

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

The Transmission on National Politics

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Philippine Studies vol. 8, no. 1 (1960): 38—43

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Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

tion ago. The full story of Meralco's impact on the city of Manila is not told in terms of economic imperialism and exploitative earnings.

The cases might be multiplied without making the point clearer. There is no untruth so emphatically refuted by economic history here and abroad as the fallacy which you will hear repeated again and again in the coming years: "Only we can help ourselves." In the mouths of primitive Papuans this would be patent absurdity. It does not become wisdom just because we say it.

MICHAEL MCPHELIN

2. The Transmission on National Politics

A recent development on the political scene is the entry into the political arena of men who make no secret of the fact that they are Catholics and that they mean to conduct themselves in public office in accordance with Catholic principles of morality. Some of them, like Senator Rodrigo, were active in Catholic Action work before they took up politics. At the same time the Philippine hierarchy in several pre-election statements has reminded Filipino Catholics that they are also citizens, and as citizens have a duty to use their votes to elect officials who will govern honestly and justly according to the democratic constitution of the country.

All this is bad news for the communists, since communism and Christian democracy are irreconcilable. What counter-move should they adopt? If the Philippines were a country generally indifferent to religion, with Catholics in the minority, it would be simple. Catholicism itself as a religion would be the object of attack. Their front men and fellow travelers would doubtless now be parroting from platform, press and radio the old familiar slogans of "religion the opium of the people" and "pie in the sky when you die."

But the Philippines is a Catholic country, and so a somewhat more devious tactic is indicated. Transmission 15 makes

a stab at one. The party line must be directed not against Catholicism as such but against the "Catholic hierarchy." The bishops of the Philippines must be made out to be men of untold wealth who to protect their investments are seeking to re-establish control of the government (as in the bad old Spanish days) by the Machiavellian manipulation of Catholic laymen. Thus, while former Secretary of Education Manuel Lim acted as "the Catholic hierarchy's guardian of the public schools," the hierarchy's "infiltrators" were busily burrowing into the principal political parties. This "infiltration work" which the hierarchy is "continuously carrying out among the political parties" is considered by the Transmission to be "the greatest danger emanating from this source." Indeed, its agents were everywhere; in "the NP [Nacionalista Party], with Rodrigo, Rosales, Cuenco, Pelaez, etc., the LP [Liberal Party] with Padilla, Pimentel, Macapagal, Yulo, etc., the PPP [Philippine Progressive Party] with Manglapus, Hernandez, Manahan, etc., and the NCP [National Citizens' Party] with a few church satellites."

The last-mentioned party, the NCP, is damned with faint praise. The authors of the Transmission loftily pat it on the back as "the only legal political party that fights for the interests of the Filipino (even if confusing and hesitating at times)" [*sic*; probably "confused" is meant, not "confusing"]. The trouble with NCP is apparently that it is not doing enough for the Cause. "It seems satisfied with the propaganda effect of a few brilliant speeches of its head." This is not enough, for "propaganda, even if believed by the people, is not sufficient to create or generate action. For this, organization is absolutely necessary." Why is the NCP proving such a disappointment to the authors of the Transmission? Need we ask? "One of the primary reasons, obviously, for the apparent inactivity of the NCP is the divisive activities of Catholic hierarchy infiltrators."

But if the NCP is "infiltrated", the Progressive Party is in a much worse case, being "composed basically of young adherents of puppetry and veteran (but young) tools of the Ca-

tholic hierarchy." Of course, no evidence whatever is advanced for this. It is merely asserted, with great courage and confidence, several times and in a variety of contexts. For the authors of the Transmission this is apparently as good as proof. In fact they come right out with it and say so. In their admonition to the leaders of the NCP to get to work and not be satisfied with delivering "a few brilliant speeches" they exhort them not to be "unmindful of the truth that even lies, when repeated so often, is [*sic*] generally taken for the truth; contrariwise even the truth, when heard so rarely, appears to be, and is taken for, a lie." Precisely.

