REAPPRAISING PHILIPPINE HISTORY

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History is not a popular subject in the schools. Perhaps we can add that, unless forced, no student will sign up for it. Fortunately, deans and professors look at it differently. In this way, they are like Rizal who spent several months in the British Museum in London annotating Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, hoping to "awaken an awareness of our past, blotted till now from our memory, and rectify past calumnies and falsifications . . . [so] we can dedicate ourselves to the study of the future."[1]

People praise history as "interesting," but in the same breath excuse themselves for not having a retentive enough memory to master it. One, of course, needs more than memory to know history.

The English word *history* comes from the Greek *ιστορεω (historeo)*, which means to investigate or inquire, and to write or talk about the fruits of that inquiry. The Germans use three words: *Geschichte* (events), *erzählen* (to narrate) and *forschen* (to investigate). The English term is thus broader, but not as precise as its German equivalent. Moreover, we are told that Herodotus was the first to "historize," that is, to write or relate the results of his inquiry into the past.

This explains why we need more than memory for history. But fundamentalist historians wrongly invoked Ranke's famous phrase, "*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*" (exactly as it was) (Stern 1956: 57). To them history means knowledge of the "facts" of history. Objectivity is the norm, historical facts must be left to speak for themselves, and interpretation is taboo. The result is a glorified calendar, a mere register of names, events, dates and places.

There are, of course, no facts out there for the picking. What we have is a sequence of causes and effects, and the historian's task is to trace this pattern in an intelligible form to understand the past.

But to educe history from facts, we have to know the language that clothes them. To master a language, we have to know the culture that produces it. And to know a culture, we have to enter the mind and the heart of the creators of that culture.

That is why history demands the entire gamut of human skills, both mental and emotional. It brings us face to face with people, with their hopes and anxieties, with people attracted by good and repelled by evil. In the sixteenth century, the Pope and the Christian kings faced the Islamic world; today, it is the United Nations calling on the United States, mainly, and its allies to defend human rights and democratic society. Then, it was Suleiman the Magnificent ranged against Don Juan de Austria. Today, it is Saddam Hussein or Fidel Castro against the president of the United States. If you can change the names, the places, the dates, you will see that the motivations are not much different. History, briefly, makes us understand human nature, and we learn to sympathize and feel for our fellow human beings.

> *They led him out of the walls of the city along the road that is now called after Bonifacio, the moat on one side of him, the sea on the other. And at one place he stopped and said, turning back to the city, "Is that the Ateneo?"*
>
> *Someone said, "It is."*
>
> *"I spent seven years there."*
>
> *Then he went on. They were now very close to the place of execution, and when he saw it, that splendid calm of his broke down, for the second and last time after he had heard the sentence of death.*
>
> *"My Fathers," he cried, turning to the Jesuits who went with him. "What a terrible thing it is to die. How much one suffers!"*

Then was he calm again suddenly, and added: "I forgive all from the heart; I hold no resentment against anyone. Now I know for truth that my pride has led me here."

Those were almost his last words, except that he begged not to be shot in the back, because he was no traitor. And all this time the drums were beating, muffled drums; and he passed silent into the midst of the silent crowd, and the soldiers waiting.

Now the place was called Bagumbayan, which being translated means the New Land; an odd omen of what was to be, though no one knew it yet. For this man's death, more than anything, brought about a new land into being.

But now there was a sudden shock shattering the silence; the short sharp speech of rifles. The man in black who stood apart and alone swayed a little; then, with a tremendous effort, turned around, because he desired to fall with his face turned to the sky, not as a traitor falls.

And it was morning.

(De la Costa 1942: 222-223)

This excerpt is from Father de la Costa's description of Rizal's execution. With poignancy and an economy of words, with rare intuition and disciplined admiration for his subject, the author revived for us those fateful hours when one man's death led to the birth of a new nation, a "*bagong bayan*."

This is history, when the past comes alive in flesh and blood. We not only know but we *sympathize* with the actors of the past, make their ideals our own, and feel inspired to do something similar; when "objective facts" spring to life and we sit back and agree that, indeed, that is the way it happened, "*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*."

What sets this writing apart? It is accurate and full, a piece of writing borne of exact knowledge, because it is total knowledge, a product of the mind and the heart, the two avenues that, when they work together, a lead to truth. Not only do we read how the national hero died, but also why. We are given a glimpse into the meaning of his death. For in history there is no such thing as bare facts or single, isolated incidents unconnected to one another. Simply put, history gives a full view of life.

There are two ways of telling the truth. I can say briefly, without any fanfare, that I go to school daily, and I can also say that I hobble on my crutches as I go to school daily. But the second is a total picture, in which I can see my determination, my courage, my energy, to overcome my physical disability in order to attend school daily.

This is the kind of knowledge and wisdom that history promotes, possible only when the heart and the mind work in harmony. Thought and emotion do not always work together, as Blaise Pascal noted, for the heart has reasons the mind knows not of. But in history, the heart and the mind must work together. Perhaps more than any other academic pursuit, history integrates imagination, emotion, will, and mind. History makes a person completely human. That is why history integrates the basic program of humanistic education.

HISTORY AND THE JESUITS

Significantly, the centuries-old Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum*, or Plan of Studies, does not mention history as an academic discipline essential to the total formation of the student. When the Ratio was first drawn up in the sixteenth century, history in the schools was just a function of religion. A closer reading, however, of the Jesuit academic curriculum shows the omission is merely apparent. Ignatian spirituality, which is the Ratio's inspiration and which expresses itself in the Jesuit school, is rooted in knowledge of history. Although implicit, a sense for history – or a sensitivity to the process of change in space and time – is essential to the famous Jesuit triad, "*prelectio*, *lectio*, *repetitio*" (preliminary reading, analytical reading, or study, review), or "*pauca precepta multa exempla*" (few rules abundantly exemplified and practiced). It could not be otherwise.

With time on his hands while convalescing from battle wounds, St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order, read the lives of saints. Slowly, vaguely and tentatively, what he read made him reject his past life and set a new direction for his future. He was converted, and later, already a mystic and master of the spiritual life, he urged – as a point of departure for his future followers – an examination of conscience. He urged people to look into their personal history, or, to discern their spirits. One of the saint's injunctions to his secretary was to note down things that could guide future Jesuits, including "*cose non edificative*" (unedifying things), because it would help to know them. What is this, if not analysis of the past – or history itself?

Jesuit academic programs insist on this mental habit of going back, reviewing, repeating, testing, reexamining ideas initially imbibed. There is nothing unusual about this at all. We all keep memories, both happy and painful, and through them we understand ourselves. What else is a birthday party other than a glance back to celebrate life's triumph over death? A wedding anniversary is likewise a moment of joy. Lawyers not infrequently pore over past legal decisions to argue a case. And employers invariably ask a job applicant about his experience, or his personal history. For knowledge of the past is the precondition for wisdom, an integral element of life subject to change in space and time.

Actually, we are all historians by instinct. We would not know anything unless it is information from the past. We do not grasp a story until it ends, and until an explanation is over, we do not understand anything. The French call it "*dénouement*," or untying, opening up things. Once untied, it is a thing of the past, for totality or completeness is the price of intelligibility.

