

AS OUR MIGHT GROWS LESS: THE PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN WAR IN
CONTEXT

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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The Philippine-American War has rarely been analyzed from the Filipino viewpoint. As a consequence, Filipino military activity is little known or misunderstood. This study aims to shed light on the Filipino side of the conflict. It does so by utilizing the Philippine Insurgent Records, which are the records of the Philippine government. More importantly, the thesis examines 300 years of Filipino history, starting with the Spanish conquest, in order to provide a framework for understanding Philippine military culture.

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I would like to thank my parents, who taught me to read, to learn, and to write. Without them, I would be nothing.

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Mind must be the harder, spirit must be bolder
And heart the greater, as our might grows less.

The Battle of Maldon

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
The Existing Literature	2
The Documentation.....	5
Chapter Summaries.....	8
II. PHILIPPINE MILITARY HISTORY: FROM CONTACT TO THE 18 TH CENTURY.....	13
Prehispanic Warfare.....	14
The Spanish Conquest.....	26
Remontado	42
Collaboration and Syncretism.....	49
Conclusion	52
III. COLONIAL TRANSFORMATION	54
Opportunities for Some: Elite Filipinos in the 19 th Century.....	55
Elite Forms of Resistance	67
Difficulties for Many: Poverty and Discontent in the 19 th Century.....	74
Bandits and Messiahs.....	81
Conclusion	96
IV. THE 1896 REVOLUTION	98
The Katipunan.....	98
The Fighting in Manila	106
The Rise of Aguinaldo and the Rural Elites	118
The Fighting in Cavite	123
Defeat in Cavite	128
Conclusion	136
V. THE STRATEGY AND POLITICS OF THE PHILIPPINES	138
The Aguinaldo Government	140
The Idea of Independence.....	147
The Aguinaldo Government’s Strategy	157
The Quest for Recognition.....	160
The Organization of the Interior	167
The Consequences of Politics and Strategy.....	174
VI. THE PHILIPPINE ARMY AND “GUERRA MODERNA”.....	178
The Battle of Manila	208
The Order of Battle	209
The Combat.....	218
The Consequences	224

Chapter	Page
The Continuation	229
VII. THE PHILIPPINE DEFEAT	240
The General Staff.....	240
Denouement	249
The Conventional Phase: In Conclusion.....	253
The Guerrilla War	258
VIII. CONCLUSION.....	276
REFERENCES CITED.....	281
Primary Sources	281
Secondary Sources	289

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

I began this study with the intention of writing about the Filipino side of the Philippine-American War (1899-1902). The most popular and important book on the conflict, Brian Linn's *The Philippine War*, offers a thorough account of the American side of the conflict. But, its lack of attention to the Filipino slants its analysis. For one, Linn did not make much use of the major primary source for the Philippine Army: the so-called Philippine Insurgent Records or the PIR. My intended goal was to master the PIR.

As my research progressed, however, I discovered that a full understanding of the Philippine side of the war required more than just reading the documents in the PIR. The actions of the Filipinos during the Philippine-American War could not be fully understood until they are placed in the broader context of Philippine history as whole. Without a broader view were it is difficult to say who became the leaders or soldiers of during the war, what they were fighting for, and why the Filipinos acted the way they did.¹ What was lacking was the *indigenous context*—an examination of the larger Philippine world in which this war took place. Examining the *indigenous context* avoids the common error of assuming that Filipino notions of war resemble those of the Americans and that the Filipinos had similar strategic and tactical objectives and

¹ The “New Military History.” See Wayne E. Lee. “Mind and Matter—Cultural Analysis in American Military History.” *The Journal of American History*, March 2007, vol. 93, no. 4, p. 1118.

outlooks.² The Filipinos did not have exactly the same outlook to warfare as the Americans because of differences in history and circumstance. The influences on the martial thinking of the Filipinos were very different.

Over time, it became apparent to me that in order to explain Philippine attitudes and practices of warfare, I needed to take a long view of Philippine history. My study therefore became less focused on the Philippine-American War itself and more on the evolution of warfare as practiced by the indigenous inhabitants of the Philippine Islands from the 1500s until the early 1900s. The starting point was Philippine warfare at the moment of Spanish contact—“prehispanic warfare”—and the end point was warfare as practiced by the army of Emilio Aguinaldo and the Philippine Republic. My goal became to explain how the Filipinos got from the first point to the second, since I felt this approach offered the best way to understand Filipino strategies and tactics during the Philippine-American War.

The Existing Literature

A survey of the historiography of Philippine military history will quickly show that there are few scholarly works on the topic. This is especially the case when it comes to works that deal with the grand narrative, or the grand sweep of Philippine military history. Only three scholars have written works that examine Philippine history from prehispanic times to the present: Uldarico Baclagon, Carlos Quirino and Cesar Pobre. These three scholars have produced solid studies, albeit with some limitations. Pobre and

² John Keegan, *A History of War*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 21. Ironically, Keegan is guilty of this in many of his works.

Baclagon wrote books geared for the Philippine Military Academy and tend to be operational in focus, with a heavy bias towards providing its cadet-readers with useful lessons. Quirino's work, on the other hand, was geared more towards a popular market. His *Filipinos at War* is probably the most popular general Philippine military history book, makes use of primary sources, and is eminently readable. But it is an old book, and its scholarship is outdated.

Studies that focus on one war in Philippine history are more plentiful—and the vast majority of these studies focus on the Philippine-American War.

A few Filipino historians have tackled the Filipino side of the war. Luis Camara Dery wrote *The Army of the First Philippine Republic*, a short overview of the topic. Teodoro Agoncillo's epic work, *Malolos: Crisis of the Republic* (1960) remains the most widely read study of the Philippine-American War but it does not focus on the military aspects of the war.

The most extensive study of the Filipino forces remains John R. M. Taylor's *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*, a four-volume set written and published in 1903. Taylor was the Army captain who translated, catalogued and compiled the mass of captured Filipino documents that eventually became the Philippine Insurgent Records and he was also an eyewitness. Taylor therefore had unmatched access to a vast body of information. Unfortunately, as Renato Constantino said: "Taylor's anti-Filipino bias and the circumstances under which his work was undertaken detract from the value

of his work.”³ Taylor was not an objective scholar and his analysis was undertaken with a specific agenda: to defend the American presence in the Philippines. He constantly takes a negative and frankly racist view of the Filipinos and he is particularly hostile to Aguinaldo, who he portrays as a villainous racial inferior who did not know his place. What Taylor did not do was take Aguinaldo seriously and he was unwilling to acknowledge that Aguinaldo had a strategy that integrated diplomacy, politics and war. Taylor’s desire to portray Aguinaldo as an unprincipled savage meant he sometimes misrepresented Aguinaldo’s plans or motives. For instance, he claimed that

There was probably from the beginning among the directing group [of Filipino leaders] an irreconcilable difference of opinion as to the proper method of waging war. [Antonio] Luna and his partisans were in favor of waging war with regular bodies of troops assisted by guerrillas... Aguinaldo was from the first probably in favor of a general rising of the Tagalog tribe and their employment as guerrillas.⁴

In this study I have used the same documents that Taylor used (the Selected Documents of the Philippine Insurgent Records) and have concluded that this assertion is largely false. Aguinaldo was equally enthusiastic in his desire to have a regular army fighting in a “civilized” European manner. Perhaps Taylor refused to see this since he wished to link Aguinaldo to a “people’s war,” a type of conflict which he deprecates as chaotic and uncivilized.

³ Renato Constantino, introduction to *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States* by John R. M. Taylor, (Pasay City, Philippines: Eugenio Lopez Foundation, 1971), 1: xii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:180.

Taylor's *The Philippine Insurrection* is still a valuable work—he provides details of organization, numbers and dates that would have been very onerous to track down. However, Taylor's prejudices are too marked for him to be taken at face value and his analysis is often questionable.

Several other works provide overviews of the war. I have earlier mentioned Linn. Also useful are Stuart C. Miller's *Benevolent Assimilation*, John Gates's *Schoolbooks and Krags*, and Stanley Karnow's *In Our Image*. Other studies examine specific regions like Glenn May's *Battle for Batangas*, Resil Mojares's *The War Against the Americans* (about Cebu) and William Henry Scott's *Ilocano Responses to American Aggression*. But the fact of the matter is that these fail to place the Philippine-American War into its proper indigenous context. A broad view—a full, long-term analysis of the Philippine side—is missing. To put it in fashionable terms, Filipinos are not given their due agency.

The Documentation

The main cache of primary documents used in this study is the aforementioned PIR. In this collection are muster rolls, telegrams, letters, circulars, speeches and many other primary sources written or produced by the Revolutionary Government of Emilio Aguinaldo. The PIR has been critical in showing the Philippine side of the war. For example, it has helped me to debunk the idea, subscribed to by Brian Linn, that the voice of the “real” Emilio Aguinaldo, the president of the Philippines at the time of the war, was “difficult to discover, for... he seldom revealed his thoughts. Conscious of his limited education, he wrote little, and much that is attributed to him, including his three

somewhat contradictory autobiographical publications, was largely the work of others.”⁵ In fact Aguinaldo wrote quite a bit and the PIR has many documents that were penned by Aguinaldo’s own hand. There is one document in particular that has proven useful in finding the “real” Aguinaldo in the PIR: a piece entitled “*Sa Mga Kababayan kong Americano*” or “To My Fellow Americans.” This was a propaganda piece that we know was written by Aguinaldo since he attached a signed note at the end where he instructed his secretary, Apolinario Mabini, to translate the piece into Spanish.⁶ The document can therefore be used to identify Aguinaldo’s very distinctive handwriting and from this sample it is now possible to show that Aguinaldo actually wrote quite a bit. The PIR therefore makes it possible to determine Aguinaldo’s thoughts on governance, war and independence. The “real” Aguinaldo is therefore not quite as inscrutable as Linn claimed.

These documents are a unique window into the Filipino side of the war, but they also impose certain limitations on the study.

The first and most obvious limitation is that the “Filipino” side is largely, but not entirely, limited to those people who wrote the speeches, edicts, circulars and muster rolls. These were the leaders and the elites that comprised what this study will call the “Aguinaldo Government.” Hence, some social groups—like the ordinary soldiers—do not have much of a voice. While they will not be ignored, they will be mentioned primarily when they interact with the agents of the Aguinaldo Government.

⁵ Brian Linn, *The Philippine War*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 19.

⁶ R6F8D3.

The second limitation is that these documents are often prescriptive, rather than descriptive. This is most important when it comes to military matters because surprisingly little in the way of feedback or descriptions from the field have been recorded and preserved in the PIR. There are plenty of documents that mandate the table of organization for units, pay structures, or even tactical approaches—but it is sometimes hard to tell whether these strictures were actually applied. One often has to read between the lines.

Third, most of these documents were generated when the Aguinaldo Government's bureaucratic structure was intact and functioning. As the government collapsed, the documentation became decidedly sparser. Sources from the latter half of the Philippine-American War, during the so-called guerrilla phase, are fairly rare. At this point, the government had fragmented, and many of its leaders were on the run or in hiding. The bureaucratic mechanisms were no longer as efficient, if they functioned at all. Because of this limitation, I focus on the conventional phase.

The PIR includes a lot of documentation on the 1898 Philippine Revolution against Spain, and even some on the 1896 Revolution. It does not have any sources on periods prior to the 1890s, and I am obliged to use other primary sources for those years, including various religious chronicles, the *Collección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista y Organización de las Antiguas Posesiones Españolas de Ultramar*, as well as the famous document compilation, *The Philippine Islands* by Emma Blair and James Robertson.

Chapter Summaries

The first chapter examines the prehispanic and contact periods—both of which were important to an analysis of warfare in the Philippines since certain historical factors that first emerged in these periods would persist for the rest of Philippine history. The geography of the Philippine archipelago, with its many islands that had forested and mountainous interiors, had created a fragmented political environment, with multiple nodes of power. Until communications and travel were improved, political centralization would remain difficult, and even with new technologies fragmentation remained an issue that had serious implications for warfare. Localism, or the importance of elites at very local levels, began during this period. The importance of interpersonal ties and personalism in mustering manpower also had the origins in the prehispanic period. The prehispanic period also introduced spiritual prowess in combat, the importance of intimidation, and individual heroics to the martial culture of the Philippines. Finally, evasion or decampment as a military and political strategy also had its origins in the prehispanic Philippines.

The first chapter will also discuss the early Spanish colonial period. The burden of “conquest” fell primarily on Spanish priests and missionaries, whose *conquista espiritual* created a political system that greatly resembled the spiritual-based rule of prehispanic chieftains, the *datu*. The chapter will therefore show how the first two centuries of Spanish conquest did not erase the patterns of decentralization, spirituality, and decampment that were so important to prehispanic warfare.

However, the Spaniards' introduction of even a weak central government based in Manila did alter warfare in the Philippines since it introduced military force in the service of a state. The introduction of Christianity also gave a degree of coherence or commonality to a large proportion of the population of the Philippine Islands. Henceforth, there would be a mainstream society—primarily in the lowlands, Christian, and nominally ruled from Manila. Decampment remained a viable tactic, although even if it was a holdover from prehispanic times, it had changed in its objectives, from a way of evading raids from enemy *datu* to a means of resisting Spanish authority.

Thus while the Spanish did not necessarily stamp out or radically alter Philippine patterns of warfare, they changed the martial culture of the people of the Philippines. The Spanish introduced warfare or the use of force directed by a central government, and to the minds of many Filipinos, Europeanized warfare would be synonymous with centralized warfare.

The second chapter discusses the profound changes wrought by the 19th century—when the Spanish so transformed their method of rule that it was tantamount a recolonization of the Philippines. The Spanish “rationalized” their colonial government, which meant that they strengthened their hold on the Philippines with more organized and far-reaching governance. The Philippine economy was also transformed into an export-oriented cash-cropping economy. The changes to colonial society created a small class of Filipinos who benefited from the new political and economic systems, and who were closely affiliated with Spanish culture. These Filipinos had a vested interest in maintaining much of the status quo, but they were also eager to gain more influence in

colonial governance. On the other hand, many poor Filipinos suffered under the new system and a few continued to resist. Decampment remained a viable strategy of resistance, although the new laws made the decampment criminal and the increase in colonial army and police forces made it more dangerous.

Warfare and resistance during the 19th century therefore continued—albeit in altered form—the trends introduced by the Spanish conquest, with some Filipinos continuing the tradition of evasion and decampment, and some Filipinos more closely adhering to the Spanish government and its centralized form of warfare.

The third chapter discusses the 1896 Revolution, when the colonial system began to break down. A few of the privileged Filipinos grew tired of Spanish domination and revolted. But instead of decamping as was traditional, they tried to create the Filipino nation and the Revolutionaries therefore chose to stand up and fight rather than decamping. The 1896 Revolution initiated almost 6 years of conflict, and it also marked a turning point in Philippine military history. Many of the people who led the 1896 Revolution would also play important roles in the following years of turmoil. Specifically, Emilio Aguinaldo rose to prominence during the Revolution, and he would subsequently become president of the Republic of the Philippines and generalissimo of the Philippine Army during the 1898 Revolution and the Philippine-American War.

The Revolutionaries were defeated in the 1896 Revolution, a disaster that highlighted the weaknesses of the Filipinos when it came to war. The leaders of the Revolution had no education in warfare, their soldiers had no training, they had no real military organization, and they had no domestic supply of weapons and ammunition or

and reliable foreign sources. Emilio Aguinaldo took note of these weaknesses in developing his subsequent strategies.

The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters deal with the Philippine-American War proper. The trends in warfare for the past 300 years were fully expressed during this conflict, and all of them influenced how and why the Filipinos fought. Emilio Aguinaldo—now president of a Philippine Republic—wanted to create a centralized nation-state, and he had to overcome the problems of decentralization and localism that had plagued would-be centralizers in the Philippines for the past 300 years. He also decided to work with local elites, the people best positioned to provide him with resources for his government and army. These people had benefited from the new economy of the 19th century, so Aguinaldo had to make sure to keep this economy functioning, which meant maintaining links with the outside world and repressing discontented peasants. The strategic issues that cost the Revolutionaries the war in 1896 remained to trouble the new Republic as well.

The Aguinaldo Government crafted a grand strategy that aimed at defending its sovereignty in the face of internal divisions and external threats. The Republic used the threat of foreign intervention or invasion to rally the Filipino populace. Concurrently, it tried to head off invasion completely by winning recognition from foreign powers. In order to win recognition, it organized its political and military structure along “European” lines, which Aguinaldo thought would prove the “civilization” of Filipinos and their suitability for self-rule. This strategy ultimately failed, and the Republic went to war with

the Americans with an army not specifically structured for the kind of fighting that actually transpired.

CHAPTER II

PHILIPPINE MILITARY HISTORY: FROM CONTACT TO THE 18TH CENTURY

This chapter examines the evolution of Philippine warfare from prehispanic times and during the period of Spanish colonization. The Spanish conquest altered indigenous politics and culture and it is only logical that it should alter the practice of warfare in the archipelago. In brief, two traditions of armed combat were created during the Spanish colonial period: an evasive, defensive tradition that was evolved from prehispanic notions of warfare, and a newer tradition of warfare introduced by the Spanish where armed might was deployed in the service of a centralized government. The chapter therefore also hopes to show both how the prehispanic form of warfare survived despite the changing culture and circumstances of the Philippines and how Spanish methods of war adapted itself to local conditions.

When Aguinaldo and the Filipinos went to war in 1898 and 1899, their martial culture did not exist in a vacuum—they were heirs to a continuously evolving way of war. Indeed, the Revolutionaries represented another step in the constant remaking of both Philippine society and Philippine warfare. Thus, when Aguinaldo speaks of a “Modern War” or “*Bagong Digma*” he was both implicitly contrasting it to “Old War”—to the traditions that sprung out of prehispanic culture and which adapted to Spanish colonialism—but he was also describing a Westernizing tradition that had been present in the Philippines for 300 years. This latter was the “Modern War,” and which had become associated with European culture and therefore with modernity. Therefore, this chapter

also serves to place the Philippine-American War into the larger context of Philippine military history.

Prehispanic Warfare

Until the establishment of the Spanish colonial administration, there had been no centralized government that encompassed all or most of the Philippine archipelago. The polities that existed were small, scattered settlements of a few hundred families at the chiefdom stage of political development.⁷ The settlements along the seacoast were known as *barangays* in Tagalog, and it is the word that shall be used to describe all the lowland, coastal settlements in the prehispanic Philippines.⁸ These *barangays* tended to be the larger and more powerful polities in the Philippines and the people in these *barangays* lived by raiding and trading—rather like miniature versions of the great trading entrepôts in the rest of island Southeast Asia.⁹ The lowland *barangays* often had trading or clientage relations with the smaller settlements that existed in the interiors of the Philippine islands. These inland settlements tended to live by swidden agriculture and by trading forest and mountain products like rice, gold, game and birds' nests for iron weapons and Chinese porcelain from the coastal *barangays*.¹⁰

⁷ Laura Lee Junker, *Raiding, Trading and Feasting*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000), 3; William Henry Scott, *Barangay*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994), 129.

⁸ Scott, *Barangay*, 4-6.

⁹ Junker, *Raiding, Trading and Feasting*, 19.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 221-260.

Geography was probably a large reason as to why the political environment of the Philippine was so multipolar and why none of these prehispanic communities became large, centralized polities.¹¹ The coastal *barangays* had to contend with the archipelagic nature of the Philippines, which made conquest or growth by territorial annexation very difficult. The inland settlements also had their own problems with geography: the interiors of the islands in the archipelago were even less conducive to centralization since most were mountainous and heavily forested.¹² The Philippine archipelago's environment was therefore not conducive to state formation, and while it might not have been impossible—Indonesia and Malaysia managed to develop large, thalassocratic polities—no *barangay* ever became a Philippine Malacca or Ternate.

Adding to these challenges posed by geography was the fact that the prehispanic population was rather small, especially in relation to the land's carrying capacity.¹³ The Philippines therefore had a low population density spread out across forest land that needed to be prepared before it could be productive, which meant that labor was more valuable than the land itself.¹⁴ Quite simply, agricultural land was abundant, but the labor

¹¹ *Kasaysayan: The Story of the Filipino People*, vol. 2, (Hong Kong: Asia Publishing Company Limited, 1998), 36.

¹² Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, vol. 1, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 1-3.

¹³ Scott, *Barangay*, 36; Junker, *Raiding, Trading and Feasting*, 61; O. D. Corpuz, *Roots of the Filipino Nation*, vol. 1, (Quezon City, Philippines: Aklahi Foundation Inc.), 9.

¹⁴ Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, 1:129; Benedict Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), 43.

needed to work it was not.¹⁵ As Laura Lee Junkers noted, the easier way of increasing agricultural output in an environment with a lot of land and few people was through “labor capture,” or by securing more workers somehow.¹⁶ People were also useful as warriors, craftsmen and sailors. The difficulty in expanding and consolidating power through territorial annexation and the high value of labor meant that the goal of prehispanic leadership was gaining followers through personal charisma.¹⁷ The *datu*—chieftains of the *barangay*—sought to gain followers by getting people to voluntarily submit to their authority.¹⁸ The *datu* did sometimes use force or coercion, but it was only when a leader had a certain minimum number of followers that it was possible for a *datu* to have the warriors and resources needed to use physical coercion or force to compel others to recognize the leader’s right to rule. Otherwise, a cruel or overly repressive *datu* might find his followers simply escaping into the interiors of the islands where it was difficult to follow them. Worse, these disaffected people might flee to other *datu*, who would be more than happy to welcome these new followers.¹⁹

¹⁵ The newest study that deals with prehispanic demographics is Linda Newson, *Conquest and Pestilence in the Early Spanish Philippines*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai’I Press, 2009), 251-253 for a summary of prehispanic population density.

¹⁶ Junker, *Raiding, Trading and Feasting*, 21.

¹⁷ Oliver Wolters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1999), 29.

¹⁸ Filomeno V. Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits: The History of Power and Sugar Planter Hegemony on a Visayan Island*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1998), 67.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 56-57.

Interpersonal relationships were the bedrock of prehispanic politics—as Wolters said of Southeast Asian leadership: “everything depended on man-to-man relations.”²⁰ In the Philippines, leaders and followers were bound to each other by ties of beholden-ness, by *utang ng loob*, a term that can be literally translated as “inner debt” but its meaning might be better encapsulated by the phrase “inner gratitude.”²¹ *Utang ng loob* implies far more than just material debt, rather, it refers to a deep moral bond between follower and leader, where both sides have mutual or reciprocal obligations.²² This was not necessarily an altruistic bond, since both the leader and the follower cultivated relations with each other out of self-interest, but breaking these bonds and failing in these obligations were moral sins.

The *datu* therefore tried to become the nexus of debt relations—to have as many people as possible owe gratitude or *utang ng loob* to the *datu*.²³ The *datu* did this by becoming the community’s benefactor, by offering followers benefits like feasts where rare or expensive foods like rice or meat were eaten, with “prestige” goods like Chinese porcelains or imported weapons.²⁴ The *datu* also provided “leadership” by arbitrating in disputes and protecting or advancing the followers’ interests. Finally, the *datu* provided security—protecting followers from bandits or raids and also from bad spirits.

²⁰ Wolters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, 30.

²¹ Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 64-65, 69; Vicente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1988), 145-146.

²² Wolters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, 114.

²³ Scott, *Barangay*, 135.

²⁴ Junker, *Raiding, Trading, and Feasting*, 236-238.

In return, the *datu* got not just his followers' allegiance; more importantly, he got their labor. The *datu* could then use these followers to farm, to build his boats or houses, or use their specialized skills if the followers were artisans or craftsmen.²⁵ As William Henry Scott put it in *Barangay*: "One's position in the social scale was ... measurable by the amount he exercised over his own time and labor."²⁶

The *datu* also made use of his followers' military labor, using these followers as warriors or sailors for his raids and skirmishes. Increased labor and military manpower consequently meant an increase in the *datu*'s ability to participate in the prestige competition, and it therefore theoretically created a cycle where more followers meant more and more political power for the *datu*.²⁷

However, the relationship between *datu* and follower ought not to be idealized—it was far from equal, since the obligations owed by a *datu* to a follower were far less than what a follower owed to the *datu*. As Aguilar put it, the *datu*'s "services" of feasts, governance and defence were "nonquantifiable and overfullfilled giving" that put his or her followers in positions where they had to give "infinite expressions of gratitude because of their necessarily underfullfilled reciprocal obligation."²⁸ Indeed, it was possible to fall so deeply into debt that a person was enslaved. The condition of slavery

²⁵ Scott, *Barangay*, 130.

²⁶ Scott, *Barangay*, 135.

²⁷ Junker, *Raiding, Trading, and Feasting*, 63.

²⁸ Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 65.

was perhaps mitigated by the fact that it was far easier to be freed in debt slavery than it was in chattel slavery.²⁹

All of these power relationships and the language of charisma were expressed in spiritual terms—that is, people were attracted to a *datu*'s spiritual power, or as Oliver Wolter put it, his “soul stuff.”³⁰ This reliance on spiritual power was logical in a political environment without an “independent physical power base” like a “specialized police force, standing army, [or] codified law.”³¹ So the *datu*'s power was understood to stem from his level of inner spiritual power, what Aguilar called *dungan*. *Dungan* was, according to Aguilar, “a life force, an energy ... that provides the essence of life.” A person with a high level of this soul stuff was imbued with “personal attributes as willpower, knowledge, and intelligence, and even the ability to dominate and persuade others.”³²

In other words, the external marks of power and success implied inner spiritual power, so a *datu* did his best to display “acute intelligence, vast knowledge, indomitable willpower, and self-confidence,” and “a robust physique, sharp mind, masterful oratorical style, good fortune, bravery.”³³ The problem a *datu* faced was the need for continuous

²⁹ John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses*, (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), 20.

³⁰ Wolters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, 18.

³¹ Junker, *Raiding, Trading, and Feasting*, 66.

³² Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 28.

³³ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

achievement—the *datu* constantly had to prove prowess and spiritual power, and often faced competition from other aspiring “big men.”³⁴

Because a leader’s charisma was based on spiritual prowess it was technically possible for almost anybody to become a *datu* and gain followers just by displays of prowess—this would imply spiritual power, which was all that was needed for legitimacy.³⁵ Owning spiritually powerful objects, like talismans or special weapons could also give a potential *datu* an aura of power, to reinforce displays of good governance or wealth.

This kind of charisma-based “theater state” made for a considerable amount of instability or “political cycling.”³⁶ Since authority relied on an individual *datu*’s ability, it could disappear with that *datu*’s death or decline in fortunes: power therefore tended to “cycle” from one polity to the other, or from one person to the other.³⁷ Institutional stability and continuity was weak because power was not necessarily hereditary, and even the descendant of a renowned *datu* had to prove his or her worth to keep the mantle of authority.³⁸ It was therefore quite easy for a *barangay* to fade in importance if a powerful *datu*’s successor proved unlucky or less talented. This might, for instance, explain the mysterious disappearance of the settlement of Mactan and its chieftain Si Lapu Lapu

³⁴ Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 55; Wolters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, 21.

³⁵ Wolters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, 20-21.

³⁶ The term “theater state” is from Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theater State in Nineteenth-century Bali* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980).

³⁷ Junker, *Raiding, Trading, and Feasting*, 88.

³⁸ Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 55.

from the historical record. Si Lapu Lapu was the victor in the celebrated Battle of Mactan, which ended in the death of the explorer Fernão de Magalhães. Yet nothing is heard from Mactan in the Legazpi Expedition's records in the 1560s—clearly, Si Lapu Lapu's successors had failed to maintain its prestige in power in the years between 1521 and the 1560s.

Rivalry between chiefs was hence very intense, with the various *datu*s doing their best to attract followers while simultaneously undercutting the authority of rival chiefs. A *datu* also had to worry about potential upstarts within his or her *barangay* and there was thus a worry that an over-ambitious or over-talented underling could become a threat in the future.³⁹ Some historical examples include the rivalry between the Cebuano chief Si Humabon and Si Lapu Lapu of Mactan and the rivalries between the three chiefs of Manila—Matanda, Soliman and Lakandula.

The charismatic and personalistic politics of the prehispanic Philippines worked against centralization since the *datu*s often found it difficult to exert their influence over followers far from the *barangay*'s center—it was easy for these distant followers to gravitate away from the *datu*'s sphere of authority. One of the members of the Legazpi Expedition, Hernando Riquel, claimed that one of the *datu* of Manila, Soliman had this to say on the weaknesses of his authority:

If I were king of this land, instead of being only the master of my own estate, the word I had given would not have been broken. But as this depended on the many,

³⁹ Wolters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, 21.

I could not, nor can I henceforth, do more than personally endeavor that my subjects and friends keep the peace and friendship that was established.⁴⁰

Prehispanic Philippine warfare was very Clausewitzian in that it was very much a tool of politics: warfare was one of the means by which a *datu* could participate in prestige competition.⁴¹ The objectives and methods of war were closely tied to the desire of the *datu* to attract followers or to deprive rivals of the same. Combat was also an excellent way of displaying spiritual prowess—fighting and war were visible opportunities to display prowess in the form of bravery, leadership and puissance through dexterous weapons handling.⁴²

Spiritual power played an important role in combat. The spiritual prowess of warriors could also be displayed or manifested by such feats as stopping blades and bullets with their bodies or striking enemies down from afar.⁴³ Magical talismans—*anting anting*—played a very important role here, since *anting anting* could confer the benefits of spiritual prowess to their users. These *anting anting* could come in many forms: medallions, daggers, clothing or amulets were all *anting anting*. Possessing one brought prestige and consequently they were much sought after.

⁴⁰ Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 55 vols. (Cleveland, Ohio: A. H. Clark Co, 1903-1909), 3:235.

⁴¹ J. Amiel P. Angeles, “The Battle of Mactan and the Indigenous Discourse on War.” *Philippine Studies Journal*, (vol. 55, no. 1, 2007, pp. 3-50), 12; Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 28; Junker, *Raiding, Trading, and Feasting*, 336; Scott, *Barangay*, 153, 231; Michael Charney, *Southeast Asian Warfare*, (Leiden, Holland: Brill, 2004), 1-6.

⁴² J. Amiel P. Angeles, *The Spanish Conquest of the Philippines*, Master’s Thesis, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University, 2006), 89-92.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 90.

In more practical terms, warfare was one way to acquire labor or prestige goods. Perhaps for some *datu*s it was the best way to acquire these resources. The Cebuanos were generally considered to be more bellicose than the Tagalogs. One likely reason for their bellicosity was that they had fewer resources to trade and farm and had to rely on raiding more than the Tagalogs did. The signature Filipino tactic for slave and resource acquisition was the naval slave-raid or the *ngayaw* raid. Such a raid was when the *datu* would gather together warriors and warships (known as the *karakoa*) and assail rival settlements.⁴⁴ This was the most prestigious and rewarding form of warfare in the prehispanic Philippines, and a *datu*'s strength was often measured by how many warships he could muster.⁴⁵

Warfare could also come in the form of ambushes, skirmishes and other small-scale actions all aimed at weakening a rival *datu*'s authority.⁴⁶ For instance, piracy—which can be seen as a form of attritional warfare—was as common in the Philippines as it was in Southeast Asia as a whole. Piracy was an attractive tactic since it enriched the aggressor while simultaneously undercutting the trading capacity of any rivals, perhaps even redirecting trade to the pirate's benefit.⁴⁷

Since land in and of itself was not necessarily valued by society as a whole, it was not an important target in warfare. Sanguinary pitched battles were too risky and too

⁴⁴ Scott, *Barangay*, 154, 187; Noelle Rodriguez, "Juan de Salcedo Joins The Native form of Warfare," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, (vol. 46, no. 2, 2003), 151-154.

⁴⁵ Scott, *Cracks in the Parchment Curtain*, 93.

⁴⁶ Angeles, *The Spanish Conquest of the Philippines*, 82-83.

⁴⁷ Junker, *Raiding, Trading and Feasting*, 343-345.

wasteful in manpower and were consequently rare, although they were not unheard of. For the most part, *datus* only engaged in pitched battle if they felt they had overwhelming spiritual and physical advantages, or when they underestimated the power of their enemies.

During battle itself, displaying spiritual prowess in combat was very important—probably serving as a form of intimidation. Intimidation was a way of showing martial ability that spared casualties—important in a culture that valued manpower. Filipino warriors therefore liked to swagger and posture, or wear flashy armour. Spanish descriptions of engagements during the 16th century are also replete with accounts of Filipino warriors throwing or firing projectiles in large quantities.⁴⁸ Fusillades of projectiles not aimed to hit could have been attempts to display combat power and to intimidate without actually killing the enemy. Combat itself was therefore an important arena of spiritual competition and in Philippine martial culture, externalities like dextrous weapons handling, appearance or bellicose behavior clearly mattered.

There were two possible defensive responses to these slave raids. The first, mentioned by William Henry Scott, was to intercept enemy raids with patrols and presumably fighting it out at sea.⁴⁹ The Filipinos had a term for naval, ship-to-ship combat—*bangga*—and the *karakoa* was employed in such encounters.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ See, Angeles, *The Spanish Conquest of the Philippines*

⁴⁹ Scott, *Barangay*, 155.

⁵⁰ Scott, *Cracks in the Parchment Curtain*, 85.

The other defensive response was flight: the forested and mountainous interiors of most Filipino islands provided excellent sanctuaries since they were difficult to traverse without guides and most *datu* lacked the logistical means to wait for their victims to return to their homes or to engage in long sweeps into the bush to chase after them. The viability of simple flight also highlighted the limited importance of land in warfare: most Filipinos were willing to abandon their homes and their lands when threatened with attack.⁵¹ Since houses were easily rebuilt and since most goods of economic and political value—people and prestige items like porcelain—were portable, it was possible for Filipinos to flee into the mountains and not be bankrupted. Some settlements like Manila or the *cota* of Mindanao, did have fortifications, which might imply a greater determination to hold them against invaders, but none of them were stubbornly defended during the Spanish conquest and after, and the inhabitants chose flight rather than resistance. Most likely, these walls were designed to deter weaker raiders, not to prevent conquest by determined invaders.⁵²

Other than flight, it was possible for the ostensible “victim” to come to terms with an aggressive *datu* and essentially become one of that *datu*’s followers. In many ways, this was a perfectly acceptable solution: the weaker *datu* benefited from the protection and patronage of a powerful lord and did not lose much in the way of power or autonomy. Such oaths of fealty were known as the *casi casi* in the Visayas, which was

⁵¹ Scott, *Barangay*, 155; Junker, *Raiding, Trading and Feasting*, 356; Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, 1:122.

⁵² Angeles, *The Spanish Conquest of the Philippines*, 79-80.

the famous blood compact in which the two *datu* imbibed a little bit of each other's blood.⁵³

The Spanish Conquest

The Spanish Conquest in the 1560s-70s did not initially change too many of the Filipino patterns of warfare or politics.⁵⁴ While the conquest is commonly depicted as a process of territorial annexation, the reality involved a considerable amount of collaboration and consent on the part of the Filipinos and was far less clear-cut.

The expedition which finally established a permanent Spanish presence in the Philippines was the Legazpi Expedition, which was named after the expedition leader, Miguel López de Legazpi. The expedition had been given instructions to maintain good relations with the local rulers and attempt a “peaceful” conversion of the locals to Christianity. Territorial annexation or even a displacement or the replacement of the local political structure was not initially part of Legazpi's mission. In his instructions, Legazpi was supposed to “bring to the inhabitants of those places our Holy Catholic Faith and to ... bring back some spices and some of the wealth found in those places.”⁵⁵

As a consequence of these orders Legazpi, did his best to maintain friendly relations with the Filipinos he encountered. For instance, despite some early skirmishing

⁵³ Angeles, *The Spanish Conquest of the Philippines*, 85-86.

⁵⁴ Horacio Dela Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), 13.

⁵⁵ Angeles, *The Spanish Conquest of the Philippines*, 20.

with Tupas, a *datu* of Cebu, Legazpi expended much effort in trying to secure an alliance with the Philippine chieftain.⁵⁶

Unfortunately, the Spaniards under Legazpi were *conquistadores* who were far less inclined towards peace. The *conquistadores* did not come to the Philippines to be mere soldiers, farmers or craftsmen—they wanted to become members of the *hidalguia* and become tax-exempt warrior elites living off the labor of an underclass of peasants, a way of life with roots in the Reconquista.⁵⁷ The *conquistadores* who came to the Philippines therefore wanted treasure and gold—loot—or they wanted to be given *encomiendas* that would enable them to live like gentlemen. For the most part, this meant that the *conquistadores* spent their time engaging in *entradas*, or traveling around the Philippines, securing loot, supplies and tribute from the various communities they encountered.⁵⁸ These *entradas* were violent and were undertaken against Philip II's orders. Legazpi had become increasingly unable or unwilling to limit the violence of his followers, and his death in 1572 removed what restraining influence was left on the *conquistadores*.

⁵⁶ William Henry Scott, *Looking for the Prehispanic Filipino*, (Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1992), 40-63.

⁵⁷ J. H. Parry, *The Spanish Seaborne Empire*, (United States of America: University of California Press, 1966), 31-32; Bernard F. Reilly, *The Medieval Spains*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 193, 146-147; John H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, (New York: American Library, 1977), 114-116; Henry Kamen, *Philip of Spain*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1997), 131; Dela Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 21.

⁵⁸ Valentino T. Sitoy, *A History of Christianity in the Philippines*, (Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1985), 175.

The *conquistadores*' methods in acquiring tributes and wealth earned the ire of the friars who had come to the Philippines as missionaries. The Augustinian Martín de Rada wrote to the king of Spain describing the *conquistadores*'s methods:

A captain with soldiers and interpreters goes to a town... They tell the townspeople that if they want to be friends of the Spaniards they must pay tribute at once. If the people say yes, they stop to work out what each man must give, and demand that he give it immediately. Sometimes the people refuse to give what is asked; then they sack the town. They also think they have a right to sack if the people do not wait for them but abandon their houses. They do all this without performing any service for them in return, without telling them for what purpose they have been sent by his Majesty, and without giving them any religious instruction.⁵⁹

Indeed, the Spanish “conquest” was primarily this sort of tribute gathering and the *conquistadores* did not bother to establish permanent presences in most of the *barangays* that they encountered. For the most part, the Spanish were confined to the newly founded cities of Manila and Cebu.

Despite these depredations, the Spanish thought the Philippine Islands to be a poor place and it was considered as nothing more than stepping-stone to China or the rest of Southeast Asia.⁶⁰ As a consequence of this attitude, it attracted very few settlers or colonists and the secular Spanish presence in the Philippines remained small and isolated for a long time. In the very early years of the colony, the numbers of Spaniards was truly vestigial: in the 1580s there were only 140 in the entire Philippines—far fewer than had

⁵⁹ John N. Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1987), 23.

⁶⁰ Nicholas P. Cushner, *Isles of the West: Early Spanish Voyages to the Philippines*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1966), 101-102.

been in Legazpi's expedition.⁶¹ By the seventeenth century, there were only a few thousand Spanish, almost all living in Manila or Cebu.⁶² As late as 1825, a Spanish writer complained that the Spanish rule was primarily confined to the coastlands.⁶³

The small numbers of Spaniards, their confinement in the cities, and their relatively limited objective meant that they did not initially have a great effect on the Philippine social and political structures that they came in contact with. Instead, the Spanish became just one more power among many, with their advantage being their perceived military strength. The Filipinos therefore reacted to the Spanish according to their traditional methods of warfare—either by evasion, resistance, or alliances, sometimes through a combination of all of three.⁶⁴

Filipinos who were initially unaware of the Spanish military capabilities tried open resistance at first, but the Spanish eventually impressed the Filipinos with their military prowess. Perhaps the loud Spanish cannons, the big ships, metal armour, firearms and steel swords made the Spanish seem like very spiritually powerful warriors to the Filipinos. The Spanish also fought with more determination and aggression than was common in Filipino military culture—charging to close quarters and risking casualties. For example, in the case of both the Cebuanos under Tupas and the people of

⁶¹ *Kasaysayan* 3:61-73.

⁶² Cushner, *Isles of the West*, 11.

⁶³ Eliodoro G. Robles, *The Philippines in the 19th Century*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Malaya Books, 1969), 12; Newson, *Conquest and Pestilence in the Early Spanish Philippines*, 119-121.

⁶⁴ Sitoy, *A History of Christianity in the Philippines*, 199.

Manila under Soliman—the Filipinos first tried to fight the Spanish, but after being defeated, they learned to avoid head-on confrontations.

Once the Filipinos recognized Spanish martial prowess, they reacted according to tradition and decamped—they avoided direct confrontations by abandoning their settlements. Whenever the Spanish *entrada* approached, the Filipinos would leave their homes and flee to the hills and forests. Sometimes they would ambush and skirmish with the Spanish: the first Spanish casualty in the Legazpi Expedition was the victim of a Philippine ambush. Even indigenous settlements with fortifications, like the walled settlement in what is now Manila, were abandoned in the face of Spanish aggression.⁶⁵ Eventually, most Filipinos chose to avoid the Spanish and previously populous settlements like Sugbu in the Visayas were depopulated as a result of Spanish contact.⁶⁶ The first bishop of Manila, Domingo de Salazar, was moved to complain to Philip II that areas around Manila, like Tondo, had been abandoned by the Filipinos because of the abuses of the Spaniards. He noted that the Filipino chiefs who remained were forced to pay for the tributes of their departed followers from their own resources.⁶⁷

Theoretically, the Spanish behavior ought not have been unfamiliar to the Filipinos—their demands of tribute, wealth and labor in return for submission and

⁶⁵ Angeles, *The Spanish Conquest of the Philippines*, 80.

⁶⁶ Sitoy, *A History of Christianity in the Philippines*, 200

⁶⁷ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 5:188-191; Newson, *Conquest and Pestilence in the Early Spanish Philippines* goes into the demographic effects of the Spanish Conquest in great detail.

ostensible protection should have made them seem just like any other men of prowess.⁶⁸ Unfortunately, the Spanish were generally not good overlords. As Martín de Rada indicated, the Spanish promises of alliance often proved hollow since they demanded gold and loot without offering anything, even protection, in return. In his letter of complaint to Philip II, Rada described how an anonymous Filipino shouted to some Spaniards “What did our fathers do to you, or what debt did they owe you, that you now come to rob us?”⁶⁹ Indeed, the Filipinos tended to regard the Spaniards with hatred and suspicion and thought of them as “usurpers, faithless pirates and shedders of human blood.”⁷⁰ This behavior may have been what provoked resistance or flight in the majority of the Filipinos.

The Filipinos did not just flee, however: they also continued their practice of asymmetric or indirect warfare.⁷¹ The *conquistadores* were perhaps emphasizing “dishonorable” tactics when they complained that the Filipinos employed “ambushes and traitorous stratagems” and killing those Spaniards who were unwise enough to go off on their own. But such acts were in keeping with the prehispanic Filipino culture of war, which included forms of indirect warfare.⁷²

⁶⁸ Sitoy, *A History of Christianity in the Philippines*, 192, for Spanish claims of extending protection in return for submission.

⁶⁹ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 23.

⁷⁰ Rosario M. Cortes, *Pangasinan: 1572-1800*, (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines Press, 1974), 72.

⁷¹ Sitoy, *A History of Christianity in the Philippines*, 199-201.

⁷² Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 25.

However, some Filipinos did collaborate with the Spaniards—and they benefited from the association. This collaboration happened very early in the conquest: Tupas and the *datu* of Manila all chose to ally themselves with the Spanish and quickly began to press their new allies for military aid.⁷³ For instance, Juan de Salcedo may have launched some of his *entradas* at the instigation of his local allies.⁷⁴ The *datu* of Cebu, Tupas, also began to pressure Legazpi for military aid, which put Legazpi in an awkward position since he did not wish to antagonize any natives but could also not afford to appear weak to his native allies.⁷⁵ The Filipinos even tried to tie the Spanish more closely through marriage, a common technique in cementing alliances in prehispanic politics.⁷⁶

Indeed, the bulk of manpower in the *entradas* were Filipinos and it is hard to imagine these ostensibly Spanish expeditions succeeding without Filipino guides, rowers, navigators and logistical support. According to Pedro Chirino:

Not only did they [the friendly Filipinos] provide sustenance; they also served as guides in the exploration and subjection of the other islands as far as that of Manila, which was their center and capital.⁷⁷

Noelle Rodriguez theorized that Juan de Salcedo's expeditions to Mindoro and Luzon were probably thought of as *ngayaw* raids by his Filipino allies. They certainly benefited from these expeditions since Salcedo shared the loot and slaves he gained with

⁷³ See also Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 10:43.

⁷⁴ Rodriguez, *Juan de Salcedo Joins the Native Form of Warfare*, 162.

⁷⁵ Cushner, *The Isles of the West*, 83; Martin J. Noone, *The Islands Saw It: The Discovery and Conquest of the Philippines*, (Ireland: Helicon Press, 1982), 355-356.

⁷⁶ Pedro S. Chirino, *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas*, trans. Ramón Echevarria, (Manila: The Historical Conservation Society), 238.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 238.

his Filipino allies. To the Filipino warriors, Salcedo acted much like a particularly successful and warlike *datu*.⁷⁸

This state of affairs could not last since it conflicted with the original aims of the Spanish crown and aroused the ire of the Spanish missionaries who had accompanied the Legazpi Expedition. These missionaries did not object to the Spanish presence in the Philippines *per se*—what they were against was the violence of the *conquistadores* and they also believed that the *encomenderos* were not living up to their duties of protecting the *indios* or providing them with Catholic instruction.⁷⁹ The Spanish concern for the justness of their claims to the Philippines involved more than legalese: there was a genuine concern that Spanish authority in the archipelago had to be legitimate. The Spanish appealed to the Church in the belief that Episcopal blessing would legitimize the Spanish empire.⁸⁰ The Philippines was hence affected by the campaigns of priests like Bartolomé de las Casas and Francisco de Vitoria. These prelates argued that the Spanish conquest was violent and cruel, and because the *conquistadores* did not convert the natives the Spanish rule in the New World was illegitimate. The only way to legitimize the Spanish presence in the Philippines was to give primacy to the evangelizing mission, with the secular colonial governments only working in support of this spiritual endeavor.⁸¹ The Philippine-based priests Diego de Herrera, Martín de Rada and Domingo

⁷⁸ Rodriguez, *Juan de Salcedo Joins the Native Form of Warfare*.

⁷⁹ José Luis Porras, *The Synod of Manila of 1582*, (Manila: Historical Conservation Society, 1990), 34.

⁸⁰ Gerald H Anderson, *Studies in Philippine Church History*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1969), 3-6; The Pope's jurisdiction was famously challenged by de las Casas, Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 7.

⁸¹ Parry, *The Spanish Seaborne Empire*, 137-151.

de Salazar clearly echoed the anti-*conquistador* sentiments of the New World advocates.⁸²

These debates in Spain had a direct impact on the subsequent interactions between the Spanish and the Filipinos. This was so because the very Catholic Philip II reacted to these priestly complaints by attempting to put the Spanish conquest of the Philippines on what he felt was a more legal and moral footing. The clerics in the Philippines sent reports and complaints, like the long letter sent by the Manila Synod in 1582 that strongly condemned the violence of the *conquistadores*.⁸³ Philip II reacted to these priestly complaints by trying to rein in violent behavior and limiting the secular Spanish presence, although given the limited numbers of Spanish immigrants coming to the Philippines, this law may simply have reinforced an already existing trend.⁸⁴

Whether due to circumstance or design, the Spanish presence in the Philippines would come to be primarily religious and as a result, the missionaries of the various religious orders would often be the only Spaniards the Filipinos ever saw.⁸⁵ In 1594, Philip II issued a *cedula* or a decree to the governor-general of the Philippines, Gómez Pérez de Dasmariñas, wherein he announced the dispatch of “one hundred religious” to the Philippines. These were from the priestly orders: Jesuits, Augustinians, Dominicans,

⁸² Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 22-38.

⁸³ Dela Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 28

⁸⁴ Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines*, 9; Anderson, *Studies in Philippine Church History*, 9-13; *Kasaysayan* 3:63.

⁸⁵ Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines*, 31; Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 32.

Franciscans and, later, Recollects.⁸⁶ Each of the Orders was given a section of the Philippines in which to operate and this system would continue without much change until the end of the Spanish colonial period.⁸⁷ Because the Spanish equated conversion to Christianity with acceptance of Spanish rule, the missionaries were therefore also Spain's main agents of conquest.⁸⁸

The missionaries gave the Spanish king an acceptable way of maintaining a permanent presence in the Philippines and the missionary endeavor was therefore a blend of religious and secular ideas of conquest.⁸⁹ This was still conquest in that the Spanish maintained political, military and economic control over the Philippine Islands, although now this secular presence was to support the missionary endeavor:

For the execution of his [the King's] mission he can send men to give security to the ministers of the Gospel, and to protect the recently converted Christians, and to do in their land whatever should be necessary for the temporal government in order to obtain this spiritual end, which is free conversion to the faith and the preservation in it once it is accepted."⁹⁰

In other words, the religious conquest of the Philippines entailed a close association of the crown and the church—a combination that would persist until the very

⁸⁶ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 17.

⁸⁷ Also, Cushner, *Isles of the West*, 88.

⁸⁸ Robert Ronald Reed, *Hispanic Urbanism in the Philippines: A Study of the Impact of Church and State*, (Manila: University of Manila, 1967), 11; Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 32-44.

⁸⁹ P. N. Abinales and Donna J. Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers,) 51; Reed, *Hispanic Urbanism in the Philippines*, 6-7.

⁹⁰ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 28.

end of the Spanish colonial era.⁹¹ This clerical domination of the Philippines was not a disadvantage at first since the missionaries probably turned out to be far better “conquerors” than the *conquistadores*.

To begin with, both the missionaries and the Filipinos had a very similar understanding of power—that it was underpinned and legitimized by spirituality. What underlay this shared understanding was a fundamental similarity in the Spanish and Philippine worldviews. As Aguilar has argued:

At the time of the conquest, the indio and the Spaniard shared an intrinsically similar worldview founded upon a solid belief in a nonmaterial yet palpable reality, particularly in a decentralized preternatural domain populated by spirit-beings with power to affect and even determine worldly affairs. With that spiritual realm humans communicated through words and actions performed by individuals possessing specialized sacral knowledge, hence the mediating role of priests and shamans.⁹²

The friars’ *conquista espiritual* hinged on the Filipinos’ *voluntary* acceptance of Christianity and its attendant culture. There was a stress, for instance, on translation, and the friars did their best to learn the local language.⁹³ The goal was to avoid baptisms undertaken despite lacked understanding of Christian dogma.⁹⁴ Perhaps no better example of Spanish efforts at translation was the *Doctrina Christiana*, published in 1593, and which laid out Christian doctrine in Spanish and Romanized Tagalog.

⁹¹ There was, of course, the *Patronato Real*: Nicholas P. Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines: From Conquest to Revolution*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1971), 75-79.

⁹² Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 36.

⁹³ Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines*, 88-89; Sitoy, *A History of Christianity in the Philippines*, 225-226.

⁹⁴ For an example of such baptisms, Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 40-41.

The friars also relied on charismatic methods to entice the Filipinos into converting.⁹⁵ Most dramatically, the friars often directly challenged Filipino belief by “challenging” sacred groves, idols or mountains. The friars’ goal was to show the evil or weakness of these spiritual items—whose power the Europeans attributed to the Devil—and the supremacy of the Christian God.⁹⁶ The friar-chronicler Marcelo de Ribadeneira gave an example of this approach in his *Historia del Archipelago*, when a certain Fray Pedro Ferrer climbed what could only have been Mayon volcano in Camarines to prove the Filipinos wrong. The Filipinos believed that the mountain was a site of great spiritual power, and none dared climb it for spiritual and practical reasons. Some Filipinos tried to accompany Ferrer up the mountain, but only one made it up to the summit with him. The arduous trip impressed the populace—it was an act of spiritual power and a superhuman feat, and led to many conversions.⁹⁷ The friars also challenged the *catalonan* and *babaylanes*, the native priests and priestesses. They frequently burnt the *anito* used by these persons or challenged their “magical” powers.⁹⁸

Not surprisingly, the Filipinos came to look upon the friars as men of spiritual prowess. How could they not? The friars displayed many of the qualities of men of

⁹⁵ Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 51.

