

Schumacher's 'The Propaganda Movement'

John N. Schumacher. *The Propaganda Movement: 1880-1895*. Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1973 302 pp.

The Propaganda Movement, the period following the execution of the three priests, Fathers Gomez, Burgos and Zamora, is the main thrust of Jesuit Father John N. Schumacher's *The Propaganda Movement: 1880-1895* (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1973).

To Father Schumacher, the period 1880-1895 was an interregnum of sort in the country's historical progression toward a "nationalist ideology" based "on a consciousness of a national identity, of being one people." This "nationalist ideology," continues Schumacher, gave "birth to the Revolution of 1896. For a revolution, he says, presupposes a people with a consciousness of its own identity and unity as a nation. And this Filipino nationalist movement made possible the emergence of Philippine society from

its "medieval tutelage" which, one way or another, had forged the Filipino unity through a "common bond of religion and even, to the extent it existed, a common language."

Father Schumacher's observations are more sweeping than convincing. Obviously, his concept of nationalism is rather limited, parochial. True, any nationalist ideology is based "on a consciousness of a national identity, of being one people" but this consciousness presupposes a direction or a dialectical praxis: a direction that should be viewed within a colonial context in its thrust toward separation or liberation from the mother colony.

Even more questionable is Schumacher's assertion that Filipino unity was made possible by the bond of religion, that is, Roman Catholicism, which he manifests as the *raison d'être* of the so-called "medieval tutelage." The twist, to say the least, though seemingly heterodox, is already a belated point among Jesuitical historians. Filipino nationalism, to set the record straight, came to the fore in response to the abusive and exploitative policies of the Spaniards both lay and religious. The religious character, as it were, of the colonial reign was mostly incidental. Whether Catholicism existed or not, as long as there was colonial exploitation, Filipino nationalism was bound to surface. And, even if, for the sake of argument, there was any unity at all that was effected by the Catholic Church, it was, at the very least, geographical, not ideological. Even then, this geo-

graphic unity was meant for Spanish ecclesiastical and political rather than indigenous nationalistic purposes.

The contention of "medieval tutelage" reaches comic proportions if we would take into consideration the fiery denunciations by both the propagandists and the revolutionists of friar abuses and atrocities which eventually culminated in the establishment of the Philippine Independent Church under Gregorio Aglipay, a Filipino priest.

Certain scholars on Philippine Revolution agree that the Propaganda Movement, contrary to popular presumption, could not have positively or to a great extent, determined the Philippine revolution of 1896. The very failure, in fact, of the Propaganda Movement led to the Revolution. The middle class had nothing to do with it. For the Propaganda Movement and the Revolution were separate movements espousing different ideals, different protagonists, different inclinations. The Propaganda Movement was mainly confined to the elite, the ilustrado, whose outlook, narrow and confined to its self-serving "universal view," clashed head-on with the Revolution's whose base, the masses, was representative of an altogether national temperament.

Historian Teodoro A. Agoncillo in his *The Revolt of the Masses* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1956) correctly assesses the character of the middle class vis-a-vis the revolution. The middle class, Agoncillo argues, looked "upon revolutionary pro-

cedure with the nonchalance of static academicians, theoretically giving consent to it but actually shunning its violent nature, for the heart of the middle class trembles with fear of the consequences that stern reason repudiates in its love of order and sequence."

The middle class only joined the Revolution, to further quote Agoncillo, at a time "when the masses had already shown that they could dethrone the ruler and beat his army in the field with nothing but bolos, a few ancient guns, courage, bravery and unity . . . in the Malolos Congress," continues Agoncillo, "the intellectuals wrangled over the question of the union of Church and State and it was only after two close balloting that the Church and State were declared independent and separate, and at that, the proponents of separation won by only one vote. The Revolution, therefore, failed in its aims and ideal of establishing an economic democracy, and its failure, if one is candid and honest enough to admit it, was caused by the betrayal of the intellectuals."

Father Schumacher has failed to provide a solid ground upon which his thesis could convincingly and credibly stand. What is, however, meritorious in Schumacher's *The Propaganda Movement: 1880-1895* is its rich archival documentations. His bibliographical essay on his sources, which are mostly primary, broadens one's Philippine bibliographic horizon and definitely enriches Philippine historiography.

ANTONIO C. HILA

'Marcos the Revolutionary'

Isabelo T. Crisostomo. *Marcos the Revolutionary*. Manila, JRP Publishing Enterprises, 1973. 231 pp.