Natural habit or instinct, of course, does not suffice. Like any natural talent, it needs identification and full development. Undeveloped ability, like an ear for music, requires refinement. Inborn inquisitiveness must be challenged. People must be taught history to be able to narrow the gap between the past and the present, resuscitate the past, or, as some say, appreciate history.

Obviously, no one consults an untrained quack to cure one's illness, but the number of pseudo-historians is appalling. Sadly, this leads to bad history, which presently plagues our schools.

The Escuela Municipal that the Jesuits opened in 1859 has today become the Ateneo de Manila University. One reason those undermanned Jesuits had accepted the running of the school was to be of "special service" to the government. They wanted to form a carefully chosen group of young men to have academic competence, rules of etiquette, and Catholic way of life. This ideal was based on a solid intellectual, literary, and moral training. While noting that "no European nation surpasses the Philippines in the number of people who can read and write," the Jesuits also saw that "in no other schools is there such a lack of historical and humanistic training." Hardly were the young trained to compare things, trace or analyze their origins or causes. Many could not recall their parents' names or identify the days of the week (Cuevas 1861; Arcilla 1983: 58-74; Arcilla 1988: 16-35).

To remedy the situation, the Jesuits agreed to direct the Escuela Municipal. It aimed at the Ignatian vision of youth formed "*en letras y buenas costumbres*." In the university statutes and by-laws of the Ateneo today, the phrase is "preservation, extension, and communication of truth and the development of man and preservation of his environment." (Ateneo de ManilaUniversity *Student Handbook* 1997: Art. II, IV) The Ateneo hopes to provide the leaven of Philippine society through the "*ejemplo y doctrina*" (Constitutions of the Society of Jesus) of its graduates – men and women for others that would help build God's kingdom on earth.[2]

How effective was the plan? In one case at least, it was very effective. On the eve of his graduation from the Ateneo, the 16 - year-old José Rizal sat pensive in his cubicle, deep emotions stirring in his heart, as his pen preserved his thoughts in a diary. He had started schooling at the Ateneo, still a young boy, he wrote,

> *. . . with little knowledge of the Spanish tongue, with an* intelligence only partly developed, and almost without refinement in my feelings. But by dint of studying, of analyzing myself, of reaching out for higher things, and of a thousand corrections, I was being transformed little by little, thanks to the influence of a benevolent professor.

> . . . Cultivating poetry and rhetoric had elevated my feelings, and Virgil, Cicero, and other authors showed me *a new path which I [could] take.* (Jacinto tr. 1950: Chapter 5)

"Elevated feelings," "a new path" – these were Ateneo's gifts to the Filipino youth best exemplified by Rizal. He did not become a professional historian, but his rounded personality and cultivated mind appreciated history. One of the gifts he had virtually forced from his father when he was still an undergraduate teenager at the Ateneo was the multivolume *Universal History* by the liberal historian Cesare Cantù (1804-95).

An innovation the Jesuits introduced into the program of the Ateneo Municipal was history as an academic subject – bible history in the first two years and universal history in the last two years. With the other disciplines, they formed a formidable course of studies for pupils between seven and 12 years old. They learned a full range of sciences not as specialized topics but, in Father de la Costa's words,

> . . . *as a sideline, an adjunct to culture [when] not much more* than memory is required. Now the memory . . . is freshest, is most retentive in childhood. It is for this reason that Father Cuevas and the Ayuntamiento [of Manila] assigned the acquiring of a "gentleman's knowledge" of the sciences to what would be today's intermediate grades. This accessory, if necessary, erudition [now] out of the way, it was possible to devote the next stage in cultural education to the faculty that next develops in man after his memory . . . his imagination; it was possible then to work with undistracted intensity in the humanities, or what they call today *Poetry and Rhetoric* (De la Costa 1942: 44).

HISTORY IN PHILIPPINE SCHOOLS

How crucial is history as part of the school curriculum? Koreans today campaign to change the history of the Second World War. They maintain that Japanese authors have whitewashed Japanese cruelty off the pages of Japanese textbooks. The same thing happened not too long ago in South America, during the 400th anniversary of Columbus's discovery of the New World. The South Americans claimed it was the beginning of Spanish inhumanity to the defenseless indigenous Americans. Among us, there is a constant move to say that Ferdinand Magellan "rediscovered," not discovered, our country, or that Philippine history should be written from the "Filipino viewpoint."

The debate is more than an academic issue, but concerns our need to know the truth about ourselves by knowing our past. What history books the Philippine schools used in the nineteenth century is perhaps impossible to determine now. The Spanish Jesuits at the Ateneo wrote their own class manuals, the best known being the *Manual de la Infancia*. The Jesuits in the Normal School, the first teacher-training institute in the Philippines, also had to write their own manuals. Its first Jesuit director published in succeeding years a compendia of Philippine history and Philippine geography. Other Jesuits, too, published their class manuals, like a history of Spain, or a compendium of Philippine geography. Later, the "Thomasites,"[3] the first American teachers in the Philippines, either wrote some kind of class notes or used American books used in the American schools. And until a few years after the change of governments at the turn of the century, Spanish served as the medium of instruction.

Unfortunately, the continued use of Spanish at the Ateneo (and the University of Santo Tomás) kept these two schools from rendering the "special service" when it was needed most. Paradoxically, the reason the Jesuits had agreed to administer the Normal School in 1865 was to give the special service of providing trained teachers for the country. Ateneo students studied English under an American Jesuit who taught it for only three quarters of an hour to a class of six. And the story goes that Governor-General William Howard-Taft offered to make the University of Santo Tomas the biggest university in the Far East provided English became its medium of instruction.

The Jesuits and the Dominicans, along with the rest of the Spanish community in Manila, believed the loss of *Hispanidad* would automatically lead to the loss of *Catolicismo*, or that the Filipinos did not care to learn the new language. Yet at the newly opened Assumption College for

girls, where English was the medium of instruction, students had to be turned away for lack of room. Frank H. Carpenter, the Executive Secretary of the Insular government, expressed surprise, for he had the impression that the Jesuits could always adapt themselves to the circumstances. But at this time, when the government needed governors and mayors, the two universities in Manila produced graduates unfit for government service because they did not know English. Scoring extremely well in all the other subjects of the civil service examinations, they invariably failed in English and could not be employed even as government clerks. In the same way, these English illiterates were kept from top positions in the new commercial or industrial corporations for which English was required. A new government school of commerce offered more courses on English and, as an American Jesuit teacher at the Ateneo remarked, "leadership among the future businessmen of the Islands will not be held by our alumni." Education had been a successful Jesuit apostolate in the Philippines, but it seemed it was no longer so. Unless changes were introduced, the same Jesuit warned, the American Jesuits would soon be rendered useless:

> *The aim of a Jesuit college should be to train men for present and future leadership. But our students are almost entirely excluded from commercial and official positions, which in consequence are being filled by students of the public schools.*
>
> *We are identifying ourselves with a losing cause; our chances for leadership are fast disappearing.*[4]

In 1921, officials of the University of the Philippines paid a courtesy call the newly arrived American Jesuits at the Ateneo. The former expressed concern over the history books used at the Ateneo and offered to revise them. Fr. Francis A. Byrne, S. J., the first American rector of the school, politely agreed to have the books examined – not by the professors of the University but by a committee of three, including himself. The Jesuits could have flatly refused to cooperate in the face of such officiousness, but unfortunately, new in Manila and not yet fully accepted by the influential Spanish community, the American Jesuits had to bend over backward to avoid compromising a work they had hardly begun. At that time, refusal to cooperate with officials of the State University could have occasioned fighting "against the educational authorities themselves."