⁹⁶ Example of the Spaniards’ belief that the Filipino *anito* and spirits were devils or demons, see Chirino, *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas*, 297-304.

⁹⁷ Marcelo de Ribadeneira, *History of the Philippines and Other Kingdoms*. 2 vols., trans. Pacita Guevara Fernandez, (Manila: Historical Conservation Society, 1970), 1: 264-265, and 1: 494.

⁹⁸ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 72-74; Chirino, *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas*, 302-304; Ribadeneira, *History of the Philippines and Other Kingdoms*, 356; Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines*, 97.

proWess.⁹⁹ For instance, they displayed great bravery in venturing into hostile territory on their own. They were charismatic speakers who talked to the Filipinos in local languages. They claimed to be in communication with powerful spirits. Finally, they possessed items of great power, like crosses, Bibles or holy water.

For instance, flooding had forced the Jesuit Pedro Chirino to relocate his church to higher and drier ground. Unfortunately this ground was also the town cemetery and the Filipinos at first refused to move there. But when it came time to dismantle the old church and move the last items from it, including the cemetery's cross, suddenly all of the villagers made haste to join Chirino in the new village, not even waiting for houses for their families, but crowding in the few houses that had been built. When Chirino asked why they had suddenly rushed to the new village, he was told that "they were suffering from the nightly haunting of demons in the village where they lived because it was without church or cross, and none dared sleep in it at night."¹⁰⁰

The friars acted like men of prowess in other ways. Like *datus*, they held feasts where they shared their food with their followers.¹⁰¹ The friars often defended the Filipinos from the depredations of the *conquistadores* and the secular government and invaders.¹⁰² One Recollect, Fray Pedro de San Agustín, was so versed in military matters

⁹⁹ Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 38-44.

¹⁰⁰ Chirino, *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas*, 24 and 256-257.

¹⁰¹ Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 51. For a good description of these techniques, Ribadeneira, *History of the Philippines and Other Kingdoms*, 1: 338-339.

¹⁰² Ribadeneira, *History of the Philippines and Other Kingdoms*, 1: 77, 1: 354, 1: 200-201, 1: 454-454.

that he successfully organized and defended his parishioners from the famous Sultan Kudarat of Magindanao, thereby earning the nickname “*El Padre Kapitán*.”¹⁰³

Despite their charismatic approach, the Spanish missionaries’ proselytizing efforts bore fruit only slowly. One major obstacle to these efforts was the dispersal of the Filipinos. This dispersal was a result of pre-existing settlement patterns, but it was exacerbated by the fact that decampment continued to be the typical Filipino response to aggression. As Martín de Rada ruefully noted, the “adults were prone to taking off for the hills” whenever they knew the Spanish were around.¹⁰⁴ The small number of Spanish friars available for missionary work further slowed the pace of conversion.¹⁰⁵

The solution was to gather the Filipinos into more compact settlements, into towns and villages. This was the *reducción*, the “reduction,” that aimed at resettling Filipinos so they lived “*bajo de las campanas*” or “under the bells”—literally, under the bells of the local church. The Filipinos resisted this resettlement. The Archbishop of Manila, Miguel García Serrano wrote to Philip II:

Although it is impossible to deny that the natives would be better instructed and would live in more orderly ways if the small villages were to be reduced to the capital, making one or two settlements of each benefice, they consider it such an affliction to leave their little houses where they were born and have been reared, their fields, and their other comforts of life, that it could only be attained with difficulty, and little fruit would result therefrom.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 105-107; Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 35:61.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Sitoy, *A History of Christianity in the Philippines*, 223.

¹⁰⁵ Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines*, 41-42.

¹⁰⁶ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 20:231.

The Filipinos were very slow to convert and accept the *reducción*, and until well into the early 17th century the numbers of Filipinos living in them was quite small.¹⁰⁷ The missionaries eventually succeeded in attracting and resettling larger numbers of Filipinos into the new *poblaciones*, but it was the slow work of decades, if not centuries.

For those Filipinos who did live in the new towns and villages, the Spanish began a process of acculturation. The missionaries defined conversion as cultural change, and they deplored what they saw as the violence and immorality of prehispanic culture. For starters, the Spanish disapproved of the lack of urbanism in Philippine culture, equating it with backwardness.¹⁰⁸ They also claimed that the lack of a centralized government or ruler created opportunities for the *datus* to become petty princelings oppressing the ordinary people.¹⁰⁹

The friars tried to stamp out slavery, the Filipino cultural institution that they found the most repugnant. The Spanish had great difficulty in understanding Filipino slavery because of its marked differences from European concepts of slavery.¹¹⁰ The Spanish seem to have objected to the *alipin sa gigilid* or “household slaves” the most since these resembled chattel slaves, although the Spanish also disliked and consequently abolished debt bondage and, more crucially, slave-raiding.¹¹¹ The abolition of slave

¹⁰⁷ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 18:93-106.

¹⁰⁸ Reed, *Hispanic Urbanism in the Philippines*, 33-34; Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines*, 44.

¹⁰⁹ Ribadeneira, *History of the Philippines and Other Kingdoms*, 340; Chirino, *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas*, 390-391.

¹¹⁰ Scott, *Looking for the Prehispanic Filipino*, 97-98.

¹¹¹ Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 57.

raiding and debt bondage removed perhaps one of the most important sources of a *datu*'s captive labor and thereby removed some of their most important sources of power.

Yet even if the former *datu* of the prehispanic Philippines may have lost some of their sources of power, they generally benefited from collaborating with the Spanish. The Spanish colonial authorities turned the *datu* into *principales*, a position of authority and privilege that was bounded by law or which was a “juridical designation... whose position was largely an effect of legal sanctions originating outside the *barangay*.”¹¹² The *principales* had become office holders essentially working for the Spanish authorities as *cabezas de barangay* and with the honorific of *don* or *dona* added to their names.¹¹³ While these *datu*-turned-*principales* were subject to Spanish authority (and could be punished for transgressions) their new positions were guaranteed by the power of the Spanish colonial government and were also now hereditary. The *barangay* was solidified and stabilized as a geopolitical unit, instead of being an expression of the *datu*'s charismatic power.¹¹⁴ While this did not eliminate the relevance of spiritual prowess or charisma in Philippine power relations, it certainly changed local social dynamics. For one, leadership or elite status had become more exclusive since membership in the *principales* class was now largely hereditary.¹¹⁵ Functionally, this created a group of Filipinos beholden to the Spanish status quo and with an interest in preserving it.

¹¹² Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, 161.

¹¹³ Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 57.

¹¹⁴ Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines*, 122-129.

¹¹⁵ Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines*, 122; Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 50-51.

Remontado

Decampment or flight from the Spanish remained an important form of resistance. The continued viability of flight stemmed from two factors. First, the mountains and forests of the Philippines continued to offer admirable sites of refuge. Second, the Spanish pattern of conquest and rule, with its stress on centralizing and gathering populations, meant that simply staying away from the towns and villages created by the *reducción* placed a Filipino outside the Spanish power structure.

This state of affairs turned the human geography of the Philippines into a physical expression of political and social space. Towns and villages represented Christianity and acceptance of Hispanization and rule, whereas living in the mountains and forests far from these towns represented continued attempts at independence. In the early part of the Spanish colonial era, the Filipinos living away from the villages kept up the prehispanic Philippine culture. Chirino, for instance, noted that when the Jesuits founded towns and villages began to attract more and more Filipinos from the hills, those who stayed away were usually *catolonan*, or the native priests.¹¹⁶

The various Filipino rebellions against Spain were the most dramatic manifestation of how flight away from the Spanish towns and villages to the mountains represented a rejection of Spanish authority and were a form resistance. A few examples will support the point:

¹¹⁶ Chirino, *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas*, 293-294.

A tribe in Cagayan called the Mandaya had twice attempted to escape en masse from the new villages where the Dominicans had resettled them, and they finally succeeded in the third attempt, sparking what was known as the Mandaya Revolt in the 1620s.¹¹⁷ The immediate cause of the revolt was the abuses of the local *alcalde-mayor* and commandant of the fort overseeing the newly settled Mandaya, one Sargento Mayor Don Marcos Zapata, who had maltreated the wife of one of the tribe's *principalia* by forcing her to pound rice.¹¹⁸ The Mandaya almost immediately fled to the hills, but before they abandoned their settlements they first slew and desecrated the bodies of some local Spanish priests and also destroyed the relics in the church—an explicit display of how the Filipinos linked Spanish rule with Christianity and its representatives.¹¹⁹

At about the same time, the Recollects in Mindanao found themselves dealing with a rebellion in Caragas, Mindanao in 1629. The cause of the revolt was unknown, although it might have been instigated by the Muslims of Jolo. The Caragans were only marginally Christianized and the rebel leaders specifically targeted priests and Christian symbols in a sign of defiance. For instance, a rebel chief named Mangabo

Took a holy crucifix, and, breaking off the arms said: “God of the Castilians, fight with me; come let us see whether you are as brave as I.” And drawing his varalao or cris, he struck it crosswise through the face, and cleft it... Then he threw down

¹¹⁷ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 32:147.

¹¹⁸ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 35:47-48.

¹¹⁹ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 32:149-150 and 35:51. A few Mandaya stayed faithful to the Spanish and, perhaps equally tellingly, went to great efforts to protect one of the priests. These Mandaya also relied on decapment, fleeing with the priest away from the rebels.

another holy crucifix of greater stature, and cut it into bits with an ax, defying it to fight.¹²⁰

The Caragans then abandoned their villages and roamed up and down the area, attacking other priests or friars and attempting to incite other groups to revolt. They were eventually suppressed through a combination of military action and negotiation.

The 1620s must have been a very bad decade for the Spanish since in 1622, another revolt broke out in Bohol and Leyte. According to Murillo Velarde,

The divata, or demon, appeared to some Indians in the woods...and commanded them to quit the gospel ministers and the Spanish vassalage, and take refuge in the hills; and to build him a chapel, where he would aid them and give them whatever they needed to pass their lives in happiness and abundance, without the encumbrance of paying tribute to the Spaniards or dues to the churches.¹²¹

This revolt was stirred up by two former *babaylanes*, the Visayan equivalent of *catalonan* or native priests, who had never joined in the *reducción* and had been wandering the countryside, maintaining their ancient faith. They promised the Filipinos that the rebellion would receive supernatural aid: mountains would rise up to fight the Spanish, they would be resurrected by *diwata* if slain, and that Spanish musket bullets would be ineffective.

The rebels desecrated rosaries, crosses, and other religious symbols before burning churches and then fled to the hills. The Spanish sent an armed expedition—composed mostly of other Filipinos—against the rebels, and this force eventually

¹²⁰ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 35:69.

¹²¹ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 38:87-88.

managed to eventually subdue the revolt. In the mountains, the Spanish found another temple to the *diwata* and a redoubt where the rebels had retreated.¹²²

A final example was the 1645 revolt by Bancao, a chieftain of Leyte.¹²³ Bancao had been chief of Limasawa and he had also been one of the first Filipinos to welcome Miguel López de Legazpi and convert in the 1560s. But he decided to become an apostate in his old age.¹²⁴ The rebels had also desecrated religious symbols and harassed Spanish priests, chasing them away from their villages. Bancao claimed that the revolt would succeed because of magical aid: that merely saying the word *bato* would turn the Spanish into stone, and that flinging earth or clay at the Spanish would do the same. The rebels immediately fled to the hills with the arrival of a Spanish expedition sent to quell the uprising. The expedition—which included many Filipinos—chased the rebels up into the hills where they found a shrine set up to worship a *diwata*.

These revolts had some similarities: they were rejections of Spanish authority by Filipinos, but tended to be localized or specific in their grievances. None had anything approaching nationalistic overtones. The Filipinos would begin their revolts by attacking priests and religious symbols, underlining their understanding of Spanish authority as being represented by the local Spanish priest and based on spiritual power. Attacking the Christian symbols therefore represented an attack on Spanish power, perhaps weakening it and its hold over the Filipinos. The Filipinos would then invariably flee from their

¹²² Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 38:89.

¹²³ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 38:91-93.

¹²⁴ Remarkably, this chief was still alive in 1645—he must have been in his 90s at least.

villages, either at the outset of the revolt or upon contact with the expeditions the Spanish would send to quell these revolts. Up in the mountains, the Filipinos would often still have shrines and priests to their old religions, physical proof of their rejection of Hispanization and Hispanic authority in the form of a rejection of Christianity. Finally, the leaders of these revolts tended to be from the *principalia*, or the “principal men” of the local communities, either former *datus* or native priests.¹²⁵

The Spanish responded with a combination of the carrot and the stick. First, the friars sanctioned the use of force against apostate Filipinos. Once the Filipinos had accepted Spanish authority and Christianity, then any form of rebellion or resistance could be legitimately quashed using violence through arms. Secondly, the bulk of the manpower in these expeditions were other Filipinos. Thus, despite their use of force, the Spanish friars continued their attempts at negotiation, and many of these revolts were diffused by a combination of negotiation and repression.

Decampment as a form of resistance did not always assume the dramatic form of rebellion. Very many Filipinos either simply refused to live in the new towns and villages, or left after living there for a while, or lived far away from it. The Spanish called those who escaped from the *reducción* the *remontados*, “those who returned to the mountains” and a term that also neatly highlights the role of mountains as a source of Philippine resistance.¹²⁶ The *remontado* included the pagan groups who had never been

¹²⁵ With the very notable exception of the Revolt of the Timawa, see Carlos Quirino, *Filipinos at War*, (Manila: Vera-Reyes, 1981), 75-82.

¹²⁶ Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, p. 68; Reed, *Hispanic Urbanism in the Philippines*, 49.

Christianized or subjugated, but it also included apostates or those who wished to escape

Spanish rule:

In these forests and hills live many people of different tribes mixed together, Christians and pagans. Some are there because they are attracted to the mountains from which they came. Others are fugitives from justice. Many likewise live there at their ease and be free from paying tribute and from fulfillment of other obligations laid on them.¹²⁷

The image of the *remontado* as a pagan and the mountains as zones of primitivism or “uncivilization” seems deceptive, however. Perhaps there was never a sharp divide between “civilized towns” and “savage forests”—the Filipinos of the towns and villages retained much of their prehispanic culture, and created a syncretic Christianity, while not all of the *remontado* were reprobate apostates. More than being sanctuaries for paganism or remnant prehispanic culture, those living in the mountains probably represented an attempt to reduce contact or escape from as much of Spanish authority as possible. This can be seen by the fact that there were substantial numbers of Filipinos who lived between the *remontados* and the town dwellers. This frontier population of Filipinos was difficult to count and proved an endless source of headaches for both Spanish civilian authorities and priests. For one, it was difficult to extract taxes, tribute or labor from them.¹²⁸ For another, it was difficult to keep these frontier Filipinos orthodox, since they often did not see any Spanish priests for religious instruction. The friars had to rely on the

¹²⁷ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 190, also quoted in Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 68.

¹²⁸ Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines*, 108; *Kasaysayan* 3:68-69.

visita, the occasional “visit” from a priest, to keep such people in the faith and there were communities that did not even have this minimal contact.¹²⁹

In a sense, the colonial-era Philippine political environment was not so different from the prehispanic political map. The power and authority of Spain was dependent on the charisma and influence of the friars, and Spanish authority therefore radiated outwards from the towns and villages where it was at its strongest right by the church. The Filipinos who wished to associate themselves with the Spanish logically tried to position themselves close to the center of power, hence why the *principalia* or native elite built their houses close to the church.¹³⁰ The priestly power—so dependent on sermons, sacraments and his personal example—was therefore as rooted in spiritual charisma and personal attraction as the *datu*’s power had been and the friar’s power and influence faded as one traveled away from the church. This greatly resembled the *mandala* ordering of states of prehispanic Philippines and of the rest of Southeast Asia—which was best illustrated by Benedict Anderson, who likened the political power of a chieftain to the light of a lamp, strongest at the source, weaker at the periphery, where it might even have to contend with the power of neighboring chiefs.¹³¹

Over time, the Spanish missionaries made a good deal of headway in stamping out paganism except among the most isolated of people in the hinterlands. Even *remontado* or rebellious Filipinos no longer rejected Christianity as such but they

¹²⁹ Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines*, 48.

¹³⁰ Reed, *Hispanic Urbanism in the Philippines*, 66.

¹³¹ Anderson, *Language and Power*, 35-36.

continued to decamp and flee to the hills as a way of removing themselves from Spanish authority. The Dagohoy Rebellion of 1744 is an excellent example of this phenomenon. This was the longest-running revolt in colonial history, ending only in 1829, or 85 years after it first broke out. Dagohoy was a *cabeza de barangay*, who had taken umbrage at the fact that the local Jesuit priest had denied his brother a Christian burial.¹³² Dagohoy and about 3,000 followers fled up into the hills of Bohol in the Visayas after killing some Jesuits and there they successfully held out for almost a century. Despite their killing of the Jesuits, the rebels later asked for and received baptisms and confessions from Recollects sent to pacify them—they never rejected Christianity. The rebels did deny the Recollects' attempts to have priests sent up to the mountains, and they continued to maintain themselves outside of Spanish authority.

Collaboration and Syncretism

Despite their suppression of slave-raiding, the Spanish never completely eliminated all forms of warfare and combat in the Philippines. The Filipinos initially kept up their practice of indigenous martial arts. Pedro Chirino writing in 1604 described the Filipinos as still using swords, spears and shields and that those who lived near the sea still carried out piratical acts.¹³³ As lately as 1594, he described a skirmish between Visayans and Negritos, where the Visayans enslaved the latter in retaliation for a

¹³² Quirino, *Filipinos at War*, 58-59.

¹³³ Pedro Chirino, *History of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus*, 2 vols., trans. José Arcilla, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009), 2: 23-24.

murder.¹³⁴ Likewise, Antonio de Morga described Filipinos as still using spears, swords and shields in 1609—some forty years after the Spanish conquest.¹³⁵

The Spanish made use of native martial skills which meant that while Filipinos could no longer openly employ arms and armed force on their own initiative or for their own political ends, they could still legally practice combat in the service of Spanish causes. The Spanish continued to use native warriors in their expeditions, letting the Filipinos ply their martial skills—on land and at sea—in fights against rebels, Muslims from Mindanao, or against Spain’s European enemies.

However, the Spanish seemed to have disarmed or suppressed native martial abilities enough that the Visayans began to suffer from raids from the Muslims of Mindanao.¹³⁶ The Spanish were constantly reporting depredations against “friendly Indians” and were compelled to occasionally attack Mindanao in an attempt to stop these raids. Alternatively, the Spanish eventually trained Filipinos to fight in European styles. No in depth research has yet been done in this area, but in 1636, Governor Hurtado de Corcuera wrote to Philip IV indicating that he had started training Filipinos to fight in what appears to be in a European manner.

I ordered two hundred Pampangos to be enrolled into two companies, so that now there are the six hundred necessary guardsmen. The Pampangos are in place of the two hundred Spaniards who went [to Ternate]. Seeing that said Spaniards are lacking, there is nothing but to appeal to the Pampangos; they are being

¹³⁴ Chirino, *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas*, 261-262

¹³⁵ Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1991), 251-252.

¹³⁶ For instance, Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 18:104

instructed, and are managing their arms in a manner that makes me very well satisfied with them.¹³⁷

Corcuera also noted that the *alcalde-mayor* of Cebu had armed and trained the Cebuanos with firearms and pikes, so they could form a militia to fight off the Moro raids.¹³⁸

By the 18th century, some Filipinos had been trained and integrated into the regular Spanish army. When the English arrived in 1761, among the garrison of Manila were 80 native artillerymen.¹³⁹ It says much of the Europeanization of Filipino combat culture that they were trained and entrusted with valuable and destructive cannons.

The Filipinos therefore had a continuing martial tradition under the Spanish aegis. What this meant was that the native attitudes and ideas on war and combat had a chance to syncretize with Christianity and the imported Spanish culture. Spiritual prowess continued to be regarded as important in battle and items like *anting anting* continued to be used. What changed was that Catholic ideas or items like crosses, rosaries, holy water or Latin prayers would become part of the spiritual arsenal. Instead of deriving their power from sacred groves or prehispanic gods, Filipinos would claim that saints and scapularies rendered them bullet proof, or that angels would fight for them. For instance, in 1650, Filipinos living in a village called attributed the efficacy of their fort to rosary prayers.¹⁴⁰ As shall be examined later, this syncretism of prehispanic martial culture with

¹³⁷ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 26:197.

¹³⁸ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 26:285.

¹³⁹ Montero y Vidal, *Historia General de Filipinas*, 2:13.

¹⁴⁰ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 38:22.

Christianity and Hispanization would be dramatically displayed in the uprisings in the 19th century.

Conclusion

Few studies of the Philippine-American War discuss it within the context of Philippine military history. This oversight is unfortunate, since ideas that had their origins in the prehispanic period persisted until the Philippine-American War. For example, the idea that spiritual prowess was important to the exercise of political power has persisted for centuries, and leaders like Aguinaldo were believed to have supernatural abilities. Another important example of a prehispanic trait of Philippine culture was the tendency of its political situation to tend towards multi-polarity or division. There were several reasons for this tendency towards fragmentation: the difficult terrain of the archipelago, the differences in language, or the differences in religion were perhaps the most salient such reasons. What this chapter hoped to show, however, was that these prehispanic trends or ideas were also influenced by contact with Spanish culture. Philippine culture, martial or otherwise, did not remain static even if it did retain many elements from its past.

In the area of military history, what is important to remember were the two forms of armed combat. The first was perhaps the last remnant of prehispanic warfare: decampment or flight into the forests and mountains of the interiors of the islands in the Philippines. This style of resistance persisted because of the geographical and political similarities between the Spanish colonial system and the prehispanic system. Flight away from the Spanish friars or soldiers was a good way of escaping their authority, and so the

remontado came into being. Decamping did not always involve combat—but it frequently did, since the *remontado* often had to contend with the Spanish forcibly trying to re-integrate them into the mainstream of colonial society. This style of warfare or resistance was therefore inherently *decentralizing* and it served to emphasize the multipolar tendencies inherent to Philippine culture. Finally, because the *remontado* style of resistance took people away from the Spanish cultural agents, it also encouraged a return to prehispanic beliefs.

The second form of armed combat was introduced by the Spaniards, and this was violence deployed in the service of a centralizing government. Native Filipinos collaborated with the Spaniards from the very start and during the colonial period, many of them joined the Spanish colonial forces. Eventually, Filipinos were trained in Western-style combat, which also became associated with centralizing or Hispanized culture. However, the Filipinos combined many aspects of prehispanic combat culture with Hispanized martial styles—for instance, the Filipinos would later produce *anting anting* that they believed made the wearer bulletproof.

The prehispanic period and Spanish colonial period therefore produced two contrasting styles of warfare: a *decentralizing* one and a *centralizing* one. And despite the dramatic changes that would occur in the 19th century, these trends would only be strengthened. This was the background of Aguinaldo’s comments on “*Bagong Digma.*”

CHAPTER III

COLONIAL TRANSFORMATION

The last century and a half of Spanish colonial rule brought great changes to the Philippines. These changes were a result of Spanish transforming the Philippines from “a subsidized [Christian] mission establishment into a profitable dependency.”¹⁴¹ The Spanish also tried to “rationalize” their colonial presence, strengthening the government in Manila and extended the reach of the apparatuses of bureaucracy. While the Spanish presence was once limited to priests and a few fortified outposts, it now began to spread and more Filipinos came into contact with the colonial system. The reopening of the Philippine economy to international trade further changed the social structure, since it created opportunities for some Filipinos and problems for others. These changes were so wide-ranging that they represented what was practically a “recolonization” of the Philippines.¹⁴²

Despite the many economic, social and political transformations, the dual trends of decentralization and centralization would persist. What did change was that the Philippine notions of warfare and resistance were bifurcated largely along class lines.

¹⁴¹ David R. Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, (USA: Cornell University Press, 1976), 32.

¹⁴² Fradera uses the term to refer to Spanish policies in 1882-1891, but it can be reasonably be applied to the entire century and a half prior to the American colonial period. Josep M. Fradera, “The Historical Origins of the Philippine Economy,” *Australian Economic Review* (vol. 44, no. 3, 2007), 307-320.

This bifurcation was a result of changes in the colonial social structure: a small number of Filipinos benefited from the new colonial system and, consequently, they tended to support the Spanish colonial government's efforts at centralization and economic rationalization. These Filipinos can rightly be called *elites* due to their high degree of wealth, education and political influence. The Filipino elites came into conflict with the Spanish but their mode of resistance tended to be "conservative" in that most of these elites did *not* wish to break away from Spain or upset a colonial system from which they benefited. The elite forms of resistance were therefore initially non-violent and limited to agitation for political reform or change.

Unlike the elites, the poorer Filipinos, like the farmers and peasants, had a continuing tradition of violent or armed resistance against Spain. The poorer Filipinos kept up the traditions of decampment because they often benefited less from the new colonial system and were therefore more willing to engage in the *remontado* form of resistance, which was inherently decentralizing. The *remontado* tradition therefore acquired a dimension of social protest.

Opportunities for Some: Elite Filipinos in the 19th Century

As described in the previous chapter, the Philippines had been a very distant outpost of empire, largely neglected by Spain and not worth much economically to the empire. Ironically, the Philippines probably had more external trade links prior to the Spanish conquest than afterward, since the various *barangays* had been in commercial contact with other Southeast Asian communities or with major civilizations like China. The Spanish had eliminated much of this trade, and the Filipinos had been forced into

becoming subsistence farmers. Their main contribution to the colony's upkeep had been tributes to the crown and to the friars.¹⁴³ The only other Spanish economic activity of significance was the Galleon Trade, which was the transshipment and sale of Chinese goods arriving in Manila to Mexico. However, even the galleon trade was not enough to pay for the Manila government's expenses.¹⁴⁴ The Philippines was therefore not a place that attracted Spanish colonists or generated much economic activity, and this was likely one of the reasons for the very limited Spanish secular presence in the Philippine Islands. It would be a fallacy to think that prior to the late 18th and 19th centuries that the Philippine economy was stagnant, with no trading going on at all, but what trade there was tended to be small in scale and not geared towards the maximization of profits.¹⁴⁵

This state of affairs came to an end in the last half of the 18th century. The main catalyst for change was the capture of Manila by the British in 1762, an event that highlighted the vulnerability of the distant colony since it also spurred the revolt led by Diego Silang and one by the Chinese in Manila. These crises "forced the Spaniards to rethink their political and economic position in Asia," which essentially meant a re-

¹⁴³ Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines*, 93-104; Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines*, 101-126; Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 60-64.

¹⁴⁴ Leslie E. Bauzon, *Defecit Government: Mexico and the Philippine Situado*, (Tokyo: Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1981) offers the best summary of the Philippine colonial government's financial dependence on Mexico; see also John Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippine Islands*, (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1859), 326.

¹⁴⁵ *Kasaysayan* 4:7; Norman G. Owen, *Prosperity without Progress: Manila Hemp and Material Life in the Colonial Philippines*, (Berkley, California: University of California, Berkley, Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies), 57-59.

evaluation of the Spanish position in the Philippines.¹⁴⁶ The need or desire to change Spanish policy towards the Philippines was given further impetus by the loss of practically all of Spain's Latin American colonies in the early 19th century—a disaster that also spelled the end of the Galleon Trade.¹⁴⁷

The Spanish tried to make the Philippines more profitable by opening it up to foreign trade and by developing its internal economy. It was Governor José Basco y Vargas (1778-87) who first tried to increase government revenues, liberalize trade and expand the Philippine economy.¹⁴⁸ Many of Basco's ventures failed or were only marginally successful but in the main, he was responsible for transforming the Philippines into an important supplier of agricultural products to the world economy.¹⁴⁹ Several agricultural products in particular—sugar, Manila hemp, coffee and tobacco—became very important to the Philippine economy and accounted for the vast majority of commodities exported by the colony.¹⁵⁰ The fact that the new Philippine economy relied primarily on exporting cash crops had a profound influence on Philippine society and

¹⁴⁶ Fradera, *The Historical Origins of the Philippine Economy*, 308; Alfred McCoy and Ed de Jesus, *Philippine Social History and Global Trade and Local Transformation*, (Honolulu: University Press of Hawai'i, 1982), 20-23 on the impact of the British invasion; Owen, *Prosperity without Progress*, 33-35.

¹⁴⁷ Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 75.

¹⁴⁸ Benito J. Legarda, *After the Galleons: Foreign Trade, Economic Change and Entrepreneurship in the Nineteenth-Century Philippines*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999), 71-73; Jonathan Fast and James Richardson, *Roots of Dependency: Political and Economic Revolution in 19th Century Philippines*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1979), 7-8.

¹⁴⁹ Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 76-77.

¹⁵⁰ *Kasaysayan* 4:11. Other products were exported, like rice, but those four products were by far the most lucrative and therefore the most influential to Philippine history. Legarda, *After the Galleons*, 139, describes how rice declined in importance as an export commodity.

history: wealth and power came to depend on ownership of land, control of labor, access to capital and access to foreign markets.¹⁵¹

Remarkably, it was not necessarily the Spaniards who benefited the most from these economic opportunities. While more Spaniards did migrate to the Philippines, they usually assumed some position in the colonial bureaucracy and did not engage in much trade or farming.¹⁵² Additionally, most of the Spanish traders and merchant houses that were in the Philippines did not thrive when exposed to the vicissitudes of the international economy. The export of Philippine agricultural products and the importation of manufactured goods were eventually dominated by foreigners.¹⁵³ English and American merchant houses in particular became the Philippine economy's main conduits to the outside world. Not only did they export and import goods, they also had access to foreign capital and could therefore loan money or act as investors and insurers. The foreign merchant houses became absolutely indispensable to the Philippine economy—much to the disgust of the Spaniards.

On the local level, it was Filipinos, either *indio* or *mestizo* (usually Chinese *mestizo*), who took advantage of these new economic opportunities. As Alfred McCoy has written, the late colonial Philippines was unique in that it had an “indigenous planter

¹⁵¹ The most authoritative work on the new Philippine economy remains Legarda, *After the Galleons*.

¹⁵² For instance, the 1903 Census states that Spanish *mestizo* population stood at 5% for most of the 19th century, and notes that there were even fewer pure-blooded Spaniards. Joseph Prentiss Sanger, et. al., *Census of the Philippine Islands*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1905), 1:479.

¹⁵³ Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippine Islands*, 18.

class.”¹⁵⁴ These landed Filipinos were not necessarily members of the old *principalia*, or the descendants of the *datu* and who held their status by heredity and control of local political office. Rather, the new elite gained their status through wealth, primarily through their control of land.¹⁵⁵ It was also possible to participate in the new economy by working in a clerical capacity for either the government or the new trading houses.¹⁵⁶ Additionally, Filipinos could gain status by joining the growing ranks of the urban professionals and becoming a doctor, or a lawyer. Rizal in the late nineteenth century was even moved to complain in *El Filibusterismo* that there were already too many lawyers in the Philippines, a comment echoed by the two British visitors, John Bowring and John Foreman.¹⁵⁷

However, the most common way for Filipinos to participate in the new economy was either as farmers or as landowners.¹⁵⁸ For the very few Filipinos who had the wherewithal to become landowners, the new economy offered great benefits: the chance to live a more comfortable life than most Filipinos, a chance to rise in status without

¹⁵⁴ McCoy and de Jesus, *Philippine Social History*, 106-107.

¹⁵⁵ John A. Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*, (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1993), 33.

¹⁵⁶ Michael Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics: Filipino Elite Responses to American Rule*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003), 12-13.

¹⁵⁷ Jose Rizal, *El Filibusterismo*, trans. Ma. Soledad Lacson-Locsin, (Philippines: The Bookmark Inc.), 125; Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippine Islands*, 187-188; John Foreman, *The Philippine Islands: A Political, Geographical, Ethnographical, Social and Commercial History of the Philippine Archipelago and its Political Dependencies, Embracing the Whole Period of Spanish Rule*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), 195.

¹⁵⁸ Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*, 22; Bruce L. Fenner, *Cebu Under the Spanish Flag*, (Cebu City, Philippines: San Carlos Publications, University of San Carlos, 1985), 178.

having to be a member of the traditional *principalia*, opportunities for education, and a chance to benefit from the influx of new products and ideas from the outside world.

At the start of this period, the traditional *principalia* were best placed to buy up land—they had already been doing that for the past few centuries.¹⁵⁹ However, the traditional *principalia* were joined by *mestizos*, generally Chinese-Filipino *mestizos*, who had the money or capital from trade to buy up the land and were legally allowed to do so, unlike the Chinese.¹⁶⁰ The *principalia* and the *mestizos* intermarried in time, although the new elites—the *ilustrados*—were largely *mestizos* and oriented towards trade.¹⁶¹ Land became a major commodity, which was bought up through fair means or foul.¹⁶²

These landed elites were not a homogenous class: the spectrum of wealth or land ownership could be quite wide. Some elites owned considerable land and were very wealthy—they were able to loan money or had sufficient capital to engage in all sorts of business dealings in more than one province. Others were more modest in their wealth, and although they still might own a few hundred hectares of land in scattered plots, their economic activities and political and social influence were usually limited to one

¹⁵⁹ Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 57; Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*, 31; the *principalia* of Cagayan also benefited from the tobacco monopoly, but not through their ability to buy up land but because of their existing relationships to the colonial government: Ed de Jesus, *The Tobacco Monopoly in the Philippines*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1980), 149.

¹⁶⁰ Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*, 33; John A. Larkin, *The Pampangans: Colonial Society in a Philippine Province*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 84-86; Fradera, *The Historical Origins of the Modern Filipino Economy*, 310; Fenner, *Cebu under the Spanish Flag*, 41, 49, 71.

¹⁶¹ McCoy and de Jesus, *Philippine Social History*, Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*, 278.

¹⁶² One example was a legal device known as the *pacto de retrovendando*. Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Filipino Society*, 32; Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 81; Larkin, *The Pampangans*, 71; Fenner, *Cebu Under the Spanish Flag*, 86-88; *Kasaysayan*, 4:30

province.¹⁶³ There were also differences in education, with some of the new economic elites being highly educated—they had studied in the best Spanish schools in Manila and a few had even gone on to study in universities in Europe. Others were far less educated: for instance, the wealthy elite of Cebu did not share in the academic attainments of their Luzon-based peers.¹⁶⁴ As Michael Cullinane noted, the richest Filipinos tended to be urban dwellers with extensive economic and social networks, and they lived lives far removed from other Filipinos. Other elites—what he called *municipal elites*—were rich and powerful only in their local, rural communities and had far more extensive contacts with poor peasants and workers.¹⁶⁵

Despite these very important differences, the members of this economic superstratum did have two important commonalities. First, despite the disparities in wealth, influence, and education, they were all better off and more comfortable than the vast majority of Filipinos. Secondly, they clearly benefited from the current economic and political system and they therefore had a stake in maintaining both. The Spaniards perhaps recognized this and a lot of power and responsibility devolved into elite Filipino hands.

As to the first point, the very richest Filipinos had very luxurious lifestyles indeed, especially in comparison to their poor tenants. The houses of the wealthier inhabitants of Manila were

¹⁶³ Fenner, *Cebu Under the Spanish Flag*, 101; Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Filipino Society*, 72-73, 91, 214.

¹⁶⁴ Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of the Modern Filipino Economy*, 102, 164.

¹⁶⁵ Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*, 8-48.

Large and many European fashions have been introduced: the walls covered with painted paper, many lamps hung from the ceiling, Chinese screens, porcelain jars with natural or artificial flowers, mirrors, tables, sofas, chairs, and such as are seen in European capitals.¹⁶⁶

The rich planters of Negros often spent their evenings indulging in fancy balls where they dressed in elegant clothes, in stark contrast to how their workers spent their evenings.¹⁶⁷ The houses of wealthy Filipino were large, spacious and elegant, large wood-and-stone dwellings with airy rooms and *capiz* windows.¹⁶⁸

These new Filipino elites also associated themselves quite closely with Spanish culture and they adopted Spanish dress, architecture and lifestyles. A select few were educated in Spanish schools, either in the Philippines or in Spain itself. In these schools, the *ilustrado*—the name given to the educated and Hispanized literati—learned classical European fencing, read Spanish literature and some even wrote more floridly than the already florid Spanish style in an attempt to be more Spanish than the Spaniards. There is no better example of the wannabe-Spaniard than the bombastic and pretentious Pedro Paterno, but other *ilustrado* like Jose Rizal or Juan Luna dressed, painted and wrote in Spanish styles.¹⁶⁹ Even the Filipinos with far less wealth, like the municipal elites, built and decorated their houses in Spanish styles.

¹⁶⁶ Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippine Islands*, 7. See also Fenner, *Cebu Under the Spanish Flag*, 100.

¹⁶⁷ Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Filipino Society*, 82.

¹⁶⁸ *Kasaysayan*, 4:234-235.

¹⁶⁹ Resil B. Mojares, *The Brains of the Nation*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2006), 1-118.

As to the second point, it is clear that most of the privileged Filipinos benefited from the economic system. Their wealth and power could not be sustained if their property and persons were not protected, if trade routes, ports or roads were disrupted, if they were not given ready access to foreign capital or markets, or if their workers could move freely or demand more pay or benefits. The elites tended to support policies or structures that protected them and upheld their privilege and, as we shall see, they tended to oppose whatever went against their interests. The Spanish colonial regime and the elites consequently developed a symbiotic relationship—the Spanish were aware that the money that flowed into their coffers was because of the endeavors of their rich Filipino subjects and did much to protect elite Filipino interests.

An important example of Spanish-elite collaboration was in the realm of politics. The Spanish placed a lot of power into local hands, and in one way or another, rich Filipinos ended up as the main power holders in their communities.¹⁷⁰ This sort of collaboration was nothing new—the *datu* of prehispanic society had been turned into hereditary *principalia* who ruled over their local communities with Spanish consent. What changed in the 19th century was that the Spanish allowed more people to become *gobernadorcillos*—the title later changed to *capitán municipal*—or the highest town official or municipal official. Previously, only the hereditary *principalia* could become *gobernadorcillo*, so by allowing wealthy *mestizos* and *indios* to become politicians, the

¹⁷⁰ Manuel de Azcárraga y Palmero, *La Reforma del Municipio Indígena en Filipinas*, (Madrid: Imprenta de J. Noguera, Bordadores, 7, 1871), 10-12.

Spanish expanded the number of Filipinos who participated in the ruling of the colony.¹⁷¹
By 1847, the basic requirements were that the candidate be

A native or Chinese *mestizo*, a resident of the town, at least 25 years of age, able to read, write, and speak Spanish and an *ex-Teniente Mayor* (*Deputy Gobernadorcillo*) or *cabezas de barangay* with good record [chief of the *barangay*, the political division lower than town or municipality].¹⁷²

These requirements were not easily met since Spanish literacy and fluency required some sort of an education, which was beyond most Filipinos' means. Theoretically, being a *gobernadorcillo* also required a fair bit of money since these officials had to pay out of their own pockets for any shortfalls in tax collection or tribute gathering—and the *gobernadorcillo*'s salary could be quite insufficient for this purpose.¹⁷³ However, elected Filipino officials were not necessarily the rich and powerful of their local communities and in fact, the very richest Filipinos very often went out of their way to *avoid* having to serve in office.¹⁷⁴ This was not a given everywhere in the Philippines: in Cagayan, the *principales* sought out the office of *gobernadorcillo* because of the benefits it brought due to the government's Tobacco Monopoly.¹⁷⁵ But whether or

¹⁷¹ Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippine Islands*, 90-91; José Montero y Vidal, *El Archipiélago Filipino Y Las Islas Marianas, Carolinas y Palaos*, (Madrid: Imprenta y Fundación de Manuel Tello, 1886), 163-164; Emilio Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, (Philippines, C. Aguinaldo Suntay, 1964), 25.

¹⁷² Robles, *The Philippines in the 19th Century*, 63.

¹⁷³ Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 89; Robles, *The Philippines in the 19th Century*, 66.

¹⁷⁴ Ruby Paredes, ed., *Philippine Colonial Democracy*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1988), 13-40; Fenner, *Cebu Under the Spanish Flag*, 155-156; Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Filipino Society*, 93-94.

¹⁷⁵ McCoy and de Jesus, *Philippine Social History*, 32-33.

not the wealthy elite held the actual office, competition to *control* or influence political power one way or another was seen as desirable and the new Spanish rules allowed the new economic elites to participate in local politics in one way or another. In turn, these landowning and commerce-oriented Filipinos exerted a lot of effort in being the power behind the scenes even if they did not occupy elected positions themselves.¹⁷⁶ For a group of native elites, local politics became the main focus of their public lives: these were the “municipal elites” or Filipinos who were modestly wealthy and influential only in their local communities.¹⁷⁷

But perhaps the new law enforcement agencies created in the 19th century were the best example of how the privileged class of Filipinos and the Spanish colonial regime collaborated or cooperated to maintain the existing economic system. Prior to the 19th century, law enforcement in the Philippines was handled either by the army or by local militias.¹⁷⁸ Rising banditry in the last half of the 18th century prompted the Spanish to create the *cuervo de cuadrilleros* in the mid-19th century, a rural police force whose main role was to “pursue bandits, whose capture or death was encouraged by a system of rewards.”¹⁷⁹ The *cuadrilleros* were a very good example of Spanish-*principales* collaboration, since its local units were under the command of the *gobernadorcillo* and

¹⁷⁶ Paredes, *Philippine Colonial Democracy*, 18-29.

¹⁷⁷ Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*, 19-20.

¹⁷⁸ Cicero C. Campos, *The Role of the Police in the Philippines*, Thesis, (Michigan: Michigan State University, 1983), 114; Alfred W. McCoy, *Policing America's Empire*, (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 29-30; Bankoff, *Crime, Society, and the State in the Nineteenth Century Philippines*, pp. 129-130.

¹⁷⁹ Greg Bankoff, *Crime, Society, and the State in the Nineteenth Century Philippines*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1996), 131; Ignacio Salinas y Angulo, *Legislación Militar Aplicada al Ejército de Filipinas*, 5 vols., (Manila: Plana, 1879), 2:210-211.

one or two other subordinate municipal officers, all of whom were drawn from the elites of the local community.¹⁸⁰ Command of this semi-military constabulary force was probably the first or only experience of military operations of many future leaders of the 1896 Revolution and the Philippine-American War.

Even the *Guardia Civil*, another law enforcement agency created by the Spaniards, showed how the *principales* and the Spanish colonial regime cooperated to maintain the status quo. The *Guardia Civil* was a gendarmerie, a paramilitary force that, like the *cuadrilleros*, was specifically tasked with upholding rural peace and security when the poorly armed, poorly trained and under-manned *cuadrilleros* proved inadequate.¹⁸¹ The *Guardia Civil* was no longer under the command of local officials, and it was one of the manifestations of the trends towards centralization in colonial affairs.¹⁸² Perhaps as a result of this centralized control, the *Guardia Civil* earned the ire of most Filipinos, including that of the new economic elites who accused the *Guardia Civil* of corruption, high-handedness and of meddling in local affairs. However, the elites did not object with the *Guardia Civil*'s fundamental mission, since the organization's enforcement of the Spanish laws meant that the *Guardia Civil* protected the roads, ports,

¹⁸⁰ Campos, *The Role of the Police in the Philippines*, 113-115; Robles, *The Philippines in the 19th Century*, 68-69; Montero y Vidal, *El Archipiélago Filipino Y Las Islas Marianas*, 166.

¹⁸¹ Bankoff, *Crime, Society, and the State in the Nineteenth Century Philippines*, 133-136; Campos, *The Role of the Police in the Philippines*, 117-119; Salinas y Angulo, *Legislación Militar 2*: 176-182. The *Guardia Civil* were not the first paramilitary organization established to combat crime—the first were the *carabineros de seguridad publica*, but it proved inadequate for the task and was soon joined by the *Guardia Civil*. Salinas y Angulo, *Legislación Militar 2*:173-175.

¹⁸² Bankoff, *Crime, Society, and the State in the Nineteenth Century Philippines*, 135-136; Salinas y Angulo, *Legislación Militar 2*:186-188.

farms and towns upon which the *principalia* relied—not to mention protecting their lives and property against increasing numbers of rural bandits.¹⁸³

Elite Forms of Resistance

The *principalia*'s attitudes toward the *Guardia Civil* perhaps mirrored their attitudes toward the Spanish colonial system in general: their complaints tended to revolve around *who* was in charge but they did not object to the social, political and economic system of the colony which was structured to their benefit. Elite resistance therefore tended to be limited and conservative in outlook—it was not “revolutionary” in the sense that it wished to completely re-order society.

A universal element of elite discontent was widespread resentment towards the friars, or the religious Orders, like the Franciscans, Augustinians, and the Jesuits. Rightly or wrongly, the elite Filipinos were of the opinion that the Spanish friars were the ones most responsible for holding them back. This antipathy was understandable since the Spanish friars *were* a major source of trouble for the rich Filipinos. While the Spanish government was theoretically moving towards greater centralization and secularization, it could not avoid the fact that the local friar was usually the only representative of the Spanish Crown in his community and he was also usually the only Spaniard in the towns or villages who was literate and familiar with bureaucratic procedure. All this meant that the Spanish government continued to give friars important roles in local governance—the

¹⁸³ Campos, *The Role of the Police in the Philippines*, 118-123; Bankoff, *Crime, Society, and the State in the Nineteenth Century Philippines*, 147-152; Noelle Rodriguez, ed., *The Philippine Revolution of 1896: Ordinary Lives in Extraordinary Times*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2001), 87.

Spanish friars were involved in everything from elections and law enforcement to the day-to-day running of the community and therefore remained extremely powerful men.¹⁸⁴ It was almost inevitable that the friars should come into competition with the rising new Filipino elites, but especially with the modestly wealthy municipal elites in the countryside. During elections, for instance, the Spanish friars often had a “faction” that fielded a candidate who could be expected to carry out the friar’s political agenda. This led to bitter electoral fights between municipal elites and the friars.¹⁸⁵

The friars were also unhappy with the opening up of the Philippines to trade and foreign influence and they frequently tried to slow or stop it.¹⁸⁶ In October 1820, the Filipinos of Tondo rioted and killed any foreigners—Englishmen, Americans, Chinese—they encountered. The friars were widely suspected of being responsible for fomenting this unrest, and as Aguilar noted:

Although an isolated incident, the 1820 carnage encapsulated the primary tensions of colonial society in the early nineteenth century, created by the long-standing dominance of the religious orders and their opposition to the entry of foreign merchants capitalists who had been quietly admitted to the colony by liberal-minded governors/captains-general from around the late 1780s.¹⁸⁷

Given that the Filipino elites needed these foreigners, they did not find this isolationist agitation very attractive. The educated Filipinos also resented the Spanish antipathy to foreign ideas, especially those that promoted liberty or equality.

¹⁸⁴ Campos, *The Role of the Police in the Philippines*, 121; Paredes, *Philippine Colonial Democracy*, 25-26; Robles, *The Philippines in the 19th Century*, 78-79; Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 92.

¹⁸⁵ Paredes, *Philippine Colonial Democracy*, 29-34.

¹⁸⁶ Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 17-22.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Finally, the friar orders were economic competitors. Over the centuries, the religious Orders, “had become the largest single group of landed estate owners” and the friars’ landholdings apparently increased in the 19th century.¹⁸⁸ The religious orders also came into conflict with their tenants and clients over issues of rent and ultimate control over the land.¹⁸⁹

Near the end of the 19th century, a few of the more Hispanized and educated Filipinos began to articulate their grievances against the religious orders, and in so doing, they began to press the colonial government for reforms to give the richer, more educated and more powerful Filipinos more say in the running of the Philippines. This was the beginning of nationalist sentiment, and perhaps it was also the beginnings of elite revolutionary sentiment.¹⁹⁰

The most famous of those Filipinos agitating for reform were the so-called Propagandists. This group was composed of the expatriate Filipino community in Spain, the majority of whom were the scions of families with the resources to send them abroad for higher education. The most famous of the Propagandists include the doctor Jose Rizal, the journalist Marcelo H. Del Pilar, the painter Juan Luna and the dilettante Graciano Lopez-Jaena. They also had the qualities of typical indigenous critics of colonial rule: all were young men of some means, and except for Marcelo H. Del Pilar,

¹⁸⁸ Nicholas P. Cushner, *Landed Estates in the Colonial Philippines*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, Southeast Asia Studies, 1976), 35, 97-98; Fast and Richardson, *Roots of Dependency*, 38-39.

¹⁸⁹ Dennis Morrow Roth, *The Friar Estates of the Philippines*, (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1977), 117-146.

¹⁹⁰ A complaint most famously voiced by M. H. Del Pilar, *Frailocracy in the Philippines*, Leonor Agrava, trans., (Manila: National Historical Institute, 2009).

all had degrees from universities in Europe. Del Pilar was the exception since he studied in universities in the Philippines and traveled to Spain specifically to campaign for the Philippine cause—the others were there for their studies, and their Propagandist activities were generally a secondary consideration to their schooling.

The Propagandists spent much of their energy in agitating for reform in Spain. The hope was that by wooing or convincing Spanish lawmakers through newspaper articles, speeches, paintings, and even dinner parties, the Filipinos would find champions in the otherwise inaccessible Spanish *cortes*. More specifically, the Propagandists wanted such things as the removal of Spanish monopolization of colonial offices, Philippine representation in the Spanish *cortes* and liberalization of trade in the Islands. These were goals born out of self-interest, but they were also informed by the Propagandists' exposure to Western ideas of equality, liberalism and humanism.¹⁹¹ These young men were also increasingly aware of their own worth and talents, especially when compared to the rather poorly accomplished Spaniards then being sent to the Philippines to run the colonial bureaucracy. Second-class status began to rankle.

The best illustration of Propagandist ideas can be found in the works of Jose Rizal, especially in his two novels *Noli Me Tangere* (“Touch Me Not”) and its sequel, *El Filibusterismo* (“The Filibustering” but also known as “The Reign of Greed”). The villains in the books are the Spanish friars Padre Damaso and Padre Salvi, and Rizal is not subtle in portraying them as unflatteringly as possible. Damaso, for instance, is loud, ignorant, boorish and overbearing—the very image of the arrogant and otherwise

¹⁹¹ For a fuller examination, see Cesar A. Majul, *The Political and Constitutional Ideas of the Philippine Revolution*, (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines Press, 1967), 21-42.

unaccomplished Spaniard, blithely secure in his sense of superiority over the Filipinos simply by virtue of his blood. With typical Rizal sarcasm, he is described as “jolly, and if the sound of his voice is brusque like that of a man who has never bitten his tongue and who believes everything he utters is sacrosanct and cannot be improved upon.”¹⁹² The two friars are, between them, responsible for practically all the conflicts and ills in the *Noli*. Both friars are lecherous, lusting after Filipino women—perhaps symbolic of the “violation” of the Philippines by the clerical orders. The two friars are also shown either interfering with secular matters or getting into fights with secular authorities. In one scene, the local Filipino officials of a town called San Diego are debating how to arrange an upcoming festival. The two factions in the town engage in heated politicking, but all of it is for naught when it is made known that Padre Salvi’s wishes have the final say:

“But we don’t want that!” said the young ones [town officials] and some old men.

“The parish priest wants it this way!” repeated the *Gobernadorcillo* [town mayor]

“And I promised him that his wishes would be fulfilled.”

“Then why have you summoned us?”

“Precisely to inform you.”¹⁹³

What Rizal’s works lack is a clear recommendation about how to *solve* these ills in colonial society. Specifically, revolution and radical change are not described sympathetically. In the sequel, *El Filibusterismo*, there are conspiracies and attempts at violent action and Rizal is careful to portray all these attempts at forcible change as

¹⁹² Jose Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere*, Ma. Soledad Lacson-Locsin, trans., (Philippines: The Bookmark Inc., 1996), 5.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 121.

failures. The final scene of the book involves a long exploration of the future of the Philippines, as Rizal's alter-ego Ibarra discourses with a native priest (one of the few sympathetic priests in Rizal's works). Anyone looking for clear endorsements of revolution will be disappointed since Rizal seems to advocate little more than patience and forbearance:

“The school of suffering tempers; the arena of combat strengthens the soul. I do not mean to say that our freedom is to be won by the blade; the sword enters very little now in modern destinies, yes, but we must win it, deserving it, raising the intelligence and dignity of the individual...”¹⁹⁴

In the end, Rizal appeared to favor a period of education and “uplifting” for Filipinos before independence. The youth would be taught nationalism and patriotism and they would be the keys to Philippine independence. Revolution did not seem to be one of Rizal's goals.

