

Chapter 11



The Spanish Philippines

ALTHOUGH it had long been involved in Asian circuits of trade, the Philippines was not “discovered” by Europeans until Magellan arrived there in 1521. The conquest of the islands and the conversion of most of their inhabitants to Catholicism began with Legazpi’s expedition in 1565 and was largely complete within a century, except in the south—Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago—where Islam had already become entrenched. Administered from Mexico, which also subsidized its government, the Philippines remained the farthest outpost of Spain’s empire, as grandiose ambitions to conquer the Muslim south, or even China and Japan, dwindled away.

Legazpi 1565

The Bourbon Reforms

OBSERVED from Acapulco or Seville, the mid-eighteenth-century Philippines seemed a static place. Galleons sailed, galleons returned. Occasionally panic and economic havoc struck the Spanish community when a galleon was sunk or intercepted by some foreign power, but a year or two later the vital trans-Pacific trade was always restored. In the walled city of Manila, the Spanish “governor and captain general” often feuded with the Spanish archbishop, while the Spanish *audiencia* (court/council) intrigued against both. Since the threatened invasion by the Chinese outlaw “Koxinga” (Zheng Chenggong) in 1662, nothing else of obvious significance had happened. The priorities of a distant Mexico

City and an even more distant Madrid were barely relevant to the archipelago. Yet simultaneously several unrelated forces were stirring that would unleash a century and a half of dramatic change.

The Tagalog revolts on the friar estates in the 1750s demonstrated a violent anger at the loss of control over land and suggested the emergence of a complex multiethnic, multilinguistic society. It also exposed the friars to more scrutiny than before; although they suppressed the revolts and won the court cases, it was harder for them to maintain the fiction that their interests were identical with those of the people of the Philippines. Their struggle to hold on to their power—political and economic as well as religious—would become a major theme of the remaining years of Spanish rule.

There were also problems arising from the Muslim south, which Spain had long claimed but had never been able to control. When Spain had first come to the Philippines, it discovered that Islam had arrived there more than a century earlier. The friars demanded that the government “pacify” the south so that they could complete their missionary work there. But Spain did not succeed there as it had in Luzon, except for a few missions precariously perched in northern Mindanao. Islam had already become domesticated into the life of the south, and the Spanish lacked the technological superiority to defeat the sultanates there. Indeed, the renewed Muslim raids after 1750—spurred in part by Sulu’s rising trade with China, which created a demand for more slave labor—raised fears within the Christian community, seriously disrupted the economy, and threatened the stability of the colony well into the nineteenth century.

Meanwhile, directed by the reformist Bourbon dynasty in Spain, the Philippine government began to shake off its lethargy. Up to then, most governors-general had accepted the status quo. Each saw his tenure as brief, his goal to stay alive in the tropics, and his reward to return to Spain wealthy. The new governors, however, saw as their mission transforming a dysfunctional economy and theocratic colony; they had been sent out by modern, secular kings, mercantilist reformers of an archaic colonial structure, with a new dream for the Philippines.

First they moved to reduce the economic power of the Chinese, forcing some into a new ghetto (Parian) and expelling others. Chinese mestizos, Christian and culturally integrated, filled the gap. The government maintained that unless new trade routes could be opened and new exports developed, the archipelago was doomed economically. It sought to expand iron mining and to encourage the production of indigo, tobacco, and cinnamon for overseas markets.

These efforts at reform, however, were overwhelmed by a half century of intermittent global war, beginning with the Seven Years War. When Britain occupied Manila in 1762, a direct consequence of Spain’s alliance with France, it found a colony isolated and unprepared. Manila was easily conquered, although one high-ranking Spanish official escaped, repudiated the surrender,

1750

1460
* Islam
S. Philippines

reformist
Bourbon
Dynasty

reduce
Chinese power

British
occ.
1762

and organized an effective resistance that limited British power to the Manila Bay area. A year and a half later, again as part of a global settlement, Britain restored the archipelago to Spain.

The interregnum had substantial domestic consequences. The interruption of trade created economic dislocation. Local Chinese, still angered by the expulsion order, openly supported the British, further exacerbating a tension between Spanish authorities and this powerful but exposed minority. Civil unrest caused by the guerrilla conflict with the British fueled a spate of native uprisings, of which the Ilocano revolt led by Diego Silang was the most significant. Operating on the premise that his enemy's enemy was his friend, Silang (ably supported by his wife Gabriela) allied himself with the British, achieving some temporary success before his ultimate crushing defeat.

Chinese supported Brits

After the occupation, the bankrupt colonial government recognized the need for developmental measures. A series of governors-general, especially José Basco y Vargas (served 1778-1787), tried to foster plantations, establish trading companies that could carry goods directly from the Philippines to Spain, encourage new Spanish immigration, reform the army and the bureaucracy, and create a viable tax structure. In 1781 Basco established an "economic society" to promote agricultural and mining production, print texts on techniques of cultivation, and publicize agronomy. He imported mulberry trees to grow silk in the Bikol region. Entrepreneurs were offered incentives to mine copper and iron or to grow indigo; others tried to grow cinnamon, pepper, or cotton. The longest-lasting success, in fiscal terms, was the establishment in Luzon of a tobacco monopoly, which controlled prices and volume by demanding forced delivery of tobacco in certain districts, while banning its growth anywhere else.

The Royal Philippine Company, established in 1785, was modeled on the British and Dutch trading companies. It was authorized to sail around the world in either direction and was specifically mandated to invest 4 percent of its profits in economic development schemes in the archipelago. Manila was also opened to foreign ships, provided they carried Asian rather than European goods. The galleon merchants and the friar-owned fiscal foundations underwriting them found themselves in competition with the company and with "country traders" from British India. They fought many of these reforms, and Basco noted that "the first task must be to level the massive mountain of prejudice that stands in the way of the enlightened purposes of central government."

1785

But decades of war in Europe weakened Spain, diverting attention and resources from colonial development projects. The Napoleonic era produced civil war in the peninsula and a British invasion, along with a blockade of the entire continent that disrupted burgeoning international trade. The subsequent revolutions that raged across Central and South America overturned the last

War weakened Spain

remnants of the old order. The Royal Philippine Company only funded sixteen direct voyages to Manila between 1785 and 1820, and finally folded in 1834.

With the independence of Mexico and the consequent abandonment of the galleon trade, Manila also lost its annual subvention, a long-term cash infusion from the New World to the Philippines. Over the centuries the galleons had carried perhaps 400 million silver pesos from Latin America to Manila (most winding up in China), one of the great premodern bullion transfers in world history. Not surprisingly, its termination represented near economic chaos to the Spanish community of Manila. A new way of managing the Philippines—the largest jewel left in the battered crown of Spain's empire—would have to be found.

Ind. of
Mexico

The Struggle for Clerical Equality

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL was in theory an enormously powerful figure with authority to do virtually anything he wished, but he had only marginal control over the friars. Over the generations, some of these religious orders had become major landlords, dominating the colony and imposing Spanish and canonical law onto pre-Hispanic peasant life. The pope had granted them autonomy in exchange for their missionary work around the world; instead of reporting to a local bishop, friars reported to a "provincial," one of their own, who reported in turn to the order's own hierarchy in Rome. Thus though the Philippines was divided into bishoprics, with an archbishopric in Manila, friar priests enjoyed an independent structure of accountability.

Embracing Enlightenment ideas, the Bourbon reformers challenged this virtual autonomy of the religious orders, seeing in it a threat to the authority of the state. They insisted on "episcopal visitation" and threatened to expel the friars if they ignored the king's command. In 1767 the Jesuits were in fact expelled from the entire Spanish empire. The Dominicans, witnessing this, reluctantly acknowledged that the archbishop of Manila did have the right to "visit" and to enforce his will on their parishes; other orders followed suit. The Bourbons also tried to exclude the friars from worldly affairs, urging that they sell their estates, which were inconsistent with their ministry.

Centuries before, the pope had granted the Spanish kings extraordinary powers as royal patrons of the church, so governors-general were delegated the authority to appoint parish priests. In the late eighteenth century they attempted to replace friars with "secular" (nonfriar) diocesan priests. All of the Jesuit parishes fell vacant with the expulsion; others opened when friar priests fell ill or died. In the absence of Spanish clerics willing to serve in this distant outpost of empire, the Bourbons decided to appoint indigenous (*indio*) and mestizo priests to these vacant parishes and established new seminaries to train them.

although the friars, openly hostile to this effort, viewed these new priests as a joke or sacrilege.

Eventually the friars won the struggle, since the government regarded them as indispensable agents of political control in the archipelago, fearing that local priests might display subversive tendencies. The tide began to turn in 1803, when the friars successfully extracted the governor-general's support to retain three parishes, including an important one near Manila. In 1826, after much of Latin America had won its independence from Spain, most Philippine parishes were returned to friar control. *Indio* priests, savaged by Spanish clerical hostility, were demoted to curates; pro-friar advocates argued that the moral fiber of the colony had deteriorated because native clergy had been ordained. Moreover, some Latin American priests sought political and clerical refuge in the archipelago, easing the pressure to ordain locals. What began as a struggle over ecclesiastical authority evolved into a racial one, as the newly ordained *indio* or mestizo priests were held up to derision by Spanish clerics, who saw them as inadequately trained and innately incapable of learning. One Spanish publicist called the native priest "a caricature of the *Indio*, a caricature of a Spaniard, a caricature of the mestizo, a caricature of everybody. He is a patchwork of many things and is nothing. I put it badly; he is something after all; more than something . . . he is an enemy of Spain." The native aspiration for clerical equality became the first major issue for nineteenth-century Philippine nationalism.

Displaced empire loyalists, including mestizos from the New World, fled to the Philippines defeated, angry, and determined that Spanish authority there would never be compromised by indigenous nationalism. The Iberian-born, known as *peninsulares*, distrusted everyone, even the creoles of the Philippines, known as "Filipinos," who were Caucasian by race but local by birth. In 1824 a revolt within the King's Own Regiment, led by a Mexican mestizo captain, Andres Novales, was quickly and brutally suppressed but seemed to confirm the worst fears of the *peninsulares*, who saw in it a revolutionary threat. From then until 1898, there was a growing polarization between those who were Iberian-born and everyone else.

A pinched, suspicious, and oppressive racism doomed Spanish sovereignty and shaped Philippine history. Spanish control rested on repression and seclusion. One midcentury official observed that restrictions on foreigners were "suspicious and unenlightened but still useful for preserving the colony." Later liberalization was undercut by Spain's own ineptitude. Between 1835 and 1898 there were fifty governors-general appointed to the Philippines, as Spain itself stumbled to find a new national coherence. Whether liberal or conservative, pro-church or antichurch, pro- or antimonarchy, Spain became a backwater, incapable of sustaining any policy that could win consensus, while its economy fell further and further behind the flourishing industrial centers of Europe.

Iberian born
peninsulares
& everyone
else.

The Emergence of a National Elite

IT WAS amid this nineteenth-century turmoil that the current Philippine oligarchy emerged. Village headmen (*cabezas de barangay*), presumably descended from pre-Hispanic chiefs (*datos*), were drawn from a pool of leading families, which became known as the *principalía*. This local elite made colonial government function, under the guidance of the local friar. The wealthiest and most powerful of them, sometimes referred to by the Caribbean term "caciques," came to own land directly or to manage the vast estates of religious orders.

