VOL. I

The Philippines:

A PAST REVISITED

(Pre-Spanish – 1941)

by

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(Vol. II: The Continuing Past)
(1941 – 1965)
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With the advent of a flourishing domestic and international trade there emerged an entrepreneurial class composed mainly of Spaniards, Chinese and Chinese mestizos, with some urbanized natives. When these classes, particularly the Chinese mestizos, acquired vast landholdings to meet the demand for export crops, they displaced and dispossessed many of the old landed principals.

The old principia succumbed to the pressure of the Chinese mestizos whose commercial activities made them a more dynamic force. Members of the old principia were either absorbed by the new rising elite through intermarriage or depressed to the status of tenants. Studies made by Marshall S. McLennan and John Alan Larkin in certain provinces of Central Luzon have turned up evidences of this development in the gobernadorcillo lists where the old native names gradually disappeared in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries and were partially displaced by Chinese mestizo surnames. Moreover, since many mestizos dropped their Chinese surnames and assumed Spanish family names, it was possible that some gobernadorcillos bearing such common Spanish names as Reyes, Ocampo, de Leon, etc. were in fact Chinese mestizos. Other mestizos Hispanized their surnames by combining the names of their fathers, viz. Lichaoco, Cojuangco, Yaptinchay. These practices have made it difficult for us to appreciate the full social dimensions of the Chinese mestizo group in Philippine society.

Thus, when the Philippines was becoming a nation, a new elite composed of Chinese mestizos and urbanized natives had already taken over from the old principia. Whereas the old principia was barrio-based or at best its horizons encompassed only a small town, the new principia, through a system of economic alliances and intermarriage, became a provincial and later a national force. When the economic ambitions of this group collided with the restrictive policies of the colonial order, its discontent merged temporarily with the age-old grievances of the people.

The new principia then began to articulate its demands as those of the emerging national entity.

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Progress and Protest

The end of Philippine isolation which took place between the middle of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries involved more than the physical opening of the country to foreign commerce; it also facilitated the entry of the ideas of the Enlightenment that had been sweeping Europe for some time. These new ideas, particularly the tenets on individual liberty which formed the core of the ideology of developing capitalism, found fertile ground within the country precisely because the new Spanish economic policies for the colony had created social forces which required for their own development an atmosphere of greater freedom.

Spread of Liberalism

The French Revolution had fostered ideas of freedom in Spain; the growth of liberalism in Spain had its repercussions in her colonies. Realizing that their economic interests conflicted with those of Spain, the creoles in the Latin American colonies led popular revolts which finally resulted in the dissolution of Spain's empire in the New World.

In Spain itself, the people's resistance to the Napoleonic invasion brought about the temporary ascendancy of the Spanish Liberals who produced the Cadiz Constitution of 1812. A typical liberal bourgeois document described as "a constitution written by free men to set men free," this Constitution extended the rights of man not only to Spaniards in the peninsula but also to all subjects of Spain.

The Cadiz Constitution was the result of the efforts of Spanish patriots who organized a provisional government in behalf of King Ferdinand VII while Spain was still in the grip of the Napoleonic occupation. But after the downfall of Napoleon
and upon Ferdinand’s return to Spain, the reactionary monarch abrogated the Cadiz Constitution and reimposed a regime of absolutism which would have significant repercussions in the Philippines. Because of the usual time lag, the Cadiz Constitution was proclaimed in the Philippines more than a year after its promulgation and barely a year before its abrogation in May, 1814. Many people took the proclamation of universal equality to mean that they were henceforth freed of tributes and polos since they were now the equals of the Spaniards who had always been exempted from such exactions. This interpretation gained enough currency to force the governor general to issue a bando or announcement saying that the people had misunderstood the constitutional decree, that the government needed funds for its protection and for the administration of justice, that equality with Spaniards did not exempt them from tributes because Spaniards themselves paid heavier taxes, and that if tributes were abolished, perhaps new and higher taxes would be imposed on them.\(^1\)

The protests were particularly vehement in Ilocos where the people vented their wrath not on the Spaniards but on their own principales. To understand this new mass reaction, it is necessary to look into the economic conditions in the Ilocos region during this period.

The Government Monopolies

Spain’s new colonial policies which aimed to develop the local economy as a better source of revenue brought new hardships on the people. The Ilocanos were among the hardest hit because of the operations in their area of the tobacco monopoly established in 1781 and the wine monopoly established in 1786.

