THE AQUINOS OF TARLAC

An Essay on History as Three Generations

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This history was completed in 1972 but could not of course be published then. Today other circumstances seem to warrant its publication.

The book ends with Ninoy Aquino being seated in the Senate. What happened afterwards — his career in the Senate, his imprisonment, the exile in America, his tragic homecoming — will need a separate record.

Here, since this is primarily a study of history, the eye is on events as they involved one Filipino family, from the 1890s to the 1960s. The events being of national import (the Revolution, the American advent, the Quezon-Osmeña rivalry, the Japanese occupation, etc.), what inevitably results is a family saga that's inherently a chronicle on the birth of a nation. To catch an intimate view of history, one household has been used to reflect the Philippine pageant.
The Wicked Accomplices

In mid-November, 1899, a typhoon struck Central Luzon, then the northern front of the Philippine-American War and its final battlefield. The storm waters burst on November 12 and raged for five days. So heavy were the torrents that ten inches of downpour were recorded in one 24-hour period. The Tarlac River spilled over and the unloosed waters tore open a new channel half a mile wide. On the raised route of the railroad the flood stood three feet high, submerging 2000 feet of railway and destroying 250 feet of track and roadbed. Halted by wind and water, the American armies had to improvise rafts, to continue their advance into Tarlac province.

That wild typhoon was of the myths that would show nature not indifferent to man's fate, the comfortable myths that hymn, however pathetic the fallacy, how often, at the moment of some great human tragedy, nature itself is convulsed. In Tarlac, that November of 1899, the tragedy was the collapse of a nation. Aguinaldo had fled Tarlac town, seat of his government, some four days before the storm started blowing. And on November 12, as night and the rain fell, the drenched Americans, their supply trains immobilized, entered the last abode of the Republic and found it a ghost town, the heavens howling upon it. On November 13, Aguinaldo, from a stop-over farther north, issued orders to his generals to retreat to their respective provinces and there organize guerrilla warfare. He himself was fleeing to the hills.

The Republic had fallen.

From Tarlac province, now in American hands, withdrew its commander, General Servilliano Aquino, his army disbanded but the pick of the troops, some 500 of them, choosing to stick it out with their general.

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1Sexton, Soldiers in the Sun, pp. 195-6.
and fleeing with him to Mount Arayat, where, in accordance with the Aguinaldo instructions, he proposed to set up a guerrilla camp. He and his men were Pampango, and Arayat was the sacred mountain of their tribe.

For General Aquino, the flight to Arayat was a return: the Revolution had come full circle. On Arayat had he joined the uprising, in 1897; and from Arayat had descended with his first troops, to fight the Spaniards on the Pampango front. Now, two crowded years and three wars later, having tasted both victory and defeat, the stockade and the death cell, exile and homecoming, here he was back on Arayat, an outlaw again, on a mountain with itself a history outside the law.

The conquering Americans were making much of one point: that the fall of Tarlac had marked the passage of what was a government into lawless wilderness. Before Tarlac, their enemy was still a republic and an army, still a lawful nation. After Tarlac, the enemy was mere outlaw.

As John R.M. Taylor put it:

"When on November 13, 1899, Emilio Aguinaldo proclaimed guerrilla warfare, he bade farewell to the restrictions of civilization and adopted the methods of banditti and of the savages who have always infested the hills of the Philippines."

Crowed one American general after Tarlac:

"Aguinaldo is now a fugitive and an outlaw, seeking security in escape to the mountains or by sea."

And General Arthur MacArthur was positive that Tarlac had meant the breaking up of the enemy army into fragments without government of any kind:

"The so-called Filipino republic is destroyed. The congress has dissolved. The president of that body is now a prisoner in our hands. The president of the so-called republic is a fugitive, as are all the cabinet officers, excepting one in our hands. The executive department is therefore broken up. The generals are separated, without any power of conference or concerted action. The authority under which an army was kept in the field no longer exists. The army itself as an organization has disappeared. As a consequence of these facts, which are now of historical record, the men who propose to lead small bodies for purpose of guerrilla warfare must act without even a shadow of authority from a de facto government and their operations from this time on will be the results of individual whims. In other words, men who now try to continue the strife by individual action become simply leaders of banditti." Arthur MacArthur was for proscribing the native resistance as "murder" and he proposed that "all persons concerned . . . be regarded as murderers and treated accordingly."5