Rizal's ambiguity about revolution was something shared by almost all of the Propagandists and Rizal himself might even be seen as rather more “radical” than other Propagandists in his espousal of *eventual* independence—most never called for even this and were content to push for assimilation with Spain. Marcelo H. Del Pilar was the primary driving force behind the Propaganda Movement's attempts at serious political lobbying and he did much to turn the Movement into something resembling a political movement. Unfortunately he received very little in the way of financial and moral support from other Propagandists and rich Filipinos back home.¹⁹⁵ As Cullinane noted, it

¹⁹⁴ Rizal, *El Filibusterismo*, 313.

¹⁹⁵ John N. Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1997), 105-127, 147-170.

was one thing to push for independence in Spain as a young student, but it was quite another to do so at home, when it was time to settle down and run the family business or find positions in the colonial government.¹⁹⁶

This is not to say, however, that the Propagandists did not contribute anything to the cause of Philippine independence.¹⁹⁷ Many of the Propagandists' works and writings did make it back to the Philippines. As John Schumacher noted:

To a far greater extent the Propaganda movement was a success in giving the people a sense of national identity and unity... Though the leaders of the Propaganda movement did not plan the Revolution that broke out in 1896, it was their ideas that caused those who did to take fire.¹⁹⁸

Perhaps the most important idea created by the Propagandists was that of a Philippine national identity. The Propagandists crafted this national identity in order to respond to the Spanish racial denigration of "Filipinos," and they hoped that if the Spanish recognized that the Filipinos were just as civilized as Europeans, and then the Filipinos would be accepted as equals and be given equal political rights.¹⁹⁹ This national identity was not initially created for the purposes of national liberation, but the Revolutionists would use this idea of national identity as a justification for revolt and as a rallying cry for unity.

¹⁹⁶ Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*, 36.

¹⁹⁷ Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement*, 295-308.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 301.

¹⁹⁹ See Rizal's commentaries of de Morga and Del Pilar *Frailocracy*, chap. 5 as good examples.

Elite Filipino resistance towards Spain therefore took the form of municipal politicking and propagandistic agitation. None, as far as is known, actively took up arms against the Spanish until 1896. This absence of armed resistance towards Spain was likely a result of the essentially conservative nature of elite complaints—these privileged Filipinos had risen to their positions of prominence by taking advantage of the system and did not fundamentally disagree with the colonial society’s economic and social set-up. They logically wanted to preserve the export-driven economy, they wanted to maintain ties to outside markets and credits, they wanted to keep their hold on their land and their workers, and they wanted the Philippines to be internally safe and secure enough to keep business going and their lifestyles (and lives) safe.

All this meant that it is not unlikely that, if the Spanish had been willing to accommodate the native elite or to give them a greater share in power over colonial affairs, the Revolution might never have happened.²⁰⁰ Puerto Rico offers a parallel: the elites of that place also agitated for equality with Spain, and since they largely achieved their aims, they did not rebel against Spanish rule.²⁰¹

Difficulties for Many: Poverty and Discontent in the 19th Century

The other side of the coin was the poor majority of indigenous Filipinos—the laborers, farmers, craftsmen and fishermen—in other words, the so-called “masses” that

²⁰⁰ Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 102.

²⁰¹ Julian Go, *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning: Elite Political Cultures in the Philippines and Puerto Rico During US Colonialism*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 58-59.

made up the bulk of the Philippine population.²⁰² These Filipinos were also affected by the changing Philippine economy—and the question is how they reacted to these new social, political and economic pressures.

Some poorer Filipinos probably benefited from the new colonial system, or at least they affiliated themselves closely to it. Many poor Filipinos acted as foremen for landowners or as workers and employees of the government. One French visitor to the Philippines named André Bellessort claimed that, “the government has the support of many natives whose loyalty is a matter salaries and wages.”²⁰³ It must also be remembered that practically all of the soldiers in the colonial army and the *Guardia Civil* were native Filipinos and, except for the Cavite Mutiny, they remained largely loyal until the Philippine Revolution.²⁰⁴

Some peasants also tried to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the cash-cropping economy. As Filomeno Aguilar put it, they “tried their luck” and attempted to benefit from the new economy by growing cash crops instead of remaining strictly subsistence farmers.²⁰⁵

²⁰² Cullinane suggests that the elite Filipinos made up 10% of the population at most, Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*, 10-11.

²⁰³ André Bellessort, *One Week in the Philippines*, E. Aguilar Cruz, trans., (Philippines: National Historical Institute, 1987), 51.

²⁰⁴ On native numbers in army, Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippine Islands*, 191.

²⁰⁵ Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 74-79; Rosario M. Cortes, *Pangasinan 1800-1901*, (Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1990), 11-12; McCoy and de Jesus, *Philippine Social History*, 63-66 and 98-99.

In other ways, however, the new colonial system was a source of hardship to poorer Filipinos.²⁰⁶ The colonial government's desire to increase its revenues increased the tax and labor burdens on Filipinos since the tax burden fell disproportionately on the poorest sectors of native society.²⁰⁷ The *cédula personal* was the most notorious and unpopular of these new taxes. In brief, it was, "formally an identifying certificate, showing the person's name, his town and province... the civil status of the holder and the class of the holder in relation to the tax." It was also required in "all civil and judiciary proceedings" and all inhabitants of the colony over were required to carry one, with payment due at the beginning of every year.²⁰⁸ The tax was regressive, since all Filipinos paid a flat rate. The *cédula's* cost and its intrusiveness were symbolic of the colonial state's increased encroachment on ordinary Filipinos' lives and of the unfairness of the new colonial system.²⁰⁹

The colonial government also began to tax or control two popular lower-class activities: gambling and smoking. The colonial government taxed cockfighting and the 19th century visitor, John Bowring, noted that:

[The Filipinos had] a universal love of gambling, which is exhibited among the Indian races by a passion for cock-fighting, an amusement made a productive source of revenue to the State.²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 83.

²⁰⁷ Robles, *The Philippines in the 19th Century*, 242-250; Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 80-81.

²⁰⁸ Robles, *The Philippines in the 19th Century*, 244-245.

²⁰⁹ McCoy and de Jesus, *Philippine Social History*, 232-233.

²¹⁰ Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippine Islands*, 7.

In Bicol—and presumably elsewhere—the government’s Tobacco Monopoly also negatively impacted the lives of poor Filipinos. A very large proportion of the Filipino population smoked, and with the Tobacco Monopoly they were now forced to buy their cigars and cigarettes from government-controlled stores and outlets.²¹¹

The richer Filipinos were also a source of hardship for the poorer Filipinos. Peasants who wished to participate in the new cash cropping economy by migrating or by exploiting their existing plots more fully needed the money and the backing of wealthy Filipinos. For instance, peasants needed help to acquire tools, seeds and implements, to buy food when harvests were bad, and to make up for the shortfall when cash-cropping. Wealthy Filipinos were also a source of money whenever poorer Filipinos were unable to meet the pecuniary demands of the colonial government.

Many peasants entered into something known as the *samacan* or *kasamahan* agreement with a richer patron, one by which the patron agreed to loan money or resources for eventual repayment or for a share of the peasant’s produce.²¹² Another agreement was the *pacto de retrovntado*. A farmer who needed money would sell his or her land to a rich patron, but could continue to work it and would eventually buy back the land.²¹³ Both arrangements tended to favor the person giving out the loan or holding the land since the interest rates for loans were often very high and resulted in near-permanent

²¹¹ De Jesus, *The Tobacco Monopoly in the Philippines*, 57-58.

²¹² Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Filipino Society*, 31-32; Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 79-82

²¹³ Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 81; Fenner, *Cebu Under the Spanish Flag*, 86-88; McCoy and de Jesus, *Philippine Social History*, 69-70; Surtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 40; Fast and Richardson, *Roots of Dependency*, 38.

indebtedness. In the case of the *pacto de retrovendado*, the creditor also had legal rights over the land, which conferred another degree of power. The law also tended to favor creditors—economic elites could bribe the government officials to rule in their favor in land disputes.²¹⁴ Economic elites all over the Philippines used these means to consolidate their hold on the land, thereby increasing their economic power and dispossessing the peasant farmers.²¹⁵

Debt therefore remained an important element in Philippine social relations, but there was now the important element of *imbalance*—the debt relationship greatly favored the lender and was now far less reciprocal than the prehispanic or early colonial forms of debt bondage. The potential for patrons or elites to abuse and maltreat their tenants or clients was quite high—high enough that the Spanish took note of it. The Spanish scholar Wenceslao Retana noted that “rare, very rare is the tenant who is not in debt to his landlord, a debt that brings into being a type of slavery to which he is subjected.”²¹⁶ The reforming governor-general José Basco y Vargas also observed how debt could be used to bind tenants to their landowners and he tried—unsuccessfully—to introduce legislation to limit these abuses.²¹⁷

The situation appeared to be unchanged in the American colonial era: an American Constabulary officer noted in the early 20th century that the treatment of poor

²¹⁴ McCoy and de Jesus, *Philippine Social History*, 321.

²¹⁵ Fenner, *Cebu Under the Spanish Flag*, 177-178; McCoy and de Jesus, *Philippine Social History*, 70-73.

²¹⁶ Quoted in Glenn A. May, *Battle for Batangas*, (Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1993), 21.

²¹⁷ Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Filipino Society*, 31-32.

peasants by landowners in Negros compared to, “our own south before the war when slavery fostered brutality.”²¹⁸ In Pampanga, sugar planters were the undisputed masters of their *haciendas* and often whipped or beat their workers.²¹⁹

Many of the poor Filipinos rebelled or protested against this situation although it is difficult to say exactly how many of them did so actively. Several factors worked to prevent a total breakdown of the social order. First, there is the fact that, as Glenn May pointed out, the relationships between tenant and landowner or patron and client were not universally abusive and antagonistic even if it was unequal and one-sided.²²⁰ The interpersonal nature of patron-client ties never disappeared since, as David Sturtevant noted, many landowners still lived in close physical proximity with their tenants. This forced landowners and their tenants to interact on a personal level, which may have prevented rural society from completely breaking down and becoming openly antagonistic.²²¹ Landowners often had a paternalistic attitude towards their tenants, and felt that they protected, guided and helped their tenants. Sometimes this paternalism involved punishing their tenants and sometimes it also meant, “teaching” them to live within their means and (rather cynically) to stop going into debt.²²² Ideally, then, patrons still felt obliged to aid a client in need or conversely, poor peasants still felt like they

²¹⁸ McCoy and de Jesus, *Philippine Social History*, 325.

²¹⁹ Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Filipino Society*, 126-127.

²²⁰ May, *Battle for Batangas*, 19-20.

²²¹ Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 40; Also noted in Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 81.

²²² Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Filipino Society*, 124-128.

could approach their landowners in times of trouble, which enabled the formation of bonds of gratitude or of *utang ng loob*.

Second, even if poor peasants were unhappy with how they were treated, it was possible that they thought there was nothing that they could realistically do about it. The landowners had considerable power. Specifically, they now had the ability to call upon the new law enforcement agencies of the colonial state. Runaway tenants, workers who did not pay their debts, or those who impeded the running of the *hacienda* could be caught and punished by the *Guardia Civil* or the *cuadrilleros*.²²³ The majority of persons caught or punished for crimes tended to be poor. One Spanish chronicler wrote in 1882, that out of a sample of 5,982 criminal cases, the most common occupation of the convicted was *laboradores* and *jornaleros*, laborers, at 3,699 and 923, respectively. There was only a single *propietario* or landowner in the entire sample.²²⁴ Indeed, the profile of the average person incarcerated by the Spanish penal system in the 19th century was, according to Greg Bankoff was, a “male, *indio* and illiterate.”²²⁵ The richer Filipinos might complain about the *Guardia Civil*'s behavior, but in reality the hand of state repression fell on the poor far more heavily.

Thus, for various reasons, poor Filipinos did not necessarily object to the new political and economic system. Or if they did object, they might not have actively resisted or, perhaps they limited their resistance to what James Scott calls “everyday forms of

²²³ McCoy and de Jesus, *Philippine Social History*, 323.

²²⁴ Francisco Javier de Moya y Jimenez, *Las Islas Filipinas en 1892*, (Madrid: El Correro, 1883), 213.

²²⁵ Bankoff, *Crime, Society, and the State in the Nineteenth Century Philippines*, 29-30.

resistance” which did not involve open use of violence. It is difficult to say what proportion of the native population essentially supported the colonial system—popular support for a social structure is difficult, if not impossible, to quantify.

Yet it cannot be denied that the pressures of increased taxation and abusive landlords *did* lead to active and violent lower-class discontent. The late 18th century marked the beginning of both widespread lower-class revolts against the colonial system and the proliferation of banditry in the countryside. Both the revolts and the banditry were instances of active resistance against Spanish and elite Filipino rule and both were, in many ways, continuations of the traditional form of Filipino warfare: decampment and flight from the offending authority or social system.

Bandits and Messiahs

Many poor Filipinos took to the hills and became bandits in response to the pressures of the late colonial society. These bandits were known as *tulisanes*, a Tagalog word that perhaps comes from “*tulis*” or sharp, an allusion to their weapons.²²⁶ The Spaniards and the Americans also knew them as *ladrones*, although the word *remontado* (“remount” according to the American observer, James LeRoy) continued to be used.²²⁷

²²⁶ Isagani Medina, *Cavite Before the Revolution*, (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines Press, 2002), 62.

²²⁷ James Le Roy, *Philippine Life in Town and Country*, (New York and London: P. Putnam’s Sons, 1907), 29-30.

Rural banditry experienced a very sharp upswing in the late 18th century, and continued to rise throughout the 19th century.²²⁸ As Sastron wrote: “In this province [Batangas], there are no roads or lodgings where a man’s money, goods, or life are secure.”²²⁹ The reason for this rise in banditry was, according to several scholars, largely lower-class discontent with the colonial economic and political system.²³⁰ It might be seen as a form of Eric Hobsbawm’s “social banditry” but it was also a continuation of the traditional Filipino practice of decamping and escaping authority that one disagreed with.²³¹ The *tulisanes* also continued the ancient Filipino practice of raiding—perhaps there is even a linguistic link since one Tagalog word for the bandits was *mangangayao*, or ambushers, which is similar to the old Visayan word *mangangayaw*, for the slave-raids of prehispanic times.²³² The *tulisanes* also continued the Philippine tradition of talismans and spiritual power in combat.²³³ For instance, one bandit active in Cavite, Luis Parang, would fearlessly charge guns directly, believing he was bulletproof because of a powerful *anting anting*—and his continued survival convinced others as well.²³⁴

²²⁸ Medina, *Cavite Before the Revolution*, 63; Cushner, *Landed Estates in the Philippines*, 69-70; McCoy and de Jesus, *Philippine Social History*, 140-141; Federico de Monteverde y Sedano, *Campaña de Filipinas: La Division Lachambre*, (Madrid: M. Tello, 1898), 57-58.

²²⁹ Manuel Sastrón, *Batangas y su Provincia*, (Malabong, Batangas: Estableciminetto Tipo-Litográfico del Asilo de Huérfanos de Malabong, 1895), 65. “*En esta provincia no hay camino ni posada donde esta seguro el dinero, el trafico, ni la vide de un hombre.*” However, Sastrón claimed that the situation had improved by the 1890s.

²³⁰ Bankoff, *Crime, Society, and the State in the Nineteenth Century Philippines*, 17-18; Surtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 115-121.

²³¹ Medina, *Cavite Before the Revolution*, 63-65; Surtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 117.

²³² Medina, *Cavite Before the Revolution*, 61.

²³³ Surtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 117.

²³⁴ Medina, *Cavite Before the Revolution*, 67.

The *tulisanes* continued to interact with settled communities, especially with the poorer farmers and peasants. They very frequently had family and friends in the towns and villages with whom they continued to interact.²³⁵

The *tulisanes* were a very serious threat to the colonial system: they waylaid travelers, raided farms and *haciendas*, menaced the roads, robbed churches and municipal buildings, and threatened the lives of government officials and Filipino elites. Some areas were so troubled by bandits that they were rendered impassable or inaccessible to normal travel. The road to Antipolo—a town very near to Manila—was apparently quite beset by bandits, which undoubtedly was troublesome given its popularity as a pilgrimage site.²³⁶ The problem of *tulisanes* could get so bad that the Augustinians were even forced to abandon one of their *haciendas* in Tondo because of the depredations of bandits.²³⁷ A crucial point about the *tulisanes* was that they made little to no distinction between the Spanish and Filipinos, especially elite Filipinos. Along with their committing depredations on Church lands or government property, the bandits also threatened the lives and property of wealthy native or *mestizo* landowners, and, because they disrupted the flow of trade, they also threatened the basis of *ilustrado* wealth.

The Spanish attempted to control this banditry by raising the aforementioned *Guardia Civil* and *cuadrilleros*. The expanded law enforcement represented perhaps something more than just an attempt to quell rising banditry—it represented a shift in the

²³⁵ Surtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 116.

²³⁶ Foreman, *The Philippine Islands*, 201. Perhaps the fact that there was a lot of traffic to and from Antipolo was why it was a haunt of highwaymen.

²³⁷ McCoy and de Jesus, *Philippine Social History*, 140.

way the Spanish conceptualized the political geography of the Philippines. In theory, there would no longer be a tolerable indeterminate space between the Spanish settlements and the wilderness: the Spanish were now claiming universal sovereignty over the expanse of the archipelago.²³⁸ The *tulisanes* were no longer errant parishioners to be enticed back to the *reduccion*; now they were outlaws to be punished if caught.

However, the law enforcement agencies were not sufficient for the task and the Spanish were never able to “solve” the bandit problem. From an environmental perspective, the mountains and forests of the inland remained dense, impenetrable and difficult to traverse. The deforestation of the Philippines had its origins in the economic and demographic expansion of the 19th century, but there was still enough rough terrain and forest cover to serve as shelter for the *tulisanes* and to make pursuit by law enforcement agencies ineffective. Concurrently, the various police forces of the colonial government were chronically underfunded and understaffed. Thus, decampment and flight might have become *more difficult* and certainly much riskier, but it was not *impossible*. *Tulisanes* could prey upon travelers and farmers and flee to the forests with some degree of security. The situation persisted even after the end of the Spanish era, and both the Philippine Revolutionary government and the American colonial government had to deal with the *tulisanes* in their turn. These *tulisanes* would also play a part in the 1896 Revolution and the Philippine-American War and as Isagani Medina noted, the

²³⁸ Bankoff, *Crime, Society, and the State in the Nineteenth Century Philippines*, 11.

activities of the *tulisanes* “became a part of the national pattern of resistance which culminated in the Revolution of 1896.”²³⁹

Aside from the *tulisanes*, the millenarian cults led by charismatic, messianic leaders also offered active resistance to the existing colonial system. In many ways, these leaders were the direct descendants of the *datu*: like the prehispanic leaders, the messianic figures of the 19th century based their authority on spiritual prowess, charisma and continual achievement: they secured and maintained their authority through acts like persuasive speech, displays of spiritual power and personal asceticism. But the messianic leaders that arose in the last century and a half of Spanish rule were rather different from the *datu* in two key ways. First, despite the centuries of Christianization, belief in the prehispanic spirit world remained strong. As John Bowring noted of Iloilo:

On the arrival of the Spaniards [to Iloilo] they found the district occupied by painted Indians, full of superstitions, which, notwithstanding the teachings of the Augustine friars, are still found to prevail, especially at the time of any public calamity.²⁴⁰

But, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Christianization had inevitably left its mark on Philippine culture, and a syncretism with prehispanic spiritual beliefs was the result. They used Christian concepts and beliefs in their spiritual worldview and derived their power and authority from God, saints, or holy relics. A few even claimed to *be* God or Jesus. The *anting anting* or the protective talismans of the 19th century were also as likely to be Christian symbols or prayers as they were to be anything else. Retana gives

²³⁹ Medina, *Cavite Before the Revolution*, 104.

²⁴⁰ Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippines*, 356. Process of Christianization of Hispanic belief, see Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 32-62; Also, Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*.

examples of Latin prayers written on pieces of paper that were used as *anting anting* in his book *Supersticiones de los Indios Filipinos*.²⁴¹

Second, these charismatic leaders had a social appeal that was new to Filipino warfare: their message was directed to the discontented poor—to the farmers, workers, fishermen and peasants who had been marginalized by the new economic system. These charismatic leaders offered a vision of a world of spiritual fulfillment, where there was no suffering and inequality, where even the poor could achieve bliss.²⁴²

Still, despite this new message these spiritual leaders harkened back to the prehispanic *datu* since like the *datu*, they claimed that their spiritual power and aura would provide this bliss for as long as one followed their authority or stayed in close proximity with them. The messianic cults and their leaders also believed that a person's inner, moral or spiritual strength, quality or purity would have an effect on the corporeal world. This was rather like a combination of their belief in *anting anting* and in spiritual prowess. The leader's spiritual power, or his or her followers' spiritual purity would determine whether they would achieve heaven or bliss on earth. It was therefore as important for the followers in these cults to cultivate their inner, moral or spiritual natures as it was for them to act on the outside world. Conversely, these cults also believed that external factors or actions could affect one's internal spiritual quality. This simply meant

²⁴¹ Wenceslaos E. Retana, *Supersticiones de los Indios Filipinos*, (Madrid: Imp. De la Viuda de M. Minuesa de los Rios, 1894).

²⁴² Reynaldo C. Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1997).

that items like *anting anting* could affect a person's spiritual nature, or that fasting could purify the self.

To understand these movements, let us look a bit more closely at two of these movements: the *Cofradia de San Jose* and the *Guardia de Honor*.

The *Cofradia de San Jose* was founded by the *indio* Apolinario de la Cruz, a resident of Lucban in (the now Quezon) Tayabas province.²⁴³ He came from a peasant family of some means and received some education. In 1830, he traveled to Manila to pursue a career as a friar but was thwarted by his racial background and he had to settle for becoming a lay brother in a charitable Catholic institution instead. However, Apolinario was apparently not satisfied with being a mere lay brother and founded his own organization, the grandiosely named *Hermandad de la Archi-Cofradia del Glorioso Senor San Jose y de la Virgen del Rosario*, or the Brotherhood of the Great Sodality of the Glorious Saint Joseph and of the Virgin of the Rosary.²⁴⁴ There was nothing unusual about this sort of organization in that period in Philippine history and religious authorities regarded it as simply one more lay religious organization among many. Despite the *Hermandad* in the name, the *Cofradia* was open to both sexes, but its membership was restricted to pureblooded *indios*—no Spaniards or *mestizos* were allowed, although *indios* of wealth were not barred from joining.²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Most of this is from Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 31-73; Surtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 83-95; José Montero y Vidal, *Historia General de Filipinas*, (Madrid: M. Tello, 1887-1895), 37-56.

²⁴⁴ Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 31.

²⁴⁵ Surtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 85.

The *Cofradia* initially was overshadowed by other, elite-dominated organizations of a similar nature until it suddenly ballooned in numbers and aroused the suspicion of the already paranoid Spaniards. The official tolerance (or at least indifference) to the *Cofradia* vanished and Apolinario de la Cruz's attempts to gain official sanction for his group not only failed, but led to their persecution by the authorities. Juan de la Matta wrote of the *Cofradia* in his confidential report to the governor-general of the Philippines Marcelino Oraá, describing the *Cofradia* as a manifestation of the Filipino tendency to "readily believe whatever is presented to them under the veil of religion and of the marvelous."²⁴⁶ Far from dismissing the *Cofradia* as a mere cult of fanatics, de la Matta noted that it had become "seditious" and might have been capable of threatening the Spanish hold on the Philippines.

Perhaps the Spaniards were right to be afraid—the *Cofradia*'s message had a powerful appeal, and the organization became very large, its members very devoted to Apolinario de la Cruz. He assumed the name of Hermano Pule, and acquired a vigorous and effective young secretary, one Octavio Ignacio de San Jorge, who called himself "*Purgatorio*" who was crucial to the group's success and also became an object of devotion. Hermano Pule communicated with many of his more distant members through letters that were read or heard with "reverence and also some curiosity" by his flock. When the parish priest of Lucban—the location of the *Cofradia*'s headquarters—

²⁴⁶ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 52:101.

confiscated some of the organization's possessions, he found "two large portraits of the leader done in the style of popular images of saints."²⁴⁷

Hermano Pule's teachings centered on promises of bliss in an earthly heaven where there would be no conflict and a human community in perfect unity. Presumably, this earthly heaven was considered to be better than the hard existence of rural poverty. Membership in the *Cofradia*, but specifically, adherence to Hermano Pule's authority and teachings and sharing in his power was the only way to reach this heaven. Once within his orbit, the followers had to change their lifestyles, purifying themselves and improving their moral fiber—along with following Pule this was also needed in order to achieve earthly bliss. Fundamentally, this meant abandoning the corrupt and fallen towns and villages in which the *Cofradia* members lived and living in a new society, or a separate community. In real world terms, the *Cofradia* members congregated on the town of Isabang in Tayabas, later moving to the *sitio* of Ipilian in an area of Tayabas known as Aritao. The latter was more easily defended, but in both cases the *Cofradia*'s decampment turned them into a "group or society apart, the members considered themselves proscribed."²⁴⁸

When the *Cofradia* gathered in Isabang, the group swelled to 3,000 or 4,000 people and it was deemed threatening enough that the Spanish decided to try dispersing them. On 22 October, 1840, the provincial governor Juan de Ortega marched to Isabang with an ad hoc force of

²⁴⁷ Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 43.

²⁴⁸ Robert G. Woods, quoted in Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 57.

300 Men of his personal guard, *cuadrilleros*, men of the reserve, along with *cabezas de barangay*, the Fransiscan curates of Lucban and Tayabas and the rent administrator Don Salvador de Roma.²⁴⁹

These were not soldiers, and this was clearly a law-enforcement operation, not a military one. The motley nature of this force also suggests just how ill-prepared and poorly-trained Spanish law enforcement was in the 19th century, factors that would be crucial in the 1898 Revolution. The members of the *Cofradia* were themselves not particularly well armed or well-trained, but they were highly motivated and they grossly outnumbered de Ortega's small, poorly armed and poorly cohesive force.

The Spanish force—which was composed largely of Filipinos—broke under a hail of *Cofradia* musketry and arrows and de Ortega himself was killed during the rout. After their victory, the *Cofradia* decamped and removed themselves from Spanish authority further when they traveled to the remote and isolated Aritao plain. At this point, the Spanish claimed that the Apolinario de la Cruz had been christened “king of the Tagalogs” and his authority among his followers was higher than ever. The *Cofradia*'s little community was fortified and prepared for the defense by Purgatorio, and its members seem to have kept up their high morale. Perhaps this high morale can be largely attributed to Apolinario de la Cruz's claims and promises of spiritual help and supernatural aid when it came time for fighting:

The cofrades were made to believe that, at the time of battle, invisible soldiers would be summoned and the angels would swing the tide of battle in the Cofradia's favor. Also, as soon as the battle started a big lake would open up and

²⁴⁹ Vidal y Montero, *Historia General de Filipinas*, 41.

swallow the advancing enemy troops... They [the cofrade] believed that their hearts would be as firm as the mysterious sword with which Apolinario baptized them, and they would be invulnerable to Spanish bullets.²⁵⁰

The Spanish were now more determined than ever to wipe out this “seditious” sect and the governor-general Marcelino de Oraa sent Lieutenant Colonel Joaquin Huet with 400 Pampangan regulars, 60 cavalymen, an artillery unit, and equal numbers of *cuadrilleros* and men of the reserve, to destroy the *Cofradia*.²⁵¹ Despite these numbers, the the *Cofradia* were so confident of their powers that they contemptuously rejected a Spanish offer of amnesty. Unfortunately, the Spanish were better led and better prepared and after a light artillery bombardment they charged the *Cofradia*’s defenses. The *Cofradia* displayed “admirable firmness” despite suffering heavily casualties, but the Spanish forces routed the *Cofradia*, killing 800 to 1,000 in the process.²⁵² Apolinario de la Cruz’s bodyguard defended him to the death, enabling him to flee, but he was eventually betrayed and captured and the *Cofradia* abolished. This did not quell the unrest in the Tagalog areas, but it did mark the end of the *Cofradia de San Jose*.

The *Guardia de Honor* had a very similar story, and the organization will reappear in this study since it had a remarkably long life and had to be dealt with by Spaniards, the Philippine Revolutionary Government, and the Americans.²⁵³ Unlike the *Cofradia de San Jose*, the *Guardia de Honor* started out as a legitimate, Church-

²⁵⁰ Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 59.

²⁵¹ Vidal y Montero, *Historia General de Filipinas*, 44-45.

²⁵² Surtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 90-92; Vidal y Montero, *Historia General de Filipinas*, 45-46.

²⁵³ Most of the narrative is from Surtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, chap. 5.

sanctioned sodality, one meant to encourage Christian virtues and controlled by local Spanish priests and friars. It was open to both rich and poor Filipinos and it consequently exploded in popularity, which made it difficult for the Spanish clergy to regulate all of the *Guardia de Honor*'s activities. "Pagan" or traditional Filipino beliefs and rituals began to appear in some of the isolated provincial chapters. The situation deteriorated so much that the Ilocos branches of the sodality were dissolved, but many self-proclaimed members continued to practice their own version of folk Christianity under the name of *Guardia de Honor*. Eventually, a charismatic "anitero" or "possessor of an amulet" named Julian Baltasar, of Urdaneta, Pangasinan, emerged as the leader of the unsanctioned branches of the *Guardia de Honor*. He does not seem to have been elected or chosen and he rose to the position based on his spiritual prowess as a faith healer (an "albulario" in Tagalog). Like Apolinario de la Cruz, Baltasar acquired his own folksy nickname—"Apo Laqui," which David Sturtevant translated as "Mister Grandfather" or "Male Deity." Unlike de la Cruz, Baltasar had an equally powerful wife, a blind woman known as "Apo Bae" or "Female Deity."²⁵⁴

In the mid-1880s, Baltasar's *Guardia de Honor* grew in size and influence and his house became the focus of pilgrimages by devotees, turning the town of Urdaneta into a "gypsy encampment overflowing with foot-loose *provincianos*."²⁵⁵ "Apo Bae," passed away in 1896, but her spirit continued to be a source of prowess for Baltasar. Eventually, Baltasar remarried and moved away from Urdaneta and to the "remote sitio of Montiel" where he "ordered assembling followers to clear large sections of the surrounding forest."

²⁵⁴ Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 98-99. Her name is otherwise unknown.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

Like Apolinario de la Cruz, Baltasar decamped into the wilderness and created a new spiritual community he called “*Cabaruan*” or “Renewal.”²⁵⁶ Also like de la Cruz, Baltasar acquired an energetic young lieutenant, a young man named Antonio Valdes who did most of the practical work of leading the *Guardia de Honor* in day-to-day life and eventually led it in combat while Baltasar provided spiritual guidance.

When the Philippine Revolution broke out, Antonio Valdes organized some self-defense groups for the *Guardia de Honor* and, according to Milagros Guerrero, sided with the independence movement—specifically, the Katipunan.²⁵⁷ Whatever the case may be, the *Guardia de Honor*’s Revolutionary-era activities, like its raids on Spanish depots, earned it the ire of the Spaniards. The Spanish eventually sent forces against the sect and captured Cabaruan, arrested Baltasar and broke up the community. This setback proved temporary, and Antonio Valdes initiated an increasingly effective guerrilla war against the Spanish and the *Guardia de Honor* was able to survive and even grow during the Revolution. By the Philippine-American War in 1899, Valdes had assumed the full leadership of the sect after Baltasar’s death and the *Guardia de Honor* had increased to almost 40,000 members in Pangasinan.²⁵⁸

The *Guardia de Honor*’s partnership with the Aguinaldo-led Revolutionary movement proved short lived. In the end, the aspirations of the *Guardia de Honor*’s peasants and farmers proved irreconcilable to the goals of the landowning *principales*.

²⁵⁶ Sturtvant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*, 101.

²⁵⁷ Milagros C. Guerrero, *Luzon at War*, Thesis, (Michigan: University of Michigan, 1977), 167-168.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.

Like the *Cofradia de San Jose*, the *Guardia de Honor* was a manifestation of peasant dissatisfaction with the entire political, social and economic system of colonial society—its followers were even known as *agrabiados* or *discontentos*: “aggravated ones” or “discontented ones.”²⁵⁹ The *Guardia de Honor* eventually declared its hostility towards the Revolutionary Government and began to raid the economic assets of local *principales* in Pangasinan and to disrupt the workings of the Revolutionary government. According to Sturtevant, they even went so far as to aid the Spanish priests and friars imprisoned by Aguinaldo’s government, although Milagros Guerrero disputes this.²⁶⁰ The *Guardia de Honor* maintained its own authority in large parts of the Pangasinan countryside and the sect proved a considerable thorn in the Revolutionary Government’s side. Aguinaldo and his army were forced to engage in what were essentially counterinsurgency activities in Pangasinan—an unedifying case of Filipinos fighting other Filipinos in the middle of the war with America. Unfortunately for Aguinaldo, he had no choice: the *principales* threatened by the *Guardia de Honor* demanded that the Revolutionary Government do something about the sect, and Aguinaldo had to comply in order to maintain their support.

The *Guardia de Honor* and the *Cofradia* were not the only messianic cults that were active in the 19th century—there were others active during the turn of the 19th century, like the *Colorum* or the *Santa Iglesia*.²⁶¹ All of them exemplified the Filipino tradition of resistance and they displayed many of the old patterns of war: the presence of

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 189.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 187.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 164.

spiritually powerful, charismatic leaders, the belief in spiritual prowess in combat, decampment as a strategy, and the establishment of a separate authority as a goal.

However, these messianic cults also showed how Spanish colonial rule and the changing conditions of the 19th century had changed the indigenous martial culture. First, these messianic cults were driven by a strong anti-elite, pro-peasant message, one that used the language of Filipino folk culture and religiosity. This populist, spiritual message was probably a key strength for these cults since it made them highly attractive to ordinary Filipinos.

These messianic sects also displayed unusually high degrees of motivation and morale in combat. The members of these sects were often undeterred by the threat of Spanish police forces with more or better weapons. The members of these messianic cults were often quite willing to fight and die, which is in contrast to the casualty-averse, manpower-acquisitive warfare of prehispanic times. A very large part of their morale and combat bravery probably stemmed from the promises of supernatural aid and invincibility that their leaders made, but part of it may also have come from the appeal of their message. The egalitarian and populist promises of earthly bliss must surely have helped encourage and motivate these cultists to fight and resist.

There was considerable overlap between the bandit groups and the messianic cults. Both were generally anti-establishment, peasant movements. Both also usually involved charismatic, spiritually powerful leaders. The members of bandit groups and messianic cults both detached themselves from the mainstream of colonial society and lived apart, whether this meant living in the mountains or simply living in isolated

villages completely dominated by the sect or the charismatic leader. In combat, both groups believed that talismans and spiritual prowess would confer victory. These similarities were perhaps why it was easy for authorities to label the religious sects as nothing more than bandits—it was certainly a useful way for authorities to de-legitimize these threats to their authority.²⁶²

Conclusion

At the end of the 19th century, the changes to the colonial system had profoundly affected Philippine notions of resistance. The richer, elite Filipinos who benefited from the new system tended to be more “conservative” in their forms of resistance: they favored political agitation or propagandizing. Their main goal was to gain more power without upsetting the existing social order. A few advocated for complete separation from Spain, but this was likely a minority viewpoint. Conversely, decampment and separation from the system was the recourse of Filipinos who did not benefit from the socio-economic system, and this tended to be the poorer or disadvantaged Filipinos.

When the elites eventually resorted to violence or active resistance, they tended to operate with this “conservatism” in mind. They still did not want to upset the social order and their initial moves were to seize the centers of power and take over the machineries of the government and attempt to recreate the colonial government, complete with regular armies. These elites resorted to decampment only when pressed by repeated defeats.

²⁶² McCoy and de Jesus, *Philippine Social History*, 156.

The changes wrought by the 19th century were influential for other reasons. The new Philippine social structure would determine which indigenous Filipinos would decide to risk open revolt and the new ideas of nationalism or political centralization would influence their goals and strategies. Finally, the new Philippine economy also had a profound effect on the course and conduct of the Philippine-American War, since crucial resources had to be imported and much of the country's pecuniary viability relied on the ability to export local goods or raw materials.

CHAPTER IV

THE 1896 REVOLUTION

The Philippine Revolution of 1896 was the progenitor of the Philippine-American War. It was during the Revolution that a small number of native elites championed the cause of Philippine independence in an armed revolt, and many of these leaders would continue to lead the fight against the Americans in 1899. However, the Revolution was an extremely complex event and there is no room in this study for anything more than a brief examination of how it affected the subsequent war. This will include a brief examination of the Revolution's goals and origins, the people involved and the strategies used by the Filipinos. It will conclude by summarizing the impact of the 1896 Revolution on Philippine military history, emphasizing its influences on the Philippine-American War in particular.

The Katipunan

The previous chapter showed that indigenous resistance towards the Spanish did exist during the 19th century but that none of the relevant groups—the Propagandists, the municipal captains, the religious cultists or the bandits—could really become the primary catalysts for a nationalist revolution. First, while the Propagandists and the other elites expressed ideas of Philippine nationalism, they were not particularly eager to rise up in revolt against Spain to fight for their ideals. Second, while the religious cults or the *tulisanes* were engaged in active and very often violent resistance towards the colonial

system, they were not nationalist or centralizing and their strategy of decampment tended to limit their aims and their scopes.

An organization that combined both a nationalistic, centralizing impulse *and* a willingness to commit violence to achieve these goals finally did arise in the late 19th century: it was the Katipunan, or the *Kataastaasang Kagalanggalangang Katipunan ng Anak ng Bayan* or the “Most High and Honorable Association of the Children of the Country.” The Katipunan was the first native Filipino organization to advocate violence in the name of a Filipino nation-state: it brought a new form of warfare to the Philippines—national warfare.

Another important first of the Katipunan was its desire to be the sole, sovereign authority in the Philippines. In its first official declaration of its principles, the *Mga Daquilang Cautosan* or “The Noble Commandments,” the Katipunan declared that it was now the head of a national Philippine government.²⁶³

It is hereby now declared that from this day forward these Islands are separated from---and that no other leadership or authority shall be recognised or acknowledged other than this Supreme Catipunan.

The Supreme Catipunan is constituted forthwith, and will be the body that exercises sovereign power throughout the Archipelago.

(Isinasaysay na ang manga Capuloang ito ay jumijiualay sa..... [España] mag bujat sa arao na ito at ualang quiniquilala at quiquilanlin pang Puno at macapangyayare cung di itong Cataastaasang Catipunan.

Ang Cataastaasang Catipunan ay tumatayo magbujat ngayon at siya ang magjajauac nang manga daquilang capangyarijan dito sa boong Capuloan.)

²⁶³ <http://kasaysayan-kkk.info/docs.casaysayan.htm> retrieved on 16 May 2012.

The use of the word “*Capuloang*,” which can be translated as “islands” or “archipelago” is of particular interest since it can be seen to denote universal sovereignty over not just Luzon—the home island of most of the Katipunan’s founders— but over the entire Philippine Islands. There is a note of irony to this idea of geopolitical space, since there had never been an indigenous prehispanic polity that had authority over the entire archipelago and the Katipunan’s idea of sovereign territory was therefore derived from the jurisdiction of the Spanish colonial state. Additionally, the Katipunan’s idea of a Filipino nation was largely derived from the writings of the Propagandists. For instance, Bonifacio idealized prehispanic society and one of the Katipunan’s goals was a return to this idyllic state. These ideas were clearly inspired by the writings of Jose Rizal and the other Propagandists.²⁶⁴

The willingness of the Katipuneros to start a revolution may have been a result of the social backgrounds of its founders and leaders. These were men or women who were generally not as wealthy or powerful as the *ilustrado*, and therefore did not have an overriding interest in maintaining the status quo. In its early days the Katipunan had originally been a largely urban organization and its members were part of what Michael Cullinane called the “urban middle sector”— native Filipinos who had a degree of literacy in either Spanish or a Filipino language (sometimes in both) and who tended to be clerks or office workers, although some were also engaged in small businesses or in trade.²⁶⁵ A good example was the founder of the Katipunan, Andres Bonifacio who was a native of Tondo—an area of the Manila urban zone—and who was employed as a

²⁶⁴ Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 83.

²⁶⁵ Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*, 22.

warehouse clerk for a foreign trading firm. He was also married to a relative of Mariano Alvarez, one of the local landed elites of Cavite, a connection that would have been unlikely if Bonifacio had been a poor person of no substance.²⁶⁶

The other leading Katipuneros were similarly situated. One Katipunero, Adrian E. Cristobal, had studied at private schools before working at a customs house and then for the German construction supply company that also employed Bonifacio.²⁶⁷ Two other leading Katipuneros, Teodoro Plata and Roman Basa, were also office workers and therefore literate and employed in white collar professions. There were also Katipunero leaders with post-tertiary educations: Emilio Jacinto, a law student, Ladislaw Diwa, a lawyer and Pio Valenzuela, a doctor.²⁶⁸ Then there was the famous Melchora Aquino or “Tandang Sora,” who was wealthy enough to have large stores of rice and a herd of carabaos.²⁶⁹ Another Katipunero, Valentin Cruz, had a large house that had a reception hall.²⁷⁰ Finally, there was at least one Katipunero who was *gobernadorcillo* of a precinct of Manila.²⁷¹ To characterize the Katipunan as a “plebeian society,” which one

²⁶⁶ Bonifacio being related to Mariano Alvarez: Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, 32 and Gregorio Zaide, *The Revolution Revolution*, (Manila: Modern Book Co., 1954), 137.

²⁶⁷ <http://kasaysayan-kkk.info/docs.ks.0092.htm> retrieved on 16 May 2012.

²⁶⁸ Glenn A. May, *A Past Recovered*, (Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1987), 12-13.

²⁶⁹ Soledad Borromeo-Buehler, *The Cry of Balintawak: A Contrived Controversy*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1998), 37.

²⁷⁰ Mariano Alvarez, *Recalling the Revolution: Memoirs of a Filipino General*, Paula Carolina S. Malay, trans., (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 25.

²⁷¹ Borromeo-Buehler, *The Cry of Balintawak*, 31.

contemporary did, is therefore not strictly accurate—these were people of some education and some means, and they were often employed in white collar jobs.²⁷²

The Katipunan’s original message—laid out in the “*Casayasan: Pinagcasunduan; Manga daquilang cautosan,*” or the “History: What was Agreed Upon; The noble commandments”—perhaps owes much to the social status of these early members. Their complaints were surprisingly materialistic, and spoke more of stifled ambition or suppressed personal advancement than for a desire to radically reorder the social and economic structure:²⁷³

1. [The Katipunan complained of] The pitiless imposition of high taxes upon us, even on our bodies, even upon our produce or wealth.
2. The expropriation of our meagre profit if we practice any industry, so that we are kept weak and prevented from bettering ourselves.
3. The imposition of a high tariff on any goods that pass through the Customs.
4. The refusal to permit our Archipelago to enter into treaties with Mother Sp... and other powers like America in relation to the export and import of any and every item of commerce. As a consequence, initiative is stifled and we remain in poverty.

The other complaints in this manifesto further reflect the remarkably business-oriented tone of the four points above: the Katipunaneros lamented the unfair competition in trade from the Chinese, they complained that high-paying salaried positions in

²⁷² Isabello de los Reyes, quoted in Corpuz, *Roots of the Filipino Nation*, 2: 212; Also Fast and Richardson, *Roots of Dependency*, 67-70. See also Richardson’s analysis <http://kasaysayan-kkk.info/studies.kkk.mla.htm>, retrieved on 5 July 2012. The *Kasaysayan* series describes the Katipunero leadership as “lower to middle-middle class.” *Kasayayan* 5:151.

²⁷³ <http://kasaysayan-kkk.info/docs.casaysayan.htm>, retrieved on 14 May 2012. The original was in Tagalog and all translations by Jim Richardson, except where specified.

government were barred to native Filipinos, and they protested the lack of economic development or progress in the Philippines.

The other issues that the Katipunan raised highlight the influence of the Propagandists: complaints regarding a lack of representation in the Spanish government, a lack of freedom of the press, of unequal privileges between natives and Spanish and reflect a general discontent with second class status. Either way, the Katipuneros' discontent tended to revolve around the fact that they were unable to benefit from the existing system more fully.

The later writings of the Katipunan were less specific on economic issues, but the general tenor of resentment towards Spanish domination of Philippine wealth remained. For instance, a later edition of the *Casaysayan* was more general in tone and was a "less specific declaration of patriotic outrage and intent" but which still included complaints that Spanish greed and perfidy was preventing the "*ikaguiguinhawa*" of the Philippines. This word denotes both prosperity and a sense of emotional relief and comfort that accompanies a lack of poverty and want.²⁷⁴ One of the Katipunan's most important documents, "*Ang Dabat Mabatid ng Mga Tagalog*" or "What the Tagalogs Should Know," stated that:

Since then, for more than three hundred years, we have supported the race of Legaspi most bountifully; we have allowed them to live lavishly and grow fat, even if we ourselves suffered deprivation and hunger. We have expended our wealth, blood and even our lives in defending them...

(Buhat ng ito'y mangyari ay bumibilang na ngayon sa tatlong daang taon mahiguit na ang lahi ni Legaspi ay ating binubuhay sa lubos na kasaganaan,

²⁷⁴ <http://kasaysayan-kkk.info/docs.kasaysayan.htm> Retrieved on 21 June 2012.

*ating pinagtatamasa at binubusog, kahit abutin natin ang kasalatan at kadayukdukan; iguinugugol natin ang yaman dugo at sampu ng buhay sa pagtatangol sa kanila...)*²⁷⁵

Finally, a leading Katipunero, Emilio Jacino, made a similar complaint in his “Gising na mga Tagalog!” or “Awaken You Tagalogs!”

Do you see who eats their lunch outdoors, exposed to the heat of the sun; soaked by the rain, and who with the drops of their sweat and the fatigue of their exhausted bodies raise from the earth the harvest that gives life to everyone and gives comfort to those whose spirits are debased? They are Tagalogs.

*(iNakikita mo yaung maghapunang nanga kabilat sa init ng araw, nangababasa sa ulan, at sa agus ng kanilang pawis at sa pagud ng kanilang katawang hapu na’y pinabubukal sa lupa ang bungang nagbibigay buhay sa lahat at nagbibigay sarap sa mga katawang may masamang loob? Sila’y mga tagalog.)*²⁷⁶

These statements of Jacinto and in the *Dapat Mabatid* are quite similar to some of the ideas of the messianic cult leaders described in the previous chapter. As explained by the historian Renaldo Ileto, the Katipunan’s notions of *Kalayaan*, or “freedom,” with its promise of an impending earthly paradise, echo the promises of the messianic cult leaders. However, there were crucial differences between the Katipunan and the religious cult. First, the Katipunan tended to limit its denunciations to the Spanish and said little to nothing about the wealthy and privileged Filipinos who were benefiting from the export economy. Far from being anti-rich, the Katipunan even seemed desirous of their support: at the outbreak of the Revolution, the Katipunan tried to implicate some wealthy Filipinos in order to force them to support the movement, or what the historian Gregorio Zaide

²⁷⁵ <http://kasaysayan-kkk.info/docs.ab.ang%20dapat.htm> Retrieved on 21 June 2012. The authorship of this document is under debate.

²⁷⁶ <http://kasaysayan-kkk.info/docs.ej.gising.na.htm> Retrieved on 21 June 2012.

blithely calls “Bonifacio’s clever ruse to implicate the rich.”²⁷⁷ The second biggest difference between the Katipunan and the religious cults was that the Katipunan did not aspire to disengage from the world. Rather, the Katipunan stated that if they—the Katipunan leadership in particular—were to rule the Philippines and to take over the system, then the Filipinos would enjoy the benefits of *kalayaan*. Again, while these ideas share similarities to the philosophies of groups like the *Guardia de Honor* or the *Cofradia de San Jose*, these messianic cults were explicitly separatist and unhesitatingly removed themselves from the mainstream of colonial society.

The Katipunan *did* consider decampment and separation from colonial society as a means of resistance. Upon the organization’s discovery by the Spanish in the middle of 1896, many of the leaders of the Katipunan traveled to Pook Kangkong, Caloocan, and from August 21-26 August they debated on whether the whole organization should rise up in revolt or whether those who were wanted by the authorities should flee to Mount Pamitinan in the rough and mountainous province of Morong.²⁷⁸ During this meeting, Bonifacio convinced his members not to decamp to Mt. Pamitinan, and he declared that

“Gentlemen, with the Spaniards wise to our activities, we cannot afford to have a protracted discussion on the pros and cons of a revolution; time is of the essence. We must act, then let us not dilly-dally or the cause is lost.”²⁷⁹

After a council of war the Katipunan decided to launch an attack on the *polvorín*, or arsenal, of San Juan in Manila—the details of their military operations will be

²⁷⁷ Zaide, *The Philippine Revolution*, 97.

²⁷⁸ Borromeo-Buehler, *The Cry of Balintawak*, 34.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

discussed in the next section.²⁸⁰ Suffice it to say for now that the Katipunan's attacks were failures and the rebels (which is what they now were) were forced to into hiding after all.

Despite these early failures, the decision to attack a visible symbol of Spanish authority rather than decamping to the mountains was a turning point in Philippine military history. For the first time, an organization of native Filipinos actually went to war with the ultimate goal of creating a Filipino-led nation-state. Because the Katipunan's goal was national takeover, their seemingly ill-advised decision to attack the Spanish forts and arsenals was actually logical since national unification could not be accomplished, or could only be accomplished with great difficulty, if the Katipuneros hid in the mountains. Decampment, by its very nature, is isolationist and while a group hiding in the forests and mountains might be able to survive and defy authority, it is much harder for that group to expand its authority and to topple an entrenched political system like the Spanish colonial government. The Katipunan was heralding something new to Philippine history: Filipino "national" warfare, or conflict in the service of a nation-state, with all that implies when it comes to such factors as manpower or resource mobilization, ideology, politics, strategy and tactics.

The Fighting in Manila

In combat, the Katipunan forces—rural or urban—were, as Bernad and Achútegui described them, an "Improvised Army."²⁸¹ Whatever else might be said about the

²⁸⁰ The exact translation would be closer to "powder house."

Katipunan—and there have been plenty of debates—it can be said with a fair degree of certainty that it was unprepared for the outbreak of war. None of its activities involved serious planning for conflict, like formulating strategy, acquiring and stockpiling weapons or gathering intelligence. This was especially true of the urban Manila branches of the Katipunan, and two engagements can serve as examples: a small skirmish in a place in Manila called Pasong Tamo on 26 August 1896, and a larger attack on the waterworks in San Juan del Monte, in Manila, on 30 August 1896, both of which were fought almost entirely by Bonifacio and other Manila members of the Katipunan.

The first engagement in Pasong Tamo had been an impromptu one.²⁸² The day before, Bonifacio had convened a meeting to decide upon the future of the revolution. The group voted on objectives and agreed to start the Revolution on 29 August 1896. The meeting swelled in size as people got wind of it and Alvarez claimed that it reached 1,000 people by 24 August. This number is likely an exaggeration, but we can probably assume that the crowd was sizeable. The Spaniards somehow got word of this meeting and sent a contingent of policemen and *Guardia Civil* to deal with the plotters. The ensuing skirmish was a very minor one, since the policemen fled after a few shots and when they realized how outnumbered they were.

This skirmish did not discourage the Katipunan and on the 26th of August the entire group decided to reposition to a place called Sampaloc. For some reason, Bonifacio had appointed a convict named Gregorio Tapalla, nicknamed Old Leon, to lead the group.

²⁸¹ Pedro S. Achútegui and Miguel Bernad, *Aguinaldo and the 1896 Revolution*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1972), 41.

²⁸² The account is from Alvarez, *Recalling the Revolution*, 35-38.

The scene that followed is outright comical, with an apparently drunk Old Leon enthusiastically shouting and encouraging the Katipunans, shouting for them to do as he did. The group took this literally and mimicked his every move—for instance, raising their bolos and lifting their left feet when he did—rather like a Looney Tunes cartoon.²⁸³

The Katipunans encountered a force of *Guardia Civil* in Pasong Tamo and all order quickly broke down. The *Guardia Civil* had contrived to surround the Katipunans and the “force” became a mob where every man fended for himself and fled in disorder. Old Leon was tragically killed.

