

## NATIONALISM IN PHILIPPINE POLICY AND LAW — A FOREWORD TO THE SYMPOSIUM\*

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The subject of our symposium this year is "Nationalism." It expresses the spirit pervading today in all the newer nations in Asia and Africa. It is not in itself a newly-born force but a resurging one revitalized by a growing awareness of actual or potential economic and political strength on the part of peoples who have felt the humiliating effect and the repressive element of life under foreign rule.

Nationalism in this country was once confined to political demands. Its immediate goal was national independence. But as this objective was attained, nationalism had to be directed into new channels. These courses are now leading our people into the economic and cultural fields. In promoting nationalism in this newer sphere, we have resorted to legislative measures and to a certain extent we are implementing it by administrative regulations. For this reason nationalism has been chosen as the general subject of the annual symposium presented by the members of the *Order of the Purple Feather* of this College.

The problem is: How may the control of the business, industrial, and economic activities of this country be placed in the hands of Filipinos? The agitation for the passage of nationalization laws by Congress has already produced some legislative enactments. The law nationalizing the retail trade has been the outstanding one. However, this law has not yet produced actual tangible results showing some marked diversion of the ownership and management of the retail trade into the hands of Filipinos. It should be evident, however, that this change cannot be expected to take place at any speedy rate. Aliens have had a firm and widely spread hold on the retail trade of this country. Long years of dedication to this business have given the Chinese particularly superior knowledge and invaluable experience in the management of retail stores in our cities, towns, and barrios.

The slow tempo of the actual process of the nationalization of the retail trade is not the only factor that should make our nationalists uneasy. The retail trade law itself has driven the alien — the Chinese in particular — into the field of industry. The major por-

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tion of the investments in this sphere is alien-owned. The alien invasion into this fruitful area has been most timely and propitious. It has received encouragement and protection by the emergency policies of exchange and import controls adopted by the Government since 1949. Consequently, it may be said that the industrialization program of the country is actually being carried out by Chinese and other alien capitalists. They have been establishing factories for the manufacture of textiles, paper, food products, hosiery, metal ware, drugs, and other articles of prime necessity. They have strengthened their hold on the wholesale trade as well. We may even expect them to enter the field of mining, lumbering, and public utilities which are reserved by our Constitution for citizens of the Philippines; and they could do so by becoming Filipino citizens through naturalization. Already, a large number of them have taken this step. In the event that our Congress should again place a roadblock in this highway, they could very well take advantage of this protection.

The other problem is: How could Filipinos be made to think like Filipinos and not like Americans or Europeans? Again an attempt has been made to accomplish this feat by law. Legislation has been enacted to compel students in all schools to read the works of Rizal. The expectation is that a compulsory measure of this sort may direct the mind of the student into a keener appreciation of the thoughts, ideals, and works of our national hero.

By law again we have adopted a national language out of one of the different tongues spoken by the Filipinos. There are no visible signs as yet of intellectual ferment induced by the employment of our national language indicative of a development of a distinctive national culture. The Spanish and the English languages were the vehicles used by the Filipinos of old in arousing political nationalism among our people. They were used as the tools, almost entirely, in developing cultural nationalism among the more literate elements of our population.

It should be admitted that laws by themselves are weak instruments for the development of a living, progressive, and vigorous nationalism. Space does not permit an ampler discussion of this subject on this occasion. The different contributions to the present symposium will tell us what has been done and is going to be done in the different fields of endeavor for the development of nationalism in this country. They represent the individual ideas of the different contributors.