

Ideological framework

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The Ideological Framework Economic prosperity spawned discontent when the native beneficiaries saw a new world of affluence opening for themselves and their class. They attained a new consciousness and hence, a new goal - that of equality with the peninsulares - not in the abstract, but in practical economic and political terms. Hipization became the conscious manifestation of economic struggle, of the desire to realize the potentialities offered by the period of expansion and progress.

Hipization and assimilation constituted the ideological expression of the economic motivations of affluent indios and mestizos. Equality with the Spaniard meant equality of opportunity. But they did not realize as yet that real equality must be based on national freedom and independence. They were still in the initial phases of nationalist consciousness - a consciousness made possible by the market situation of the time. The lordly friar who had been partly responsible for the isolation of the islands became the target of attacks.

Anti-clericalism became the ideological style of the period. [p. 134] These then were the salient economic and ideological features of Rizal's time. A true historical review would prove that great men are those who read the time and have a deeper understanding of reality. It is their insights that make them conversant with their periods and which enable them to articulate the needs of the people. To a large extent, Rizal, the ilustrado, fulfilled this function, for in voicing the goals of his class he had to include the aspirations of the entire people.

Though the aims of this class were limited to reformist measures, he expressed its demands in terms of human liberty and human dignity and thus encompassed the wider aspirations of all the people. This is not to say that he was conscious that these were class goals; rather, that typical of his class, he equated class interest with people's welfare. He did this in good faith, unaware of any basic contradictions between the two. He was the product of his society and as such could be expected to voice only those aims that were within the competence of his class.

Moreover, social contradictions had not ripened sufficiently in his time to reveal clearly the essential disparateness between class and national goals. Neither could he have transcended his class limitations, for his cultural upbringing was such that affection for Spain and Spanish civilization precluded the idea of breaking the chains of colonialism. He had to become a Spaniard first before becoming a Filipino. [8] As a social commentator, as the exposé of oppression, he performed a remarkable task.

His writings were part of the tradition of protest which blossomed into revolution, into a separatist movement. His original aim of elevating the indio to the level of Hispanization of the peninsular so that the country could be assimilated, could become a province of Spain, was transformed into its opposite. Instead of making the Filipinos closer to Spain, the propaganda gave root to separation. The drive for Hispanization was transformed into the development of a distinct national consciousness. Rizal contributed much to the growth of this national consciousness.

It was a contribution not only in terms of propaganda but in something positive that the present generation of Filipinos will owe to him and for which they will honor him by completing the task which he so nobly began. He may have had a different and limited goal at the time, a goal that for us is already passe, something we take for granted. However, for [p. 135] his time this limited goal was already a big step in the right direction. This contribution was in the realm of Filipino nationhood - the winning of our name as a race, the recognition of our people as one, and the elevation of the indio into Filipino.