Many Chinese married into *principalía* families. Such marriages made economic sense: the Chinese husband had access to capital and a commercial network, the *india* wife's family had land and local power. The mestizos descended from such unions were far more numerous than the "Spanish mestizos," though over the course of the nineteenth century, ethnic diversity increased as wealthy families from differing backgrounds intermarried. Mestizos, whatever their ancestry, transformed the colony—and benefited mightily in the process.

Mercantilist exclusion, no longer seen as a viable economic policy by Spain, was succeeded during the course of the nineteenth century by relative freedom of trade and foreign commercial investment. By 1879 the Philippines could be described as "an Anglo-Chinese colony with a Spanish flag." It had become an export economy based on agriculture, much of it on small landholdings. Even large friar estates were rarely run as plantations, like those elsewhere in Southeast Asia, but as clusters of tenant farms. Foreign merchants, especially British and Americans, linked the Philippines to world markets. Local entrepreneurs, often mestizos, developed the infrastructure to produce these commodities. Modern banks and trading companies conducted foreign business in dollars or pounds, not pesos.

Sugar was one of the crops that transformed the Philippines. It was first exported in the eighteenth century, using old-fashioned milling techniques. In 1856 the sparsely populated island of Negros produced just 280 tons of sugar. Within twenty years Negros had become a major new center of wealth and power, with 274 steam-operated sugar mills supporting a population that had grown tenfold. Foreign corporations, individual families, or Chinese owned the sugar mills; mestizos dominated the new planter class. The growth of the abaca (Manila hemp) industry, mostly in the eastern half of the archipelago, was more gradual and less dramatic, being a smallholder rather than an estate crop, but abaca rivaled sugar among Philippine exports for most of the century, with tobacco, under the government monopoly, a distant third.

As Manila and other ports opened to international commerce, British merchants dominated the import market of textiles, machinery, and other finished goods. For a few decades before 1870, the archipelago had in good years exported rice, primarily to China, but as land was shifted into sugar, copra,

Principalía

Chinese

intermarried

more numerous

*

Sugar
late 1800s

• abaca
• tobacco

hemp, or tobacco, the Philippines became a chronic importer of rice. Land became more valuable; taxes were assessed in money, not crops. Many peasants were pushed into tenantry, driven to migrate, or forced to change their traditional ways of life as the country entered the global economy.

On the socioeconomic margins, some expressed their discontent. Much of their resistance was framed in religious terminology, but their revolts were not “aberrations,” to use Reynaldo Ileto’s phrase, “but occasions in which hidden or inarticulate features of society reveal[ed] themselves.” Ileto argues that “the mass experience of Holy Week fundamentally shaped the style of peasant brotherhoods and uprisings.” The crucifixion of Jesus, the *pasyon*, was a metaphor to express the suffering and longing within peasant society. One major uprising began in 1841 because Apolinario de la Cruz, a devout provincial Catholic, discovered that he could not enter a monastic order. He then established his own native religious brotherhood, the Confraternity of San José, which spread rapidly in Tayabas (now Quezon) province. De la Cruz launched this movement because of clerical exclusion, but his supporters apparently responded to a broad range of rural grievances. The Spanish military was hard-pressed to suppress the rebellion, and “Brother Pule,” when finally captured, was hacked into pieces and displayed around the province as a grisly expression of increasing colonial repression.

There were also winners. Over the course of the century—especially after the Suez Canal shortened the trip substantially—there was a steady increase in Iberian immigrants (for the first time including a noticeable number of women), some of whom now settled outside Manila. More significant, the opening of markets encouraged a new wave of immigration from China. In 1839 the Chinese were given “complete liberty to choose the occupation that best suited them” and, subsequently, to live anywhere they wished. In 1844 Chinese gained the legal right to enter local trade; in 1857 the government permitted them to collect taxes. These Chinese brought capital and an entrepreneurial spirit into the hinterland, helping link local producers to foreign markets.

Chinese immigration pressured the mestizos to define themselves culturally. Unlike the immigrants, they did not use chopsticks or speak Chinese at home. They now ate with spoon and fork, were Roman Catholic, and socio-culturally resembled their *india* mothers, speaking local languages and moving across the society in ways that recent arrivals could never achieve. Threatened commercially by new Chinese energy and capital, they became sugar planters, developers of indigo for export, and lessees (*inquilinos*) of rice land from the friars, intermediaries between tiller and landlord. Sometimes they cleared open land, subletting it to peasant cultivators (*kasamahan*) for a percentage—often outrageously high—of the crop yield. Sometimes they evaded restrictions on moneylending by nominally “buying” land from local peasants while granting

Chinese
immigration
mestizo
defined
against

them an option to repurchase it later; in the event, they frequently ended up keeping title permanently. Well before the export economy was fully developed, one friar had warned that "if no remedy is found within a short time, the lords of the entire archipelago will be the Chinese mestizos."

This new prosperity did not resolve the question of identity, however. Mestizos were not *indios*, or creoles, or Chinese; over time their culture became more Spanish in style, more Catholic in observance, more clearly identified with the land. They eventually appropriated for themselves the term "Filipino," transforming it to mean anyone born in the archipelago, irrespective of ethnicity, and thus they came to define the parameters of nascent Philippine nationalism. Within "Filipino" society, elite status was not determined by caste or lineage, but by wealth, of which landownership was the tangible symbol. To climb higher would require access to modern education and equality in the pulpit, which became the wedge issues this emerging elite demanded. One Spaniard, noting that "the work-hand, the goatherd, does not read social contracts," warned in 1843 that the colleges in Manila should be closed, "because in a colony, liberal and rebel are synonyms."

Filipino Nationalism and Spanish Repression

DESPITE such reactionary sentiments, educational opportunity increased, especially after the Jesuits were readmitted to the archipelago in 1859. Ateneo de Manila, the Jesuit high school, accepted *indios*, mestizos, and creoles without distinction. The ancient University of Santo Tomás, founded in 1611, also opened its doors to males of all ethnicities, although ordination of *indios* and mestizos remained rare. In 1871 only 181 of 792 parishes were administered by non-Spanish priests. Starting in the 1860s, the government mandated the opening of public schools for both boys and girls in every municipality throughout the archipelago, though the implementation of this order left much to be desired.

One mestizo priest, José Burgos, wrote a manifesto calling for clerical equality in 1864, when the Madrid government was relatively liberal and anti-clerical. Burgos wanted any newly arrived Spanish priest to learn the local dialect before receiving a parish assignment. When there was a sudden shift to the right in Madrid, the new governor, Rafael de Izquierdo, announced he would rule "holding in one hand a cross and in the other a sword." In 1872 he used the suppression of a mutiny of the garrison at the Cavite Arsenal as an excuse to arrest, try, and execute the clerical advocates of Filipino religious nationalism, including Burgos and fathers Mariano Gómez and Jacinto Zamora.

The archbishop of Manila refused to excommunicate these three priests, despite Izquierdo's strong pressure, rejecting those allegations. Forty thousand

"Filipino"
 • archipelago
 born.
 • status by
 wealth

came to witness the execution, hearing Burgos cry out: "But what crime have I committed? Shall I die in this manner? Is there no justice on earth?" The governor's crackdown led to many arrests and deportations; others fled to Europe or to Hong Kong. These moves in turn helped radicalize a younger generation of nationalists, including Marcelo del Pilar and José Rizal.

Del Pilar, the son of a town mayor, turned nationalist when his oldest brother, a priest, was exiled to Guam in 1872. Rizal, the most famous of these new Filipinos, was a relatively wealthy fifth-generation Chinese mestizo, whose family was also among those persecuted. Trained as a medical doctor, Rizal was a skilled linguist, speaking many languages, and a man of culture and letters, best known for two scathing satirical novels that were attacked as heretical, scandalous, and subversive. He later wrote that had it not been for 1872, he would have become a Jesuit, and instead of writing the *Noli me tângere* (his first novel), he would have written the opposite. He dedicated his second novel, *El filibusterismo*, to the memory of the three martyred priests, and by 1896, when the national struggle was secularized, the password for the rebels was the initial syllables of their surnames: "Gom-Bur-Za."

Exiled or at home, these new upwardly mobile Filipinos became known as *ilustrados* (educated ones). They advocated a meliorist, evolutionary approach to political reform, including equality for all Filipinos, representation in the Spanish parliament, freedom of speech and assembly, nonrepressive taxation, and clerical equality. Some of the young men who had managed to get to Spain to further their education launched a "Propaganda Movement," emphasizing cultural nationalism, including Tagalog literature and the arts. Romantic and moralistic, these *ilustrados* fused their own aspirations for status with a newly articulated nationalism. Few acknowledged that their own families had grown rich within a socioeconomic system deeply implicated with Spanish colonialism. They raged against a transforming order that had created them.

By the early 1890s the exiled Propagandists, disillusioned that their criticism from abroad had achieved little, drifted home. Del Pilar, long the editor of the overseas newspaper *La Solidaridad*, surrendered all hope of peaceful reform and by his death in 1896 was actively contemplating revolution. In 1892 Rizal organized "La Liga Filipina" to promote peaceful economic and educational advancement, but jittery Spanish officials had him arrested and deported to Mindanao.

Others, from lower socioeconomic strata, also sought independence. Andrés Bonifacio, a clerk in the Manila port area, founded the Katipunan, a Tagalog abbreviation for the "Highest and Most Respectable Association of the Sons of the People." The Katipunan, secretive and neo-Masonic, descended from a long tradition of popular unrest. Bonifacio's language was suffused with the religious images of the *pasyon*. The camaraderie of a secret brotherhood resonated with

ilustrados

*Katipunan
- opp. of Bonifacio
secret
of a -*

many Filipinos. It fused a secular Western concept of political independence with a Christian promise of redemption. The Tagalog word for independence, *kalayaan*, suggests both salvation and redemption.

Bonifacio sought unsuccessfully to attract *ilustrados*, including Apolinario Mabini, Antonio Luna, and, most important, Rizal himself, to his Katipunan. He then decided to implicate them through forgery, hoping that Spanish repression would achieve his goals. He succeeded. A friar, discovering the revolutionary plot—supposedly during confessional, though this seems unlikely—reported it to Spanish authorities, who moved to arrest the conspirators. As the police swept across the city searching for Katipunan members, Bonifacio and his supporters fled to a Manila suburb where he issued a call to open rebellion, known today as the “cry of Balintawak,” and they tore up their hated *cédulas* (identity papers).

Spanish heavy-handedness accomplished Bonifacio's goal. Rizal was brought back to Manila and tried for treason, because the Spanish believed he was “the principal organizer and the very soul of the Philippine insurrection.” Rizal, who considered the Katipunan plan “disastrous,” was convicted after a sham trial and publicly executed. Many years earlier, Rizal had written, “The day on which the Spanish inflict martyrdom on our innocent families for our fault, farewell, pro-friar government, and perhaps, farewell, Spanish Government.” Rizal's execution forged an alliance, albeit fragile, between the *ilustrados* and Bonifacio's rebels. Hatred of the Spanish unified many Filipinos of every social class. Some years before Rizal had noted: “A numerous, educated class, both in the archipelago and outside it, must now be reckoned with. . . . It is in continuous contact with the rest of the population. And if it is no more today than the brains of the nation, it will become in a few years its whole nervous system. Then we shall see what it will do.”