What a difference from the view that his son Douglas would have of Filipinos who, five decades later, during another occupation, led "small bodies for purpose of guerrilla warfare" although they were without "even a shadow of authority from a de facto government"! For MacArthur the father, such guerrilla leaders were mere "banditti"; for MacArthur the son, they were heroes. Yet the two situations are painfully similar. In both, the president of the "so-called" government was a fugitive: Aguinaldo in the hills, Quezon in Washington. In both, the "authority under which an army was kept in the field" no longer existed: in 1899, because the executive department had been broken up; in 1942, because the supreme military commander, Wainwright, had surrendered to the enemy. Therefore, if we are to accept the conclusions of MacArthur the father, the only lawful thing any Filipino could have done was: in 1899, after the fall of Tarlac, to collaborate with the victorious Americans; and in 1942, after the fall of Corregidor, to collaborate with the winning Japanese.

The irony is that another father and son are involved in this equation: Aquino the general, who, in 1899, chose to "continue the strife by individual action"; and Aquino the son, who, in 1942, did not so choose, thus reaffirming the American thesis of '99. But to the Americans, General Servillano Aquino, because he would not collaborate, was of the "banditti"; while his son Benigno, because he did collaborate, was a "traitor." The son was reviled for doing what the father was reviled for not doing; and the elder MacArthur was to be contradicted by MacArthur the son.

As a sign of contradiction, Tarlac is boomerang, for here, where the Americans, in 1899, brought down a nation, the Americans, in 1942, were to be brought low, repeating their march through Central Luzon, though this time as a "death march," and entering Tarlac not in triumph but in disgrace, a fallen army staggering to captivity. Where the Republic was vanquished, the Republic was avenged.

These, to borrow the words of the elder MacArthur, are facts which are now of historical record—and how could he have foreseen that his words could be used against him? Yet he and his fellow conquerors were keen in seeing that Tarlac was a frontier, to step beyond which was to step beyond "law" and "civilization." The actuality was not as crude as their

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\*Ibid.

\*However, the earlier American epithet for Filipino guerrillas was to be applied to one guerrilla organization of the 1940s: the people's army in Central Luzon that came to be known as the Hukbalahap. The Huk's "banditti," not heroes—which, an illusion, makes them kin to the guerrilla movement that began operating in Central Luzon in 1899, and which the Americans likewise refused to recognize as a legitimate resistance.
idea of it, but they had grasped a fact the Spaniard had long been aware of: that the Tagalog-Pampango area, comprehended between Batangas in the south and Tarlac in the north, formed the vital core of the country; was heartland, was the metropolitan area; in relation to which the other centers of culture in the islands (Vigan and Dagupan in the north, Cebú and Iloilo in the south) were outposts.

The reason this heartland became the ground of history may be that, in the 16th century, it was the only region of some size where the native tribes had achieved a measure of unity. Older and richer might be the kingdoms of Cebú and Joló, but these were small city-states isolated by hostility. The king of Cebú, for instance, had for enemy the tiny isle of Mactán, which was just across his bay. In contrast, the neighboring kingdoms on the Pasig—Manila and Tondo—were allies, and evidently belonged to a confederacy loosely binding the realms all over the Tagalog and Pampango region. Not divide and conquer, but unite and rule, was the policy made possible by this domain.

The Spaniards were quick to see how smoother an avenue was afforded by the coherence of this region, and their conquest of it was to make official what unity they found there. Here they concentrated their colonizing efforts, with the result that the Tagalog and Pampango were to become the most “politician” of Filipinos, accounting for the arrogance they have traditionally been accused of. In fact, one friar⁴ has described the Pampangos as “the Castilians among these Indies,” and though his remark was not a gibes, it would be followed by gibe on how the Tagalog and Pampango, by acting so “westernized,” merely showed how different they were from what they aped.

Nevertheless, the idea of national unity was to begin as this unity of the Tagalog and Pampango country, from which the Spaniards created a Seat of State (the City of Manila and the Province of Pampanga were the basic foundations) and a Seat of the Church (the Archbishopric of Manila, which embraces Pampango ground, is the primal See of the country), thus fusing into a unit the old Tagalog and Pampango realms.