What were these objectionable history books? One of them was written in Spanish by a Spanish Jesuit, Fr. José Burniol, a history teacher at the Ateneo since 1908, the year the University of the Philippines was founded. In 1912, the book was translated into English, but obviously it emphasized the Spanish role in Philippine history. But neither was the other kind of history less objectionable. The history books used at the university, according to Burniol, "neglected, insulted, [and] betrayed Spain, keeping the truth under cover." (Burniol tr. 1912)

Significantly, earlier in 1905, James A. Leroy (1905), perhaps the American most informed about the Philippines at the turn of the century, published his *Philippine Life In Town and Country*, precisely to counter what he called North American prejudice and ignorance about the Philippines. Both expansionists and anti-imperialists, he wrote, were debating themselves black and blue in the face about the future of their new colony, but without the slightest idea of what they were talking about. He insisted that one must consider the history of the country in order to judge the Filipinos fairly. And no balanced judgment could ever be made without considering the role of the Spanish friars. That ahead of all their Asian neighbors, the Filipinos had progressed to such a degree that they were willing to fight and even die for political independence was itself the highest praise for what Spain did. Yet in 1921, the Americans at the University of the Philippines seemed unaware of the views of one who had been a member of the Taft Commission and later consul at Durango, Mexico. American prejudice against Spain ran deep.

SOCIAL CONTEXT OF PHILIPPINE SCHOOLS

This is not the place to go into the details, but at this time the Philippine Catholic Church, critically short of priests, was fighting for its very life. How bad the situation was, Fr. Byrne described to a

fellow Jesuit in New York. Most of the Ateneo graduates, he wrote, were "leaders in education and law and medicine and in politics, but most of them have given up their faith and are Masons. Our greatest enemies are the Ateneo graduates."[5] Significantly, while lamenting the "sure disappearance" of Spanish, the Spanish consul in Manila wrote in *La Defensa*, a Spanish daily newspaper in Manila that the American Jesuits had come to "help the US put off independence." the Spanish daily predicted that with the newcomers, independence "would suffer intellectually." But more than slowing down or speeding up the Philippine independence campaign, the American Jesuits immediately found out that their work in the Philippines was not to save the Christian faith of the Filipinos, but rather that of "planting it in a land that hates priests and despises them . . . ."[6]

Their more urgent task was, therefore, to make Ateneo help solidify the Catholic Church in the country. Philosophy and theology became the key academic disciplines, and history was relegated to a secondary rank. And until Fr. Horacio de la Costa, S.J. (1911-77) returned after profesional training in the historical sciences, amateurs and non-historians taught history at the Ateneo and other Philippine schools. The books they used and their teaching methods naturally reflected this less-than-ideal situation.

Outside of the Ateneo, Fr. Louis LaRevoire Morrow (1916), later bishop of Krishnagar in India, with Norberto Romualdez, former justice of the Supreme Court, wrote *A Short History of the Filipino People*. [16] Published in 1916, it was revised only in 1955 to "present events, circumstances, and developments correctly and dispassionately, in order to favor the formation of as fair a judgment as is possible . . . to emphasize not the activities of a few individuals or any class, but the development of the people as a whole." The authors reminded their readers that the separation of Church and State in the Philippines should "not be interpreted as many have interpreted it – to mean the deification of the State at the expense of the Church, the adoption of a fetish about non-religion, or even irreligion."

The implications are clear: a pervasive anticlerical and anti-Hispanic attitude fostered by bad history, spiced by the sharp anti-Spanish *leyenda negra*, which proclaimed that everything Spanish was bad.

In 1939, Gregorio Zaide's *Philippine History and Government* appeared from a Manila press. He followed this with a history "for Catholic schools." These two books formed the minds of many Filipinos immediately after the Second World War. Zaide was trained in the school of the factualists, those who misinterpreted Ranke's dictum and concentrated only on the bare "facts" of history. Personal interpretation was taboo, and objective impartiality was the ideal. Today, many would classify these works as mere chronicles, not history in the present understanding of the word.

Philippine postwar reconstruction was laborious. Liberated and newly independent, the war-ravaged country raised new objectives and new history texts did not take long in appearing, most of them proudly proclaiming that they were "based on the course of studies approved for the Public Schools." Eufronio M. Alip (1954:149-50) was one of the first writers of manuals for history classes in the postwar Philippines.

Perhaps it was Teodoro C. Agoncillo who made the most impact among this group. In his *History of the Filipino People* (1960), he claimed there had never been a history of the Filipinos until 1872, but rather a history of Spain in the Philippines. Nationalism at the time was flexing its muscles, and the Agoncillo thesis received a welcome no other subsequent history manual has been accorded. Agoncillo's book may not have been used at the Ateneo,[7] but the high-school graduates who continued their schooling here had been nurtured in the Agoncillo frame of mind. History teachers at the Ateneo had – and still have – to disabuse their students and correct wrong methods of study.

What is true of Philippine history at the postwar Ateneo can also be said of the other courses of history – European, American, Japanese, etc. Undergraduate history was for long based on Carlton J. H. Hayes' two-volume *A Political and Cultural History of Modern Europe* (1961), whose title is a good index of the Eurocentrist emphasis in classroom discussions that included economic or literary history. Hayes claimed his book presented the "many-sided aspect of modern Europe," for Europe for the past thousand years, he claimed, had been the key to the world. To understand it, then, one must

know the story of how "Europe earned a living and has been ruled . . . what it has thought and achieved in science and philosophy, in literature and art."

A briefer version he co-authored with Parker T. Moon (1923) was also popular among Philippine schools. At a time when the postwar boom led to a feeling of euphoria and optimism, the people believed progress was around the corner, and the 1943 revision of the Hayes thesis reflected the critical attitudes following the outbreak of the Second World War. The co-authors again presented the "story of how modern Europe has "earned a living and has been ruled . . . of what it has thought and achieved in science. and philosophy, in literature and art" – many-sided, but still, with emphasis on Europe alone.