In his prison cell Rizal wrote a “Manifesto to Certain Filipinos,” reiterating that the education of the people was a prerequisite to liberty. Noting that without education and “civic virtues,” Filipinos would not find “redemption,” he stressed that reforms, if they were to bear fruit, would have to “come from above,” because reforms from below would be “violent and transitory.” In spite of this cautionary note and his professions of loyalty to a Spain that he still hoped might govern justly, he was shot on 30 December 1896, ensuring the very revolution he had hoped to avoid.

Hatred of Spanish
Education of
The people of
prerequisite for
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Rizal

frid

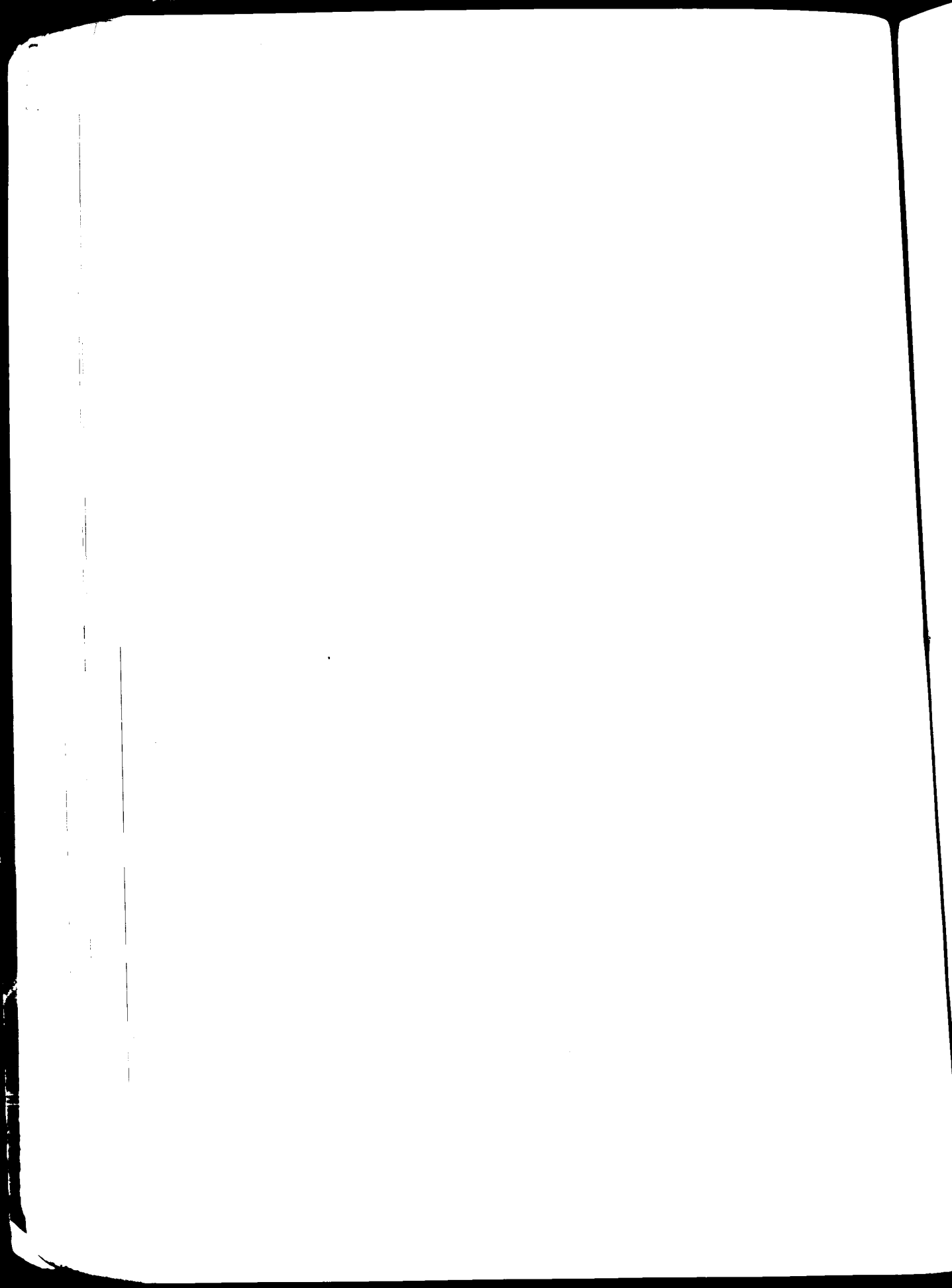
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The Spanish Philippines

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Chapter 19



The Philippines, 1896-1972

From Revolution to Martial Law

PERIODIZATION in history is never easy. In the Philippines, as elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the Great Depression and World War II were clearly turning points in history, viewed from one perspective. These calamitous events brought an end to a lengthy period of apparent progress, and they helped precipitate (and complicate) the demise of the region's dominant political institution, colonialism, by shattering the assumptions of political stability and inevitability that had loaned colonial authority such power. Suddenly new individuals, groups, and movements were given the opportunity to challenge existing verities and hierarchies of authority and to offer alternate scenarios, increasingly nationalistic, to define the future.

In most countries of Southeast Asia, the depression and the war opened opportunities and empowered individuals in ways that would have been impossible a decade earlier. In the Philippines, which had the oldest and most mature secular national movement in the region, they created different kinds of stress. Class tensions, a highly distorted distribution of wealth, and the maintenance of political dominance by a self-arrogating elite generated spasms of violence and raised profound questions about the core promise of a nationalist dream.

Philippine history is normally divided so that a new period begins at the end of the colonial era, with formal independence in 1946. But throughout the twentieth century, the mostly-mestizo elite continued to dominate the socio-economic, political, and cultural environment (as friar priests had earlier), a

historical truth perhaps even more important than the transfer of legal authority from Spain to the United States in 1898 or from the United States to the Republic of the Philippines in 1946.

Imperial Transition

IN 1896 Andrés Bonifacio, an urban nationalist but no general, hoped that the Cuban revolution a half a globe away would deplete Spanish resources, allowing the Katipunan to triumph. Yet it was only in nearby Cavite, where the friars held half of all rice land, that Emilio Aguinaldo, a young mayor of Chinese mestizo stock, defeated Spanish troops. Aguinaldo challenged Bonifacio for leadership, arresting and ultimately executing him for "treason," a spurious allegation that stained Aguinaldo's memory, split the Katipunan, and alienated *ilustrado* support. The Katipuneros had to retreat and negotiate a cease-fire with the governor-general. Aguinaldo sought much but only got amnesty, safe passage to exile, and a pledge of 800,000 pesos in three installments (the last was never paid). He went to Hong Kong; the Spanish celebrated a *Tè Deum* at the Manila cathedral.

The sinking of the U.S. battleship *Maine* in Havana on 15 February 1898 altered the revolutions in both Cuba and the Philippines. President William McKinley claimed not to know where the Philippines was, but America understood imperial opportunity. Whether it was the voice of God intoning Manifest Destiny or, in Richard Hofstadter's graphic phrase, "the carnal larynx of Theodore Roosevelt," the Americans took up the "White Man's burden." Roosevelt, then acting secretary of the navy, ordered the Asian squadron to sail to Manila to destroy an aging, rusted Spanish fleet lest it cross the Pacific to attack California. On 1 May 1898 Commodore George Dewey sank the Spanish fleet so easily that he was able to interrupt his attack to serve breakfast. Lacking further orders, he anchored in Manila Bay and decided to bring Aguinaldo back, over the opposition of the State Department.

From then through the election of 1900, there was a passionate debate within the United States between pro-imperialists, mainly Republicans, who saw great opportunity in Asia, and anti-imperialists, who saw no lasting American interest in the Philippines. One satirist irreverently told the president, "Tis not more thin two months since ye larned whether they were islands or canned goods." But McKinley, intrigued with imperial opportunities, concluded that he had no choice but "to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them and by God's grace do the very best we could by them." To achieve that, he strengthened Dewey's flotilla by sending more than ten thousand ground troops across the Pacific.

Spain still controlled Manila. Aguinaldo, whose insurgent forces controlled most of the archipelago, established himself in the provincial city of Malolos, declaring Philippine independence on 21 June 1898. A cabinet controlled by a

brilliant *ilustrado*, Apolinario Mabini, pushed Aguinaldo into a titular role. A constitutional convention was summoned, a parliamentary system chosen. Of the 136 delegates, 45 were lawyers and 35 others were trained as other modern professionals. The Malolos constitution guaranteed private property, limiting suffrage to men of high character, social position, and honorable conduct. The government of the Philippine Republic, inaugurated on 21 January 1899, was conservative. Mabini, who had sought a more authoritarian structure and radical agenda, lost.

This dispute became moot, because the United States decided to colonize the archipelago. The Spanish garrison had surrendered Manila to American forces after a sham battle in August 1898, from which Aguinaldo's troops were excluded. On 4 February 1899, under disputed circumstances, fighting erupted between Americans and Filipinos. During the war that followed, Aguinaldo, repeating his folly toward Bonifacio, arranged the ambush of an *ilustrado* officer, Antonio Luna, who had eclipsed him militarily. Mabini lambasted Aguinaldo for his "immeasurable ambition of power," subsequently writing that "with the loss of Luna . . . the Revolution fell, and the ignominy of the fall, weighing entirely on Aguinaldo, caused his moral death, a thousand times bitterer than the physical."

For the United States the conflict, which lasted officially until 1901, unofficially even longer, proved more costly and prolonged than the fight against Spain. For the Philippines it was a vicious, violently destructive encounter, the first war of national liberation in Southeast Asia, a struggle that left a half million noncombatants dead or maimed and produced severe economic dislocation. Thousands of Americans and tens of thousands of Filipino soldiers died of disease or in combat. The American military, to its shame, resorted to collective punishment (including the "reconcentration" of civilian populations) and torture in its effort to suppress what they referred to as the "Philippine Insurrection" and Filipinos, more appropriately, named the Philippine-American War. General Arthur MacArthur noted in 1900 that "this unique system of [guerrilla] war depends upon almost complete unity of action of the entire native population." The brutality of its suppression was acutely embarrassing to the Republicans; America's imperialist binge left a wicked hangover.

