

# Editorial

## NATIONALISM IS NOT A MONOPOLY

**DR. JOSE RIZAL** is our national hero. He is not the private hero of any one cult or political party; nor is the act of reverencing him the monopoly of any one man or group of men. He belongs to all of us who want to perpetuate him in our memory and in our hearts — not only to those who are now loudest in their professions of patriotism and nationalism. All Filipinos rise, as a man, to pay him homage and to thank him for his selfless devotion to his country and for his incisive analyses of the social and political order of his time.

Just as the worship of God — the ideal worship — should be purged of compulsion, so must our way of honoring a hero be left to our choice. We would not be the less nationalistic if we did this than if we submitted to a forced prescription for worshipping him. Rizal, himself, had his ideals. He pursued them not because there was a shotgun at his back but because he appreciated their value in life. He embraced Catholicism, lapsed from it and later returned to the Fold of his free will. To believe otherwise would be to rob Rizal of the qualities that made him a hero.

Rizal was against force, that is to say, against compulsion. He would have considered an insult any and all attempts to have him revered because of force. We honor Rizal in our own way and for reasons which, if we may say so ourselves, are entirely commendable and valid. We desire, like any other true-blue nationalist, to be counted among those who celebrate his greatness. We recognize his brilliance and salute him for his keen insight of Philippine conditions during his time. We are not slow to adopt his teachings on the functions of government and the remedies to the social cancer which afflicted Philippine society under Spain. We are indebted to him for many other things he taught us but not for passages in his novels which, by his retraction, he repudiated.

We can honor Rizal and be patriotic without reading "El Filibusterismo" and "Noli Me Tangere." Even should we find it difficult to be nationalistic unless we read his novels, we do not see how reading his attacks against the Catholic religion, his religion and ours, would instill in us a nationalistic fervor. The novels' disparaging passages certainly do not promote nor lead to the promotion of high social ideals, patriotism and nationalism. We do not deny his novels the consequence they deserve. They are, it is not questioned, of high literary merit and they reflect, to a great degree, the truthful observations of the national hero on the social and political order. But the objectionable passages do not flush the novels with any literary brilliance. Neither do they accomplish what Rizal expected his works to achieve: independence and unity. The national controversy over the "Noli" and the "Fili" prove their divisive effect.

Nationalism, patriotism or, if you please, Filipinism, cannot dust itself out of grave intramural differences; they can thrive only in an atmosphere of unity and harmony.

Only under it can Filipinism bear the stamp of a truthful national character.

*Buddy B. Quitorio*