left behind their arms and supplies. The Spaniards counted 93 rebel dead; in a nearby woods they found numerous horses and carabaos. But the supreme catch had eluded the government: neither Makabulos nor Aquino was captured when the Real de Camansi fell, nor indeed the greater number of the estimated 2000 rebel troops. The battle lost, they fled under cover of the storm and vanished into the wilds of Sinukuan.

The Battle of Camansi, or Sinukuan — one of the few actions of the first phase of the insurrection of which we have a detailed account (written as usual by the other side) — marked the defeat of the Revolution in Pampango domain and indicates what could have happened to Aguinaldo but for the Pact of Biak-na-Bato. If it be true that Makabulos was against the pact and refused to join Aguinaldo in exile because he felt that Aguinaldo should have continued resisting from his mountain hideout, then Makabulos had learned nothing from the disaster on Sinukuan. Aguinaldo evidently did and, by agreeing to a truce, showed himself a foxier strategist than the Spanish government, which decreed its own doom when it ordered Monet to stop his highly successful campaign in the provinces. It was the Pact of Biak-na-Bato that saved the Revolution for a second time around.

After the fall of Sinukuan, Servillan Aquino hid in San Fernando but continued his recruiting work. Spies were set on his trail; a trap was laid for him; he was caught, taken to Manila, thrown into Fort Santiago, court-martialed and found guilty of sedition. This was during the first half of December, 1897. The rebel was sentenced to death before the firing squad.

"The sentence," he would recall later, "was read to me on a Wednesday and I was to be shot on Saturday."

THE PACT of Biak-na-Bato was to save Major Aquino's life. He would recount later, according to his son Gonzalo, that his head had already been shaved and his body "washed with chemicals" in preparation for the execution. His two elder sons, Gonzalo and Benigno (the latter was then three years old), had been brought to see him for the last time, at Fort Santiago, and Gonzalo recalls that they had to go down a deep stairway to the dungeon where his father, very thin and pale, stood behind bars, with other prisoners.

Between the Wednesday of his sentencing and the Saturday of his execution the Pact of Biak-na-Bato was signed (December 14-15, 1897) and automatically stayed the execution of condemned revolutionaries. They were not set free, however, until after the pact had been ratified by the revolutionary assembly (December 20) and a general amnesty was proclaimed by the government. By the time Mianong Aquino was released, Aguinaldo had already left for Hong Kong. Aquino immediately followed. Since he was not on the list of men that Aguinaldo proposed to take with him, he may have gone there on his own volition. On the other hand, his son Gonzalo says that Don Mianong always claimed that he had been deported by the government, which may mean that his release from Fort Santiago was on the condition that he left the country.

At any rate, he joined Aguinaldo in Hong Kong, stayed there five months, and became a devout Aguinaldo partisan. During the nastiness over the money held by Aguinaldo, Major Aquino was among those who signed the manifesto protesting "the infamous calumny which ill-will has set forth against the immaculate name of Don Emilio Aguinaldo" and asserting that "of the sums which this illustrious Chief has under his charge not the smallest amount has been misapplied, but that they remain
in their entirety, having been preserved for the service of the country. 1

Don Mianong would recall that the Hong Kong exiles all lived together in
one house, did the marketing themselves, ate a lot of chestnuts because
it was so cold, and talked of nothing but how they would fight the war bett-
er when they got back.

They returned in the summer of 1898, after Dewey had snatched
Manila Bay. The Spanish-American War was on and the American ploy
was to bring Aguinaldo back and have him resume his own war against
Spain. So, the returned Aguinaldo ordered his fellow exiles back to their
respective provinces, to rekindle the insurrection. Major Aquino was
promoted to full colonel and sent to rejoin Makabulos in Central Luzón.
During the "Peace of Biak-na-Bato" Makabulos had set up a provisional
revolutionary government, in Pampanga territory, under a constitution
written in Tagalog. The ancient alliance was still in effect and the capital
of the nation during the Aguinaldo exile was on Pampanga soil, with
Makabulos the Solimán as caudillo. Naturally, on Aguinaldo’s return, an
Aguinaldo man was dispatched to Tarlac as second in command.

“When we landed in Cavite,” says Servillano Aquino in his autobiog-
raphy, “General Aguinaldo gave us our destinations. I was assigned as
colonel and assistant to General Makabulos, because the Spaniards had
not yet surrendered in that province. The Spanish soldiers in Tarlac
numbered 2,000, while our forces consisted only of 150 armed men. There
were, however, thousands who were unarmed.”

The unarmed thousands formed the bolo brigades. The 150 men with
guns had been thus armed by the grace of the Spanish government, for
Makabulos was one of the insurgent leaders who, at the outbreak of the
Spanish-American War, had presented themselves as “loyalists” willing
to fight, if armed, on the side of the government: During the latter part
of May, 1898, when the rumor spread that Aguinaldo was to be repatri-
ated by the Americans, Makabulos, according to Carlos Ría-Baja, “of-
ered himself to our authorities; and Captain-General Augustí had
rewarded this act of loyalty on the part of the insurgent leader by appoint-
ning him commandant of the Philippine militia specially created to rally the
natives of the country to our side, so that they would cooperate through-
out the archipelago in the triumph of our arms against the North Amer-
ican army.” 2 What Makabulos would do was, of course, use the Spanish
arms against the Spanish as soon as word came that Aguinaldo had landed
and ordered the revolt resumed.

From Cavite, Colonel Servillano Aquino had sped by motor launch
to Sexmoan in Pampanga, where two of his men waited to smuggle him
back into Tarlac. He reached Concepción, reorganized his troops, was
assigned by Makabulos to San Miguel de Murcia, the main front in the
siege of Tarlac town. All the Spanish forces in the province had been con-
centrated in the capital. The siege of the town began on June 3, 1898, and
lasted 38 days.

Defending Tarlac were a battalion of cazadores; a troop of Guardia
Civil, and two native companies: the Ilocos Sur Volunteers and the Pan-
gasinan Volunteers, the latter under Captain Mariano Enríquez, a
Filipino. Into the town had evacuated the province’s government officials
and their families; the friar parish priests; the employees of the Tabacal-
era; and the Spanish community. The civilians occupied the upper floor
of the Casa-Gobierno, or government house; on the verandas were the
Ilocos Sur Volunteers; and on the ground floor was the headquarters of
the army officers. In over-all command was Lieutenant Colonel Bien-
venido Flandes. The provincial governor was a certain Federico Jaques,
who did nothing during the siege but mope and tremble. The friars all
stayed together at the convento, where they were reported to spend all
day and most of the night gambling at cards, as though no war were on.
Round the convento were the Pangasinan Volunteers.

The Spaniards had the town to themselves. Even before June 3 the
townsmen were already fleeing, though Commander Flandes begged
them to stay, assuring them that the town was secure. The Tarlacaños
knew better, having taken their cue from the Castelvi family, the first to
vanish. When the siege began, Tarlac was a ghost town, save for
the improvised fort on the plaza, between the Casa-Gobierno and the
convento.

At nightfall of June 3, the defenders heard movement and activity in
the outskirts of town: the insurgents were creeping in and building
trenches near the railroad station and the market. Towards eight in the
evening, lights appeared in one house, from which presently drifted to
astonished enemy ears the sound of revelry: the insurgents were wining
and dining to the music of a brass band! The merriment lasted until almost
eleven o’clock; then the lights in the house were put out and there was a
sudden silence.