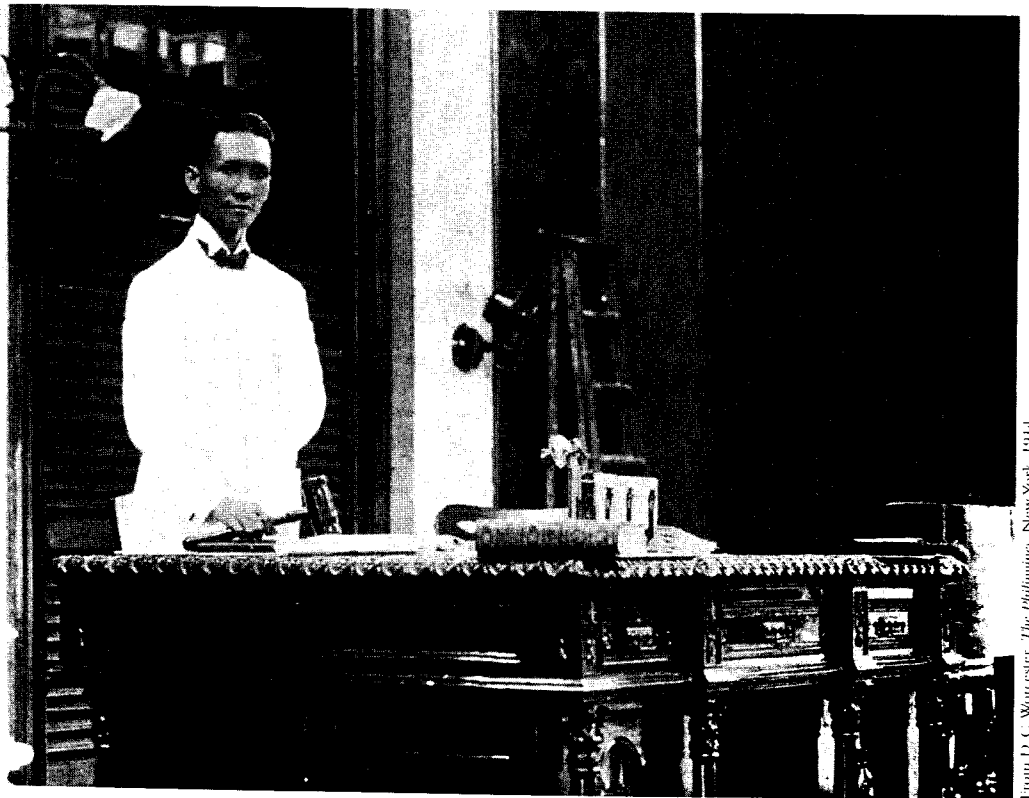
500,000
Casualties!

Compadre Colonialism

MEANWHILE, the United States sent several fact-finding commissions to the islands. The first was led by the president of Cornell and the second by William Howard Taft, who rapidly understood the need to establish a "policy of attraction" for the *ilustrados* if America wanted to transform hostility into friendship. America promised a government designed "for the happiness, peace and prosperity of the people of the Philippine Islands. . . . The measures adopted should

be made to conform to their customs, their habits and even their prejudices." It was in effect a self-liquidating form of colonialism, with an evolutionary nationalism to be given the opportunity to take over gradually. Taft (who went on to be governor-general, then secretary of the army, and finally president) made colonial politics an extension of imperial war by other means. As early as 1900, he invited a group of *ilustrado* leaders to form a political party. Led by T. H. Pardo de Tavera, this Federal Party, misunderstanding McKinley's vague promise of "benevolent assimilation," actually sought statehood within the United States—something closely akin to what Rizal had sought from Spain.

Taft's policy of attraction, said one of his successors, "charmed the rifle out of the hands of the insurgents and made the one-time rebel chief the pacific president of a municipality or the staid governor of a province." *Ilustrados* accepted this tacit deal to collaborate with the United States. The Philippine-American War ended more with a whimper than with a bang. Aguinaldo was captured by subterfuge and lived on for decades, honored but largely irrelevant; all but a few "irreconcilables" gained positions of power. Imperialism was re-packaged as altruism. An American vision of capitalism, electoral democracy, and mass education seduced the newly empowered *ilustrado* elite. Other political



A modern politician: the speaker of the Philippine Assembly, Sergio Osmeña, Manila, ca. 1910.

From D. C. Worcester, *The Philippines*, New York, 1914

parties soon emerged. Local and provincial elections were held in 1903, a national assembly elected in 1907.

The United States, long committed to separation of church and state, sought to remove the church from temporal affairs. Since the friar charitable foundations still functioned as banks, the government started chartering commercial banks, while negotiating with the Vatican to sell off friar lands. Rome replaced Spanish friars with English-speaking priests, primarily Irish Americans, while seminaries hastened to train an adequate number of Filipino clerics. This response was accelerated by the emergence of a national Philippine church seeking to replace Rome's authority. A Filipino priest, Gregorio Aglipay, the chaplain general of Aguinaldo's forces (for which he was excommunicated by the Spanish hierarchy) became "supreme bishop" of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (Philippine Independent Church) in 1902. Under its lay organizer, Isabelo de los Reyes, it seized possession of many rural parishes previously staffed by friars.

But Taft blocked the forcible dispossession of Roman priests, and in 1906 a conservative Philippine Supreme Court, including both American and mestizo jurists, ruled that all Catholic property taken by the Aglipayan church had to be returned. Some peasants followed Aglipayan priests into makeshift chapels, but many continued to worship where they had always prayed, in the massive baroque structures that dominated town plazas. Gaining support from the American Episcopal Church, Aglipayanism retained a presence in the archipelago, but its growth ceased, so it remained strong only in northwest Luzon, where it originated. Instead, a native Catholic clergy, substantially mestizo, now ministers to most Filipinos; Jaime Cardinal Sin, the long-serving archbishop of Manila, carried the Chinese surname of his paternal ancestors. Other Philippine-based churches, most notably the Iglesia ni Kristo (Church of Christ), minister to those seeking evangelical alternatives.

By 1908 Taft was fretting that American colonial policy was to "await the organization of a Philippine oligarchy or aristocracy competent to administer and turn the islands over to it." American policy postulated that mass education, if properly extended, would eventually break "the feudal relationship of dependence which so many of the common people feel toward their wealthy or educated leaders." But by granting *ilustrados* enormous landownership opportunities and validating their near monopoly of influence, the United States abdicated its chance to rework the Philippine polity in more equitable, democratic ways. When the friar lands were sold, after negotiations in Rome, *ilustrado* families gained ownership of most of that land, even though the ostensible policy had been to encourage homesteading tenants. (Colonial official Dean C. Worcester also acquired sizable holdings, to the irritation of Filipino nationalists.) American colonial policy, though proclaiming its intent to establish a

economic
inequality

“showcase of democracy,” in fact conformed to the customs, habits, and even prejudices of *ilustrados*. Pardo de Tavera sadly predicted in 1907 that the “government would not be democratic but autocratic, and the people would be oppressed by those who would be in power.”

Peace, trade, and American investment stimulated the economy. Manila grew rapidly; its population quadrupled under the Americans. Public health measures helped tame tropical and poverty-born diseases. English spread across the archipelago. Young American recruits, known as “Thomasites” for the first ship that brought them to the archipelago, fanned out across the country to teach in English. In 1901 functional literacy was about 20 percent; by 1941 it was over 50 percent. Newspapers, radio, then ultimately television connected the countryside to Manila. Road construction, interisland shipping, and eventually air service did the same.

The Timing of Independence

AFTER 1907 the key political debate in both Manila and Washington was over the timing of independence. The Nacionalista Party, first led by a Chinese mestizo, Sergio Osmeña, and later by a Spanish mestizo, Manuel Quezon, demanded immediate independence, even though privately neither leader saw it as feasible. The opposition party, led by Juan Sumulong, wanted something more gradual, believing that premature independence would further entrench the oligarchy.

In the United States Republicans argued for a gradual process, while the Democrats, harking back to 1900, sought early independence. Woodrow Wilson’s election in 1912 led to rapid Filipinization of the colonial government. Governor-General Francis B. Harrison increased the proportion of Filipinos in the bureaucracy to 96 percent. In 1916 the Democrats passed the Jones Act, promising independence “as soon as a stable government can be established”; a proposed Senate amendment, defining that time limit as two to four years, was barely defeated in the House of Representatives. Independence seemed imminent, especially after Wilson articulated self-determination as a worldwide goal at the end of World War I. In 1919 a Philippine independence mission came to the United States to negotiate that transition, but Wilson’s stroke, the Republican electoral victory in 1920, and America’s decision to reject the League of Nations delayed an early transition, which would have had a palpable impact throughout Southeast Asia. Instead the Republicans appointed a former “Rough Rider,” General Leonard Wood, as governor-general. Wood sought to put the nationalist genie back into the colonial bottle, but Quezon, manipulating Wood’s rigidity, thwarted him and soon replaced Osmeña as the leading Filipino politician.

The 1932 election of Franklin Roosevelt as U.S. president, with overwhelming Democratic congressional majorities, again accelerated the likelihood of early independence. Japanese militarism, depression-stimulated hostility by

American labor to Filipino immigrants, and protectionism by American farm interests trying to exclude cheap Philippine produce were also important factors. The Tydings-McDuffie Act (1934) established a ten-year transitional Philippine Commonwealth. In 1935 Quezon was elected president of that commonwealth, with Osmeña as his vice president. Sumulong lamented that "any reunion of the followers of Quezon and Osmeña—call it fusion, coalition, cooperation or conjunction—would mean the restoration, inexcusable from all angles, of the feared and detested oligarchy." But despite his jeremiad, most Filipinos optimistically anticipated independence under Quezon.

Geographic, linguistic, and ethnic distinctions softened as national norms emerged. Most Filipinos, whatever their economic class or social status, identified with Philippine nationalism and its symbols: the flag, the anthem, and the glorification of Rizal as the great symbol of national identity. They saw themselves as a bridge for the rest of Asia, prompting one to exclaim that they were "an oriental people standing at the portals of Asia, in deep sympathy with its kindred neighbors, yet with hands outstretched to the cultures of Spain and America." "Compadre colonialism," that tacit collaboration between American colonial authorities and the *ilustrados*, transferred political power and created economic wealth for those best able to profit. Young Filipinos were regularly sent for modern career training in the United States. Known originally as *pensionados* (scholarship holders), they were educated in law, medicine, and liberal arts and sciences as well as mining, agronomy, forestry, accounting, and all types of engineering.

One of the anomalies of American colonialism was the disconnect between rapid devolution of political power and a seemingly immutable economic framework that sheltered Philippine exports within an American tariff zone. Sugar, copra, and other coconut products prospered even during the depression by having access to the protected U.S. market. Philippine sugar production expanded, while the Indonesian sugar industry was decimated. There was little economic planning for independence, minimal effort to diversify the economy, and hardly any fiscal and monetary planning to parallel the self-liquidating colonialism of the political sphere.

War and Liberation

THE AMERICAN MILITARY had realized early that the conquest of the Philippines left the United States exposed in any future Pacific war. Despite having a superb harbor at Subic Bay, the Philippines was too far from the United States and too close to Japan, so Pearl Harbor (Honolulu), became America's forward naval base. As early as 1907 Theodore Roosevelt had recognized that the Philippines "form our heel of Achilles." From the earliest contingency plans, "War Plan Orange" became the code name for a future struggle against Japan. It

postulated that any attack on the Philippines by Japan would be answered by the arrival of the battle fleet from Pearl Harbor. Since the Philippines was obviously in harm's way, early independence became increasingly attractive to the American military, especially after 1931, when the Japanese seized Manchuria.