This book is the first serious attempt by a prominent Filipino writer to analyze with singular clarity and logic the phenomenal rise of President Ferdinand E. Marcos from politician to revolutionary. Rich in scholarship but deceptively simple in its style of exposition, this work of Professor Isabelo T. Crisostomo is remarkably instructive and enjoyable to read. It commends itself to readers who desire to acquire an understanding of the Marcos theory of revolution, as well as the background, rationale and prospects of his historic decision.

A great number of Filipinos, including members of the intelligentsia, were taken by surprise when President Marcos, a product of the old system of politics in this country, turned against that system and decided to change the course of the nation's history by waging a democratic revolution. Their astonishment stemmed from the fact that no President before him had had the genius to conceive such a comprehensive vision, and the courage and fortitude to implement it. Furthermore, past experience in the history of this and other nations, in Asia and other parts of the globe, could yield no precedent similar or parallel to the action President Marcos had taken. Finally, they realized that the Marcos revolution, unlike other great revolutions in history, is peaceful, legal, and constitutional.

Professor Crisostomo contends in *Marcos the Revolutionary*—inciden-

tally his second book on the President — that those who were surprised by the apparent suddenness of the President's decision would not have been caught unaware if they had been perceptive enough to sense that actual revolution was a recurrent message in the President's speeches and official pronouncements. As early as 1965, when by an overwhelming majority he won the Republic's presidency, he was already mentioning it, and in his First Inaugural Address delivered on December 30, 1965 he adumbrated the course of the revolution as one principally directed at the oligarchy — "the privileged few."

Scrutinizing the President's published speeches, interviews with journalists and a wide spectrum of other sources, Crisostomo observes that since Mr. Marcos occupied the presidency, he had nothing but contempt for the status quo. He wanted to build a new social system because the old order, totally controlled by the elite, was too sterile and decadent to admit changes that could relieve the misery of the masses. Yet, paradoxically enough, although theoretically the most powerful man in the Republic, the President did not have sufficient powers to institute the reforms in the society awaited by the people. Congress was at best slow in considering the passage of revolutionary social legislation that would diffuse wealth and power since the elements comprising it were, by and large, oligarchs or their proud extensions. The judiciary, like Congress, was stuffed with a number of representatives of the oligarchy, and as a consequence the dispensation of

justice was not beyond the commerce of the influential. The bureaucracy was bogged down in the mire of corruption and ineptitude, thus resulting in the loss of millions of public funds, and the sacrifice of the masses. Criminality and lawlessness were rampant not only because of the inequities engendered by the oligarchic control of the economy but also because of the prevailing distorted sense of values of the law-enforcers and the people themselves.

To a President obsessed with national greatness and a passion to improve the plight of his people the situation was intolerable. Thus, as early as May 29, 1966, President Marcos declared:

"You have elected me as your leader, but as your leader I find myself impotent to raise this cry [that public officials be beyond reproach] for all the people to hear. I have issued the directive. I have issued the orders. I commanded, and yet it does not go beyond the lower echelons of the hierarchy of government."

Imperative was, therefore, the need to change the system and recast the values of our people. But such an end could only be attained by radical action, a revolution. The President, observes the author, could sense that the mood of the people, as early as 1966, was portentous; the masses were rapidly developing a revolutionary temper that could explode any time. Thus he appealed to the oligarchy to be more socially responsive and responsible, to stop the ostentatious and brazen display of their affluence and power, and to share, if possible, part of their privileges with the masses. But instead of heeding his advice the unscrupulous rich used their mass media in ridicule to destroy his credibility as they continued to mock the masses by extravagantly

flaunting their pelf and privilege. When the masses began to rise, as Marcos had warned, the oligarchy, much to their dismay, discovered he was with them — the people — leading them in their revolt against the system.

As a critical study of the Marcos leadership, Crisostomo's book familiarizes the reader with the background and motivations of a number of great revolutionary leaders in history, vividly capturing the mood and temper of the period covered by his narrative — the irresponsibility and unreasonableness that rendered inadequate the powers of the President of the Republic, the rebelliousness of the young, the color and clangor of protest rallies and demonstrations which were eventually infiltrated and manipulated by Communist ideologues. The author's account of the so-called "Revolt at Congress," the "Battle of Mendiola" and "Siege of Malacañan" prior to the launching of the Democratic Revolution on January 25, 1971 by President Marcos will doubtless enable the reader to see that chapters in our history which helped precipitate martial law.

However, it is in his characterization of President Marcos where Professor Crisostomo excels himself. Drawing from the President's own words and from those of his critics in the mass media, he succeeds in depicting the President in his true light as the nation's leader: a heroic figure who is always moved by feelings of humanity, who is firm but compassionate, warm but resolute, who is above all a genuine idealist with a pragmatic view of the world around him, indeed a commanding yet humane personality.

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