MODERN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Two world wars had raised serious doubts about the theories and utopias inherited from the nineteenth century, and historians began to question traditional historiography. Among the pioneers of the new thinking were Jaime Vicens Vives (1971, 1967) and his scholars in Spain, and Fernand Braudel (1969) with his colleagues of the *Annales* school in southern France (Reynolds 1972; Burke 1990). Now the actor of history was not so much the big man, the leader – Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, Napoleon, etc. – but the ordinary person on the street. After all, it was actually the rank and file who died fighting the kings' battles, the unnamed factory worker who made possible the industrial revolution, or the ordinary citizen who enjoyed Dante's *Divina commedia* or Shakespeare's plays and popularized them in the literal sense of this word. History just uncovered the movements of the human heart. History expanded its horizons and took into account *all* factors of human life. And since the scope of research has reached beyond the capabilities of a single historian, the trend is now toward a team cooperating to produce the most plausible recreation of the intelligible pattern of the past called "history."

Henry S. Lucas's *A Short History of Civilization*, first published in 1943, faintly – perhaps unwittingly – exemplified this theory. He warned that his book was about culture. He added that political, social, and economic phenomena had been properly subordinated to general cultural development. To make the most of his new book, he urged his readers to supplement it with the "important literature such as Plato's *Republic*, the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, or Calvin's *Institutes"*.[8]

What does all this mean? It simply means that historical scholarship has moved ahead. More than what happened to people, or what people have caused to happen, uncovering and identifying the past really means probing the depths of the human heart – uncovering and identifying all that we have thought and wanted, where we have succeeded or failed. Knowing all this, we are in a better position to understand the present and to chart our future. For historical wisdom comes from understanding temporal change in space and time. It tells us of life, which offers no clear-cut divisions between past and present. It is like the mother who knows her child thoroughly through the years, from infancy to early childhood to adulthood, from the cradle to the child's new home.

History implies the art of communication. History should be seen, heard, felt. Its audience should shed tears, laugh, or be inspired.

> *Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate – we can not consecrate – we can not hallow – this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated [it] far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is*

for us the living, rather, to dedicate to her the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.

Abraham Lincoln was not a historian. His speech was not meant to be history. But in these few lines, perhaps much better than any other written by any historian of the American Civil War, he captured the meaning of a crucial event in that nation's history. He has given life not just to the events, but also to their inner logic – the causes, the effects, the totality of a fratricidal conflict. He saw not a bare isolated incident but the total historical reality, namely, men fighting and dying for a noble cause.

Total knowledge, integration of the heart and the mind, understanding of human nature – this is the ideal result from teaching history.

THE EUROPEAN ROOTS OF PHILIPPINE HISTORY

Philippine history can mean both the events that formed our country and our effort to understand them, which depends on "historiography," or the art of writing history.

No one will gainsay that factors outside of the Philippines influenced the formation of mutually hostile tribes into what is now the Philippines. In fact, we still hear the not-too-innocent remark that after 375 years in a Spanish *convento*, the Filipinos moved to the more airy but godless American bungalow. Buddhism, too, and Islam had been earlier influences, but they did not leave as deep an imprint on Philippine society as Spanish Christianity.

Like Central America, our country was – for lack of a better term – an "exploitation" colony. Located in the tropics, with a different climate from that of Spain, it produced goods that commanded a huge market in the mother colony. Economic reasons and the hope of amassing personal fortunes strongly motivated migration to the country despite the dangers of crossing the unknown seas. Hence, the colonists wanted to control extensive areas for exploitation, sometimes with slave labor. This explains the use of the tag on the Philippines as an "exploitation colony."

Obviously, the government would not remain indifferent to the possibilities of a lucrative trade. The late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century voyages of discovery were generally Crown monopolies, and colonial rule was an exclusive royal prerogative. Colonial society, under direct royal control, purposely imitated the metropolitan. The reason was simple: total control for the sake of economic gain. This was true of the Philippines, which Spain wanted to Hispanize.

The Spaniards came after more than a half-century of uneasy colonial experience in America. Blood had flowed, some indigenous tribes had been wiped out, but people like the Dominicans Francisco de Vitoria (1484-1546) and Bartolomé de las Casas (1474-1566) and the Jesuit José de Acosta (1539-1600) defended native rights and condemned the heartless abuse of the defenseless in the New World. They pricked the royal conscience and drove the Crown to look into the issue of how to treat non-Europeans. Spain's jurists and theologians spent months justifying the Spanish presence in America until they convinced everybody that Spain could conquer and govern colonies only *propter evangelium* (for the sake of the Gospel). And before Legazpi sailed to Cebu in 1565, King Philip II of Spain (1556-98) had already replaced the word "conquer" with the more idealistic "pacify" in the law, for conquest could be interpreted as a title of ownership or that the Crown condoned violence.[9] This explains why the conquest of the Philippines was less bloody than that of the Americas, and the Crown took great pains to minimize outright exploitation of the pre-Hispanic inhabitants of the Philippines.

But geography hampered the colonization of the Philippines. Two oceans separated the colony from the metropolis, and although the Philippines was, like the Spice Islands, in the tropical zone, it produced neither gold nor spices. Except for a fistful of royal representatives and military or naval personnel, Spanish colonists were a negligible factor in the development of the islands. But missionaries came and stayed, and they Christianized local society. Their work left deep traces and Filipino culture today is strongly colored by Hispanic Catholicism.

RESETTLEMENT OF THE FILIPINOS

When the Spaniards arrived here, the people lived in mutually hostile and independent tribes. The colonizers resettled them in permanent communities within *encomiendas*, or lands entrusted as a *merced* (royal favor) for meritorious service. The trustee, or *encomendero*, organized people into a political community with its own government, instructing them in Christianity and defending them from enemies. To enable him to do this – or, in legal jargon, to "discharge the royal conscience" – he had the right to collect an annual tribute and demand public service, or *polo*. As it turned out, the *encomienda* became the social frame within which Hispanization and Christianization were carried out. For lack of missionaries, the *encomenderos*, many of whom – contrary to biased history – were sincere and dedicated Christians, provided the pre-baptismal instructions and prepared the people for baptism before the missionaries finally arrived.

The indigenous culture charmed the first Europeans in our country. Antonio Pigafetta, the chronicler of Magellan's voyage, could not forget the friendly welcome they received from the islanders who had even sailed up to their resting spot to meet them. To his surprise, they fulfilled a promise to return "in four days," to bring them more food. In Cebu, his heart went out to the beautiful girls who entertained them at the royal court, and the etiquette during the banquet Rajah Humabon tendered them (Pigafetta-Nowell:153ff).

But one thing jarred their sensibilities. Instead of towns, the newcomers found "*rios poblados*" (literally, inhabited rivers) or clusters of houses stretching from rivermouths by the sea upward along the rivers inland. Moreover, the people lived "*sin policía*" (without a clear political system or central government), each tribe self-contained and suspicious of the next. Tribal war was chronic, and slavery, endemic.

To the Spaniards, that was not a life worthy of humans, so they decided to gather and relocate people in permanent communities. But the people were loathe to leave the lands where they had been born or where their ancestors' bones had been buried, until they learned the use of the plow and sedentary agriculture.

