

editorial

Once again there is much talk about corruption and graft in our government. How many of the charges are true it is hard to ascertain. How many of the rumors are merely "balitang kutsero" we do not know.

At least at the present writing, THE CROSS feels it is unable to take sides. Are the charges against the incumbent government administration well founded? Or does the present minority party have just as big if not a bigger proportion of crooks and dishonest men? Really THE CROSS feels unable to take a stand or to state an authoritative opinion in the matter.

But it would seem that there is much dishonesty among government officials, both in high and low positions. By no means do we believe that this corruption affects all government officials or even a majority of them. But from the countless rumors and pieces of information that trickle in, it does seem to be highly probable that such corruption exists. Indeed, we fear that it is almost widespread and rampant. At least such is the general belief.

Perhaps worse still, many people are disheartened. They seem to feel that frequently it is impossible to get justice from various branches of the government, unless they grease the palms of the government officials, unless they provide "pabagsak" in large or small quantities, whenever they seek not favors, but merely justice in their relations with the government.

But our question above was "ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION?" Practically all of our readers will reply with a loud and indignant NO! They will insist that this governmental corruption must be laid at the door only of the government officials themselves. That Juan de la Cruz is only the innocent victim.

We do not think so.

Although the corrupt officials of the government, be they numerous or few, possess free will like the rest of us, and although they are largely responsible for their own actions, nevertheless there is another element to be considered in the picture, namely, the widespread tolerance of dishonesty and injustice that permeates our entire civilization. We see this in our places of business. We see it in our rural areas. It exists among students and even among the directors of some schools. It is present among many capitalists and employers, but it is not absent from the employees and the laborers and the working class.

Taken altogether, this widespread toleration of and participation in dishonest and unjust dealings with our neighbor has created a poisonous atmosphere throughout our country that we feel is at least partly responsible for the present sad conditions in our government.

Is the above statement extreme? Is the charge unfounded? Is it unfair to assert that cheating and lying tactics are so widespread and prevalent?

We think not. Let us refresh your mind with a few facts that we think you will accept.

Let us take first our property owners. Perhaps they have a legal title to residences or places of business in cities or large towns. Many of them charge excessive rents by no means justified by true values. They only "get away with it", because the lessees desperately need the

**GOVERNMENT
CORRUPTION
— ARE YOU
RESPONSIBLE?**

**PEOPLE ARE
DISHEARTENED**

**BUT THE
PEOPLE ARE
PARTLY
RESPONSIBLE**

**SOME
PROPRIETORS
ABUSE**

 Editorial

property. In some cases, it is acutely poor people who are being robbed of a large part of their meager income, in order to be able to live in abodes scarcely fit for animals.

Or perhaps the proprietors own rice farms and coconut plantations and sugarlands. Many of them demand an excessive share of the crops. Many thoughtlessly neglect the welfare of their tenants and laborers, paying no attention to their health and living conditions.

**USURERS—
BLOOD-
SUCKERS**

Then we have the usurers, that despicable class of blood-suckers who by inheritance or some other means have gotten into their hands some extra money. They lend it to their needy neighbors at such exorbitant rates of interest that it is sometimes impossible for the poor victims ever to escape from their rapacious clutches. Verily, blood-suckers.

**THE WORKING
CLASS, TOO**

But it is not only the rich and the property owners who are contaminated with this disease. Very often, the employees and the laborers and the tenants are just as dishonest. They fail to give the required hours of labor for which they are paid. When the boss is absent, they read newspapers in the office. Or on the farms, they sleep under the shade trees instead of cultivating the crops. So widespread is this dishonesty among the working class that good employers and landowners, of whom there are many, are so discouraged that they even abandon worthwhile projects. They say they cannot continue when their workers are not cooperative even for their own good.

**PROFIT-
HUNGRY
SCHOOL
OPERATORS**

Let us go further into our schools, into these respected and revered places where the youth of the land should be drawing inspiration and knowledge and preparing themselves for a noble and productive life. At least some of our "schools" are nothing but cheap diploma mills. Different from other countries, some of our "educational institutions" are largely commercial enterprises operated by their owners primarily for profits. They give only the barest minimum of instruction. They watch for every opportunity within the law to get added financial returns from their students.

