

TWO INTELLECTUAL TRADITIONS

by LEOPOLDO Y. YABES

IN THE WESTERN OR EUROPEO-AMERICAN CULTURAL SYSTEM the emergence and development of two broad intellectual traditions, namely the clerical and the secular, may be traced from about the Middle Ages.

The people of the Philippines, in so far as they have been influenced by the Europeo-American cultural system, also are heirs to the same clerical and secular intellectual traditions.

It is necessary, then, before taking up the two traditions as they have developed in the Philippines, to trace them to their origins in the European environment.

I.

First it should be necessary to define some terms and delimit the meanings in which they will be used here.

The term "intellectual" shall be understood here, not as a term of derision or mockery, as sometimes used in Philippine and in some other societies, but as a reference of deep respect, as commonly used in French society, to refer to any person, be he clerical or secular, who has dedicated himself mainly to the life of the mind and who, understandably enough, hopes to influence society with his ideas or way of thinking.

The term "clerical intellectual" shall be understood here as a cleric or member of a priestly or monastic class who exercises leadership of the intellect not only among his class but also among society. It shall also be used to include a lay leader of the intellect who thinks or acts in the manner of the clerical intellectual.

The term "clerical intellectual tradition" shall be understood here as the way of thinking or acting or attitudes of clerics and monastics as transmitted or inherited from age to age. Aside from demanding paramountcy of their social class in the social system, they also claim to derive

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from an unseen source the authority which they exercise over the spiritual and social lives of men and women. Originally and basically dedicated to problems of the life hereafter, the clerical tradition nevertheless has exerted tremendous influence on the worldly activities of human beings.

By "secular intellectual" shall be understood here a leader of the intellect with a non-clerical or non-religious orientation and who is recognized as such by secular society. Unlike the clerical intellectual who has prior ideological commitment, the secular intellectual usually is a free agent and has no such prior commitment. In other words, he does his own thinking and draws his own conclusions as warranted by his findings, while the clerical intellectual looks to prescribed authority not only as guide but as final arbiter in the conduct of his intellectual, emotional, and spiritual life.

The term "secular intellectual tradition" shall be understood here to mean the non-clerical or non-religious way of thinking or acting or attitudes transmitted or inherited from generation to generation. This way of thinking need not be anti-clerical or anti-religious although sometimes it becomes such. It gives more importance to the attainment of happiness on earth than to the promise of happiness in the life hereafter.

By "conventional wisdom" shall be understood here, in the sense John K. Galbraith¹ uses it, as the wisdom characterized by its general acceptability in the clerical intellectual tradition or in the secular intellectual tradition. As to be expected, conventional wisdom lasts longer in the clerical intellectual tradition because of the dogmatism and rigidity of this tradition, while the conventional wisdom of the secular intellectual tradition changes more rapidly or frequently because of the flexibility and mobility of this tradition.

II.

The beginnings of the clerical intellectual tradition may be traced to the Middle Ages, when the monasteries were the main if not the only source of light in a benighted Europe, where the learned monastics and theologians preserved the learning already acquired and added to it through their own studies. Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Peter Abelard, and Roger Bacon were among the leading monastic intellectuals at the time.

It was also around this time—the thirteenth century—that universities reached fuller development: Paris (1215); Sorbonne (1257); Oxford, Pa-

¹ *The Affluent Society* (Harmondsworth: 1962), pp. 17-27.

dua (1228); Rome (1245); Salamanca (1250). The University of Paris was recognized as "the center of a Pan-European intellectual influence resting above all upon its faculties of theology and arts."²

I like to look at the Renaissance and the humanist movement as attempts to secularize the thinking and attitude of the people who, for centuries, had been steeped in the other-worldly philosophical outlook of the clerical tradition. The Renaissance was the kindling of interest in a cultural tradition (the Greek and Roman) that by and large had been more secular than religious; and humanism was a logical development from the revival of interest in the secular life. Humanism has been described not as a literary but as an intellectual movement, "a movement of the human mind which began when, following the rise of the towns, the urban intelligentsia slowly turned away from the transcendental values imposed by religion to the more immediately perceptible values of Nature and of man."³

Machiavelli liberated political science from the theological outlook, while Galileo, in affirming the Copernican heliocentric theory against the prevailing geocentric dogma, did much in secularizing the physical sciences. However, Thomas More, who was a contemporary of Machiavelli, and whose *Utopia* was written almost at the same time as *The Prince*, cannot be placed in the tradition of Machiavelli, although he was himself a humanist. He was a layman, but he was closer to the clerical tradition than to the secular tradition.