Formerly, they lived by hunting and some crude swidden farming, with only the bolo and a sharpened stick to dig show holes into which they dropped the grain. After the harvest, cogon grew, against which the bolo was ineffective, forcing them to move to other sites more fertile, more amenable to planting with their rudimentary tools. But with the plow – the lack of an indigenous word for it is guarantee enough of its foreign origin – they could dig deeper, turn the soil, and even uproot the unwanted cogon, enabling them to plant and replant the same piece of land. The promise of a harvest in a few months time thus obviated the need to look elsewhere for new planting grounds. Once people had tasted the benefits of sedentary agriculture and permanent communities, they adapted themselves to the new lifestyle.

Centuries-old experience in town building in the Castilian kingdoms helped dictate the detailed colonial laws on the choice of sites for permanent communities (Recopilacion VI). Ideally, they should be easily accessible, and near sources of water and wood for building and cooking. Individual farmlands should be opened nearby, as well as a common pasturage away from the direction of the wind. Each village and town should be built around a central plaza, on one side of which would be the church (with its door and key), on the opposite the *tribunal* (government hall), on the third a school, and the fourth the houses of the more prominent town residents. Streets should be drawn *a cordel y a regla* (straight and properly measured) from the four sides and four corners of the plaza, the latter to correspond to the four cardinal directions. Each community should have a native *alcalde* (*gobernadorcillo* or, later, *capitán*, the town mayor of today), assisted by a *regidor* (literally "co-ruler," that is, councilor). In communities of 80 residents or more, there could be at most two alcaldes and two councilors.

Thus, the first step the Spaniards took was to bring together and relocate the nomadic tribes in clearly defined permanent settlements according to Castilian tradition. This was how our towns grew. Obviously, a number of these early settlements quickly disappeared. Unused to the duties of living in community, people escaped to the mountains. As a compromise, the government allowed them to

live at a distance from the permanent settlement, provided they were within hearing of the church bells ("*bajo la campana*"). In due time, however, they developed into civil towns, when they counted at least 500 full tributes (or 3,000 inhabitants, "*almas*" in the missionaries' records), and after having opened streets and built the tribunal, the church and the school followed.[10] If priests were available, the new town would have its parish church with a resident priest in charge.

Sociologists tell us that the mutual exchange of social services is essential to a permanent community, for otherwise, community life would be impossible. For example, the fisherman does not have to be at the same time a carpenter, because he can pay with his catch what the latter does for him; or the warrior does not have to plant or hunt, because his main duty is to defend the community, for which he will be duly compensated. Not infrequently, of course, farmers use the free time while waiting for the harvest to go out and fish or hunt, or make bolos and arrows, or build boats to supplement their income. But the general rule was true that specialized social roles freed the community from the ceaseless toil of scrounging for food or securing shelter all their waking hours. No longer was there a need for each one to be at once planter, warrior, carpenter, or weaver, for now others performed these chores for him.

REORGANIZATION IN SPACE AND TIME

More importantly, the people now enjoyed some free time for relaxation, time for the needs of the spirit, time when people becomes most fully human because they can laugh and enjoy the fruits of their labor. And without this freedom from labor, there was hardly any chance for cultural growth, for civilization. All this was possible because of the introduction of the European tradition of town life. A German proverb sums it up quite neatly, "*Stadt macht frei*" (The city liberates).

Thus, with the Hispanization of the Philippines, we observe a reorganization of life in space and time. Sunday was the day to come together for the Mass, the sacraments and religious instruction. Four times daily (sunrise, noon, sunset, and night), the bell called for a brief pause and prayer. Once a year, celebrations honored the patron saint. Life now revolved around a meaningful cycle, the center of which was worship of the Christian God, which gave life a clear purpose.

Permanent communities led to a new political organization, when public authority was no longer vested in the traditional tribal leaders based on kinship alone. This was not as easy as it seemed, and people had to learn to accept leaders who were not their blood relatives.

Necessarily, the new society led to new attitudes and a new language. Royal law clearly ordered that everyone in the colonies should learn Castilian. As Emperor Charles put it, the most perfect indigenous language could not adequately express all the Christian mysteries (Recopilacion VI: 1,18). But experience immediately showed that it was much more convenient for one missionary to learn several local idioms than for entire communities to learn the Castilian language. Thus, the missionaries preached in the local tongues, becoming the first lexicographers and grammarians of the Philippine languages.[11] But since a number of Christian concepts could not be expressed in any indigenous tongue, the missionaries used their Castilian terms, in the process enriching Philippine culture.

Instead, for example, of the indigenous "*Bathala*," the missionaries introduced the Castilian "*Dios*." The first term also referred to a supreme god with lesser deities below him, while the second referred to the unique, all-powerful, absolute Creator the Christians worshipped, thus precluding an unwanted religious syncretism. Pre-Hispanic shelters, except those in ports of international trade like Cebu, were generally a makeshift roof of palm leaves completely open to the winds. In their effort to lead the people to a more human existence, the Spaniards introduced the European *casa* (house), with walls that had opening for ventilation (hence, the Castilian "*ventana*" indigenized to "*bintana*"), and interior walls for separate rooms. New furniture and utensils also came with the Spaniards – *mesa* (*lamisa*), *cama*, *cutsara*. People soon wore trousers (*pantalon*) and shoes (*zapatos*). And now we greet people with "*Magandang araw*," clearly a translation of the Spanish "*Buenos dias*," instead of the more personalistic indigenous greeting with a smile and the question, "*Saan ka pupunta*?" or "*Saan ka galing*?" For the novelty introduced by the conquest inevitably led to a new outlook on life, new

attitudes that needed a new vocabulary: *kalye*, *piso*, *pusta* (for *apuesta*), and the like. A social psychologist would have a field day analyzing such incidents as people denying they eat "*dilâ*," but, yes, "*lengua*."

SURNAMES FOR FILIPINOS

One of the more underrated governors of the Philippines was Narciso Clavería (1843-49). One of the reforms he introduced still characterizes Philippine society. A visit to the provinces had convinced him of the need to reform court procedures and marriage arrangements. Before the conquest, mothers named their infants at random, depending on the circumstances of birth, and people did not use family names. A child, for example, could be called "*Ulan*" (Rain) because rain was falling when he was born, or "*Gutom*" (Hungry) because he was unusually fat. When the oldest child married, the father was called "*Ama ni Gutom*" (in old Tagalog, "*Pan Gutom*," Gutom's father), and people would not know who was referred to if they used his baptismal name.

One can imagine the inconvenience this pre-Hispanic tradition occasioned at court hearings. Not only that, Church law banned marriage of close blood relatives but unless family identities were clear, such impediments could not be settled.

On 21 November 1849, then, Governor-General Clavería ordered a census list based on an alphabetical list of Spanish family names to be chosen by each family head. Those who had been using their pre-Hispanic names together with their given baptismal names could continue to use them, e.g., Lacandola, Tupas, Humabon, Mójica, and no other Filipinos could use them. This explains why almost all Filipinos, even if they have not a single drop of Castilian blood in their veins, have Spanish surnames.