The next engagement in San Juan del Monte almost a week later showed many of the same patterns. The attack on San Juan del Monte was to be an ambitious assault on the water supply system that serviced the city of Manila that also happened to have a Spanish government arsenal with much-needed weapons. It was to be the official beginning of the Revolution, and the Katipunans decided to go all out by ordering a multi-pronged attack by all the Katipunans branches: the provincial branches were to attack after pre-determined signals in coordination with the Manila Katipuneros.

The contemporary Spanish historian Manuel Sastrón claimed that the majority of Spanish troops in Manila during this attack were 100 soldiers from the 70th Regiment—presumably the regiment of the line “Magellan”—and except for their officers, all of these soldiers were native Filipinos. There were also 65 artillerymen with their pieces in

²⁸³ “Walk this way sir.” See “The Super Snooper,” 1952. Director: Robert McKimson.

the arsenal, and unspecified numbers of cavalrymen and Guardia Civil all around the area.²⁸⁴

The Katipunan attack was ill-starred from the beginning, marred with problems of planning and coordination. Once again, all planning was done just prior to the attack, with Bonifacio consulting and instructing with each chapter of the Katipunan that had shown up at the rendezvous point.²⁸⁵ Bonifacio and his troops never sent the signals that would coordinate with the rural Katipuneros waiting outside the city because Bonifacio had apparently been distracted or delayed because of issues with organization. Katipuneros had been filtering in to join him while he marched to San Juan del Monte, and he also encountered two small detachments of Guardia Civil that had to be dealt with. In the confusion, Bonifacio forgot the time and he decided not to signal the rural Katipuneros to prevent further confusion.²⁸⁶ In his memoirs, Aguinaldo writes of waiting for the signal for his forces to attack Manila but the signal never came and he and his men were forced to sneak back to their homes, disappointed.²⁸⁷

Despite these setbacks—and despite the fact that the Spanish were now fully alerted to the fact that something serious was afoot—Bonifacio and his fellow Manila Katipuneros still persisted in trying to attack the *polvorín* in San Juan del Monte. The

²⁸⁴ Manuel Sastrón, *La Insurrección en Filipinas*, (Madrid: Imprenta de la Sucesora de M. Minuesa de los Rios, 1901), 75; Secretaria del Gobierno General del Archipiélago, *Guía de Oficial de las Islas Filipinas para 1894*, (Manila, 1894), 225-227.

²⁸⁵ Alvarez, *Recalling the Revolution*, 42-43.

²⁸⁶ Alvarez, *Recalling the Revolution*, 45; Carlos Quirino, *The Young Aguinaldo*, (Manila: Aguinaldo Centennial Years, 1969), 53-54.

²⁸⁷ Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, 58-62.

problems of coordination persisted and it meant that the various Katipunan chapters attacked separately and acted with little cooperation. Bonifacio himself arrived late to the affray, having been preceded by other Katipunan chapters who had only succeeded in stirring up the Spanish forces and alerting the authorities. The Filipinos spent some time skirmishing with the various Spanish armed contingents until the Spanish sent a cavalry and infantry detachment to reinforce the beleaguered garrison in San Juan del Monte and the Katipunan was forced to disperse in disorder. Many of them were killed or captured and the whole affair was a disaster for Bonifacio's reputation as a commander.²⁸⁸

What these two engagements show most of all was the Katipunan's unpreparedness for war and also how it is simply not possible to improvise your way to effective warmaking. To begin with, the Manila Katipuneros barely had any guns. During the engagement of Pasong Tamo the Katipuneros only had 20 guns for 500 people.²⁸⁹ There had apparently been an attempt to secure weapons from the Japanese but the plan came to nothing.²⁹⁰ Most Katipuneros were armed with *bolos*, a large Philippine bush knife rather like a machete. For lack of anything else, this weapon would become the default weapon of most Filipinos into the Philippine-American War and has become much mythologized, although its actual efficacy in combat is questionable. It certainly did not help the Katipuneros in their battles.

²⁸⁸ Alvarez, *Recalling the Revolution*, 46-48; Quirino, *Filipinos at War*, 104-107; Sastrón, *La Insurrección en Filipinas*, 74-77; Foreman, *The Philippine Islands*, 368.

²⁸⁹ Alvarez, *Recalling the Revolution*, 40-42.

²⁹⁰ Quirino, *The Young Aguinaldo*, 51; Foreman, *The Philippine Islands*, 365.

The Katipunan had also made no provisions for supplies like food. By the latter half of August, the Bonifacio and many other Katipuneros were constantly on the run from Spanish authorities, and they had to rely on the impromptu generosity of supporters like Tandang Sora for sustenance, which meant they often went hungry.²⁹¹

Another issue was the simple fact that the Katipunan was not structured for hostilities. The Katipunan had started out a small, secret organization with a cellular structure and its early efforts were spent spreading its message and recruiting. It does not seem likely that any plans for an uprising had been formulated beforehand, since the last few days before the Revolution was on the verge of breaking out were spent trying to work out a basic strategy and organization.²⁹² These meetings and debates continued throughout the conflict, but this kind of command structure resulted in confusion in action as and poor cohesion. The Katipunan forces started with high spirits, but quickly broke down to their component parts when under pressure.

Indeed, it almost seems as if the urban wing of the Katipunan had a dangerously amateurish approach to leadership and command. The urban Katipuneros' style of leadership and command seemed to rely very heavily on face-to-face meetings with their followers where matters of basic strategy had to be voted on—not a system that often works under the stresses of combat where decisiveness is paramount. The Katipunero leaders also relied heavily on leading by personal example—Bonifacio led from the front and had to deal with every problem personally, which was likely what led to the delay in

²⁹¹ Alvarez, *Recalling the Revolution*, 33-36.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 31-42.

signaling the rural Katipuneros to attack. This need for personal intervention by the leaders led to some rather tragicomic scenes: at one point in the engagement in San Juan del Monte, one Katipunero commander was even reduced to shouting orders to his men from a second story window.²⁹³ Then there is the matter of Old Leon—why would any sane or competent leader allow someone like Old Leon to lead the troops?

Perhaps the Katipunero's seemingly odd and amateurish behavior can be best explained by the possibility that, because it lacked an institutional framework for command, Bonifacio fell back on the age-old patterns of leadership based on charisma, prestige and prowess. As Glenn May theorized, Bonifacio fit into Max Weber's theories regarding pre-bureaucratic charismatic authority.²⁹⁴ In the context of Philippine history, this meant that Bonifacio fell back on traditional notions of spiritual prowess and charisma when in command. This constant need to display prowess explains why Bonifacio and other urban Katipunero leaders frequently led from the front. This type of charisma-based leadership also explains the constant meetings—the Katipunero did not have formal mechanisms for formulating command decisions by one or a few people that would be accepted as legitimate by their followers. Leaders like Bonifacio therefore had to win their followers over by continuously displaying their oratorical ability.²⁹⁵ Finally, this reliance on charisma and prowess might also explain the unexpected elevation of Old Leon: anybody who could display prowess was accepted as a leader in Philippine society.

²⁹³ Foreman, *The Philippine Islands*, 368.

²⁹⁴ Glenn A. May, "Warfare by Pulong: Bonifacio, Aguinaldo, and the Philippine Revolution Against Spain." *Philippine Studies Journal* (vol. 55, no. 4, 2007), 472-474.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 456.

In this situation, Old Leon probably displayed the qualities of one: as a former bandit he would have had “combat” experience, and he was certainly charismatic enough for the Katipuneros to copy his every move.

Yet, however authentic and academically interesting Bonifacio’s traditional style of leadership was, it proved inadequate when coupled with his choice to frontally confront entrenched and well-armed Spanish army and police forces. It was additionally to Bonifacio’s misfortune that he lived and operated in the city of Manila, the heart of Spanish power, where they had agents and informers, and a place heavily garrisoned by Spanish troops.

As a result of these failures, the Revolution in the city of Manila petered out. A contemporary account by an English visitor named John Foreman claims that rumor had it that the Katipuneros had killed some Chinese they encountered and used others as human shields, but among the residents of Manila, “the idea that the Caloocan affair was the prelude to a rebellion was utterly ridiculed.”²⁹⁶ In a sense, if the Revolution had ended with these defeats, the Katipunan’s premature rebellion would have resembled the riots that would periodically break out and wreak havoc in Manila: violent but limited in duration and scope. What made this particular revolt so different was that the Katipunan’s ideas had spread to the countryside and it was there that they met the most success.

The Katipunan and the Rural Elites

²⁹⁶ Foreman, *The Philippine Islands*, 367.

The military failures of the urban leaders of the Katipunan resulted in the balance of power shifting to their rural counterparts, the Filipino rural elites. These rural elites were people like Emilio Aguinaldo and Santiago Alvarez in Cavite, Miguel Malvar in Batangas, Paciano Rizal (Jose Rizal's older brother) and Severino Taino of Laguna, Maximino Hizon of Pampanga, Francisco Makabulos of Tarlac, an Mariano Llanera and Manuel Tinio of Nueva Ecija.²⁹⁷ These were men who, according to Michael Cullinane, were those

Who generally held the highest municipal offices (that is, the legal *principales*), who usually, but by no means always, owned or controlled land and property in their municipalities, and/or who often dominated through various means the lives of numerous local dependents (small holders, tenants, landless peasants or agricultural workers, and fishermen)²⁹⁸

They were therefore native Filipinos who were the economic and political powers in their towns and villages, but whose power and influence generally did not extend beyond their municipality. Much of their wealth came from ownership of land and through participation in the agricultural export economy. They were not usually large plantation owners—the Philippines had a noticeable lack of these—but their wealth did make the rural elites the nexus of social networks in their municipalities since it made them the center of local patronage ties.²⁹⁹ As stated in the previous chapter, these rural elites were not necessarily the actual holders political office—though they often were—

²⁹⁷ *Kasaysayan* 5:154. The case of Paciano and Jose Rizal also shows that social stratification could be variable even within families. Jose Rizal's foreign education placed him in the higher rank of *ilustrado*, while Paciano Rizal "remained" a municipal elite.

²⁹⁸ Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*, 19-20.

²⁹⁹ Fast and Richardson, *Roots of Dependency*, 74.

although they were the power behind the scenes.³⁰⁰ Other rural elites included teachers and provincial clerks—or indigenous Filipinos with education and some standing in society.

Not all of these rural elites had been members of the Katipunan: Miguel Malvar may not have been a Katipunero, but once war broke out, he joined in the revolt and eventually became involved with the Katipunan.³⁰¹ It does not appear as if Paciano Rizal, brother of the hero Jose Rizal and a prominent rural Revolutionary, was a member of the Katipunan either. Thus, membership with the Katipunan was not so important as general sympathy with the organization's separatist aspirations.

What compelled these rural elites to rise up against Spain alongside the Katipunan? What were their objectives? To answer this question, an example will be made of one of their number: Emilio Aguinaldo, the man who would become president of the Revolutionary Government and commander of her armies during the Philippine-American War.

It is hard to say whether a rural elite like Aguinaldo sympathized with all aspects of the Katipunan's message but there was probably nothing in the organization's ideas (like those expressed in the *Casaysayan*,) that he would have disagreed with. In his memoirs, Aguinaldo certainly claims to have agreed with the Katipunan's bylaws and

³⁰⁰ Fast and Richardson, *Roots of Dependency*, 77; Paredes, *Philippine Colonial Democracy*, 13-40; Culinane, *Ilustrado Politics*, 19-20.

³⁰¹ May, *Battle for Batangas*, 37-40.

goals (“*saligang batas at layunin*”).³⁰² The complaints voiced in treatises like *Calyaan*, that the Spanish were holding Filipinos back from prosperity, would have likely struck a chord. While *cabeza de barangay*, Aguinaldo had also worked as a trader, sailing around the Philippines and selling manufactured goods and textiles from Manila to other provinces. It is easy to see the *Casaysayan*’s complaints regarding taxation and fees as appealing to him.³⁰³ More importantly, the previous chapter already showed how landowners and rural elites were keenly aware of the importance of controlling local politics and they were often locked in political competition with the colonial government’s municipal representative: the local parish priest. These rural elites had an economic interest in being the main political powers in their locales, unencumbered by the weight of Spanish hegemony. Aguinaldo would obfuscate on his anti-clericalism throughout his life, most likely because of political expediency, but many of his statements and actions during the 1896 Revolution and later would show his fundamental opposition to the colonial Church. He admitted as much in a letter he wrote 2 years later to one of his provincial chiefs: “the abuses committed by the Spanish friars are the principal causes of the Revolution.” (“*los abusos cometidos por los frailes espanoles fueron las causas principales de la Revolucion*”).³⁰⁴

Aguinaldo’s anti-clericalism also brings up the topic of the Freemasonry, and his membership in this group suggests that his discontent with the Spanish friars preceded his membership in the Katipunan. Lodges were established in the Philippines during the 19th

³⁰² Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, 31.

³⁰³ Aguinaldo as trader: Quirino, *The Young Aguinaldo*, 28.

³⁰⁴ R15F165D1, E. Aguinaldo, Letter. Porac, 1 November 1898.

century, and even if the Philippine Freemasons denied they were atheists and separatists, the Spanish Church and government accused them of such and dealt with them harshly.³⁰⁵ Ramón Blanco, the Governor-General during the outbreak of the 1896 Revolution, blamed the Freemasonry for the spread of treasonous feelings among the Filipinos.³⁰⁶ Aguinaldo—and many other Revolutionaries—were therefore already members of a subversive movement even before he joined the Katipunan. Indeed, Aguinaldo would say in his memoirs that, “Such was my joy in joining the Katipunan that all of my townmates that I was not able to enroll into the Masonry I enticed them into joining the Katipunan.”³⁰⁷

This statement suggests that to Aguinaldo, the Freemasonry and the Katipunan were similar in goals and he did not see much difference in asking his fellow townmates in joining one or the other.

There were important similarities between the rural and urban Katipuneros—both groups were neither the richest nor the poorest native Filipinos, and both groups evinced a strong dislike for a Spanish authority they felt was holding them back. The events of the 1896 Revolution would show that both groups were willing to go to war to secure their rights, quite unlike the upper class of Filipino society. One of the Katipunan’s most important roles was therefore to act as a catalyst, bringing together ideas and people who

³⁰⁵ Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, 30.

³⁰⁶ Ramón Blanco y Erenas, *Memoria que al Senado Dirige el General Blanco*, (Madrid: “El Liberal,” 1897), 6.

³⁰⁷ Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita Himagsikan*, 31.

were already anti-Spanish, who had the willingness or the means to fight and giving them the idea that at some point the Filipinos must actually risk revolution.

The Rise of Aguinaldo and the Rural Elites

The rural Katipuneros had several advantages over their urban brethren when it came to staging an uprising. Municipal elites like Emilio Aguinaldo, Miguel Malvar and Mariano Alvarez achieved enough success that the leadership of the Revolution fell into their hands and Bonifacio faded in importance. The participation of the rural, municipal elites was therefore key to the Katipunan's success during the 1896 Revolution, as it would be key to the Revolutionary Government's success in the Philippine-American War. What advantages did these rural elites have over their urban counterparts?

The first advantage that the rural Revolutionaries possessed were their experiences of leadership. None of the tiny number of *mestizo* officers seem to have joined in the 1896 Revolution which meant that the rural municipal elites were perhaps the only group of elites with the background that made them capable of leading an improvised military uprising. As the center of patronage networks these elites were probably better able to mobilize for war since they had access to material resources and manpower.³⁰⁸ As overseers of agricultural enterprises or as municipal officials, these rural elites would also have had some experience of leading large bodies of men. Municipal officials may also have had some vague approximation of military experience,

³⁰⁸ May, *The Batangas for Batangas*, 50-51.

since one of the duties of the municipal captain was to lead the local *cuadrilleros* in hunting bandits and in safeguarding the community.³⁰⁹

The Revolutionary Government established by Emilio Aguinaldo acknowledged the importance of municipal elites to the cause. The form of government that he established was heavily dependent on local, municipal elites: in the circular announcing the creation of the new government, each town was tasked with creating a Municipal Committee that had broad responsibilities in justice, governance and in military matters.³¹⁰ Indeed, the Secretary of War, Daniel Tirona, issued a circular mandating that municipal officials recruit soldiers in each local community. They knew how many men their towns could spare because “No one knows these things better than the municipal presidents and the military commanders of the respective towns” (“*Ualang ibang makatatalastas kunde ang mga Plo [Pangulo], at mga pinuna sa digma ng bauat bayan*”).³¹¹

The second advantage the rural elites possessed was the fact that the Spanish forces in the countryside were extremely vestigial. Aguinaldo noted in his memoirs that in his town of Cavite el Viejo he had to deal with only three members of the *Guardia Civil*.³¹² For all of its infamy, the *Guardia Civil* was not a very effective institution by the

³⁰⁹ Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, 45-46.

³¹⁰ Bernad and Achútegui, *Aguinaldo and the War of 1896*, 34-40.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 64-68.

³¹² Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, 67.

late 19th century due to a lack of funding, training and equipment.³¹³ When this lack of efficacy was combined with scanty numbers, Aguinaldo and other rural elites had no troubles dealing with the local Spanish forces.

Third, the rural elites in Cavite were probably slightly better equipped than Bonifacio's men. Initially, Aguinaldo's forces were as scantily equipped as their urban counterparts and he was forced to arm his men with wooden poles shouldered like guns in the hope that they would deceive the enemy.³¹⁴ However, Aguinaldo was eventually able to acquire the stores of arms held by the rural police forces like the *Guardia Civil* or the *cuadrilleros*. Guns beget more guns: with his seven guns from the *cuadrillero* and *Guardia Civil* stores in Cavite Viejo—"seed weapons"—he managed to capture the stores of the *Guardia Civil* and the friars in Imus and he added 30 Remington guns, 2 Winchester rifles (one of which became Aguinaldo's personal weapon), a light artillery piece and a large quantity of ammunition.³¹⁵ It was these weapons that encouraged Aguinaldo to take his stand at the bridge against General Ernesto Aguirre and it was these weapons that enabled his forces to discomfit the Spanish forces. The Alvarez clan was similarly successful in securing the local Spanish caches of weapons—their initial capture of the local *Guardia Civil* outpost in Noveleta yielded 28 guns.³¹⁶ Like

³¹³ Bankoff, *Crime, Society, and the State in the Philippines*, 135-138.

³¹⁴ Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, 87.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 91.

³¹⁶ Alvarez, *Recalling the Revolution*, 56.

Aguinaldo, the Alvarezes also managed to capture some guns from Spaniards sent to put down the revolt.³¹⁷

Eventually, the Cavite Revolutionaries created an impromptu arms and ammunition manufactory in San Francisco de Malabon when two Katipuneros from Manila arrived with “a large quantity of saltpeter, powder, lead, a crucible for a foundry and other implements probably stolen from the *maestranza* or Spanish arsenal.” The Caviteños also set up a foundry in Imus under a Chinese blacksmith named Jose Ignacio Pawa who even created crude and doubtfully effective makeshift artillery.³¹⁸ These improvised support services were mainly in the employ of Aguinaldo’s forces, but they seem to have helped the Alvarez faction as well.

The rural elites also seem to have had an easier time supplying their men with food and other such needs. For instance, the Revolutionary government of Aguinaldo was able to requisition rice from the farmers within its jurisdiction.³¹⁹ The Revolutionary forces eventually set up a somewhat more formalized system of procurement that involved promising payments for its supplies.³²⁰

However, it should not be assumed that the rural Revolutionaries were thereby well armed and well supplied. The Filipinos were still poorly provided for, especially

³¹⁷ Alvarez, *Recalling the Revolution*, 63. Miguel Malvar in Batangas was also able to start the Revolution with some guns, see May, *The Battle Batangas*, 50.

³¹⁸ Quirino, *Filipinos at War*, 111-112; Monteverde y Sedano, *La Division Lachambre*, 77-78.

³¹⁹ Bernad and Achútegui, *Aguinaldo and the Revolution of 1896*, 100-101.

³²⁰ Quirino, *The Young Aguinaldo*, 72.

when compared to the Spanish forces. The Filipinos had constant problems finding reliable sources of weapons, spares, gunpowder and ammunition—the makeshift systems created in Cavite did not produce enough munitions and the Revolutionary Government was always on the lookout for possible sources of guns.³²¹ So few weapons were available that most rural Revolutionaries were armed primarily with bolos and other edged weapons, and only a fraction of their troops had actual guns. The Revolutionary Government even issued a circular mandating the equipping of some soldiers with longbows—“the Bow should be as tall as the user.”³²² Finally, there was also a lack of firearms exposure among the rural Filipinos—Santiago Alvarez described the awe and caution that he and his troopers felt when they captured their first Mauser rifle, which was then the standard firearm of the Spanish armed forces.³²³

Fourth, Aguinaldo and the rural elites may also have had slightly better trained troops than Bonifacio at the outset of the Revolution. The core of Aguinaldo’s early forces was his *cuadrilleros*, the local police force under the command of the municipal *presidente*. On 23 June 1896, Aguinaldo inducted all 40 of his local *cuadrilleros* en masse into the Katipunan, although how well they sympathized with or understood the Katipunan’s message is highly debatable since he only explained the Katipunan’s message to them before inducting them.³²⁴ Given that most of the leaders of the Revolution in the countryside were local politicians like Aguinaldo, it is not unreasonable

³²¹ Bernad and Achútegui, *Aguinaldo and the Revolution of 1896*, 72-78.

³²² “Ang Panang dapta na taglain ay kasing pantay ng taong magdadala.” Ibid., 81-83.

³²³ Alvarez, *Recalling the Revolution*, 63.

³²⁴ Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, 45-46.

to assume that they too would have been able to use their local *cuadrilleros*. Again, one should not exaggerate this advantage: the *cuadrilleros* were inferior even to the indifferently trained *Guardia Civil*, and they were part-time rural policemen, not soldiers.

In addition to the police forces, the rural Revolutionaries may also have been able to draw upon the *tulisanes*. In his memoirs, Santiago Alvarez mentions that he recruited the “famous outlaw brothers Hipolito and Hermogenese Sakilayan” who he then tasked with recruiting men and gathering weapons.³²⁵ Outlaws may not necessarily have been any better as soldiers than *cuadrilleros*—perhaps with their lack of discipline they were even worse—but they would have been among the few Filipinos in Luzon with any experience of fighting.

All in all, these advantages were enough to enable some of the rural Katipuneros to secure the countryside for the Revolution. Rural uprisings were not successful everywhere—for instance, a 3,000 strong uprising in Nueva Ecija failed in the face of very modest Spanish forces.³²⁶ But in places like Cavite and Batangas, the combination of rural elites and vestigial Spanish forces won out.

The Fighting in Cavite

After Aguinaldo’s early seizure of Kawit, he turned his attention to the town of Imus, where the Spanish friars and the local *Guardia Civil* had taken refuge in the friar’s *casa hacienda*, or estate house. According to Carlos Quirino, Baldomero Aguinaldo—

³²⁵ Alvarez, *Recalling the Revolution*, 51.

³²⁶ Quirino, *The Young Aguinaldo*, 76.

Emilio's cousin and one of his closest confederates—had failed to capture this building and Emilio could not countenance this blow to family prestige: “he [Emilio] would not let an Aguinaldo meet with failure.”³²⁷ On the other hand, Emilio Aguinaldo himself does not record this failure on Baldomero's part and merely claims that the local *presidente* of Imus, Jose Tagle, had come to him asking for help in dislodging the Spanish forces. The *casa hacienda* was no easy target for the ill-armed and poorly trained Filipinos, it was a “compound surrounded by massive high walls of adobe stone—a veritable fortress.”³²⁸ The *casa hacienda* also had a church with a tower in which the *Guardia Civil* had taken positions, further complicating the task of the Filipino attackers.³²⁹ Attacking this position required what Aguinaldo called “*estrategia militar*” and in his memoirs, he candidly admitted that “in my entire life, this was the first time that I had ever been faced with such a big problem” (“*sa pagka't sa tanang buhay ko ay ngayon lamang ako mapapasuong sa ganito kalaking suliranin sa buhay*”).³³⁰

Aguinaldo's first solution was to divide his forces to try and attack the *casa hacienda* from three sides. He gave command of the two other prongs of the attack to Jose Tagle and Baldomero while he gave himself the most difficult assignment: the frontal attack. Despite this stratagem, the assault failed in the face of enemy firepower and because of the strength of the enemy position. The *Guardia Civil* in the tower kept up a galling fire and were aided by the surprisingly warlike friars who fired through the

³²⁷ Ibid., 64.

³²⁸ Ibid., 65.

³²⁹ Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, 79.

³³⁰ Ibid.

windows of the *hacienda*.³³¹ Aguinaldo took this defeat in remarkable stride and after regrouping he carefully observed all sides of the enemy position. He then observed that there was a warehouse full of rice near the *hacienda* and he had his men set fire to this warehouse to smoke out the Spanish forces. This ultimately succeeded and resulted in a victory for Aguinaldo.

The victory in Imus on 1 Sept 1896 was immediately followed by a defeat.³³² Aguinaldo received word that a column of *Guardia Civil* infantry and cavalry under General Ernesto Aguirre of the Spanish general staff had been sent to succor the Spaniards trapped in Imus. Aguirre could only gather 100 men from the garrison in the Arsenal in Cavite and so his column was greatly outnumbered by the Filipinos.³³³

Aguinaldo gathered what forces he could and force-marched south to meet Aguirre. He initially took up positions outside a church at Bacoor, which was a town north of Imus. The church had the advantage of a low stone wall and Aguinaldo placed his only seven riflemen behind this wall along with some of his bolo-armed men. However, the local Katipunan head led them to some trenches that the local townspeople had dug and which Aguinaldo decided to use because they were “truly well made” (“*totoong magaling ang pagkakayari*”).³³⁴ This proved to be a mistake since Aguinaldo ran into Aguirre’s column on his way to these trenches and what ensued can only be

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

³³² Mostly from Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, 86-89 and Quirino, *Filipinos at War*, 107-108.

³³³ Sastrón, *La Insurrección en Filipinas*, 87.

³³⁴ Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, 88.

described as a meeting engagement, or a situation when two forces are advancing with no one side possessing the advantage of the defense. Aguinaldo had not sent any scouts ahead of his column and he blundered into the *Guardia Civil* who surprised the Filipino forces with gunfire. Aguinaldo's little army disintegrated almost immediately and he ruefully noted in his memoirs that his forces would not listen to his orders to charge. (“*hindi ko maiutos na sisirin*”).³³⁵ Aguinaldo only survived by playing dead until the Spanish forces left and he could make his way back to Imus.

Aguinaldo's most famous victory came soon after—and it was against the same General Ernesto Aguirre who had almost killed him near Bacoor. Aguirre had not pressed his previous success and had turned back from Imus to Manila. He returned to Cavite on 3 Sept 1896, once again determined to pacify Imus.³³⁶ This time, Aguinaldo had learnt his lesson and he decided to wait for Aguirre's forces on the banks of a river crossed by a stone bridge. Aguinaldo had the bridge demolished and disguised this fact from the Spanish. He also ordered the creation of trenches and other defenses to shelter his men while they covered the bridge.

The Spanish forces that advanced on the Filipinos were a mixed force of regular and *Guardia Civil* cavalry, artillery and infantry.³³⁷ The Spanish forces confidently launched a frontal assault of the rebel trenches, but despite being preceded by a light bombardment from some mountain guns, the attack was stopped by the dismantled bridge

³³⁵ Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, 88.

³³⁶ Quirino, *Filipinos at War*, 107.

³³⁷ Mostly from Quirino, *Filipinos at War*, 107-110; Quirino, *The Young Aguinaldo*, 67-69; Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, 90-100.

and the Filipino fire. The Spanish forces withdrew to regroup and Aguinaldo decided to counterattack. He led a small group of handpicked men across a ford and fell on the enemy flank. This broke the Spanish ranks, and they fled in disorder, chased by the victorious Filipinos. While scouring the battlefield, Aguinaldo acquired one of his most prized possession: Aguirre's Toledo-forged saber, or his *sable de mando*—officer's sword.³³⁸

Other Revolutionaries in Cavite also managed to defeat the Spanish forces in their areas and the province was eventually liberated. Spanish rule in Cavite collapsed and in the ensuing power vacuum, two rival governments were established in the province: the Magdalo government, headed by Emilio Aguinaldo, and the Magdiwang Government headed by Mariano Alvarez. These two factions would eventually be caught up in fratricidal infighting but this should not distract from the fact that their accomplishment was a historical first. For the first time, Filipino resistance groups had managed to defeat the Spanish and instead of fleeing to the hills and forests, the Filipinos laid claim to territory that they subsequently governed. While these two governments did not rule more than half the province each, they *aspired* to be national governments. They were structured after the colonial government, with presidents and a full complement of cabinet secretaries, like Secretary of Justice and Secretary of Agriculture.³³⁹ These governments can therefore be seen as nationalist institutions in seed form and while it might seem rather absurd for a government that ruled barely half of a small province to be electing a “*Mataas na Pangulong-Pangkalahatan*” or “Venerable All-Over President”

³³⁸ See note in Quirino, *The Young Aguinaldo*, 69.

³³⁹ Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, 103; Alvarez, *Recalling the Revolution*, 97-99.

it showed that these governments were laying claim to the entire Philippines.³⁴⁰ The nationalist aspirations of the Katipunan were taken one step further, so it was unfortunate that the 1896 Revolution came to a ruinous end in 1897.

Defeat in Cavite

The Spanish colonial authorities recovered from their initial panic and they stopped sending ill-prepared forces into Cavite piecemeal. Instead, they consolidated their hold on Manila and called for reinforcements. Lacking any sort of navy, the Filipinos were unable to prevent these reinforcements from landing. Capturing Manila would have helped, since it would have deprived the Spanish of Manila's communications facilities (like the telegram line to Spain) or its port facilities, but with the defeat of Bonifacio's forces, Manila was essentially immune from Revolutionary attack. The Spanish therefore had a secure line of reinforcement and resupply, the continued flow of which was subject only to the willingness of the metropole to keep sending resources to the Philippines. Conversely, the Filipinos would steadily weaken since the forces in Cavite had no access to foreign weapons and because the province's isolation and the disunity of the Revolution meant they could not expect much in the way of reinforcements.

The Spanish government replaced the current governor general Ramón Blanco with Camilo de Polavieja, a career soldier with combat experience in Africa, and he brought with him a contingent of soldiers from Spain. The Spanish formed the "Division

³⁴⁰ Santiago V. Alvarez, *The Katipunan and the Revolution: Memoirs of a General*, Paula Carolina S. Malay, trans., (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1992), 312.

Lachambre,” named after its commander, José de Lachambre. In his account of the campaign, staff officer Federico de Monteverde y Sedano, claimed that the division had 13,580 men in combat formations, while Carlos Quirino estimated that the division had 22,000 men in total.³⁴¹ While other rebellions of varying degrees of success and intensity had broken out in other parts of the Philippines the Spanish decided to focus on the Filipinos in Cavite, rightly surmising that this was the Revolution’s center of gravity. They thus isolated the province and after planning and preparation, they hurled the Lachambre Division at the insurgents in Cavite. At this point the Revolution was essentially lost since the Lachambre Division—a small unit by European standards—represented a concentration of force that the Filipinos simply could not hope to stop.

The Lachambre Division was large and unwieldy, and as Monteverde admits, it had a difficult time traversing the rough terrain and poor roads of Cavite. It had to divide into smaller columns by necessity and its routes of advance had to be carefully planned so it could unite when attacking but it was otherwise slow-moving and difficult to maneuver. The Division’s greatest strength therefore was when attacking and moving straight ahead. Its main objectives matched the Division’s strengths: to simply advance and crush any opposition and to impress Spanish authority by the marching of her soldiers on rebel ground.³⁴²

However, the Spanish were lucky in that the Filipino strategy maximized the strengths of the Spanish forces. The Filipinos tended to sit defensively, presenting the

³⁴¹ Monteverde y Sedano, *La Division Lachambre*, 143; Quirino, *Filipinos at War*, 114. Numbers are unclear since this aspect of Philippine history has not been much studied.

³⁴² Monteverde y Sedano, *La Division Lachambre*, 145.

Spanish with an inviting and accessible target for their unwieldy mass of soldiers. The Filipinos therefore met a concentration of force with their own concentration of force, which was a fundamentally flawed strategy.

What prevented the situation from becoming an unmitigated disaster was the fact that the Filipinos also fought from the tactical defensive, sheltering in trenches and other field fortifications. These defenses were often well-designed, perhaps because of Edilberto Evangelista, a Belgian trained engineer and the only Propagandist to join in the Revolution. Aguinaldo claims to have held Evangelista in very high regard and it is perhaps no exaggeration that without his defenses, the Filipinos would have done even worse.³⁴³ It was unfortunate that Evangelista was lost early during the Lachambre offensive, although the Filipino entrenchments continued to be excellent. They could also be quite extensive: the Filipinos dug trenches *3 kilometers long* to defend a small town known as Anabo II.³⁴⁴ A tactical defensive is proverbially stronger than a tactical offensive and fighting on the defensive was easier for the poorly trained Filipino officers and men, since the static way in which the Filipinos fought did not place a lot of demands on the men's initiative and cohesion.

However, the Filipinos were generally unable to prevent the Spanish from constantly defeating and capturing their defenses. In general, it seems as if the Filipinos only stymied the Lachambre Division's attacks whenever the Spanish made mistakes.

³⁴³ Quirino, *Filipinos at War*, 124.

³⁴⁴ Bernad and Achútegui, *Aguinaldo and the Revolution 1896*, 264; Aguinaldo, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*, 174. Incidentally, this feat also shows the ability of the Revolutionary elites to marshal manpower for public works.

One example was the Battle of Anabo II and Pasong Santol. On 7 March, the Spanish forces captured the town of Salitran, and were surprised to find that the expected concentration of Revolutionary forces was not there. As it turned out, Aguinaldo had decided to defend a village a short distance from Salitran, Anabo II, instead. A small Spanish reconnaissance force was caught in the open by the Filipino forces and suffered heavy casualties, including the loss of its commander, Colonel Antonio Zabala.³⁴⁵ Even this success proved brief and illusory, however, since the Spanish were able to bring up reinforcements and rout the Filipinos from their trenches.

The Filipinos launched a handful counterattacks, but these were also frontal affairs that came to naught in the face of Spanish professionalism and firepower. For instance, during the Filipino attempt to recapture Silang, Aguinaldo admitted that many of his troops ran away upon contact with the enemy and he had to chase after his troops in order to rally them.³⁴⁶

A detailed examination of the campaigns during the 1896 Revolution will have to await another study. Suffice it to say for now that despite their trenches, the Filipino forces were driven out of Cavite. The Revolutionary Government—now composed of Aguinaldo and his closest confederates—was finally forced to engage in that age-old Filipino practice of decamping and fleeing from superior forces. Aguinaldo was now a *remontado*, and like all *remontado*, he was difficult to capture and represented a threat to

³⁴⁵ Bernad and Achútegui, *Aguinaldo and the Revolution of 1896*, 262-269; Monteverde y Sedano, *La División Lachambre*, 102. Bernad and Achútegui give Zabala the rank of general, but Monteverde lists him as a colonel.

³⁴⁶ Bernad and Achútegui, *Aguinaldo and the Revolution of 1896*, 268-270.

the established order by simply staying alive and keeping his force in being. However, his ability to affect affairs in the Philippines was thereby greatly diminished.

Why did the Filipinos even try to stand up to the Spanish in head-on confrontations? This strategy clearly played into Spanish hands and emphasized Filipino weaknesses. Why did they not use mobile columns, and maximize their familiarity with the terrain and the unwieldiness of the Lachambre Division to attack and ambush the various Spanish detachments on the march? Why not hit the Spaniards' vulnerable supply columns or supply depots? Why allow the Spanish forces to advance practically unhindered across ground that would have been perfect for ambushes and night attacks? Indeed, why confront the Spanish at all? Why not run to the mountains and force the Spanish to disperse, instead of giving them an easy target?

As to the first strategy, a mobile, hit-and-run approach would have required far more training, staff work and professionalism than the Filipinos possessed. Detecting and attacking the Spanish columns would have required a high degree of planning and well-trained officers and men in order to achieve the desired coordination. Such a strategy was probably beyond the Filipino forces. It would have also required a high degree of cooperation and trust among the officers, which did not exist in the fractured ranks of the Revolutionary leadership.

Why did the Filipinos not engage in guerrilla tactics and decamp to the hills and mountains? This was probably not acceptable to the leaders of the Revolution for various reasons. First, it would have involved abandoning their lands, homes and wealth—perhaps something not acceptable to these landed elites. Second, the Revolutionary

leaders aspired to be centralizing nation-builders. Their goal was to create a Philippine state, which can only be achieved with great difficulty while hiding in the mountains. Their notion of a state resembled the Spanish colonial state, hence why Aguinaldo and the other Revolutionaries seized local centers of power and created governments with territorial jurisdictions. Hiding in the mountains, isolated from the populace, from the centers of power and even from each other is not conducive to nation-building. Finally, it may also represent a lack of willingness to engage in the difficult and uncomfortable lifestyle of an outlaw in the jungle, a style of life associated with the poor and the disaffected, not with the landed, economic elite. However, it must be stressed that these points are conjectural and a deeper examination of the 1896 Revolution will have to wait.

Throughout this military crisis, the Revolutionary leadership was absorbed in a bitter and counterproductive struggle for leadership. Disunity and factionalism were constant problems for the Filipino independence movement, from the Propagandists to the Katipunan. In 1896, there was no individual charismatic enough to truly unite a critical mass of Filipinos, and beyond anger with the Spanish, neither was there an idea strong enough around which people could rally and for which they were willing to forego personal interest. The Revolutionaries were united by a common set of grievances, but not by a common set of goals. Thus, the removal of the colonial government in Cavite created a power vacuum, a situation remarkably similar in nature to the *mandala* or “circle of kings” of prehispanic times but with a big difference: the Katipunan had created the idea of a *unified* Philippines. A few of the more ambitious Revolutionists now had a new objective during the conflict: to become the leader of this unified, Philippine nation-state and trying to get other Filipinos to accept their authority.

The Aguinaldo and Alvarez factions contended with each other for supreme leadership of the Revolution, and this struggle eventually drew in Andres Bonifacio. This conflict has been much studied and analyzed by Philippine historiography. Reynaldo Ileto's conclusion that "[elite] rivalry would harm the revolution from within" can be taken as the orthodoxy: there is a widely held belief in the historiography of the Revolution that disunity harmed the Filipino cause and may even have led to their defeat.³⁴⁷ It is certainly true that disunity was harmful, at least to cohesion or "morale", but it is also doubtful that absolute unanimity would have done much to change the ultimate outcome of the 1896 Revolution. Even if the Magdalo and Magdiwang factions had worked together, they would not have had any better training in military leadership, and neither would they have had better-trained and disciplined soldiers or more guns. Unless the Filipinos also changed their strategy then unity would not have done much to affect the outcome and may simply have meant more Filipinos sitting supinely in their well-constructed trenches. Zeal for a cause alone cannot guarantee victory, as Tadeusz Kościuszko can attest.

However, the Revolutionary leaders expended much effort and energy in trying to resolve this internal conflict. Was this ambition coming into play? Or perhaps the Filipinos merely dealt with the one problem at hand that seemed the most familiar and to which they could offer real solutions: political and dynastic rivalry were contests in which these municipal elites had much experience. It would certainly have been a more intelligible problem than military tactics and strategy. Finally, it may even been linked to the Filipino idea of *loob* or inner quality. This follows the ancient Filipino belief that the

³⁴⁷ Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 109.

spiritual and moral tone of individuals affect the external world, and in this case, conflict and disunity might perhaps be interpreted as a weakening of inner resolve and physical prowess in combat.³⁴⁸ Again, this is conjecture and more work needs to be done on the Revolution.

By the middle of 1897, the province of Cavite had been overrun by the Lachambre Division and the uprising there was largely defeated. Aguinaldo spent the last few months of the year on the run, a headache for the Spaniards and a constant drain on their resources, but not much of threat and unable to influence events or advance the cause of Filipino nationalism.³⁴⁹ Both sides eventually agreed to a truce, the Pact-of-Biak-na-Bato and Aguinaldo sailed for exile in Hong Kong on 27 December 1897.³⁵⁰ In Hong Kong, Aguinaldo and a few other exiled Revolutionary leaders became known as the *Hong Kong Junta*. They did little until the outbreak of the Spanish-American War provided them with a means of returning to the Philippines.

This was not the end of the fighting in the Philippines, however, and scattered uprisings occurred in various parts of the archipelago. None were very successful, but they finally forced the Spanish to disperse their forces. If the Revolution had actually been coordinated across several provinces—if it had *actually* been national in practice and organization and not just in its aspirations—then perhaps the fighting in Cavite might

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 75-113.

³⁴⁹ Quirino, *Filipinos at War*, 143.

³⁵⁰ Quirino, *The Young Aguinaldo*, 219.

have turned out differently. For now, the Revolution was in abeyance and it would not be until 1898 that it would be fought out again in earnest.

Conclusion

The Filipino Revolutionaries were clearly unprepared for the outbreak of hostilities in 1896. The Katipunan was still in the early phases of recruitment and expansion when it was discovered by the Spanish and pitched into war. Thus, when fighting began the Katipunan had no war plans, no caches of arms, no training or any other serious preparation for the violent revolution it was advocating. We will never know if, given time, the Katipunan would have ever turned into an effective insurgent or revolutionary organization. The Katipunan's unpreparedness was the primary factor that dictated the course of events from hereon in.

This unpreparedness was largely why the rural elites who had joined or sympathized with the Katipunan's cause became the leaders of the Revolution: they had inherent advantages like human resources to mobilize, experiences in leadership, or scanty opposition. Thus, the 1896 Revolution saw the rise of rural municipal elites, the most notable of whom was Emilio Aguinaldo—the mayor of a small town who would one day become the first Filipino president. Alongside him rose other rural elites, men like Miguel Malvar, Mariano Trias, Daniel Tirona and Artemio Ricarte

However, this unpreparedness was also why the Revolutionaries did not have trained officers or personnel, a source of weapons or plans. Thus, the Revolutionaries were most successful when attacking isolated Spanish outposts or countering haphazard,

poorly-prepared Spanish attacks. When the Spanish finally landed reinforcements—something that the Filipinos were completely incapable of preventing—then the Filipinos were in trouble. The social background and lack of preparedness of the rural elites who commanded the Revolution meant that they picked a strategy that played to the strengths of the Spanish: the Filipinos sat passively on the defensive, waiting to be attacked. Their counterattacks were equally ill-starred and tended to be frontal attacks on prepared Spanish positions. The Filipino leadership had no way of rectifying these problems and they concentrated instead on the issue of division and discord in the leadership ranks of the Revolution.

The 1896 Revolution marked the beginning of almost 6 years of intermittent combat in the Philippines. The Revolutionists would have very little respite and very few opportunities to rectify their shortcomings. It would not be remiss to say that *none* of these deficiencies would truly be corrected by the time of the Philippine-American War. Almost all of the same circumstances would prevail: the dominance of the rural elites and the lack of guns, training and organization on the part of the Revolutionary leadership.

But these negative factors aside, the 1896 Revolution also marked the first time that Filipinos used violence or force in order to attain nationalistic goals. The Revolution was therefore the advent of national warfare in the Philippines.

CHAPTER V

THE STRATEGY AND POLITICS OF THE PHILIPPINES

The 1896 Revolution saw the introduction of national warfare to Philippine military history, but it remained largely theoretical: neither the Katipunan nor the Revolutionary Government exercised anything close to national authority. It was only in 1898, when the Revolution was renewed that true national politics and warfare came to the Philippines. The Aguinaldo Government was the first indigenous Filipino government that could exercise—and claim—real and functioning authority over a significant portion of the Philippine Islands. This meant that the Aguinaldo Government was the first Filipino government that could theoretically muster the resources of the entire archipelago, and it was also the first native government that had the burden of having to enforce its authority and its will over a large expanse of territory.

The Aguinaldo Government's fundamental strategic mission was to defend and enforce its sovereignty within its claimed jurisdiction in the face of both internal and external threats. Internally, its biggest issue was the fact that not all Filipinos recognized its authority. Its external problems stemmed from its need to defend itself from foreign infringements on its sovereignty. There was something vaguely ironic about this strategic mission, however: Aguinaldo professed to be defending a Filipino nation, but it did not yet exist. Aguinaldo essentially had to *create* the nation that he was ostensibly defending.

The Aguinaldo Government's internal and external concerns were very closely intertwined. Aguinaldo used external concerns—worries about foreign invasion and recognition—to justify strengthening his domestic power. In other words, his justification for nation-building was external threats. This is not unique to the Philippines: war and military organization have historically been intimately connected with the centralization and strengthening of governments. What this chapter will argue, however, is that the Aguinaldo Government *had* to use either the prospect of foreign intervention or the exigencies of war to justify its nation-building project. That necessity was due to the newness of the endeavor: Aguinaldo lacked a historical example from which to draw legitimacy and he had to rely on his accomplishments as a commander in the 1896 Revolution.

Despite the newness of his endeavors, Aguinaldo's war-making and nation-building were not a radical break from the past. Rather, Aguinaldo continued to be influenced by circumstances and cultural trends that had influenced Philippine military history and politics for the past 300 years. Some of these circumstances included the continuing multi-polarity of Philippine politics, the unchanged nature of Philippine geography, the continuing importance of internal and external trade, and the continuing importance of prowess, spirituality and display in the exercise of leadership. As this chapter demonstrates, the Philippine-American War was not a break with the Philippine military past, but a part of it.

In this chapter I will focus on the social, economic and political factors that influenced the course of the Philippine-American War—in other words, historical factors

other than war that affected conflict. These factors were particularly important in determining the strategy, the nexus of politics, economics and war. Strategy is the arena of policy where, Basil Lidell-Hart argues, the leaders of a war “co-ordinate and direct all the resources of a nation, or band of nations, towards the attainment of the political object of the war—the goal defined by fundamental policy.”³⁵¹

The Aguinaldo Government had a grand strategy, one that tried to match the economic, military and political resources it *thought* it had to its desired ends. It was also a strategy that tried to employ political action as well as military force. We will examine these resources and these goals—both of which were determined by internal and external considerations. That is, we will see what the Filipino leaders wanted, and how they attempted to achieve these goals.

The Aguinaldo Government

The Filipino leadership discussed here is the Aguinaldo Government—the organization headed by Emilio Aguinaldo. It was a group of young men who eventually formed the first national government of the Philippines in 1898. There were other indigenous political actors in the Philippines during this period, and while they will be mentioned, they are not considered a part of the central cadre that was at the heart of what became the national government of the Philippines. They were limited in their influence: either because they were only politically significant in local settings, or they were associated with the central leadership cadre only temporarily. Here we shall discuss who

³⁵¹ Basil Lidell-Hart, *Strategy*, (New York: Praeger, 1967), 335-336.

the main national leaders of the Philippines were, the nature of their claims to leadership, and the dynamics of their interactions with each other.

The apogee of the Aguinaldo Government's power and relevance was in 1898-1899. Not coincidentally, this period is most represented in the Philippine Insurgent Records, since the Aguinaldo Government was then most active and therefore generated the most documentation. By 1900 the Aguinaldo Government was in hiding, its influence had dwindled considerably, and its bureaucratic structure had fallen apart. The Americans captured Aguinaldo on 23 March 1901 and at this point the government became the "Malvar Government"—named after a close confederate of Aguinaldo, Miguel Malvar. While the Malvar Government still claimed to be a national government, its realm of authority was circumscribed and very localized. In many ways, the Malvar Government (or even the late Aguinaldo Government) more closely resembled the *remontado* resistance groups of the past, and the collapse of indigenous central authority in 1900 marked the effective end of the nation-building experiment. Hence, the focus will be on the years 1898-1899, the period of true national warfare and politics.

Who were the people in this government? Obviously, the foremost member was Emilio Aguinaldo, the former small-town official who became the putative head of the 1896 Revolution. In many ways, Aguinaldo was an unlikely candidate as the head of a national government. As the last chapter showed, he had been a man of only modest wealth, education and accomplishments especially in comparison to well-known *ilustrado* like Jose Rizal or Juan Luna. During the 1896 Revolution, Aguinaldo had risen to prominence and had been elected "president," but in actuality his authority had been

severely challenged by rivals like Andres Bonifacio and the Alvarez clan, and it had also been strictly localized to Cavite.

Aguinaldo overcame these challenges to his authority, and the years 1898-1899 would find him at the height of his career. He became *diktador*, *capitán general*, and *presidente*: theoretically the most powerful man in the Philippines, its first truly national leader and commander of its first national army. It was quite an ascent for this former small-town mayor and petty trader. History would show Aguinaldo to be an extremely ambitious person, and he would also prove to be ruthless in his efforts to maintain his position.

What was Aguinaldo's claim to power? Aguinaldo owed his prominence to his apparent skill as a commander in the 1896 Revolution. His reputation was mentioned in one of the Hong Kong Junta's *actas*: "the glory which the President so worthily conquered in the last rebellion."³⁵² Additionally, in the circular he released upon landing in the Philippines, Aguinaldo noted, "I will once again take on the command of all the armed forces until we have achieved our noble desire [of independence.]" Here we see Aguinaldo specifying that he had returned to re-assume military command, emphasizing his role as a military commander. He did not even mention his status as the elected president of the 1896 Revolution.

Throughout the war, Aguinaldo never relinquished his role as supreme commander of the armed forces and he issued as many (surprisingly specific) orders as *capitán general* as he did as *presidente* or *diktador*. Even if he did not write these orders

³⁵² R8F53D2, "Act of the Hong Kong Junta." Hong Kong, 15 May 1898.

himself, they bore his name and indicate a desire to be seen as *commanding* the army in a real capacity. For instance, on 16 July 1898, two months after his return to the Philippines, he sent a telegram to one of his commanders, General Mariano Noriel, advising him on the deployment of a specific artillery detachment in support of an attack on the Spaniards.³⁵³ There are other such documents in the PIR and they contain commands that give quite detailed and specific operational orders.

Given Aguinaldo's emphasis on the military element, it made sense that he would also praise war and the use of force. In a published message about the Revolution addressed to the Filipino people Aguinaldo said:

It is a truth that the clean renewal of a country's honor [requires] the use of force, in order to achieve the strength given to it by God.

*Sa pagka't isang katotohanan na ang malinis na Pagbabangong puri ng bayan ay ang paggamit nito ng karahasan, upang maigiit ang kapangyarihang ipinagkaloob sa kaniya ng Dios.*³⁵⁴

He also praised the army at the end of a speech at the opening of the Congress of Malolos, "*Mabuhay ang Puno at Caua! na nagtanggol nitong Sangcapuluan!*" or "Long live the Leader and the Soldiers who defended this Archipelago!"³⁵⁵ In general, this praise emphasized the army's victories in spite of facing formidable enemy forces.

³⁵³ R9F69D4, E. Aguinaldo, Telegram to M. Noriel. 16 July 1898.

³⁵⁴ R15F171D1, E. Aguinaldo, "Kalatas Nang Presidente sa Pagbabagong Puri nang Bayang Filipinas." Cavite, 23 June 1898.

³⁵⁵ R5F2E1D1, E. Aguinaldo. Speech at the Opening of the Congress of Malolos. Cavite Viejo, 3 August 1898.

So important was the martial dimension to Aguinaldo's exercise of leadership that the very first government he organized in 1898 was a military dictatorship. Until he had secured his position, Aguinaldo and his advisor Apolinario Mabini clearly felt that he could only justify his assumption of supreme authority in the Philippines by invoking military necessity. In the 24 May 1898 decree that established this dictatorial government, Aguinaldo specifically stated that he was suspending or invalidating the Republic formed in the "past insurrection" and replacing it with a dictatorial government until "tranquility" had returned and "the legitimate aspiration of liberty had been completed."³⁵⁶ Thus, he was explicitly using his capacity as military commander of the Revolution to reassert control over both the army and civilian government.