The cataclysm of World War II swept over the Philippines at the end of 1941. With independence almost achieved, most Filipinos, in stark contrast to much of the rest of Southeast Asia, felt that the American colonial interregnum had been beneficial and that the Japanese invasion violated their own defined sense of nationhood. But inadequate Filipino-American military resistance, organized by Douglas MacArthur (Arthur's son), merely delayed the Japanese conquest. Quezon and Osmeña were evacuated with MacArthur to Corregidor and then taken to Washington via submarine. Other government leaders, bankers, landowners, and jurists were left behind, as one colonial regime was swept away by another.

Collaboration by the elite opened profound fissures in the body politic. Most Filipinos were anti-Japanese, but virtually all of the prewar elite chose to cooperate with the occupiers. America, meanwhile, encouraged widespread guerrilla activity. Factionalism played a role. Many individuals or families who were political losers during the commonwealth became guerrillas, especially since their archrivals were usually collaborating. And many who were poor, rural, or trapped in a socioeconomic hierarchy used the war to challenge the establishment. Some peasants in central Luzon joined the Hukbalahap, a guerrilla force with a pro-communist, anti-Japanese ideology. Recalling earlier peasant movements, the Huks rebelled against an inequitable class structure, fusing anti-Japanese nationalism with a long-simmering peasant rage at an economic system in which absentee landlords collected very high rents and extracted usurious interest.

Savage fighting produced monumental destruction, social upheaval, and vast personal and property loss. The modern sector, disproportionately located in Manila, was literally and figuratively pulverized, especially during the "Liberation" in 1944-1945. Hospitals, universities, radio stations, transportation hubs, government infrastructure, and private homes were in rubble by the end of the war. Political consensus was equally shattered. Quezon had died of tuberculosis in exile, while Osmeña returned to the Philippines without experiencing the trauma of war. The monolithic Nacionalista Party split. In 1946 MacArthur's prewar friend Manuel Roxas, accused of collaboration, ran for president against Osmeña and won.

During the war both the Japanese and the guerrillas had manipulated the flag and anthem. Jose Laurel, the Japanese-sponsored wartime president, tried to implement authoritarian reforms to enhance national cohesion; he hoped to emulate Japanese discipline, patriotism, and self-sacrifice. Instead, economic

corruption became rampant; the black market flourished, and some profiteers attempted to get rid of Japanese-sponsored pesos (which they called "Mickey Mouse money") by buying land. Respect for law and order collapsed. People ignored civil and criminal codes in the pursuit of family survival or even personal aggrandizement, claiming a wartime right to define for themselves what was legitimate. Everyone claimed to be a hero.

The war years also shifted the archipelago culturally closer to the rest of Southeast Asia, transforming Filipino perceptions about America. In 1935 Pio Duran, a prewar apologist for Japan, had been labeled as a right-wing extremist for advocating that the Philippines was "inextricably linked with" Asia. But in the postwar era his theme would become mainstream; leading political figures like Claro Recto, Ferdinand Marcos, Carlos P. Romulo, and Benigno Aquino each tried to reposition the Philippines within the region. During the war the Japanese had promoted Tagalog, emphasizing indigenous institutions and culture. General Homma Masaharu told the Filipinos that "as the leopard cannot change its spots, you cannot alter the fact that you are Orientals." It took a while, but eventually Filipinos, who often joked that they spent three hundred years in a convent and fifty in Hollywood, saw themselves as Southeast Asian.

The "Old Order": Political Independence, Neocolonialism, and Anticommunism

FROM ROXAS' inauguration on 4 July 1946 until Marcos declared martial law in 1972, the country struggled to grow economically, while resolving socio-political "anomalies." Gone were white-suited colonial bureaucrats, replaced by *ilustrados* wearing *barong tagalogs* (embroidered shirts) as emblems of their national pride. Interlocking family dynasties, rich in landownership and in commercial, industrial, and banking interests, sent their children to be educated in the United States and flaunted conspicuous wealth with Cadillacs, country clubs, and mansions. Money conferred social status. Some businesses prospered honestly, but price controls, import-export licenses, American foreign aid, Japanese restitution funds, a black market for luxury items, contract kickbacks, traditional "greasing," and imaginative entrepreneurial schemes all created extralegal opportunities by which individuals could achieve familial goals, often at the expense of inchoate national priorities. Fancy lawyers bought judges. Some super-rich maintained private armies to intimidate and enforce.

Yet this "old order" was also an era when many more people became educated, found opportunity for upward mobility in Manila and elsewhere, and entered the middle class. The first twenty-five years of independence revealed a rough and tumble, expanding capitalist environment. Those who made a fortune gained mythic status; few questioned how their fortunes were made. At

Capitalism
& corruption

every level people accepted as the norm that a driver's license or a visa to America could be acquired using "fixers." Cops could be bought off for a few pesos. Daily life was lived at substantial variance from what legal codes prescribed.

At the same time, the need to restructure the postcolonial relationship with America was seen as a sustaining priority for many Filipinos. The United States, instead of providing generous rehabilitation assistance in reciprocity for Filipino loyalty during the war, had been niggardly in its postwar aid, providing far more money to rebuild Japan. Aid was also tied to neocolonial concessions, including a rigid currency link of peso to dollar and special privileges for American corporations and individuals. For forty years thereafter, Filipinos struggled to end these unequal concessions. The United States also insisted on retaining its giant military bases for ninety-nine years, including the fleet harbor at Subic Bay and Clark Air Base. These bases became central bastions in the Cold War, fiefdoms of *pax Americana*. Philippine law did not apply to American troops; a crime committed by an American serviceman, on base or off, would be tried before a U.S. military tribunal rather than a Philippine court.

Many Filipino leaders, most prominently Recto, raged against these facilities as threats to national sovereignty, inviting future attacks and compromising Philippine integrity. Olongapo (next to Subic) and Angeles City (by Clark) became fleshpots, sin cities of bars and brothels, massage parlors, and gambling dens. The dollars thus transferred into the local economy helped support tens of thousands of Filipinos, ironically also helping to fund the Huks, who, after the war ended, had continued their armed struggle when they realized they had been liberated from the Japanese but not from their landlords. Now, in Mafia style, they skimmed the take from Angeles City to finance their insurgency.

As the Cold War erupted, U.S. president Harry Truman had become anxious about the spread of communism in Asia. Whereas it had been Roosevelt's policy to banish all collaborators from political office, Truman's administration saw these conservative oligarchs as a vital bulwark against communism, thus continuing long-term U.S. support for the *ilustrado* oligarchy under a new rationale. It became an issue in the 1946 election, since Osmeña had accepted Huk leaders into his political coalition. Later, as communists moved toward victory in China and Vietnam, Washington obsessed further about their possible victory in the Philippines. Long-existing socioeconomic tension was filtered through a Cold War prism in Washington; the Huk uprising was seen more as a part of the global "Red" conspiracy than as an indigenous reaction to tenancy, landlessness, and grinding poverty. And while some American strategists argued for effective land reform, they were not prepared to recommend funding it from Washington or to demand a significant redistribution of wealth from the Filipino elite.

Manuel Roxas suffered a fatal heart attack, ironically while visiting Clark Air Base, in 1948. Neither he nor his vice presidential successor, Elpidio

Quirino, could crush the Huks, led by a charismatic, if unsophisticated, peasant, Luis Taruc. Governmental corruption, low morale, inadequately trained troops, rampant inflation, and inadequate foreign funding all doomed governmental efforts. Because both Clark and Subic were within Huk-controlled zones, the American military closely observed the struggle. Its solution was to provide the Philippine army with increasing amounts of surplus equipment, but Filipino troops sold or lost much to the Huks, so the United States effectively outfitted both sides in the guerrilla war.

In 1949 the wartime president, Jose Laurel, ran against Quirino for president. It was a particularly corrupt and venal exercise in democracy. Most historians accept that Laurel was elected, but he refused to challenge Quirino's declared victory with force. The nation seemed trapped in interlocking economic, moral, political, and security crises. While the Huks remained circumscribed regionally, primarily in central Luzon, they appeared more likely to triumph than the government in Manila, which had to borrow from abroad just to meet its payroll.

The political rise of Ramon Magsaysay seemingly broke the sterile cycle of political corruption and economic drift. Magsaysay had been born relatively poor, or at least not of super-rich *ilustrado* stock. During the war he had become a prominent anticommunist guerrilla leader, emerging—at CIA insistence—as secretary of defense in the Quirino government. He accomplished three vital goals in defeating the Hukbalahap: he brought a new esprit de corps to a demoralized Philippine military; with the active help of the CIA, he penetrated and arrested the Philippine Communist Party's politburo, seizing lists of both sympathizers and financial supporters; and he mobilized the army to ensure that the 1951 congressional elections were free of the fraud that had so tainted the 1949 elections.

Ramon
Magsaysay

Magsaysay equally captured the imagination of the common Filipino and of Washington. In 1953 he was easily elected president, with the scarcely concealed help of American officials and funds. Rising prosperity (boosted by U.S. spending in the Korean War), Japanese reparations for wartime destruction, and a visible land reform policy that resettled landless peasants in central Luzon on the Mindanao "frontier" helped boost the economy and rekindle confidence in the political process. An uncomplicated anticommunist ideology satisfied many Filipinos while pleasing neocolonial America. The image, however manipulated, of a *tao* (peasant) elected to the presidential palace helped to transform despair into hope. Thus Magsaysay's premature, tragic death in a 1955 plane crash left a jagged scar on the psyche of the nation. Carlos Garcia, his vice president, was a pedestrian politician from the island of Bohol. Elected for a full term in 1957, he was succeeded in 1961 by Diosdado Macapagal, an attractive but ineffectual president, who was unable to stem endemic violence, jumpstart the economy, or create a transcendent political vision.

Ferdinand E. Marcos

THE LEADERSHIP vacuum was filled in 1965, when Ferdinand Marcos, an ambitious young senator from northern Luzon, defeated Macapagal's bid for reelection. Marcos and his beautiful, equally ambitious wife, Imelda, seemed to be Southeast Asian equivalents of John and Jackie Kennedy. At his inauguration Marcos claimed that "the Filipino, it seems, has lost his soul, his dignity, and his courage. Our people have come to a point of despair. We have ceased to value order." Noting that the "government is gripping the iron hand of venality, its treasury is barren, its resources are wasted, its civil service is slothful and indifferent, its armed forces demoralized, and its councils sterile," Marcos presented himself as his nation's savior.

But even in those heady first months of his new presidency, Marcos was brilliantly corrupt, far greedier than his predecessors. His avariciousness and deceit still stagger the imagination. There was a vast gulf between his rhetoric and his actions. He used the power of the presidency to reward friends, allowing them to wax very rich. Marcos manipulated a rising economy created by a Vietnam War boom. Lyndon Johnson and his successors, needing Southeast Asian allies, turned a blind eye to his personal greed, chronic dishonesty, and self-aggrandizing political agenda. Marcos was as skilled in manipulating America as in fleecing his own people.