Just when the defenders, every man tensely at his post, were finding
the suspense maddening, shots stuttered in the moonless dark and the
ground rumbled as to a stampede: the insurgents were rushing the enemy
position, surging forward with a mighty uproar—and to the music of their
brass band, which was playing, mockingly, the Marcha de Cádiz, Spain’s
national anthem!

During the battle the Pangasinan Volunteers heard themselves being
called—Kapatid! Kapatid!—and urged to pass over to their countrymen’s
side. The volunteers stood firm and replied only with bullets. The Spanish
officers on the other hand heard themselves being taunted and derided by

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2 El Desastre Filipino, pp. 162ff.
a voice that called them out by name and warned them of the day to come. The firing intensified through the night, illuminating the plaza as if with fantastic lightnings, never letting up until four o’clock, when the last wave of insurgents to assault the Casa-Gobierno was driven off.

Daylight revealed empty insurgent trenches, where the Spaniards found abandoned firearms, balisay and a guitar—a pretty guitar tasseled with red-and-gold ribbons. Several persons recognized it as belonging to one of the Castevh boys. "From that moment, the name of the Count of Villanueva was pronounced with horror for what it was: the name of a traitor to his country."

Hardly had the defenders recovered from the night’s ordeal when they were confronted by a new peril: a fire that broke out in the abandoned portion of town and spread rapidly all that morning. Whether the fire was started by the retreating insurgents, or by the Spanish scouts sent out to check the rebel trenches, was never known; but it reduced the greater part of Tarlac town to ashes.

The battle of June 3 was how the insurgents announced that they had the town under siege; and the Spaniards, as the days passed and their rations dwindled, realized that their foes might have no need to fire another shot to take the town. In mid-June a column of 300 men, sent out under Captain Enriquez to fetch help, managed to pierce the encirclement and reach Bayambang, but found no help available in Pangasinan, already mostly in rebel hands, and had to return to Tarlac. On June 22, Captain Enriquez and a detail went foraging in the woods of the Tabacalera hacienda and were able to capture 80 carabaos and 40 cows but lost eight men when set upon by insurgents. Before this encounter, Captain Enriquez had had a parléy with an insurgent officer, to whom, it was later claimed, Enriquez promised that, at the right moment, he and his men would defect to the insurgent side.

Through the month of June the Spaniards in Tarlac kept hoping that from Pampanga would come a force sent by General Monet to rescue them—not knowing that Monet had already abandoned Pampanga and fled back to Manila. On July 4 a Spanish doctor who had fallen into rebel hands arrived at the fort, under a flag of truce, with a letter from Makabulos. The letter advised the garrison to surrender—it could expect no relief; all Luzón had fallen—and proposed a conference for the following afternoon at the bridge of Binaoganan, Panicking, the Spaniards decided to flee. A convoy was organized and, early the next morning, the entire population of the fort set off, the women wearing three or four skirts, having been bidden to carry no luggage. The mad intent was to reach Daguapan, but as the refugees stepped outside town they saw, on the other side of the river, the insurgents climbing out of their trenches and forming a line along the riverbank. The convoy beat a hasty retreat back to town.

That afternoon Commander Flandes went to the bridge of Binaoganan, for the proposed conference, and there told the Makabulos emissary, an officer named José Bañuelos, that the Spaniards would surrender the town on the condition that they were to be allowed to leave and proceed in any direction unmolested. Bañuelos replied that no conditions could be accepted, since Makabulos could take the town whenever he pleased, though Makabulos preferred, for humanitarian reasons (in the fort were women and children), to avoid further bloodshed. With Bañuelos was the same Spanish doctor who had earlier delivered the Makabulos letter and Flandes was shocked to see that this doctor had become such a partisan of the rebels he was even urging an aide of Flandes to “pass over.” The conference ended with Flandes protesting that his officers would never consider capitulating.

On July 7, Makabulos sent another emissary to warn the Spaniards that, unless the town was surrendered at once, his army would attack. In desperation the Spaniards made another attempt to fight their way out. The convoy was reorganized and started moving out at dawn of July 8 but was intercepted by the revolutionary troops entrenched around the railroad station. The ensuing battle raged from seven in the morning to noon-time, when the Spaniards retreated back to town, five of their men killed and 43 wounded. It was the Spaniards’ last show of resistance. For ten days they had had nothing to eat but rice.

On the morning of July 9, Flandes and three other Spanish officers crossed enemy lines and presented themselves at the headquarters of General Makabulos in San Miguel de Murcia. They had been authorized to surrender the Tarlac citadel. The wording having been agreed on, an Act of Capitulation was drawn up; Flandes and a companion, Captain Lahuerta, remained as hostages in San Miguel, while Lieutenant Colonel José Bañuelos and another Philippine officer took the document to Tarlac, read it out to the assembled Spanish officers, and made them sign it. Spain had fallen in Tarlac.

At eight the next morning, July 10, Colonel Servillano Aquino arrived at the citadel as head of the commission (among the members were Manuel de León and Valentín Díaz) appointed by Makabulos to receive the arms of the surrenderees. The Spanish troops were lined up, the Spanish flag was hauled down; then the officers yielded sword and gun to Colonel Aquino. “The ceremony,” says Carlos Ria-Baja, who was there, “took on an extraordinary solemnity and sadness impossible to put down on paper.” Colonel Aquino would recall that the arms he collected "consisted of 2,150 rifles and 70 revolvers, together with plenty of

1 Ria-Baja, p. 159.

2 El Desembarco Filipino, p. 250.
ammunition." The Spanish officers and civilians were assured that they could choose where to go within insurgent territory; but poor Captain Mariano Enríquez was thrown into jail, while the friars got herded to Victoria, where they were kept incomunicado, given black rice and dried fish to eat, and made to sweep the streets.

At noon of July 10, the Philippine troops entered Tarlac, followed by the returning townspeople. Carlos Rúa-Baja has a bitter description of the scene: "At around eleven in the morning we suddenly saw on the streets leading to the plaza, invading it amid an awful pandemonium, enormous hordes of those savages, some naked from the waist up, others covered with repulsive rags, and all brandishing a bolo in the right hand, like a barbarian army with no thought save of crime, and recognizing no authority except that of force." Poor Carlos Rúa-Baja: how he must have savored the torments of the damned! At five in the afternoon General Makabulos made his triumphant entry into the capital, to the strains of the brass band of Concepción. As in Roman triumphs, the conqueror was flanked by the captive enemy—in this case, two Spanish officers: Commander Flandes and Captain Lafuente, riding to left and right of him—while the crowds shouted vivas "to Makabulos, to Aguinaldo, and to the Army of Liberation of the Philippines."

The celebration continued to the following day and was climaxed by a dinner and ball at the Casa-Gobierno, to which the sardonic Makabulos invited the ex-governor of Tarlac, Señor Don Federico Jaques, and his lady, Doña Cruz Varona. To the stupefaction of their fellow Spaniards, Don Federico and Doña Cruz had no qualms about attending a fiesta to celebrate their country's defeat. "To say that the ballroom glittered with light and beauty, that I leave to vulgar reports," fumes Carlos Rúa-Baja. "What's important to know is that everyone dined and danced to his heart's content, with the concurrence of no less than the ex-governor and his lady, who, as may be expected, were the comic note in the fiesta." Makabulos was in fine form. During the dinner, he had Don Federico at his side and he related how the Spanish governor of Bataan, a Don Antonio Córdoba, had got two bullets through his head on the day Bataan fell. "He did wrong," opined Don Federico, but Makabulos disagreed. "No, sir, he did not do wrong," said Makabulos to Jaques. "He was a true governor and a good Spaniard, and he could not bear the despair that seized him when he saw the flag of Spain replaced by the flag of the Revolution." One can imagine poor Jaques not knowing where to look. Meanwhile his lady was telling everybody who would listen that she was a Cubana and that she came from a revolutionary family.