One consequence of Aguinaldo's militarism was that the army became a political power in its own right. Aguinaldo was therefore quite concerned with the army's loyalty, and he tried to staff its highest echelons with close associates, or he tried to win over the loyalty of men he had to appoint as military officers but who had not started out as his partisans.

The Hong Kong Junta, the cadre of former Revolutionary leaders who had gone into exile with Aguinaldo, dominated the government's inner leadership circle. The group included Teodoro Sandico, Tomas Mascardo, Miguel Malvar, Mariano Llanera, Vicente Lucban, Galicano Apacible, Vito Belarmino, Gregorio del Pilar and Manuel Tinio.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁶ R12F125D93, E. Aguinaldo, Decree. Cavite, 24 May 1898.

³⁵⁷ Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*, 1:454-455; See also the signatures on R8F53D2, "Act of the Hong Kong Junta." Hong Kong, 15 May 1898. As an aside, for those who wonder about the reliability of Aguinaldo's post-war memoirs, Emilio Aguinaldo and Vicente Pacis, *A Second Look at America*, (New York: Robert Speller & Sons, 1957). It is interesting to note that he mentions the

Aguinaldo reposed a considerable amount of trust in these men and packed his military high command with them. Half of the signatories of one of the Hong Kong Junta's most important *actas* would become senior officers in the army.³⁵⁸ Sandico is a particularly noteworthy example: he first served as Secretary of Foreign Affairs but, instead of quitting when he was ousted by Pedro Paterno's takeover of the Cabinet, he joined the army and continued fighting under Aguinaldo's banner.

The Hong Kong Junta was a fairly heterogeneous group, composed of men from different social circles, provinces and backgrounds. A few had backgrounds similar to Emilio Aguinaldo's. Malvar, Llanera, Mascardo, and Tinio had been rural *municipal elites*, serving as either small town mayors or local notables.³⁵⁹ On the other hand, three members of the Hong Kong Junta, Apacible, Gregorio del Pilar and Sandico, might be considered *ilustrados* in the same category as Jose Rizal, men with a measure of wealth and with degrees from prestigious schools in the Philippines or in Europe.³⁶⁰ Only one was not a Tagalog: Vicente Lukban, from the Visayas.

Despite these differences, these were the men who were the most faithful to the cause of Philippine independence and Aguinaldo, not surrendering or defecting when the going got rough, and not attempting to supplant or overthrow the president. Glenn May

meeting detailed by this *Acta* and summarized what was discussed therein with a fair degree of accuracy: see p. 38.

³⁵⁸ R8F53D2, "Act of the Hong Kong Junta." Hong Kong, 15 May 1898.

³⁵⁹ National Historical Institute, *Filipinos in History*. 4 vols., (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1989), 2:1, 36, 44, 233.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:65-67, 2:94-95, 197.

has written that old school ties helped create leadership networks among Revolutionaries in Batangas and perhaps the Hong Kong Junta's prolonged exile together served a similar function.³⁶¹ The members of the Junta were together in Hong Kong for several long and lonely months—enough time for them to form bonds and forge a common purpose.

Once Aguinaldo had re-established himself in the Philippines, his inner circle expanded to include non-Hong Kong Junta members, most of whom had some strong personal connection with Aguinaldo. For example, his cousin Baldomero Aguinaldo served as Secretary of War in the first year of the 1898 Revolution. A list of army officers found in the PIR also shows the predominance of Caviteños and Aguinaldo partisans in high military command: Daniel Tirona, Emiliano Riego de Dios, Mariano Trias, Pantaleon Garcia, Mariano Noriel, and Jose Ignacio Pawa.³⁶²

A number of other people who had been active in the 1896 Revolution and who had not sided against Aguinaldo also seem to have become part of Aguinaldo's leadership cadre: men like Paciano Rizal, Juan Cailles and Artemio Ricarte. Why they joined the Aguinaldo Government is difficult to answer. Perhaps they did so out of a patriotic desire to help in the nationalist cause. One possible explanation was that they were ambitious men and military office offered them an avenue to power and influence on a wider stage. Few of these men were otherwise remarkable in their wealth, education, or influence. This situation was echoed in the lives and careers of the more junior officers, men who also tended to be drawn from municipal rural elites or former

³⁶¹ May, *A Past Recovered*, 51-65.

³⁶² R7F50D10, "Relacion del Personal que compone el Gobierno Revolucionario de Filipinas." No Date. Also a similar list, R7F50D2, no date.

students—generally men who still belonged to the elite classes of the Philippines but were not as highly socially positioned as, say, Jose Rizal or the other Propagandists.³⁶³

In sum, the relationship dynamics in the leadership cadre in the Aguinaldo Government was highly personalistic. Among the high command of the government, interpersonal bonds, charisma and personal accomplishment played key roles in how leadership was exercised. Aguinaldo tended to trust members of the Hong Kong Junta along with former Revolutionary comrades and friends and kinsmen from Cavite. This was a small group that amounted to perhaps forty or so men but they formed the core of Filipino leadership. When I write about the “Aguinaldo Government,” I henceforth refer to these men, the main deciders and initiators of policy in the national, central government that arose after the collapse of Spanish authority in 1898. This group was predominantly military so it can also be said that central government in the Philippines was practically synonymous with the army.

The Idea of Independence

What did Aguinaldo and other leaders of the government mean when they spoke of Philippine independence? According Reynaldo Ileto, the *ilustrado* idea of independence was closely modeled on the Western idea of a “sovereign nation” with established borders within which “all of its inhabitants...pledge loyalty to the government and constitution.”³⁶⁴ This was certainly correct: there are parts of the Malolos Constitution that were practically word for word restatements of the Spanish

³⁶³ Guerrero, *Luzon at War*, 70.

³⁶⁴ Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 115.

Constitution of 1812. Significantly both constitutions define sovereignty as “residing exclusively in the people.”³⁶⁵ Article 20 of Mabini’s rejected constitutional project, the *Panukala sa Pagkakana ng Republika nang Pilipinas* also drew heavily on the Spanish 1812 Constitution, similarly defining sovereignty as bounded by territory.³⁶⁶

That article of Mabini’s *Panukala* also defined the territorial extent that the Aguinaldo Government was claiming: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao and “all the islands attached to those [three regions] just mentioned.” Since no indigenous prehispanic polity had ever ruled this much of the archipelago, this territorial claim was obviously derived entirely from the Spaniards, and corresponded to the jurisdiction of the colonial state. Mabini even went so far as to invite the inhabitants of the Marianas, Carolinas and “all the others who were governed by the Spanish Government here in Oceania” to join the Philippines.³⁶⁷

Aguinaldo stated the territorial extent of the new Philippine nation in a draft of a letter to President William McKinley: “The Spanish possessions in the Oceania constitute the Independent State known as the Republic of the Philippines.”³⁶⁸ However, the Aguinaldo Government may not have viewed the Marianas or the Carolinas as integral to Philippines since Aguinaldo wrote to Sandico suggesting that these two places be offered

³⁶⁵ *Constitución Política de la Monarquía Española*. Título I, Capítulo I, Artículo 3 “*De la Nación Española*,” p. 2; *Constitución Política de la República Filipina*, 1899, Artículo 3, p. 8. R7C39D10.

³⁶⁶ Mabini, *Panukala sa Pagkakana*, Art. 20, p. 26; Título I, Capítulo I, Artículo 1 of the 1812 Constitution, Capítulo II, “*De los Españoles*,” pp. 2-3

³⁶⁷ Mabini, *Panukala*, 26.

³⁶⁸ R28F441D1, E. Aguinaldo. Letter to William McKinley. No Date.

to America in exchange for an alliance. Those were bold words, considering the lack of control the Filipinos had over these areas.³⁶⁹

Within this bounded territory, independence meant political autonomy or in Aguinaldo's words, to have Filipinos "led or headed by other Filipinos," ("*pagpunuan ng kapua Filipino*").³⁷⁰ Aguinaldo echoed the sentiment in a propaganda piece, written by him, that he ordered Mabini to translate in such a way as to make it seem as if an American soldier had written it.³⁷¹ In this document, Aguinaldo invoked the Monroe Doctrine, stating that Monroe had claimed that "America is for Americans" ("*Ang Amerika ay para sa Amerikano*") and that logically "the Philippines is also for the Filipinos" ("*Ang Filipinas ay para sa Filipinas naman*").³⁷² What Aguinaldo does not express publicly was that he and his closest confederates were the "*kapua Filipino*" who would lead the country. Implicit in these statements was that the idea of independence also meant defending his personal rule. The Aguinaldo Government's basic political objective was therefore the maintenance of the authority of its members as the leaders of a national government in the face the face of external or internal threats. This notion of independence had two extremely important consequences when it came to the conduct of war.

³⁶⁹ R5F5D7, E. Aguinaldo, Letter to Sandico. Bacoor, 10 August 1898.

³⁷⁰ R5F5E2D5, E. Speech by Aguinaldo. Cavite Viejo, 3 Aug. 1898.

³⁷¹ R5F5E8D3, E. Aguinaldo, "*A Mis Paisanos*." Malolos, 7 January 1899. The final printed, English version is in R29F457D1, "To My Countrymen the Americans."

³⁷² See also sentiments regarding sovereignty also echoed in R27F424D1, Spain. Philippines, 30 April 1899, multiple signatures.

First, the emphasis on definite boundaries meant that the Aguinaldo Government could not tolerate a hostile force or foreign government imposing its authority within these borders. Foreign invasion or intervention into Philippines affairs was a constant fear of the Aguinaldo Government. The Revolutionary leaders referred to the uncertain fate of the archipelago as the “Philippine question” and they were afraid that some other power might decide to settle this question by infringing on Philippine territory. The Hong Kong Junta was already concerned about foreign intervention even before the renewal of the Revolution against Spain and it also had deep concerns about allying with America.³⁷³ Later, during the Philippine-American War, Mabini wrote that the Philippines could still be endangered by the “intervention” of foreign powers.³⁷⁴

This fear of foreign intervention was borne out when the Americans finally declared their policy on the Philippines. On 24 December 1898, general Ewell Otis announced in no uncertain terms that the United States “intends to establish among them [the Filipinos] an efficient and most stable form of government.”³⁷⁵ The Aguinaldo government quite rightly saw this pronouncement as a challenge to its authority. On 5 January 1899, Aguinaldo published a protest against the proclamation of Otis: “*Protesto contra ese acto tan inesperado de la soberania de America en estas islas,*” or “I protest against this unexpected act [imposing] American sovereignty on these islands.”³⁷⁶ At

³⁷³ R8F53D2, Act of the Hong Kong Junta. Hong Kong, 15 May 1898.

³⁷⁴ R25F377, A. Mabini, Letter to Felipe Buencamino. Rosales, 12 August 1899, Rosales.

³⁷⁵ Philippine Information Society, *Aguinaldo and the American Generals*, (Boston: Philippine Information Society, 1901), 10-11.

³⁷⁶ R10F88E5D7, E. Aguinaldo. “Suplemento a Heraldo de la Revolucion. Oficial. Manifiesto del Sr. Presidente del Gobierno Revolucionario.” Malolos, 5 Jan 1899.

some point prior to the outbreak of the Philippine-American War in 4 February 1899, the Americans threatened to land troops in the southern island of Panay. Sticking to its assertions of sovereignty, the Aguinaldo Government threatened war—a threat that was averted when the Americans backed down.³⁷⁷

A fear of foreign intervention went hand in hand with fears of foreign military power. The specific example was obviously the United States, a country whose strength had been praised prior to the outbreak of war. Once the war began, this praise turned into dire warnings of the difficulties about resorting to strength of arms in securing independence. For instance, Mabini claimed that the Americans had “armies, squadrons [fleets] and the unlimited resources of a great and powerful nation.”³⁷⁸ In a message to the Filipino people, Aguinaldo described the Americans as the “*Coloso Norte Americano*,” and commented that “the enemy is extremely rich and powerful.”³⁷⁹

Second, sovereignty also had to be enforced within its borders. It must constantly be stressed that Filipino nationalism at this juncture was weak and that the Filipinos were more united in grievance than in a common identity. That age-old quality of Philippine politics, multi-polarity, or the existence of multiple contending groups and individuals of power and influence, reasserted itself with the collapse of Spanish authority in 1898. Dealing with this multi-polarity was the major internal challenge of the Aguinaldo Government.

³⁷⁷ R10F88D5, E. Aguinaldo, “El Gobierno de los Filipinos, ha creído.” Malolos, 5 Jan 1899.

³⁷⁸ R24F377D1, A. Mabini, “Manifiesto, Amados Hermanos y Compatriotas.” San Isidro, 15 April 1899.

³⁷⁹ R5C8D4, E. Aguinaldo, “Message to the Filipino People on their Duties.” Tarlac. 17 Oct. 1899.

An important source of disunity came from regional divisions.³⁸⁰ Aguinaldo's authority was strongest in Luzon, close to his seat of power, but it faded the farther one traveled. The Aguinaldo Government was particularly weak in the Visayas, the island group south of Luzon. The members of the Aguinaldo Government were predominantly Tagalog and the linguistic differences between Tagalogs and the Cebuano-speaking Visayans have been much commented upon by American observers who were fixated with "ethnic" or "tribal" differences. But what was more important was the lack of interaction between the two regional elites—they generally did not go to the same schools, they did not operate in the same social circles and the commercial networks of the two places were largely separated.³⁸¹ This meant that there were few of the all-important interpersonal bonds and networks between members of the Aguinaldo Government and the Visayan elites. Thus, it was only wherever Vicente Lukban established himself that the Aguinaldo Government managed to exercise any real authority. Lukban had been a member of the Hong Kong Junta and a close associate of Aguinaldo.

Otherwise, the Visayans were reluctant to accept Aguinaldo's authority. The sugar planters of Negros, for instance, formed their own army and government after the collapse of Spanish authority. They refused to affiliate themselves with the Aguinaldo Government, or even with other Visayan independence movements. They sent a florid letter to Aguinaldo that praised his victories but basically wanted a "federal government"

³⁸⁰ A problem acknowledged by the government. R6F22D3, P. Garcia, Decree. 14 September 1899.

³⁸¹ On Visayans not going to Manila or abroad to get educated, Fenner, *Cebu Under the Spanish Flag*, 102-103, 166-167; on disunity fostered by economic patterns, McCoy and de Jesus, *Philippine Social History*, 8.

or one that gave them plenty of local autonomy.³⁸² The government of Negros eventually welcomed American authority and (more importantly) military protection.³⁸³ The Negrenses were not alone in this sentiment and many people in Cebu accepted American authority too, thereby challenging the legitimacy and authority of the Aguinaldo Government in the south of the Philippines.³⁸⁴

The Aguinaldo Government also faced challenges from some elites who simply did not want to acknowledge its claims to leadership. There may have been a social or class-based element to this resistance since these elites were led by Cullinane's "urban elites," the wealthiest and most educated Filipinos whose influence could be far-reaching.³⁸⁵ These people threatened the Aguinaldo Government by either staying neutral during the fighting or by actively trying to take over the reins of government. In two of his speeches Aguinaldo complained of the "learned" and wealthy men who either did not help the "*mangmang*" ("ignorant") or demanded high office as the price of their allegiance.³⁸⁶ It is interesting to note that Aguinaldo did *not* see himself as one of these wealthy *ilustrados*. In his Christmas address in December 1898, he claimed that in other countries, the rich led revolutions but, "here, it is the opposite and the revolution was

³⁸² R9F77D5, Melecio Severino y Yorac (Secretary of the Federal Republican Government of Negros). Letter to E. Aguinaldo. Bacolod, 28 November 1898.

³⁸³ Larkin, *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*, 118-119; R6F29D8, Sergio Go Cinco. Letter to Vicente Lukban. Maribojon, 12 June 1899.

³⁸⁴ R13F144D2, Arcadio Maxilom to A. Mabini. San Nicolas, 30 May 1899.

³⁸⁵ Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*, 21.

³⁸⁶ R5F2D1, E. Aguinaldo, "Talumpati Na Isanaysay ni M. Emilio Aguinaldo at Famy... Sa Pagbubucas Nang Asamblea Nacional." Barasoain Church, 15 Sept. 1898; R5F8D1, E. Aguinaldo, "Aguinaldong Hinihingi Sa Mga Capatid Na Filipino." Malolos, Dec 1898.

initiated by the poor,” (“*nguni ditto sa atin ay naging baligtad at nagbuhat sa mahihirap*”).³⁸⁷

No other person epitomized these *ilustrado* better than Pedro Paterno. Paterno was an *ilustrado* of the first rank: wealthy, educated, and a friend of famous and prestigious Propagandists like Jose Rizal or Juan Luna. In the early days of the 1898 Revolution, Paterno was against the cause of independence and released a circular calling for “Spanish sovereignty and Filipino autonomy” that was denounced by the Aguinaldo government.³⁸⁸ Despite this early hostility towards him, Paterno somehow worked his way into government and became powerful enough to unseat the cabinet headed by Aguinaldo’s advisor Apolinario Mabini in May 1899.³⁸⁹ Paterno was not working alone: other elite Filipinos of similar wealth and standing thrust themselves into power now that the hard fighting appeared to be finished. This provoked a crisis in government: Teodoro Agoncillo’s eponymous “crisis of the Republic,” an episode which has received much scholarly attention from Philippine historians.³⁹⁰

We do not have the details on how these elite Filipinos joined the government, but we do know that Aguinaldo invited them. There were two reasons why the Aguinaldo Government needed these elites. The first was the most obvious: the government needed

³⁸⁷ R5F8D1, E. Aguinaldo, “Aguinaldong Hinihingi Sa Mga Capatid Na Filipino.” Malolos, Dec 1898.

³⁸⁸ R10F96E1D1, Pedro Paterno, “Soberania de Espana y Autonomia Filipina.” Manila, 19 June 1898,

³⁸⁹ See Apolinario Mabini, *The Philippine Revolution*, Leon Ma. Guerrero, trans., (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1969). Mabini was understandably bitter that Aguinaldo abandoned him, essentially sacrificing him to the *ilustrado*.

³⁹⁰ Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *Malolos: Crisis of the Republic*, (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippine Press, 1960).

their wealth. The other reason was that Aguinaldo valued the Westernized education of the *ilustrado*, which he thought would give prestige to his government, making it acceptable to foreigners.³⁹¹

How exactly the non-cooperation of these elites threatened the Aguinaldo Government is somewhat more difficult to assess. The standard accusation leveled at them by Philippine historians is that the *ilustrados* were quick to surrender to the Americans and thereby weakened the Filipinos' will to fight. It is true that the Paterno Cabinet stated that one of the reasons why it had unseated Mabini was because of the latter's unwillingness to negotiate with the Americans.³⁹² Yet as shall be seen, the fundamental strategy of the Aguinaldo Government remained unchanged and the war obviously continued despite the change in the composition of the cabinet. As Nick Joaquin pointed out, not all high-ranking *ilustrado* were willing to give up the fight.³⁹³

These *ilustrados* also tried to use the Malolos Constitution to reduce the power of the president and the regional congress in favor of a senate, presumably filled with these elites.³⁹⁴ The threat they posed to Aguinaldo has probably been overstated, however.

³⁹¹ Once again see R5F2D1, E. Aguinaldo, "Talumpati Na Isanaysay ni M. Emilio Aguinaldo at Famy... Sa Pagbubucas Nang Asamblea Nacional." Barasoain Church, 15 Sept. 1898; R5F8D1, E. Aguinaldo, "Aguinaldong Hinihingi Sa Mga Capatid Na Filipino." Malolos, Dec 1898. Aguinaldo mentions why he wants these elites in power. Guerrero, *Luzon at War*, 54-55 comes to the same conclusion as I do—probably because of the use of the same source materials.

³⁹² R6F28D8, F. Buencamino, Letter to Filipino agents abroad informing them of fall of Mabini cabinet and giving reasons thereof. San Isidro, 8 May 1899.

³⁹³ Nick Joaquin, *A Question of Heroes*, (Manila: Ayala Museum, 1977), 158. See also Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*, 33.

³⁹⁴ RF25D1, the Malolos Constitution. Note Titulo 7 and 8 of the Constitution. The Malolos Constitution wished for the president to be elected only by the Assembly of Representatives—the senate—not by popular vote. It also insisted that most of the president's actions had to be voted on by the senate. Titulo 11, the Congress was reduced to only managing local affairs.

Paterno and the others were never part of the army, the main source of power in the government, and as a result their authority was limited. Paterno seems to have recognized this limitation and he tried to affiliate the cabinet with the army by convincing Aguinaldo to grant its members officer rank.³⁹⁵ Paterno's attempts to do so can be seen as failures, since they didn't actually command any troops and, as the case of Juan Luna's brother Antonio will later show, rank alone did not automatically confer respect and obedience in an army where interpersonal networks were more important.

The *ilustrados'* threat to Aguinaldo also tended to solve itself since many of these fair weather patriots quickly surrendered to the Americans when the fighting turned sour, thereby limiting their impact. Finally, Aguinaldo and his fellows could be ruthless if they wanted to be. People who were perceived as threats to his hold on authority were often simply killed—Andres Bonifacio and Antonio Luna being prime examples.

Ultimately, the biggest threat that the *ilustrados'* non-cooperation likely posed to the Aguinaldo Government was that it weakened the government's legitimacy and denied it needed money.³⁹⁶ Whether these issues were serious enough to have cost the Philippines the war as Teodoro Agoncillo implies is much more debatable. Perhaps the *ilustrado* were simply not that important. After all, they did not have the ability to muster

³⁹⁵ R6F28D6, E. Aguinaldo, Decree. Tarlac, 31 July 1899. R6F28D10, E. Aguinaldo, Decree. Tarlac. 2 August 1899. Both were issued by office of the president but signed by Paterno. In one other document, Paterno justifies his position and claims that giving cabinet members officer rank was done in "civilized places" suggesting perhaps criticism or doubt. R7F50D4, P. Paterno, Circular. Tarlac, 2 August 1899. Paterno could be remarkably transparent.

³⁹⁶ For instance, many people refused to pay into the National Loan. R16F184D1, Ramon Soriano, Letter. 17 Jan 1899; R16F184D2, J. A. Callantes, Letter. Pangasinan, 27 April 1899; R16F184D3, Baldomero Alveas, Letter. 1 February 1899. See also R41F721, Arcadio Rosario (Secretary of the Treasury), Orders rigid enforcement of the collection of National Loan. Malolos, 6 February 1899.

manpower and resources for the army. The rural municipal elites were much more important and the Aguinaldo Government relied on them much more heavily.

In fact, an equally pressing internal threat to the Aguinaldo Government's authority and claims to sovereignty came from people on the opposite end of the socio-economic spectrum: from the *tulisanes*, *remontado* and religious cults. These anti-establishment, peasant resistance groups persisted even after the declaration of independence simply because the Aguinaldo Government never fundamentally addressed their concerns. Thus you have Pio del Pilar and Vicente Lukban both complaining of attacks by bandits, or by people that del Pilar called "men of bad life."³⁹⁷ Officials also complained of cults, like the "Catipunan ni San Cristobal" and the "Guardia de Honor"³⁹⁸ There were other threats to law and order, such as attacks from Igorots, Muslim tribes, people who disrupted elections and many others.³⁹⁹

The Aguinaldo Government's Strategy

The Aguinaldo Government came up with a strategy to deal with these internal and external threats to its authority. In a circular aimed at the Filipino people, Aguinaldo wrote that his Government wanted, "Firmness and justice in the interior, culture and

³⁹⁷ R25F359D1, Pio del Pilar, Orden. San Miguel, 23 September 1899; See also R23F318 for notes on "bandits."

³⁹⁸ R7F47D4, Jose Elias, (Provincial Chief) Order to Local Presidentes. Antipolo, 20 December 1898; R15F168 Documents that deal with the "Guardia de Honor."

³⁹⁹ For Igorots see R14F150 and R19F243, for Muslims see PIR R9F76. For disruption of elections and others see R7F47.

propaganda in the exterior” (“*Fortaleza y justicia en el Interior, Cultura y propaganda en el Exterior*”).⁴⁰⁰

The Aguinaldo Government aimed at gaining foreign recognition of its sovereignty while consolidating its authority within the Philippines. These two points were closely linked: the Aguinaldo Government believed that foreign governments would only recognize the Philippines’ right to self-rule if the Filipinos portrayed themselves as civilized and therefore “worthy” of independence. Hence, the Philippines had to be “orderly” in its internal affairs, which meant that everybody had to acknowledge its authority and follow its laws. Not coincidentally, if it was unified and orderly internally, the Philippines would also be in a better defensive posture militarily.

However, the Aguinaldo Government wished to avoid military confrontation as much as possible largely because its members did not think that the Philippines could defend itself against a foreign military power. They constantly stressed the weakness of the Philippines.⁴⁰¹ For instance, in September 1898, Aguinaldo stated that the Philippine victory over the Spanish in 1898 was accomplished by “[an] army [that] was improvised and lacking in arms” (“*hocbo ay pagdumali at salat sa sandata*”).⁴⁰² Aguinaldo was not the only Revolutionary leader to note the Filipinos’ lack of arms. A member of the Hong Kong Junta, Aurelio Tolentino, wrote a tract that emphasized the heroism of the

⁴⁰⁰ R5F8D4, E. Aguinaldo, “Message to the Filipino People on Their Duties.” Tarlac, 17 Oct. 1899. A similar statement was made in R26F396D3 and D9, F. Buencamino, Letter to G. Apacible regarding instructions to agents abroad. Tarlac, 12 September 1899.

⁴⁰¹ A belief that started as early as the 1896 Revolution. R7F43D1, E. Aguinaldo. “Minamahal Kong Mga Kapwa Taga Filipinas.” Cavite, 24 May 1898.

⁴⁰² R9F82D1, E. Aguinaldo, “Acta.” Cavite, 1 August 1898.

Revolutionary forces who defeated the Spanish with barely any weapons or military training.⁴⁰³

The Aguinaldo Government also confronted what was essentially an insoluble strategic dilemma: the problem of sea control. The Philippines could be dominated by an enemy who could exert control over the seas around it.⁴⁰⁴ As the 1896 Revolution had shown, the Filipinos might be able to overcome the scattered, isolated and poorly armed Spanish garrisons, but they could do nothing to prevent the reinforcement and resupply of Spanish forces. The Filipinos also lacked the ability to disrupt or prevent littoral naval operations, like coastal bombardment, blockade, or amphibious landings because of a lack of coastal anti-ship weaponry like heavy artillery or sea mines.

Sea control was also vital to the Philippines' military economy, since the Philippine archipelago did not possess any arms industries of any size. This was a product of Spanish law—in particular, a piece of legislation which states that weapons production could only take “place in the manufacturing establishments that they have in the Artillery Corps in the Peninsula.”⁴⁰⁵ Only gunpowder and ammunition was manufactured in the Archipelago.⁴⁰⁶ However, Aguinaldo would claim that the

⁴⁰³ R23F298D1, Aurelio Tolentino, “Discurso Pronunciado por Ciudadano Sr. Aurelio Tolentino.”

⁴⁰⁴ Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power on History*, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1898).

⁴⁰⁵ Salinas y Angulo, *Legislación Militar*, 4: 178.

⁴⁰⁶ Salinas y Angulo, *Legislación Militar*, 4:200-201. The Legislacion also lists the *polvorines* in the Philippines, 4:275-277. The *Guia de Oficial de las Islas Filipinas* for 1898, which names a director of the *Fabrica de Polvora* (p. 658) also provides a brief description of the naval arsenal in Cavite which, however produced naval weapons and munitions which may not have been of much utility for a ground army, p. 674-675.

Philippines lacked “*Fábrica de Municieónes de Guerra*,” or “factories for munitions” which suggests that what arms production did exist was probably very limited.⁴⁰⁷

The problem of sea control also meant that the Philippine civilian economy could be hampered by blockade. As the last chapter showed, the late 19th century Philippine economy had become highly export and import dependent, and access to foreign markets and capital was crucial for the wealthier Filipinos—precisely those Filipinos who were the leaders of the 1896 and 1898 Revolutions and the Philippine-American War.

Because of these challenges, any revolt or armed resistance by Filipinos had to achieve their objectives before weapons and ammunition ran out and before a blockade wrecked the export economy. Incidentally, these issues of sea control suggest that even with *ilustrado* financial support, the Aguinaldo Government would always have problems securing weapons since any weapons purchased abroad had to be able to make it through an enemy blockade.

The Quest for Recognition

The Aguinaldo Government’s answer to its external problems was a “strategy of recognition.”⁴⁰⁸ To put it simply, the government attempted to use propaganda, lobbying, and diplomacy to secure recognition by foreign governments and thereby secure outside aid or head off any foreign invasions. Incidentally, foreign recognition would also ensure the continuation of external economic contact.

⁴⁰⁷ R5F5D4, E. Aguinaldo, Letter to Mariano Trias. Cavite, 18 Feb 1899.

⁴⁰⁸ R5F5D7, E. Aguinaldo, Letter to T. Sandico. Bacoor, 10 August 1898.

The Filipino leadership initiated its strategy of recognition abroad almost as soon as it had established itself in the Philippines. The government created a department of Foreign Affairs, whose secretary was one of the most important members of the Cabinet.⁴⁰⁹ The department was to set up foreign embassies tasked with propagandizing and diplomatic negotiations. They also were to arrange the shipments of arms and supplies that were required by the Philippine government.

The foreign service and its mission were elaborated upon in a formal plan of diplomatic action that outlined in detail how the Aguinaldo Government wished to organize its diplomatic campaign.⁴¹⁰ Embassies with committees like “*Centros de Información y Propaganda*” and “*Agencias de información y propaganda*” were to be established in Manila, Washington, Saigon, France, Germany and Spain. These were to work with the press in order to disseminate the message of the Aguinaldo Government, portraying its cause as just and the Filipinos as civilized.

The embassies would do more than just propagandize; they were also tasked with negotiating commercial contracts. Such trade agreements were considered a tool of foreign diplomacy, or a way to secure recognition and aid—and to trade for weapons if they could. The embassy to Saigon was singled out as being specifically tasked with arms procurement, since that city was under the control of a neutral power.

⁴⁰⁹ R9F82D1, E. Aguinaldo. Capítulo 1, “Del Gobierno Revolucionario,” Artículo 4 and Artículo 31. Cavite, 23 June 1898; R11F111D10, E. Aguinaldo. Bacoar, 24 August 1898. Also R24F385D5.

⁴¹⁰ R17F205D1, “Plan diplomático que se propone para su desarrollo al Consejo.”

However, the main role of all of these embassies remained propagandizing, either through the foreign press or by directly lobbying foreign governments. This was similar to the unsuccessful and disorganized efforts of the *ilustrado* Propagandists in Spain and it is to be wondered whether the Aguinaldo Government drew its inspiration from them.

The embassy to the United States would also try to lobby the American Congress directly and much was made of the upcoming session of Congress on 5 October, since the Aguinaldo Government thought that this was when the American government would deliberate on what to do with the Philippines.⁴¹¹ It was therefore important for the American Congress “to hear the voice of the Philippine people” (“*oír la voz de pueblo Filipino*”). The document advocated campaigning or lobbying for the Filipino cause in the hope that it would aid the cause of the Democratic Party that formed the opposition.⁴¹²

The Aguinaldo Government’s propaganda effort emphasized a few basic points. First, it asserted that Aguinaldo had come to an agreement with Dewey and other American officials in Asia. In return for Filipino aid, the Americans would recognize Filipino independence. One finds an example of this claim in a manifesto known as the *Reseña Verídica de la Revolución Filipina* (“The True Version of the Philippine Revolution”), a document that was to be distributed to the foreign press and foreign

⁴¹¹ The Congress was actually held in December, 1899. See, Frank Hindman Golay, *Face of Empire*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1997), 53.

⁴¹² The Filipinos received surprisingly good advice on lobbying from W. F. Sylvester, an otherwise untrustworthy American merchant who had somehow attached himself to the Filipino cause. R5F54D6, W. F. Sylvester, Letter to Aguinaldo. Hong Kong, 25 Nov. 1898.

governments.⁴¹³ The *Reseña* went into detail regarding the discussions and negotiations between Aguinaldo and several U.S. officials. One of its arguments was that Admiral Dewey had recognized Philippine independence, which bound the U.S. government, and which also obligated the U.S. Navy to take the new republic under its protection.⁴¹⁴

Morality played a key role in Philippine propaganda. The Aguinaldo Government was eager to portray itself as the “good” party, fighting a war it had been forced into because the United States had reneged on an agreement. This claim was, it should be noted, quite similar to the Filipino belief that the 1896 and 1898 Revolutions, were necessary because the Spanish had broken their word in the Blood Compact and in the Pact of Biak-na-Bato.

A second point the Aguinaldo Government often made in its propaganda was that the Americans were violating their own principles in waging war against the Filipinos. In fact, the Filipino leadership argued that the Filipinos’ reasons for fighting foreign invaders were not much different from the ones that impelled the Americans to go to war against the British. An undated and unsigned flyer aimed at Americans—a rare Filipino document written in English—goes so far as to claim that the Filipinos were fighting for

⁴¹³ The diplomatic plan specified that a propaganda piece be written for the express purpose of disseminating the truth of the Filipino cause to foreign governments and the foreign press. R26F396D3 and D9, Tarlac, 12 September 1899, F. Buencamino. Letter to G. Apacible regarding instructions to agents abroad identifies the *Reseña* as this document.

⁴¹⁴ Emilio Aguinaldo, *Reseña Verídica de la Revolución Filipina*, (Manila: National Historical Institute, 2002), 6, 96, for part of the translation.

the same principles that (supposedly) motivated the Americans in their Revolution: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.⁴¹⁵

Finally, the Aguinaldo Government's propaganda was keen to show the Philippines as a civilized country that was deserving of independence. The propaganda tried to paint a picture of an orderly, peaceful Filipino society that followed all the rules of Western civilization. For example, on 6 August 1898, the government published a circular signed by Aguinaldo aimed at foreign governments that emphasized the level of culture and civilization of the Filipinos by noting how "perfect tranquility" existed in areas under its control and the army was organized along Western lines and treated its prisoners well.⁴¹⁶ Another example was a piece of propaganda from 1 August 1898, which claimed that the Filipinos rose up in revolt against Spain not out of revenge, but out of a desire for freedom.⁴¹⁷ The Revolution's only object was to free the people from the chains of servitude, and it was undertaken with "a desire for perfect order and justice, repudiating the savage life and loving civilization" (*sino que tiene idea perfecta del orden y de la justicia, huye de la vida salvaje y ama la civil*). The rest of it goes on much the same way: the Revolution and the Filipinos were high-minded and civilized, following all of the modern laws of progress, working for peace and prosperity.

Similar propaganda was directed towards American soldiers in the Philippines. In "*A Mis Paisanos Americanos*," the Filipinos are described as "enlightened" or have

⁴¹⁵ R23F298D4, Unsigned, "To American Soldiers." Undated. The motto of the French Revolution. Perhaps the Filipinos got their revolutions mixed up.

⁴¹⁶ R9F82D5, Unsigned, "A Los Gobiernos Extranjeros," Bacoor, 6 August 1898.

⁴¹⁷ R9F82D1, Unsigned. Cavite, 1 August 1898.

“awakened minds” and are “of one heart.”⁴¹⁸ The propaganda piece also enjoins the American soldiers “Do not believe what foreign newspapers say that the Philipinos are ‘salvajes,’ you well see that such a thing is not true.” It also repeats the claim that the Filipinos had cooperated with Americans in defeating the Spanish, and now that the Spanish forces were gone, the American mission was complete. A similar message could be found in a flyer captured by the Americans in Batangas in 1900.⁴¹⁹

Interestingly, Aguinaldo’s claims resembles those of the *ilustrado* Propagandists—that Filipinos were just as civilized as the Spaniards and were therefore worthy of political equality. It is more than likely that the Aguinaldo Government was inspired by or actually used their ideas.

The Aguinaldo Government did not want the Americans to just leave, however.⁴²⁰ Their fears of foreign intervention made them desirous of some kind of alliance with the Americans. On 6 June 1898, one of the members of the Hong Kong Junta suggested that the Filipinos ask for protectorate status from the Americans.⁴²¹ In a letter to Aguinaldo dated 31 August 1898, one A. Zialcita—apparently one of the officials negotiating with the Americans—advised Aguinaldo to offer trade concessions to the

⁴¹⁸ R5E8D3, E. Aguinaldo, “A Mis Paisanos.” Malolos, 7 January 1899. The final printed, English version is in R29F457D1, “To My Countrymen the Americans.” Aguinaldo’s exact words were “Mulat na ang isip at nag-iisang loob.”

⁴¹⁹ R5F15D3, Bruno Casala. Batangas, 1900 (?).

⁴²⁰ Apacible notes in his 5 Sept 1899 letter to Buencamino that negotiating with the American government—even if it was the McKinley Government—was an important course of action the Filipinos had to consider.

⁴²¹ R8F54D7, Garchitorena, “Americanos y Filipinos.” 6 June 1898.

Americans in return for their protection.⁴²² Even the supposedly intransigent Mabini sent a telegram to President McKinley that stated that the Filipinos were seeking an arrangement with the Americans for protectorate status.⁴²³ Protectorate status did not mean colonial status, however, and the way the Filipinos described it made it clear that they sought an alliance between equals, “in the custom of a defensive [pact].”⁴²⁴ One of the things that the Aguinaldo Government sought was for an American naval squadron to be stationed in the Philippines—a clear sign that the Filipinos understood the importance of sea control.⁴²⁵

Teodoro Sandico had a different idea: he wished to appeal to every other power to fight the Americans. He thought that it was possible that the “Philippine question” might end in an international conflict that would oblige the Americans to abandon the war. He was of the opinion that the justice of the Filipino cause might induce sympathy among Europeans, and he also thought that the American position in the Philippines was contrary to European and Asian interests. Sandico specifically mentioned Japan as a possible ally.⁴²⁶

⁴²² R5F4D11, A. Zialcita, Letter to E. Aguinaldo. Manila, 31 Aug. 1898.

⁴²³ See above; R29F472D6, A. Mabini, Telegram to Galiciano Apacible and William McKinley, “To The Spanish-American Commission at Paris.” Dec 1898.

⁴²⁴ R28F438D1, F. Buencamino, No Date. See also R28F441D1, E. Aguinaldo. No date.

⁴²⁵ R28F438D3, F. Buencamino, Letter to A. Mabini. Tarlac, 16 October 1899.

⁴²⁶ R6C28, Teodoro Sandico. “To the Country.” Cabanatuan, 16 May 1899.

The Organization of the Interior

The second half of the Aguinaldo Government's strategy involved "firmness and justice in the interior." The Aguinaldo Government's goal of "strengthening" the interior basically meant overcoming the problem of multipolarity. It had to unify and centralize power and reduce resistance to its authority. This task was linked to external considerations, since the Aguinaldo Government believed that the strategy of recognition required the trappings of European-style governance and a show of internal stability in order to convince foreign powers of the Filipino right to self-rule.

On a practical level, the Aguinaldo Government first had to convince Filipinos to accept its authority; second, create a political system that was acceptable to foreigners and which would enforce or maintain its rule inside the Philippines, and third it had to install a system that could gather the resources it needed to maintain its army and bureaucratic structure and thereby carry out the first two objectives.

The Aguinaldo Government was quite concerned with "unity," by which it meant acceptance of the Aguinaldo Government's authority. Disunity, or internal divisions, Aguinaldo warned, could lead to civil war, which could lead to "the complete ruin of our adored Country."⁴²⁷ For example, Aguinaldo appealed to the still-extant *Katipunans* or secret organizations to cease any further plotting. Apparently some Revolutionaries were disgruntled at what they felt was a lack of appreciation for their efforts and Aguinaldo had to appeal to them to accept his authority for the sake of order, good governance, and the esteem of other nations, which depended on the smooth and peaceful functioning of

⁴²⁷ R5F4D4, E. Aguinaldo, Letter. Binangonan, 10 September 1898.

Filipino political institutions.⁴²⁸ There are other speeches and circulars where Aguinaldo stressed the need for Filipinos to be united, to be of one “loob” and support his rule.⁴²⁹

Second, the Aguinaldo Government theoretically adopted Western-derived forms of elected, representative government with executive and legislative branches.⁴³⁰

Aguinaldo took great stock in the outward form or appearance of his government. In a draft of one of his speeches, he essentially stated that the Philippines’ adoption of a Republican form of government, with a constitution and representatives, showed the country’s fitness for self-rule since it echoed the systems in Europe.⁴³¹

Government in the Philippines was reorganized in June and July of 1898 following two decrees issued on 18 and 23 June.⁴³² In practice, this reorganization created a government that was far less democratic and representative than Aguinaldo’s propaganda made out. For instance, property qualifications meant that only a tiny handful of wealthy people in each town were actually eligible to vote or hold office, a situation largely unchanged from Spanish times.⁴³³ Furthermore, the government was not as far-

⁴²⁸ R18F206D2, E. Aguinaldo. “Sa Mga Taga Katipunan.” Cavite, 15, July 1898.

⁴²⁹ See a few examples R5F2D1, E. Aguinaldo, Speech to local jefes or presidents, Cavite, 3 August 1898; R5F2D7, E. Aguinaldo, Speech, Barasaoin Church, 15 September 1898; R5F8D4, E. Aguinaldo, Message to the Filipino people. Tarlac 17 October 1899. See also the oath of office of local officials, R7F50D3, Oath of Adherence to the Government.

⁴³⁰ Majul, *The Political and Constitutional Ideas of the Philippine Revolution*, 8-9. See also R9F382D1, Capitulo 1 “Del Gobierno Revolucionario” and Capitulo 2 “Del Congreso Revolucionario.”

⁴³¹ R5F2E3D1, E. Aguinaldo, Draft of speech for 23 January 1899. Malolos, 21 January 1899.

⁴³² Much of this is from Guerrero, *Luzon at War*. This remains the best description of politics in the Philippines in 1898. For the decrees regarding the reorganization of government, see R9F82.

⁴³³ Guerrero, *Luzon at War*, 48.

reaching as Aguinaldo claimed. The military situation prevented many provinces from having elected representatives in Congress both during the 1898 reorganization and after the outbreak of the Philippine-American War. To maintain the image of a national congress, Aguinaldo simply assigned these provinces representatives, a good number of whom were his close, military, confederates.⁴³⁴

Thus while the Aguinaldo Government claimed to be a widely-based democracy, in practical terms it had a much narrower base: its primary constituency were the rural municipal elites. These were the Filipinos with power and influence in their rural towns and villages—the same ones as had been in power in their locales in Spanish times—and they were Aguinaldo’s most logical constituency, since he was one of them.⁴³⁵ Given that they were also the Filipinos drawn into local government in Spanish times, they also had experience in the practical matters of governance that included gathering taxes and mustering manpower.⁴³⁶

This leads to the third point: the structure that the Aguinaldo Government created to collect the resources it needed and to maintain order was based on these municipal elites. They had important roles to play in the collection of taxes and the organization and supply of local military and security forces stationed nearby.⁴³⁷ These men became the

⁴³⁴ R7F38D1, D3, D6 Lists of members of congress noting who had been appointed; R7F39D1, Decree on appointing delegates to provinces. Tarlac 7 July 1899.

⁴³⁵ Guerero, *Luzon at War*, 63.

⁴³⁶ Robles, *The Philippines in the 19th Century*, 62-79.

⁴³⁷ R29F478D2, Order regarding organization of local militia. Tarlac, 11 February 1899. Also D4 E. Aguinaldo, decree; R31F481D2, E. Aguinaldo, “Instrucciones sa mga Generales.” Malolos, 14 February 1899. See also R12F128 for local communities as source of supplies; They were even empowered to act as notaries public, R21F268D2, E. Aguinaldo, Decree. Malolos 24 September 1898.

linchpin of the Aguinaldo Government, and without them governance and war would simply not have been possible—something that Aguinaldo publicly acknowledged.⁴³⁸

The loss of the assistance of these rural elites could prove critical. For example, in Iloilo Tagalog forces sent to “aid” the locals came into conflict with them instead because the local elites were unwilling to give the Aguinaldo Government control over their resources.⁴³⁹ As a consequence, the locals were unwilling to supply the Tagalog soldiers with food and the Aguinaldo Government’s efforts in Iloilo foundered because its forces were logistically dependent on local communities. Milagros Guerrero is correct in pointing out that the relationship between “civilian and military elements of the government” was crucial to the conduct and outcome of the war.⁴⁴⁰ In modern military parlance, the rural elites were the “center of gravity” of the Philippine forces—that is, “the source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act.”⁴⁴¹

On top of these local government units Aguinaldo placed the superstructure of his national government. It was divided into civilian and military branches with Aguinaldo himself heading both. In practice, the military branch of government tended to be the more important branch since it was the centralizing force and the primary representative

⁴³⁸ R5F2D1, E. Aguinaldo, Speech to Local Jefes. Cavite, 3 August 1898.

⁴³⁹ R8F52D4, Numerous Signatures, Letter to E. Aguinaldo. Santa Barbara, 1 August 1899; R8F52D5, Josete Yusay. Cabanatuan, 16 March 1899.

⁴⁴⁰ Guerrero, *Luzon at War*, 50.

⁴⁴¹ Rather elegantly put by the Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/, retrieved on 11 May 2013.

of the Aguinaldo Government in most towns and provinces. For instance, in the early days of the 1898 Revolution, army officers were tasked with overseeing the political reorganization whenever Spanish power was expelled in a region.⁴⁴² The onset of peace after the collapse of Spanish authority was supposed to have reduced their authority and civilian offices like the Secretary of the Interior did indeed assume greater importance.⁴⁴³ However, the outbreak of the Philippine-American War once again gave the military officers considerable authority by virtue of the exigencies of war.

Another reason for the military branch's dominance was the fact that it was, as mentioned previously, largely staffed by people Aguinaldo trusted. Aguinaldo doubtless felt more comfortable in entrusting considerable political power to those men. Thus, Aguinaldo sent these trusted men to establish the Government's authority in some of the more far-flung corners of the Philippines—places where Aguinaldo had no real contacts or networks and where adherence to the central government was not necessarily automatic.⁴⁴⁴ An illustrative example was Daniel Tirona's expedition to Aparri, in the very far north of Luzon, where he was sent to gain the allegiance of the locals and reorganize their government.⁴⁴⁵ Tirona's efforts inevitably led to tensions with local officials. He was even moved to complain of the "despotism" and lack of cooperation of

⁴⁴² Guerrero, *Luzon at War*, 50.

⁴⁴³ For instance, the Secretary of the Interior was empowered to act with considerable leeway in Aguinaldo's absence, R5F9D8, E. Aguinaldo, Letter. Malolos, 23 December 1898.

⁴⁴⁴ See R19F226D1, E. Aguinaldo, Decree. Cavite, 11 February 1899. He appoints Mariano Trias, the Secretary of the Hacienda but also a commander in the army, as his Special Government Delegate with full civil and military powers should communications with Malolos be cut.

⁴⁴⁵ R34F614D1, Daniel Tirona, Letter to E. Aguinaldo. Aparri, 11 November 1899. See also R24F349 for more details on his expedition to Aparri.

the local civil officials, who in turn complained of the “abuses” committed by him and his soldiers.⁴⁴⁶

Underpinning this ascendancy of the military hierarchy was the fact that the military controlled access to a vital and widely sought-after commodity: weapons. Since, as we have seen, there were no indigenous arms industry in the archipelago, there were very few guns as well. The Aguinaldo Government itself had the advantage of having the largest stockpile of weapons and potential access to foreign sources of weaponry. So, for example, the Aguinaldo Government received a large shipment of weaponry sometime in June of 1898 (most likely the largest such shipment it acquired during its existence). This was a shipment of 1,992 Mauser rifles and 200,000 rounds of ammunition—a purchase that had been expedited by the *American* consul of Hong Kong Rounceville Wildman.⁴⁴⁷ The shipment cost \$60,000 (Spanish dollars), a sum that only the Aguinaldo Government could afford, since it was the only institution that had access to the settlement money from the Pact of Biak-na-Bato and that had the ability to impose taxes on large numbers of Filipinos. There was another shipment of 500 rifles, 500,000 cartridges and 2 Maxim machine guns from Canton that cost \$137,287—again, a sum only the Aguinaldo Government could afford.⁴⁴⁸ The Aguinaldo Government also tried to control the

⁴⁴⁶ R17F192D4, J. N. Leyba, Letter to B. Aguinaldo. Aparri, 4 December 1898; R18F219D1, Daniel Tirona. Letter to Aguinaldo. Aparri, 25 February 1899.

⁴⁴⁷ R5F14D1, Rounceville Wildman, Letter to E. Aguinaldo. Hong Kong, 6 June 1898.

⁴⁴⁸ R5F19D8, No name. No Date. See also R5F19D5 for a contract for weapons with a British trading company, Spitzel & Co in Shanghai, for \$150,000. It is not clear if this shipment ever arrived.

movement of guns *within* the Philippines and towns or provinces were forbidden from loaning their guns to other towns or provinces without permission.⁴⁴⁹

These early shipments of weapons served as “seed weapons” so to speak, which the Aguinaldo Government used to establish itself. Every successful defeat of a Spanish garrison meant more captured weapons and more prestige for the government. With every victory, more people pledged allegiance to the Aguinaldo Government, which gave it more resources for further conquests. The effect was cumulative, and weapons were thereby used to grow the government’s power.

Various local commanders and municipal elites sought weapons, since they needed arms or armed support to secure their own positions, keep order, and maintain the status quo. People had to petition the government for access to these weapons and control of them and their supply was therefore an important source of the Aguinaldo Government’s authority. For example, the Filipino elites attempting to capture the tiny Spanish garrison in the town of Baler eventually had to be given armed support—including a modern cannon—by Aguinaldo.⁴⁵⁰ The Aguinaldo Government also used its military power to maintain “order” by quashing banditry and the like—a service sought after by the rural elites. Indeed, the Aguinaldo Government publicly declared that it

⁴⁴⁹ R7F45D4 and D6, E. Aguinaldo, “Mga Punong Kawal at Punong-Bayan ng at hokoman ng (sic).” Cavite, 3 June 1898.

⁴⁵⁰ Saturnino M. Cerezo, *Under the Red and Gold*, F. L. Dodds, trans., (Kansas City, Kansas: Franklin Hudson Publishing Co., 1909), 90-91. See also, R19F221D2, Aparri, 2 November 1898. Daniel Tirona asked for 2,000 rifles from what he presumed was a shipment of 12,000; R13F144D8, Ananias Lara and Ludivico Yugate, Letter to E. Aguinaldo asking for aid. Cebu, 8 November 1898; R15F168D3, Antonio Soledad, Letter asking for protection from Guardia de Honor. Location unclear 18 January 1899; R37F654D3, F. Macabulos Soliman, Letter to E. Aguinaldo, sending \$7,000 for the purchase of rifles. La Paz, 15 June 1898.

would eliminate all instances of banditry or “*bandolerismo*,” declaring that such disorders undermined the war effort.⁴⁵¹

Much more can be said about the topic of political organization but it would no longer be relevant to a study on military history.⁴⁵² Suffice it to say for now that this political system—one that placed more power in the hands of municipal elites—seemed to work fairly well for Aguinaldo. For instance, the treasury estimated that at the end of December 1898, it had expenses of about \$7,069,074.81 but an income of \$7,078,365.41—a balance of \$8,290.60 in its favor.⁴⁵³ In 1898, Aguinaldo faced many challenges from elites, bandits, foreigners and the like, but the political system he controlled worked well enough for him remain in command and reach the height of his power in late 1898 and early 1899. The question was whether the system could withstand the stresses of war.

The Consequences of Politics and Strategy

Was the Aguinaldo Government’s political strategy successful? Were its leaders able to secure “firmness and justice in the interior, culture and propaganda in the exterior?”

⁴⁵¹ R6F22D5, E. Aguinaldo. Bando. Malolos, 16 February 1899. On the other hand, these criminals had the rare commodity of combat experience, and they were told to join the army as a way of atoning for their crimes.

⁴⁵² Guerrero’s *Luzon at War* is recommended for those interested.

⁴⁵³ R13F141D4, Department of the Treasury. 31 December 1898.

The Aguinaldo Government's goal of strengthening its hold on power in the Philippines was a qualified success. There was resistance to Aguinaldo's authority from some groups, like the *ilustrado*, but the rural municipal elites joined the government, and their support made the system work. Most of Luzon and parts of the Visayas acknowledged the authority of Aguinaldo. Stable structures of rule were created, taxes were collected, and laws were enforced. The Aguinaldo Government had access to a considerable amount of human and material resources and with it created the largest army any indigenous government had ever deployed.