Long accustomed to manufacturing basi for their own consumption, the Ilocanos were now forbidden to drink their home-made brew and were forced to buy their wine from government stores. This was the cause of the so-called basi revolt of 1807 in Piddig, Ilocos Sur.\(^2\)

The tobacco monopoly from which the Spanish government derived considerable revenue was the source of graver resentments among the people. Previously, the people grew their own tobacco and sold or consumed it as they pleased. But after the institution of the monopoly, the growing and sale of tobacco was supervised by the government. Farmers were assigned production quotas and fined if they did not meet these quotas. Their entire crop had to be sold to the government which then went to the extent of sending agents to search the houses of the hapless farmers for any stray tobacco leaves they might have kept for their own use.

The whole operation was graft-ridden. The farmers were paid in vouchers which they had to cash at a ruinous discount with government officials or with merchants who were licensed to supply the provinces with necessities, or to use to purchase from the latter their prime commodities at inflated prices.\(^3\) Very often the poor farmers were even forced to exchange their vouchers for articles which they did not need. Government agents cheated the farmers by certifying that their tobacco was of lower grade and then reporting the same tobacco to the government as being of a higher grade. The difference in price went into their own pockets.\(^4\)

These various abuses ancillary to the tobacco monopoly were sources of profit for the gobernadorcillos, the cabezas de barangay and local merchants. These profits were used to buy lands and expand business operations. It was therefore becoming quite clear to the oppressed farmers that their principales constituted an additional burden on them. Other poor farmers who had to plant food crops in order to meet the shortages caused by the assignment of lands to tobacco were also suffering from the usurious rates charged by money lenders. Still others lost their lands via the pacto de retroventa and ultimately became tenants.

Against the Principales

Given these conditions, it is not surprising that when mounting resentment erupted in revolt the people directed their anger against the principales who, having been accommodated in the colonial system as intermediaries, were now not only incidental beneficiaries but active exploiters. Sinibaldo de Mas comments on the unrest in Ilocos:

The principales were the aim of the popular wrath in the Ilocano insurrection in 1807. ‘Kill all the dons and doñas’ was the cry, while the people hastened toward the capital to petition for the abolition of the monopolies and the fifths.\(^5\)

This cry of the people was a clear indication of a growing consciousness of differentiation between themselves and the
indigenous wealthy families, an alienation from their traditional leaders who had gone over to the side of the oppressors. We now see the beginnings of mass movements with class content directed against foreign and local exploiters and putting forward demands of an egalitarian nature.

Economic unrest also manifested itself in preoccupation with egalitarianism in the local religious movements of that time. There were attempts to establish a new religion in the name of an old native god called Lungao who promised equality. A man who called himself a new Christ appeared to the fishermen announcing that true redemption consisted of equality for all and freedom from monopolies and tributes.

Conditions were ripe for the Sarrat revolt in 1815. The expectations kindled by the Cadiz Constitution only to be snuffed out by its abolition provided merely the spark that ignited a long-smoldering resentment.

Illusory Equality

What interested the people most about the Constitution was the question of polos and servicios — the obligation to contribute personally to community works such as roads and bridges. Since the principales were exempted from these exactions, the masses considered the levies made on them as a violation of the principle of equality.

This is not to say that the people had a thorough knowledge of the provisions of this Constitution nor of the complex political battle between liberalism and reaction that produced it and saw its dissolution. They did not need such an understanding to react. It was enough that information regarding this point on equality seeped down to some of them from principals' ranks for the news to spread.

When word of the abrogation of the Constitution reached Ilocos, the cañianes or common people refused to believe it, regarding the announcement as a fabrication by their rich compatriots and by the Spaniards in order to deprive them of their rights. They therefore vowed vengeance on all principals. In almost all towns the masses assaulted the town hall and freed prisoners.

Plebeian Revolt

The cañianes of Sarrat proclaimed their rebellion on March 3, 1815. In Sarrat there was even more cause than elsewhere for an explosion of mass violence against the principals. The town had a thriving weaving industry. The principals of the town used to give workers silk and cotton thread to be woven into cloth. Not surprisingly, the rich usually cheated the poor, often claiming that the cloth was badly woven or of inferior weight and then reducing the payment or refusing to pay altogether.