I am not inclined to consider the schism of Martin Luther as fundamentally a breakaway from the clerical intellectual tradition, because even after he had broken away from Rome, he was still essentially an Augustinian monk in mentality. Of course he declared for freedom of the mind, and that was a step toward liberalism, but in actual practice he still was authoritarian and was not very tolerant of views contrary to his. It can be said in his favor, though, that usually reformers or prophets cannot afford to be very tolerant, or they would fail in their mission. His contribution to the strengthening of the secular intellectual tradition came about unintentionally, maybe even fortuitously, when as a result of the Peasant Uprising in 1524-25, he was forced to align himself with the Princes of Germany and thereby subordinate himself to them. The subordinate position of the church in relation to the state in Protestant countries has contributed to the secularization of the mind of man during the last four centuries. But as indicated by the experience

² Richard Hofstadter and W. P. Metzger, *The Department of Academic Freedom in the United States* (New York: 1955), p. 5.

³ Ferdinand Schevill, *History of Florence* (New York: 1936), pp. 316-317.

of some secular states, the secularization of thought does not always contribute to the freedom of the mind.

And yet it was really this secularization of thought that brought in the beginnings of science to the European continent. Before its liberation from the clerical tradition, the European mind was not free to speculate beyond the approved grooves of thought. Philosophy and natural science were only a handmaiden of theology; theology was the queen of the sciences. But with the advent of Copernicus, Leonardo, Galileo, and Francis Bacon in the fields of the natural sciences, and of Machiavelli Boccaccio, Rabelais, and Montaigne in the humanities and social sciences, the human mind, long fettered, took on wings and ranged the farthest reaches it was capable of reaching. Before the introduction of the secular way of thinking, knowledge was largely speculative and dogmatic; with the advent and growing ascendancy of secular thought, empirical and inductive reasoning, which is the basis of all scientific procedure, made possible the opening of the modern scientific and technological age.

The question might be raised here whether there is conflict between secular thought and clerical thought, or between scientific thought and religious belief. There need not be any between the latter, but there could be between the former. For if secular thought tends towards scientific orientation and methodology and clerical thought tends towards theological orientation and methodology, then there could be great danger of conflict since the scientific attitude is usually one of open-mindedness and scientific conclusions are always held tentative but the theological attitude is usually one of intolerance and its conclusions are dogmatic and authoritarian. As an American academic man ⁴ says:

There is no conflict between science and religion, but there may be deep conflicts between science and theology. The theologians are specialists whose business is to define religious beliefs, dogmas, duties. Their tendency is to draw lines and to say that people who stand to the right of them are good people, while those who stand to the left are bad, heretics, criminals. Death is too good for the latter; they must be driven out like vermin.

In past times theologians had enough power to do such things and to persecute often with extreme cruelty the people whose theological opinions differed from their own. The wars of religion of the sixteenth century were so full of atrocities because the good theologians were always ready to pour oil upon the fire

It is remarkable that the struggles between science and Christian theology did not cease after the Middle Ages and the Renaissance but continued throughout the best part of the last Century, in spite of scientific and technological victories which were of incredible magnitude.

⁴ George Sarton of Harvard University, in Joseph Needham (ed.), *Science, Religion, and Reality* (New York: 1955), p. 13.

It might be added that even at present the clerical intellectual tradition has not contributed to the free and mature development of the intellect of man.

III.

It was the Medieval intellectual tradition—of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, of Domingo de Guzman and Torquemada—that was brought into the Philippines by the Spanish *conquistadores* and missionaries of the sixteenth and succeeding centuries. It was Renaissance in much of Europe and although the humanist Desiderius Erasmus had died decades before a very much disillusioned man—both with Rome and with Martin Luther—humanism was already a force to reckon with in many areas on the continent. Yet Spain was not one of these areas; as a matter of fact it was in Spain where the institutions of the Holy Inquisition flourished most and longest.