Darlings on the world stage, Ferdinand and Imelda started a series of vast show projects in Manila and talked of land reform, "miracle rice," and rising prosperity. In 1969, running for reelection on the slogan of "rice and roads," Marcos was the first Filipino ever to win a second full term as president, with 74 percent of the vote. During that campaign, he spent liberally, contributing to a growing problem of inflation in the economy. Cemeteries have voted in the Philippines since elections were first held, but there was a new level of professionalism in the electoral corruption of 1969 that boded ill. Of the 8 senatorial seats contested, Marcos' Nacionalista slate won 7. All but 24 of the 120 House seats also went to candidates favorable to the president.

Marcos' new, overwhelming political power encouraged his corruption and, simultaneously, the likelihood that disenfranchised ethnic and geographic minorities and the economically disadvantaged, including a rising number of university students, would turn toward violence. Soon after the election, a group of students marched on the presidential palace, clashing with police at Mendiola Bridge across the Pasig River. Four student "martyrs" died. Those deaths and police brutality not only alienated student activists—this was a global age for such activism—but also encouraged peasants, migrant rural workers, and the Muslims in Mindanao to rebel.

Marcos dominated his society, controlled its politics, and manipulated both the domestic and the world media. But by 1971 he had also become a lame duck

president, constitutionally obliged to surrender power after two full terms. A convention called to revise the commonwealth constitution of 1935, was, therefore, both challenge and opportunity, as Marcos plotted to extend his rule. He spoke of the need for “a new society,” arguing that “constitutional authoritarianism” was necessary to give discipline to the nation, manage its growth, and help the Philippines find its way toward a secular utopia of economic progress and social well-being.

Political violence, much of it organized by Marcos himself, escalated rapidly. At an electoral rally in Manila in 1971, a bomb exploded on stage, wounding eight of the opposition Liberal Party senatorial candidates. Lawlessness, long a handmaiden of Philippine politics, encouraged politicians to organize militias, even as the president was using the military and the national police for his own political objectives. The Muslims had begun a war of national liberation. Communists and radical students had created a New People’s Army, as the United States failures in Vietnam seemed to change profoundly the geopolitics of the region.

Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino was Marcos’ putative successor; the son of a ranking prewar and wartime politician, he was expected to be the next elected president of the republic. In the 1971 elections, six of the eight Senate seats contested had swung to the Liberal Party and Aquino. But on 22 September 1972 Aquino and many others were arrested, as Marcos ended an era, declaring martial law in order to protect the Republic of the Philippines and its “democracy.”

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welfare. The bicameral legislature now centered on an elected house of representatives of five hundred members, most of whom represented single-seat constituencies, while the remainder were elected at large. The two-hundred-member senate, also elected, was to play a secondary role. Suffrage was extended universally, but all candidates for election to either house were required to hold at least a bachelor's degree. Implementation of the new constitution was delayed while candidates were held to supposedly rigorous tests that attempted to screen out ties to financial interests.

It was in this context that the telecommunications tycoon Taksin Shinawatra became prime minister in March 2000, after an election in which more than 70 percent of the electorate participated. Taksin's position was clouded by claims that much of his considerable wealth had been hidden in the accounts of his family and friends, and that a great deal of money had found its way into the hands of impecunious voters. In a split decision, the courts ruled otherwise, and Taksin became premier. Early issues that challenged the government were the ongoing role of financial interests in politics, the continuing fragility of many financial institutions, and the draconian concessions the country had been compelled to make to the International Monetary Fund. The government also showed increasing sensitivity to foreign press criticism and banned a number of periodicals (such as the *Far Eastern Economic Review* and *The Economist*) and publications from sale and distribution in Thailand.

At the beginning of the new millennium, Thailand's economy had stabilized, as formerly impoverished parts of the country (like the northeast) had improved their economic status. Thais could still complain of continuing uneven distribution of wealth, but now there was a great deal more wealth to fight over than there had been thirty years earlier.

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Chapter 33



The Philippines since 1972

WHAT IS the consequence for a nation if its most successful and brilliant politician turns out to be corrupt and evil? What is the impact on a society if the man sworn to defend its values openly flaunts them, corrupting both the institutions of society and its underlying values? What does it do to an economy if its chief executive plunders in excess of 10 billion dollars, creating a "kleptocracy"? What happens to the notion of a constitution as the supreme law of the land if statutes are flaunted and whims of an individual become law?

Ferdinand Marcos was demonic. A political genius, a self-promoter, and a confidence man, he fabricated his own identity, believing his own mythology. He dominated his nation, diminishing its destiny. The brazenness of his many lies quite staggers a historian's imagination, but for far too long far too many people accepted this fraud with a willing suspension of disbelief. While Ferdinand and Imelda pretended to be John and Jackie Kennedy, they behaved like Lord and Lady Macbeth, establishing a conjugal dictatorship.

Martial Law

MARTIAL LAW shattered Philippine democracy and challenged, at least temporarily, the *ilustrado* monopoly of power. This century-old oligarchy had long confused class interest with national priorities. The "old order" was characterized

by inequalities and inequities. Migrant rural laborers and peasant tenants rarely got a just share of the harvest. The urban proletariat lacked a fair wage or the protection of effective unions. Many smart, ambitious students were denied upward mobility. An underemployed intelligentsia, unable to find adequate opportunity at home, emigrated, often never returning. To some who stayed, communism offered an ideological rationale to explain the contradictions of Philippine society.

Marcos justified his declaration of martial law in the context of the Cold War by claiming Philippine society was at risk because of these contradictions. A few at home and some abroad initially accepted his assertion that "constitutional authoritarianism" was a bulwark against chaos, embracing the political right out of fear of the radical left. Richard Nixon, for example, reflexively endorsed martial law rather than lamenting the abolition of constitutional freedoms and democracy. It became fashionable to compare Marcos to Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, since both justified the surrender of personal freedom as a necessary concomitant to economic progress, anticommunism, and nation building. In contradistinction to Lee, however, Marcos used martial law for personal aggrandizement. "Crony capitalism" mocked economic development and distorted the economy. Imelda became a symbol of conspicuous consumption, compulsively buying shoes, properties, and friends.

One significant historical discontinuity was Marcos' empowerment of the military. Martial law catapulted military officers, often from humble circumstances, into power. The chain of command stretched into every province and hamlet. Marcos used it to impose control and quash what he defined as threats to the nation—a communist insurgency and an Islamic war of liberation in the south. The officer cadre drew its cohesion from the democratic centralism of every military, where promotion is often based on ability, not birth. Marcos rewarded his loyal troops with upward mobility comparable to that afforded officers in Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar, and Vietnam. But he also corrupted and politicized them, shattering their American-inspired respect for civilian control. Generals grew rich, and officers were rewarded for stifling dissent. Using the Philippine Military Academy as its training ground, the new military elite challenged the oligarchy, suggesting that the Philippines had become more like its sister nations all across Southeast Asia.

Resistance

IRONICALLY, Marcos also empowered dissident elements in society. His actions prompted some Filipinos to react violently, while others responded silently. Key *ilustrado* families, suddenly cut off from wealth and power, went abroad. Some, years before, had transferred wealth out of the archipelago; others just fled incarceration. The Marcos government was delighted to see such oligarchic clans go.

often only permitting their exits in exchange for their businesses or land. Upper-middle-class professionals, doctors, lawyers, and civil engineers also fled, taking precious skills abroad. Marcos tolerated this brain drain as well as an exodus of unemployed laborers who went on contract to the Middle East, the United States, or wherever a visa could be secured. Migration lowered domestic unemployment, while greatly increasing the flow of foreign exchange back to the archipelago.

In Mindanao and Sulu, violence erupted when Marcos moved to disarm Muslims. Chronic underinvestment, timber and copra concessions to Marcos cronies, and Christian migration south fused with a global reawakening of Islamic identity to mobilize indigenous Muslims. Four centuries of hostility and distrust exacerbated this anger. An Islamic identity reshaped by mullahs gave ideological justification for geopolitical anger. The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), founded in 1968, had demanded full independence, although this really just meant increased regional autonomy. But after martial law, when Marcos moved to suppress the MNLF by military means, the rebellion claimed fifty thousand "freedom fighters." Marcos, cynically, gave the Philippine military an enemy—the Muslims—to justify army growth.

Martial law exacerbated socioeconomic tensions generally; the "have-nots" lost ground, and some reacted violently as standards of living deteriorated. The percentage of families below the poverty line increased dramatically. Squatters lived on garbage heaps, while children begged along the boulevards. Farmers lost their land, degenerating into an agricultural proletariat, while rural schooling and health care delivery deteriorated. The favored few, especially Marcos' cronies, formed private armies to protect their homes and economic interests.

The New People's Army (NPA), the military arm of a resurgent Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)—a very different party from its earlier namesake—gained support from human distress. Marcos, who had cited a communist menace to legitimize martial law, became its best recruiter. The party enlisted students and intellectuals who despaired of gaining opportunity. Over thirteen years, approximately twelve to fifteen thousand guerrillas were recruited, prompting both American and Filipino military observers to anticipate large scale NPA attacks.

U.S. bases at Subic Bay and Clark seemingly encapsulated the nefarious reality of neo-imperialism. Moreover, the collaboration of American corporations and global banks with Marcos suggested to many that America was the "Great Satan." The United States equipped Marcos' army, helped to train his new officers, and embraced his corrupt generals. But Marcos' real genius was his capacity to manipulate the Americans while sounding anti-American. The Pentagon readily supplied weapons to an increasingly bloated Philippine military—the army tripled in size—even though some of those weapons wound up being used against it. Army units, operating in the Muslim areas of Mindanao

and elsewhere across the archipelago, often degenerated into marauding gangs, robbing, raping, brutally torturing, and plundering. Extralegal execution was so common that a special euphemism for it was coined: "salvaging."

Benigno Aquino: Hints of Mortality

MOST traditional politicians ("trapos"—the acronym also means "dish rag" in Tagalog), judges, and journalists accepted martial law or went into exile. Marcos shrewdly calibrated his brutality to sustain authority. Benigno Aquino was a unique case. He was arrested within the first hours of martial law, charged with murder, tried by Marcos in a military court, and sentenced to death. The cover of the last pre-martial law press run of the weekly news magazine *The Philippine Free Press* pictured Aquino targeted through the crosshairs of a rifle with the caption, "Senator Benigno S. Aquino: Target?" Never distributed, that issue was dated 30 September 1972. For the next seven years Aquino was held, often in solitary confinement, too popular to be executed but too dangerous to be freed.

Born in 1932, Aquino was the son of a mainline prewar politician who collaborated with the Japanese and was facing a treason charge when he died in 1947. Benigno, universally called by his nickname, Ninoy, was, like Marcos, a graduate of the University of the Philippines; both pledged the same fraternity. He married Maria Corazon (Cory) Cojuangco, a daughter of one of the wealthiest mestizos in the Philippines; the couple lived in Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac, one of the biggest private estates in the archipelago. (Corazon's first cousin Eduardo Cojuangco would later become one of Marcos' closest cronies, as the family split irrevocably during martial law.) Greatly influenced by Ramon Magsaysay, Ninoy entered politics at an early age. At twenty-two he was elected the country's youngest mayor; later he was its youngest vice governor, and at the age of thirty-five he became the youngest senator.