It was a new culture altogether, hardly mentioned in traditional historiography, but it led to Cebu's final surrender to Legazpi in 1565. An unarmed soldier had walked out of the Spanish encampment and was immediately speared to death. An armed squad set out in retaliation and came back with about 20 prisoners, among them the niece of Chief Tupas of Cebu. Learning who she was, Legazpi sent back her lady-in-waiting to tell Tupas that the prisoners were fine, that he could take them all back, provided he came for a parley. Tupas did not come, but his brother, the girl's father did, with six men. Since his daughter was a captive, he said, he also wanted to be a captive of the "king of Spain" and they could do with him "whatever they wanted." He was not going to escape, for he wanted to be "friends with the General." Legazpi expressed satisfaction over his visitor's attitude, and allowed him to take his daughter back home. To the father's utter surprise, the princess came out dressed not as a captive but as the niece of the local chief, in a "very elegant dress," we may presume, tailored according to the European style. And her father, totally won over, replied he no longer wanted to take her back. Instead, he was going back to his brother to tell him to "make peace with the General. If he refused, he would kill him, as he had men to do that for him."[12]

Overlooked by historians, this initial encounter of two different cultures – the Judeo-Christian respect for the human person against the pre-Hispanic tradition of using the spear to solve differences of opinion – was the factor that broke down Cebuano resistance. Was his daughter captured and, probably according to the period, enslaved? Well, then, her father found no other solution than to be enslaved in her stead: an eye for an eye, life for life. The captive girl's father had no qualms about killing his own brother if the latter should disagree with him. Life was not as precious as in Christian society, built on the teaching that each human being for whom the blood of God Incarnate had been spilled was infinitely precious. Instead of being humiliated, harassed, and enslaved, Tupas's niece, a member of the royalty, received the respect and honor she deserved.

Forty-four years earlier, Magellan's explanation of the Christian doctrine to respect one's elders also won over Chief Humabon of Cebu. While tribal society lost respect for the old and the weak – since they could no longer serve as food gatherers of warriors for the tribe – Christian society, built on the intrinsic value of each human being, taught otherwise. The old, the weak, one's elders – regardless of their condition – deserved love and respect (Pigafetta-Nowell: 151-52).

This new morality induced two Cebuano chiefs separated by about a half century to receive the strangers in peace and prepared the ground for the Christianization of the rest of the archipelago. In

other words, the coming of the Europeans meant a broadening of horizons, a new vision of reality that ennobled life. No longer would people live under the constant fear of a sudden attack, especially from one's neighbors; no longer would they cower before the strong who could enslave them or confiscate their harvests, simply because they were too weak to resist. Christianity was meant to change all this, and to give meaning to life.

Of course, it was not a totally rosy picture. In its implementation, Spanish colonial policy had glaring defects, nor was the Christian code easy to follow. Local uprisings were frequent, although until the end of the nineteenth century, they were generally not politically motivated, but were efforts to mitigate an unbearable socioeconomic situation. The government always managed to squelch these movements, for they were generally localized and badly organized.

Pre-Hispanic contacts with China or Southeast Asia hardly affected indigenous life compared to European culture. And great architectural monuments like the Borobudur or the exquisitely fine art of China or Japan produced no indigenous counterparts, which if there were any, could now be truly called indices of pre-Hispanic Philippine culture.

REAPPRAISING PHILIPPINE HISTORY

The Philippines is a sovereign republic of more than 7,000 islands stretched north to south between 4° and 20° north latitude. Located on the edge of the Asian continent, it is often shaken by earthquakes. Volcanic eruptions are not so frequent, but when they occur, the damage can be extensive.

If progress depends on a delicate balance between the external stimuli and the human reaction, geographical factors are a good clue to the Philippines. For where stimuli are overwhelming, culture is stunted, perhaps best exemplified by the extreme Alaskan cold or the burning African desert, neither of which has favored proper human development.

Perhaps it is not totally wrong to say that Philippine history is a story of unfinished beginnings. Magellan arrived in Cebu in 1521, but died before completing his mission. Forty-four years later, Legazpi established the first Spanish colony on the same island, the *Villa del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús*. But twice he abandoned it: first, to go to Panay were food was more abundant, and, second, definitively, when he sailed north and established the seat of the colonial government in Manila in 1560.

Manila was the first Spanish *ciudad* in the Far East. Attacked by Limahong three years after its foundation, the city and the rest of the colony were saved through the heroic action of a handful of Spaniards fighting for their lives and with the help of Visayan and Pampango auxiliaries. As a reward, Manila received the honorific title "*La Muy Noble y Siempre Leal*."

In its early years, the Philippines was a beleaguered outpost. Hardly in place, the Spanish administrative machine was battered by the Chinese who rose in arms a number of times, beginning in 1603. Perhaps the blame could be laid on the Spaniards who did not know how to treat the Chinese whom they admired and despised at the same time. Spanish doubts turned into suspicions, suspicions became irrational fears, and as always, since the best defense is to go on the offensive, the Chinese, disorganized though not outnumbered, struck first. Only after Chinese blood had flowed did reason intervene. And thanks to loyal native auxiliaries, the government prevailed. But anti-Chinese prejudice continued.

The more numerous Chinese in the Philippines were not the only problem. The Spaniards, with neither funds for an adequate defense nor a clear policy, had to be always on their toes because the Moro raiders were relentless, at one time reaching as far as Cagayan Valley in the north and sailing back with a hapless Dominican missionary in tow. At another time, they landed in Bataan and taunted the Spaniards in Manila (actually, Intramuros). Only when steam gunboats arrived in the middle of the nineteenth century was the problem minimized and eventually solved.

To these twin, almost simultaneous threats, we add the Dutch menace. Shut off from the lucrative spice trade after winning their independence from Spain in 1668 following a campaign that had lasted at least 20 years, they set out on their own to claim a share of the eastern trade. Spanish Philippines, however, blocked their plans. Their answer was to waylay the Manila-bound galleons

loaded with silver from Mexico, or to urge the Chinese to divert their trade away from Manila. The heroic defense of the outnumbered Spaniards – again with local auxiliaries – when carabao skin held their cannon in place for they had neither iron chains nor rivets, is an epic awaiting its writer. But we know at least the kernel of the story. A grateful Philippines now commemorates with the yearly "*La Naval*" celebration held every 7 October that improbable victory over better - armed and a more numerous fleet from heretical Holland, a victory attributed to God's Mother invoked under the title of "Our Lady of the Rosary."

In 1648, the Treaty of Westphalia cleared the eastern seas of the Dutch, and the Philippines, with its galleon trade, enjoyed some respite. Manila soon proved it was indeed Spain's "Oriental Pearl" when exotic goods earned millions of Mexican silver. As Schurz put it, Manila had never known "such glorious days." But we must remember that the Manila-Acapulco trade benefited only a few Spanish capitalists in Manila and the exporters from China where the bulk of the profits went. The rest of the colony remained poor, the people eking out a livelihood through the traditional system of "*tianggi*."

Then in 1762, British men-of-war came unannounced, catching Spanish Manila flatfooted, and rather easily captured the city. But the people reacted variously. Parañaque, strategically located between the British gunboats in the bay and the British cannon installed in the city, stood loyally by Spain. In Cavite and Laguna, footloose mobs looted the friar estates. In Pangasinan, Juan Palaris de la Cruz and his followers killed a supposedly abusive *alcalde mayor*. And in northern Luzon, Diego Silang, promised aid by the British, rose in arms. But he was assassinated and his movement collapsed.

