whom Rizal was acquainted both personally and through his brother Paciano, is clearly the one intended. He writes of the priest as:

the man who had opened the eyes of his intelligence, and had made him understand the good and the just, giving him only a handful of ideas, yet these not commonplaces but convictions that had stood up well under the glare of all that he had learned later. . . . [His] parting words still resounded in his ears. "Do not forget that if wisdom is the patrimony of all men, only those of good heart can inherit it. I have tried to transmit to you what I in turn received from my teachers, adding to that legacy as much as I was able in handing it on to the next generation. You must do the same with your own inheritance; increase it threefold, for you go to countries that are very rich." And the priest had added with a smile: "They came here seeking gold; go you to their countries in search of the treasures we lack. But remember all that glitters is not gold." The priest had died on a scaffold on that hill.<sup>36</sup>

What heritage had Burgos passed on to the next generation? He transformed the century-old dispute between the Spanish friars and the Filipino secular clergy from an intramural ecclesiastical controversy into a clear assertion of Filipino equality with the Spaniard, into a demand for justice to the Filipino.<sup>37</sup> A century earlier the court prelate, Archbishop Basilio Sancho de Sta. Justa,

had attempted to subject the religious orders to his own jurisdiction and to that of the government whose creature he was, by the overnight creation of a Filipino clergy who would take their places. The chief victims of this power play had been the Filipino clergy, whose slow but steady growth had been accelerated at the expense of quality. When the Archbishop's crash program produced unworthy priests, whose behavior led to the Spanish joke that there were no more oarsmen for the Pasig river boats because the archbishop had ordained them all, a permanent prejudice was created against the Filipino clergy.<sup>38</sup>

The lack of friars at the beginning of the nineteenth century led to turning over many parishes to the Filipino priests. But once the number of friars began to increase again after about 1825, a series of moves to deprive the Filipinos of the parishes once more succeeded each other for the next fifty years. Just when a new generation of Filipino priests under the leadership of Fr. Pedro Pelaez were attempting to disprove the age-old accusations against them by showing that they were equal in ability to the friars, the government hardened its position, filled with suspicion that these priests, as had earlier happened in America, might become the leaders of Filipino emancipation from Spain. Pelaez died in the earthquake of 1863, accused as a subversive.<sup>39</sup> His role in fighting for the rights of the Filipino clergy was taken over by one of his young disciples, Jose Burgos, who published an anonymous pamphlet the following year, defending the memory of Pelaez and calling for justice to the Filipino clergy.<sup>40</sup> Burgos's defense of the rights of the secular clergy in his *Manifiesto*, however, goes beyond the scholarly arguments from canon law used by Pelaez to urge the rights of the Filipino clergy to the parishes; it blazes forth in a passionate challenge to the whole notion of inferiority of the Filipino, whether of Spanish blood or indigenous, to the European. Citing a long list of Filipino priests and lawyers from the past, he insists:

If in our days we do not see more Filipinos outstanding in the sciences, let this not be attributed to their character nor to their nature nor to the influence of the climate nor much less that of the race, but rather to the discouragement which for some years now has taken possession of the youth, because of the almost complete lack of incentive. For as a matter of fact, what young man will still make efforts to excel in the science of law or of theology, if he does not see in the future anything but obscurity and indifference?<sup>41</sup>

With Burgos we see the first articulation of national feeling, of a sense of national identity. One cannot speak of nationalism in the

full sense. In spite of the accusations made against him, for which he was executed, there is no evidence that Burgos ever aimed at separation of the Philippines from Spain.<sup>42</sup> Rather, his was the first step, the expression of a sense of those born in the Philippines being one people, with a national identity and national rights, even under the sovereignty of Spain. From this initial articulation of national feeling, Rizal and others would move toward what they had come to see was the only way of maintaining that identity and obtaining those rights—separation from Spain; if need be, by means of a revolution.<sup>43</sup> It is not any accident that we find numerous close connections between the activist Filipino clergy led by Burgos and the next generation of Filipinos who would lead the Propaganda Movement of the 1880s and 1890s—that Rizal's brother, Paciano, was living in the house of Burgos in 1872; and that among those exiled to Guam in the aftermath of Burgos's execution would be Fr. Toribio H. del Pilar, older brother of Marcelo, and Fr. Mariano Sevilla, in whose house Marcelo del Pilar was living as a student in 1872.<sup>44</sup> The Propaganda Movement would be the heir of the movement of the Filipino clergy, and would carry the ideas of national identity articulated by Burgos to their next step and their logical conclusion.