After the taking of Tarlac, Makabulos, with a thousand of his troops, moved on to Dagupan, being in charge of the campaign in Pangasinan, too. Colonel Aquino was left in Tarlac as military governor. Of this period, two vague recollections—one sunny, one somber—were to haunt his eldest child. The daylit memory is of two Spanish soldiers, prisoners of war, who worked for a time as servants in the colonel's house in Murcia and often romped with his children. The nightmare is of their mother's and grandfather's death.

By December, 1898, the Republic had been six months established in Central Luzón but that it was not entirely accepted as the people's liberation is attested by the rise and spread of the underground movement called the Guardia de Honor. In effect, there were two liberation armies in Central Luzón at that time. One was the army of the Republic, represented by such as Makabulos, Aquino, the Taños, the de Leóns and other great landowners. The counter force was the peasant army called the Guardia de Honor, a people's army that the other side denounced as tulisanes, or, as the Yanqui would put it, bandits.

Carlos Rúa-Baja sees the Guardia as the reaction of the common folk to the abuses of certain officials of the Republic, and he suspects that the rank-and-file of the troops were in league with the peasant movement. Since most of the government offices were without pay, many of the appointees tried to make their authority profitable.

"And this precisely was what angered the honest peaceful folk in the provinces: that those named to positions of this nature turned out to be ignorant, not knowing how to go about their duties, and very little honest.

"Though a familiar enough phenomenon in poverty cultures, the mystical folk cult called the Guardia de Honor, one of the fiercest peasant revolts in our history, has been maligned to this day as a reactionary movement engineered by the friars. Actually, the friars' Guardia de Honor, a rosary association founded in mid-century, had died out in Central Luzón by the 1880s, when a miracle man named Julián Batzar revived the Guardia, this time not as a church devotion but practically as a rival religion to the established church, since Apo Julián was revered as God by his followers. This was the peasant army led by a Jesus Christ and Twelve Apostles that during the Revolution talked of seizing the haciendas and establishing a "socialist paradise." A New Jerusalem was actually built in Cabaran, Pangasinan, which drew thousands of peasants from the Ilocos and Central Luzón. Needless to say, from the time it was taken over by Julián Batzar as God the Father, the Guardia de Honor was repudiated and persecuted by the friars. The Republic likewise harassed it; MacArthur hunted it down and suppressed its communities; and the constabulary continued the persecution through the 1900s. It was supposed to have been wiped out by 1919, when another mystical folk cult, the Colorum, began to stir in the same region, preaching a similar mix of miracle and rebellion. Typical of the black legend against the Guardia is its confounding with the rebellion of Pedro Che, which was really a poor struggle within the Revolution in Tarlac: Che versus Makabulos. At a "peace" banquet in Camiling tendered by the Makabulos faction, Che and his followers were massacred by their hosts. He was killed for being ambitious. But as legend now has it, Che was of the Guardia Civil and of the Guardia de Honor (with which his Party of the Aggrieved has been confused) and his killing is justified as part of the Makabulos campaign against reaction, meaning the Guardia."
giving cause by their conduct to the formation of the Guardia de Honor, the purpose of which was to keep an eye on the provincial authorities and impose punishment on those who deserved it. As soon as the Guardia received a denunciation, its leaders... would notify the soldiers of the town concerned that the Guardia would be entering that town, to kidnap or kill, as they saw fit, the official who had been denounced; and it often happened that the soldiers would slip out of their stations to join the Guardia... usually at night, and afterwards, having kidnaped or killed, would return to their posts."9

In Tarlac, by the end of 1898, the Guardia had become the terror of the landowners, who were also mostly the officialdom. The Guardia had snatched the town president of Bamban; had broken into and tried to seize Camiling; had entered Victoria and tried to kill the town president there; and were raiding one hacienda after another. But the atrocity that aroused the greatest horror was the attack of the Guardia on the house and family of no less than the highest authority of the province, Commander Aquino. As usual, the Guardia had swooped down suddenly, in the dead of night; had struck and fled as fast, and possibly, as Carlos Ria-Baja hints, with the connivance of disloyal troops, in the manner described above.

"By this procedure, they killed the town president of Murcia, who was the father-in-law of Servillano Aquino, then (December of '98) the military governor of Tarlac; and to complete the job, they finished off his wife, who was staying with her father and was pregnant at that time."10

When the Guardia struck, Colonel Aquino was away from home. In the old house in Murcia were his wife Guadalupe, his three little sons, and his parents-in-law. The story is that, when the Guardia broke in, they were met by Don Pablo Quiambao and his daughter Guadalupe, who, both armed in arms style—bolo in the right hand, dagger in the left—fought off the marauders until, overpowered, both the father and the daughter were slain, along with their farm overseer and a servant. Thus did Servillano Aquino lose his first wife. His eldest son Gonzalo, then a child of five, vaguely remembers waking up in the night and thinking it was fiesta, because he heard what sounded like crowds and fireworks. The children were hidden by their grandmother Lorenza, while the marauders ransacked the house and carted away everything they could seize: money and jewels and plate and clothes and even kitchen utensils.

On being notified, Colonel Aquino rushed after the killers but was unable to track them down. They seemed to have vanished into the countryside. The governor's three little boys were taken over by his married sisters in Angeles.

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9El Desastre Filipino, p. 306.
10Ibid., 307.
THE LAST YEAR of the century began with General Otis announcing that the Philippines had been ceded to the United States; and with Aguinaldo announcing the “rupture of amicable relations.” His government, said Don Emilio, was ready to open hostilities should the Americans try to take forcible possession: “Upon their heads be all the blood which may be shed!” Then, with a bravura that recalls Biak-na-Bato, imperilled Malolos proclaimed the Constitution and reaffirmed the Flag’s sovereignty.

In the gala days of the Congress, Servillano Aquino had come to Malolos, to enroll in the military school put up by Luna and staffed with former officers of the army of Spain in the Philippines. The old triumvirate — Creole, Tagalog, Pampango — had joined together for the last time to face the latest of a long series of aggressors; and the form so long kept intact was what Aguinaldo vowed to defend when he warned that Malolos would go to war if the Gringo annexed the Visayas. Colonel Aquino stayed a month at the officers’ school in Malolos; he was back in Tarlac when the Yanqui, spilling out of Manila, dislodged the armies of the Republic from the north bay and grabbed Caloocan. It was the first week of February, 1899. Luna retreated to Polo in Bulacán, where he reorganized his lines of defense, along the railroad.

As in 1565, when Rajah Solimán clamored, the Pampango armies were summoned to the Tagalog front; and Colonel Aquino found himself assigned a key role in the Luna plan to retake Caloocan and seize Manila. Luna envisioned a blitz and total war. His strategy would have a fifth column inside Manila (the sandatahan, or bolo brigades) rising in arms in the night and setting fire to certain places in the city. At that signal, the

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Tagalog troops (under Mariano Llanera and Pantaleon Garcia) would attack Caloocan from the west and advance into Manila by way of Maypajo; while the Pampango troops (under Maximino Hizon and Servillano Aquino) would attack Caloocan from the east and push into the city by way of San Lazaro and Sampaloc. At the same time, from south of Manila would advance the forces of Miguel Malvar and Pio del Pilar, while the army under Licerio Gerominio would complete the encirclement by driving into San Juan del Monte and interlocking with the Pampango troops in the east.