From this unit came the necessary consent to government as well as its support forces, so that a counter capital to Manila always had to be within the Tagalog-Pampango terrain—like Arayat, as proposed by Governor-General Basco; or Bacolor, to which Anda removed the government during the British Occupation; or Kawiit, Malolos, San Isidro and Tarlac, the successive capitals of the Aguinaldo government. But when the Spaniards, after the fall of Manila in 1898, transferred the government to Iloilo—that is, outside Tagalog-Pampango ground—it automatically meant the end of Spanish rule. Similarly, the Revolution, a Tagalog-Pampango enterprise, chiefly happened on Tagalog-Pampango ground; and the Americans correctly foresaw that it could not survive beyond its frontier in Tarlac. The unity of faith and action was, at that moment of our history, still bound up with the particular ethnic and geographical unit that, for almost four centuries, had stood for “law,” for “government,” for “civilization.” When that symbol of Victorian progress, the railroad, was brought to the Philippines, the first line was, of course, laid along, and further bound together, the Tagalog-Pampango country, connecting it with the outposts in the north. And when the Revolution broke out, the Spaniards, though fighting was confined to Cavite, correctly declared a state of war in the entire Tagalog-Pampango domain, knowing it only too well as a unit where fire in any part could set the whole ablaze. But the whole had now become something greater than this unit, for a nation had sprung from there.

The role of this region can be read in our flag, where each ray of the sun stands for either a Tagalog or Pampango province. But even the stars in the flag proclaim this role, being three in number because the Tagalog and Pampango fought to keep them at least three. For good or evil, it was these two tribes, these wicked accomplices, that determined not only the shape of our history but even of our geography. The form now called the Philippines was maintained through almost four centuries of steady assault from within and without only because Spain (which, through those centuries, never had more than 5000 Spanish troops in the islands) could rely on the Tagalog-Pampango alliance to keep the form (now called the Philippines) from disintegrating.

The alliance antedated the coming of Spain, and may have antedated even the coming of Tagalog and Pampango to these shores. One Pampango scholar⁵ theorizes that the two tribes emigrated from neighboring regions in Java (or Sumatra?) and continued in the new country their association in the old—a theory backed by the tradition that the Prince Balatagas who founded a dynasty in Pampanga was, even before his coming to Luzon (sometime perhaps between 1335 and 1380), already a Tagalog-Pampango mestizo, his mother being of the royal house of the Kingdom of Sapa (now Manila's Sta. Ana district) before she was given in marriage to a sovereign of the Madjapahit Empire in Java.⁶ The coming

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⁴Fray Gaspar de San Agustín; Blair & Robertson, Vol. XL, p. 252.

⁵Emilio Aguinaldo Cruz, who further opines that the Tagalog and the Pampango ("of the river" and "of the riverbank," respectively) can be grouped together under the generic name of "mountain-worshippers." Cruz observes that in the region the two tribes may have come from (Java or Sumatra) the folk originally settled not necessarily along rivers but rather around distinctive mountains regarded as sacred; and that this trait may have been carried over to Luzon by the emigrants, who, in the Tagalog region, settled around an outstanding mountain like Makiling and, in the Pampango region, around the mountain of Arayat. These mountains were supposed to be the home of a god (Sukö of Arayat) or goddess (the fairy queen of Makiling) who would later acquire a Christian nomenclature. Hence: Mariang Makiling, and the Three Marias said to be the daughters of Sukö.

⁶Beyer Collection; Henson, The Province of Pampanga and Its Towns, pp. 9 and 214.
of Prince Balagtas and his entourage apparently capped a series of waves of Pampango emigration to Luzon and had a definite intent: to consolidate into a kingdom all these Pampango colonies believed to be already occupying an area that extended from Manila Bay to the wilds of Cagayan. A true consolidation was never effected, nor did a kingdom arise, but from Prince Balagtas, according to tradition, descended the native principalia, or nobility, that included such families as the Solimán, the Lakandula, the Gatbontón, the Gatmaitan, the Gatusá, and the Gatudla, the Malang and the Kapulung—families in whose veins ran a mixed Tagalog-Pampango blood, and in the knots of whose marriages the two tribes became so interwined as to form a single growth. 10

Geography was to compound the knots, for the Río Grande de Pampanga empties into Manila Bay, where also ends the Tagalog's Río Pasig; and in the region between the two deltas was common ground for confederacy. After Manila (a city ruled by a Tagalog-Pampango house) was seized by the Spaniards, the ousted heir, Solimán III, fled upcountry and presently reappeared, on Manila Bay, with a Tagalog-Pampango fleet, which the Spaniards routed in the Battle of Bangkusay. That was in 1571, the year Manila was established as the capital city, the seat of power, and Pampanga was organized into a province, the premier local government of the land, under Spain. Although the Tagalog and Pampango were to unite later in several revolts, the Battle of Bangkusay can be said to have been their last joint engagement under the old alliance. Only three years later, in 1574, Tagalogs and Pampangos are being induced into the army they battled in Bangkusay, and a new alliance has begun.

