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The Dominicans in the Philippines: Dominicos Donde Nace El Sol

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Personally, I wish that some way could be found to bring Miss Díaz-Trechuelo to the Philippines. I can see nothing but benefit resulting from a confrontation of her scholarship with the actual subjects of her brilliant research.

FERNANDO ZOBEL DE AYALA

THE DOMINICANS IN THE PHILIPPINES

DOMINICOS DONDE NACE EL SOL. Historia de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas de la Orden de Predicadores. By Fr. Pablo Fernández, O.P. Manila 1958. 712 pp.

This book is a welcome addition to historical literature on the Far East, where the Order of Preachers has played such an important role since the first Dominican, Bishop Domingo de Salazar, arrived in Manila in 1581.

Though the narrative carries the reader briefly to America and Europe, the Province—reckoned by Fr. Fernández the foremost of the Order—has its center in Manila. From Manila the Dominicans worked out to Japan, Formosa, China, Tonkin, Cambodia. In the Philippines they were active in Bataan, Pangasinan, Tarlac, Nueva Viscaya, Zambales, the Cagayan Valley, the Mountain Province, the Batanes; and in a limited degree in Cavite, Laguna, the Ilocos provinces and La Union. They were very briefly in Iloilo, Negros and Zamboanga.

DOMINICOS is a compendium of Dominican archives, acts, letters, unpublished manuscripts, published works of restricted availability, and is the fruit of ten years' work. The treatment of particular events is necessarily brief in view of the long period and many activities covered. The author gives as his purpose "to write a compendium of the history of the Province... to serve as a text for our scholasticates (*colegiaturas*) and novitiates, and as a source of information concerning the activities of those who have gone before" (*Prólogo*, p. 9).

The reader will be impressed by the record of the Dominicans. It is recognized that the conquest of the Philippines by Spain was due to the friars more than to anything else, but one understands this better after reading the present book. The Dominicans spread the faith in the Philippines mainly by the example of their holy lives. They were men of prayer and mortification, lovers of poverty, chastity and obedience, ready for any hardship, and if necessary prepared to lay down their lives for the Gospel.

It is of course true that while the missionaries helped Spain, Spain also helped the missionaries, and in those places where Spanish arms were either lacking or weak, the missionaries were also less successful. The Dominican effect was courageous, holy, tireless, tenacious; but there was also some lack of method and organization. Some beachheads seem to have been established without careful planning for permanence.

Father Fernández realizes that not all will agree with his interpretations. He says that he has tried to temper the warmth of the original documents, especially in the question of the Chinese Rites. This reviewer's objection to the treatment of the Rites is that it depends too heavily on Dominican sources. A history of the Dominican province cannot be written entirely from Dominican archives. Moreover, the compendious treatment has resulted in the omission of details necessary for a true picture of this highly complicated problem. The record of the Dominicans in China is admirable and edifying. But such an evident proposition could have been established, and at the same time reconciled with the truth that the supporters of the Rites were also on fire with love for the purity of the faith, were obedient and straightforward.

In the short space available a few examples will have to suffice to show that the reviewer's disappointment is not mere querulousness. In 1656, Father Martinus Martini obtained an important decision from the Holy See in favor of the Rites. Father Fernández calls this man Martínez, says he got the decision surreptitiously, and in general belittles his mission. Father Fernández' revealing phrase is "al decir de algunas crónicas." It is no great fault to make a mistake in a name, but in this case the error is symptomatic. Consultation of other Rites literature would have revealed that this important figure in the controversy was not a Spaniard but an Italian; it would have also revealed that his mission was entirely irreprehensible and was justly made the basis of mission policy for the next forty years.

Later in 1667 at a meeting in Canton, nineteen Jesuits, three Dominicans and one Franciscan strove to agree on a formula of unity in the ministry. The stumbling block was article 41, namely, that Alexander VII's decision favoring the Rites should be followed. Father Fernández says that the Dominicans under the leadership of Father Navarrete protested against article 41, and that Father Navarrete, not hoping to persuade the Jesuits "by reasons", took the case to Rome.

Of the three Dominicans, one, Sarpetri, was openly in favor of the Rites and wrote in their defense. Secondly, although it is true that Father Navarrete did protest, he later in a letter to Father de Gouvea, Jesuit vice-provincial, accepted the Jesuit position as safe in practice. He then went to Rome.

