

# The Propaganda Movement

The Propaganda Movement (1872-1892) was the first Filipino nationalist movement, led by a Filipino elite and inspired by the proto-nationalist activism of figures such as [José Burgos](#) and by his execution at the hands of colonial authorities. Propagandists were largely young men, often [mestizos and creoles](#) whose families could afford to send them to study in Spanish universities in Madrid and Barcelona. There, they encountered the tumult of 19<sup>th</sup> century political movements inspired by Enlightenment thought, individual rights, constitutionalism, and anti-clericalism.

It was an assimilationist movement in that the propagandists—many of whom were of half Spanish parentage and saw themselves as inheritors of Spanish civilization—believed that the Philippines should be fully incorporated into Spain as a Spanish province and not merely as a colony, with Filipinos granted the same citizenship rights accorded to Spanish citizens. Second, it sought the expulsion of the Spanish friars from the Philippines and the empowerment of a native Filipino clergy. Lastly, as a cultural movement, it showcased the writing and artistic production of the young Filipino elite as a means of demonstrating their intellectual sophistication, on par with their Spanish peers.

The Propaganda Movement targeted the Spanish government and public, but as an elite movement failed to engage with the wider Filipino population. The Spanish government was little interested in the conditions of the Philippines, particularly with the immense political foment in the Spanish political environment, and the movement ultimately received scant support and made little headway in Spain. The propagandists themselves were considered to be rebels at home in the Philippines, and many were exiled. Despite its overall failure, the movement generated a political consciousness that fed into the nationalist revolution of 1896 and the struggle for independence that followed.