To this alliance they were to become so indispensable, not only as military but as economic arms, that from the start the empire of Spain in the Philippines could not have survived save with the consent of these two tribes. "The colony indeed survived," observes Father de la Costa, "but what was the price of survival? Obviously, the price which had to be paid for ships; for building them, keeping them afloat and sending them out to fight. This price was paid, most of it, by ... the forced-labor contingents drafted year after year from the provinces near Manila that felled the timber, built the ships, sailed them and manned the guns. It was ... these same provinces that fed, clothed and armed the crews. ... What aggravated the burden laid on the Tagalogs and Pampangos was the fact that the government was not in a financial position to pay a just wage to the laborers it drafted or a just price for the goods it bought." 11

And yet, after the period of the Conquest, this region on which the heaviest burdens were laid was nevertheless the least mutinous in the country, as though it regarded itself, however exploited, as not alien to the new government but allied to it. A continuity in fealty justified the view, for the old-time tribal chiefs, the datus, had been incorporated into the new government and in most places were the only visible form of government.

"At the time of the conquest," says John Alan Larkin, "the Spaniards were severely undermanned and needed someone to maintain order and collect the needed supplies. They accepted the authority of willing local leaders rather than upset the existing system at a time when military concerns were paramount. Both parties were served by this arrangement; the Spaniards received the necessary goods, and the datus retained their position in the village." 12

From these datus would develop the principalia that, from earliest Spanish times, were exempt from taxes; enjoyed the title of Don, and controlled local governments in "elective" positions that were actually hereditary. (Larkin notes that in Macabebe, for instance, the position of gobernadorcillo was, during a period of 150 years—1615 to 1765—held by the members of only 13 families of that town.) Because an organic relationship still existed between the principalia and the peasantry, service required by the Dons was not regarded as exploitation by their liegemen, who knew from experience that, whenever abuses grew rampant, the Dons hastened to be their spokesmen, not fearing to appeal to the king of Spain himself. Thus, in the 1670s, did the principalia of Pampanga complain to Carlos II about the quota of rice exacted from every farmer in Pampanga and the Spanish king could not but order "the total extirpation of the abuse and injustice" committed against a region of which he had heard it said that it "has made important contributions to the defense of the entire colony, having raised several companies of troops to serve in the wars against the Dutch who infest those waters, the Moros of Ternate and other hostile nations; that it provided and still provides whole units of regular infantry to garrison that royal capital, its fortress of Santiago, the forts of Cavite, Cebú, Oton, Cagayán, Caraga and the other strong points of these islands"; and that "the Pampango nation has on all occasions shown great fidelity in my service." 13

Indeed a popular saying then was that "one Spaniard and three Pampangos are the equal of four Spaniards," a boast that grew from the battlegrounds of the 16th century. Pampangos were with Dasmariñas in the taking of Nueva Vizcaya in 1591; were with Figueroa in the conquest of Mindanao in 1596; were with the "pacification" troops that brought...

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10 When in the 1750s a tax case was filed against the heirs of the last two Tagalog royalties, Lakandula and Solitán, their descendants (who included Puyat and Makapagklas) were found spread all over Bulacan and Pampanga. (See the Historical Conservation Society's Christianization of the Philippines, pp. 409ff.)

11 Readings in Philippine History, p. 54.

12 The Evolution of Pampanga Society, p. 50.

13 Readings in Philippine History, pp. 79-80. The principalia of Pampanga would later report to the king that the abuses they complained of had been somewhat corrected, though much remained to be done in the way of reforms.
under one flag the regions of Cagayán, Caraga, Calamianes, Negros, Ogtong and Leyte; and were with the various expeditionary forces to the Moluccas in the days when our geography was still in the making and it seemed for a while that the Philippines might include the Spice Islands, Borneo, Formosa, the Malay Peninsula and the coasts of Indochina. When the Koxinga invasion impended (1662) and the Chinese in Manila rose in revolt, it was the Pampango militia under Don Francisco Laxamana that defeated the rebels in pitched battle, killing a thousand of them and capturing the ringleaders. Because of this victory, Laxamana the Pampango was entrusted with the walls of Manila for 24 hours — a startling symbolic gesture by which the empire confessed its dependence on the heartland.