In the afternoon of March 3, shouts were heard all over town and in the plaza a crowd rapidly gathered armed with swords, bows and arrows, and pikes. The gobernadorcillo attempted to send word to the alcalde mayor but failed to do so because the rebels had posted sentries at all the exits from the town. The town priest tried to address the crowd which received him with shouts and surrounded him, brandishing their arms. The majority kissed his hand and asked for his blessing but told him that they had vowed to kill all the principals including their women and children and to take all the property and jewelry of the convents. The priest tried to dissuade the rebels from their purpose but they turned their backs on him and proceeded to the town hall where they attacked some officials and destroyed the town records. They sounded their drums which were answered by other drums in the houses of the masses.

Each house then hoisted a white flag as a sign that they were not principals and as a manifestation of alliance. Soon the number of rebels reached fifteen hundred. They went to the biggest houses around the plaza and, disregarding the pleas of the curate, killed or wounded a principal and two women, one of them the priest's housekeeper who was noted for her avarice in her transactions with the weavers. They also killed other pro-Spanish residents.

Victory of the Principales

The priest hid in the church with most of the principals. The rebels then entered the convent, took 1,200 pesos fuertes and destroyed the images. At night the rebels rested but left sentinels around the plaza to prevent the escape of principales hidden in the church. The next day they issued an edict prohibiting, on pain of death, any cañian from sheltering in his house any of the principales, doñas or their children. Then they continued looting the houses of the rich.

They captured the gobernadorcillo and two regidores, tied them up and took them to the plaza. There, Simon Tomas, one of the leaders, questioned the principals as to their motives for
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abolishing the privileges granted them by the king. The
principales explained that the Cadiz Constitution had been
abrogated but the rebels refused to believe them and instead
decided to kill them. However, the priest who was called to hear
the prisoners' last confession was able to prevail on the rebels to
suspend their execution.

On the first afternoon of the uprising, two groups of two
hundred men each went to the towns of San Nicolas and Piddig.
The group that went to San Nicolas took the town hall and
convent, killed two principales, captured nine and took some
loot. The rebels then tried to go to Laoag, hoping to recruit new
followers along the way but instead, some principales were able
to gather enough people on their side to force the rebels to
retreat back to Sarrat where the other group also returned after
sacking the houses of principales in Piddig.

Meanwhile, the principales of other towns had gathered six
hundred armed men. These joined the Spanish infantry and
cavalry sent by the alcalde mayor and together they marched on
Sarrat. The rebels announced that if they were attacked, the
principales, donas, and their families would be killed. The priest
talked to the leaders warning them of the punishment that
awaited them and reminding them of the pain of eternal
damnation to which they were exposing their souls by their
recalcitrance. The rebels wavered in their resolve, then agreed to
end their resistance and to set the principales free. Still, the
Spanish forces entered Sarrat and set it on fire. Some leaders
fled to the mountains, others were caught and imprisoned.

Advance and Retreat

The Sarrat revolt was both an advance and a retreat in the
history of the people's struggle. While the rebels of Sarrat
demonstrated an advance in consciousness in their awareness of
their exploitation by the native elite as well as in their demands
for equality, this egalitarian demand was premised on accept-
ce of Spain's sovereignty. The rebels merely sought better
accommodation within the colonial framework. Furthermore,
although they regarded the wealth of the Church as part of the
riches amassed through exploitation, the rebels retained their
customary respect for priestly counsel even in political matters.

The uprising exhibited some ingenious examples of mass
action but its limited ideological horizon and untenable military
position inside a besieged town doomed it to a quick end. Still
and all, the anti-principala aspect of the Sarrat rebellion

PROGRESS AND PROTEST

marked a definite stage in the people's struggles which in the
future would be developed to a higher level by the people.

Sense of Racial Equality

A frustrated desire for equal rights, this time in the area of
religion, was the root cause of another revolt in the Southern
Tagalog region. The impulse toward religious nativism as an
expression of resentment and protest had all but died down in
the face of over two centuries of Catholic proselytization. The
return to the old gods which used to be a persistent feature of
eyary uprisings gave way to the adoption by rebels of modified
forms of the Catholic religion and its rites as in Tapar's revolt in
Panay. (See Chapter 7) This indicated a half-way hold by the
Church over the minds of the people. They rejected the
institution because of its participation in colonial oppression
but did not repudiate its beliefs and rituals.