So into a Philippine society that was largely animist in belief was introduced an authoritarian intellectual tradition deriving its powers from a supernatural source of which it claimed to be the exclusive interpreter. At the time of the conquest and for centuries before, this tradition had adhered to the Ptolemaic or geocentric concept of the universe; and any other concept, like the Copernican or heliocentric concept, was considered heretical and heavily punishable. So it is interesting to note here that about the time (1616) the Jesuit Cardinal Roberto Belarmino was commanding Galileo not to persist in indorsing Copernicus' heliocentric heresy, Belarmino's book on the Christian Doctrine was being translated into the more important Philippine languages and published for use in the evangelization of the pagan Filipinos.⁵

One of the more important early converts to the new intellectual tradition was Pedro Bukaneg, a lay Augustinian brother who is sometimes referred to as the Apostle of the Ilocos. Among the few extant literary pieces credited to him is a poem entitled "Pampanunot Ken Patay" ("Thoughts on Death"), which reflects an attitude towards life on earth that is thoroughly medieval, regarding it essentially as empty and only transitory to the heavenly existence.⁶

⁵ The special committee named by the Holy Inquisition to examine Galileo's work *Dialogue on the Two Chief Systems of the World*, which was issued in 1632, reported among other things: "He (Galileo) has been deceitfully silent about the command laid upon him in 1616, viz., to relinquish altogether the opinion that the Sun is the center of the world and immovable and that the earth moves, nor henceforth to hold, teach, or defend it in any way whatsoever, verbally or in writing." Quoted by Charles Singer, "Historical Relations of Religion and Science", in Joseph Needham, ed., *Science, Religion and Reality* (New York: 1955), p. 140.

⁶ Francisco Lopez, *Gramatica Ilocana* (Malabon: 1895), p. 317-318.

In due course this clerical intellectual tradition became supreme in the country, at least in the converted areas. This development was inevitable because of the union of church and state and because, as a consequence of which, of the paramount role achieved by the friar clerics over the civil and military authorities of the colony.

There is this one marked difference between the European clerical intellectual tradition and the clerical intellectual tradition as developed in the Philippines. The clerical tradition in Europe recognized the humanity and rationality of its communicants, and even of its enemies. Proof of this is that it punished heresy; at least a heretic is endowed with reason, hence the Holy Inquisition was instituted for the punishment of error.

The clerical intellectual tradition in the Philippines looked down on the Filipinos—the *indios*—as either less than human or as perpetual children who were not endowed with enough reason to be responsible for their acts. It should be interesting to note, in this connection, that the provisions of the laws of the Inquisition were never made applicable to the Filipinos; they were applied only to the Spaniards resident in the colony. Also corroborative of this statement was a declaration made by the last Spanish archbishop of Manila, the Dominican Bernardino Nozaleda, before the Taft Commission in 1909. In this testimony Nozaleda affirmed that the “the Filipinos . . . had an absolute want of character,” and had “not sufficient mental capacity to digest any abstract question;” that “prudence and discretion are absolutely unknown to them”; that “soon after they leave an educated atmosphere, they lose all they have learned,” and that “their affection for their children is more that of the animal than human.”⁷

It was the general claim of most of the Spanish chroniclers that the main objectives of the missionaries was to stamp out superstition among the pagan natives. A very laudable objective, and yet no less than T. H. Pardo de Tavera⁸ is author of the statement that another system of superstition was substituted for the old. He wrote:

All of the fear for the mysterious as well as the belief of the primitive Filipinos in occult powers that destroyed health, attracted misfortunes, brought victory or led to disorder were preserved, changing only the spirits that governed the happenings in life and natural phenomenon . . . The patron saints recommended by the missionaries took the place of the ancient *anitos*, representatives of their ancestors who intervened in their former idolatry in all the incidents in life . . . When the missionaries preached their religion, they condemned the ancient pagan superstitions,

⁷ United States Senate Document 190; 56th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 96-112.

⁸ *The Character of Rizal and the Legacy of Obscurantism* (Manila: 1960), p. 68.

but they taught another new superstition more powerful than the primitive one, not only because of the prestige of the new patrons, who are all members of a celestial court organized like a celestial aristocracy . . . but for using to communicate with their God the same language supposed to have been spoken by Him—the Latin language—in which the priests say their prayers and chant their hymns.