The Propagandists would also be heirs to another allied movement, but one distinct from that of the clergy—the liberal reformists of the 1860s. These were the “modernizers,” men who desired to bring to the Philippines economic progress, a modern legal system and, the “modern liberties”—freedom of the press, of association, of speech, and of worship. All of these goals would of course be part of the goals of the nationalist movement, but they were not confined to nationalists. Indeed, most of the men who appear prominently among the liberal reformists who emerged into the public light in 1869–72 were criollos, Spaniards born in the Philippines. These criollos had little or no desire to see the Philippines separated from Spain, but rather wished to see the liberties that had been introduced into the Peninsula also extended to Spanish Philippines. Such were men like Joaquin Pardo de Tavera, Antonio Regidor, and other lawyers and merchants. (Burgos himself was a Spanish mestizo, but he had identified himself clearly with all those born in the Philippines, whether of Spanish or Malay blood—“sean estos lo que son, filipinos o indígenas,” as he puts it in his *Manifiesto*).<sup>45</sup> Generally antifriar, these reformists saw in the friars obstacles to progressive reforms and modern liberties. It was with enthusiasm therefore that they welcomed the new governor, Carlos Ma. de la Torre, who arrived in Manila in 1869, the appointee of the anti-



clerical liberals who had made the Revolution of 1868 in Spain. When de la Torre opened to Manila some of the freedom of expression proclaimed by the Revolution, and announced his intention of introducing reforms into the government, these reformists cheered him on and were joined in their demonstration by Father Burgos. The latter saw in the new liberal government, with its proclaimed respect for liberty and equality, the hope of gaining recognition for the justice of the Filipino priests' cause. Both the clergy and the reformists were deceived. In spite of the governor's professed liberalism and his cordiality, he was suspicious of both groups and had put them under secret police surveillance.<sup>46</sup> Before long he was succeeded by another appointee of the Revolution, Gen. Rafael Izquierdo. Even more than with De la Torre, for Izquierdo liberal reforms were for the Peninsula, not the colonies. He did not even keep up the pretense of his predecessor, but quickly suppressed the reform committees and ended even the appearances of liberty of expression allowed by De la Torre. The clergy and the reformists continued their struggle through friendly political influence in Madrid, little realizing that their steps were watched.<sup>47</sup>

When finally the opportunity came, with the outbreak of what was to all evidence a merely local mutiny over local grievances in the garrison of Cavite, within hours all had been arrested. Before the month was over three priests had gone to their death by the garrote, while their colleagues and their reformist allies were on their way to exile in Guam, despite their political influences in Madrid. It is noteworthy that it was the three priests who were executed, not the reformist lawyers and merchants.<sup>48</sup> Their execution manifested Izquierdo's conviction that the friars were a necessary political instrument for maintaining the loyalty of the Filipinos to Spain; therefore, by the same token, the Filipino priests who might replace them in the parishes must be eliminated. Those who clamored for liberal reforms would be silenced, but they were only a passing annoyance; the clergy who represented the growing Filipino consciousness of their rights as equal to any Spaniard must be crushed. With the death of its leaders and the exile of their followers, the movement of the Filipino priests was indeed crushed.

When the exiles finally returned to Manila, they knew better than to expose themselves a second time. Only with the Revolution would the survivors, Fr. Pedro Dandan and Fr. Mariano Sevilla, reappear in the public eye. Father Dandan would die fighting in the mountains in 1897. Father Sevilla would work to rally Filipinos to resist the Americans, and once more be condemned—though eventually reprieved—to exile in Guam, this time by the Americans.<sup>49</sup>

Many of the liberal reformists of 1872, on the other hand, no longer returned to the Philippines once they were free, but made their homes in Hong Kong or in Europe. For them the issue had been precisely that—liberal reforms, rather than Filipino rights—and when they could not obtain these in the Philippines, they lived elsewhere.<sup>50</sup>

Since the Propaganda Movement was also heir to the liberal reformist tradition, the degree to which the Propagandists were truly nationalists, like Rizal and Del Pilar, or merely liberal reformists, like many of their colleagues in the campaign of *La Solidaridad*, would only be made clear once war had broken out with the Americans, and the latter were offering the reforms which had been sought in vain from Spain. To the reformists, the American offer would be enough; it was what they had really been looking for all along. For the nationalists, the struggle would go on till it became hopeless.