The religious movement led by Apolinario de la Cruz
constituted a logical development in that it was born out of his
desire for equal standing within the Church. Revolts with
religious content had thus become transformed into their
opposites: from movements rejecting the Catholic religion, to
protests against being denied status within the Church
hierarchy.

Hermano Pule

Hermano Pule, as Apolinario de la Cruz came to be called,
was the son of devout Catholic peasants. He went to Manila in
1839 hoping to join a monastic order, but his application was
rejected because he was a native. He then founded the Cofradia
de San Jose which quickly gained numerous adherents in
Tayabas, Laguna, and Batangas. Members made regular contribu-
tions which Hermano Pule used to defray the cost of a monthly
Mass in Lucban, Tayabas and a monthly fiesta for his
followers.\(^8\)

Despite the frustration of his clerical ambitions, Pule must
have continued to regard himself as a regular Catholic up to this
time for he applied for ecclesiastical recognition for his
confraternity. The Church, however, refused, labelling his
organization heretical. Another version has it that the priests in
Lucban doubled the fees for his Mass. Pule balked at paying the
new rate, whereupon the clerics ordered the dissolution of his
brotherhood and its expulsion from Lucban. From then on, the
group was continually harassed, its meetings raided, and some of its members arrested.

The fact that only “pure-blooded” natives were allowed to join the confraternity led the Spaniards to suspect that religion was being used as a blind for political designs. De la Cruz’s early attempts to secure ecclesiastical recognition for his group would seem to belie Spanish suspicions. The exclusion of Spaniards and mestizos was probably only a natural retaliation for the discrimination he had suffered. However, the moment the Church refused to recognize his confraternity, Pule and his followers became insurgent in their attitude towards both the Church and the State. The group became a break-away sect claiming that its leader had “direct heavenly support” and was invulnerable. Pule was hailed as the “king of the Tagalogs.”

Alarmed by the rapid growth of the movement, the provincial authorities pressed by the friars requested military assistance from the governor-general. The latter sent two infantry companies, one artillery battery and some cavalry to Tayabas. Members of the confraternity constructed fortifications in Alitao and seemed prepared to fight, but when the soldiers charged, Pule’s followers fled. Pule and his aide, a man called Purgatorio, were captured. After a hasty trial, they were both executed. Their bodies were dismembered and exhibited in the principal towns of Southern Tayabas. Pule was then only twenty-seven years old.

Origin of Colorums

After Pule’s death, the remnants of his Cofradia retreated to the mountains between Tayabas and Laguna. The mountain of San Cristobal with its caves, waterfalls, and mountain streams which Pule’s faithful named after Biblical places and persons became the sect’s Holy Land. Later religious groups also considered this mountain their Jerusalem.

Because the members were so devout, the group came to be called Colorum, a corruption of the et saecula saeculorum, used at Mass to end certain prayers. During the American occupation, the name colorum was used by other groups and also applied by the authorities to a wide variety of rebel organizations with mystical characteristics. In fact, by the 1930’s the term colorum had become a common word used to describe any illegal activity. For example, in certain provinces a private car that is hired out as a taxi without being licensed for that purpose is called a colorum.

The Cofradia’s earlier demand for status within the Church may be regarded as part of the growing protest for equal rights which in its religious aspect would culminate in the fight for the Filipinization of the clergy. The social and economic basis for these apparently purely religious protests is readily perceived if we recall the economic and social prominence of religious institutions in Philippine society. Priesthood had the highest professional standing; therefore, the goal of many an ambitious family was to have one of its sons become a priest.

Repercussions

The suppression of Apolinario de la Cruz’ revolt had its repercussions in Manila where soldiers from Tayabas quartered in Malate attacked Fort Santiago. The mutiny was however quickly suppressed.⁹

Evidence of support or sympathy for Hermano Pule’s movement may be deduced from the following portion of the Report of Juan Matta, intendant of the army and treasury:

Notwithstanding the royal order of April 25, 1837, prohibiting publications that might disturb public order and weaken the prestige of the government, such publications have circulated fully in Manila, thus increasing the discontent. In such publications the followers of Apolinario are called innocent and the execution of the rebels in the camp of Alitao has been termed assassination.¹⁰

Economic Dislocations

There were other indications of rising popular unrest not only in the provinces but also in Manila and other urban centers — and not only among the civilian population but among the native soldiers as well.