On the other hand, the strategy of recognition was an abject failure: it neither prevented the war, nor stopped it once it had begun. No foreign power was willing to recognize the Aguinaldo Government and the Americans were unwilling to enter into the proposed protectorate relationship and refused all offers of a ceasefire. The only terms to which the Americans were open was subordination, something which the Aguinaldo Government labeled as "autonomy" and which it rejected outright. Imperial racism and self-interest could not be overcome with appeals to liberalism and common humanity.

This failure was not from a lack of trying: the Aguinaldo Government sent out agents in an attempt to carry out its diplomatic plan. Sixto Lopez was appointed as the general agent in London and Felipe Agoncillo was sent to America.⁴⁵⁴ Ultimately, the Filipinos never secured an audience with McKinley or any other American official of note, or with any European government. Japan became the focus of much diplomatic effort and Mariano Ponce and Gregorio Agoncillo (Felipe's nephew) were sent to

⁴⁵⁴ R11F102D3, Leyba. Tarlac, 29 August 1898; R11F102D4, E. Aguinaldo. Cavite, 7 Aug. 1898.

Shanghai and Japan in an attempt to secure the support of the Chinese revolutionary party and the Japanese government.⁴⁵⁵ Negotiations with the Japanese seemed to bear fruit, since some members of the Japanese army and the Imperial Government expressed some interest in “the Philippine question.” The Japanese went so far as to send low-ranking army officers to the Philippines to examine the situation and offer advice.⁴⁵⁶ As late as 1900, a Japanese Commission was sent to the Philippines, where meetings took place and some discussion of forming an alliance where “Asiaticos” like Filipinos, Japanese and all the inhabitants of “*Colonias de color inglesas*” would unite to oppose the white powers of Europe and America.⁴⁵⁷ Unfortunately, Japanese interest in the Philippines waned as the imperial government’s attitudes changed and despite some early promise, nothing came of these diplomatic efforts.⁴⁵⁸

Whatever the case may be, the failure of the strategy of recognition may have doomed any Filipino resistance in the long run since they were now bedeviled by the same problem of sea control that had cost the Filipinos the war in 1896. The American naval blockade cut the Philippines off from foreign sources of weapons and trade, and it also cut inter-island contacts.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁵ R26F390E1 (various); R27F420E9D2, M. Ponce and G. Agoncillo, letter to G. Apacible. Yokohama, 10 Nov. 1898.

⁴⁵⁶ R28F446D2, J. A. Ramos, letter to A. Luna. Yokohama, 20 Feb 1899; R28F446D3a, M. Ponce, letter to G. Apacible. Yokohama, 31 Jan 1899; R28F446D3b, T. Sandico, Letter to E. Aguinaldo. Manila, 1898.

⁴⁵⁷ R35F621D1, No name. Letter to Brig. Gen. J. Torres. 10 Sept. 1900.

⁴⁵⁸ See Setsuho Ikehata and Lydia Yu-Jose, *Philippine-Japan Relations*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003).

⁴⁵⁹ R7F47D3, Fernando Calderon, Letter. 20 June 1899. This gives some idea of the effects of the blockade on inter-island contacts.

The Aguinaldo Government's internal and external political strategies had important effects on the course of the Philippine-American War. The government's nationalist ideology and territoriality meant that it was now burdened with a strategic problem new to indigenous warfare: the problem of defending or enforcing its territorial integrity. The government also needed to maintain the loyalty of the municipal elites, without whom the political and military structures would fall apart. Finally, so concerned was the Aguinaldo Government with foreign recognition that it also tried to reform its army along Western lines. The next chapter is therefore closely integrated with this one: how did all these political and strategic factors directly influence military organization, action and outcome?

CHAPTER VI

THE PHILIPPINE ARMY AND “GUERRA MODERNA”

In this chapter, I will examine the organization of the military of the Philippines and the course of the fighting during the years 1898-1900. This period encompasses the renewal of the Philippine Revolution (1898) and the Battle of Manila, which occurred in February 1899, and was the first and arguably the most important engagement in the Philippine-American War. The Army that fought in the Battle of Manila was organized according to regulations laid down as a consequence of the 1898 Revolution, thus Revolution and the battle are intimately linked. The next chapter will discuss the rest of the Philippine-American War, when the Philippine Army had to deal with the consequences of defeat. The two chapters are linked, but are separated in the interest of clarity.

The Aguinaldo Government’s mission remained unchanged: it had to defend its sovereignty from internal and external threats. In order to meet this goal, it decided to remake Philippine military culture. Aguinaldo displayed an awareness that the traditional style of resistance and conflict practiced in the Philippines—decampment and indirect warfare—was incompatible with his desire to create a centralized nation-state.

In a 21 May proclamation Aguinaldo insisted that Filipinos fight in the style of “*Guerra Moderna*” or in Tagalog (and in Aguinaldo’s own translation) “*Bagong Digma.*” This “modern war” was defined as fighting in a civilized manner—showing mercy to

Spaniards who surrender, respecting foreigners and their property, and showing unity. The stated reason for fighting in this way was to impress the Americans and other foreign powers of the Filipinos' level of culture and civilization. In return for this good behavior, foreign powers would recognize the Philippine nation.⁴⁶⁰

Aguinaldo never explicitly described "*Lumang Digma*" or "ancient warfare," but it can be said with certainty that he was calling for change in the Philippine military culture. Aguinaldo's use of the term "modern warfare" is therefore critical because here we have a Filipino *explicitly* making a reference to a favored way of warfare that he associated with European mores. "Modern Warfare" was linked to notions of "civility" and was therefore a desire to appear European in order to be accepted by European powers. As mentioned in the previous chapter—any kind of armed resistance *not* part of a controlled, regular army was now considered "banditry" and was to be squashed by the central government.⁴⁶¹

This was part of Aguinaldo's strategy of recognition. Implicit was the notion that "civilized" warfare would require centralized control by the Aguinaldo Government of the use of armed force in the Philippines. "*Guerra Moderna*" was the military expression of "Firmness and justice in the interior, culture and propaganda in the exterior."⁴⁶²

⁴⁶⁰ Aguinaldo reiterated this call for "civility" in war. R11F111E2D1, E. Aguinaldo, "Filipinos." Cavite, 24 May 1898.

⁴⁶¹ R6F22D5, E. Aguinaldo. Bando. Malolos, 16 February 1899.

⁴⁶² R5F8D4, E. Aguinaldo, Message to the Filipino people on their duties. Tarlac, 17 Oct. 1899,.

Unfortunately for Aguinaldo, he was not working with a blank slate. For instance, the political scene in the Philippines remained multi-polar, and local rural elites were still the only people who could lead an armed resistance in the countryside. These people had to become his officer corps, and they were not professionally trained and motivated soldiers. The attempt to remake the military culture of the Philippines therefore had a deleterious effect on the Philippine Army's combat performance. The Aguinaldo Government would pay a very steep price for its decision to confront the Americans in a style that emphasized American strengths and Filipino weaknesses.

The 1898 Revolution

Emilio Aguinaldo's exile to Hong Kong in 1897 seemed to have put a halt to the Philippine Revolution. The Filipino forces had been defeated, Aguinaldo was trapped and isolated in Hong Kong, and the Revolutionary leadership was divided, often bickering about money.⁴⁶³ Armed resistance continued even during Aguinaldo's exile. Manuel Sastrón wrote that Filipino resistance to the Spaniards flared up soon after the Battle of Manila and he mentions a rebellion in Cebu in particular.⁴⁶⁴ Milagros Guererro was exaggerating somewhat when she claimed that Aguinaldo claimed "the people's victory

⁴⁶³ See S. V. Epistola, *The Hong Kong Junta*, (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippine Press, 1996).

⁴⁶⁴ Sastrón, *La Insurrección en Filipinas*, 521-527. He was referring to the ongoing revolt by Leon Kilat, see Emil B. Justimbaste, *Leon Kilat*, (Cebu, Philippines: DMC Busa Printers, 2011). See also Sastrón, *La Insurrección en Filipinas*, 351-362; An idea of the various uprisings after the Pact of Biak-na-Bato and the Battle of Manila can be seen in Sastrón, pp. 351-362 and Artemio Ricarte, *Memoirs of General Artemio Ricarte*, (Philippines: National Historical Institute, 1992), 69-84. Mauro Garcia, *Aguinaldo in Retrospect*, (Manila: Philippine Historical Association, 1969), 21 suggests that Francisco Makabulos could have restarted the Revolution without Aguinaldo but the latter chose to join with Aguinaldo instead. Isidro Torres is mentioned as the leader of the Bulacan uprising by both Sastrón and Ricarte, but he eventually joined the revolutionary government, NHI, *Filipinos in History*, 2: 245-247.

as their own” but it is probably true that these instances of resistance threatened Aguinaldo’s prestige as a commander, specifically, his claim to be the *sole* commander of all Revolutionary forces.

The Revolution therefore appeared to be dead in the water—until the American victory in the Battle of Manila Bay on 1 May 1898 changed the entire strategic situation. This event was the crucial turning point that allowed the continuation of the Philippine Revolution since the defeat of the Spanish navy solved the Filipinos’ problem of sea control. To put it simply, the American naval blockade prevented Spanish reinforcements and resupply. This was critical, since it was Spanish reinforcements that had turned the tide in the 1896 Revolution. Aguinaldo could now return to the Philippines. Because he had worked out an alliance of sorts with Dewey, the American fleet also allowed the revolutionaries to import weapons and ammunition.

However, American assistance did not solve Aguinaldo’s biggest problems: he had no army with which to reconquer the Philippines. Aguinaldo and the rest of the Hong Kong Junta had been cut off from their power bases while in their uncomfortable exile, and the military structures they had organized back in 1896-1897 had been dissolved. To make matters worse, the Hong Kong Junta received word that a government was being formed back in the Philippines under American aegis. Aguinaldo therefore had to return as soon as possible or risk losing control of the Revolution. The news of the American victory and its aftermath therefore provoked debate among the members of the Hong Kong Junta as to what to do next.⁴⁶⁵ Teodoro Sandico argued that it was the threat of

⁴⁶⁵ About two weeks after the Battle of Manila Bay, R8F53D2, Act of the Hong Kong Junta. Hong Kong, 15 May 1898.

division and dissension that made it “absolutely necessary” for Aguinaldo to return to the Philippines in order to take charge of the revolution. In his memoirs, an embittered Apolinario Mabini was rather more blunt and claimed that Aguinaldo returned because he was “fearful that other influential Filipinos (*should rob him of glory and*) reach an understanding with the Americans in the name of the people.”⁴⁶⁶

In light of these concerns with disunity, it might therefore seem strange that upon landing, Aguinaldo immediately issued an edict that called upon the Filipinos to rise up on their own initiative.⁴⁶⁷ Another, undated, edict included the same command: the towns had to rise up in revolt and capture the Spaniards in their localities.⁴⁶⁸ It was specifically aimed at local municipal captains, although, if the *capitán* proved unwilling, then anybody who was open to the nationalist cause could take over and be recognized by the Aguinaldo Government. Any town that did join in revolt was to be considered the enemy.

Aguinaldo’s pronouncements may seem contradictory to his desire for centralization and unity, but given the lack of military structures to reactivate, Aguinaldo probably had no choice but to recreate the spontaneous, multi-polar and largely disunited revolt of 1896. Thus, the Filipino forces that rose up in revolt in 1898 greatly resembled the forces that had done so in 1896: armed bands raised and led by rural elites who had common grievances but no common cause. Indeed, these bands were led by the very

⁴⁶⁶ Mabini, *La Revolución Filipina*, 2: 308; *The Philippine Revolution*, p. 52.

⁴⁶⁷ R5F12ED2, E. Aguinaldo, Unsigned proclamation. Cavite, 21 May 1898. This document was apparently circulated widely enough that one fell into the hands of contemporary Spanish historian Manuel Sastrón, who included a translation in his book, “*La Insurrección en Filipinas*,” pp. 419-421.

⁴⁶⁸ R12F125D9, Undated, unsigned.

same rural elites who had revolted in 1896: in Cavite, Mariano Trias, Ladislaw Diwa and Artemio Ricarte all took up arms against Spain once more.⁴⁶⁹ One major difference was that the Filipinos were now better armed, courtesy of the Spaniards, who had enlisted their former enemies into the local militia in a rather misguided attempt to secure manpower and support in the fight against the Americans.⁴⁷⁰

It was the scattered, de-centralized forces that Aguinaldo had called into being on 21 May 1898 that did the most to defeat Spanish colonialism. These scattered forces began to engage the various Spanish forces in the Philippines, with most of the action happening in Luzon. John Taylor claimed that “a swarm of insurgents surrounded Manila” on 1 June 1898, following the defection from the Spanish side of a large portion of the Filipino militia to Aguinaldo’s cause. On 5 June Filipinos began to attack the line of blockhouses defending Manila.⁴⁷¹ The contemporary Spanish historian Severo Gomez Nuñez, who noted that the Filipino attacks on the outskirts of Manila had begun as early as June, corroborates this.⁴⁷² On 7 July 1898, Aguinaldo commanded the “heads of towns” or “*Punong Bayan*” to organize attacks by the *sandatahan* or the militia on

⁴⁶⁹ Manuel Sityar, *Rebolusyong Pilipino: Memorias Intimas*, Virgilio S. Almario, trans., (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines Press), 174-175.

⁴⁷⁰ Congreso Internacional de Historia Militar, *El Ejercito y La Armada en 1898*, (Spain: Ministeriop de Defensa, 1999), 286-287; Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*, 2:41.

⁴⁷¹ Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*, 2: 25-26.

⁴⁷² Severo Gomez Nuñez, *La Guerra Hispano-Americana*, (Madrid: Imprenta del Cuerpo de Artillería, 1902), 216-221.

Manila—perhaps inviting the scattered bands of insurgents to gather around the city?⁴⁷³

Either way, the city was fully besieged by Filipino and American forces by July.⁴⁷⁴

When the commander of the American 8th Corps, General Wesley Merritt, arrived in Manila on 25 July 1898, he claimed that:

The Filipinos, or insurgent forces at war with Spain, had, prior to the arrival of the American land forces, been waging a desultory warfare with the Spaniards for several months, and were at the time of my arrival in considerable force, variously estimated and never accurately ascertained, but probably not far from 12,000 men. These troops were well supplied with small arms, with plenty of ammunition and several field guns, had obtained positions of investment opposite to the Spanish line...⁴⁷⁵

Thus, this decentralized Filipino army had effectively destroyed Spanish power in Luzon, either capturing the Spanish garrisons or forcing them to retreat to Manila. By July of 1898, the Americans declared that, “Spanish power is dead beyond possibility of resurrection.”⁴⁷⁶

There is very little documentation on this “desultory warfare.” What little there is suggests it was a repeat of the 1896 Revolution, where Filipino forces, raised by local elites who controlled the countryside, defeated small Spanish garrisons. However, American naval superiority prevented the reinforcement and resupply of Spanish forces in the archipelago, effectively isolating the Spanish army in the Philippines. The situation

⁴⁷³ R12F125 E. Aguinaldo, Proclamation. Cavite, 7 July 1898.

⁴⁷⁴ Sastrón, *La Insurrección en Filipinas*, 469-480.

⁴⁷⁵ Department of War, *Annual Reports of the War Department, 1899*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899), 1:4, 94.

⁴⁷⁶ F.W.V. Green, quoted in Philippine Information Society, *Aguinaldo and the American Generals*, 13.

was exacerbated by poor Spanish leadership, which chose to defend as much of the Philippines as possible with small contingents of soldiers.

These small garrisons were thoroughly demoralized and it seems that in some cases the Spanish never fought at all. Isolated, outnumbered, with no hope of rescue, many of these isolated Spanish garrisons wisely chose to surrender.⁴⁷⁷ The defection of the Philippine militias was a particularly powerful spur to surrender. For instance, Sergeant Carrasco surrendered his tiny band of 19 Spanish soldiers in San Miguel de Mayumo in Bulacan after 300 of the Filipino militia defected to the Revolutionary cause.⁴⁷⁸ In another instance, Aguinaldo noted in a letter to Pio del Pilar, that the Spanish governor of Laguna was willing to give up his entire province if Aguinaldo allowed him and 700 Spanish prisoners to retreat to Manila unharmed.⁴⁷⁹

When combat did occur, the Spanish suffered because of their demoralization, dispersion, and isolation. Three encounters can serve as examples: the combats in Cavite, Batangas, and Baler.

Manuel Sityar, a *mestizo* staff officer serving in the Spanish army, describes how in Cavite—the center of gravity of the 1898 Revolution—the commanding general Leopoldo Garcia Peña completely mishandled the situation.⁴⁸⁰ Peña sent out a small force

⁴⁷⁷ Núñez, *La Guerra Hispano-Americana*, 169-170 suggests this happened in many parts of Cavite. Sityar confirms, *Memorias Intimas*, 210-211.

⁴⁷⁸ Telesforo Carrasco y Perez, *A Spaniard in Aguinaldo's Army*, Nick Joaquin, trans., (Manila: Solar Publishing Corporation, 1986), 36-37.

⁴⁷⁹ R7F45E2D2, E. Aguinaldo. No date, however, in response to 31 May 1898 letter by Pio del Pilar. It is not clear if this happened.

⁴⁸⁰ Sityar, *Memorias Intimas*, chapters 17-18.

of Spanish soldiers to confront the Revolutionaries, but this force apparently marched out blind, with no reconnaissance or intelligence and was ambushed by forces under Mariano Trias. The Filipino ambushers fired their guns simultaneously and this so intimidated the Spanish that they surrendered. Not only is this indicative of the incredibly low morale of the Spanish but the use of intimidation is also a continuation of age-old patterns of Filipino warfare. After this incident, Spanish morale completely collapsed and they surrendered to the Filipinos. The only garrison in Cavite to resist was the one in Kawit, which the Filipinos bombarded into submission. The Filipinos even mounted cannons on small boats in order to bombard the Spanish position from the seaward side. Remarkably, the Spanish endured this cannonade and eventually surrendered only because they ran out of ammunition.⁴⁸¹

In the province of Batangas, Spanish forces holed up in the *cabecera* or town center of Tayabas. As described by Reynaldo Ileto, this siege eventually involved 15,000 Filipinos—an improbably high number—against a mere 443 Spaniards.⁴⁸² Various armed bands of Filipinos congregated on Tayabas, surrounded the Spanish position and proceeded to besiege and bombard the hapless garrison. The Filipino commanders issued a set of orders that aimed to restore discipline in the rag-tag force, with much of it echoing Aguinaldo’s constant rejoinder that the Filipinos act in a civilized manner and treat their prisoners well. But there is more, and as Ileto notes:

⁴⁸¹ Sityar, *Memorias Intimas*, 208-209.

⁴⁸² *El Ejercito y la Armada en 1898*, 288-293.

The final order is interesting: it reminds the soldiers that despite all the shooting, bombing and cannonades, the aim of the operations is to *sitiar*, to closely surround and besiege the enemy, rather than to wantonly advance against them.⁴⁸³

Miguel Malvar, a member of the Hong Kong Junta, eventually took command of the forces and launched a few failed assaults on the wildly outnumbered Spaniards. Eventually, the Spanish simply surrendered—and found out that they had been opposed by 15,000 Filipinos armed with 7,500 Mauser rifles and who had fired an incredible 500,000 cartridges.⁴⁸⁴ These numbers are very likely exaggerated, but they are probably indicative of the fact that at this stage of the war, the Filipinos were sufficiently well-armed and supplied with ammunition and could achieve fire superiority over the Spaniards.

Finally there was the celebrated siege of Baler. Baler was a small and rather unimportant town in the east coast of Luzon where a small band of Spanish soldiers held out in a siege that was celebrated by the Spaniards as their one lone accomplishment in this phase of the Philippine Revolution.⁴⁸⁵ As in the other sieges, the original commander mishandled the situation by not taking warnings of a hostile populace seriously, not conducting intelligence gathering, and not preparing for hostilities by gathering supplies or improving his defenses. The siege began sometime in June of 1898 and for the next several months, the Spanish holed up in the local church while the Filipinos launched occasional assaults, maintained a constant bombardment and expended prodigious amounts of rifle ammunition. Despite these efforts, and despite the fact that steady

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 291.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 293.

⁴⁸⁵ The main source is Cerezo, commander of the Spanish garrison, *Under the Red and Gold*.

attrition reduced the garrison to fewer than 35 men, the Filipinos were unable to secure a victory. The siege dragged on for 10 months, sustained largely because the Spanish commander stubbornly—and rather unintelligently—refused to believe that the Spanish had already given up on the Philippines. In the end, the garrison in Baler surrendered of their own volition—they were not defeated, despite being vastly outnumbered and outgunned by their Filipino opponents. The siege of Baler shows how critical morale and will was to these encounters: if the Spaniards were willing to endure the privations of a prolonged siege they proved surprisingly capable of resisting the Filipinos.

The surviving Spanish forces retreated to Manila and were then besieged by the Filipino forces. The Filipinos were soon joined by Americans, who keenly observed the Filipino siege, already half-suspecting they would have to fight their former allies. Thus, the siege of Manila might give some idea of how Filipinos carried out their other sieges.

The first most obvious thing that the Filipinos did was to circumvallate—construct fortifications—around the Spanish position in Manila. These fortifications were generally trenches, and they were “skillfully constructed.”⁴⁸⁶ More will be said about the Filipino fortifications later since they were the same ones used in the battle of Manila in February 1899. The Filipino soldiers did not hold their positions with any consistency and one American observer claimed that Filipino troops had a tendency to leave their trenches whenever they felt like it.⁴⁸⁷ The Philippine Army had to issue orders preventing

⁴⁸⁶ Karl Irving Faust, *Campaigning in the Philippines*, (San Francisco: The Hicks-Judd Company Publishers, 1899), 75.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

Filipinos from entering American lines, which suggests a certain lack of control over the movements of its soldiers.⁴⁸⁸

As in the two other sieges, Filipino troops also constantly—and rather indiscriminately—fired their rifles at Spanish defenses. John T. McCutcheon, the noted reporter and political cartoonist, wrote that a Filipino soldier “fires his rifle whenever he feels like it and often when a Spaniard’s head is not even in sight.” This observer came to the conclusion that Filipino soldiers “are not drilled and disciplined, but they love to fight and in that respect are effective soldiers.”⁴⁸⁹ Lt. A. J. Luther, of the First Colorado Volunteers, observed that, “the Spanish and the insurgents continually trade volleys, but neither side seems able to hit anything.”⁴⁹⁰

It will never be known if the Filipinos could have captured the city of Manila on their own. The presence of the Americans hampered Filipino freedom of action and the Treaty of Paris terminated the siege without any Philippine input. Perhaps it was for the best, since the Filipino style of siege warfare had the potential of producing a disaster because of all the non-combatants in the city. Constant small arms firing and cannonades might have produced immense civilian casualties. Furthermore, the Filipino tendency of starving out Spanish garrisons it could not assault would also have affected Manila’s civilian population very badly. Indeed, one reporter observed how the two-month siege that actually did occur already produced a dire situation:

⁴⁸⁸ R6F21D4, “Gagalangin,” Circular. 29 August 1898.

⁴⁸⁹ A. B. Feuer, *America at War*, (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2002), 42.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.

Manila had become a city of dread, poverty, almost of starvation, and isolated entirely by reason of all railway and telegraphic communication having been cut off by the Filipinos. Bread could not be obtained because the stock of flour had been exhausted, and cattle were not to be had. The inhabitants were therefore compelled to eat the carabaos.⁴⁹¹

In the other sieges the Filipinos living in the towns and villages where the Spaniards took shelter simply decamped. Decampment may not have been possible in Manila since its population was many times larger than in Baler and Kawit. But it is a moot point. The Americans took the city right from under the Filipinos' noses and shut them out of the last and greatest prize in the archipelago.

In sum, the decentralized forces that Aguinaldo called into action in May 1898 were successfully able to overcome the Spanish defenders, and with a few exceptions (such as Baler), they were able to do so in a very short amount of time. This was a significant accomplishment, one for which the Filipinos were rightfully very proud and for which Aguinaldo tried to take credit.⁴⁹²

The Filipino Revolutionaries' success in 1898 showed that it had certain strengths. The local elites who led the armed bands that intimidated or besieged the Spanish forces were capable raising large numbers of men and somehow keeping them in the field. Success created its own momentum and people who were on the fence in 1896 pledged their allegiance to Aguinaldo when his victory looked assured. This meant that

⁴⁹¹ The Centennial Collection of Filipino Heroes, *Eyewitness Accounts in 1900*, (Philippines: Trademark Publishing Corporation, 1998), 31.

⁴⁹² See his speech, R5F2D1, E. Aguinaldo, Speech at the Opening of Congress. Cavite Viejo, 3 Aug. 1898. "Mabuhay ang Puno at caual na nagtangol nitong Sangcapuluan!"

the Spanish faced an unremittingly hostile populace, and had nowhere to turn for local support.

The 1898 Revolution had three important differences from the 1896 Revolution. First, the Filipinos were much better armed in 1898, ironically, because the Spanish gave them the weapons. Second, the Filipinos had sea control since they had the services of the US Navy. With Dewey's fleet blockading the archipelago, the Spanish were unable to reinforce or resupply their forces in the Philippines. Third, Spanish leadership was particularly bad in 1898. It was a serious misjudgment to supply arms to the Filipinos. Perhaps the Spaniards were desperate, but their solution was rather ill-advised: they gave weapons to former enemies who had not received any economic or political concessions. The decision to scatter their forces to hold down as much of the archipelago as possible was also a poor one, made worse by the fact that local commanders usually failed to detect stirrings of unrest.

Despite these Filipino advantages and Spanish mistakes, the Filipino forces still had a difficult time defeating demoralized, outnumbered and out-gunned Spanish garrisons. They frequently expended what appeared to be considerable amounts of ammunition to no real end. In Baler and Tayabas, attempts to end the sieges by assault failed. The Filipino forces lacked training, organization and discipline, which limited their tactical options. Relying on circumvallations, firepower, and attrition in order to wait out an enemy was probably the best that the Filipinos could do and they were fortunate that the Spanish morale was low enough that the sieges usually succeeded.

However, the case of Baler shows what could happen if the Spanish simply refused to surrender.

In conclusion, the Filipino army of 1898 was very similar to the armed bands of Revolutionaries of 1896. It had the same characteristics, and largely the same strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, it must be concluded that the 1898 Revolution ended in victory owed much more to external factors than to any great change or improvement in the quality of Filipino arms. Specifically, the Spanish forces in the 1898 Revolution were cut off from reinforcements, badly led and suffered from poor morale. The Filipinos were better-armed but were still not terribly proficient in tactical matters. Whatever the case may be, the Filipinos did manage to destroy Spanish power in the Philippines and it was a great feat of arms—perhaps the *greatest* feat of Philippine arms.

Emilio Aguinaldo managed to take credit for this victory, which cemented his reputation as a conquering, spiritually powerful general. He used the prestige and authority he gained from this victory to consolidate his hold on political power, and to reform the armed forces of the Filipinos.

“Ang Bagong Digma”

Aguinaldo was much concerned with projecting an air of order and discipline to foreigners and on 24 May 1898, he issued an edict encouraging the Filipino soldiers to behave with civility when in combat.⁴⁹³ Many other such orders from the Philippine leadership would follow, but the issue of discipline and civility became especially acute

⁴⁹³ R11F111E2D1, Aguinaldo, “Filipinos.” Cavite, 24 May 1898.

when the Filipino forces reached Manila. There were foreigners in the city—American soldiers and sailors along with merchants, embassies and consulates—and Aguinaldo issued another edict that warned his soldiers and commanders that they were fighting while under foreign scrutiny.⁴⁹⁴

Ultimately, the Aguinaldo Government decided to regularize the loosely organized and disciplined soldiers of the Revolution. The “*Guerra Moderna*” was therefore the military expression of the Aguinaldo Government’s strategy of “firmness and justice in the interior, culture and propaganda in the exterior.”⁴⁹⁵ It is therefore logical that this desire to fight in the style of “modern warfare” would lead Aguinaldo to create a regular army, one organized along contemporary Western European lines. It is important to note that Aguinaldo was most concerned with *form* and *appearance*. None of the edicts or orders issued by Aguinaldo and the other commanders link the regularization and reform of the army with military or tactical efficiency. Their primary concern was to control and discipline the soldiers in order to impress foreigners and, implicitly, to consolidate the central government’s hold on armed force in the Philippines.

An early attempt to control and discipline the army was a 3 June 1898 circular that listed some orders that the Filipinos soldiers had to follow.⁴⁹⁶ It mostly pertained to discipline, like maintaining fire discipline or not wasting ammunition, sparing the lives of

⁴⁹⁴ R9F69D4, E. Aguinaldo, Orders to Army. Bacoor, 16 July 1898.

⁴⁹⁵ R5F8D4, Emilio Aguinaldo, Message to the Filipino people on their duties. Tarlac, 17 Oct. 1899, Tarlac.

⁴⁹⁶ R7F45D4 and D6, E. Aguinaldo, “Mga Punong Kawal at Punong-Bayan ng at hokoman ng (sic).” Cavite, 3 June 1898.

surrendered enemies, continuing the training or drill of the soldiers, and not cutting telegraph lines. Ranks of officers and non-commissioned officers were to be regularized based on the number of troops under the command of the various chiefs then leading the armed bands. For every 11 soldiers with weapons, there would be a corporal, for every two corporals a sergeant, for every two sergeants a second lieutenant, and 100 soldiers made up a company that was to be led by a captain with a first lieutenant assisting.

On 30 July 1898, the Aguinaldo Government released a circular that formally and comprehensively established a regular army.⁴⁹⁷ Again, the reasons Aguinaldo gave for creating the army were more concerned with internal order than external defense and bear quoting at length:

The disorder that has afflicted the towns—a product of this current Renewal of Honor—must be stopped at all costs. Order is necessary for the prosperity of the towns and for the strengthening of the Government.⁴⁹⁸

(Ang caguluhang sumapit sa manga bayan dala nitong casalucuyang Pagbabagong puri, ay dapat patiguilin ano man ang carainan, sa pagca't ito'y siyang hinihingi nang cabuhayan nang manga bayan at catibayan nang Gobierno.)

The circular further claimed that Aguinaldo was particularly concerned with the economic well-being of the Philippines, since the Revolution had pulled men from their “fields and livelihoods.” Having so many men under arms, Aguinaldo warned, was draining away the “lifeblood” of the Philippines. Efficiency in combat, or reforming the army for reasons of military performance, is not mentioned at all.

⁴⁹⁷ PIR R11F112D1, E. Aguinaldo, Untitled circular. Cavite, 30 July 1898.

⁴⁹⁸ “Pagbabagong puri” is simply translated as “Revolución” in the Spanish version of this decree.

The army had various names. The 30 July decree called it the “Revolutionary Army” or “*Hocbong Tagapagbagong Puri*,” in Tagalog and “*Ejercito Revolucionario*” in Spanish. The Tagalog name is appears only rarely in the documentation, although it was used in official army letterheads or as stamps.⁴⁹⁹ The Philippine army was generally just called the “Hucbo,” or the “Ejercito Filipino”—the Philippine Army.⁵⁰⁰

So what was this Filipino Army like? How did Aguinaldo attempt to remake this army?

The raw materials of the army were the numerous armed bands that had risen up in revolt in the wake of the Battle of Manila. So first, these bands had to be brought under central control. One important measure in the 30 July decree was an order for lists and registers of all armed revolutionary groups in the Philippines so they could be properly registered as soldiers and officers. The decree clearly mandated that the only armed groups that could operate in the Philippines were those that had Aguinaldo’s approval and which had pledged their allegiance to the Government. Indeed, the decree included the oath that high-ranking officers (“*mga Puno at oficial*”) were to recite an oath. It began with:

I swear to carry out all the orders of the Army and the National Revolution, and I will carry out with a faithful heart all the duties entrusted upon me...

⁴⁹⁹ R18F209E9, signature illegible, Note. 4 July 1898. Note that this document predates the 30 July pronouncement.

⁵⁰⁰ Note for instance the seal on R6F21D1, A. Flores, Letter. Malolos, 25 February 1899. A name commonly given to the Philippine Army in current scholarship is “The Army of Liberation”—but this appears very, very rarely and this author has not seen it in the documentation more than once or twice. For instance, R10F97D1.

It was quite natural for the Aguinaldo Government to want to have some control over the commissioning of officers. On 24 May 1898, the Aguinaldo Government revoked all commissions then in existence, apparently wanting to start with a clean slate. From that point on, all commissions had to be approved by the Government.⁵⁰¹ The best that the Aguinaldo Government could do was to insist that commissions be forwarded to the capital where they could be approved.⁵⁰² Once again, the Aguinaldo Government's main concern was control and not tactical efficiency, since these officers were not trained in the Western-style of warfare that they were supposed to practice. The officers received their ranks based on the number of soldiers they brought to the army or on the officer's social standing.

Ultimately, the Philippine Army was unable to fundamentally alter the attitudes of its officers: they remained non-military elites who had simply donned uniforms and had been given ranks. These elites could be quite good at mustering manpower or directing the digging of trenches and other public works—things they were used to doing as landowners, local officials or managers of economic enterprises. But commanding large bodies of men, ensuring their logistics, and coordinating their movements proved beyond the amateur officers of the Philippine Army. Neither did these officers develop a professional attitude towards rank or service: interpersonal relationships mattered more than the formal command network. This is not to say that these officers were not

⁵⁰¹ Luis Camara Dery, *The Army of the First Philippine Republic and Other Essays*, (Philippines: De La Salle University Press, 1995), 14.

⁵⁰² For specific decrees, R11F109D4, Secretary of War (B. Aguinaldo), Decree. 31 December 1899; R11F108D3, Secretary of War (B. Aguinaldo), Decree. San Isidro, 22 April 1899, and R19F241.

committed to the cause—they persisted with their resistance and suffered for it.⁵⁰³ Even though they were willing to suffer, the officers of the Philippine Army were unable to translate their dedication into cohesion.

Despite the Army's attempts at centralization, it still created regional commands to devolve power and authority into more local hands. This was likely for the sake of organizational convenience, since it would have been impossible for Aguinaldo to run the entire army directly. The Army was divided into provincial commands, except for Manila, which was divided into four zones. The Government made sure to give these commands to people with personal ties or loyalties to Aguinaldo.⁵⁰⁴

The Army regularized in its structure, changing the table of organization and rank structure it had established in the 3 June 1898 decree. The company was the building block unit, or at least it was the smallest formation that was detailed in the 30 July decree. Each company was 110 men strong, commanded by a captain and assisted by 1 second lieutenant, 1 first lieutenant, and 4 sergeants, and with a line strength of 88 soldiers. There were 4 mess soldiers under 1 corporal—possibly the only corporal in the company. There were also 4 stretcher-bearers and one bugler. To compare, one colonial company of Spanish troops was slightly larger, with 119 men. Aside from having 10 extra riflemen, the Spanish company had more non-commissioned officers: 6 corporals and 4

⁵⁰³ *El Ejercito y La Armada de 1898*, 301-303.

⁵⁰⁴ Appendix A. R12F124D1, No date, although the PIR archivist suggests it was after September 1898 and prior to September 1899. The presence of the four Manila Zones suggests it was also prior to February 1899. See also R13F143.

sergeants.⁵⁰⁵ The Spanish organization was what the Filipinos would have been most familiar with, but none of the documentation explains why the Filipino organization was different. Perhaps the Filipinos recognized their lack of experienced soldiers—the ones who become non-commissioned officers. There is also a document in the PIR that seems to show Aguinaldo tinkering with the organization of a company. It is undated, but it is in Aguinaldo’s handwriting and it may illustrate how Aguinaldo took an active hand in structuring of the Army.⁵⁰⁶ That Aguinaldo had a direct hand in organizing and restructuring the Army is further corroborated by another document that shows the pay structure of the Army and which was “*en concepto de Aguinaldo.*”⁵⁰⁷

The largest standard unit discussed in the 30 July decree was the battalion—in contrast to most European armies, whose largest permanent formations tended to be regiments. A further deviation was that Filipino battalions varied in size, depending on the province in which they were stationed. Battalions stationed in places like Cavite, Manila, Pampanga or Tarlac—larger or more populous provinces—had six-company battalions. Those stationed in Morong, Bataan and Nueva Ecija had four-company battalions, Mindoro had a two-company battalion, and a single company guarded Marinduque.

If this decree had been followed, the Philippine Army would have been very small indeed, since even a large battalion of six companies would have only amounted to about

⁵⁰⁵ Salinas y Angulo, *Legislación Militar* 1:70.

⁵⁰⁶ R14F147D12, Note in Aguinaldo’s hand.

⁵⁰⁷ R14F147D13, No author, “Cuantidades distribuidas a los soldados y clases de los Batallones o Columnas y Compañias de este Cuartel Gral...” Undated.

661 soldiers, not including officers. The few muster rolls that do exist do not correspond with these prescribed numbers, although this evidence is problematic since the muster rolls were compiled *after* the outbreak of the Philippine-American War, when the army was expanded in size. Tayabas was supposed to have 660 or so men organized into one battalion, but on 30 June 1899, it appears to have had two battalions, one with 670 men and one with 506.⁵⁰⁸ Similarly, the headquarters in 14 April 1899, Nueva Ecija claimed to have 1064 men on its rolls, when it should only have had 660 or so men.⁵⁰⁹ The muster rolls do suggest that the 660-man battalion was the model that the provincial commands tried to copy with more or less success.⁵¹⁰ The muster rolls also show that the battalions were named after the provinces they were stationed in, such as “the First Battalion of Tayabas.”⁵¹¹

These provincial troops were to be recruited on a volunteer basis—the soldiers currently under arms who did not want to fight would be allowed to demobilize. If the number of volunteers exceeded the allotted strength for each town, then the surplus of men would be enrolled in the police forces, which was another institution that was formalized in this decree. Some of the surplus volunteers would also be sent to the capital, where they would form a 3,000-strong central corps under the direct command of the president himself, as commander in chief. Eventually, this force was supposed to have

⁵⁰⁸ R14F156D2, Muster Roll for Tayabas. 30 June 1899.

⁵⁰⁹ R14F156D7, Muster Roll for Nueva Ecija. 14 April 1899,.

⁵¹⁰ See R14F156.

⁵¹¹ Taylor comes to the same conclusion, *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*, 2:78.

reached 10,560 men, but it is not clear if it ever did, or if it was even formed.⁵¹² Either way, this central reserve was proof that Aguinaldo wanted to have on hand the strongest armed force in the Philippines.

However, numbers for the Philippine Army are incredibly difficult to come by and Taylor is probably correct that it was difficult to ascertain just how large the Filipino Army actually was.⁵¹³ Taylor mentions that the Americans in the Philippines estimated that there were 20,000-30,000 around Manila, with an unspecified number in the provinces.⁵¹⁴ Jose Alejandrino, a general in the Philippine Army, gives the figure of 20,000 rifle-armed men in his memoirs.⁵¹⁵ The Aguinaldo Government itself seemed to think it could only financially support 25,000 soldiers *in a state of war*.⁵¹⁶ Earlier, in a circular aimed at foreign governments, Aguinaldo claimed that the Revolution had 30,000 men “organized in the form of a Regular Army.”⁵¹⁷ However, he apparently later claimed to a Visayan politician that had as many as 50,000 men.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹² Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*, 2:177-178. He seems to think it did exist.

⁵¹³ The numbers of Filipino troops has been the subject of much overestimation in the historiography of the Philippine-American War. The otherwise excellent *War in World History* by Jeremy Black, Stephen Morillo and Paul Lococo (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009), gives the improbable figure of 120,000 Filipino soldiers at the outbreak of the war (2:469).

⁵¹⁴ Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*, 2:178-181.

⁵¹⁵ Jose Alejandrino, *Price of Freedom*, Jose M. Alejandrino, trans., (Manila: Solar Publishing Corporation, 1949), 110.

⁵¹⁶ R12F121D4, Baldomero Aguinaldo, Prepuesto, Gastos del Ramo de Guerra correspondiente al ano actual de 1899. Malolos, 4 Feb 1899. Note the date—on the day of the outbreak of the Philippine-American War. It is not clear if this was written prior to the outbreak of hostilities or as a response to it.

⁵¹⁷ R9F82D5, E. Aguinaldo, A Lost Gobiernos Extranjeros. Bacoar, 6 August 1898.

⁵¹⁸ Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*, 2: 173.

There were likely more men available for local operations who were not part of the regular army: the *Sandatahanes* or local militias and the local police forces, whose organization and administration was largely out of central control and devolved into local hands.

The number of rifles the Philippine Army had on hand might provide some indication as to how many soldiers it fielded, but this is even harder—perhaps impossible—to ascertain. There is no comprehensive record of rifles, just scattered lists, although Alejandrino claimed that one was made and that there were approximately 20,000.⁵¹⁹ Taylor seems to be the only reliable source—given his familiarity with the Philippine Insurgent Records—and his guess of 35,000 rifles is probably as good as any estimate.⁵²⁰ This corresponds to the figure of 20,000-30,000 soldiers in the Philippine Army. The real problem with the weaponry, however, was not the number of rifles but the amount of ammunition on hand. As Aguinaldo said, the Philippines did not have any “*Fabrica de Municiones de Guerra*.”⁵²¹

If this study is to make any guess as to the size of the Philippine Army, then the figure of 25,000 or so seems most reasonable: the size mandated by the Aguinaldo Government’s budgetary study and one that corresponds to the number of rifles the Government had on hand, leaving some over for local militias and police forces. All in all, one gets the impression that the Philippine Army was not very large. This makes

⁵¹⁹ Alejandrino, *Price of Freedom*, 106-107.

⁵²⁰ Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*, 2: 173.

⁵²¹ R5F5D4, E. Aguinaldo, Letter to Mariano Trias. Cavite, 18 Feb 1899.

sense since the Aguinaldo Government did not want an unwieldy horde. It wanted an army it could properly control, equip, and organize in order to impress foreigners. It likely did not have the financial or bureaucratic resources for an army much larger than 25,000 or so troops—at most, 30,000.

The Army had a uniform, one that the Government manufactured itself.⁵²² The officers had insignia of rank that Jose Alejandrino claimed was designed by Juan Luna, the famous artist, although the documentation makes no mention of this.⁵²³ The uniforms of all the branches were described in great detail and by and large they all seemed to have been based on Spanish uniforms, with the most common pattern (of both armies) being the *rayadillo*—a white cloth with thin blue pin stripes.⁵²⁴

The most elaborate instructions for uniforms were those for the clothing of Aguinaldo's prospective presidential guard, a group that probably never came into existence.⁵²⁵ The regulations for the presidential guard also show Aguinaldo's concern for appearance and mimicking European armies since the guards' uniform was modeled on what was likely the Spanish Army's uniform. A page from a Richard Knotel-esque uniformology book was included in the edict to serve as a model.⁵²⁶ Interestingly enough,

⁵²² R14F147D14, No author, Title illegible. 19 October 1899,

⁵²³ R12F123D1 No Date; Alejandrino, *Price of Freedom*, 106. Juan Luna was the brother of Antonio Luna, a member of Aguinaldo's high command. More on his role in military reform shall be discussed later. Alejandrino's claim that it was the Luna brothers who were responsible for the colors of the uniform seems doubtful given how closely the Filipino uniforms adhered to the Spanish ones.

⁵²⁴ R12F123 Has several documents which give details of the uniform.

⁵²⁵ R12F130D1.

⁵²⁶ See Eladio Baldovin Ruiz, *Historia de la Cuerpo y Servicio de Estado Mayor*, (Madrid: Imprenta Ministerio de Defensa, 2001), as a comparison.

this was the only branch of the army where a height requirement was specified—1 meter and 70 centimeters or about 5 feet 6 inches was to be the minimum height of the guards. The focus given to the presidential guards again shows the great concern the Aguinaldo Government had with appearance.

The logistics of the Philippine Army are difficult to describe, since so little on this topic can be found in the PIR.⁵²⁷ Food was normally supplied by the local *presidentes*, with provincial militias in particular being the responsibility of local governments.⁵²⁸ But this arrangement was not possible for the forces besieging Manila. From what little data that can be found, it can be determined that the Aguinaldo Government bought and shipped foodstuffs by *banca* or small boat to the forces around Manila.⁵²⁹ Soldiers were supposed to receive a regular ration of rice and other food, although it is not clear if this regulation was actually implemented.⁵³⁰ It was only the Regular Army that was to be supplied by the central government; specifically Contributions of War could only go to the regular troops.

These supplies were transported by boat, but other documents in the PIR suggest the use of railways, horses, and carts. The Philippines had very few railway lines, but those that existed were obvious strategic assets. One example is the Manila to Dagupan

⁵²⁷ This is rather surprising, given how logistics tends to dominate the bureaucratic concerns of centralized armies.

⁵²⁸ R12F128D10, Telegram from the Provincial Chief of Pangasinan to Mabini. San Carlos, 15 March 1899. Reply from Mabini is in the back of telegram.

⁵²⁹ R7F45D5, E. Aguinaldo, Orders. Cavite, 22 July 1898.

⁵³⁰ R11F112D1, E. Aguinaldo, Orders. Malolos, 14 February 1899.

Railway—the first railway line laid down in the Philippines and one of the most important, since it ran from Manila to the city of Dagupan in Pangasinan, on the Lingayen Gulf. The Aguinaldo Government gave the railway a \$2,000 loan but it likely remained in private (British) hands.⁵³¹ The horses and carts that the army wished to use belonged to private citizens who had to put their property at the government's disposal.⁵³² Other evidence (to be discussed later) will suggest, however, that the Philippine Army's logistics arrangements were poor or inadequate, especially with regards to distribution.

Finally, the description of the Philippine Army will end with an examination of their tactics and training. In his 30 July decree, Aguinaldo ordered the continuing use of Spanish manuals but none of these manuals have been found in the PIR. The one manual that has survived is not a drill manual, but a soldier's handbook—a booklet that outlines the most basic of a soldier's duties like saluting, following orders or how to mount a guard.⁵³³ It is also a word-for-word translation into Tagalog of the basic soldier's manual issued to Spanish soldiers and members of the Guardia Civil.⁵³⁴

What we do know of the tactics of the Philippine Army can be gleaned from scattered letters and orders. From these documents, it can be seen that the basic tactics that the Philippine Army followed were largely linear tactics, designed for frontal

⁵³¹ See R10F91 for matters on the Dagupan Railway.

⁵³² R13F140D1 and D2.

⁵³³ R14F149D1, no date.

⁵³⁴ Miguel Gürtler y Maroto, *Manual Para Cabos y Sargentos*, (Manila: Imprenta Militar, 1873), 3-25. The Americans had a similar manual: N. Hershler, *Soldier's Handbook for the Enlisted Men of the Army*, (Washington: Department of the Army, 1889).

confrontations. For instance, one surviving diagram describes a company attack.⁵³⁵ A trumpet call was the sign for the company to disperse into skirmish line, keeping two platoons in close order in reserve. The spacing interval between individual soldiers was not certain but it did order 4 paces between squads in the same platoon and 6 between two platoons. The dispersed order was described as a “guerrilla” order. The Filipino regulations were very similar to—and were likely derived from—contemporary Spanish tactical manuals, which also advocated an advanced skirmish line backed up by a solid infantry line in reserve to the rear.⁵³⁶ The Spanish also called dispersed order “guerrilla order.”

An order for a battalion attack similarly advocates a skirmish line thrown ahead of a solid body. However, it also gives instructions on how to move in battalion column.⁵³⁷ Close-order drill, even when under enemy fire, was therefore still considered part of the Philippine Army’s tactical repertoire. This approach seems to be reinforced by two other surviving snippets of tactical drill that describe how the vanguard of a company must execute a turn in close order.⁵³⁸

The only surviving tactical writings composed by Antonio Luna that have survived deal with ranges and types of rifle firing by platoon.⁵³⁹ Luna describes volley

⁵³⁵ R12F120D1, no author, no date.

⁵³⁶ Ministerio de Defensa, *Historia de la Infantería Española*, 5 vols. (Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 1998), 3:365-402. Note in particular p. 399, the diagram from the Spanish 1899 manual for an attack by a company.

⁵³⁷ R12F120D4, no date.

⁵³⁸ R12F120D2, no date; R13F135E5, no date.

⁵³⁹ More on Luna’s role in the reformation of the army later.

firing by platoon, individual firing and “rapid firing.”⁵⁴⁰ He does not seem to have a very realistic notion of range: he suggests opening fire at ranges of 800 meters and as far as 2,000 meters in volley fire. Luna is thus advocating a 2-kilometer shot and it would be difficult for even well-trained soldiers to *see*, let alone hit, a target at that range, even in volley fire. To put it in perspective, the Americans thought that with “careful” practice—which in the US Army was very rigorous—a soldier could be “fairly effective” in hitting individual targets out to be about 600 yards, or about 650 meters. A well-trained group of men might be able to hit a mass of soldiers as far as 1,500 yards—well short of Luna’s two kilometers.⁵⁴¹ Even the Americans seriously overestimated their ranges, however. In the latter half of the 19th century, studies showed that effective firing range in combat was probably closer to 300 yards or 274 meters.⁵⁴²

Did the soldiers actually train in these tactics? Indeed, did the Philippine Army train at all? On 18 October 1898, Aguinaldo published a circular that complained that the soldiers and officers of the Army had abandoned their duties and their discipline.⁵⁴³ It provided a daily schedule that officers and soldiers had to follow. The soldiers had to spend most of the day drilling, training and receiving tactical instruction. However, there is nothing in the PIR to suggest that they *actually* did what they were told to do, and only

⁵⁴⁰ R18F214D3, A. Luna, Letter to B. Aguinaldo. Marikina, 3 August 1898.

⁵⁴¹ Stanhope Blunt, *Firing Regulations for Small Arms for the United States Army*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1889), 7.

⁵⁴² Earl J. Hess, *The Rifle Musket in Civil War Combat*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 220-224.

⁵⁴³ R6F21D3, E. Aguinaldo, Orden General del Ejercito del dia 16 de Octubre de 1898. 16 October 1898.

a few small bits here and there in American sources that depict training. Here is one snippet of information from John Bowe, a member of the 13th Minnesota Volunteers:

In the intervals between the music two insurgent companies of soldiers, one of them men and the other of boys, both armed with wooden guns, would drill and parade in front of the house. Their work was rank, but we tried to make them think it was the only correct thing. The officers were armed with swords and if a soldier made a false move, which was nearly all the time, the officer would hit him over the shoulders or legs with the flat of the sword.⁵⁴⁴

There are other hints that show that at least some of the units in the Philippine Army trained and drilled. A Spanish sergeant who joined the Philippine Army drilled some soldiers in his area, if only briefly.⁵⁴⁵ The noted reporter and political cartoonist John T. McCutcheon wrote to the *Chicago Record* that Juan Cailles drilled his soldiers:

Next came the soldiers—hundreds and hundreds of them—all dressed in blue cotton drilling, and each man carrying a rifle. The picture they made in their bright uniforms as they filed down the Calle Luis, with the bands playing and the horses dancing, was a sight not soon forgotten.⁵⁴⁶

Frederick Funston of the Kansas Volunteers also mentioned an occasion when “a large force of Filipino soldiers engaged in drill advanced on the outpost of the First Montana.”⁵⁴⁷

It is hard to determine from such slim evidence whether the Filipinos trained or drilled according to regulations. It is difficult to tell whether this training was done

⁵⁴⁴ John Bowe, *With the 13th Minnesota Volunteers in the Philippines*, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: A. B. Farnham Ptg. & Stationery Co., 1905), 46.

⁵⁴⁵ Tesforo Carrasco y Perez, *A Spaniard in Aguinaldo's Army*, 37.

⁵⁴⁶ Feuer, *America at War*, 81.

⁵⁴⁷ Frederick Funston, *Memory of Two Wars*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), 176.

frequently or with rigor. Perhaps the strongest evidence about the sort of training the soldiers received could be found in the battle fought by the Filipino soldiers against the Americans. This was the Battle of Manila, and it showed that the Philippine Army's training was seriously deficient.

