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Behind the Nationalist Facade

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Behind the Nationalist Facade

A phenomenon on the local scene are various groups purporting to advance the cause of Filipino nationalism. Chief among these are the National Progress Movement (NPM) or Kilusang Makabansa (KMB), and its youth counterpart, the National Youth Movement of the Philippines (NYMP). On the labor front we have the Katipunan Manggagawang Pilipino (KMP). Accounts regarding the activities of these various groups appear at intervals in the local newspapers. A systematic collation of these accounts brings to light certain curious facts. At first glance these groups give the impression of a spontaneous upsurge of nationalism on various levels of society. A closer look reveals that the governing bodies of each group draw their principal men from a single tight inner circle. Secondly, while their principal aim is, of course, the advancement of nationalism, they all propose to effect this by means that are surprisingly similar, namely by using the alien among us as a scapegoat for all the country's ills. The thought comes to us of Hitler's Nazi State which blamed all of Germany's ills on one ethnic group, the Jews. For Catholic Philippines, what is of utmost concern is this: these groups, specifically the NPM, have made no bones about their hostility to the Catholic Church. If these groups ever sell their brand of nationalism to the entire country, the Catholic Church will be in for a very rough time. And to all Christians of whatever denomination, who would see the evils of the country corrected, the methods suggested and employed by these groups are foreign to the principles laid down in Christ's teachings. To go even a step further, anyone who vaguely acknowledges the existence of a God who rules the destinies of men and nations will seek in vain for any such acknowledgment in the "Nationalist Manifesto" or the "Primer on Nationalism."

The groups are well organized and seem well supplied with funds. (This latter is a point on which the NPM is extraordinarily sensitive. Dean Jose Ma. Hernandez dared to put a heavy finger on this sore spot, and the walls of *Filipinas* have not yet ceased to shudder after the heavy blasts that he got from behind every "nationalist" tree.) It is surmised that the groups are mere political organizations put together for the coming elections. That may well be. But the possibility that they are fronts for communistic activities cannot be discounted.

Communism, of course, considers the Catholic Church one of its principal enemies. However, many others have indulged in the pleasure of hating the Church without being communistic. But among the leaders of these groups are a number who are heavily suspect of leftist tendencies, if not of outright Communism. Their condemnation of Chinese nationals and of American so-called imperialism is an echo of the constantly recurring Communist party line. It is sig-

nificant that in the "Nationalist Manifesto" there is not a word of condemnation of Red imperialism and aggression in the countries behind the Iron Curtain: Hungary in Europe, Tibet in Asia. In the resolutions of the KMP it is proposed that we seek closer ties with our Asian brothers without a word of caution about Communist China, Communist Vietnam, Communist North Korea.

Some time last June the NYMP took an active lead in the case of See Tun, a Chinese merchant accused of burning to death a housemaid, Lolita Tosi. The KMB helped from the side-lines by sending in two lawyers to handle the case. The burning was an evil crime, whoever was the perpetrator. But why, of all the crimes filling the columns of our daily newspapers, was this one singled out by demonstrations, placards, a special funeral procession carefully routed through the Chinese district, flags and speeches, and afterwards by a systematic stoning of Chinese stores? The speed with which the demonstrations were organized is alarming. Other crimes—take the Crisóstomo murder—have not evoked such "spontaneous" reactions from an outraged citizenry. Are we to believe, then, that beneath the surface of traditional Filipino calm there are forces at work waiting to be set in motion by faceless men? One gets the eerie feeling that the machinery for the demonstrations and the speech-making was all the while humming expectantly. All it needed was an occasion to send it on its way. The murder itself was not important to the machine; what was important was that it furnished the excuse for the demonstrations.

The soil had not yet settled over the girl's unhappy grave before another incident hit the papers. A telephone call came to the NBI office, allegedly from the doctor who performed the autopsy on the dead girl. The telephone message said that the murdered girl had been pregnant. The report filled the headlines before the doctor who performed the autopsy could deny that the girl had been pregnant; could deny, in fact, that he had made any telephone call at all. Was this the busy machine, anxious that the feeling of outrage should not die too soon?

ENRIQUE L. VICTORIANO

Wishing Won't Make It So

Towards the end of the last century a convention about division of their material had become almost universal among newspapers, at least in English-speaking countries: facts were in the news columns, opinions about facts were on the editorial page. Thus if a story on page one reported that City Councillor A had struck City Councillor B in the eye during a normal council meeting, the paper had to hold off until the editorial page before it could say "Hooray!"