Marcos tried to break Aquino's will during his confinement, but Aquino, refusing to accept a pardon that required acknowledging his "crimes," stayed in jail long after his political allies were released. Some people who face adversity are broken by it; many more remain more or less unchanged; Aquino seems to have been one of those rare individuals who grew. After Marcos relaxed the severity of martial law, Aquino became politically active from prison. When his doctors reported that he needed a coronary bypass operation—a diagnosis that has never been independently corroborated—Marcos agreed to allow him to leave for the United States, hoping to rid himself of his undaunted rival.

The only thing Marcos could not control was his own health. He suffered from a degenerative illness, lupus erythematosus, which attacked his kidneys. As his illness progressed, the rivalries within the small clique around the president increased. The minister of defense, Juan Ponce Enrile, lost out to Marcos' cousin and most faithful supporter, General Fabian Ver. Central to these court

intrigues was Imelda, who clearly hoped to inherit her husband's job. By the early 1980s, the body politic was sick like the president. Endemic army abuse, a new proliferation of warlordism, rampant corruption, and the collapse of the Philippine economy had given both the NPA and the Muslim resistance succor. The oil shocks of 1973 and 1979 had raised import prices dramatically and destabilized export prices. Between 1979 and 1983 the nation's foreign debt doubled. Inflation was rampant. The frail president no longer controlled events.

When Aquino heard the false rumor that Marcos was dying, he returned to the archipelago, anticipating imprisonment on his return. Philippine security forces boarded his plane to "escort" him. Despite wearing a bulletproof vest, he was shot in the back of the head within seconds of leaving the plane. His assassination on 21 August 1983 altered his nation's history; it galvanized Filipinos and dominated the world's news. The Philippine government maintained that Aquino had been assassinated by a lone radical, but for most people the real question was whether Marcos himself ordered Aquino's death. More probably, Imelda and General Ver, who had the most to lose by Aquino's return, organized the assassination.

The following day, Corazon, Aquino's widow, flew home from Boston, instructing that Ninoy's open coffin be transported around the country, displaying his body to challenge Marcos and rally the people. Millions of ordinary Filipinos paid their respects. Yellow ribbons appeared everywhere, confetti from telephone directory yellow pages fluttered from high-rise offices. Ninoy joined the pantheon of national martyrs with José Rizal and fathers Gómez, Burgos, and Zamora.

EDSA and Corazon Aquino

MARCOS did not die, surviving until 1989, long after he was forced from power. The two and a half years after Ninoy's assassination were an era of political turmoil and economic catastrophe, of corrupt courts of inquiry and sham elections. Although Ronald Reagan remained Marcos' friend, other American leaders demanded a new approach to the Philippines. Even the Pentagon came to see Marcos' unpopularity as a threat to American retention of Subic and Clark. Marcos called what the press referred to as a "snap election" for 7 February 1986. Believing that the opposition would not rally to any one candidate and seeking to restore his mandate, he was sure he could rig the outcome, however vocal his critics.

Dramatically, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Manila, Jaime Cardinal Sin, intervened openly, demanding a fusion ticket with Aquino running for president and one of her key challengers, Salvador (Doy) Laurel, for vice president. Sin issued a series of pastoral letters, and thousands of priests, nuns, and lay leaders mobilized to wage a struggle for "good over evil," for Aquino over

Marcos. The CPP, deeply divided about how to react to these sudden events, made a serious tactical error in deciding to sit out the election, assuming that Marcos would win through corruption and anticipating that the resultant cynicism would help it gain power. The NPA suspended military activity, leaving a nonviolent opportunity to the moderate democratic opposition. A watchdog group, NAMFREL (the National Movement for Free Elections), mobilized tens of thousands of men and women to defend the ballots.

The level of corruption that election day was stupendous. Ballot boxes were stuffed, fraudulent tally sheets were inserted, and voting rolls reflected both those alive and those dead. Millions of people's names were removed from voting rolls, deregistering them. Meanwhile, poll watchers from NAMFREL chained themselves to the ballot boxes. Hundreds of millions of pesos, many with identical serial numbers, flooded the countryside as traditional vote buying took place. Marcos claimed victory, debasing the electoral process further.

In this chaotic environment Minister of Defense Enrile and General Fidel Ramos seized two important military installations on Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) in Quezon City—technically the national capital but part of

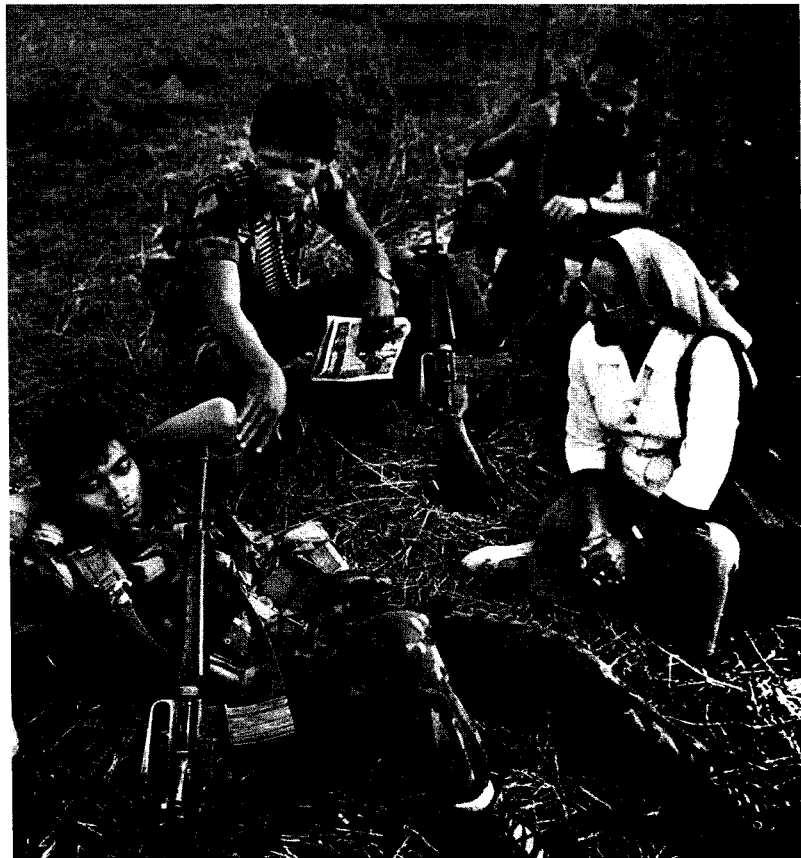


Photo by Tom Gralish/*Philadelphia Inquirer*, courtesy of D. J. Steinberg.

“People Power”: nun and marines, Quezon City, 23 February 1986.

Metropolitan Manila—in an open attempt at a preemptive coup against Marcos. Sin appealed by radio for citizens to gather there, turning the conspirators into patriotic defenders of Cory and democracy. Tens of thousands of civilians responded in what became known as “People Power,” filling the space between the rebel soldiers loyal to Enrile and Ramos and those supporting Marcos.

Ver wanted to fire on the civilians to make them scatter, but Marcos, tired, ill, and beaten, understood that to slaughter innocent citizens would doom him even if he could suppress this rebellion. Nuns and seminarians knelt before tanks to pray; citizens put flowers in the muzzles of guns. The rebellion succeeded. Enrile declared a provisional government with Aquino as president. Marcos, his family, and other key loyalists, including Ver, fled to Clark Air Base and then to Hawai‘i, where the United States granted him asylum. To the world press, the story seemed part television sitcom and part modern-day passion play.

Aquino was inaugurated on 25 February 1986, thanks to the abortive coup and “People Power.” If this tale were myth, it would conclude, “And they all lived happily ever after.” But this is history, where “ever after” never happens. Poverty, hunger, social polarization, and a staggering national debt were Marcos’ legacy. Filipinos basked briefly in the world’s adulation. “People Power” had toppled a dictator; the Philippines had shown the world a new way to democracy when marking a ballot was no longer sufficient. But EDSA did not address the deep structural problems in Philippine society. Was EDSA a “revolution,” a “restoration,” or a “reformation?” Was a new age dawning or an old age returning?

Democracy and the electoral process were soon restored. Habeas corpus and an independent judiciary, free speech, and free press returned. But Corazon Aquino, despite her moral decency, never resolved other issues, in part because of a series of attempted military coups against her government. Young, dissident middle-rank officers, loyal to Enrile, had earlier founded a Reform the Army Movement (RAM). Now they plotted to seize power, withholding that vital allegiance required of armed services in any democratic state. To them Aquino exemplified the failed leadership of the “old order”; they objected less to martial law than to Marcos’ failure to use it to restructure Philippine society.

The first coup attempt was on 6 July 1986, the last on 6 October 1990. In between several were farcical, but on 1 December 1989 some three thousand troops, many from the best-paid elite units, rebelled. Before that coup was suppressed, 95 people were killed and 580 wounded, two television stations had been seized, the commercial airport closed, and there was an aerial attack on the presidential palace. Jets from Clark patrolled the skies over Manila, a not-too-subtle reminder that toppling Aquino was unacceptable to Washington.

Further complicating her presidency were the ongoing Islamic rebellion, increasingly funded from abroad, and a renewed challenge from the CPP, which, understanding its error in standing aside during EDSA, sought to overthrow both *ilustrado* resurgence and the capitalist economy that empowered it. They tried

unsuccessfully to discredit Aquino, seeking to sully her near mythic bond to the masses. At its zenith, the party claimed to be on the verge of early victory, but deep schisms and an internal rectification debate fragmented its leadership. The politburo imploded.

Such dynamic instabilities defined the parameters of Aquino's presidency. She came to power with a vice president, Laurel, who was never loyal, often flirting with the military. Her cabinet included both her late husband's supporters and those like Enrile (her minister of defense) and Ramos who had served Marcos. Early on she proclaimed that her government's legitimacy was based on EDSA, not the election, an awkward truth. Then she promulgated an interim "freedom constitution" until a new constitution could be drafted and ratified. She had to abrogate the 1972 Marcos constitution to restore constitutional protections and decide how to dispose of laws, contracts, and deals generated by twenty years of cronyism and corruption.

She established a Constitutional Commission and appointed delegates strikingly similar to those who had gathered at Malolos almost a century before. They were educated, wealthy, and predominantly lawyers; many were close to the church hierarchy. Their final document of over one hundred pages reaffirmed established verities, protecting private property, confirming a highly centralized government in Manila, defining an evolutionary trickle-down vision of social justice, and stressing education and a bill of rights—rather than serious land reform—as bulwarks for the poor and disenfranchised. The fifteen new justices of the Supreme Court were, similarly, men and women committed to "old order" values. Under Aquino there were efforts to promote good government, curb corruption, increase tax compliance, end tax evasion, cleanse the bureaucracy, and restore the rule of law. Committed to universal education, improvements in national health (but not birth control), and a higher standard of living for all Filipinos, Cory understood what the average Filipino needed. But her sincerity was not enough to solve the problems her country faced.