The Battle of Manila

By the start of 1899, the Philippine Army had several months to be trained and reorganized by the Aguinaldo Government. The Government had also had several months to consolidate its hold over the Philippines. In his annual report for 1899, Gen. Ewel Otis, Wesley Merritt's successor stated that

General Aguinaldo was now at the zenith of his power. He had recently repressed rebellion which had raised its head in central Luzon. He had assembled a pliant congress, many members of which had been appointed by him to represent far distant congressional districts, and which had voted him the dictator of the lives and fortunes of all the inhabitants of the Philippines.⁵⁴⁸

This image is a little overdrawn, but it was not a false one. At the start of 1899, the Aguinaldo Government was indeed at the height of its powers: it controlled much of Luzon and its army was probably the best trained and the best-equipped that it would ever be. How then did the army fight? Did Aguinaldo's attempts to professionalize his army succeed?

The Battle of Manila will serve as the best example of the Philippine Army's performance in large part because it is the only major engagement of the war that has

⁵⁴⁸ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 94.

more than a few scattered documents in the PIR. It was also the best opportunity the Filipinos had of defeating the Americans in a single battle.

The first shots of the Battle of Manila, were fired at around half past 8 in the evening of 4 February 1899. The point of the outbreak was at the San Juan Bridge in Sampaloc, although one Filipino report referred to the bridge as the “Puente de Balsa.”⁵⁴⁹ The circumstances leading to the outbreak of open conflict are difficult to determine and highly controversial—it is not clear whether Filipinos or Americans initiated the fighting. What is certain is that the gunfire in Sampaloc initiated a general combat. In this regard, it is clear that the Americans were the ones who took the initiative and turned what could have been a minor skirmish into a full-blown battle.⁵⁵⁰ Gen. Otis admitted in his report that “the engagement was one strictly defensive on the part of the insurgents and of vigorous attack by our forces.”⁵⁵¹

The Order of Battle

Otis claims that his 8th Corps had about 10,000 troops in a loose cordon around Manila, ready to meet the Filipinos—although Otis’s own math would suggest 11,000.⁵⁵² The Americans occupied a position that Brian Linn described as a “pentagonal defensive line shaped like home plate” that was about 16 miles in perimeter, with the Pasig River

⁵⁴⁹ R865D5 Author unclear, partial report. Manila, 4 Feb 1899.

⁵⁵⁰ Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 54.

⁵⁵¹ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 96.

⁵⁵² War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 93.

dividing the American forces into northern and southern halves.⁵⁵³ The 2nd Division under Maj. Gen. Arthur McArthur occupied the northern half of the American position and it was around 6,453 men strong.⁵⁵⁴ The southern half was occupied by the 1st Division under Maj. Gen. Thomas Anderson, which numbered about 3,850.

The great majority of these troops were Volunteers, short-term soldiers mustered specifically for the Spanish-American War. They were mustered, organized and partially equipped by each state. Most of the men had had no military experience, although some were members of their states' National Guard and had some training.⁵⁵⁵ The Army tried to fill out the Volunteer Regiments' officers rosters with officers from the regular ranks, but there were far too few of them and many (if not most) of the Volunteer officers were just as inexperienced as their men. For example, one lieutenant colonel in the 20th Kansas may have been chosen because he had been the private secretary of the governor, while the Utah Battery had a captain who was a lawyer, a lieutenant who was a civil engineer, and another who was a teacher.⁵⁵⁶ In short, many of these volunteer officers and men would not have been very different in background or military experience from their Filipino opponents.

⁵⁵³ Linn, *The Philippine War*, 42.

⁵⁵⁴ Benito J. Legarda, *Hills of Sampaloc*, (Philippines: Philippine Studio Graphics, 2001), 21.

⁵⁵⁵ Allan R. Millet and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America*, (New York: The Free Press, 1984), 273-274.

⁵⁵⁶ Funston, *Memories of Two Wars*, 151; A. Prentiss, ed., *The History of the Utah Volunteers in the Spanish-American War and in the Philippine Islands*, (Salt Lake City, Utah: Tribune Job Printing Co., 1900), 379-387.

However, unlike the Filipinos, these greenhorns were integrated into an existing military system, with an established tactical system and more or less systematic training regimen. The American military had assimilated the lessons of “Indian Warfare” and the Civil War to develop a system of attack that took into account the firepower of modern, rifled, clip-fed guns. Infantry was taught to attack in open order, and either rushed the enemy lines while providing their own walking suppressive fire or had one unit provide covering fire while another advanced. This tactical system also took into account broken ground, and thus proved very suitable for use in the Philippines.⁵⁵⁷ The Volunteers all received several weeks’ worth of drilling and training in this system before shipping out for war and they continued their training while in the Philippines.

When it came to the quality of weaponry, the Filipinos may have had a slight advantage. Only a small handful of American soldiers were equipped with the smokeless, bolt-action, magazine-fed Krag-Jorgensen rifle (or the Springfield Model 1892-99 in American service). The Volunteer Regiments were armed with the old Springfield Model 1873, the “Trapdoor,” which was a .45 caliber, breech-loading, single shot rifle. The Springfield .45 was shorter-ranged than the Mauser rifle used by the Filipinos, produced smoke when fired and had a lower rate of fire. The 8th Corps’ Inspector-General consequently did not think much of it.⁵⁵⁸ It was not just the Springfield: the *New York Times* published an article that decried the inferiority of even the Krag-Jorgensen to the

⁵⁵⁷ Perry D. Jamieson, *Crossing the Deadly Ground*, (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1994).

⁵⁵⁸ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 175-178.

Mauser.⁵⁵⁹ The Springfield rifle did at least have one thing in its favor—it was powerful. Frederick Funston noted that: “there was one thing to be said of those old Springfields... if a bullet from one of them hit a man he never mistook it for a mosquito bite.”⁵⁶⁰

When it came to artillery support, the 8th Corps only had two light, the 6th Artillery and the Utah Volunteer Battery, but it did have the support of Admiral George Dewey’s ships in Manila Bay. The Filipinos had their own artillery, although some would have been obsolete or of indifferent quality. For instance, the Filipinos had at least 11 guns of various types in Caloocan and Paranaque.⁵⁶¹ The Filipinos also had 6 guns in Pasay.⁵⁶² The Filipinos captured a considerable number of cannons in Cavite, some of which made it to Manila.⁵⁶³ If one assumes there were guns in the other Zones of Manila then the Filipinos potentially had more land-based artillery than the Americans.

The Americans had far too few troops to occupy the entire line, a situation exacerbated by the broken terrain and poor communications. What the Americans had instead was “a series of semiautonomous regimental commands” that tried to guard the extended front through the judicious use of reserves and the careful observation of obvious lines of attack. Because of this very unfavorable disposition, the American plan

⁵⁵⁹ “The Krag-Jorgensen Gun, Inferior in Many Respects to the Mauser Used By the Spaniards.” *The New York Times*, 16 August 1898.

⁵⁶⁰ Funston, *Memories of Two Wars*, 176

⁵⁶¹ R13F136D2, Author unknown. Malolos, 29 November 1898. R21F273D2, P. Garcia, Relacion detallada de los armamentos y municiones de la Seccion de Artilleria de esta Zona. Caloocan, 15 November, 1898.

⁵⁶² R21F273D4 T. Seneca, Letter. Gagalangin, 13 October 1898.

⁵⁶³ R21F273D6 “Commandant of Artillery” (name not listed), Cavite, 1898.

was not to meet an attack passively, but to advance and occupy strategic locations at the first indication of hostilities and to counter-attack as needed.⁵⁶⁴

The order of battle of the Filipino forces is much harder to ascertain. A breakdown of the specific units that were around Manila is perhaps not possible and the exact numbers of the Filipino forces has long been an issue of conjecture. Otis himself estimated 20,000 to 30,000 Filipinos outside Manila and Linn noted that the estimates have ranged from 15,000 to 40,000.⁵⁶⁵ Almost all of these estimates of Filipino size are based on American estimates from the time, and they have been widely accepted by most historians. Benito Legarda Jr., for instance, accepts the estimate of a Harper's correspondent of 20,000 Filipino troops around Manila.⁵⁶⁶ There has thus been a consensus that the Filipinos outnumbered the Americans, with the only point of uncertainty being the degree.

The main problem with these numbers is that they are not supported by documentation in the Philippine Insurgent Records. There is one document that lists only 5,170 soldiers in 47 companies around Manila.⁵⁶⁷ This document, however, is unsigned and undated—although it bears the letterhead of Gobierno Revolucionario de Manila, which means that it can be dated from August 1898 to January 1899, when the

⁵⁶⁴ Linn, *The Philippine War*, 44.

⁵⁶⁵ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 93; Linn, *The Philippine War*, 42.

⁵⁶⁶ Legarda, *The Hills of Sampaloc*, 15.

⁵⁶⁷ R9F69D1, Forces around Manila, undated.

government changed its name to the Republic of the Philippines. There are a few other documents, however, that tend to support an even lower number of Filipinos.

Pio del Pilar, the commander of the Second Zone sent an order of battle summary to the Filipino Army's headquarters listing 1,599 officers and men divided into 20 companies. He listed 38 casualties, which meant that at full strength at the beginning of March, 1899, the Second Zone had a line strength of 1,637 officers and men.⁵⁶⁸ This is a rather low number, given that the authorized strength of a company in the Filipino army was 110 officers and men, which should have yielded at least 2,200 men in the Second Zone, but it is comparable in size to other battalions in the Philippines.

It is not implausible that Filipino units were not at full strength even at the start of the battle in 4 February, although we may take 2,200 or so men (not counting officers) as a theoretical maximum for the Second Zone. Figures do not exist for the other 3 zones. Each of the zones around Manila was deemed at least equal to an entire province, commanded by a General de Brigada (Brigadier General) with full staff, but since most provinces generally only had a single battalion, the Zones around Manila were oversized for Filipino units.⁵⁶⁹ Assuming roughly similar numbers for each zone, there is the possibility that there were only 8,800 Filipino or so troops around Manila, or about 35% of the budgeted Philippine army. A force of 20,000 would have meant that 80% of the budgeted army was stationed around Manila, which is not implausible.

⁵⁶⁸ R14F156D8, Pio del Pilar, Returns of Strength. Pasig, 3 March 1899. 38 Casualties for both the Battle of Manila and the Filipino attack in 23 February 1899 seems rather low, and it may be that Del Pilar was listing only recent casualties.

⁵⁶⁹ R12F121D4, B. Aguinaldo, Presupuesto de Gastos del Ramo de Guerra correspondiente al año actual de 1899. Malolos, 4 Feb 1899; R12F124D6, Undated.

Another possible way of gauging the size of the force around Manila is to remember that the Aguinaldo Government controlled about 8-9 other provinces each of which had, on average, about 1,600 troops. This adds up to a total of about 14,400 soldiers scattered in the provinces controlled by the Aguinaldo Government. Subtract 14,400 from 25,000 and this leaves a theoretical maximum of 10,600 soldiers around Manila or 42% of the budgeted army. Given that some provinces had fewer than 1,600 soldiers (although none had more) then there may have been more than 10,600 soldiers around Manila, but not much more.

Gen. Thomas Anderson, the American commander north of the Pasig provided some additional corroboration. He estimated that his First Division, which faced two Filipino zones, was opposed by only 5,000 Filipino insurgents during the Battle of Manila.⁵⁷⁰ Assuming that the Second Division south of the Pasig faced a similar number of insurgents, then there would have been roughly 10,000 or so Filipino soldiers around the city of Manila. This is a far cry from even the low figure of 15,000, much less the commonly stated figure of 20,000 or so Filipinos around Manila. It must be remembered once again that the Aguinaldo Government did not want an unwieldy mob: it kept the size of the army down for reasons of cost and control. Ultimately, providing an exact number of Filipinos is probably not possible, and perhaps all that can be introduced is reasonable doubt about the traditional belief that the Filipinos outnumbered the Americans. If they did outnumber the Americans, it was not by much.

⁵⁷⁰ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 375.

Whatever the numbers involved, the Filipinos had to contend with some severe geographic handicaps. Otis himself noted that the Filipino forces were bisected by the Pasig River, with the Americans in command of most of the bridges. The river was not easily forded and was easily interdicted by American naval forces. As a result “insurgent troops of one wing could not give support to the other in order to meet any emergency of battle which might arise.”⁵⁷¹ The Filipinos were obliged to fight with all the disadvantages that come with occupying the outside lines—extended lines, a difficulty with communications along the line, and a difficulty of massing reserves at a central location.⁵⁷² This was exacerbated by a lack of provisions for restoring telegraphic lines either back to Malolos or among the units themselves should they be cut.⁵⁷³ Additionally, it must be noted that the Filipinos themselves were badly stretched. They had to man a perimeter at least as long the American line. This problem would not have been easily soluble even with 40,000 troops but if there were indeed only 11,000 or so Filipino troops around Manila, then they would have been at a significant disadvantage.

However, the Filipinos also had some very important advantages—ones that might normally have been decisive. They were operating on the defensive—the traditional formula is that an attacker has to be three times stronger than a defender in order to prevail. The Filipinos knew the terrain, were accustomed to the climate and were sheltered by prepared positions. Indeed, the Americans were of the opinion that the Filipino fortifications were very good. Aside from the usual trenches, the Filipinos also

⁵⁷¹ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 93.

⁵⁷² Legarda, *The Hills of Sampaloc*, 17.

⁵⁷³ Mabini, *The Philippine Revolution*, 59.

occupied most of the Spanish blockhouses and had integrated these buildings into their defenses. These were not extremely heavily fortified bunkers, but they were sturdily built and could easily handle small-arms fire. According to Karl Irving Faust, blockhouses had walls fortified against rifle fire and were almost all built on raised ground, sloped to deflect fire.⁵⁷⁴ The Filipinos also had the ability to read and modify the terrain for military advantage. In the Santa Mesa area, where the war broke out, the Filipinos had constructed fortifications that both covered the river crossing and prevented them from being flanked from multiple sides.⁵⁷⁵ Other American reports attest to the quality of at least the first line of the Filipino trenches.⁵⁷⁶

The Filipino forces around Manila were divided into four zones. The First Zone was to the south, with its left flank resting against Manila Bay, and occupying the towns of Bacoor, Las Piñas, Palanag, Pineda, and Malate. The Second Zone was next to the first, with its right flank resting against the Pasig River, and occupying the towns of Makati, Pateros, Taguig, Pasig, and Santa Ana. The Third Zone was directly north of the Second Zone, occupying the towns of Mandaluyong, San Juan del Monte, Pandacan, San Francisco del Monte, San Mateo, Montalban, and Marikina. Finally, there was the Fourth

⁵⁷⁴ Feuer, *America At War*, 73; Charles Mabey, *The Utah Batteries*, (Salt Lake City, Utah: Daily Reporter Co. Printers, 1900), 37.

⁵⁷⁵ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1:4: 372.

⁵⁷⁶ Prentiss, *The History of the Utah Volunteers*, 233; War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 371-372; Frank D.Eager, *History of the Operations of the First Nebraska Infantry*, (1900), 12.

Zone, north of Manila, with its right flank resting against Manila Bay, occupying the towns of Caloocan, Novaliches, Tambobo, and Navotas.⁵⁷⁷

If there were any Philippine pre-battle plans, they have not been preserved in the Philippine Insurgent Records. However, it does not seem like the Philippine commanders had any plans at all, or if they did, these were known only to themselves.⁵⁷⁸ This lack of planning was exacerbated by absences in command during the Battle of Manila. The zone commanders were either not present or quickly incapacitated.⁵⁷⁹

The Combat

Specifics of the battle for the Philippine side are practically non-existent so a detailed reconstruction of the Philippine moves during the battle is impossible. The best that can be managed is to correlate recommendations and various after-action reports written by the Filipino commanders with the American accounts of the battle.

Once the fighting began, most of the American sources agree that, all over Manila, the general Filipino reaction to the gunfire in Sampaloc was to open fire at anything that seemed threatening. Frederick Funston, an officer stationed in the southern half of the battlefield:

⁵⁷⁷ R12F124D5, No author, undated. Division territorial military de Isla de Luzon y adyacentes.

⁵⁷⁸ Apolinario Mabini would later complain that the generals of the army had no plans for the battle whatsoever (Mabini, *The Philippine Revolution*, 59). Mabini attributes this neglect to the Filipino General Staff, which had not yet been formed, but his complaint was borne out by the course of events.

⁵⁷⁹ Linn, *The Philippine War*, 53; Mabini, *The Philippine Revolution*, 59-60.

There was scarcely any diminution in the fire of the enemy, it being so incessant that the darkness on our front seemed to emit an almost continuous roar. But it was badly directed, as the Filipinos were evidently crouching down in their trenches and using their Mausers as rapidly as they could, simply splattering the whole country with bullets, the great majority of them going far over our heads.⁵⁸⁰

Other accounts corroborate Funston's. The official history of the Nebraska Regiment noted that "In a few minutes after the... first shot, firing was opened by the native army... on the Nebraska camp and was soon taken by the entire native army around the city" and "soon the Mausers were popping and the bullets were flying in every direction... Bullets were dropping promiscuously and shelter was desirable, if not necessary."⁵⁸¹ Another Nebraska soldier claimed that, when they were sighted by the Filipinos, "the insurgents started to shoot as fast as they could all around us."⁵⁸² A soldier serving with the 13th Minnesota wrote that during a firefight that lasted for 2 hours: "whenever we raised our heads we could see flashes of fire in front of us."⁵⁸³ The Filipino penchant for wild firing was noted by a soldier named Selman Watson with the 1st Colorado: "As a result, scarcely a night goes by that some nervous 'soldado' doesn't take a shot at something or other."⁵⁸⁴

Most of these bullets were wasted in the darkness. Major Sime of the First California repeated Funston's suggestion that the Filipinos fired their weapons over their

⁵⁸⁰ Funston, *Memory of Two Wars*, 181.

⁵⁸¹ Eager, *History of the Operations of the First Nebraska Infantry*, 15-16.

⁵⁸² Thomas S. Nielsen, *Inside the Fighting First*, (Nebraska: Lur Publications, 2001), 99.

⁵⁸³ Bowe, *With the 13th Minnesota in the Philippines*, 78.

⁵⁸⁴ Frank Harper, ed., *Just Outside of Manila*, (Denver, Colorado: Colorado Historical Society, 1991), 60.

heads: a Filipino force suppressed by American fire “did not show themselves at all, except by poking their rifles over the wall and firing aimlessly.”⁵⁸⁵

All this firing suggests that the Filipinos had large stocks of both guns and ammunition at the outset of the war. There are also some hints as to how the Filipinos were resupplied with ammunition: Lt. Col. Victor Duboce of the First California observed that many of the houses along the Filipino line contained ammunition, which suggests that the Filipinos dispersed their ordnance so it could be easily accessed by the front line troops themselves.⁵⁸⁶ This decision eliminated the need for a method of delivery from the rear, but it also resulted in the capture or destruction of large stocks of weapons and ammunition when these supply huts were fired upon or overrun by the Americans.

Despite all the gunfire, the front lines were relatively stable on the night of 4 February. The Americans launched most of their attacks on the morning of 5 February 1899. The Third Zone bore the brunt of most of the American probes north of the Pasig River. An anonymous letter to Aguinaldo states that the commander of the Third Zone, Luciano San Miguel, had weakened the defenses in his area and did not maintain the proper vigilance during the night of the 4 February.⁵⁸⁷ The author of the letter observed the Filipino troops retreating towards Cubao by Sunday morning (the 5 February) before ultimately ending up in Marikina. The letter goes on to claim that the Filipino dead were

⁵⁸⁵ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 383.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 885.

⁵⁸⁷ R8F65D5, Author unknown, Letter. 4-5 February 1899?

simply left unattended. The fleeing Filipino troops rallied somewhere in Marikina, possibly because that was where the anonymous letter-writer had set himself up in order to supply the troops there with food. The American commander, Col. John M. Stotsenburg, appears to corroborate the fact that the Filipino forces had retreated to the outskirts of Marikina and established themselves there, since his attack on 6 February 1899 encountered resistance.⁵⁸⁸ However, on 7 February, the Americans entered Marikina proper unopposed. The defeat of the troops of the Third Zone was a particularly grievous loss to the Filipinos since the waterworks that supplied fresh water to Manila were located in Marikina.

Another Filipino account that roughly corresponds to the American after-action reports was a summary of events written by the second in command of the First Zone, Juan Cailles. He wrote that he came to the First Zone and found it in disarray. He attributed to the loss of the officer in charge up to that point, a Lt. Col. San Juan. Cailles was only able to set up defenses in Parañaque—a fact that tells us that the Filipinos lost a considerable amount of ground, since the First Zone’s initial positions had been in Pineda and Lico—much closer to Manila.⁵⁸⁹ American accounts do indeed describe how the US troops broke the Filipino resistance in the Pineda area and pushed ahead as far as Makati.⁵⁹⁰ The Filipino commanders attributed the retreat of the troops of the First Zone to the bombardment of American naval vessels, the *Baltimore* and the *Monitor*.⁵⁹¹ The

⁵⁸⁸ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 455; 463-466.

⁵⁸⁹ R5F7D8, Juan Cailles, Letter to Aguinaldo. Santa Cruz, Laguna, June 1899.

⁵⁹⁰ Linn, *The Philippine War*, 55; War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 402.

⁵⁹¹ R8F65D4, No author, “Expediente Sobre...” 7 February 1899.

American sources agreed that the naval bombardment was quite effective, although the actual ships supporting the American attack were the *Monadnock* and *Charleston*.⁵⁹²

There was, in fact, no such as ship as the “*Monitor*” in Manila Bay, although the *Monadnock* is of the ship type known as a monitor.

Some general observations of Filipino military behavior during the battle can be made. The most obvious point is that the Filipinos exhibited extremely poor marksmanship. As Funston and the others have told us, the Filipinos apparently tended to fire high. This poor marksmanship was likely made worse by the American use of cover and suppressive fire. However, the Americans attacked Filipino trenches head on and they suffered far fewer casualties than they ought to have in the face of entrenched opponents armed with modern bolt-action, clip-fed rifles.

It is to their credit that at least some Filipino units did not merely sit in their trenches and passively accept enemy fire. For instance, in Makati, Col. James Smith of the 1st California noted that his right was in danger of being turned by a Filipino flank attack.⁵⁹³ Unfortunately, the poor Filipino marksmanship meant that almost all these maneuvers failed to inflict much harm on the Americans.

The American accounts also strongly suggest that the Filipinos did not seem to have any reserves at any level. Col. Smith of the 1st California managed to sneak a force to the left flank and rear of some Filipino troops, but no reserves were deployed to meet

⁵⁹² War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 400.

⁵⁹³ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 380.

him, which contributed to the defeat of the Filipinos.⁵⁹⁴ Indeed, the American reports narrate many instances of American outflanking Filipino lines, with the Filipinos rarely sending forces to meet them. Additionally, once the Filipino trench line was breached, there were usually no forces in the rear to cover the Filipinos' retreat or to provide a rallying point. This combination of putting all the troops in the trenches, without a reserve, meant that there were often gaps in the Filipino defensive line. The Americans frequently found the Filipino flanks, since the latter were often unable to present an unbroken line.

Despite these tactical shortcomings, the Filipinos did show remarkable bravery and unit cohesion. Most units did not run even after sustaining heavy casualties from the American rushes. They only retreated when the Americans were right on top of them, as was noted by (for example) Gen. Thomas Anderson, who described a group of Filipinos that his division encountered as holding their ground like the Scottish “in Flodden Field.”⁵⁹⁵

Once they were retreating, Filipino retreats tended to be disorganized, with the troops only stopping when rallied by senior officers. Mabini strongly criticized the Filipino commanders for not planning withdrawals.⁵⁹⁶ The officer who apparently

⁵⁹⁴ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 381.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 373-374.

⁵⁹⁶ Mabini, *The Philippine Revolution*, 59.

planned the least was Pio del Pilar, whose negligence resulted in his troops attempting to cross the Pasig River while under heavy fire.⁵⁹⁷

These disordered withdrawals were not universal, however. In the early stages of the battle, Gen. Thomas Anderson noted that Filipino line “fell back before our advance, fighting, however, with spirit. The rice fields in our front were intersected by little irrigating dikes, and behind each of these a stand was attempted, the Filipinos firing from behind them.”⁵⁹⁸ However, even this fighting withdrawal became a headlong retreat once the pressure from the American attacks became too great.

A second major mistake of the Filipinos was the failure to establish a secondary defensive line. Once the front line was breached, the Filipinos had nowhere to run for shelter. As a result, the Filipino forces had to hastily construct new trenches and defenses in the days after the Battle of Manila.

The Consequences

The first phase of the battle ended by the evening of 5 February 1899. Filipino casualties in the battle are hard to ascertain since no Filipino casualty reports have survived. The only casualty report that this author has found so far was Pio del Pilar’s claim to have lost only 38 casualties in his second zone for all of February 1899.⁵⁹⁹ The claim is simply an invention, given the amount of action del Pilar’s zone had seen.

⁵⁹⁷ Linn, *The Philippine War*, 50.

⁵⁹⁸ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 373.

⁵⁹⁹ R14F156D8, Pio del Pilar, Returns of Strength. Pasig, 3 March 1899.

So once again, we are forced to rely on the American reports—with all the weaknesses that such an approach entails. Gen. Thomas Anderson’s 1st Division buried 238 Filipinos, but he claims they killed 2,000 of the 5,000 Filipinos they fought.⁶⁰⁰ The division also captured 306 prisoners, but it is not known how many Filipinos were wounded, how many died and were carried away, and how many died of their wounds. Gen. King’s command, the First Brigade, buried 153 Filipinos.⁶⁰¹ North of the Pasig, Arthur McArthur’s forces buried 374 Filipinos for the *entire* month of February. McArthur claimed that the Filipinos were usually able to carry away their wounded and many of their dead and he assumed that the ratio of wounded to dead Filipinos was 3:1, which was then the standard accepted ratio.⁶⁰² Brig. Gen. Harrison Gray Otis, commander of the First Brigade of McArthur’s division, claimed that his troops buried 199 Filipinos for the month of February.⁶⁰³

All in all, Otis maintained that his 8th Corps buried 700 Filipinos—which does not correspond to the claims made by his subordinates—and that the total Filipino casualties must have been 3,000.⁶⁰⁴ The American casualty estimates do not always appear to be very reliable and they may have over-claimed kills. McArthur and at least one other officer suggested that the Filipinos carried away their dead and wounded, but this is

⁶⁰⁰ War Department, Annual Report 1899, vol. 1, pt. 4, p. 375.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 376.

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*, 427.

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*, 433. The Second Brigade gave no estimates.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

contradicted by the Filipino reports—including the Filipino surgeon-general, who later accused the troops of leaving their dead and wounded behind.⁶⁰⁵

If there were only 8,800 or so Filipinos, then 700 dead would constitute a disastrous fatality rate of 10%—not even counting the unknown numbers of wounded. If there were 11,000 Filipino soldiers, then the casualty rate drops to 6%. However, since the American figures cannot be properly checked to Filipino ones, it is currently not possible to determine how many casualties the Filipinos took except to suggest that they were heavy.

What *is* certain is the overall result of the battle—a decisive defeat for the Filipinos. The Filipinos had been largely ejected from their positions around Manila and their troops were demoralized and disorganized. Pio del Pilar noted, for instance, that the troops of the Second Zone had suffered from a “*descalabro completo*” or a “complete setback.”⁶⁰⁶ They had also lost huge stocks of irreplaceable weapons and ammunition, including artillery. In his letter, del Pilar noted that his forces had lost four cannons, “many rifles,” large quantities of ammunition, and the Second Zone’s smithies and repair shops. Del Pilar claimed he needed 300 rifles and 5,000 rounds of rifle ammunition as replacements. The American lists of captured Filipino weaponry support this assertion of large equipment losses.

⁶⁰⁵ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 385; R8F65D5, Author unknown. Letter. 4-5 February 1899?; R13F34D4, Marcelino Santos, Letter to the Secretary of War. Tarlac, 26 August 1899.

⁶⁰⁶ R10F93D1, Pio del Pilar, Report. Antipolo, 11 February 1899.

A General Order released on 7 February 1899, noted that the Filipino troops' were completely demoralized and it was even thought to be necessary to replace some of these them with newly commissioned reserves.⁶⁰⁷ The defeat was so serious that the Filipino troops could offer no sustained or effective resistance to the American advances for a few days after February 5. Some units dug trenches and made a stand here and there, but these lacked direction or coordination.

This demoralization can be seen in a description of some combat in Caloocan soon after the Battle of Manila. The Aguinaldo Government had somehow recruited or conscripted some Igorots—upland tribesmen—into its army, and one of them recounted his part in the “Battle of Caloocan” to the author of an Igorot grammar book.⁶⁰⁸ This unnamed narrator described how the Filipino soldiers were so frightened and demoralized by constant American rifle and artillery fire that they “take their bayonets they dig up the ground they bury all their cartridges” and then reported to their commander that they had fired off all their ammunition. The narrator described heavy casualties—“many dead”—and constant retreats by the Filipino soldiers.

Fortunately for the Filipinos, the Americans realized that their advance had left them scattered and disorganized as well, and they were forced to stop and consolidate their gains. Hence, some American units had to abandon their more forward positions, which they claimed the Filipinos took as a sign of victory. These American “retreats” may explain why the colonel in the Third Zone (presumably Ambrosio Mojica) sent an

⁶⁰⁷ R6F22E4D3, E. Aguinaldo, Orden General. Malolos, 7 February 1899.

⁶⁰⁸ Carl W. Seidenandel, *The First Grammar of the Language Spoken by the Bontoc Igorot*, (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1909), 527-528.

absurdly optimistic report to Malolos on 10 February, noting that not much was happening in his sector.⁶⁰⁹ Still, Mojica was the exception and the Filipino situation was bad for a week or two after the Battle of Manila.

Otis noted that some time after the Battle of Manila, Filipino forces had re-established their positions in Pasig, Pateros and Taguig, north of the Pasig and even managed to push their line forward to Guadalupe “within rifle shot of Makati.”⁶¹⁰ These positions were threatening and indicated that the Filipino forces were regrouping. However, these Filipino attempts at defense were hurried and disorganized and the Americans continued their advance outside the city. The Filipinos managed to offer some resistance in some areas, and there were attempts at local counter-attacks. The most notable was an attack launched in the vicinity of the Guadalupe Church in Makati that was met by the 1st California under Lt. Col. Victor Duboce, who noted that after some skirmishing, the Filipinos started to advance in close order:

A number of insurgent troops in squads of from 10 to 50 were coming up over the ridge of the hills, and with field glasses their uniforms could be distinctly seen and three officers on horseback easily recognized by their swords and uniforms. They were continually yelling and at short intervals sounded their bugles. The largest body noticeable included fully 100 men, nearly all of whom were in the regulation uniform. Most of these troops moved slowly forward toward the cemetery, but upon being fired upon as well as shelled they retreated somewhat and moved toward the sky line in a southwesterly direction.⁶¹¹

⁶⁰⁹ F93D2 Ambrosio Mojica (?), Report. San Mateo, 10 February, 1899.

⁶¹⁰ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 108.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, 389.

Linn referred to this as an attack in “parade formation” where, as Duboce noted, the Filipinos marched forward in “good order.”⁶¹² There is no mention of this attack in Filipino records, but this account by Dubcoe does show that some of the Filipino forces did train and drill. Unfortunately, they drilled in obsolete and dangerous close-order formations.

The Continuation

The postscript to the Battle of Manila took place at the end of February, when the Filipinos attempted to recapture the city. Such was the importance the Aguinaldo Government attached to the city that it was practically inevitable that there would be an attempt to retake it. The attack was to have two components: a push from the regular army north of the Pasig, and a simultaneous uprising of *sandatahan*, or militia forces, within Manila itself. The uprising in the city was a crucial part of the operation. According to Aguinaldo, the Filipino soldiers outside Manila were counting on the *sandatahan* to confuse the Americans: “it may be counted on that when our troops around Manila, upon finding out that those in the city are fighting, will attack immediately.”⁶¹³

The attack by the regular army is difficult to track. The American reports make no mention of any major advances from Filipino troops outside the city but there are hints of Filipinos preparing for operations. For instance, a force of Filipino troops tried but failed to infiltrate and encircle the Americans stationed in the Marikina waterworks from 19

⁶¹² Linn, *The Philippine War*, 55.

⁶¹³ R9F73D12, E. Aguinaldo, Instructions.

February until 21 February.⁶¹⁴ There were also signs that Filipino forces massed in the vicinity of San Juan del Monte and unsuccessfully attacked the positions of the First South Dakota Infantry on the afternoon of 23 February.⁶¹⁵ These were regular Filipino soldiers, since the Americans noted their *rayadillo* or “white uniforms.”

Filipino forces had apparently infiltrated American lines and attacked the Kansas Regiment’s headquarters.⁶¹⁶ Funston noted that he and his men faced a “strong demonstration against our lines” on the afternoon of the 23rd, but that the attack lacked commitment since the Filipinos did not try “to drive home the attack.”⁶¹⁷ Funston was later surprised to find out about an attack to the Kansas’ rear, and noted that his unit had “actually been cut off from our base for hours.”⁶¹⁸ If these attacks had been successful, the Philippine Army may well have been credited with infiltration tactics almost 20 years before their widespread use towards the end of the First World War.

Fragments of an anonymous Filipino officer’s diary for February 1899 offer some clues as to what was happening in the Filipino side.⁶¹⁹ The unnamed Filipino officer’s diary suggests that there wasn’t a single planned counter-attack as such, but reflect a general push back towards Manila with reinforcements from the rear or wherever

⁶¹⁴ War Department, *Annual Reports 1899*, 1: 4: 479-482.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 484.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 500.

⁶¹⁷ Funston, *Memories of Two Wars*, 218.

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁶¹⁹ R10F93D4, Author unknown.

defeated units could be reorganized. Pio del Pilar, for instance, began probing into the areas vacated in the Second Zone, near Makati, and on 17 February, the diarist claimed that Del Pilar was attacking from Mandaluyong. In Makati, the Filipinos encountered detachments of Americans and skirmished with them indecisively. Del Pilar may have been at the very front of this attack, since he sustained an injury in his forearm.

This account was corroborated by the reports of Maj. J. Franklin Bell, who claimed that there were reports of insurgent troops massing in Makati—but found nothing more than small patrols of Filipinos that were driven off, with no sign of any larger force.⁶²⁰ The main body of Filipino and American troops finally did encounter each other on the 20th and the Americans claim to have driven off the Filipinos after a short fight.

The officer diarist also noted that Luna himself was leading soldiers in the field, since he commanded the forces attacking Caloocan and Loma. Like Del Pilar's attack, there were skirmishes and patrols preceding the main push on February 20 itself, but Luna's forces were less active than del Pilar's. The main attack failed supposedly because the Kawit Company refused to follow orders, although the diarist's notes indicate that the defeat may also have resulted from problems in getting all the forces under Luna to fire or attack with coordination.

Thus, the Filipino forces were committed piecemeal, attacking or taking a stand as they were sent to the line. The regular army may have been waiting for the uprising in the city before initiating its main push, but what fragmentary reports do exist indicate that the Filipino regular army was were disorganized and badly handled—sent to fight with what

⁶²⁰ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 499, 513.

appears to be poor staff work and planning. Luna blamed his defeat on the insubordination of the Kawit Company, and he would certainly not be the first commander to cover his failures in planning with claims of treachery and insubordination.

There is a little bit more information on the uprising in the city that was supposed to coincide with the 22-23 February attacks, but even that information is muddled and fragmentary. Prior to the outbreak of the war, a number of *sandatahan* or militia regiments had been formed in Manila. The most notable, and the one on which there is the most information, was a unit known as the “Cuerpo de Armas Blancas” or “Corps of Cold Steel” which was headed by a certain Col. Luciano Lucas and was centered mainly in Tondo. The exact returns of strength of this unit are unknown, and it is also unclear whether Lucas had formed a component of a larger unit—his early letters indicate he formed two battalions of a larger body, but his later letters seem to indicate he was in command of the entire “regiment” or “cuerpo.” This unit was formed only on 9 January 1899, and it was apparently independent of the main force outside the city. Lucas sent a letter to the commander of the Second Zone asking that the commissions of his officers be recognized.⁶²¹

The mission of the Armas Blancas prior to the outbreak of the war was unclear. Lucas claimed that he had formed the unit to exact contributions from the wealthy members of Manila, to guard against abuses committed by the Americans and to perform “other important services.” He specified that the Armas Blancas were there to keep the

⁶²¹ R6F22D5 Malolos, 16 February 1899, E. Aguinaldo. Bando.

peace and tranquility for the native Filipinos in Manila and that they would collect no more than the funds needed to sustain their battalion.

Hints as to what this unit was *actually* doing after its formation are given in a report by Lucas. On 17 February 1899, the Armas Blancas was on its way to an area of operations (perhaps to join in some attack) when the unit captured a certain Gregorio Martinez who had informed the Americans of their presence. Now aware of the danger, the Armas Blancas threw away their arms and abandoned their advance. The fate of Martinez is not mentioned.⁶²² Another hint of the operations of the Armas Blancas—and other units like it in Manila—can be found in a letter by an agent codenamed “Pipi” who wrote that Filipinos seen visiting or accompanying Americans were likely to be kidnapped or “*ducut*” (which literally means “snatched”).⁶²³ One gets the impression that the Armas Blancas was operating in a manner suspiciously like an extra-legal shakedown operation and that Lucas had to defend himself against accusations of wrongdoing.

Thus, the Armas Blancas and other similar units in Manila were “secret organizations,” broadly similar to the earlier Katipunan and theoretically formed to enforce the interests of the Malolos Government but operating rather independently of high command. There were many other units like the Armas Blancas, and they prefigure the Philippine Army’s eventual turn to guerrilla warfare

These unconventional units interacted with the Philippine Army’s high command mainly by letters and communiqués smuggled into the city—an unreliable and sporadic

⁶²² R9F72D4, Lucio Lucas, Report. Tondo, 17 July 1899.

⁶²³ R9F70D7, Pio del Pilar. January 1899.

form of communication. These units essentially acted on their own and were only nominally commanded and supervised by Aguinaldo or the other senior commanders of the Philippine Army. They took almost no part in the Battle of Manila, but played an important role in the 22 February uprising.

Aguinaldo's headquarters sent a communiqué in Tagalog outlining specific orders or tactics that these *sandatahan* were to carry out on the night of the attack. Their main role was to sow confusion and cut off the American's front from their rear. Prior to the attack, the *sandatahan* were to make a careful reconnaissance to determine the quarters and positions of all the American troops in the city, noting secret passages or entryways to these locations. The ranking officers of the American units were to be specifically targeted. The officers of the *sandatahan* were supposed to approach them with four men pretending to give them gifts, while the rest of the unit hid nearby. Then, once the attack began, the *sandatahan* were to assault the Americans with ferocity and determination. Aguinaldo suggested that the *sandatahan* not be too eager to grab enemy weapons, an approach that would decrease the momentum of their attacks. Probably they were to use close-quarters weapons like knives or *bolos*, or literally, *armas blancas* or cold steel. The *sandatahan* were also to prepare boiling oil, fat, or water to pour on the Americans, and to improvise homemade explosives and bombs, with some to be made of bamboo. The officers were also to station troops in upper stories of buildings, where they stockpiled rocks, furniture or other projectiles that they could throw down on the Americans.

Aguinaldo assured the troops that these infiltration tactics and close-quarters attacks would render American weapons useless, since they ran the risk of hitting each

other rather than the Filipinos. Aguinaldo also stressed that the troops must show their good order and discipline to foreigners, going so far as to order the officers of the *sandatahan* to send their most trusted soldiers and men to guard the homes and businesses of foreigners within the city.⁶²⁴

Luciano Lucas's brief report on what happened on 22-23 February 1899 suggests that although the Filipinos were successful in causing a lot of chaos and disorder, most of these detailed instructions were not followed. To start with, there may have been problems organizing for the attack. On the night of the 22nd, Lucas tried to attack with a badly understrength unit. He noted in two reports he sent to the Army headquarters afterwards, that he attacked with only 26 officers and men out of the entire *Armas Blancas*, a tiny fraction of its full strength.⁶²⁵

From then on, poor coordination and communication with other units in Manila—possibly even with members of his own unit that had not managed to join him—caused great confusion for Lucas. Upon encountering the Americans, he claimed that they saw other Filipinos shouting encouragement to the *Armas Blancas*, telling them to attack the Americans: “Brothers, the time to attack is now!” A bugle was also sounding the signal to attack “*abance y fuego*,” or “advance and fire.” This was apparently not part of the plan, and Lucas and his men didn't know what to make of the situation—Lucas described what he saw as a “*fantastica drama*” and he decided to retreat. This was when he and his men

⁶²⁴ R9F73D12, E. Aguinaldo, Instructions.

⁶²⁵ R9F73D10, Lucio Lucas, “Relacion de los individuos...” Tondo, 5 April 1899; R9F73D11, Lucio Lucas, Letter. Tondo, 15 April, 1899; R9F70D9, “El Colonel Jefe Principal,” (Lucio Lucas?), Letter. Tondo, 28 February 1899.

ran into another problem: their own lack of planning. Lucas had ordered some troops to set fire to buildings in Mesic that blocked the American axis of retreat, but in their confusion, it was found that these fires blocked the Armas Blancas's retreat instead. The Americans fired two volleys at the Filipinos, but caused no casualties and Lucas decided that it was better to "die fighting than to burn to death" and the Armas Blancas ran to engage the Americans in hand to hand combat. The fight lasted for an hour, and according to Lucas, the Armas Blancas managed to get the Americans to retreat in the direction of the Railroad Station. At this point, the Armas Blancas disengaged from the battle and returned to their homes with only three casualties, but with having accomplished nothing at all useful.⁶²⁶

There are two other fragmentary sources in the PIR relating to the uprising in Manila. One is a telegram to the Secretary of War from a certain Major Tirona in Tondo, who sent his message on 23 February.⁶²⁷ He wrote that at 10:08 AM the Filipinos had stationed themselves along a tramway, where they had possibly built a kind of breastwork. Tirona claimed that the Americans had suffered numerous casualties but that the Filipinos needed aid. At 10:42, the Filipinos had the Americans on the run and there was a large engagement at Tondo or Binondo. He also noted that the nipa section of Tondo was on fire.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁶ R9F70D9, "El Colonel Jefe Principal," (Lucio Lucas?), Letter. Tondo, 28 February 1899.

⁶²⁷ His relation to the more famous Daniel Tirona of Cavite is unknown.

⁶²⁸ R9F70D4, Major Tirona, Telegram to the Secretary of War. Polo, 23 February 1899.

This report is either supported by or was the source of an article published on 23 February in a supplement to an issue of the *Heraldo Filipino*, which claimed that the *sandatahan* of Tondo under the command of Mariano Ponce were firing on Americans along Calle Azcarraga. The account corresponds with the aforementioned one of Luciano Lucas's. It may well be that the mysterious Filipinos the Armas Blancas encountered were other *sandatahan* under Ponce. The Herald also reported that the fire in Tondo had been caused by Filipinos—again, this may possibly be the fire started by Lucas's men.

The *Heraldo Filipino* claimed too that columns commanded by Gen. Pio del Pilar and Col. Hizon—commanders of regular army soldiers in zones outside Manila—had managed to occupy parts of Manila or its suburbs, such as Sampaloc, Tondo, and Binondo. The Cavite Battalion had also (supposedly) captured the Quartel de Mesic—the same unit that Luna blamed for his failure and the same *cuartel* set alight by Lucas and the Armas Blancas. Finally, the report claimed that Caloocan was under siege by Generals Luna, Mariano Llanera and Pantaleon Garcia.⁶²⁹

The only firm conclusion one can draw from these contradictory and fragmentary reports is that the attacks of the *sandatahan* were chaotic and confused. It appears as if there were great problems with coordination and communication, with units not able to determine where all their members were, where other units were, and what everybody else was doing.

The reports from the American Provost inside Manila tend to support the picture of absolute chaos in the city. Fires broke out as early as the night of 20 February, when

⁶²⁹ R9F70D6, Supplement to the Filipino Herald. Manila, 22 February 1899.

much of Paco was burned down by Filipino insurgents dressed as women.⁶³⁰ Some of the contents of the report of what happened on 23 February roughly correspond with the Filipino accounts. The Americans did encounter temporary fortifications set up by the Filipinos, and they did suffer from rifle fire from all directions.⁶³¹ The congruence ends there, however, since the Americans claim that they advanced in good order, and were in complete control of the situation. Interestingly, the Americans claim to have advanced in the direction of the tram or train station, precisely the direction that Lucas claims to have driven them in retreat.

The confusion was compounded by masses of panicked civilians crowding the streets, and it is rather difficult to believe that the Americans were as calm or efficient as they (and Linn) claim.⁶³² John Bowe, who was in a part of Manila not involved in the fighting, gives some idea of the chaos of the uprising:

Was on guard and everything was quiet till midnight, when, all at once, fires started up in a dozen places across the swamp, in Tondo and Binonda [sic], then yelling and shouting and an occasional explosion. The bursting of bamboo mingling with the volley-firing of Americans and insurgents, the shouting of combatants, the roaring of the cannon, the dark, illuminated smoke stretching heavenward, made a sight impossible to describe and never to be forgotten.⁶³³

With the failure of the *sandatahan* inside Manila, the Filipino counterattack came to an end. There can be no doubt that the Filipinos had failed. The attacks by the regular Filipino Army outside the city were not carried out with much efficacy, and Linn is

⁶³⁰ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 515-516.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, 517-518.

⁶³² Linn, *The Philippine War*, 60-61.

⁶³³ Bowe, *With the 13th Minnesota in the Philippines*, 38.

entirely correct in noting that if they had indeed been headed by Luna, the results certainly don't say much about his abilities as a commander.⁶³⁴ The Filipino officers showed all the same faults as the earlier Battle of Manila: a lack of planning and coordination brought about by poor staff work. The Filipino forces made contact with the Americans, but attacked almost haphazardly, withdrawing before accomplishing much.

The uprising in Manila by the *sandatahan* successfully caused considerable chaos and destruction, but this success was unintended, since it was the product of a lack of planning and coordination. Additionally, it is doubtful as to what the uprising would have accomplished without a successful attack from the Filipino forces outside Manila, given their small numbers and lack of coordination.

Whatever the case may be, the city was now permanently lost to the Filipinos. There would be plans for future uprisings, but none ever came to fruition and Manila remained a secure base for American forces thereafter.

⁶³⁴ Linn, *The Philippine War*, 60.

CHAPTER VII

THE PHILIPPINE DEFEAT

The Aguinaldo Government was not blind to the problems of the Philippine Army that were revealed by the Battle of Manila, and they tried to apply corrective measures in an effort to improve tactical performance. In this final chapter, I will discuss the consequences of defeat in the Battle of Manila. The Aguinaldo Government had lost its last, best chance to defeat the Americans in a single engagement and it also had to deal with the failure of trying to avoid conflict in the first place by gaining foreign recognition. It therefore tried to find ways of improving its combat performance in the face of progressively declining resources and fighting strength.

The Aguinaldo Government's attempts to adapt failed and it was eventually forced to take to the hills in order to evade the American forces. This was the guerrilla phase of the war, and it also marked the end of the indigenous attempt at political centralization.

The General Staff

The Government first reorganized its command structure.⁶³⁵ The actual running of the war was to be delegated to a Sub-Secretary of War and the Secretary of War's duties were further delegated to new command staffs, the most important one of which was the newly established Estado Mayor General, or the General Staff. The General Staff was to

⁶³⁵ R6F22E4D1, B. Aguinaldo, Decreto. 25 February 1899.

be headed by Ambrosio Flores, the governor of Manila, who had also been a lieutenant in the Spanish General Staff—a military professional.⁶³⁶ The General Staff may be seen as the final attempt of the Aguinaldo Government to reform the Army to enable it to fight and win while maintaining its Western-style organization and tactics. For instance, the General Staff was supposed to have detailed knowledge of reconnaissance reports, plans, and sketches for operations and uprisings, the statistics and military details of the various towns under Philippine control, and detailed knowledge of materiel and personnel of the Army.⁶³⁷ The General Staff was to also manage the movement of soldiers, regulating their routes during marches. The Chief of the General Staff, Ambrosio Flores, was specifically tasked with all aspects of fortifications, such as directing their construction and inspection.⁶³⁸ He also had to handle logistics, which primarily meant organizing transport brigades of porters and pack animals and setting up supply dumps in suitable locations.

These new duties of the General Staff all beg the question: why were these tasks not undertaken before? Was nobody responsible for working out route marches and the basic details of logistics? The results of the Battle of Manila suggests that, in fact, nobody was, hence arms and ammunition dumps were placed dangerously close to the frontline, where they could be destroyed or captured by the Americans. A logistics net and a supply distribution system are not easy things to set up, so the officers of the Philippine Army had resorted to simply pre-dumping these supplies in the front line.

⁶³⁶ R23F301D6, A. Flores, Sketch of his life (in his handwriting). No date.

⁶³⁷ R6F22E4D9, A. Flores, Direccion de Estado Mayor. 12 March, 1899.

⁶³⁸ R6F22E4D8, A. Flores, “Ejercito de la Republica Filipina.” 11 March 1899.

Why had these problems not been anticipated? Why had the army not created—or even thought of creating—a logistics net? Weren't matters like this the responsibility of Antonio Luna? He was supposed to be responsible for organizing the Philippine Army along Western lines. As his letter of introduction to Aguinaldo stated:

Ever since he has arrived here [Hong Kong] he made a project of the Organization of our Army of Liberation [a rare use of the term] and on field fortifications based on those used by the French Army: He also knows about military strategy, he has been studying these matters of late in Europe...⁶³⁹

The fact that Luna missed these very basic military necessities does not speak well of his supposed knowledge of military affairs. Luna's problem was that his knowledge of military affairs was self-taught, and knowledge of technical matters like logistics or route scheduling is difficult to acquire without the benefit of technical military training. One reason why Aguinaldo probably commissioned Luna despite his lack of a formal military education was because he impressed by the latter's status as an *ilustrado*. After all, Luna was a Propagandist, the brother of artist Juan Luna and a contemporary of Jose Rizal. Having Luna reform his army would have raised its prestige and associated it with a Europeanized elite—two things which would have helped in Aguinaldo's quest for foreign recognition.

But Luna was otherwise not better trained or not much more knowledgeable than Aguinaldo or any other officer when it came to military science. Indeed, Luna did not even have Aguinaldo or Malvar's *practical* experience in handling, supplying and coordinating large bodies of men. Luna's failure to anticipate these basic, technical,

⁶³⁹ R29F471D2, "Respe." Letter to Aguinaldo. Hong Kong, 20 July 1898, See also, Quirino, *Filipinos at War*, p. 150.

military necessities suggests that the standard image of Luna as the “best” Filipino commander, or the only professional in a high command packed with amateurs, is overdrawn or inaccurate. Much of what is known about Luna’s activities have been derived from Jose Alejandrino’s *Price of Freedom*, but this work may not be as reliable as is commonly thought when it comes to Luna. For one, Alejandrino falsely attributes two things to Luna: he claims that Luna was the one who introduced or insisted on entrenching as a tactic and that it was Luna who insisted rigid discipline after the disasters of February.⁶⁴⁰ Entrenching was a tactic used as early as the 1896 Revolution—Luna hardly introduced it. To address the second claim, it was in fact Ambrosio Flores as Chief of the General Staff who ordered strict—one might even say draconian—discipline after the disasters of February 1899.⁶⁴¹ Alejandrino’s claim that the artillery service was rudimentary and of no account can also be considered false.⁶⁴² As the last chapter showed, the Filipinos made extensive use of artillery during the 1898 Revolution.

Luna’s inability to coordinate the movements of Philippine Army units might have been excusable, since it may even have been beyond trained professionals like Ambrosio Flores. Officers from different units often refused to cooperate with each other, or even with their superiors, without existing social ties⁶⁴³ Thus, Malvar was able to command his officers in Batangas with a degree of efficiency because he and these men

⁶⁴⁰ Alejandrino, *Price of Freedom*, 105, 118, 120.

⁶⁴¹ R6F22E4D11, A. Flores, Orden y Mando. Malolos, 12 March 1899 and R6F22E4D13, A. Flores, Orden General del Ejercito. Malolos, 14 March 1899.