**FRIVOLOUS
AND
DISHONEST
STUDENTS**

And the students themselves are not without blame. Oh, we have countless numbers of our youth who still have glorious ideals and are striving manfully to prepare themselves during their school days for the battles of life to come. But countless others are passing their years in school just to obtain a piece of paper called diploma to be hung on the walls of their sala and flourished before their townmates. They waste the hard-earned money of their parents on frivolities and vices. They spend little or no time for study. Then when the quizzes or examinations come, cheating in some schools is the rule rather than the exception.

**CIVIC
GROUPS**

Need we go further? We could speak at length of civic organizations. In some of these, the men are striving to promote their own prestige and reputation rather than the bonum commune, the welfare of the people. In some women's clubs, the "ladies" engage in ill-disguised and venomous warfare, in order to assert their superiority over others, to acquire the higher offices, to have their names and pictures in the newspapers.

Let us not continue on the byways and highways of our national life where the monsters of dishonesty and injustice and cruel treatment of our fellow men walk in broad daylight seeking whom they may devour.

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EDITORIAL . . .

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We return to our first question. ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR THE POISONED ATMOSPHERE IN OUR NATIONAL LIFE? Respected readers of THE CROSS, we hasten to add that we consider you among our best citizens. We are confident that many of you are innocent of many of the abuses mentioned above. But still we suggest that all make an examination of conscience. We are the fallen sons of Adam. Unless we struggle constantly against it, we are all likely to fall prey to our passion for power and riches. Unless we discipline ourselves, we are likely to be contaminated by the materialistic poison of our civilization.

Have we been outstanding as employers and fair and even generous in the treatment of our employees? Or if employees, have we always been loyal and faithful to honest employers?

As students, as organization members, as citizens of our community, have we been fair and square and unselfish in the daily routine of our lives?

If not, we have been partly responsible for creating this widespread atmosphere of injustice and corruption that seems to have poisoned our national life.

When election day comes, if we vote not for the man who is good for the country but for the man who will do something gainful for us personally, who will give us a few pesos or a job or some other favor, then we are responsible for the bad men in our government. And if we have definite evidence of the wrongdoing of a public official and fail to reveal it out of fear that by doing so we will lose some personal advantage, then we, as citizens, are partly responsible for the crooks now holding some of the reins of power.

Let us not shout indignant cries of corruption in the government, unless we can first say that we personally are doing our utmost to be honest and fair and just in our own personal lives.

EXAMINE
OUR OWN
CONSCIENCE

OUR STRANGE EXPERIENCE . . .

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There were also many other pilgrims there coming from other countries, like the Germans, the Dutch and the English; who, although there were more than 2,000 persons in each group, attended services from morning till night, marching and singing together, like so many soldiers.

Some Filipino pilgrims wore barong-tagalog and terno, although the weather was wintery, as a natural consequence of which, some of them got sick while in Lourdes.

After spending about two (2) weeks in Brussels, London and Amsterdam, we proceeded to America for medical checkup, either at the Walter Reed Military Hospital or at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. But we decided first to consult competent physicians in New York City, where X-ray examinations were made of both of us. And strange to say, after thorough physical examinations, X-ray and otherwise, Mrs. de Joya's physicians said that the stones in her gall bladder had disappeared, and that

her gall bladder was in its normal condition, not enlarged anymore, as it had been, before our departure from the Philippines. And in my case the big stone in my bladder, which, according to my physicians in the Philippines, was solid, was found in the process of dissolution (not solid anymore); and we were informed that there would be no necessity of any surgical operation or hospitalization. After I had been so informed, I regained courage to stand up straight and to walk fast, as I had been advised previously by some friends that I must walk slowly to avoid any possible irritation.

And strange enough, we were not given any medicine at all. We were simply advised not to eat foods that are very salty or very sweet. And I was somewhat flattered by the opinion of my physicians, after thorough examinations, that my health condition could be favorably compared with that of a healthy young man of 25. And so I am very thankful to a Most Merciful God.