If therefore the clerical intellectual tradition in Europe was unsympathetic to science, the clerical intellectual tradition in the Philippines was much more so. In the first place, the clerical intellectual tradition in the Philippines during most of the Spanish regime could hardly deserve to be called intellectual because the friar-missionaries that came here were as a rule not endowed with a high quality of intelligence and were not well educated, in contrast to their confrères in Europe. In the second place, it was to their selfish interest that the people be kept in relative ignorance, because if they became enlightened they would find out about the general ignorance of the friars and lose their esteem or any fear of them.

The hostile attitude towards education and enlightenment for Filipinos, however, was not confined to the friars and clerics; it was also shared by the colonial civil and military authorities who, under our definition, may be classified as belonging to the clerical intellectual tradition. Even a Spanish diplomat, who made a study of Philippine conditions during the first half of the nineteenth century, urged the closure of colleges for men in Manila as inimical to the stability of the colony for producing potential liberals and rebels. In the last volume of his three-volume report on Philippine conditions in 1842, he offered these observations: ⁹

. . . The workhand, the goatherd do not read social contracts and neither do they know what occurs beyond their town. It is not their kind of people who have carved the destruction of absolutism in Spain, but those who have been educated in the colleges and who know the price of security and accordingly fight for it. We must always keep this in mind if we have to think sincerely. It is indispensable that we avoid the formation of liberals, because in a colony, *liberal* and *rebellious* are synonymous terms. The consequence of this maxim is to admit the principle that every step forward is a step backward; circumscribe education to primary schools where the three "r's" can be taught, with one school in every town as is the present practice and under the care of the curate. The colleges for men now extant in Manila should be closed.

To help prevent the infiltration of dangerous thoughts into the colony, the friar-missionaries found it necessary to control the reading mat-

⁹ Simibaldo de Mas, *Informe Sobre el Estado de las Islas Filipinas en 1842*. Volume III, translated into English by Pablo K. Botor (Quezon City: 1961), p. 10.

ter that was printed in the country or that entered from abroad. Strict censorship was in force throughout most of the regime, directed mostly by the ecclesiastical authorities. Even the Comision Permanente de Censura, established in 1855, was controlled by ecclesiastics although it was a creation of the colonial government. "It was specially careful," says a close student of Philippine bibliography, "to prevent the publication or importation of any book that attacked or belittled the established religion or the state, either criticizing them as institutions or censuring their members, or that contained material deemed detrimental to public morals."¹⁰

According to W. E. Retana's account¹¹ of the proceedings of the Commission, in the year 1866, the Commission approved three books for importation but with changes, and prohibited twenty-three, among them *Aventuras de Robinson* and seven historical works written with a democratic point of view. In 1867 it approved fifty religious tracts and one newspaper for publication in the Philippines. It disapproved importation of twenty-two books including Dumas' novels, *Los derechos del hombre*, and *Las mil y una noches*. *Don Quixote* was admitted with the suppression of the following sentence: "*Las obras de caridad que se hacen flojamente, no tienen merito ni valen nada.*"

Some twenty years later, in 1887, this same Commission, in a report to the Governor General written by an Augustinian friar, Salvador Font, curate of Tondo, Manila, in connection with Rizal's novel *Noli me Tangere*, recommended, "*que se prohibita en absoluto la importacion, reproduccion y circulacion de este pernicioso libro en las Islas.*"¹² Earlier that year, a faculty committee at the University of Santo Tomas had made a similarly strong recommendation against the same book to the rector of the University.

All this happened less than a century ago in the Philippines. What happened one hundred or two hundred years earlier could have been worse.

At any rate, the friars were able in no time to consolidate their spiritual and temporal power over the people. By the very nature of their work, they were closer to the people than were the colonial authorities. As a general rule, they also stayed longer. On the average the Manila archbishops had a longer tenure of office than the governors-general. Throughout the Spanish regime Manila had only twenty-five archbishops, but the Philippines had about one hundred and twenty governors-gen-

¹⁰ John W. Osborn, "Books and Bookselling in the Philippines," Philippine Library Association Publications, I (1935).