⁶⁴² Alejandrino, *Price of Freedom*, 111.

⁶⁴³ May, *Battle for Batangas*, 78-79; Alejandrino, *Price of Freedom*, 112-113.

had prior social ties, while other commanders without prior social ties were less successful.⁶⁴⁴ Aguinaldo was aware of the importance of interpersonal ties, and this was likely why the high command of the Philippine Army was filled with his partisans.

Luna was especially disadvantaged in such a personalistic command environment since he was an outsider amidst Hong Kong Junta members or Aguinaldo friends and kinsmen.⁶⁴⁵ He made matters much worse by letting his arrogance and violent temper get the better of him in his interactions with the officers and men.⁶⁴⁶ Perhaps in an army with an established culture of respect for grade and seniority, Luna would have been able to command respect and authority by simple virtue of his rank, but in an ad hoc army like that of the Philippines, social ties and personal loyalties were paramount. Luna had no networks with the top leadership cadre of the Aguinaldo Government and he possessed a grating, overbearing personality that antagonized many people he came into contact with.

The General Staff was aware of the amateurishness of most of the Filipino officers and tried to make up for it by ordering all senior generals, like provincial commanders or zone commanders, to designate officers with knowledge of technical military affairs as their seconds in command.⁶⁴⁷ These seconds in command were to help their commanders in formulating battle plans and the three senior officers in each battalion were to have intimate knowledge of this plan so the Filipinos would not be

⁶⁴⁴ May, *Battle for Batangas*, 78.

⁶⁴⁵ Vivencio Jose, *Rise and Fall of Antonio Luna*, (Manila: Solar Publishing Corporation, 1972), 124-125.

⁶⁴⁶ R8F59D5—Documents regarding a conflict between Luna and Mascardo, for instance.

⁶⁴⁷ R6F22E4D9, A. Flores, *Direccion de Estado Mayor*. 12 March, 1899.

caught flat-footed again. Essentially, Flores wanted senior commanders to acquire trained chiefs-of-staff to overcome their lack of technical know-how. It was an arrangement similar to what existed in the Prussian Army—or indeed, in any army at the time that had a General Staff system.⁶⁴⁸ These chiefs of staff had to do many of the same things that Flores had to do, such as arranging the logistics of their units and helping the commander formulate battle plans.⁶⁴⁹ Unfortunately for the Philippine Army, there were few such trained officers and it does not seem as if this decree made much of a difference.

The General Staff's orders and recommendations also suggest that the rank and file had problems with military discipline. There was a widespread lack of discipline or respect for the superiority of ranks and Flores had to mandate the inculcation of the “respect and profound subordination of the inferior to the superior” in order to create “cohesion and military discipline.”⁶⁵⁰ Soldiers had to be reminded to salute officers and any breaches of discipline were to be punished severely. Sergeants were also to be respected, and soldiers had to be reminded that these NCOs had the authority of the president behind them. It must be noted, however, that armies can be successful without rigid adherence to military deference.

The relationship the soldiers had with their officers was likely based on pre-existing social ties: they listened to or respected officers who had been their patrons in civilian life. However, there are also signs that the soldiers tended to respect or listen to

⁶⁴⁸ Robert M. Citino, *The German Way of War*. (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2005).

⁶⁴⁹ R6F22E4D4 A. Flores, “Orden General.” 16 February 1899.

⁶⁵⁰ R6F22E4D10, A. Flores, “Orden General.” 12 March 1899.

officers who possessed spiritual prowess. There is no better example of this spiritual dimension than Aguinaldo, who gained support from the ordinary Filipinos from a belief that he possessed *anting anting* in the form of two children who accompanied him in the battlefield.⁶⁵¹ Even the Americans caught hints of what Aguinaldo's followers thought of him: Captain P.C. March, commander of the Astor Battery, noted that Aguinaldo derived much of his authority from the fact that, "the more ignorant of his [Aguinaldo's] followers firmly believe that he is invulnerable, that a bullet fired at him would be deflected."⁶⁵²

The Philippine Army also had tactical failings that the General Staff tried to correct. One such failing was the habit of commanders of placing all of their troops on the firing line. The desire to cover every inch of the front is a novice commander's error and the General Staff ordered commanders to leave a small body of men slightly behind the lines to act as a reserve to plug holes in the battle line or to act as a "fire base" or pivot when the unit had to maneuver.⁶⁵³ In the same decree, the General Staff also encouraged the officers in the Philippine Army to abandon close-order drill and disperse their troops when under fire. They were to adopt the "*orden abierto*" or the open order "of the guerrillas."

Perhaps the biggest tactical failure of the Army was the ordinary soldier's extremely profligate expenditure of ammunition and abysmal marksmanship. The

⁶⁵¹ Quirino, *Young Aguinaldo*, 75-76; Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 26.

⁶⁵² J. W. Buel, *Behind the Guns with American Heroes*, (Chicago and Philadelphia: International Publishing Company, 1899), 86.

⁶⁵³ R6F22E4D4 A. Flores, "Orden General." 16 February 1899.

American accounts agree that Filipino soldiers fired indiscriminately, without aiming, and at the slightest provocation. The General Staff and the army high command in general were aware of this problem and tried to rectify it. However, it is interesting to note that the Filipino high command was more concerned with the troops' poor fire discipline rather than their marksmanship. The 12 March General Orders stated that any soldier wasting ammunition by firing without need or without having sighted the enemy was to be punished with expulsion from the army.⁶⁵⁴

The Philippine high command's solution to the soldiers' poor marksmanship was not more practice, but increased control by the officers. An anonymous document issued by the office of the president suggests that troops should only fire after their officer had estimated the range of the enemy and spoke against the free fire system of the Spanish, "*el sistema de los españoles.*" The document claimed that the "Spanish system" produced a higher rate of fire but fewer results.⁶⁵⁵ This concern for wasteful firing is understandable: as Aguinaldo said, the Philippines did not have any munitions factories and could not easily replace any ammunition expended. However, the high command's solution relied on the officers' ability to estimate range—and it is not at all clear that the Philippine Army's officers were any better at this feat (which is a basic marksmanship) than their soldiers.

⁶⁵⁴ R6F22E4D10, A. Flores, "Orden General." 12 March 1899.

⁶⁵⁵ R13F135D1, No Author.

In September of 1899, the Army finally tried to rectify the soldiers' poor marksmanship.⁶⁵⁶ Each commander was to designate 10 soldiers in each company as *tiradores* or sharpshooters, and these men were to receive higher pay and a special shoulder patch and were to be exempted from manual labor—clearly attempts to increase the prestige and desirability of the position. The army was also to set up gunnery schools that would teach basic marksmanship to the Filipino soldiers. Why it took the high command to recommend this course of action is unclear, but either way, it was too late. At this point, the Philippine Army was very low on ammunition—probably too low to initiate training with live ammunition.

That the Filipino soldiers proved to be poor marksmen was indicative of their general lack of training, or the lack of realism or efficiency in their training. Range estimation in particular is difficult to teach and is a common failing among poorly trained shooters.⁶⁵⁷

However, there is also something decidedly traditional about such fusillades of projectiles—it is reminiscent of the prehispanic tactic of barrages of projectiles meant for intimidation. Perhaps without any training or guidance, Filipino soldiers simply reverted to an ancient cultural default—employing masses of projectiles during combat. The use of firepower to intimidate was certainly evident during the 1898 Revolution.

The Philippine Army's poor marksmanship was a major failing since it rendered any tactics that the officers could have come up with moot. It would not have mattered if

⁶⁵⁶ R12F130D2, A. Flores (as Secretary of War), Circular. Tarlac, 28 September 1899.

⁶⁵⁷ C. M. Wilcox, *Rifles, and Rifle Practice*, (New York: D. van Nostrand, 1859), 65-68.

the Filipinos had reserves or could maneuver to outflank their opponents if they simply could not hit their targets. After all, the Filipinos already had the incomparable advantages of being stationary, in ground they knew well (which meant they should have had time to estimate ranges) and in the shelter of very good fortifications. The Americans, for all of their revised Uptonian tactics, still tended to run across exposed ground towards Filipino trenches. The Filipinos should have exacted more casualties than they did, but the fact was that American casualties in the Battle of Manila were fairly light.⁶⁵⁸

Denouement

Despite the efforts of the General Staff, the Philippine Army never truly recovered from the Battle of Manila. The Army had one last chance to inflict a significant defeat on the American forces in Calumpit, Bulacan, and this battle showed that while the Philippine Army did show signs of improvement, it was not enough to secure a victory.

The Aguinaldo Government had already abandoned its capital in Malolos, but the “confluence of three rivers” in Calumpit offered an “ideal site for defense.”⁶⁵⁹ Once again, the Filipinos set up impressive fortifications: trenches with overhead cover, revetments, and firing slits.⁶⁶⁰ The Americans were in considerable force, attacking with two Volunteer regiments, a battalion of infantry, and a squadron of cavalry, supported by

⁶⁵⁸ Linn, *The Philippine War*, 52.

⁶⁵⁹ Quirino, *Filipinos at War*, 154.

⁶⁶⁰ Funston, *Memories of Two Wars*, 275.

3 field guns and an armored train armed with Gatling guns moving along the railway.⁶⁶¹ Antonio Luna commanded the Filipinos and he had three artillery pieces, a machine gun, and possibly 4,000 men with which to stop the Americans. If these numbers are accurate, this encounter was probably the largest battle in the Philippine-American War since the Battle of Manila.

The Battle of Calumpit began on 24 April, when American forces led by Frederick Funston and the Kansas Volunteers approached the Bagbag River. The Americans advanced across the open and even tried to cross a ruined bridge spanning the river while, being covered by rifle fire from infantry from two brigades and by artillery fire from the armored train and the field guns. This fire so suppressed the Filipinos that “very few shots [were] fired” at the Americans as they traversed open ground and even attempted to cross the ruined bridge.⁶⁶² Most of the American infantry was able to ford the Bagbag River unmolested—apparently the Filipinos had abandoned their defenses when the Americans were halfway across the river. The Americans arrived at the second river, the Rio Grande, and faced more elaborate Filipino entrenchments. Once again the bridge across this river had been partially disassembled, and this time the Americans were unable to ford the river. The two sides traded fire for the rest of the day, ceasing their activity only when darkness fell.

The next day, Funston managed to cross the river when he found a raft that the Filipinos had unaccountably not destroyed. He sent two of his men across the river and

⁶⁶¹ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 5: 400.

⁶⁶² Funston, *Memories of Two Wars*, 273.

the two privates swam the river completely naked, taking a rope with them to act as a tow cable for the raft. Once again the Americans completely suppressed the Filipinos with heavy fire from their rifles, machine guns and artillery. The Americans had to stop giving covering fire when the two swimmers made it across, but these men apparently scared off the Filipinos in their trenches by *throwing mud balls* at them.

Funston was able to cross the river on the raft and found that the Filipinos had abandoned the trenches closest to the river. However, in a marked change from the Battle of Manila, the Filipinos had set up a secondary line of trenches and caught the Americans by surprise. As usual, the Filipinos opened up on the Americans with their rifles and even used their Maxim machine gun, but they failed to make much impression on the Americans. The Filipinos also tried a counter-attack in “a deployed line, extended order”—again the lessons of the Battle of Manila seem to have been internalized somewhat.⁶⁶³ Unfortunately, the Americans brought their own artillery to bear and the Filipino counterattack failed. The Americans suffered very lightly—for instance, Funston lost only 3 killed and 5 wounded, despite having to ford two rivers and confront trenches while under fire.⁶⁶⁴

The Filipino side of this battle was conducted by Luna, and this author has found a telegram summarizing the engagement that was very likely written by Luna himself.⁶⁶⁵ The report is quite short, and spare on the details, but it more or less corresponds with the

⁶⁶³ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 5: 405.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 425.

⁶⁶⁵ R10F93D8, “General, Chief of Operations” (Luna?), Telegram. San Fernando, Pampanga, 25 April, 1899.

American narrative. A point of divergence between Luna's and the Americans' accounts was that Luna insisted that he abandoned his positions in good order and only due to ammunition exhaustion. In light of the fact that his forces kept a continuous fire on the Americans to the very end, this is a rather dubious assertion. Luna further claimed that the Filipinos suffered only moderate casualties—which cannot be disproven—but he then went on to declare that the Americans had suffered 700 dead. Ultimately, one gets the impression that Luna was indeed brave, but his generalship did not display any marked superiority over any other Filipino commander. He too was unable to hold well-built trenches and advantageous terrain despite having a fair amount of weaponry on hand.

The Battle of Calumpit shows the Filipinos trying to implement positive changes since the Battle of Manila: improved trenches and attacks in dispersed order. However, Filipino marksmanship remained poor—so poor it probably cost the Filipinos the battle. The Filipinos also made poor use of their heavy weapons. They had fired their machine gun on Funston and his men, who had been caught in the open, and were flat-footed, but failed to inflict a single casualty. The Filipinos also remained supine in their trenches and were quickly routed. Morale had thus worsened.

Defeat in battle had fatal consequences for Luna. Because of his overbearing personality and lack of personal networks in the high command, he had made many enemies among Aguinaldo's closest followers. In fact, he had feuded with Tomas Mascardo, a high-ranking Filipino officer, shortly before the Battle of Calumpit.⁶⁶⁶ After the battle, he was arrested and executed on Aguinaldo's orders on suspicion of trying to

⁶⁶⁶ R8F59D5, A. Luna, Letter to E. Aguinaldo. Calumpit, 21 April 1899; Alejandrino, *Price of Freedom*, pp. 139-140

seize the presidency.⁶⁶⁷ Perhaps his many enemies simply used the opportunity to get rid of him, and his defeat proved he was not the general he made himself out to be and was no longer useful to Aguinaldo.

The Battle of Calumpit was the last major engagement in the Philippine-American War. There were plenty of other actions, but by and large, the Philippine Army suffered defeat after defeat in the 10 months after the Battle of Manila. The one good thing that might be said about Aguinaldo's military arrangements was that his forces were quite capable of replacing losses and pitching men into combat, so the Philippine Army was able to offer resistance to the Americans for quite some time. Unfortunately, the Army's officers and men never improved and the Army was unable to fight to win. Towards the end of 1899, Aguinaldo disbanded the regular army and resorted to guerrilla warfare. This was not an overly radical shift: as the *Armas Blancas* showed, the Philippine Army had units that were engaging in unconventional warfare from the start. The conventional phase of the Philippine-American War came to an end.

The Conventional Phase: In Conclusion

One point bears repeating another time: the Aguinaldo Government's attempt to reform the Philippine Army and remake it into a regular, centralized, and Europeanized force was in line with its general strategy of seeking recognition from foreigners and consolidating its hold on the Philippines. The Aguinaldo Government did not think it could win a war with a foreign power like America and therefore decided that its best

⁶⁶⁷ RF60D9, Baliwag, 9 April 1899, "Pepe." Letter to E. Aguinaldo; R8F59D8, San Carlos 19 June 1899, Circular regarding Luna's death.

strategy was to seek recognition and support from foreign powers. Concurrently, the Aguinaldo Government wished to gather domestic power into its hands, and this meant controlling violence and force in the Philippines. The various armed bands that had defeated the Spanish in 1898 were therefore reformed and integrated into a centralized Philippine Army—on the surface of it, quite successfully. The Aguinaldo Government used external threats to justify its consolidation of political and military power, arguing that Western powers would only recognize a country with a disciplined, regular armed force. This was the “*Bagong Digma,*” and Aguinaldo and his Government worked to turn their army into what they imagined a Europeanized army was like.

The strategy of recognition failed. No country was willing to recognize the Philippines and the Americans still attacked the Aguinaldo Government’s forces. Aguinaldo therefore went to war with his reformed army, and failed. To say that the Philippine Army failed is not to hold it up to a universal standard of military efficiency. The Philippine Army failed in its self-appointed task, which was to uphold the Aguinaldo Government’s hegemony in the face of internal and external threats. The Philippine Army’s reformation meant that it fought the war symmetrically, meeting the Americans head on. The example of the *Cuerpo de Armas Blancas* shows that it was willing to use unconventional tactics from the beginning, but the bulk of the Philippine Army’s fighting strength lay in its uniformed, regular forces.

The Philippine Army was unable to stand up to the Americans despite several key advantages at the start of the Philippine-American War. In the Battle of Manila, the Americans had no choice but to attack the Filipino forces surrounding the city if they

were to gain room for operational maneuver. The Filipinos were therefore on the tactical defensive in an era when technology had made infantry attacks difficult or even nearly suicidal. Throughout this period, infantry unsupported with heavy artillery fire generally failed when they came up against entrenched infantry armed with clip-fed, bolt-action rifles. In theory, the Filipinos had many advantages, even if their forces were stretched. They had had time to construct defenses, like trenches or strong points; they knew the ground; they were used to the climate and they may have marginally outnumbered the American forces. They were also armed with an excellent clip-fed rifle in the form of the German Mauser, and the evidence showed that they had plenty of ammunition. The Americans, on the other hand, had very little artillery support outside of two small batteries, and while they had the naval guns of Dewey's fleet, these pieces could not provide fire support beyond the coastal areas.

Despite their tactical advantages, the Filipinos were unable to stop the Americans. They did not even inflict any serious casualties. At this very early stage of the war, American successes could not be attributed to an overwhelming advantage in numbers of weapons: the Filipinos had plenty of rifles, a comparable number of artillery, and a fairly large stock of ammunition.

The Filipinos' defeat in the Battle of Manila explains their defeat in the conventional phase of the Philippine-American War in general, since this was the best-equipped, best-organized, and possibly even the best-trained army that the Filipinos fielded. There would be no real difference between the Filipino soldiers in the Battle of Manila and in later engagements. There were no real improvements. Indeed, the Filipinos

faced a steady diminution in fighting power as their morale collapsed and their stocks of weapons and ammunition were depleted.

Perhaps the most important reason for the Philippine Army's failure in the Battle of Manila and in subsequent engagements was that it was not ready to engage the Americans in a frontal confrontation, even when on the defensive. The Army's organization and training had several important weaknesses. The most glaring one was the utterly abysmal marksmanship of the Filipino soldiers: they were incapable of inflicting casualties on the Americans. The Filipino soldiers tended to fire off ammunition wildly, inaccurately, and in massive quantities.

Finally, the Philippine Army's officers proved less than able at their jobs. These men were generally brave and dedicated, but had little to no knowledge of the technical aspects of military operations, like handling logistics or coordinating movements. They also had problems respecting the chain of command or cooperating with other officers. Some were negligent, failing to devise plans or supervise their units properly.

These failures suggest serious flaws in Aguinaldo's reorganization of his army. In many respects, the Philippine Army only superficially *resembled* a European one. Too much attention was paid to appearance. The Philippine Army did have uniforms, colonels and generals, and it even marched and drilled in parade formation, but it retained many of the qualities of the revolutionary forces of 1896—or even of armed forces from prehispanic times. Despite Aguinaldo's attempts at centralization and control, the army was still marked by multipolarity, and the relationships between the officers and men still relied on charisma and personal ties. The poor marksmanship of the Filipinos might even

be explained away as a vestige of spiritual prowess in combat: the high volume of unaimed fire was meant to intimidate and impress, rather than kill.

Thus, Aguinaldo's attempt to field an army to fight the "*Bagong Digma*" was a failure. The Philippine Army was unable to overcome its origins as a revolutionary force raised by rural elites with little to no horizontal integration or cohesion among its command cadre. This sort of army had a difficult time facing conventional forces like the Spanish Army or the American Army unless circumstances were greatly in its favor, as they were in the 1898 Revolution. The American Army of 1899 was not the dispersed, poorly-led, and isolated Spanish Army of 1898, and the typical Filipino tactic of a loose siege and massive bullet barrage no longer worked. The Filipinos also lost control of the sea, which meant that they were unable to prevent American reinforcements and resupply, and they were no longer able to import weapons and ammunition.

Perhaps it was a mistake for the Aguinaldo Government to attempt fight in the style of the "*Bagong Digma*" given the handicaps with which it had to work. The biggest one was that military expertise was a rare commodity among the people who became this Army's leadership cadre. The person Aguinaldo brought in to reform the army, Antonio Luna, had a superficial, amateur's knowledge of military affairs. The other officers that Aguinaldo had to use were former landowners or local officials—not professional officers. Aguinaldo did have a few former Spanish army officers, Manuel Sityar and Ambrosio Flores were the most prominent. But they either did not ascend to positions of importance, like Sityar, or did so when it was too late, like Flores. Why this was so is

difficult to explain: perhaps they simply did not have close personal ties to Aguinaldo or their social credentials were insufficient.

In sum, it can be said that the Filipinos fought hard, but not well. Perhaps it was a mistake to *choose* to fight in the manner of the “Bagong Guerra,” but Aguinaldo chose to do so because of the strategy of recognition. The strategy of recognition was not illogical, and it had been based on experience and a realistic appraisal of Filipino military ability. Pursuing the strategy of recognition was therefore an intelligent way of trying to avoid combat while still maintaining Filipino independence. It is therefore especially ironic that in trying to gain foreign recognition, Aguinaldo reformed his army in such a way that it was incapable of winning when war unexpectedly did break out.

The Guerrilla War

By the end of 1899, Aguinaldo had been forced to abandon successive capitals and was on the run from the American forces. Taylor gives the date of the Filipino switch to guerrilla warfare as November 1899. This date was based largely on American views, since it was when Gen. Arthur McArthur sent a telegram to the commander of the American forces, Gen. Ewel Otis, declaring that the “the so-called Filipino republic is destroyed.”⁶⁶⁸ Taylor was perhaps not entirely accurate, and pegging the start of the guerrilla phase of the war to an exact date should probably not be attempted since the Aguinaldo Government does not seem to have released a document ordering such a switch. Indeed, guerrilla tactics had been practiced by the Filipinos from the beginning of the war, as evidenced by the *Cuerpo de Armas Blancas*.

⁶⁶⁸ Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*, 2:260.

There has always been some conceptual fuzziness with the definitions of such terms as “guerrilla warfare” and “insurgencies.” It is possible for the armies of nation-states to engage in guerrilla warfare, which can probably best be described as the tactic of non-concentration, and evasion. Likewise, it is also possible for an insurgency to fight with a uniformed army, facing enemies frontally, since this is a political label, denoting rebellion or resistance. The Americans described the Philippine forces as an insurgency precisely because of their refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the Aguinaldo Government. The guerrilla phase of the Philippine-American War therefore began not only when the Filipinos had to assume the indirect tactics of dispersion and evasion, but also when the Aguinaldo Government lost its political primacy and had to compete with another political system. Thus, in some parts of the Philippines the guerrilla war began quite early on. For instance, the Filipinos in Manila were engaged in guerrilla warfare from the very start of the war, since the Americans had established a working government there and the Filipino forces inside the city were never able to operate openly. Antonio Luna may have organized some guerrilla units as early as June of 1899.⁶⁶⁹ In the province of Bulacan, Pio del Pilar proposed a “plan de guerrilla” in September.⁶⁷⁰ On the other hand, in January of 1900, the Filipino forces in the province of Batangas still had a centralized government that adhered to the national government, and they initially fought in a frontal, conventional manner.⁶⁷¹ Likewise, the Filipinos in Ilocos Norte fought from trenches and even engaged in an *artillery duel* with the

⁶⁶⁹ R8F51E2D1-2.

⁶⁷⁰ R8F51D4, P. Garcia, Letter. Tarlac, 19 September 1899.

⁶⁷¹ May, *Battle for Batangas*, 91-130.

Americans in 14 January 1900.⁶⁷² Giving an exact date to the start of the guerrilla war is therefore impossible, as it varied from region to region.

What is undeniable is that the dissolution of the Philippine national government—i.e., the Aguinaldo Government—was an important event. The Aguinaldo Government could no longer work openly and it was now a “guerrilla government,” or one that had to work in the shadows. In this case, McArthur’s November date does have some merit, since November was when Aguinaldo was forced to evade the Americans and become increasingly nomadic. Aguinaldo had been the center of the interpersonal relationships that held the government together and his prestige and position had also been important in keeping the system unified. With Aguinaldo marginalized, the “national” element of the Government diminished.

Up until September or October of 1899, the Aguinaldo Government was probably still functional. It was still answering correspondence, planning finances, and debating strategy.⁶⁷³ It had lost a lot of its power and influence, but its central bureaucracy was still intact (if much reduced) and it therefore could still claim to be a source of authority. It had not yet been completely marginalized. For instance, despite defections and captures, the Aguinaldo Government tried to keep the Congress in existence even if it had to

⁶⁷² William Henry Scott, *Ilocano Responses to American Aggression*, (Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1986), 51.

⁶⁷³ E.g., the Philippine high command still published General Orders using the Imprenta Nacional: R6F22D3, P. Garcia, Orden General del Ejercito, 14 September 1899. It was also still issuing detailed operational orders: R5F4D8, E. Aguinaldo, Letter, 14 September 1899. The government also still corresponded with foreign governments: R7F41D7, F. Buencamino, Letter to German Consul, Tarlac, 10 October 1899. The government even still engaged in internal bickering, when Mabini was elected as head of a prospective Supreme Court, but this was vetoed by his political opponents. R8F62D9, No Author. Tarlac, 13 September 1899.

appoint some members.⁶⁷⁴ When Aguinaldo was forced into flight, the activities of the central government were much curtailed and Aguinaldo himself was rendered powerless.

According to one of his aides, Simeon Villa,

The Honorable President has decided to descend into the plain as soon as the rainy season commences... He has also another motive for doing this, namely, the establishing of his communications; for really, from the time that we fled toward the mountains until now we have remained in complete ignorance of what is going on in the present war.⁶⁷⁵

Aguinaldo eventually re-established contact with the rest of the Philippines, but his communications remained unreliable and sporadic. He maintained some of his authority, however, especially his moral authority. According to Villa, Aguinaldo still received or dispatched messages to surviving guerrilla groups or to the still-extant Hong Kong Junta.⁶⁷⁶ In many ways, Aguinaldo resembled the cult leaders of the 19th century, complete with an adoring entourage who gave him a largely symbolic title—“Honorable President.” Aguinaldo was now the messiah of the “religion” of Philippine independence. Like other cultists, his “religion” was heretical, since it was certainly not the accepted dogma of the period, which was now American rule.

Elsewhere in the Philippines, governance and the prosecution of war devolved into local hands. Again, this change did not happen by surprise. It must be remembered that the 1896 and 1898 Revolutions had been regional, local affairs, and the Aguinaldo Government had simply built its structures on top of these local government units.

⁶⁷⁴ R7F39D3, Author illegible. Tarlac, 5 October 1899.

⁶⁷⁵ Garcia, *Aguinaldo in Retrospect*, 153.

⁶⁷⁶ e.g. *Ibid.*, 182, 193.

Additionally, when the Philippine-American War began, the Aguinaldo Government set up mechanisms of local support and resistance—although these actions might simply have been formalizing what had been common practices anyway.⁶⁷⁷

It cannot be denied, however, that by 1900, the Filipino forces had become guerrillas in every sense: politically and militarily. They may have occasionally fought the Americans in a tactically frontal, conventional manner, but in a strategic sense the Filipinos had now dispersed their forces and avoided contact with the Americans. The guerrilla leader Jesus Villamor stated this new state of affairs with remarkable elegance in his memoirs: “*guerra de montaña—es la propia del pequeño contra otro mayor*”—or “the mountain war—fit for the small against the big.”⁶⁷⁸

Essentially, the Philippine Army had become *remontado*. Like the *remontado*, they were resistance groups who had decamped from the towns and villages of the lowlands to avoid a stronger enemy. Also like the *remontado*, they were an alternative to the dominant political authority (the American colonial regime, in this case). The guerrilla’s continued survival represented their main challenge to the colonial authorities, since the mere fact of their existence rendered questionable the American claims of universal and unchallenged hegemony in the Philippine Islands.

Indeed, the Filipino decision to decamp to the mountains looks very much like what happened during the Spanish conquest. The *datu* of the coastal *barangay* had also been defeat in frontal confrontations by a superior force. Like the guerrillas, the *datu* fled

⁶⁷⁷ R6F21D2, E. Aguinaldo, Orden General. Malolos, 7 February 1899.

⁶⁷⁸ Scott, *Ilocano Responses to American Aggression*, 28.

to the mountains, occasionally raiding the Spaniards, but generally content to merely survive and wait for the situation to change or for the Spanish to leave.

This is not to say that the Filipino guerrillas became *bandits* or savage tribes, something that the Americans liked to claim in order to de-legitimize the Filipino cause. Witness Taylor's racist and derogatory description of guerrillas as "half-naked men" and "robber bands" whose "sole excuse for its existence was plunder, and the pompous titles of its commanders."⁶⁷⁹

Taylor's comments give some idea of the frustrations that the guerrilla tactics and the continued Filipino resistance engendered. His comments also show a lack of understanding of greater trends in Filipino military history. The guerrillas were not "bandits," even if they practiced the same tactic of decampment and flight into hills and mountains. Rather, the Filipino forces had simply reassumed the age-old tactics of resistance against a stronger power by detaching themselves from the ruling body politic. They were still fighting for nationalistic reasons: for independence. As one Hong Kong Junta member wrote to Juan Cailles in 1900, the Filipinos were fighting because of the "oppression, arrogation of our nationality, our sure death."⁶⁸⁰ The bandits of the Philippines did not have this centralizing, nationalistic goal.

The Filipinos' general strategy during the guerrilla phase was to outlast the Americans, to slowly "attrite" them. Aguinaldo wrote to some of his local *presidentes*—men who again were at the forefront of revolutionary struggle—that they had to kill or

⁶⁷⁹ Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*, 2:283.

⁶⁸⁰ R8F54D11, Emiliano Riego de Dios, Letter. Hong Kong, 5 July 1900.

capture small parties of Americans, saying that if this was done in a large enough scale, it would secure victory.⁶⁸¹ As early as May of 1899, Teodoro Sandico was of the opinion that the Americans were inspired by “*sentimiento mercantile*” or “mercantile sentiments” and this would impel them to concede the war because of its rising costs.⁶⁸²

The Filipinos were also hoping for favorable political circumstances and the 1900 presidential elections in America seemed to provide them with a possible turning point. The Aguinaldo Government constantly told Filipinos that the war was the fault of a small section of American society headed by the William McKinley and an “imperialist party.”⁶⁸³ The Filipino leadership further promised that if the anti-war William Jennings Bryan won, he would end the war.⁶⁸⁴ Bryan consequently became the unlikeliest figure around which the Filipinos rallied. A festival was even held in Bryan’s honor, and here he was cheered as the savior of the Philippines. This festival does not seem to have been aimed at American audiences, and it does not seem to have been an attempt to influence the presidential election. Rather, it was most likely aimed at Filipinos, to encourage continued fighting and to raise morale.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸¹ Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*, 4: 193.

⁶⁸² R6F28D5, T. Sandico, “Al Pais.” Cabanatuan, 16 May 1899.

⁶⁸³ For example, R11F106E1D1, No Date, Ambrosio Flores. “Sa Manga GG. Generales.”

⁶⁸⁴ Perhaps better known to most Americans as a participant in the Scopes Trial.

⁶⁸⁵ The Aguinaldo Government was not so stupid or naïve as to ignore the possibility of a Democratic defeat. For example, Galiciano Apacible wrote of this possibility to Felipe Buencamino. He also pointed out that it was not guaranteed that a victorious Democratic party would remain friendly to the Filipino cause. R26F396D5, 5 Sept. 1899, Hong Kong. G. Apacible, Letter to F. Buencamino. The leadership did not publicly voice these fears.

The Filipinos' attitudes towards Bryan are also remarkably similar to the cult leaders' ideas on salvation and "paradise." Like the cultists, the Aguinaldo Government promised a better world with independence. Like them, this paradise was to be achieved after a salvific moment: the American election. Bryan assumes the role of a sort of triumphant deity, offering the Filipinos new hope with his impending victory.⁶⁸⁶ Unfortunately for the Filipino guerrillas, Bryan lost and the war continued.

Tactically, the guerrilla phase allowed the Filipinos to resist for much longer than a conventional war would have, largely because they no longer presented the Americans with concentrations of soldiers to defeat. The guerrillas had the advantage of working in small units, something to which their amateur commanders were much better suited. The Filipino forces up in the mountains could also regulate when and where they established contact with American soldiers, which often meant that they could choose situations favorable to them, usually ambushes or surprise attacks. For instance, in Pampanga, a local guerrilla commander named Jacobo Fajardo—an Artillery officer in the Philippine Army—surprised a small detachment of American soldiers by dressing 8 soldiers as peasants who managed to approach the Americans by hiding their bolos and daggers in umbrellas. 25 rifle-armed soldiers also gave them covering fire. The ambushers killed an unspecified number of Americans, stole away 4 Mauser rifles with ammunition, and managed to evade pursuit.⁶⁸⁷ The commander of the guerrillas in Nueva Ecija issued

⁶⁸⁶ R5F16D3, Felipe Buencamino, Letter to the Sec. of the Interior. Tarlac, 26 October 1899. See R5F16 in general. See also R5F17D9, A. Flores, Letter to Aguinaldo. 27 October, 1899.

⁶⁸⁷ R8F51D1, P. Garcia, Letter to Secretary of War. 6 October 1899.

instructions to one of his local commanders, telling him to ambush American convoys but to avoid combats that promised no gain or results.⁶⁸⁸

The most famous of all the guerrilla actions was the Balangiga Massacre in Samar in September 1901, when a garrison of 74 American soldiers was caught by surprise by some Filipino guerrillas and lost 44 killed and 22 wounded.⁶⁸⁹ They were led by their local mayor, but the overall commander of the forces in Samar was that stalwart of the cause of Philippine independence, Vicente Lukban. The American commander of the Visayas, Gen. Jacob H. Smith reacted in the worst possible way for a counterinsurgent: he ordered the massacre of almost all the men in the town of Balangiga. He also imposed harsh punitive measures in the province of Samar. Terrible as all of these were for the people of Samar, the Balangiga Massacre and its aftermath produced nothing but negative publicity for the Americans. Cynically speaking, this was exactly the sort of media coverage that the Filipinos needed and a strategy of provoking American rage and overreaction would have been good for the guerrillas.

Unfortunately, such successes were rare and it is apparent that the Filipinos did not inflict much in the way of casualties. William Henry Scott makes the remarkably depressing statement that in Ilocos Norte, “only twice during the whole war were more than two Americans killed in the same action—five one time, and eleven another.”⁶⁹⁰ In fact the Americans suffered very few killed in action during the guerrilla phase. The

⁶⁸⁸ R8F51D8, Pedro Padilla, Letter to Casimiro Tinio. Nueva Ecija, 31 January 1900.

⁶⁸⁹ Quirino, *Filipinos at War*, 166.

⁶⁹⁰ Scott, *Ilocano Responses to American Aggression*, 56.

American commander Ewell Otis reported that from August 1899 until 1 May 1900, the Americans lost 258 killed in battle, which includes the wounded who eventually succumbed to their injuries. Arthur McArthur, the commander who succeeded Otis, reported that from 5 May 1900 to June of 1901, the Americans suffered only 245 killed. To put this in perspective, the Americans suffered 351 killed and 1,412 wounded from February 4 until 31 August 1899—this was the conventional phase of the war.⁶⁹¹ By the metric of kills, the Filipinos were therefore *less* successful in their guerrilla combats than in their “conventional” battles of 1899.

Thus it does not seem as if the Filipinos tactical performance improved much during the guerrilla phase. And there is little to suggest that Filipino tactical performance *should* have improved. Without access to foreign sources, Filipino stocks of weapons and ammunition would have slowly dwindled without hope of replacement. The resulting shortages would have prevented the Filipinos from practicing their marksmanship, which is tragic since the Filipino high command only realized their deficiencies in this regard just at the end of the conventional war period. Additionally, the Filipinos never gained access to professional military officers or men who could have instructed them in tactics or marksmanship. Indeed, with the isolation and dissolution of the General Staff in 1900, what little military expertise that remained in the Philippine Army was effectively neutralized. Ambrosio Flores, for instance, surrendered to the Americans in 1900.⁶⁹²

⁶⁹¹ War Department, *Annual Report 1899*, 1: 4: 192.

⁶⁹² National Historical Institute, *Filipinos in History*, 1:192-193.

There is also the fact that the Americans were not the Spanish of 1896 or 1898. The Americans did not have poor morale, they were not isolated, they could be resupplied and reinforced because of sea control, and they initiated aggressive patrolling and intelligence gathering. They also concentrated Filipinos into villages and rigorously guarded the movement of food and other basics. Offensively, the Americans engaged in “punitive actions,” like “crop and property destruction.”⁶⁹³

In many ways, the American soldiers resembled the Spanish conquerors of the 16th and 17th centuries.⁶⁹⁴ Like the Spaniards, the Americans controlled the towns and villages. The Americans even “concentrated” the Filipinos into more compact settlements to better control the movement of food and people—a remarkable echo of the Spanish practice of *reducción*. In the towns and villages, the American soldiers acted much like the Spanish priests: they educated the children, they dispensed justice, they took care of basic sanitation, and they reordered local politics. Like the Spanish priests and friars, the American soldier was often the only representative of his government that the Filipinos ever saw. Occasionally, the Americans would send patrols out into the bush, where they often burnt or confiscated food or crops—another remarkable echo of Spanish practice, this time, the practice of the *entrada*. Thus, if the Filipino guerrillas had become *remontado*, the Americans had become friars and *conquistadores*.

⁶⁹³ Linn, *The Philippine War*, 214.

⁶⁹⁴ American counterinsurgency operations have been covered by other works. See Linn, *The Philippine War*; John Morgan Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags*, (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press Inc., 1973) and Russell Roth, *Muddy Glory*, (W. Hanover, Massachusetts: The Christopher Publishing House, 1981) for instance.

Filipino tactical failure meant that the Filipinos were unable to constrain these American actions. Merely surviving and existing as *remontado* was not enough—since the Filipinos wanted recreate the Philippine nation, they had to make the Americans leave, and not just passively offer a challenge to colonial hegemony. The Filipinos therefore had to actively disrupt the workings of American colonial society. But because the Filipino were tactically incapable, they were unable to hem the Americans in their garrisons, to prevent or seriously impede the reinforcement and resupply of detachments, and to ambush American soldiers who were out on patrol or who were out protecting the mechanisms of American rule.

This failure to constrain the Americans in turn impeded Filipino freedom of action, which prevented *them* from gathering food and supplies from locals or shifting their operations. Whatever else may be said about “winning hearts and minds,” both guerrillas and counter guerrillas require a minimum of physical security to go about their business, and this physical security can only be secured by successful military action.

Because the Filipinos could not kill enough Americans to increase their rate of attrition and constrain their freedom of action, their only hope of victory lay in outlasting the American forces. Essentially, the war became a contest of wills. There were three things the Filipinos hoped for: disease to waste away the American forces, the cost of continuing the war to erode American will, and a fortuitous event to occur, like a foreign power intervening on their behalf.

The third point can be dismissed right away: despite some Filipino attempts at diplomacy, nothing ever happened that compelled the Americans to leave. The Filipinos

briefly hoped that the Boxer Rebellion would force the Americans to reduce their commitments in the Philippines, but this never happened. Neither did any foreign power ever intervene on the Philippines' behalf.

The war did cost the Americans a lot of money. James Blount claimed that, "It used to be said in the early days that we paid \$20,000,000 for a \$200,000,000 insurrection."⁶⁹⁵ He went on to claim that the war ultimately cost the Americans about \$300,000,000. But this cost was not enough to make the Americans give up on their imperial dreams.

Waiting for disease to kill the American soldiers was a somewhat better option since disease *did* take a heavy toll on the American forces. From 31 July 1898 until 24 May 1900, the Americans lost 1,138 men to disease, which was more than was lost to combat.⁶⁹⁶ Again, the death toll from disease was not enough to discourage the Americans and force them to leave.

The strategy of outlasting the Americans was risky, since there was no guarantee that Philippine will would not collapse first. The guerrillas themselves had to have the willpower to keep on living in the mountains, risking their lives to disease and hunger and sometimes facing the occasional American patrol or raid. The willingness of non-combatants, like farmers, fishermen, or municipal officials, was also crucial to the survival of the guerrillas, since they relied on these people for their food and information.

⁶⁹⁵ James H. Blount, *The American Occupation of the Philippines*, (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913,) 599.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 597.

The most important non-combatants were the rural municipal officials and elites, since these people controlled most of the resources in the Philippine countryside.

The Filipino guerrillas evinced a considerable level of stamina and adherence to their cause in the face of great hardship and constant defeats. Why did they display such endurance? The most obvious answer is simply that these guerrillas—or at least their leaders—were committed and believed in the cause of Filipino independence.⁶⁹⁷ Life up in the mountains and forests was not easy—food was scarce, conditions uncomfortable, and the threat of death was always present so their persistence suggests that there was a degree of belief in the cause involved.

Another possible reason why these guerrillas kept up the struggle—and why ordinary Filipinos supported them—was fear of Americans. The Aguinaldo Government both received and spread word of American abuses.⁶⁹⁸ For instance, the official newspaper, the *Independencia*, published stories recounting American atrocities and brutality.⁶⁹⁹ Teodoro Sandico even gave dire warning to the Filipinos about the fate of American Indians, who were hungry and had been reduced in numbers after having been subjugated by the Americans.⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁷ Scott, *Ilocano Responses to American Aggression*, 48-49.

⁶⁹⁸ For instance, R5F17E1, D2, D6

⁶⁹⁹ Edwin Wildman, *Aguinaldo: A Narrative of Philippine Ambitions*, (Boston: Lothrop Publishing Company, 1901), 275-282.

⁷⁰⁰ R6F28D5, T. Sandico, "Sa Bayang Filipinas." Cabanatuan, 16 May 1899.

Finally, the Aguinaldo Government tended to overstate American casualties, thus giving the impression to the Filipinos that they were more successful than they were. For instance, Pantaleon Garcia, the new head of the General Staff, claimed in September of 1899 that the Americans had suffered over 1,400 combat-related casualties in the month of August—a gross exaggeration.⁷⁰¹ Leaving aside the fact that overstating enemy casualties is something many armies do, there are a few possible reasons why the Filipinos miscounted their kills. Such exaggeration may have been calculated policy, to keep people invested in the war, or it may have been wishful thinking, or it may have been local commanders inflating their casualty reports in shame or for prestige reasons, or it may simply have been a lack of accuracy in counting enemy casualties. Whatever the case may be, overestimating their success might have induced the Filipinos to hold out longer in the mistaken belief that they were somehow winning.

Why the Americans persevered in this war is beyond the scope of this study, which deals with the Filipino side. But one question that should be asked is why the Filipinos did not do more to help undermine the will of the American public. The successful insurgencies of recent decades have employed propaganda campaigns targeting their enemy's populace and decision-making bodies. The Filipinos *had* a well-conceived plan of diplomacy that they could have used to propagandize during the guerrilla phase, and Filipino elites had experience in lobbying and publicizing Filipino issues to foreign presses. Unfortunately, however, Filipino diplomacy tapered off after 1899 and the PIR does not give any hints as to why. My own suspicion is that it was largely due to a lack of resources. This failure to propagandize was especially unfortunate

⁷⁰¹ R6F22E4D4, P. Garcia, Orden General. 20 Sept. 1899.

since there was an anti-war movement in America the Filipinos could have readily exploited.⁷⁰²

Unfortunately, in this contest of willpower, the Filipino will broke first. Specifically, the Filipino guerrillas lost the support of the rural elites, without whom no resistance was possible. The turning point of the war may to have been the passage of a Municipal and Provincial Government Act in February 1901. This act, modeled to some extent on the post-Maura Reforms of the Spanish, devolved considerable authority into local hands.⁷⁰³ Elections were held to set up these local governments and the elites—the only people who were actually eligible to vote—did so in large numbers. This event was soon followed by Aguinaldo’s capture and there was a spike of surrenders in February-May of 1901 that crippled the guerrilla movement.⁷⁰⁴ The movement limped on, and Miguel Malvar assumed the presidency of the Philippine Republic, but the spate of surrenders in 1901 was the beginning of the end.

The Municipal and Provincial Government Act took the sails out of the resistance movement since it appealed to the rural, municipal elites—the people whose support was crucial to the survival of the independence movement. A lot of the elites’ impulse to resist was now gone—the Americans had essentially given them back the power they had enjoyed under the Spanish, with the added bonus of having gotten rid of the friars, and promised Filipinos a larger role in national politics. The American’s creation—and

⁷⁰² Linn, *The Philippine War*, 219.

⁷⁰³ Parades, *Philippine Colonial Democracy*, 44.

⁷⁰⁴ Go, *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning*, 111.

successful defense—of a working civil government in the Philippines also undercut many of the Aguinaldo Government's claims of authority with the ever-so-important municipal elites. The Americans now offered these elites protection from bandits. The Americans also promised to uphold the economic order from which these rural elites benefited. And with the new municipal government, the Americans could now legitimize the municipal elites' positions of authority. The Aguinaldo/Malvar Government could do none of these things and, with their exactions of food and wealth and their disruption of the economy, the guerrillas were in fact impediments to the continued prosperity of the rural elites. The Aguinaldo/Malvar Government could offer little in return for their demands beyond a vague promise of independence sometime in the future. There was now little reason for these rural magnates to support the guerrillas, and more reasons for them to turn to the Americans—who were also strong enough to defend the rural elites from guerrilla reprisals.

The collapse of the independence movement suggests why the Aguinaldo Government *could not* resort to guerrilla tactics right away—or at least it could not do so easily. Guerrilla warfare in the Philippines would have entailed *decampment* in order to avoid the American forces and not present them with a concentration of Filipino military strength to destroy. Dispersal of this sort would have entailed *giving up* the lowland centers of power, of losing contact with the municipal elites and leaving them to interact with the Americans. The Americans would have been able to set up governments much sooner, which would have challenged the basis of the Aguinaldo Government's power much sooner. Giving up the lowlands would have made the Aguinaldo Government appear incompetent, unable to govern or exercise sovereignty in its chosen jurisdiction.

Decampment was a strategy of decentralization—it could not have worked for a government whose goal was the complete opposite.

The war was officially declared won by the new American president Theodore Roosevelt on 4 July 1902. The Malvar Government had been dissolved and American colonial hegemony had no competitors left in the Philippines. Some resistance would continue for a few more years, but it did not stop American agents of empire from collecting taxes, enforcing the law or doing business. The burden of “pacification” fell on the newly established Philippine Constabulary, but for all intents and purposes, the Philippine-American War had come to an end.

Thus died the first Philippine attempt at nation-building. Emilio Aguinaldo had dreams of a “Philippines for Filipinos” but in the end, “his capacities did not come up to his dreams.”⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰⁵ From *Conquistadors*, Ep. 4 “All the World is Human.” BBC documentary, Michael Wood. The quote refers to Pánfilo de Narváez.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

A long view of Philippine history from the Spanish Conquest until the Philippine-American War shows a slow, halting process of political centralization. The political landscape of the Philippines began with the multipolar environment of the prehispanic *barangays* and ended with a unitary, centralized American colonial state. The road to centralization was complicated and the end result not at all preordained or inevitable. For a variety of reasons, a tendency towards political fragmentation or decentralization was strong in Philippine history. The geography was probably the most important reason why it was so difficult to consolidate power in the Philippines: it is an archipelago, and the islands are often hilly or mountainous, and densely forested. Centralizing power in the Philippines therefore required a concerted effort, and the Spanish only tried to do so in the 19th century.

Filipinos, whether full blooded natives or *mestizos*, played a role in the eventual centralization of the Philippines. Throughout the period I discussed in this study, Filipino society was very strongly inclined towards localism; but by the end of the 19th century a small number of Filipinos had internalized the concept of nationalism. Thus, by the end of the 19th century, there were a few Filipinos who wanted to centralize the Philippines under the aegis of a Filipino government, one ruling over an indigenous nation-state. These nationalist Filipinos revolted against Spain in 1896, precipitating a period of unrest and violence that lasted until 1902. Unfortunately, there was no wave of nationalist

sentiment, but only a sense of common grievance against the Spanish domination and exploitation of the Philippines. The Filipino nationalists also had to deal with the multipolar tendencies of Philippine politics, which affected the kind of government and army they ended up creating. This experiment in nation-building came to an end when the Filipinos were defeated in the Philippine-American War. Filipinos thereby lost the chance to centralize the archipelago entirely on their own terms.

The two competing trends of centralization and fragmentation were reflected in similar trends in Philippine military history. On the one hand, the various central governments deployed military force to fight for their interests and to uphold their authority. The Spanish were the ones who introduced these centralized military systems, which gave them a European flavor in the Philippines. The military forces of the centralized governments were usually organized, bureaucratized, and uniformed armies—“regular” armies (even if they did not start out that way). They fought to defend territory against foreign invaders and to suppress internal dissent or resistance towards the political system.

On the other hand, there was physical, forcible resistance to centralization. Resistance generally took the form of *decampment*, or flight into the mountains and forests in the interiors of the islands of the Philippines. Decampment was an evolution of military practice that dated from prehispanic times, and it remained a viable tactic even during the Spanish period because of the peculiarities of the Spanish colonial system. Decampment can be called *remontado* warfare, from the Spanish term for Filipinos who abandoned the mainstream of colonial society to literally “return to the mountains.”

Remontado warfare was inherently decentralizing, since its practitioners intentionally isolated themselves. Survival was a form of victory, since the continued survival of the *remontado* represented a challenge to the dominant system of the centralized government of the lowlands. The *remontados* sometimes raided the lowland settlements and they occasionally had to fight off attempts by the centralized government to defeat them and reintegrate them into society so it wasn't a completely passive form of war—it did involve the active use of force.

Therefore, one can say that there is a dialectic between centralization and fragmentation in Philippine politics and warfare. The general trend has been towards centralization, but because of the nature of the geography and culture of the Philippines, fissiparous tendencies persist even to this day.

The dialectic was played out during the Philippine-American War. During this conflict, we saw two groups, the Aguinaldo Government and the Americans, contend with the problems of multipolarity and attempt to centralize the Philippine archipelago on their terms. The study focused on the Filipino side, since there are already studies of the American attempts to conquer and “pacify” the archipelago.

The Aguinaldo Government faced two problems in its quest to build a nation-state: the familiar one of overcoming localism in the Philippines, and the new problem of trying to secure foreign recognition of its sovereignty. Its answer to both problems was to create an outwardly Westernized or Europeanized political system and army. The political system was a constitutional republic with executive and legislative branches and direct representation, while the army was a regular, uniformed military force with a

hierarchical structure and European-style tactics. The Aguinaldo Government's hope was that by appearing Europeanized, foreign governments would recognize the Filipinos' suitability for self-rule. This may be called Aguinaldo's "strategy of recognition," or his attempt to prevent war through diplomacy or, indeed, through a show of prowess. However, the kind of government and military that Aguinaldo created consolidated power into his hands, so it also served to centralize authority.

Unfortunately for Aguinaldo, the strategy of recognition failed. In trying to reform the army and politics of the Philippines, Aguinaldo also fought the Americans in a way that maximized Filipino weaknesses and American strengths. When the central government and reformed army were defeated, Aguinaldo and the other revolutionaries reverted back to *remontado* warfare. Once again the dialectic of centralization and fragmentation came into play, and because the *remontado* form of warfare was inherently decentralizing, the Aguinaldo Government's nationalist aspirations came to naught. More specifically, the nationalist guerrillas in the mountains lost contact with the rural elites in the towns and villages of the lowlands. This gave the Americans the opportunity to gain their loyalty, and the guerrillas' tactical ineptitude meant they were unable to do anything about it. So in the Philippine-American War, the Aguinaldo Government was unable to overcome the challenge of political fragmentation and they were eventually defeated.

This study began by saying it wished to place the Philippine-American War into the indigenous context. In doing that, I ultimately analyzed 300 years of Philippine history. The scope of this study expanded because I was desirous of finding out why the Filipinos fought the way they did during the Philippine-American War. Some of their

decisions seemed nonsensical—why fight the Americans in a conventional war? The answer, I discovered, was that the whys and wherefores of the Philippine-American War have their roots in larger trends of Filipino history. There were, in fact, very good reasons for the decisions the Filipinos made. War is not an act that happens in isolation—it is necessary to consider the larger picture of a society's culture and history in order to fully understand it.

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