This unrest was fundamentally the product of economic development. The rise of the hacienda system was to a great extent based on the expropriation of numerous small farmers. The decline of certain local industries as a result of the inroads of foreign trade brought acute deprivation to whole communities. Economic progress itself nurtured a popular consciousness more acutely aware of injustice and inequality, the fruit of more efficient means of exploitation.

One by-product of the development of an export-crop economy was the decline in the acreage planted to rice. From
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being a rice-exporting country which used to ship as much as 800,000 quintals (a metric quintal equals 100 kilograms) of rice to China yearly, the Philippines began to suffer rice shortages and eventually became an importer of rice.\(^1\)

While export crops were certainly more profitable for large landowners and traders, rice shortages worked great hardship on the people. Self-sufficiency in the staple crop was a hedge against hunger. A poor tenant who planted something he could not eat and had to buy his daily rice was that much more at the mercy of the landowner and the trader. To feed his family, he either borrowed money from the landowner at usurious rates or sold his share of the produce to the Chinese merchant prematurely and at a very low price.

The entry of English textiles destroyed the local weaving industry. The local cloth could not compete with the much cheaper products of Britain’s textile mills. Although textile exports rose in value between 1818 and 1864, after the latter year their importance quickly declined. By 1890, textile exports amounted to only 10,455 pesos. These developments brought economic destruction to the traditional weaving regions. The number of persons affected may be gauged from the estimate that in the 1870’s there were sixty thousand looms on Panay Island alone.\(^2\)

A British vice consul reporting from Iloilo in 1887 described the inroads made by Glasgow textiles which were 50% cheaper than the local hand-woven material. Instead of using the traditional native material, women were now buying the cheaper imported cotton cloth for their patadions. The weaving of piña, sinamay and justi, which used to be practically the only industry in certain districts of Iloilo before sugar growing was introduced, likewise declined.\(^3\) From being the daily wear of the people, these local materials became luxuries only the rich could afford.

Foreign Ascendancy

While economic development was causing painful dislocations in the life of the masses, it was proving very profitable for the numerous foreign firms, particularly the British and the Americans. By the 1880’s England and her possessions had become the principal trading partners of the Philippines, with the United States coming in second.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, foreign firms established cigarette factories, a sugar refinery and a cement factory. They went into rice processing and the manufacture of such commodities as cotton cloth, rope, umbrellas and hats. Foreign traders exported Philippine tobacco and Manila cigars all over the world and hemp to Europe and the United States. By 1898, all major commercial nations had agents in Manila. Around three hundred Europeans virtually monopolized the import-export trade.

Foreign firms continued to do business even during the Revolution and the resistance against the United States. In fact, foreign companies paid licenses and customs duties to the revolutionary government to continue their business operations. During the Philippine-American war, the produce contributed by the people to the Aguinaldo government was sold to foreign merchants and the money used to finance the war effort.\(^4\)

Cultural Changes

Economic development, which had its initial impetus in the 1750’s, inevitably led to changes in consciousness among its local beneficiaries. Wealth made possible the acquisition of education and Spanish culture by Chinese mestizos and urbanized natives. The educational reforms of 1863, besides improving the standards of education in the primary levels, opened the doors of higher institutions of learning to many natives. They could now study law, medicine or pharmacy. Many young men from prosperous Chinese mestizo and native families studied in Manila. Wealthier families sent their sons to Spain. Thus the cultural merger of these two sectors was being realized. Their economic status assured them social and political influence. Eventually they became the disseminators of Spanish culture and of liberal thought.\(^5\)

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the establishment of a regular steamship service between Manila and Europe further facilitated the influx of the liberal ideas that were current in that continent. More Spaniards settled in the Philippines. They were businessmen, professionals, and former bureaucrats who having lost their posts during the many turnovers in administrative personnel during the nineteenth century, elected to stay in the country. Many of them helped in the dissemination of liberal ideas.

In Manila and its environs, economic progress created a growing native group of small landowners, city workers and small shopkeepers who readily absorbed these new liberal ideas.
They became part of the reform movement and later of the Revolution.¹ⁿ

Intellectual Ferment

If economic progress became the foundation for cultural unification, it was likewise the bearer of intellectual ferment. This was due not only to the influx of new ideas from abroad but also to the realization of the economically advancing groups that their upward climb was being restricted by the imperatives of colonial policy.