If the Tagalog-Pampango troops of those times now seem to us mercenaries, in their own eyes they were not, since they were fighting for a government they regarded as their own, especially as represented by their datus, now the powerful principalia. Theirs, too, was the army: "well-organized troops under the command of their own general officers [Laxamana was a master-of-camp], majors and captains, posts that they greatly esteem as a reward of merit, each of them striving for promotion so as to bequeath this honor to their descendants." Strictly speaking, therefore, theirs was a feudal rather than a mercenary army, since they were led by their own liege lords, to whom they owed fealty; and in fighting outside their tribal ground, in fighting for regions to which, then, they did not feel native (Cagayán, Negros, Leyte, Mindanao, etc.) they were already a national army in the making, creating a sense of country by their willingness to defend certain boundaries from invasion and the government within from usurpers. As long as that government had the consent of the Tagalog and Pampango, it could stand firm, though the rest of the tribes revolted; but when that consent was withdrawn, the empire tottered. From Limahong in 1574 to William Draper in 1762, the fate of Spain in the Philippines rested on whether the Tagalog and Pampango chose to side with the Spaniards or with the invader.

The Spanish were well aware that it was they who were dependent on the alliance with the Tagalog and Pampango, and not vice-versa — which would have been the case had the native troops been nothing more than mercenaries. So, a Tagalog-Pampango revolt was feared most of all — as in 1660, when one such revolt was decried as "all the worse because these people had been trained in the military art in our own schools . . . their valor was well-known, and therefore it was said that one Spaniard and three Pampangos were equal to four Spaniards . . . [and the] people of the other provinces were on the watch for its outcome, in order to declare themselves rebels . . . There is no worse enemy than an alienated friend [no hay peor enemigo que de la misma madera]." Here, from a Spanish mouth, is the admission that the Tagalog and Pampango were not mercenaries but allies and friends who must not be alienated, being of the same timber as the Spaniard — and there's "no worse wedge than that of the same wood." The Tagalog and Pampango were likewise aware that it was on them that the empire rested and through them that destiny was at work, as they proclaimed in the classic feast of Philippine history, the feast in which the Tagalog and Pampango celebrated the alliance that was to beget a nation. It has been said, quite incorrectly, that the Limahong invasion was the crucial moment in our history, the event that decided if there was to be such a nation as the Philippines or merely an outer province of China. But that moment was not as decisive as the Dutch Wars of the 17th century, which were, by far, the greater threat, the more crucial event. Limahong was not backed by his government and did not have the resources for a real invasion; his was purely a one-shot attempt. But the Dutch invaders had the official backing, the resources and the will to sustain what was clearly not just a feint, since their attempt at invasion was pressed for more than 50 years (the first half of the 17th century) with annual battles on a front that stretched from Aparrí to Jolo. This was the Great War in our history, for it was the war that decided if we were to be the Philippines—or a part of the Dutch East Indies then, a province of Indonesia today. The war ended in victory for the idea of nation. That the Tagalog and Pampango regarded it as their war and their victory can be gathered from the feast that is exclusively a Tagalog-Pampango tradition: the feast known as La Naval de Manila, once the principal fiesta of Manila, the capital of the land of the Tagalogs, and also the great fiesta of Bacolor, the ancient capital of the Pampangos. When the Pampangos pushed their frontier beyond San Fernando, they thought this tradition important enough to carry with them in their movement northward — to Angeles, the prime pioneer foundation and take-off point for the new frontier. And in Angeles, to this day, the principal celebration is the fiesta called La Naval. The significance may be lost to us now, yet a feeling of pride still inheres to the cult, even with the celebrants not knowing what they feel so proud about, for the inherited emotion may have transcended the occasion for the feast and, perhaps, now refers, not merely to the victory

14The Chinese in the Philippines, p. 79.
15Carlos II, in the 1677 letter quoted above. Among the privileges granted the datus was the education of their sons in colleges established by the Spaniards for themselves. It seems to have been an extensive privilege. While ambassador to Spain, Leud Mu. Guerrero came upon a curious datum: sometime in the 17th century two sons of Pampango nobles were enrolled in the royal military academy in Madrid.
16Blair & Robertson, Vol. 38, pp. 141-211.
17In 1898, when the American invasion threatened, a member of the Tagalog prisma, Don Pedro Paterno the "Magino," called on his people to rally once again to the side of "our old ally Spain."
in the Dutch Wars, but to all the others feats of an ancient alliance. More than the moment’s safety was involved in what we now dismiss as colonial wars not a part of our history. But for the winning of those wars, we might have had no history.

