

## Revisiting Nationalism

Nationalism is known as the devotion to the interests of one's nation. How is it getting by amid the vastly linked world built by globalization?

An ongoing belief is that globalization is leading to the ruin of nations that insist on acting alone rather than collectively as demanded by the globalists.

However, the world seems to miss the fact that globalization itself is under heavy pressure since the world recession of 2008.

The G-7 countries and the global oligarchy of transnational corporations have now been forced to share power in directing the world economy with the so-called BRIC countries – nationalist-led Brazil, Russia, India and China – whose economies, like those of some Southeast Asian countries, avoided recession.

Could it be that the reason our economy lags behind those of our neighbours is that our leaders lack the nationalism that characterizes these countries?

The Philippines has a cherished nationalist tradition going back to the days of Jose Rizal and the other *ilustrados* who launched the propaganda movement in the late 19th century.

During the American colonial regime, it was Claro M. Recto, the brilliant Filipino politician, jurist and poet who led the nationalist cause. Recto thrived as leader of the nationalists when the Philippines gained independence from America in 1946. His allies included Lorenzo Tanada, Jose W. Diokno, and Renato Constantino. Recto, openly opposed to the American bases in the Philippines, ran for president in 1957 but lost to then Vice-President Carlos P. Garcia.

Critics say this loss shows that Philippine nationalists, while popular with the elite and educated classes, lacked mass support.

Just the same, the nationalists' victories made history. In 1991, under the leadership of then Senate President Jovito Salonga, the Senate voted 12-11 to reject the extension of the Clark and Subic bases agreement with the US, overriding President Corazon Aquino's allies.

Still, national interest does not seem to be the overriding concern in majority of our current leaders.

The debate on the efficacy of Philippine nationalism endures today. It has gained international dimension with the existence of eleven million Filipinos working overseas, often under hazardous conditions, so they can send money to families they love in the country of their affections.

The Filipino diaspora continues to be fueled by the gross lack of employment opportunities and the uneven spread of the benefits of growth in the country. The World Bank has reported that Philippine economic growth under globalization has produced a widening income gap between the rich and the poor. The growth may be impressive but it is not equitable, the Bank says.

We need a nationalism that enlarges the economy for the benefit of the majority and allows our young people who wish to do so to stay and get jobs in the local economy that will help the country to flourish.

*This editorial was written by Prof. Frankie Llaguno. Frankie is a contributing writer of ISACC.*