There is no need to detail the story of the British occupation of Manila and Cavite, the only places they controlled. Perhaps native resistance rallied by Deputy Governor-General Simón de Anda y Salazar and financed by the millions of silver pesos recently received from Mexico would have eventually ousted the invaders. But there was no need for that. In 1763, the Treaty of Paris ended hostilities and the Philippines reverted to Spanish rule.

One notes that these incidents occurred when the colony reached a certain level of peace and prosperity. The Philippines withstood the triple danger from the Chinese, the Moros and the Dutch, only to face a fourth challenge from the British. The century following the end of the Dutch wars had been a period of stability and some growth, and the galleon trade helped Manila to develop. But European politics brought the British to our country, and they left it a ruined colony.

They stayed less than five years, but during the time that they controlled Manila, no galleon sailed to, or arrived from, Acapulco. The perennially near-bankrupt colonial treasury, which relied on the yearly *situado*, or subsidy from Mexico, was in near collapse, leaving the merchant community penniless. Sufficient agricultural lands were abandoned or wasted. With most of the farm animals slaughtered for food, famine threatened the towns and banditry worsened.

Luckily, after this interlude, the Crown had sense enough to send enterprising governors-generals to Manila: José Basco y Vargas (1778-87), Felix Berenguer de Marquina (1788-93), Rafael Maria de Aguilar (1793-1806) and Mariano Fernández de Folguera (1806-10). These four governors, disciples of the new economic theories imported from France, and convinced that the Philippines could be and should be self-supporting, not only governed in succession but also stayed in office for a total of 34 years, the first time there was a continuity in government policies. Previously, the average term of a governor-general of the Philippines was from five or six years, including travel time. But since it took at least a year and a half sailing from Spain to the Philippines, a governor-general ruled the Philippines for an average of less than five years. Administering a colony two oceans away from the metropolis, and by law with no power to legislate but merely to implement laws enacted in Spain, hardly assured efficient government. That is why the exception almost became the norm: "*a la ley se acata*, *no se cumple*" (we respect the law, but do not implement it). In other words, laws and decrees incompatible with local conditions were held in abeyance until the king, properly advised, either revoked the law before issuing a better one, or insisted on the old law, a case that hardly happened. All the while, the country remained in what we may call "suspended animation." The wonder is not

that occasions for misrule were present; rather, that with a mere fistful of soldiers, and another fistful of missionaries, Spain governed the Philippines for more than 350 years.

By the second half of the eighteenth century then, the Philippines was entering its own second spring. The *Sociedad Económica de los Amigos del País* and its socioeconomic programs; the tobacco monopoly, which more than made up for the perennial colonial deficit and even supported the ailing peninsular economy; the opening of the Philippines ports to international trade; the sugar and the abaca booms in the middle of the nineteenth century – all these breathed new life into the colony. Naturally, prosperity opened horizons and people clamored for more modernization.

THE *ILUSTRADOS*

By the middle of the nineteenth century, we witness the appearance of two outstanding priests – Pedro Peláez, a *criollo* from Pagsanjan, Laguna, and José Apolonio Burgos, a Spanish *mestizo* from Vigan, Ilocos Sur. They campaigned for equal treatment for native-born Filipino priests and appointment to administrative posts in the local Church, as church law demanded. But political expediency dictated that Philippine-born priests should be eased out of existence and their influence curtailed. The South American republics had won their independence through separatist wars started in 1810 by a native-born priest in Mexico, and Spain did not want the same thing repeated in the Philippines.

Their defense of the dignity and worth of the Filipino priests placed the two priests in the limelight. Evidence shows that Peláez had become a thorn on the side of the administration, and there were moves to elevate him to a bishopric outside of the Philippines, according to that famous administrative defensive trick, "*promoveatur ut removeatur*" (promote in order to remove). But a 32-second earthquake buried him in the ruins of the Manila Cathedral in June 1863. The younger Burgos picked up where Peláez had left off.

Unknown to Burgos, the plotters of the Cavite Mutiny of 1872 had used his name to recruit for their cause. Less than a month after it exploded, he, with Fathers Mariano Gómez and Jacinto Zamora, was the prime suspect and later unjustly executed by *garrote vil*.

We say "unjustly" with reason. Governor-General Izquierdo refused to show the trial acts to the archbishop of Manila, who in turn refused to defrock the three priests before their execution. A year later, upon reviewing the dossier from Manila, the Supreme War Council in Madrid condemned in no uncertain terms the executions that followed the mutiny. The governor-general of Manila, it declared, had overstepped his powers, acting as prosecutor and judge at the same time. It issued a stern warning that "in the future, one should resolutely guard against anomalies through privileges granted by the law deeply lacerated in those Islands, as reported in the documents in question." [13] Never had the Madrid government spoken so unequivocally, although mercifully for Izquierdo, he had already finished his term and the reprimand fell on his successor.

Rizal was only eleven years old at the time, but the public execution of three probably innocent priests traumatized him. How terribly the future national hero was affected is best shown in a letter to his friend, Mariano Ponce, 17 years later:

> Without 1872 there would be no Plaridel, no Jaena, not even Sancianco, nor would there be courageous and generous colonies of Filipinos in Europe. Without 1872, Rizal would now be a Jesuit and instead of writing *Noli me tangere*, he would have written the opposite. Seeing those injustices, my imagination even as a child woke up. I swore to dedicate myself to avenge one day so many victims. I have been studying with this idea, and this can be read in all my writings. God will give me the occasion someday to carry out my promise. [14]

With Burgos gone, no other leader stood out and the clergy seemed to have lost their bearings. Once again in Philippine history, the hopeful beginnings of a vigorous clergy were rudely squelched. With the clergy silenced, the laity took over the fight for justice for the Filipinos.

The appearance of the *ilustrados* and nationalist propagandists mark one more stage in Philippine history. The sugar and abaca export industries in the second half of the nineteenth century had created an inchoate middle class with resources to enable them to attend the universities. Articulate and keenly aware of modern developments abroad, they hoped to introduce them also in their country. Strongly Hispanized, they lived, ate, dressed, spoke and wrote like the Spaniards – in some instances, better – and more important, they were as liberal and anticlerical as the Spanish liberals themselves. Aware of their identity and worth, they asked for treatment equal to that given to the Spaniards, and a share in the government of their own country. But, no, they were merely *mestizos*, *indios*, or *hijos del país*, literally "country folk." And backed by the traditional *principio de autoridad*, that is, in every society someone must exercise leadership, the Spaniards believed that they, not the Filipinos, should govern the Philippines. This national insult, heaped not on an individual Filipino but on the race, hurt. The Filipinos reacted as a race. This irrational racism channeled strong Filipino feelings into the revolution that finally ended more than 300 years of Spanish rule in the Philippines.