At first, the conflict was between the creoles and the peninsulares, with the former complaining that they were not afforded the same opportunities for advancement as the latter. The Españoles-Filipinos felt they were discriminated against in the matter of government appointments and promotions. Since there were at this time more than one thousand creole adults and only about four hundred available government positions, the best of which were filled in Madrid and hence reserved for peninsulares, the creole aspirants for employment or promotion were a frustrated lot.¹⁷ Their feeling of injustice was sharpened not only by the social discrimination they experienced at the hands of the peninsulares, but also by their own belief that they should receive preference in matters of appointment because in their eyes the Philippines was their country. Unfortunately for them, the loss of Spain’s colonies in America and the rise and fall of Spanish governments during this politically turbulent period of Spanish history had the effect of increasing the number of peninsular bureaucrats in the country. As a consequence, the creoles frequently found themselves edged out of employment by newly-arrived peninsulares.

The same pattern of discrimination existed in the army. When revolutions broke out in Latin America and the creoles there ranged themselves on the side of the rebels, the Philippine creoles in the military also became objects of suspicion. The creole foothold in the army became more precarious as more peninsular officers were brought over to insure the loyalty of the army. The army was reorganized; creole officers were replaced by peninsular officers or placed under the supervision of the latter. This discriminatory treatment triggered off the short-lived mutiny in 1823 led by a creole officer, Captain Andres Novales.¹⁸

This feeling of injustice seeped down to the ranks of the Chinese mestizos who having prospered much began likewise to

feel the restrictions to their own further economic advancement. The Chinese mestizo had social status among the natives for he was both landlord and creditor. Moreover, by virtue of his education, his opinions were accorded attention and respect. This widened the base of ferment.

Secularization and Filipinization

One of the manifestations of the native demand for equality or at least for higher social and economic status was the eventual transformation of the secularization movement into a fight for the Filipinization of the clergy. The quarrel between regulars and seculars over parish assignments and supervisory rights had been going on for a long time, but it was a fight among Spaniards and hardly involved the few native priests. It was therefore of little concern to native Catholics except perhaps as it provided them with some insights into the economic basis for the religious dispute between two sections of the hierarchy.

With economic development, however, came an increase in the number of native priests. Native families who were among the beneficiaries of material progress could now afford to educate their sons, and the priesthood was at that time the best road to status and economic stability. A royal decree of 1774 ordering the secularization of the parishes was a further stimulus for natives to enter the priestly profession which, coincidentally, was somewhat short-handed as a result of the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1768. More native seculars were given parishes of their own and the more able among them held some rich and important benefices, notably the parish of Antipolo.

When the policy of desecularization was adopted and implemented, therefore, not only was there a sizeable group of native priests who could protest but a number of them were directly affected. The return of the Jesuits in 1859 and the consequent reallocation of missions among the various orders further deprived native priests of parishes they had held for years.¹⁹

Like other sectors of the local elite, the native priests were finding out that their own advancement was being impeded by the Spaniards. Those who held no parishes had been chafing under their friar superiors who employed them as coadjutors and assigned to them all the burdensome aspects of parish work. They, too, reacted with resentment at the injustice and
discrimination they were subjected to. This sharpened their awareness of their separate national identity, a consciousness which was transmitted to their native parishioners. The demand for Filipinization became one of the rallying cries of the steadily growing sentiment of nationality.\(^{20}\)

It should be noted that towards the last part of the nineteenth century, the secular priests were either creoles, mestizos or natives. Thus the fight for secularization inevitably became anti-peninsular and was recognized as such. (Lay peninsulares were pro-regular and lay creoles pro-secular.) It should also be emphasized that the demand for Filipinization of the parishes encompassed not only the native clergy but also creole and Spanish-mestizo priests. In fact, as the term Filipinization implies, the fight began as an attempt by Españoles-Filipinos to assert themselves vis-a-vis the peninsular friars. Father Jose Burgos of the Manila Cathedral, one of the prominent leaders of the movement, was himself three-fourths Spanish and held important religious positions because he was considered a Spaniard.

In 1870, there occurred a new wave of curacy-grabbing by the friars. The rancor of creole, mestizo and native seculars was such that the Archbishop of Manila was moved to send a letter of protest to the Spanish government warning that such ill-treatment of Filipino priests might undermine their loyalty to Spain. The appeal was futile.

 Barely two years later, the controversy over secularization and Filipinization which had begun to fan popular ferment although it was essentially a rivalry among the religious, was formally linked to the people's general struggle by a reactionary administration overreacting to the Cavite mutiny of 1872.