The multiple operation set for February 15, was postponed by a leery Aguinaldo, then reset for February 22, a Gringo holiday, when the carousing enemy might be caught off guard. At eight o’clock that night, the sandatahan rose in Manila and started simultaneous fires in Tondo, Binondo and Sta. Cruz. As the city flamed up in the dark, the armies of the Republic sped to their respective entrances.

In the north, the Tagalog troops poured in by way of Malabon, while the Pampango troops entered La Loma, where they captured a blockhouse and forced the American garrison to retreat. Meanwhile, the company under Mayor Francisco Román succeeded in entering Tondo, while a group of commands under Major Rosendo Simón de Pajarillo reached as far as Calle Azcárraga and battled the enemy right in front of the Bilibid. Their intent was to rush the jail and free the prisoners, who were to be armed and set a rioting.

“I talked afterwards,” says Carlos Rfa-Baja, “with the leader of this revolutionary unit and he told me that it consisted of no more than 240 men, of whom 65 were killed inside Manila while all the rest were wounded. And even so, I could not understand how even one of them could have come out of that fight alive. Considering that it turned at last into a hand-to-hand combat and that the Yankees greatly outnumbered the Filipinos, the logical thing would have been for all the Filipinos to perish.”

The Americans throw in the provost guard to stop the commandos and the rampaging fifth columns; and heavy artillery to stop the armies advancing into Pasay and San Juan from the south. But in the north the Luna blitz was still unstoppable. To sustain the thrust into La Loma, and seeing that the Pampango troops, who had been fighting all night, were mortally exhausted, Luna, towards dawn of February 23, ordered into the fray the four Kawit companies under Captain Pedro Janolino. But the Kavit companies never went in; the weary Pampangos got no support and began to fall back. It turned out that Janolino had not obeyed Luna’s order because, said Janolino, he had been instructed to take orders only from Aguinaldo. To Luna’s roar of rage collapsed the most tantalizing gamble of the war, what could have been its decisive audacity. When the Pampango troops faltered in La Loma, the battle was lost.

“The failure,” says John R.M. Taylor, “was attributed to the action of the troops from Cavite Viejo... On February 24, Luna telegraphed that if Cauir (evidently the Cavite Viejo battalion) had understood the plan the victory would have been complete. On February 25, Gen. Ambrosio Flores, who had succeeded Luna as assistant secretary of war, wrote that want of discipline had been chiefly responsible for the failure of February 23. The companies of Cavite Viejo had refused to take part in the attack on the Americans in Caloocan... This failure still further disheartened the soldiers and desertions became very numerous.”

How close the Luna blitz came to succeeding can perhaps be gathered from the way the Americans were to play down its gravity, naturally, since American morale, whether in the army or on the home front, would hardly have been improved by a report that the Filipinos had outwitted General Arthur MacArthur and captured his troops napping. The minimizing is still evident in an account written long after, which sniggers that the sandatahan, when they rose and started a fire in Sta. Cruz, were “rewarded with a cracked skull from the butt of a rifle.” However, the true situation can be read between the lines of that account:

“As the Sta. Cruz fire was being brought under control, another fire broke out in the Tondo district... It was later ascertained that about 300 Insurgents under the command of Major Francisco Román, one of Luna’s aides, had managed to pass MacArthur’s lines by going through the swamps adjoining the bay on his left flank. These Insurgents had then infiltrated into Manila and barricaded themselves in Tondo. More provost guards were called, but the Insurgent force was so active that the Americans had to take up a defensive line... The houses were necessarily permitted to burn to the ground...”

“The provost guard, which had successfully resisted the efforts of Román’s force to advance from Tondo, was given a short rest and then six companies were sent to drive them out. During the night the Insurgents had securely barricaded themselves and it took an all-day running fight to clear them out of the area. The majority were killed because they refused to surrender when cornered, and the few who did manage to escape moved back through the swamps. Tondo was a mass of ruins.”

With the Americans so occupied in Tondo, and also in Pasay and San Juan, as well as inside the city, the impetus in La Loma could well have carried the Pampango troops into San Lazaro and Sampaloc, if they had only been backed up by the Kawit companies. Not since Aguinaldo’s blitz...
up the Camino Real in June, 1898, had the armies of the Republic come so close to taking Manila; and never again would they come this close.

That the Americans did get a bad scare is implied in Rfa-Baja's contemporary observation:

"This unexpected attack by the Filipinos made the Americans realize that they could not dawdle in operations of war, and that a forward push had to be undertaken without delay." ²

From La Loma, Colonel Aquino moved his troops to the woods of Balintawak, the railroad's gateway into Bulacán. Of the lost battle he would recall that he had gone into it with 1200 men and that no sooner were they disembarked from the train that had brought them in than "we were engaged in battle outright and 50 of my men were killed." That was just in the first charge; the brigade was to lose over a hundred men during the night-and-day battle and many more had been wounded by the time the brigade fell back. In Balintawak they dug in, and were there entrenched for a month; occasionally the U.S. warships on the bay shelled their camp, which was just a few miles from the American outposts in Caloocan.

On March 25, MacArthur started his big push northward, along the railroad. But first he snipped off the Filipino picket lines, and then a noose round the throat of the railroad. Dislodged from Balintawak, Aquino and his men retreated to Polo, arriving there in the night and waking up on the morning to find the Americans swarming upon them! In a single day, the enemy, racing forward in two columns, one to the left, the other to the right of the road, had crossed the swampy rice fields of Marikina on the one hand, and the trackless jungles of Novaliches on the other, and come up on the Bulacán border, the two columns converging at daybreak on the approaches to Polo, in Malinta, where the punch of the defense knocked the life out of Colonel H. C. Egbert, commander of the attacking regiment. With Polo lost, the Filipinos reestablished their lines across the Meycauayan River, but that was no torrent to daunt the Gringo, and Meycauayan, too, was snatched in a day. Then, one after the other, fell the succeeding railroad stops — Marilao, Bocaue, Bigaa, Guiguinto — with the Filipinos obeying no pattern of defense, now hotly contesting a position, now just slipping away from it, but almost always burning down what had to be abandoned. Like the Israelites, the pursuing Americans moved to a cloud of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night. A week after the push began, they entered Malolos, on the morning of March 31, and found the capital of the Republic intact but deserted. Aquino had vanished with the night.

On the fall of Malolos, Colonel Aquino and his troops fled north over the Candaba swamps to Concepción. The colonel rested among his own for a week. Then he marched his men to Dagupan, possibly to rejoin Makabulos, but on arriving there received orders to position his brigade in Calumpit. The Americans were trying to cross over into Pampanga country, where the Republic had fled. On reaching Angeles, the colonel found Aguinaldo headquartered there and learned that the Americans had already crossed the Río Grande into Pampanga. His troops were reassigned to the México-Arayat area. After the fall of San Fernando on May 5, there was a lull in the fighting. MacArthur was resting his troops; Aguinaldo was suing for an armistice.