Faced with a new colonial power, the clergy continued to play its role in the rise of nationalism. The Americans directing the crushing of guerrilla resistance, whether civilian like Governor Taft, or military like Gen. J. Franklin Bell in Batangas and Gen. Jacob Smith in Samar, all singled out the Filipino priest as the most dangerous enemy and the soul of the Filipino resistance.<sup>51</sup> At the height of the guerrilla war in 1901 numerous priests in all parts of the country were in prison, and not a few, especially in the Visayas, suffered torture and even death for complicity with the guerrillas. Though the initiative in the nationalist movement had passed from the Filipino priests to the young ilustrados in Europe and Manila in the 1880s, the clergy remained a powerful force in the Revolution and the major factor in keeping the masses loyal.

### Main Currents of the Nationalist Movement

In recent years certain generalizations have been used concerning the nationalist movement of the nineteenth century and the revolution that emerged from it. Such catchwords as “the secularization movement,” “the reform movement,” “the revolt of the masses,” and “the betrayal of the ilustrados” obscure more than clarify the character of Filipino nationalism. The same might be said of attempts to describe the Revolution as a proletarian or lower-middle-class movement captured by the bourgeois ilustrado reformists, and other such explanations that come more from ideological constructs than from an examination of historical realities. These generalizations may not entirely be false. But by oversimplifying complex

events in a complex society, they fail to give an account of the reality that was.

To understand what happened in the nineteenth-century movement culminating in the Revolution, it is necessary to distinguish the several different currents that went into movement. At least five can be considered—the reformist, the liberal, the anticlerical, the modernizing, and the strictly nationalist. Each individual need not be placed under one of these categories, for they certainly overlapped. Almost all nationalists were liberals in some respect; almost all were in favor of modernization. So too most liberals were also anticlerical, or at least antifriar. But it is necessary to distinguish what was really most important for individuals or groups in order to understand what they aimed at in supporting the Revolution, and why they did or did not continue to do so when certain ends had been achieved.

Probably most Filipinos, certainly all thinking ones, and even Spaniards with any interest in the country, can be called reformists in some sense in the late nineteenth century; the Spanish colonial regime obviously failed any longer to satisfy basic needs and desires of the Filipino people. As intimated in the letter of Paciano Rizal we have quoted, many of the friars themselves desired reforms. They even appear to have offered to make joint cause with the Filipinos in Spain to obtain such reforms, for all suffered from the inefficient and corrupt bureaucracy, from the antiquated and contradictory laws, from the exploitation of the Philippine treasury by the mother country, and from the inability of the government to maintain peace and order.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, in an earlier period the harshest condemnation of Spanish misgovernment came from the friars. It was only when the cause of reform began to take on antifriar and nationalistic overtones that they opposed it.<sup>53</sup>

Though by no means all reformists were liberals, liberals were almost by definition reformists as well. For the safeguards of personal liberty—freedom of speech and of the press, freedom of association, freedom of religion, and especially freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention and exile or imprisonment without a trial—could only be obtained with major reforms in the existing colonial government. With the partial exception of freedom of religion, those liberties were the aspiration of all the activist Filipinos who participated in the Propaganda Movement.<sup>54</sup> Together with the demand for representation in the Spanish Cortes, they headed the list of reforms demanded by *La Solidaridad*. As Rizal would write Blumentritt, these liberties were an essential component of any progress worth the name.<sup>55</sup> So integral were the aspirations to civil liberties

to the program of the Propagandists, that it is difficult to see how anyone with any knowledge of our history and heritage could remark, as some did in the Marcos years, that democracy and civil liberties were an American import which can now be dispensed with. Not to the men who created a Filipino nation long before the Americans ever established themselves.<sup>56</sup>

In the circumstances of the time, to be a liberal very often meant to be anticlerical or at least antifriar. Such anticlericalism was not so much due to obscurantism, which certainly existed in some sectors of the clergy, as it was to the well-justified fear that ecclesiastical power would be used to suppress liberal progress. The influence of the friar orders in the Philippines was not rarely used for this purpose, whether successfully or not, though the religious orders' fear of liberalism was not without basis. For church property had so often been confiscated in Europe and the personal rights of ecclesiastics so often violated in the name of the new freedom.<sup>57</sup> Whether or not they fully agreed with the liberals, the Filipino clergy were much less likely to be the target of liberal antipathy. This was true even on the part of those liberals who cared little for the bond of common nationality, since the Filipino clergy were powerless to block liberal reforms, even if they had wanted to.