After the Dutch Wars, the next — and last major — engagement of the alliance is the British Invasion; and here the staging is even more explicit: the capital is moved from Manila to Bacolor; Tagalog and Pampango rally around the “legitimate” government; while, beyond the Tagalog-Pampango frontier, the Ilocanos seize the chance to break away from achieved form, under the leadership of Diego Silang. “He soon realized, however,” says Father de la Costa, “that his untried and undisciplined forces, unpiloted with firearms and artillery, would be no match for the seasoned and well-armed troops Anda was collecting in Pampanga to send against him. We shall never know what might have happened if the Ilocanos and the British had succeeded in combining forces. Whatever dreams Silang had conceived of an Ilocano nation under British protection were shattered forever by an assassin’s bullet.” This is another ambiguous moment in our history; whom are we to cheer? The Ilocano rebels who would break away and set up their own nation; or the Tagalog-Pampango troops who were for keeping the Ilocs in as an integral part of the form? At any rate, the Tagalog and Pampango then, as in the other tribal attempts to secede that they were prevented, were fighting, however unknowingly, for the integrity of a nation.

Not so unconscious is their role in the next great struggle in our history: the revolt of the Creole—though this revolt was to confuse the old Tagalog-Pampango loyalties, unfixed the line between law and outlaw. Did the Creole, even in rebellion, represent “legitimate” government, or was he an usurper? Did he stand for the integrity of the form so long defended, or had he become another disrupter to be stopped? The confusion was inevitable, the Creole having been for so long the establishment he would now topple.

After the era of the conquistadores, power had passed to the hands of the Creoles in alliance with the Tagalog and Pampango. For two centuries (the 17th and 18th) the Creoles manned State and Army, but not the Church — which was why the Church became the first target of their campaign. That they were in control of government can be surmised from the shock with which, at the beginning of the 19th century, they reacted to the arrival of ships from Spain loaded with peninsular Spaniards bearing appointments as provincial governors, military brass and finance officers — positions traditionally held by the Creoles. As late as 1842, Sinibaldo de Mas could note that half of all civil and military posts in the Philippines were still occupied by the Creoles; and he warned that, if the islands were to be kept a colony, “the Spaniards born in the Philippines must be reduced as much as possible in number.”

As the educated class in the country, the Creoles had been infected by the ideas of the Enlightenment and the events of the French Revolution — just like their confreres in America, where the colonies were lost in revolts led by the Creole class. A repeat could not be allowed to happen in the Philippines. But as the Creole was displaced in State and Army by the Peninsular, as his rise in the Church was blocked by the friar, and as he found himself reduced to a position little better than that of the Indios, it was but natural that he should stop thinking of himself as Spanish and begin calling himself a Filipino in earnest. Form (which, when fulfilled, becomes singular) had here become dangerously separate; the Creole had pulled the trigger of nationalism in the Philippines — and the explosion was of identity.

The result was the First Propaganda Movement (Rodríguez Varela, Pelaez, Gómez, Burgos) which fought peninsular prejudice by exalting the name Filipino (Rodríguez Varela styled himself the Conde Filipino) and by asserting the competence as well as the preeminent rights of the Hijos del País — that is, the Native. By the time of the Second Propaganda Movement (Paterno, del Pilar, Sanciangco, Rizal) the term Filipino has widened to include all the native-born, irrespective of blood; and the Katipunan would take over the Creoles’ rallying cry — Hijos del País — and thus proclaim the continuity of the nationalist movement (and of our history) in its own battlecry: Anak ng Bayan.

In the beginning, however, as with the Novales attempt to capture the army (1823), the Creole revolt could not but confuse established loyalties, so that, obeying centuries of conditioning, the Tagalog-Pampango alliance instinctively sided with the State against the would-be usurpers. It was the Pampango militia that aborted the Novales coup. But as the Creole campaign intensified, its attraction and influence spread beyond its class with the result that a general following became convinced that a transfer of loyalties from empire to nation would be, not


20In a previous study I summarized the development of Creole nationalism thus: “For 200 years — through the 17th and 18th centuries — the Philippine Creoles were Filipinos in the sense that their lives were entirely devoted to the service of the country: to expanding or consolidating the national frontiers and to protecting them. Their great labor, their achievement, was keeping the Philippines intact through two centuries when, it may be said, there was not a single day that the islands were not under threat of invasion. All this time the Creole — and the Philippine colony in general — lived in isolation from Spain, and the neglect fostered the autonomous spirit. With the 1800s, we see the Creole turning, after two centuries of warfare, from arms to plow, from battlefield to farm and shop. As long as the Creole was merely defending the land as empire, the land was his but he was not the land’s. But when he began to work the land himself, he became possessed by what, formerly, he had merely possessed.” (Why Was the Rizal Hero a Creole?)