At this point there may have been a schism in the Tarlac command over the Aguinaldo-Luna feud, with Makabulos on Luna's side and Aquino a steadfast loyalist. While in Malolos, Aguinaldo had tried to yank Makabulos out of Central Luzón and transfer him elsewhere. "Suspecting that he was to be freed from his command on account of his popularity in the north, Makabulos refused to go, saying that his provinces would have to be conquered by Aguinaldo before he would leave them. A few days later, he forwarded to Aguinaldo, as a guarantee of good faith in the cause of the insurrection, the sum of $35,000 in cash."³ Makabulos would later claim that he should have been with Luna on the fatal trip to Cabanatuan, having also been ordered to go there, but received the order too late, and was thus saved from being slain along with Luna and Francisco Román.³ Aquino was, on the other hand, to demonstrate his fidelity during the crisis. An aide of Luna, Captain José Bernál, was arrested during the purge of Luna partisans and taken to Angeles, where he was liquidated by the troops of Colonel Aquino.⁴ Apparently, after the crisis, Makabulos was restored to favor, since he was one of the generals that Aguinaldo chose to support him in his attempt to retake San Fernando town. However, it was Gregorio del Pilar, not Makabulos, who was later made Commander of the North, with headquarters in Dagupan, although Pangasinan had long been officially a Makabulos zone.

The offensive on San Fernando, eleven days after the killing of Luna, was the first in which Aguinaldo took personal command of the army; and his plan to retake the town recalls the Luna blitz on Manila. "On June 16, Aguinaldo himself led an attack on San Fernando by the brigades of Makabulos, San Miguel and Mascardo, in which his line extended for some 3 miles. As one of these brigades on June 1 had 1,431 rifles, the attacking force probably had at least 4,000 rifles — General MacArthur thought at least 3,000. But the soldiers probably did not have more than 30 to 44 cartridges each. When these were exhausted they had to fall back."

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² *El Desastre Filipino*, p. 345.

³ Autobiography; the Ninoy Aquino account.


⁵ José P. Santos, *Unang Bayani ng Tarlak*, p. 6.

One brigade had 54 casualties."\textsuperscript{11} Another account has Aguinaldo leading a force of 7000: "No military man, Aguinaldo spread his entire force in a seven-mile arc which practically surrounded the city ... Fifty feet of the railroad track between San Fernando and Calumpit were removed. The attack of the thin over-extended Insurgent line, however, was easily repulsed by the Americans."\textsuperscript{12} For Servillano Aquino, nevertheless, it was a memorable battle (he was wounded in action; he ended up a general) and without deprecation certainly would he recall the four columns (one led by Aguinaldo himself) advancing on San Fernando from as many directions, and the quality of the fighting. During the battle on that "over-extended" front, he was shot in the left shoulder, at Sito Lagundi in México, and had to be rushed to a hospital. When he recovered, the Americans were only a few miles outside Angeles and the Republic had moved its capital to Tarlac town.

Aquino was summoned by Aguinaldo, raised in rank to brigadier general, and appointed deputy to the Congress, which had reassembled in Tarlac, to intone its swan song. Presumably, as the deputy for Samar, General Aquino sat in the session which, on July 14, very hopefully elected a new set of Congress officials. His brigade had been placed in charge of the Magalang area. The rains had come and the war had turned fluid, the Americans being no more eager to hold on to soggy backwoods than the Filipinos, who would yield a position and then flow back. Slippery outposts thus changed hands so often and so softly it was a joke among the Yanqui in Pampanga that "when there isn't anything else to do, we go out and take Porac before breakfast." But their generals in Manila were already mounting the triple operation, by land and sea, designed to entrap the Republic in Tarlac. General Aquino was part of the human palisade put up to block American passage into the province.

This palisade consisted of the four brigades under Generals Mascaro, San Miguel, Hizon and Aquino, which together formed the division commanded by General Venancio Concepción. As the Americans saw it, the four brigades were "supposed to be effectively disposed to prevent American advance along the railroad, but were really scattered commands, operating rather independently over an unduly prolonged and thin line, with some regard to natural strategic points, but no comprehensive, practicable general plan of defense, and wasting their energies in night attacks."\textsuperscript{13}

From mid-season, activity increased in General Aquino's Magalang area, though MacArthur had yet to stir from San Fernando.

On September 30, 1899, Pantaleón García, chief of staff, wrote that General Aquino, commanding the brigade operating about Magalang, Pampanga, had informed him that his command was divided into four flying columns composed in all of 1,156 men with rifles. The columns were each commanded by a lieutenant-colonel and were composed of from 276 to 300 men, divided into three companies. On October 1 this force held the Angeles-Calutit-Santa Cruz-Arayat line. Reports exist of a series of skirmishes he had with the Americans during that month who from time to time advanced towards towns held by him. He would promptly move his men from the front and attack the flank of the enemy. One man killed and two wounded is his usual return of casualties after these combats, but the expenditure of ammunition was serious to a man of his position."\textsuperscript{14}

In early September, General Concepción made a study of the terrain and came to the conclusion that the Americans had no alternative to the railroad for an advance into Tarlac. The enemy would surely not detour around Mount Arayat into Nueva Ecija and from there try to force an entry into Tarlac; the detour was impregnable swamp. Nor would the enemy try going in by way of Magalang, from where there was no way into Tarlac town save the cart roads of Murcia and La Paz; those roads were deep gutters where a weighted wheel would freeze.

"Would it be possible for an army which cannot advance without artillery to move through this country in its present condition? Might this not be the reason the American forces have given up the movement on Magalang after the movement was commenced? Besides, it is not necessary to overcome the obstacles presented by the conditions of the country in the rainy season; but also to overcome the resistance of our troops, protected by strategic intrenchments, and which are under the able command of General Servillano Aquino, who, with his brigade, is in charge of those lines and of the defense of Concepción, and would protect our retreat from the Parauo in case of necessity. For this reason the Aquino brigade with its present forces will be sufficient to defend and hold our left wing."\textsuperscript{15}

General Concepción erred in being too optimistic and underestimating the enemy. He assumed that of two or three "impregnable" routes the least impossible would be chosen. He failed to consider that the enemy might attempt all the routes — which is what the Americans did decide to do, with MacArthur blitzing his way up the railroad and Lawton sloshing through the mud of the Arayat byways into Nueva Ecija.

On October 3, General Aquino received fresh instructions: if forced to abandon Magalang, he was, as he moved back, to keep hitting at the right flank of the enemy, so as to protect the retreat of the other brigades to Capas, where, on the north bank of the Cutcut River, a second line of defense was to be established.\textsuperscript{16} On the same day, Aguinaldo announced loops.
his intention of moving the government out of Tarlac; the reason he gave was disingenuous: Tarlac town did not possess "the hygienic and geographic conditions" proper for a capital of the Republic. Actually, Don Emilio was planning to flee into even more unhygienic wilderness (Bayombong in Nueva Vizcaya), for a wandering in the wilderness was the fate he had brought on himself when, missing the cue of history in June, 1898, he failed to march all the way up the Camino Real from Cavite to Manila, when Manila was still his alone for the taking.

As more American troops poured into Angeles, the Aquino sector came under heavier fire. The enemy tried to break the Magalang line on October 7, in a battle that lasted from nine in the morning to twelve noon; Aquino's line held. Four days later he retaliated with an attack on the Americans that caused them great losses when he cut off their retreat by railway to Angeles. The following day, October 12, the Aquino brigade succeeded in derailing a wagon train carrying an American convoy from Calulut to Angeles; the conductor and the convoy were taken captive.17

From October 10 to 20, General Aquino joined in the nightly raids on Angeles, which the Americans had seized in mid-August.