The beauty of this kind of logic is that once you have chosen the kind of premises you need — and you have complete liberty of choice, since proof is not a requirement—you can then arrive at any conclusion you choose. The conclusions which the Transmission writers chose to reach from the premises they failed to prove is that the Catholic bishops of the Philippines are a bunch of opportunists. They are such thorough opportunists that they will even compromise with communism if by so doing they can hang on to their "vast property holdings." Here is the passage where this remarkable rabbit is pulled out of the hat:

The Church hierarchy is one of the most opportunist, if not the most opportunist group in society. It will enter into any arrangements so long as it can preserve and promote the interests of its vast property holdings. The Vatican had some form of *modus vivendi* with fascism, and even blessed fascist soldiers on their way to aggression. It is now in alliance with imperialism, and defends the latter's actions whenever and wherever it defends the interests of property. Today the Church is infiltrating the NCP, not only for the purpose of capturing the leadership and using it for its own purposes, not only for mitigating the impact of the nationalism of the NCP (if it cannot dominate it), but to ride on the wave of nationalism, when it cannot succeed in either of the first two objectives. There is the possibility, nay the probability, that it will compromise with communism, when the hierarchy sees the utter hopelessness of the imperialist-capitalist cause, so long as communism will compromise to preserve at least a part of its (the hierarchy's) propertied interests.

This brings out the inherent weakness of this kind of argument. It is the familiar fallacy of proving too much. If I

wish to prove that someone is slightly stupid, it does not make my argument any more forceful if I endeavor to prove that he is not rational at all, that he is in fact a vegetable. It merely makes it worthless, because for a person to be stupid some intelligence is required. I have overshot the mark and by trying to prove too much have proved nothing. The authors of the Transmission are in the same predicament: in their eagerness to paint as black a picture as possible of the Catholic hierarchy they have merely succeeded in removing from it any resemblance to the original. They have proved too much; though "prove" is not perhaps the best word to use for the kind of ritual incantation which in communist documents apparently takes the place of proof.

At any rate what is interesting is not so much the performance of the Transmission writers as their intention. Their intention, as noted above, is to apply to the Church in the Philippines the same divisive tactics that they accuse the Church of using on the political parties. Their fond hope is to alienate the laity from the hierarchy by making the latter out to be ruthless exploiters and conscienceless opportunists. The gambit is standard and to be expected. Fortunately, by overstating their case beyond the limits of credibility, they have saved us the trouble of undertaking a refutation.

Much more adroit is the use which the communists are making of the nationalist movement. Philippine nationalism is at present passing through a particularly assertive phase. This is entirely natural and normal in a nation that has but recently become independent. It is good for such a nation to "feel its oats," to flex its muscles, to stand on its own feet, to think its own thoughts, to assert itself. But self-assertion can have a negative as well as a positive aspect. It can mean not only the assertion of self as *distinct* from other selves but the assertion of self as *against* other selves.

It is this negative aspect of nationalism, the side of it that looks with suspicion and hostility on the foreigner, that the communist is primarily interested in. No one can blame him. The energies which nationalism can release are incalculable, for they

spring from the instinct of self-preservation, that is to say, of life itself. If he can only direct these energies towards the accomplishment of his objectives in Asia, he has an excellent chance of success.

One of the most important of these objectives, as we pointed out above, is to destroy the existing alliance between the Philippines and the United States. Hence the present all-out campaign of the Party to inject a "hate America" element into Philippine nationalism; or, more precisely, to make Philippine nationalism practically synonymous with "hate America." It is interesting to note how impatient communists and fellow travelers get when anyone tries to direct nationalist sentiment towards other objects of a more positive and constructive nature. To them it is sheer criminal waste, a dispersal of energy which should be concentrated on hating America. They get even more impatient, of course, when someone suggests that we hate the Chinese too. The Chinese are a special case, you see. Some of them live on Formosa and are even more hateful than the Americans, while the rest who belong to the great People's Republic are lovely fellows really, and besides, they may well be amongst us, at some not very distant date, as jolly old commissars.