Enciclopedia Espasa, Vol. 41, p. 566.
criminal, but lawful — the logical extension of the Creole clergy's argument that it was they, the native-born, who, according to the Council of Trent, had the legal right to control the Church in the Philippines, and not the foreign friar. In other words, it was the Peninsular, not the Hijo del Páis, who was the usurper. The confusion of loyalties was thus cleared up — and from here it's but a step to the idea of separatism. Burgos is the Creole on the verge of violent schism; and the Cavite Mutiny of 1872 is already "Filipino" in the sense that its participants, or those suspect as its participants, can all be lumped together as a single dangerous breed: the Native — indiscriminately Creole, Indio, mestizo and Chinese. That unification was the fruit as it was the finish of the Creole revolt. So savage were the State's post-Mutiny reprisals — execution, exile and expropriation — that the elite class was all but crippled, and from then on lost its nerve.

The failure of the Creole revolt was to ruin the old triple alliance (Creole-Tagalog-Pampango) that had meant stability for the empire. The principalta now stood alone — for, on the one hand, the fallen Creole had lost his value as ally and, his spirit crushed by the post-Mutiny persecution, had abdicated as leader, was no longer an agent of history; while, on the other hand, the Peninsular was neither ally nor leader, but simply despot, the agent of anti-history, being as cruel to stop the rise of the Indio as that of the Creole. The native class that could, once upon a time, aspire to promotion as captain, major or general officer was now so mistrusted that Sinibaldo de Mas could recommend denying to it even the rank of sergeant.22 What happened to the Creole now happened to the native Don: his rejection as a partner set him to asking why he should be anybody's vassal when he could be his own master. And this happened precisely at a time (the mid-1800s) when the principalta had gained economic power and were becoming affluent: the bestias cargadas de oro of contemporary sneer. Moreover, the long period of Creole activism (from the 1790s to the 1870s) had been a valuable school23 for the native Dons, educating them in sedition and implanting separatist ideas. Even the failure of that activism meant an advance for the principals, whether the advance be viewed as a passing of the torch or the capture of a movement; for, as the Creole, turned timid, abandoned insurGENCY, leadership inevitably passed to the hands most prepared for it: the Tagalog-Pampango principalta who became increasingly, after 1872, the propagandists and activists until, in 1896, they rose in arms against the empire they had once secured with their arms. Toward this had tended the currents of our history since 1571, when the Tagalog-Pampango domain was made the ground of those currents.

The Philippine Revolution was thus the uprising of the Tagalog-Pampango principalta, now at last withdrawing consent and support from the empire, but doing so not as a tribe (which is what distinguishes their revolt from that of, say, Sillang) but in the name of a nation. At Biak-na-Bato as in Kawit, the republic proclaimed by a handful of Tagalogs and Pampangos is for the whole of the archipelago, not just for their region; and Malolos is a Congress where Tagalogs and Pampangos represent the regions outside their region.24 Such historical vicissitude is not uncommon. Spain was made a nation by the union of two small tribes, Castile and Aragón, which chiefly waged the wars of the Reconquista. Similarly is the American Revolution identified with two tribes, the New Englanders and the Virginians; and though 'tis said that more Americans fought on the British side than under Washington, it was the minority under Washington that stood for the whole of the nation. And likewise was history again on the side of a minority of two during the adventure called the Philippine Revolution.

Like the Creole movement, the revolt of the principalta ended in failure but in its turn gave rise to another activism: the revolt of the masses, which took over in the 1900s and is still in progress. One region has therefore been the theater for the three major uprisings in our history: the revolt of the Creole, the revolt of the principalta, and the revolt of the masses; all three being so interlinked as to show a sequence and all three more or less describable as a Tagalog-Pampango enterprise — including the third one, which had a climax (also tragic) in the Huk rebellion. In his autobiography Luis Taruc devotes a chapter to the original leaders of the Huk movement and it's bemusing to note, that, of the leaders he mentions, four are Tagalogs (Victente y Jesús Lava, Mariano Balgós and Fred Laan), four are Pampangos (Casto Alejandrino,恩生比阿基诺, Silvestre Liwanag and Remedios Gómez), two are from the Tagalog-Pampango province of Nueva Ecija (Juan Feleo and José de León), and one is a Creole (Mateo del Castillo, son of a Spaniard resident in Batangas).25 Apparently, the Huk, too, continues the history of the Tagalog-Pampango alliance, which, at certain times, is coextensive with its region.