Cavite — 1872

The Cavite mutiny of 1872 marked the beginning of a new stage in the escalating unrest. Another swing from liberalism to reaction had taken place in Spain and was reflected in the arrival in 1871 of Rafael de Izquierdo to take over the governorship from the liberal Carlos Maria de la Torre. Izquierdo promptly suspended or revised de la Torre’s liberal decrees and classified as personas sospechosas educated persons who had supported de la Torre’s policies. It was this attitude of Izquierdo’s that was to give the Cavite mutiny greater significance than it actually had.\(^{21}\)

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Since 1740, the workers in the arsenal and in the artillery barracks and engineer corps of Fort San Felipe in Cavite had enjoyed exemption from tribute and forced labor. When Izquierdo abolished these privileges abruptly, the men in the fort mutinied. Although the mutiny was suppressed in less than a day and no other actions followed, the Spaniards under the leadership of Izquierdo proclaimed it part of a widespread separatist conspiracy.

Actually, it was nothing more than a localized expression of protest against a particular injustice, but the reactionaries chose to use it as an excuse for instituting a reign of terror. This was their pre-emptive action against the discontent that during the tenure of the liberal de la Torre had surfaced in criticism of various aspects of Spanish rule and in demands for equal treatment.

Since the current demands for secularization and Filipinization were particularly distasteful to the friars, they took advantage of the incident to accuse Fathers Jose Burgos, Mariano Gomez and Jacinto Zamora of being leaders of the Cavite conspiracy. Gomez and Zamora were prominent native clerics. Burgos, a Spanish mestizo, had been particularly active in the movement for secularization and Filipinization. The three priests were arrested, given a mock-trial, and publicly garroted. All three protested their innocence to the end. Many other prominent persons: priests, professionals, and businessmen — mestizos and natives alike — were arrested and sentenced to long prison terms or to banishment.\(^{22}\)

Against the Peninsulares

The persecution of liberal creoles, mestizos and native ilustrados on charges that they were plotting against Spanish sovereignty only gave them a greater feeling of affinity toward one another. A common grievance produced a deeper awareness of their community of interests as against the peninsulares.

Thus, 1872 marks a new stage in the growing consciousness of a separate national identity. Where the concept of Filipino used to have a racial and later a cultural limitation, the repression that followed the Cavite mutiny made the three racial groups — creoles, mestizos and natives — join hands and become conscious of their growing development as a Filipino nation.\(^{23}\)
Fighting the Friars as Spaniards

The palpably unjust and unwarranted execution of the three priests released great waves of resentment. Although one of them, Burgos, was a three-fourths Spaniard, the authorities regarded all three as indios, thus giving the natives three ready-made martyrs. Among a people in whom the Catholic faith had been ingrained for centuries, this execution of the three priests had grave repercussions. It placed the fight for Filipinization of the parishes squarely within the mainstream of the people’s unrest.

It is not far-fetched to surmise that having priests on their side freed the people psychologically from intellectual bondage to the friars. For many, fighting the friars meant fighting them as Spaniards and exploiters. It did not mean denying their Catholic faith since they had Catholic priests on their side.

Between 1872 and the outbreak of the Philippine Revolution, a generation of ilustrados came of age. Beneficiaries of the educational reforms of 1863 and exponents of liberalism, these young men were now beginning to articulate for the people as a whole those resentments that had motivated their centuries of struggle. The interaction between liberal ideas from the continent and the growing ambitions of the rising classes plus the experience of the masses in struggle contributed to the emergence of a nation with rising expectations and common grievances.

Setting the Stage

The stage was set for a national action. A closer linkage to world capitalism had remolded the structure of the economy and unified the country. But capitalist progress meant underdevelopment, for the resources of the country were being used for the development of the metropolitan centers of the world. The beginning of progress was the beginning of modern underdevelopment.

Prosperity for certain classes bred ambition and discontent. For the masses, it meant greater deprivation both in the absolute and in the relative sense. They were more exploited and they felt this exploitation more keenly because they could see the material prosperity of others. At the same time, they now had articulators of their aspirations although these had motives of their own. The economic and social development of the nineteenth century changed the complexion of the struggle.

The quantitative series of rebellions produced a qualitative leap — the revolution of a nation. The nation was born of the Revolution as much as the Revolution was the expression of the nation being born.