"Eleven consecutive nights," reported an American officer, "my troops at Angeles were attacked by the enemy. The attack was generally commenced at 2 or 2:30 a.m. The attacks in the mornings of the 11th and 16th were quite formidable. The enemy's forces including the brigade of Gen. Maximino Hizon and Colonel Quezón. Also troops under Gen. Servillano Aquino, from the line of Arayat to Magalang. Also troops under Gen. Tomás Mascarto, from the line west of Angeles. Reliable information places the entire insurgent force that moved against us on the morning of October 11 at more than 3,000 strong, and on the 16th the force was still greater, numbering nearly 4,000."18

The hope of retaking Angeles shriveled when at the beginning of November, MacArthur resumed his advance, from San Fernando, and everything including the KP stove got thrown at the Filipinos. General Aquino had been pushed out of the southern half of the Magalang area on October 17 but on November 2 was still holding the Magalang-Concepción road, despite an American assault on that day in which 12 were killed and 24 wounded of his men.19 On November 5, two American battalions, a battery of artillery and a detachment of engineers were sent under a Colonel Smith to take the Magalang-Concepción road. "Smith met little opposition until at Magalang, where the enemy made a stand, which afforded him an opportunity to inflict a considerable loss... The insurgent force encountered was commanded by General Aquino [mis-

spelled Aquina in the report] and consisted of about a thousand men, equally distributed in the vicinity of San José, Pandakaki and Magalang.20

On November 8, the Americans began moving northward from Mabalacat and on November 11 were confronted by "a force of about 900 men armed with rifles" on the Bamban-Concepción road, where the ensuing battle also involved General Makabulos, with 300 or 400 men, and General Aquino, with about 1200 to 1250 rifles. The American troops that engaged Aquino numbered some 3000 and their heavy fire drove the Aquino brigade out of San Antonio, the extreme barrio of Magalang. Aquino retreated into Tarlac, from where Aguinaldo had already fled. MacArthur was reporting on November 10 that "the road is clear to Concepción, where the remnants of Aquino's command, which was formerly at Magalang, was assembled."22 But that remnant was evidently still game enough to give battle to the enemy on November 10 and 11, still desperately trying to close the approaches to Tarlac and protect the retreat of the government, as Aquino had been bidden to do. Patriot and foe grappled in mud and flood, to the windy rain of the monsoon.

After the November 11 battle, the towns of Concepción, Bamban and Capas fell to the enemy. "Every combination," gloated MacArthur, "has been carried out precisely as ordered, and this famous stronghold has been captured with four casualties only... I am not able to report certainly more than ten or a dozen casualties among the insurgents, although there are indications that their losses are much larger. The defense was apparently made by something like 1,600, equally distributed between Bamban and Concepción."23 Added the triumpher: "It has rained hard ever since 1 o'clock. I shall make an effort, however, to reach Tarlac tomorrow, and hope conditions may improve somewhat, but just at this writing it is still raining." The next day, November 12, the storm has worsened and MacArthur is in some doubt that he can enter Tarlac town on that day: "The rain yesterday and last night made progress almost impossible. I shall not be able to take two regiments forward, as I hoped. I shall send the Thirty-sixth Infantry and a troop of cavalry with instructions to get contact and, if possible, get into Tarlac, if it can be done without too much risk." But he was sure of one thing: "The brigades of Mascarto, Hizon and Aquino have been practically disorganized and demoralized. I don't know where San Miguel is, but unless he is in my front, it seems to me that the organized resistance on this line is almost destroyed." It may be, however, that Servillano Aquino made one last futile stand, on

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17Ibid., p. 691.
18Report of Lieutenant General Commanding the Army, p. 258.
19Artigas, pp. 678ff.
his home ground, in Murcia, where he had married his wife and begotten his children, and where, only the year before, he had looked on in pride and joy as Spain surrendered to the Republic; for it was surely he that tried to stop the Americans there on the stormy afternoon of November 12, 1899. "Bell's column reached Murcia at 3 p.m. Encountered a party of 100 insurgents, who were run out by Lieutenant Slavens and the detachment of headquarter scouts. They rescued the station house [of the railroad], which had been set on fire." After Murcia, only the typhoon had to be fought.

Arthur MacArthur's hopes were fulfilled: Bell's column, the 36th Infantry, entered Tarlac town on the night of November 12, and found nobody home. The Republic had fallen, but Aguinaldo had escaped again — and would escape still once again, in Pangasinan, where the jaws of Yanqui strategy somehow failed to snap shut.

From the fleeing Aguinaldo came word to the patriots to go underground and revert to guerrilla warfare, as in '97. The Tarlac armies were disbanded in Geron. Then Makabulos took to the hills of Mayantoc while Servillano Aquino flew back to the old eyrie on Mount Sinukuan. From their respective redoubts the two warlords were to continue the resistance through the maiden semester of the 1900s.

The hapless Yanqui must have felt this like a nightmare exactly repeating itself. For the second time they thought to have won a war in the Philippines, but found themselves having to fight another, uglier war.

2Ibid., p. 53.

Once again, deep in the woods and hills sounded the horn of native dissidence. Not for the first nor the last time would Central Luzon house the "invisible government" of a champion without a face.

"While American troops were occupying towns and establishing municipal governments, the Insurgents arranged a parallel organization, in many cases employing the same natives who held offices under the Americans. The towns were taxed, contributions and supplies collected, and recruits for the guerrilla forces enlisted right under the noses of the unsuspecting Americans."1

But the Gringos did come to realize that the unseen foe was not of the hills only, being as constantly invisible on the streets of town.

"Then strange dual governments existed throughout the pueblos of Luzon, and it was expedient for the municipal officials aiding the insurgents to persuade the Americans that the marauding bands which ravaged the countryside were ladrones and not guerrillas... General MacArthur saw that the opposition to American sovereignty came from the towns, and that the guerrilla bands could not exist without their support."2

The American use of water cure, rope cure, massacre, concentration camp, and even amnesty, failed for a long time to create a dependable distinction between hill and town, between the faceless outlaw and the very visible man on the street.

On Sinukuan, General Aquino had about 500 men as the core of his guerrilla troops. He set up camp at Sitio Pader in Camansi, the same site of the citadel of '97. Right off, General Aquino's war became vexing enough to warrant an American expedition against him, at the very start of the new year.

1Soldiers in the Sun, p. 239.
“On the 5th of January 1900, upon information obtained by previous reconnaissance, Companies B, K and M of the 25th Infantry . . . left Magalang and attacked the stronghold of the insurgent General Aquino, situated at Poder (sic), near Comansi (sic), Mt. Arayat. The troops scaled heights of great difficulty and crawled thru dense undergrowth.”

As the first action on record against a known guerrilla unit, the attack on the new Real de Camansi can be said to inaugurate the second phase of the war: the guerrilla resistance.

Reported an officer of the American expedition:

“While the command was . . . strung out through the dense underbrush it was fired on by insurgents — number unknown, but 15 or 20 — from a hill about 100 feet high. This hill was very steep and was difficult to climb. It was taken in the face of a severe fire, the enemy retreating by a well-defined trail along a ridge. In taking the hill the men were annoyed by a fire from the hills some hundred yards in rear. The town was then taken with practically no resistance, the enemy retreating into the mountains. Five American prisoners were found in Camansi who had been shot, boledo, and mutilated by the insurgents just before abandoning the place. Three of the men are from the Ninth Infantry and two from the Twelfth. The buildings and stores were burned and the command returned by the other road to Magalang.”