22Secret Report, p. 133.
23Today the struggle of the Creole against the Peninsular is shrugged off as just a fight between two kinds of Spaniard, a misprizing that rejects the testimony both of the Katipunan, which, by enshrining the Creole rebels, proclaimed its descent, and of Rizal, whose famed statement on '72 can be paraphrased thus: But for the fight of the Creole, there would have been no Philippine Revolution.
24In the Congress in Tarlac (July, 1899) a Tagalog, Fernando Ma. Guerreero, represented the province of Leyte; a Pampango, Francisco Makabulos, represented Cebú; a Tagalog, Daniel Tirona, represented the Butanes; a Pampango, Maximino Hizon, represented Sorsogón; a Tagalog, Tomás Mascardo, represented Zamboanga; a Pampango, represented Surigao, a Tagalog and Pampango acting as deputies for the entire nation.
25Born of the People, pp. 85ff.
and cannot survive beyond its frontiers and, at other times, transcends those boundaries to become a national movement.

It was on this storied ground that, in 1899, General Servillano Aquino dispersed his army, shifting the action from the plain of Tarlac to the mountain of Arayat: what had been a national war of independence had shrunk again into tribal resistance. He was not the first to use Mount Arayat as a fort outside the law (the "banditti," or fleers from empire, had been there before him) nor would he be the last (the Hukis, also fugitives from Fascism, would likewise use Arayat for bastion). But General Aquino, unlike so many "outlaws," would survive Arayat, though his head was at stake when he came down at last from the mountain, the resistance there having been equated with "murder."

He saved his head somehow and, like the Roman of adage, returned from sword to plow. But it was not a humble farm that he returned to but a great hacienda — for the general was, of course, of the principalia; came from a family of landowners and gobernadorcillos; had studied at Letrán and Santo Tomás; had married an heiress; and was of the Masonic Order, the rebel club of the gentry. These are the ingredients — money, land, education, Masonry, and official position — that identify as a class the leaders of the Revolution, whether they be the Aguinidos of Cavite, the del Pilars of Bulacan, or the Alejandrines of Pampanga; and such data resist any reading of the Revolution save as a movement of the middle class, at a time when the bourgeois had turned insurgent. Indeed, of the caudillo of Tarlac, Makabulos, it is said that he was "one of the few generals of the Revolution who were born poor." Yet Makabulos, too, was of the principalia, being a Soliman on his mother's side and therefore of the royal house whence mostly sprang the Tagalog-Pampango patriciate. And though born poor, he was of the clerical profession.

Emotional misreadings of our history have sturred over the economic facts, which show that the barons of the richest and most powerful region of the country had, realizing their collective strength, decided to overthrow their overlord. These barons were the planters, merchants, landowners, barristers, intellectuals, priests and mayors who, from start to finish, provided the Revolution with leadership.

The revolt of the principalia thus has a correct picture in the Aquinos of Tarlac.

28 Luis Serrano, in the Makabulos Centennial issue of The Monitor (Tarlac).

25

THE TARLAC of the Aquinos was the Benjamin of the confederacy, being the last province to be born of the heartland. Though the vaunt is that Pampango realm extended to Cagayán before the coming of Spain, the truth seems to be that, then, as in the next three centuries, the tribe kept to the delta land of the Rio Grande and ventured but little, as settler, outside that plain, although ranging, as soldiery, all over the entire country and the seas beyond.

Up to the 19th century, San Fernando marked the northernmost limit of Pampango culture: of the proud, rich, populous terrain bustling with townships like Bacolor, Guagua, Lubao, Macabebe, Arayat, Mexico. Past San Fernando, the plain petered out into gravel and the landscape turned hostile: foothill and mountain range to the west, crocodile swamps to the east, and in between the gloom of aboriginal forest, where prowled, with deer and boar, the Zambal and the Aeta. (It was their arrows that had kept the plainsman to his riverbank.) The jungle was a day's journey across by horse; the undergrowth was mostly a tough weed that the Aeta called tarlac or tarlac and it gave its name to this belt of wilderness between the land of the Pampangos and the Pangasinan plain.

Into this wilderness that had so long resisted both brown man and white man, various families headed by the Castanédas and the Migueles (these latter would, under the Clavería decree, change their name to Tañedo) began venturing in the 17th century, buying off the Negritos (who retreated to the mountains of Zambales) and clearing, for rice and cane culture, the area that is now Tarlac town. The settlement was considered a part of Pampanga but was not made a town until a hundred years