Father Fernández repeats certain old accusations against Jesuits. It had always been a strong argument with the Jesuits that the Chinese literati themselves should be best able to say what Chinese words and rites meant. Hence they sought the testimony of the Emperor K'ang-hsi. Father Fernández says they "made a secular pagan prince a judge in ecclesiastical matters." The Jesuits pointed out centuries ago that there is a clear difference between a judge and a witness.

This accusation comes especially strangely at this time, for on Dec. 8, 1939, the Holy See again allowed the Rites precisely because of the opinion of a "secular, pagan" government as to their exact meaning, the procedure the Jesuits had followed three hundred years before.

The author blames the Jesuits for the way K'ang-hsi treated Tournon. But the Jesuits were not to blame. K'ang-hsi had by this time begun to lose his esteem for Christianity due to the discord he observed. The main difficulty was Tournon himself who was singularly unfitted for his delicate task. Cary-Elwes, a Benedictine with no ax to grind, says: "The Jesuits had in fact behaved with the utmost discretion and charity, even though they saw their century-old endeavors being smashed before their eyes" (*CHINA AND THE CROSS*, p. 153).

Finally, after K'ang-hsi died, a persecution broke out under his successor. Father Fernández says that the cause of this was a Jesuit Brother, Juan Morón, who was involved in a plot to overthrow the new emperor. The truth is as follows. K'ang-hsi some years before his death had asked Father Joao Mourao (not Brother Juan Morón) which son should be named successor. Father Mourao tried in vain to avoid an answer but finally praised the qualities of Yin-t'ang, the ninth son. Yung-cheng, however, succeeded and banished Father Mourao and Yin-t'ang to Tartary. Father Mourao was later executed. Six months after Father Mourao's arrest, a persecution began in the remote province of Kokien. Mourao's name appears nowhere in the official Chinese literature about the persecution. The charge is a plain case of "post hoc ergo propter hoc."

These are some of the unsatisfactory points in Father Fernández' treatment of the Chinese Rites. Instances could be multiplied but space forbids. In general it may be said that the author's treatment suffers from over-simplification. The question was complex: there were Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans and Augustinians on both sides; the motives animating the controversy were diverse and not always holy. A recent book, *FAILURE IN THE FAR EAST* (1956) by Malcolm Hay (also reviewed in this number), gives some idea how

deeply the Jansenists were involved. Perhaps it was difficult in a compendium to reflect all these nuances.

The revolution against Spain and especially the Philippine-American War brought great hardships to the Dominicans in the Philippines. Once again they drew upon the reserves of courage and love of the Cross of Christ which has made Pastor speak of them (XXXV, 460) as the "order which... was in the habit of winning the crown of martyrdom." One of their number was killed and nine others died as a result of the treatment they received at the hands of revolutionaries. After the Revolution many of the Dominicans left for other fields. After three hundred and twenty years of fruitful and on the whole disinterested work, it was a bitter recompense.

In general the style of DOMINICOS suffers from excess of laudatory epithets. The events could have been left to speak for themselves. Moreover, many of the biographical notices could have been omitted, either because the subject appears elsewhere in the narrative where his actions testify to his virtues; or because the information is such as might be true of any good religious; or finally because it does not seem wise to perpetuate the pious exaggerations so dear to our forefathers in the faith.

There is hardly a phase of Philippine and Far-East history after the middle of the 16th century which will not profit from Father Fernández' work. The Province emerges truly great; its record is impressive and challenging. At times perhaps one thinks of Newman's lion who felt that the role his family played in human art would have been different had a lion been the artist. But that is only occasionally. The total picture is convincing.

LEO A. CULLUM

A UNIQUE GRAMMAR

THE STRUCTURE OF AMERICAN ENGLISH. By W. Nelson Francis. New York, The Ronald Press, 1958. vii, 614 pp.

This book is one of several excellent textbooks that have appeared recently on American English in which structural linguistics underlies the presentation. Some of the others are PATTERNS OF ENGLISH by Paul Roberts (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1956), A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH GRAMMAR by James Sledd (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1959) and AMERICAN ENGLISH IN