According to another report, of the five prisoners found in Camansi, one was dead and “the other three were in a fearful condition.” This was the crime to be imputed to General Aquino and there are several versions of the story. As Leon Wolff tells it: “Four Americans searching (as always) for chickens were surrounded by rebels who killed one and captured the others. For six weeks, during which playful Filipinos sometimes pointed cocked pistols at their heads and then pulled the triggers on empty chambers, they were abused and underfed. At last a detachment of the 25th Infantry approached the insurgent camp. Before departing, the natives shot the prisoners down and hacked them with bolos.” William T. Sexton has a vivid account: “At Mabalacat, only ten days after MacArthur’s division had passed through, four soldiers of the 9th Infantry, which was garrisoning the town, wandered into the surrounding barrios in search of some chickens. They were suddenly surrounded by some fifty or sixty armed Filipinos who commenced to fire on them. In the ensuing fight, three Filipinos were killed, four wounded, and one American soldier killed and the other three captured. The dead American was mutilated by bolos and the three prisoners hurried off to a small barrio on the slope of Mount Arayat. There for six weeks they were subjected to numerous indignities . . . A Macabebe prisoner had his throat cut before their eyes. Their sole diet was rice, sometimes interspersed with a small amount of salmon. In a short time they became so weak and emaciated that they could barely stand. In January the camp which was occupied by some 600 insurgents was attacked by a detachment of the 25th Infantry. As the American troops approached the camp the prisoners were lined up, forced to kneel, and shot by a Filipino firing squad. As the Americans entered the camp the insurgents hacked the wounded Americans with bolos as a parting gesture. Strange to say, two of the Americans survived the horrible incident, though critically injured, and were able to give an account of their ordeal.”

In his autobiography General Aquino gives his own version:

“Two American soldiers from the forces encamped in Capas one day arrived in this town [Concepción] on horseback. We were able to take them prisoners after they had emptied their revolvers. At a place called Dunning a Matas (Tall Tree) between Concepción and Capas, we surprised an American unit and were able to take three men and their arms. We brought these five prisoners to our camp. When the Americans attacked the camp, they found three of the prisoners dead and the remaining two in serious condition. The lieutenant in charge ordered the last two to be shot.”

The official report of the expedition says that “five American prisoners fell into our hands, but not until they had been shot and so brutally boledo that but two recovered.”

The survivors testified that: “Gen. Aquino, whom they saw often, was generally harsh toward them, but sometimes gave them cigarettes and talked with them. There were several hundred insurgents at Camansi. That evening of Jan. 4 about 600 had answered the roll call . . . and by the morning of the attack, Jan. 5, there were 1,000 of them.”

Its ravaging did not mean the end of the fort at Camansi; the Americans had to launch more expeditions against it, for General Aquino continued his war from Sinukuan, harassing the Yanqui's camps and falling upon their wagon trains. An ordeal he loved to recount was his near-capture by the enemy. He and his men were confining in a shed at Almendres, a sitio near a forest, when they were surprised by American troops. They ran for their lives into the forest. It was noon, the sun was blistering hot, but they dared not stir from cover. All that afternoon and all that night they lay hid in the forest, without food or drink. The general
became so thirsty he drank his own urine. Not till eight o'clock the next morning did the enemy depart. When the guerrillas returned to their conference shed they found their uniforms and shoes and horses gone.

Apparently they had been conferring in their underwear.

The secret war at last had poor Otis asking to be relieved as military governor of the Philippines. "The scope and success of guerrilla resistance had shaken 'Grandma' Otis. Unlike the old war he thought he had won, the new one had gotten quite out of control."11 And the folks back home were asking why, if the "insurrection" had been suppressed, more troops were being sent to the Philippines and more American boys were being killed there. MacArthur took over as governor in the summer of 1900 and in his grim way offered amnesty: the guerrillas had three months (up to September) to give themselves up and go free (though he thought them all "murderers"). The amnesty flopped; MacArthur had to resort to martial law; but his three-month bargain offer did bag a number of notables, among them the two caudillos of Tarlac.

Makabulos, whose wife was pregnant, let it be known in jest that he would come down from the hills if she delivered a boy. She sent word he had a son. He gave himself up, then learned it was a girl.12

General Aquino, too, was then being prayed to desist. A secret meeting was arranged for him at Barrio Sta. Rita in Concepcion, with an American captain, who was scarcely encouraging.13 General Aquino, said the captain, might have to face a court-martial, being held accountable for what happened to his American prisoners in Camansi. The general retorted that he would yield only on the assurance that he would be set free at once. In a second meeting with the American captain, who had consulted his fellows, the general was told that no such assurance could be given. The general returned to the hills. But, by now, tedium and terror had eroded the movement and his band was dwindling to just his officers and bodyguards; the mass of the soldiery, weary of resistance, were trickling home. Even the flesh would subvert the spirit: on the wet mountain germinated the tuberculosis that would waste him in age. Before the deadline of amnesty in September, 1900, General Aquino came down from the mountain, surrendered "unconditionally" to U.S. Brigadier General Frederick Dent Grant,14 and was charged with atrocities committed on five American prisoners in Camansi. He had been at war for four years.

He was taken to Manila and, as he remembered it, was kept in the

same house on Calle Anda where Mabini, Ricarte, Joaquin Luna, General Hizon and other officers of the Republic were being detained. In January, 1901, the Mabini group were deported to Guam; and General Aquino, left behind, went on trial for his life.

"I was court-martialed," he says in his autobiography, "and sentenced to die, but my lawyer, who was an American, General Thomas L. Hartigan, appealed to the United States government, and my sentence was reduced to life imprisonment."

That would make the second time in his life that he cheated the executioner.

Among his fellow detainees was another officer of the Revolution, Manuel Luis Quezon, who had come to Manila to continue his law but found himself being arrested by the Americans and taken before the Provost Marshall.

"On reaching the Provost's Office," recalls Quezon, "I was told to follow an American sergeant who knew what to do with me. The sergeant was a gentleman. He conducted me to a big house which during the Spanish regime had been occupied by the Civil Governor of the province of Manila. It was now the stopping place for the leaders, civilian and military alike, and intransigent chiefs of the Revolution. Mabini, the greatest character of his time and many times the prime minister of Aguinaldo, had hallowed its halls. Two Filipino generals were the unwilling guests in the house. I was left in a nice room where I lived for two months, eating good food but not knowing why I was confined there.

"One day, the two generals were taken out, Gen. Diokno to his own house and Gen. Aquino to Bilibid Prison. The latter had been court-martialed and sentenced to death for the alleged murder of an American prisoner. However, his sentence was commuted by the President of the United States to life imprisonment."15

Quezon erroneously adds that General Aquino was freed when a general amnesty was proclaimed. Actually, the general served three years of his sentence; then he was extended clemency, because there was reasonable doubt about his guilt.

At his trial, weight was given to the affidavits of the three surviving victims (one of them died afterwards) whose testimonies were taken soon after they were rescued, although not all three witnesses identified General Aquino as the officer who ordered the shooting of the American prisoners.