¹¹ As summarized by J. W. Osborn. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

¹² As quoted in Rafael Palma, *Biografia de Rizal* (Manila: 1949), p. 100.

eral. Whoever had the longer tenure obviously could wield the greater authority and exert the greater influence. The ecclesiastical authorities, certainly were aware of this; hence in a struggle for power with the colonial authorities, almost always they emerged triumphant.

It was in the field of education that the clerical intellectual tradition fought most tenaciously for the maintenance of its supremacy. It has always held, as part of its conventional wisdom, that education is properly the responsibility of the home and the church and not of the state, and so from the beginning in the Philippines education had always been managed by the clergy. Primary education was under the care of the friar-curates and secondary and professional education was under the University of Sto. Tomas, a Dominican school. By 1870, under the influence of European liberalism, the government of Spain itself, through the Moret decrees, sought to secularize education partly by placing the administration of what passed for a system of higher education into the hands of laymen. The Maura Law of 1893 also provided that the *capitan municipal*, as town executive, was to be inspector of schools in place of the friar-curate. But the implementation of these laws was fought violently by the friars and they succeeded in keeping education relatively undisturbed under their control to the end of the Spanish regime.

IV.

The Filipinos, however, refused to be kept indefinitely in a state of ignorance by the friar tradition. They could be regimented under an authoritarian and monolithic regime only up to a certain point, and no further, they had enough sense of self-respect left to fight for their freedom to think and act for themselves. Besides, elsewhere the secular and libertarian forces were at work to counteract the efforts of the older and more powerful clerical intellectual tradition. The gains achieved by such struggles in Europe and America, no matter how distant, could not fail ultimately to infiltrate into the country past the strict thought censorship.

The rise of secular thought and the development of modern science in the wake of the Reformation was something that could not be stopped or even slowed down by the clerical tradition. As a matter of fact the momentum became stronger when the clerical resistance grew more fierce. "When intellectuals ceased to be solely bearers of religiosity, the very act of separation, however gradual and unwitting and undeliberate, sets

'up a tension between the intellectuals and the religious authority of their society," observes a student of intellectual history. He goes on:¹³

Ecclesiastical and exemplary religious authority became an object of the distrust of intellectuals, and in so far as the authority of the government of earthly affairs associated itself with the religious powers, it too shared in that skepticism In the West where the separation of religious and other intellectual activities has become most pronounced, a more general feeling of distance from authority has been engendered and has become one of the strongest of the traditions of the intellectuals.

This kind of situation was to be seen most clearly during the period of the Enlightenment in France. Among most intellectuals, if there was no open anti-clericalism, there was at least distrust of clerical authority. There was a similar attitude towards the civil authority. The rising prestige of science and scientists helped in strengthening the secular position as against the traditional clerical prestige. A deism that did not depend on a priesthood for the practice of its worship was substituted by many intellectuals for the established religion.

What are variously known and referred to as the Reform or Propaganda movement and the Philippine Revolution itself may appropriately be described as the product or inspiration of the French Enlightenment and the American and French Revolutions. Although their writings still contained scholastic terminology, which may be traced to their formal sectarian education, it is very evident that Antonio Ma. Regidor, Graciano Lopez-Jaena, Marcelo H. del Pilar, Jose Rizal, T. H. Pardo de Tavera, and Juan and Antonio Luna had read up extensively on the literature of the Enlightenment and of the two great Revolutions of the 18th Century, and had assimilated some of the ideas that had inspired those historic movements.

As proof of this statement, it may be pointed out that the Reformists advocated the secularization of education or at least its liberation from friar control; as a matter of fact the more radical of them wanted the friars to be expelled from the country. However, even if many of them were anti-clerical, they were not necessarily against revealed religion, although a number may have turned to deism as more in consonance with their secular outlook. It may also be pointed out that although many of them in the beginning still advocated incorporation of the Philippines into the Spanish Kingdom as a regular province, they eventually declared themselves, with possible exception of Rizal and a few others, as in favor of self-determination or independence—which was the logical development

¹³ Edward A. Shils, "The Traditions of Intellectuals," *The Intellectuals*, ed. by George B. de Huszar (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960), p. 57.

from the experience of the American Revolution and the subsequent rise of nationalism. Also there is a healthy respect of the Reformists for the fundamental human freedoms¹⁴—the freedoms the enjoyment of which were eventually guaranteed in the Malolos Constitution. Rizal himself, besides writing of these freedoms, had actually translated into Tagalog a fundamental declaration of the French Revolution on the Rights of Man. And finally the scientific orientation, as a general rule, of the Reformists was very clear.