In effect, what the communists are trying to do is to capture the elemental force of nationalism, bottle it up under pressure, and concentrate a thin but deadly stream of it upon a highly specialized and almost entirely negative object. This requires extremely delicate handling if the cylinder is not to blow up in their faces; and it is only fair to say that they have so far met with a measure of success. They have even persuaded people who are by no means communists and who should know better that the communist brand of nationalism is the only authentic brand.

But have they persuaded *themselves*? This is the interesting question that Transmission 15 inadvertently raises. Communism is an international movement or it is nothing. How then can it subscribe to or approve of nationalism in any form? But if it renounces nationalism, what appeal can it have for the newly

independent peoples of Asia, who are at present interested in practically nothing else? This dilemma seems to worry the writers of the Transmission not a little, and they devote to its solution one of the rare passages of real reasoning to be found in that document.

Communism is basically international, not national, so that the term national communism is a contradiction in terms. Communism is international brotherhood based on economic and political equality.

National communism then must be rejected as a horrid heresy. Other things may be and must be "nationalized": the economy, the schools, the Church; but not communism. That must at all costs remain "international", that is, exactly as the Kremlin decrees it should be. But what of nationalism, then? Is there no room for it in communism? Miraculously enough, there is. National communism is not even to be thought of; but there is such a thing as communist nationalism, and the first man who says "scholastic hairsplitting" goes to Siberia. No, the "term is correct, in form as well as substance"; and likewise *sensu composito* and *sensu diviso*, if Latin had been a part of the curriculum of Stalin University.

It would be argued by some however that communists cannot be nationalists because they are internationalists. This is far from the truth. In the true sense of the word, nationalism is an ideology that condemns and struggles against foreign domination. Communists in a colonial country, consequently, must necessarily be nationalists, otherwise they will not be fighting foreign domination. However, when a country is already truly independent, nationalism ceases to be a progressive ideology.

There; it is out at last. As far as the communists are concerned, nationalism is simply the struggle against foreign domination. And for "foreign domination" we must read, as the rest of the Transmission abundantly shows, "any kind of Western, and particularly American, connection or influence." *And that is all it is.* As soon as nationalism ceases to be that, as soon as it begins to occupy itself with simply building up a nation in which the citizens can go about their business in peace and a measure of prosperity, as soon as it distracts itself from the supreme and all-absorbing task of hating the Westerner in

order to provide opportunities for the Russian or the Red Chinese, "it ceases to be a progressive ideology."

Those who go along with the communists to the extent of making Philippine nationalism nothing but a "hate America" movement should ponder well and ponder long this remarkable passage of the Transmission.

H. DE LA COSTA

3. The Transmission as Propaganda

Aside from a determined internal attempt to destroy the English language by bad example, the chief propaganda techniques of the Transmission are two, both tried and true. The first is an adaptation to the written word of eye-and-ear censorship, the second the facts-to-conclusion leap.

The first was popularized in Nazi Germany during the nineteen thirties. Foreign newspapermen were allowed to print anything they saw, but they were only allowed to see just the right things, that is, the favorable occurrences or scenes. Their copy was thus edited at the source. Similarly, the reader of the Transmission is overwhelmed with facts, but they are hand-picked facts. The Americans intervene in Lebanon, the British occupy Jordan, but there are of course no Soviets in Syria or Iraq or Iran and no Chinese communists in north Vietnam or, more recently, on the Himalayan borders of Indian states. How could there be? It doesn't say anything about them here.

The facts-to-conclusion leap has several approved variants. One is producing a positive assertion from negative evidence. This is best exemplified by the reasoning processes of the jayhawk which appeared once in the Pogo comic strip and was accused of being a mythological bird. He stated that, far from being mythological, he had been brought up by a tribe of invisible Indians living north of the Kaw river. "Bein' invisible they natural din't leave no traces an' to this day no sign of 'em is ever been found. . . Sheer proof!" This may be called