Testified Lt. Joseph Frazier:

"Early in the morning (January 5, 1900) the 5 prisoners were lined up by Gen. Aquino himself and 9 Filipinos lined up in front of them with rifles. ... All had been made to kneel except Sgt. Pedersen who had

[Notes]
10The Ninoy Aquino biography.
11Little Brown Bruiser, p. 309.
12Zaide; Great Filipinos in History, p. 303.
13The Ninoy Aquino biography.
14Manila Times, March 26, 1904.
15The Good Fight, pp. 81-2.
refused to kneel. The insurgents then boloed those that seemed to be still alive and ran hastily away, as the Americans were already quite near."

Edward A. Norval, army cook, had a slightly different story:

"On the morning of the fight Gen. Aquino sent 25 men at the edge of the mountain. . . He then had 9 men left with him in the camp. He took us out in the open place and . . . when the firing began, Aquino motioned for us to get back of the 9 men. When we got back there they told us to get on our knees. Aquino then gave the orders to fire. As soon as they got thru shooting they left. They shot about 25 rounds.

"I know Aquino very well, also Comandante Castillo. I did not notice whether Castillo was there or not at the time of the shooting. After the shooting and just before they left, some of the insurgents stopped to bolo the 2 cooks of the 9th Infantry."

But the third witness, Sgt. Christian Pedersen, tells a different story altogether and does not attribute the shooting order to General Aquino:

"In the morning I noticed considerable confusion in the camp. The officers all moved their stuff away. All of us were ordered out of the guardhouse. We came out into the open space in the camp. The insurgents formed a skirmish line and we 5 prisoners were put in front of it, between the line and the outpost. Comandante Castillo came up and one of the 9th Infantry prisoners said to him, 'Are you going to kill us this morning?' And he said, 'Oh, I don't know.' He was always kind to us and friendly. There was considerable excitement about this time and the officers were rushing about. Somehow two of the prisoners got behind the line. I don't know how they got there. They were the two prisoners who were favored — Cook and Brown. We were sitting down waiting when suddenly the outposts began firing. Then the line of soldiers in front of us began firing at us 3 prisoners. They didn't hit me at first and I ran over and behind a tree. One of the soldiers ran over to me and put his gun up and shot me. I played possum when I fell and rolled over and over until I fell over the side of the hill. I went down a considerable distance and landed in a lot of bushes. After that I knew nothing until the soldiers of the 25th Infantry found me.

"Comandante Castillo made all the arrangements for our execution. I did not hear anyone else give any orders. Gen. Aquino was there that morning and I saw him talking with Castillo and the officers just before the firing began. I did not hear any orders given for the firing when the soldiers shot us. It seemed to have been arranged beforehand."

Concluded the officer, Lt. F. Guy Knabenschue, who took down the affidavits: "Who the insurgent officer was that ordered the execution is uncertain as the men tell different stories."

During his trial, General Aquino "maintained that it [the order to shoot the prisoners] was given by a subordinate who resembled him, and whom he afterward punished."17 But the court chose to believe otherwise and convicted General Aquino, who, early in 1901, was committed to the Bilibid, as a life-termer. The following year (Aguinaldo being already safe in the Yanqui fold) a general amnesty was proclaimed by the Government of the United States in the Philippines — but General Aquino was "the only insurgent officer of any note who did not receive the benefit of the full amnesty of 1902, the offense of which he had been convicted being held to fall outside the exemptions of that amnesty."18

Two years later he was pardoned by President Theodore Roosevelt, upon recommendation of Secretary of War Taft. The reason given was that General Frederick Dent Grant, the presiding officer at the Aquino trial, had "also expressed doubt as to the identification of Aquino . . . being positive."19

Besides, the powerful Partido Federal had been working for his release.

Completely apocryphal, however (although General Aquino himself repeats it in his autobiography), is the story that William Howard Taft sought the release of General Aquino because of a friendship between a son of Taft and Benigno, the general's younger son. As the tale has it, the two boys were classmates in LeTrän when Taft was civil governor of the Philippines, and the young Benigno Aquino was sometimes asked by the Taft boy to spend the night at Malacañañg. Governor Taft is thus supposed to have learned that Benigno's father was a prisoner in Bilibid, and to have promised the little boy that when he, Taft, returned to the United States he would ask the President to pardon General Aquino.

According to the general's eldest son Gonzalo, nothing of this could have happened, since he and Benigno were not staying in Manila during the Taft governorship, and were not placed in LeTrän till after their father's release. But the kernel of fact round which the legend grew was indeed a visit the Aquino boys made to Malacañañg when Taft was governor and their father was in prison.

At that time they were staying in Angeles and their uncle there made Gonzalo and Benigno (then respectively nine and eight years old) memorize a little speech in English that had for refrain the piteous line: Please pardon our father! The two boys were told that they were to be taken to Manila and that there, whenever they saw an American, they were to fall on their knees and deliver their speech — of which, of course, they understood not a word. "In Manila," recalls Don Gonzalo, "we saw a white man on the street and immediately fell on our knees before him. 'Please pardon our father!' But he turned out to be a Spaniard. 'Qué diab-

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18Ibid.
19Ibid.
20Texts of the four declarations are from the 1900 Report of the War Department, pp. 286ff.
lost" he said, and gave Benigno and me a peseta each." The boys were then taken to Malacañang, accompanied by their uncles and their father's lawyer, Thomas Hartigan. "Our uncles wanted us to climb the stairs of the Palace on our knees but Mr. Hartigan would not allow it." They were brought before Governor Taft and fell on their knees at his feet. "Please pardon our father!" The governor was touched, gave the boys a gold dollar each, and promised to do what he could. Don Gonzalo says that the long fight to free his father cost a fortune in legal fees and ate up much of the family hacienda.

During that trip to Manila they visited their father in prison and found him wearing the black-and-white striped uniform of Bilibid — traje de tigre, he called it. And he announced that he had won a rank in prison: capataz de lavaderos, or laundry foreman. After his release, he had a picture taken of himself wearing his traje de tigre and hung it prominently in his house. And of no picture of his was he prouder than of that one showing him in the convict uniform he wore "when I was a prisoner of the Americans."

On March 23, 1904, from Washington, Secretary Taft cabled Governor-General Luke E. Wright in Manila: "Upon my recommendation Servillano Aquino pardoned by the president today. You may therefore issue the necessary order of release. Formal instrument of pardon will be mailed."

Two days later, on the evening of March 25, General Aquino left the Bilibid. He was 30 years old and had spent over three years in captivity. A news item20 the next day in an American paper referred to him as "a brigadier-general of insurgents of the old regime" and recalled his career as though it were remote history:

"Aquino was released last night from Bilibid. This morning he called upon Señor Arsenio Cruz Herrera of the municipal board, sometimes called the presidente of Manila. He called to thank Señor Herrera for the activity of the Federal Party in securing his pardon, that organization, of which Cruz Herrera is the head, having labored without ceasing to secure the exercise of executive clemency on behalf of Aquino."

"Some light on Aquino's military career was thrown by some Filipino admirers of him, who say that he was a bold fighter and a good one, offering valiant opposition to the Spaniards and later to the Americans in open fights. . . . It was charged that he ordered certain American soldiers, who were prisoners, shot. Some witnesses testified that he did and some that he did not and it is understood that it was on account of this conflict that Secretary Taft recommended clemency. His native friends say that he is not a man of barbarous instincts but a humane and kindly dispositioned person."

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20Manila Times, Saturday, March 26, 1904.