Modernization was a desire of all liberals, as it would be of nationalists in general. But the converse was by no means true. Modernization was primarily an economic goal, and many of those who were deeply interested in progressive economic measures sought them for the profit they themselves would derive, not for the country. Many of these men were conservative politically. Though desiring far-reaching economic changes in Philippine society, just as the British, American, and other foreign entrepreneurs did, they had no desire to create a new nation.<sup>58</sup> When the Spanish regime fell under the onslaught of the Revolution, conservative modernizers had no regrets, for they realized how little hope there was of Spain ever doing away with all the archaic obstacles to economic progress. When the Philippine Republic emerged, they supported it cautiously, intending to control it. When they saw they very likely could not, or that an American regime promised more in the way of immediate peace and order and ultimate economic growth than could the newborn Revolutionary government, they had few qualms about accepting positions in the new colonial regime, even while still holding positions in the Revolutionary government. Such were men like T. H. Pardo de Tavera, nephew of the exile of 1872, friend of Rizal and the Lunas in Paris. Although a bitter enemy of the friars and high-ranking anticlerical Mason, he was among the first to

accept a position in the American government. He would be one of the first Filipino members of the Philippine Commission, though he had been named Secretary of Foreign Affairs in the government of Aguinaldo.<sup>59</sup> A similar case was Jose Ma. Basa, exile of 1872, who perhaps did more than any other individual to promote the campaign against the friars in the 1880s and 1890s. He was also the main source by which the writings of Rizal, Del Pilar, and others of the Propaganda Movement were smuggled into the Philippines.<sup>60</sup> Together with Doroteo Cortes, former head of the Comité de Propaganda in Manila which had supported Del Pilar and *La Solidaridad* for five years, Basa was among the first to petition the American consul in Hong Kong for an American protectorate over the Philippines.<sup>61</sup>

The establishment of an American colonial government would sort out those who had been agitating openly or secretly during the decade before the Revolution. It would make clear who were only reformists, or liberals, or anticlericals, or modernizers, but not truly nationalists. For all of the former the American government gave assurance that their main goals would be achieved—modernizing reforms in government and the economy, civil liberties, and the elimination of theocratical control over Philippine society; only the real nationalists would see the frustration of the principal goal for which they had struggled. During the earlier years of struggle this line of nationalist thought leading from Burgos to Rizal to Bonifacio, Jacinto, and Mabini, had attracted not only those who yearned for an independent Philippines, but numerous others whose goals were at least partially different, or who supported only part of the nationalist program. Now the real nationalists were left to themselves. It would be an exaggeration to say that the masses as a whole stood behind the nationalist struggle, but large numbers of them did. The *kalayaan* they looked for might not be the same concept as the *independencia* conceived by Rizal, Bonifacio, and Mabini. But the freedom they longed for was far nearer to the nationalists' idea of independence than were the goals of economic progress, political reforms, and modernization sought by many of the ilustrados who had supported the Propaganda Movement, only to shift their loyalties in the hour of crisis.<sup>62</sup> For the goals now achieved from the Americans had only partially coincided with those of leaders like Rizal who had seen the struggle primarily as a movement aimed at the creation of a national consciousness, the making of the Revolution.

Rizal of course favored reforms in Philippine society, not only by Spaniards, but by the Filipinos themselves. He opposed the influ-

ence of the friars on that same society, for he saw them as an obstacle to freedom and to progress. He was devoted to the modernization of his country, so that, as he put it, she might take her place among the proud nations of Europe. But what he sought above all was that his country should be free, free from tyrants from abroad or at home, a country where there would not be any tyrants because Filipinos would not allow themselves to be slaves. It was the growth of a free people, proud of its past, working for its future, united in a common set of ideals.<sup>63</sup> This vision it was which made him the center of the nationalist movement of his day and the principal inspiration of the Revolution.