This social, political, and intellectual ferment may perhaps be best illustrated in Rizal's novels, especially the *Noli Me Tangere*. We have here two clashing forces, an older one represented by the friar orders who are in control of the educational program as well as the ecclesiastical system, and a younger one represented by the educated and science-oriented elements of the population. Frays Damaso and Salvi were examples of unedifying priests who were not only sexually immoral but intellectually dishonest and spiritually bankrupt. Opposed to the education of the masses, they plotted secretly against Ibarra's project of a school-house by ruining Ibarra himself. Ibarra, Tasio and Elias—who were the representatives of the more enlightened portion of the population of San Diego—could therefore be made to symbolize the secular intellectual tradition, while Frays Damaso and Salvi and all those who shared their way of thinking and acting may be made to symbolize the clerical intellectual tradition. Ibarra, Tasio and Elias may be referred to as direct inheritors of the French Enlightenment, while Damaso's and Salvi's origins may be traced farther back to Torquemada and Rodrigo Borgia.

Largely through the efforts of such intellectuals as Emilio Jacinto, Apolinario Mabini, Tomas del Rosario, Antonio Luna, Jose Alejandrino, and T. H. Pardo de Tavera and of such non-intellectuals as Andres Bonifacio and Emilio Aguinaldo, the clerical intellectual tradition lost much of its power and prestige during the two phases of the Philippine Revolution. Among the intelligentsia of the time, however, this tradition was still strong as indicated in the debate and voting on the proposed provision of the Malolos Constitution to adopt Catholicism as the state religion. An amendment that would have the state recognize the freedom and equality of religions as well as the separation of church and state received a tie vote on the first balloting and won by only one vote on the second ballot.¹⁵ However, it is significant that, as finally promul-

¹⁴ There is plenty of evidence of this in the columns of *La Solidaridad* (1889-1895), which called itself *quincenario democrático*.

¹⁵ Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *Malolos; The Crisis of the Republic* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1960), pp. 297-306.

gated, the Constitution established a secular and republican state, the first to be founded in Asia.

Into the vacuum left by the clerical intellectual tradition as a result of the loss of some of its power and prestige during the American colonial regime, naturally moved in the secular intellectual tradition. As expected the secular nature of the state was reaffirmed and invigorated under the American colonial regime. So the secular intellectual tradition instituted by Rizal, Plaridel, Lopez-Jaena, and Pardo de Tavera was also strengthened under the American rule with the cooperation of such statesmen as Rafael Palma, Sergio Osmeña, and Manuel L. Quezon, of such jurists as Jose Abad Santos and Jose P. Laurel, of such educationists as Francisco Benitez, Jorge Bacobo, and Camilio Osias, and of such writers as Teodoro M. Kalaw, Claro M. Recto and Fernando M. Maramag.

It is to the credit of the American colonizers that, thanks to their secular and democratic tradition, they did not rehabilitate the master-slave moral tradition of the Spanish clerical system in the Philippines. They called their rule one of American-Filipino partnership. Municipal and provincial elections were held soon after the conquest and a popular national assembly was elected in 1907. A secular public school system which culminated in a secular state university was established. Filipinos could hold much more responsible positions than were open to them during the Spanish rule. They could become chief justice or associate justice of the Supreme Court, Speaker of the House of Representatives, President of the Senate, President of the University of the Philippines, Secretary of Department, or Commissioner or Director of Bureau. The atmosphere was auspicious for the strengthening of the secular intellectual tradition which, inspired by the campaign for political independence,¹⁶ slowly took deeper root among the liberal intelligentsia, whose nucleus came from the young people educated in the public and other secular schools and who were in the forefront in the fight for the basic human freedoms.

