

BULLETS, VIOLENCE

The gunning down of Congressman Amante (on March 26, 1968) is a continuing reminder that peace and order is now the fundamental national problem. It will be impossible for the nation to survive if the situation continues to deteriorate. Despite a well-publicized anti-crime campaign following the publishers' pool editorial lamenting the sad state of peace and order this country, criminal elements think nothing of shooting a congressman in public. We do not know the facts behind this recent assassination attempt, but it fits into the same pattern of killings in that it shows our society is becoming more and more prone to violence and scornful of the law. Today one can be anywhere, driving a car as in the case of the radio commentator Yabut, or dining in a restaurant as in the case of Speaker Laurel, or waiting for an elevator in the lobby of a government building, or receiving communion in church, and a hired killer will

come and shoot you down. Human life is that cheap. And this attitude seeps down on the entire nation, whether one refers to farmer-Huks killed, or religious fanatics like the Lapiang Malaya slaughtered, or the more recent reports of Special Forces trainees being "massacred."

This situation prevails not only in our gangster-influenced cities because killings are even more rampant in the rural areas, whether one is talking about bandits, pirates, Huks, or armed goons in Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Pampanga, Cavite, Ilocos, or the Southern provinces. The reasons for killings are diverse, from personal family feuds to politics, to plain criminal avarice. Our image abroad is already such that most visitors who come here, always state that they had come despite the warnings and cries of alarm of travel agents, transport personnel, and friends. Pursuant to this, a bill was proposed in Congress requiring that local crime news reports can be

published in Pilipino so they may escape the tourist's eye. Alas, it is more than our image abroad that is in grave peril, it is our very lives as citizens of this republic, and the life of this nation as civilized society.

According to someone, who has been to Jolo, recently, the PC enforcement groups there are outgunned and alienated from the people, all of whom carry the latest

automatic weapons. Those in the hinterlands are flocking to town for protection. When a farmer plows his field he needs his brother to stand by cradling an Armalite. We need more than a mailed fist policy against criminal violence. We need a positive voice speaking out for law and order and civilized human decency. — *Alfredo R. Roces, Manila Times, March 27, 1968.*