Rizal had long wanted to avoid violent separation from Spain. The Filipinos, he wrote, were not asking for pity or compassion, but for justice (*Gerechtigkeit*).[15] For colonization, he wrote, was justifiable only on two grounds: overpopulation in the metropolis and the good of the colony. In neither of these two possibilities could Spanish colonization of the Philippines be justified. What then, was the remedy? Violent revolution? No, not violence, Rizal insisted, but reforms, both in the colonial government and among the Filipinos. For the latter were not ready for self-rule, and independence would be meaningless if, in his famous phrase, "today's slaves would be tomorrow's tyrants." Since reform from the top is always the best and the surest and that from the bottom is dangerous, Rizal believed that Spain should lead in the reform.[16] Alas, Spain seemed unable or unwilling to do it. Unfortunately, the first victims of violence were the youthful Filipino intelligentsia, the "fair hope of the fatherland" (*la bella esperanza de la patria mia*), as Rizal sang in his famous poem. Another generation of thinkers and writers followed them, but they were mainly politicians and lawyers spawned by the new political game the Americans introduced.

When they came, the Americans promised to give to the Philippines "the well-being, the prosperity, and the happiness of the Philippine people, and their elevation and advancement to a position among the most civilized peoples of the world." (*Report of the Philippine Commission I* 1900: 13).

They succeeded, but only partly. The democratization of the Philippines depended on two things: sociopolitical unity through one language, English, and the spread of education. In 1939, 10 percent of the Filipinos of school age were attending schools, a rate lower than Japan's 21 percent but higher than Indonesia's 3.2 percent or Korea's 4.5 percent. Then in 1941, Japanese bombs destroyed whatever had been in readiness for full sovereignty in 1946.

The postwar rehabilitation of the country, however, led to an injustice that until now has hardly been righted. Destroyed by a war not of its own making, the United States government agreed to help finance the recovery, provided the Philippines amended the fundamental law of the land by granting equal rights to American nationals to exploit its natural resources. Communism haunted the air, and the specter of the Cold War loomed. They rationalized that by promoting, through American capital, the economic development of the Philippines, it could stave off the Red menace. But American investors refused to help realize that dream. Instead, the move tied the young Philippine Republic to the American dollar.

UNFINISHED PHILIPPINES

Around 1935, the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset described his country as "spineless" (*España invertebrada*). He lamented that "there were no important social forces today in which an enthusiasm for the law is a live issue." (Ortega y Gasset 1937: 87)

With some modifications, this can be said of the Philippines. Rather than being spineless, the Philippines is "unfinished." Not that a "finished Philippines" will ever be possible, since life never ends but continues to develop and there will always be room for improvement.

The Philippines is "unfinished" because the elements for growth are still lacking. Philippine society has always been split between the small landed class and the vast majority of poor, landless Filipinos. From the start, the privileged group has always been distinct from the latter. Their enduring poverty is, as Fernand Braudel wrote, a long-range and almost permanent factor of the lack of Philippine growth. Imperceptibly but effectively, it has determined the kind of society we have and, unless faced, will continue to have.

Spain ruled the Philippines for more than 300 years. During that period, a total of 99 governors-general and 27 interim governors administered the colony. This means that each top royal official in the colony stayed at his post an average of less than three and a half years, a rather brief period for good government.

This was not only because of Spanish incompetence. The Americans governed the country for only 35 years, if we discount the Commonwealth period (1935-41) when we enjoyed some autonomy. But those years were a sustained fight for political independence, and our leaders, hypnotized by the dream of independence, overlooked the needed economic and social development that would sustain independence. With its platform of independence, only one successful political party, the Nacionalista, won during the prewar elections. A party that did not sponsor independence – that is, a *change* of government – was doomed from the start. As a result, no true political party, with a true political platform that aimed at *good* government, developed. What we have are parties based on personalities but without real political platforms. We remain a country without industry, without infrastructure, without adequate education.

We are now an independent nation. But until the Marcos dictatorship, none of our five presidents was reelected. Except on two occasions because Roxas and Magsaysay died in office, every four years a new leader, with new government policies, was installed in Malacañang. As in the Spanish period, there was no continuity of policies, and we have always tried to begin anew – but without ever finishing what we began.

In reappraising Philippine history, it is too simplistic and wrong to blame Spanish colonialism or American imperialism. We must instead recall Rizal's lament, that to build a nation we need, not mud, but bricks.

ENDNOTES

[1] Prologue to Rizal's edition of Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (1899).

[2] The phrase "men for others" was coined by Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S. J., superior-general of the Society of Jesus in 1965-87, in his address to the assembly in Valencia, Spain, of the Jesuit alumni of Europe, on 31 July 1973.

[3] So called because the ship that brought them to the Philippines was the *S.S. Thomas*.

[4] Jerome H. Prendergast, S. J. to the provincial superior, Manila, 12 August 1921. Archives of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus, V-2-059.

[5] Francis A. Bryne, S.J. to the Provincial Superior, Manila, 12 August 1921. Archives of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus, V-2-062.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Some, not all, history classes used, and are still using Agoncillo's book.

[8] Preface to the second edition of Lucas, *A Short History of Civilization.*

[9] *Recopilación de Leyes de los Reinos de las Indias*, Book IV, Title I, law 6, which sums up the royal instruction issued at Valladolid, 13 May 1556, and repeated in the *Ordenanzas* by Gov. Ovando of Hispaniola on 13 July 1573.

[10] A full tribute represented the father, mother, and an average of four children, which was not surprising, considering the high mortality rate when, outside of experienced healers using indigenous medicinal plants, there were no modern medical services.

[11] We must distinguish between the first *handwritten* word lists by the first missionaries, the Augustinian friars, and the first *printed* dictionaries, significantly titled "*Vocabulario*." There naturally would be no extant copies of the first, since, on publication, they were discarded. The first missionary who studied the indigenous tongues was the Augustinian Fray Martín de Rada, who came with Legazpi and converted with his knowledge of Cebuano the first Christian converts in Cebu, including Chief Tupas's niece, renamed Isabela on her baptism. The friar also learned Chinese and presumably, Tagalog. The first Tagalog word list was composed by the Franciscan Fray Juan de Portocarrero (better known as "de Plasencia"), who also wrote a Tagalog-Spanish Christian Catechism. But the first *printed* Tagalog vocabulary was by the Franciscan Fray Pedro de San Buenaventura, *Vocabulario de la Lengua Tagala*, printed by the Franciscan press in Lipa in 1613.

[12] Anonymous report of the Legazpi expedition, *Docoumentos inéditos de Últramar* (1886, 2: 37333-427). A slightly different text in English is in *The Colonization and Conquest of the Philippines* (1965: 41-73).

[13] Archivo General Militar (Segovia), 2ª Sec., 4ª Div., doc. 527 cited Sanz (1987:54).

[14] Rizal to Mariano Ponce, Paris, 18 April 1889 in *Epistolario Rizalino* (1931, 2: 166).

[15] Rizal to Blumentritt, 22 November 1889, *Epistolario Rizalino* (1931) 5, 2:513-15.

[16] *El Filibusterismo*, Ch. 39 and Rizal's long essay, "The Philippines A Century Hence."

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