¹⁶ It should be interesting to note here that the clerical tradition in the United States and in the Philippines was opposed to early independence for the Philippines as called for in the Clarke Amendment to the Jones Bill (1916), which promised to recognize Philippine independence as soon as stable government could be established here. Evidently under instructions from ecclesiastical authorities, about thirty Democratic representatives, "identified with the Roman Catholic Church broke away from their Party-line, and joined the Republicans" in voting down the amendment, which would authorize the United States President to proclaim Philippine independence within two or four years from the date of approval of the bill, unless there were disturbances in the Islands. Napoleon J. Casambre, "Manuel L. Quezon and the Jones Bill," *Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review*, XXIII (June-Dec. 1958), pp. 277-282.

All this time—that is, during the first two decades of the American colonial rule—the clerical tradition seemed to have kept itself discreetly in the background. With a shameful past it could not presume to lead in a society dominated by American secular and democratic values. However, it viewed with alarm the weakening of the closed, monolithic and stratified society built under the Spanish rule and the emergence of an open, pluralistic and mobile society with the introduction of several competing social institutions and ideas and practices. The Aglipayan schism, the Protestant inroads, in other words the institution of the freedom of worship, which was understood to mean freedom not only to worship but also not to worship, condemned by the clerical tradition as one of the errors of liberalism—these were bad signs for a quick comeback to power. A favorite target for attack then, as it is today, was the secular public school system. In a circular dated 19 November 1919, a high prelate instructed his clergy as follows:¹⁷

As a first step, after you have made the parents see the social evils that result from the godless school, such as crimes against purity, murder, suicide, rape, and robbery, disobedience to civil and ecclesiastical authorities, in short, the corruption of customs—all the ripe fruit of those lay schools—Your Reverences hint to them to declare without euphemism in letters or petitions addressed to us their irrevocable determination that their children be given a Christian education in the government schools. We on our part will take care of sending on these petitions to the Legislature.

The good prelate conveniently forgot that there was more immorality and corruption during the Spanish regime than at the time he wrote his circular, and yet, to use his logic, this rampant immorality and corruption during the Spanish colonial rule should be attributed to the religious instruction in the exclusively sectarian system of education during that regime.

But that is the nature of the clerical intellectual tradition. It can never reconcile itself to the continued existence of secular education, because secular education is not God-centered and therefore will not recognize the pre-eminence of clerics either as a social class or as intellectual leaders. About fifteen years later, it again made a bid in the Constitutional Convention in 1934 for a constitutional mandate for compulsory religious instruction in all schools. It lost its bid, but about four years later, in 1938, it succeeded in persuading the unicameral National Assembly to pass a religious instruction bill. On the advice of Osmeña, who was Vice-President and concurrently Secretary of Public Instruction, Quezon vetoed the bill and challenged the prelates to bring the issue to the

¹⁷ Quoted in Pardo de Tavera, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

polls that year. They did not, but at present and for a few years back, there again has been a movement, led by laymen who belong to the clerical intellectual tradition, to propose an amendment to the Constitution to provide for compulsory religious instruction in all schools.¹⁸

The fact is that after the war, especially after the establishment of the Republic, the clerical intellectual tradition has become more militant and more politically powerful. It has faithful disciples in the Legislature, in the executive departments, in the judiciary, in the educational establishments. Reminiscent of the tremendous power that it used to wield during the Spanish regime was its successful blocking, only a little more than a decade ago, of the effective use in public secondary schools of the English version of a notable biography of Rizal by a prominent Filipino writer in Spanish. In connection with this work, a high Filipino prelate, along with other high prelates mostly Filipino, wrote a widely publicized pastoral letter to the faithful saying, among other things:¹⁹

In the Catholic nation that is our beloved Philippines, there is a small sector of society which would pretend that one of the marks of glory of Jose Rizal, our undisputed national hero, and the ideal of our youth and of all our people, is that he was a Mason, died a Mason, that is a member of a sect expressly condemned by the Church. And to advance this proposition it is now sought to place in the hands of the youth in high school, the biography of the hero: *The Pride of the Malay Race*. x x x

The discrediting of the authorities of the Church together with the passion to pose as an ideal for Catholics, one portrayed as a champion of Masonry, is what, even at first glance is easily discovered to be behind the militant demand to introduce in the schools the book we are considering. And therefore, complying with our duty to watch over the spiritual welfare of the faithful we prohibit, under pain of grave sin (with the notation that ignorance or parvity of matter may lessen the gravity of the sin and that permission will remove all fault) and in the case of contumacy under pain of canonical sanctions, the reading and retention of these books, whether in the original Spanish or in the English translation, by any of the faithful in our respective jurisdictions.