During Marcos' last years there had been a precipitous fall in the per capita gross national product, and prices doubled between 1983 and 1985. The Aquino administration was reformist, market-focused, internationally oriented, and technocratic. The sugar and coconut monopolies created for Marcos' cronies were abolished. The government ceased operating state-subsidized corporations, selling many cheaply either to the old establishment or to new Chinese entrepreneurs, and pursued the stolen billions Marcos had transferred out of the archipelago. While some funds were repatriated, especially by Marcos' cronies who wanted to come home, most of these efforts failed.

Aquino also had to renegotiate the external debt left by Marcos. In 1986 the debt service repayment requirement was U.S.\$3.2 billion, equal to 34 percent of the exports of the nation. Nearly 40 percent of the national budget was committed to service those obligations. The country was so deeply in debt to

other governments, to foreign banks and creditors, and to itself that it could not fulfill its international obligations and still generate sufficient revenue to jumpstart the economy. Southeast Asia was moving toward globalization, and the Philippines needed to participate in that global economy. The coup attempts weakened the peso, prompting foreign investors to turn elsewhere for new investment opportunities. Unrest in Mindanao and military action by the NPA also chilled the economic climate.

The End of Neocolonialism

MANY FILIPINOS wanted to end American neocolonialism. Both Ronald Reagan and George Bush had supported Marcos. In 1986 Reagan had snubbed Aquino, even after Marcos had fled, choosing neither to congratulate her by phone nor to visit the Philippines during a trip from Indonesia to Japan. As vice president, George Bush had hosted Marcos in 1981, soon after a rigged election, and said, "We love your adherence to democratic principles—and the democratic processes." Such disdain for genuine Philippine democracy angered Filipinos, especially since the American government remained parsimonious. Speaking before the U.S. Congress in September 1986, Aquino said: "You have spent many lives and much treasure to bring freedom to many lands that were reluctant to receive it. And here you have a people who want it by themselves and need only help to preserve it."

Twenty thousand American military personnel and twenty-five thousand dependents were still stationed at Clark and Subic. Sixty-eight thousand Filipinos worked there, making the United States the second biggest employer in the country. The bases injected over one billion dollars a year into the economy, including half a billion for supplies and services. That very economic reality was galling to many Filipinos, since it seemingly induced them to sell their birthright for material gain.

Under the terms of the lease agreements, any renewal needed to be negotiated by September 1991. The Filipinos wanted to call payments "rent," while the United States refused, speaking instead of economic, military, and development assistance. In June 1991, Mount Pinatubo, dormant for over six hundred years, erupted in central Luzon with a violence that staggers the imagination. Clark was rendered virtually useless, prompting the United States to announce that it would abandon that base, while also lowering the amount offered for compensation. Almost simultaneously, the collapse of the Soviet Union eliminated the major justification for the naval base at Subic. America lost interest just as the Philippines was demanding either enormous sums of additional money or complete withdrawal.

The Aquino government needed money and military supplies to fight the Muslim insurgents and the NPA, but Aquino herself spoke of the bases as "a

lingering vestige of our colonial past." In July 1991 U.S. and Philippine negotiators finally reached an agreement to extend the lease at Subic for ten years in exchange for approximately U.S.\$200 million a year and other multilateral aid programs. The Aquino government needed sixteen votes in the Philippine Senate to ratify this treaty; it fell short. That rejection altered the Philippine-American relationship and the geopolitical military realities of Southeast Asia. The U.S. navy withdrew within a year, and a major symbol of neocolonial asymmetry ended.

Fidel V. Ramos

ON 11 May 1992 every political office in the land—president and vice president (elected separately), all 24 senators, 200 members of congress, 73 governors, 1,543 municipal mayors, and thousands of other local officials—was contested. For the two dozen senatorial seats there were 265 candidates. In all, 82,450 people competed for 17,205 elected positions. This unique election was the result of Marcos' long rule and the new constitution, which mandated a completely new electoral slate.

It was a fair and open election. Power was peacefully transferred. Nearly 80 percent of the 32 million eligible voters participated. Cardinal Sin supported a losing candidate. Few cared about Washington's priorities. Traditional party structure no longer guaranteed electoral success. There were seven candidates for president, including Eduardo Cojuangco. Imelda Marcos flamboyantly returned in a chartered 747 to campaign. Both the senate president and the speaker of the house sought the presidency, as did General Fidel Ramos, Aquino's loyal chief of staff during those several coup attempts, but approximately a third of the nation voted for Imelda, Cojuangco, or Salvador Laurel, all of whom, like Ramos, had been closely linked to Ferdinand Marcos. A Protestant in an overwhelmingly Catholic country, Ramos won. Joseph Estrada, a former senator and popular grade "B" movie actor, was elected vice president on Cojuangco's ticket.

Ramos, nicknamed "Steady Eddie" by the press, provided sustaining leadership over his six-year term. At his inauguration he bluntly noted that the nation was in trouble, but he had the good fortune to be president during an era of global prosperity. He focused on public works, while accepting a regimen of fiscal discipline demanded by the International Monetary Fund. He restructured much of the Marcos debt overhang and emphasized "the four D's": devolution, decentralization, deregulation, and democratization. Decision making was theoretically pushed down to local and provincial levels. The economy was freed from excessive government regulation; local entrepreneurs and foreign corporations were allowed to compete in the marketplace without restrictions.

The Ramos administration sought to end corporate and individual tax evasion, as the expatriation of funds to Hong Kong, Macau, and the Bahamas siphoned money away. It won international approval and foreign investment by abolishing foreign currency controls; the peso was floated, allowing Philippine goods to compete successfully on a global market, though at the cost of on-going devaluation. "Trade, not aid" became government policy. Banking reform, including a willingness to let foreign banks compete with local ones, broke the monopoly of certain families and made the economy more transparent.

During the Aquino years, the power utilities had rarely been able to meet demand. "Brownouts" had been endemic, and economic progress was hamstrung by shortfalls in electricity, water pressure, and telecommunications. Ramos got the traffic lights and the computer screens to stay on. He also transformed Subic Bay into a civilian facility, granting it duty-free status and taking advantage of some of the fixed assets left behind by the U.S. navy, including 1,800 bungalows, a 9,000-foot runway, an independent electrical power plant, a country club and golf course, as well as a highly skilled local work force.

The administration also faced threats of violence on various fronts, though a rising tide of economic prosperity and good police work reduced the risks somewhat. Ramos lifted the thirty-five-year ban on the CPP; his goal, to let the party function openly, was part of a larger strategy of reconciliation. In the military, rebellious colonels and majors once again became loyal officers. Gregorio Honasan, former idol of the RAM movement, signed a cease-fire with the government and returned to mainstream politics, ultimately winning for himself a senate seat in 1995.

Muslim provinces had the highest infant mortality and illiteracy rates in the archipelago and desperately needed substantial infrastructure investment, although they accounted for 60 percent of Philippine exports of raw material, including prawns, pineapples, timber, bananas, and copra. The rise of a global fundamentalist Islamic network transformed their struggle. President Qaddafi of Libya and others in Saudi Arabia supplied Nur Misuari of the MNLF and other local Muslim leaders with money, weapons, and a militant ideology. As part of the overseas Filipino diaspora, hundreds of thousands of men and women went off to work in the Middle East as domestics, construction workers, or professionals. The Philippines became a portal linking radical Islam to globalization.

But in many respects it was politics as usual. Imelda Marcos was elected a congresswoman from Leyte, her native island, and her son, Ferdinand Jr. ("Bong Bong"), won his father's old congressional seat from Ilocos Norte. To peruse the winning list of governors, congressmen and women, and senators was to be reintroduced to the great families. Ramos himself, Marcos' second cousin, was just such a child of an *ilustrado* family. His father, Congressman Narciso Ramos, had been foreign minister; his sister, Leticia Ramos Shahani, with degrees from

Wellesley and the Sorbonne, was a senator and chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Among the legacies of President Ramos was his decision not to amend the Aquino constitution in order to permit himself to serve a second term. Ramos was interested but ultimately accepted the constitutional prohibition. Cardinal Sin and Mrs. Aquino had to organize mass protests to remind Ramos not to be tempted, but it worked. In sharp contradistinction to other countries across Southeast Asia, where the economic had been defined as more important than the political, in the Philippines, the obverse was true.

Joseph Ejercito Estrada and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo

THE 1998 presidential election was a further endorsement of democracy. Initially there were eighty-three candidates for president. One fringe candidate organized a party called the Civilian Independent Candidates against Traitors and Satanic Agents in the Philippines. Another delighted the press by announcing that he had returned from heaven specifically to run for president. But once the lunatic fringe was winnowed out, there were several perennials seeking the job, including Imelda Marcos and a grandson of Sergio Osmeña.

The victorious candidate was Vice President Estrada. Nicknamed "Erap"—a spelling reversal of the Tagalog word *pare*, meaning "buddy"—he was an aging Don Juan. In mediocre films of high romance and low art, he always played the good guy, the hero who challenged wicked hacienda owners or wealthy Chinese merchants, inevitably triumphing against overwhelming odds. Estrada's appeal to common folk appeared to challenge the *ilustrado* monopoly of power. In his inaugural address, he claimed, "Now power is with the people, one of their own has made it."

Reality was more complicated. The people around Estrada had in fact been power brokers under Marcos. Eduardo Cojuangco, Marcos' crony of cronies, and billionaire Lucio Tan, who owned Philippine Airlines, made key economic decisions. At first the Filipino public enjoyed the fact that their president was "so human." Estrada had a potbelly and wore his hair like Elvis Presley. He smoked, drank heavily, and was a self-proclaimed womanizer. He spoke of his ten children and of his wife as the mother of three of them. He held cabinet meetings in a nightclub that he owned, often making decisions in the wee hours of the morning in a haze of tobacco and alcohol.

But a scandal involving kickbacks from *jueteng*, an illegal numbers game widely played by many poor Filipinos, toppled Estrada, who had used a fake name to transfer millions of dollars to his own account. On the day he was impeached, the Manila Stock Exchange rose by 16 percent, though his allies blocked his trial in the Senate. Forty thousand citizens rallied against him, marching on the presidential residence. In January 2001 the Philippine Supreme

Court, insisting that the "welfare of the people is the supreme law," ruled unanimously that the presidency was vacant and stripped Estrada of his office, though he continued to maintain his innocence.

There was talk of "People Power II," of a greedy and corrupt president overthrown in a new type of national plebiscite, but there were also serious questions about the constitutionality of Estrada's removal. Was this a "soft coup"? Was popular recall a legitimate way to remove a duly elected president? But the military did not protect Estrada, while Sin, Aquino, and others—including many foreign observers and investors—celebrated his fall. Estrada was jailed on corruption charges, accused of "economic plunder," while the Supreme Court swore in his estranged vice president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, as president.

President Arroyo was a trained economist, the daughter of a former president, a member of the Philippine establishment, a scion of *ilustrado* culture. Sophisticated, modern, international in outlook, she reconfirmed that women are politically empowered, a reality that Filipinos have taken for granted. When she became president, *ilustrado* hegemony was also reconfirmed; she seemed to be a restoration leader for the new millennium. Yet just three years later she—and the class she represented—would again be challenged by a movie actor (Fernando Poe, Jr., a close friend of Estrada) whose career was built on playing a hero of "the masses." Clearly the struggle for the right to rule and represent the Philippines was far from over.

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