The only major defeat the clerical tradition suffered was the passage of the Rizal Law in 1956; but it seems even the Rizal Law, is not being adequately implemented except in the University of the Philippines. As a matter of fact it has encouraged a strong movement to have the law repealed. It has infiltrated secular government establishments like the National Science Development Board and it has tried very hard to infiltrate even the secular University of the Philippines, including its Insti-

¹⁸ Not so long ago a high official at the University of the Philippines actually proposed the establishment of a Department of Religion at the University. Vidal A. Tan, *Our Philosophy of Education* (Quezon City, 1954), p. 5.

¹⁹ I. T. Runes and M. M. Buenafe, *The Forgery of the Rizal Retraction and Josephines' 'Autobiography'* (Manila: 1962), pp. 11-13.

tute of Asian Studies and some other research units. As usual its first step has been to undermine the integrity of the University and of the research units. Whatever may be the inadequacies of the outgoing administrators of the Institute, it can be said to their credit that they have had the wisdom and the strength of character to prevent the clerical tradition from creeping into, and influencing the policies of the Institute. It would be inimical to any research body for it to be unduly influenced by persons who are no longer open-minded and free because of their previous irrevocable commitments to certain ideologies, methodologies, and epistemologies.

In this connection, a perceptive observer of the contemporary Philippine scene will not fail to note that while in America and in certain areas of Europe, leading scientists and statesmen have already discerned with joy the emergence since the end of the war of what appears to be a truly democratic-scientific society, in the Philippines not a few of our prominent countrymen are still looking backward to the Middle Ages for rules of conduct of the mind and of the body to guide the thinking and attitude of Filipinos of the Space Age of the second half of the twentieth century.²⁰

V.

Despite the growing political power of the clerical intellectual tradition, however, clerics as a class do not seem to have acquired much of the prestige and influence exercised by their kind during the Spanish colonial regime. Under a theocratic era such as that of the Spaniards, among the traditional learned professions, the priesthood could easily place first or second in prestige, above either law or medicine or both. A recent survey of opinion undertaken among seniors in three leading high schools in the Manila metropolitan area including the U.P. High School and in three representative high schools in the province of Laguna disclosed that priests and ministers now are not so highly regarded—at least not among intelligent young people—as physicians, college professors, and lawyers. They were ranked fourth by the students, with physicians, college professors and lawyers preceding them in that order, and with the corporation executives trailing them closely.²¹

²⁰ Grenn T. Seaborg, "A Scientific Society—The Beginnings", *Science*, (Feb. 16, 1962); Ambrosio Padilla, "On Religious Instruction," *The Manila Chronicle*, Feb. 20-24, 1963; Oscar Ledesma, "Religious Instruction Backed," *The Manila Chronicle*, Feb. 28, 1963.

²¹ Gelia T. Castillo, "A Study of Occupational Evaluation in the Philippines," a paper presented to the First Research Conference of the University of the Philippines, Quezon City, 21-23, June 1961.

This could be an indication that the secular intellectual tradition is not as weak as some people fear it is and that, if it cannot equal or dominate the clerical intellectual tradition, at least it will be strong enough to check the abuses of the other tradition. The secular tradition in the Philippines will derive its strength mainly from that part of the tradition of the nation that is liberal and democratic; and so long as that tradition is not completely cut off from the Europeo-American liberal democratic tradition and so long as this latter tradition remains dominant in the Western cultural system, there is hope that the secular intellectual tradition will gather greater strength as the Filipino people become more educated and enlightened and grow in greater and more widespread abundance in the material blessings of life. This will need more improved and more widespread education on all levels and in all areas from the basic disciplines to the professions and technology and an improved national economy that can be the result only of greater and more extensive industrialization.

Mainly through the instrumentality of the secular, liberal, and democratic tradition, therefore, the Filipino people may yet be able to build up a national civilization that will be rich in the secular, liberal, and democratic values and yet will not be bereft of the other values, usually called spiritual, which make for a fuller, more expansive and more satisfying existence.

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