

Ethnicity and the Revolution in Panay*

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In the war for independence, Filipinos fought the Spaniards, Americans and their fellow Filipinos with almost equal difficulty. When revolutionary president Emilio Aguinaldo sent two expeditionary forces from Luzon to liberate strategic provinces in the Visayas the objective could not be achieved without local resistance. The expeditionary forces met lukewarm, if not hostile, reception from the locals. It did not help that the first of two expedition leaders was inclined to burn down uncooperative communities and that the Visayan elite had other plans for the territory. Having fought the Spaniards without aid from the Luzon government, they found the expeditions intrusive and reacted to them as they would an invasion. They even established a system of government not unlike that of the United States¹ for the following reasons: one, they wanted to be autonomous from the control of Malolos and two, they wanted freedom to define relations with the United States. The joint revolutionary forces' bungled defense of Iloilo and the fingerpointing that followed hinted the obvious flaws of ethnicity which allow Filipinos to see each other not as countrymen but clansmen. In a war against foreigners, the greater threat lies within the Filipinos themselves.

The project started with a view of forming a biographical sketch of General Ananias Diocno who was the head of the expeditionary forces to Capiz in 1898. After poring over documents in the Philippine Insurgent or Revolutionary Records, it became apparent that very little material survived about Diocno. Save for a few letters he wrote, his appointment papers from the central government, the complaints lodged against him, and a couple of sketchy biographies, not much else is known of him.

Of the material that did exist about him, most were complaints about the conduct of the Tagalog forces in Capiz and in Iloilo. The great majority of these were penned by local leaders of Iloilo although Diocno did write a couple of letters refuting the charges. This was a surprising and, admittedly, interesting development. We decided to focus on the revolutionary movement in Panay, with special attention on the developing tension between Diocno and the Visayan revolutionaries.

The history of the revolution in the Visayas is rife with political controversies and machinations that would have been fodder for the sensationalist press. There was a struggle for political control over the

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government of the region and this led to the formation of a unique system of government within the set-up of the Philippine revolutionary government.

In this power struggle, the expeditionary forces under Diocno, the regional forces under General Martin Delgado, and the federal government clashed in order to gain ascendancy in the Visayas. But underlying it all, there was a realization that the troubles in Iloilo had the unmistakable markings of regionalism.

In this time of pride in our nationhood it would seem sorely ill-timed to discuss matters of such a divisive nature. But at the same time, it would not be appropriate to ignore the divisions within the revolutionary movement in Panay, merely to keep up in the spirit of the centennial celebration. The problem existed and still exists today and the challenge is to address such problems, not pretend that all is well.

This study attempts to give a running background of the conflict between Tagalogs and Visayans. This would include the motivation for sending the expeditionary force, the status of the revolution in Panay, the establishment of a regional government and the attempts to suppress this government. It would then try to sift through the various conflicts and gain a more focused definition of ethnicity or group identification. This study is very preliminary and it is suggested that a more thorough consideration of various concepts of ethnicity, particularly those that relate to group identification and differentiation, be done.

It may be proper to begin with a background of the revolutionary movement in the island. The island Panay felt the stirrings of revolution shortly after the outbreak in Luzon. In 1896, the Katipunan was established in the Aclan region of Capiz by Francisco del Castillo and Candido Iban. On March 17, 1897, the *katipuneros* led by del Castillo marched on Calivo but dispersed after the death of del Castillo and the capture and eventual execution of Iban.¹ However, the movement spread into the interior.²

The revolution in Panay was different from that which grew out of Cavite, Laguna and Bulacan. The motivations to rebel against the Spanish regime were markedly different. Unlike the Tagalog provinces, no large friar estates dominated Iloilo or Capiz. But there was a strong disgruntled element living in the interior. The Historical Data Papers

(HDP) refer to the revolutionaries in Panay as the *agraviados* (aggrieved) and they were pictured as occasional troublemakers and lumped together with bandits and religious fanatics.³ Does this indicate a certain perception that they were nothing more than men with gripes? Early insurgents were ill-armed and lacked both logistical support and tactical know-how. With little or no support from the revolutionary movement in Luzon, the engagements with the Spaniards were sporadic.

The insurgents were led by men such as Esteban Contreras, Juan Arce and Juan Maraingan. Aside from Contreras, little is known about the other men but they succeeded in establishing revolutionary movements not only in Aklan but also in the Ilaya district of Capiz and some interior towns of Iloilo. Their deeds and exploits, however, are recorded in folk recollections of the people in towns of Capiz and Aklan. Were they nothing more than peasants who were easily supplanted by the savvy *principalia*?

To a certain degree, other groups on the periphery of society aided the *insurrectos*. The religious movement *Alapaap*, led by a certain Macario Lucso or Papa Ambi, attacked the towns of Aclan.⁴ *Teniente Cosme Barbasa*, who was identified with the religious cult called *Ostiam Poram*, led the defenders of the town of Pan-ay. The unsettled conditions also encouraged the members of various *tulisan* (bandit) groups, known locally as *boyongs*, to stage attacks on unprotected villages and towns. Many of these attacks were credited to the *insurrectos*.

The revolutionaries welcomed cooperation with these groups but would later make a clear distinction between the two movements. The relationship of the *principalia*-led revolutionaries and the *agraviados* was one marked by distrust and conflict. In the eyes of revolutionaries like Martin Delgado, Ananias Diocno and Leandro Fullon, these *agraviados* were outcasts, religious fanatics and other “aggrieved” parties who took advantage of the unsettled times to come down and attack the Spanish forces and unprotected towns and villages. The HDP covering the period of the Revolution is full of accounts about *boyongs*, *pulahanes* and *tulisanes* who would come down from the mountains and threaten the settlements. *Pulahanes* or *Dios-Dios*, as some of the aggrieved were called, were not welcomed into the towns under revolutionary control and there were frequent expeditions sent by Delgado and Diocno to free the roads linking their areas of *agraviado* activities. Although they participated

in harassing the Spaniards, once the revolutionaries gained the upper hand, they were no longer welcome.

From 1897 to 1898, the Spaniards held the upper hand in Panay. The revolutionaries, who relied almost exclusively on *talibongs*, *bolos* and seized firearms, could not mount any serious threat to the garrisoned towns. *Cazadores*, or Spanish soldiers, were deployed to the towns of Capiz because of the unsettled situation in the area. But while small guerrilla bands predominated in the first phase, larger regular formations quickly formed in 1898.

On April 17, 1898, the rebels fought a battle for the control of the town of Pan-ay. The accounts are sketchy but it seems that the rebels defeated the Spaniards. On May 4, the rebels thwarted a Spanish attempt to take the town of Pan-ay. A few days later, a reinforced Spanish force drove out the revolutionaries towards the swamps of Pontevedra and Pilar and burned the town of Pan-ay. Later still, in a more decisive battle, the revolutionaries routed the Spanish forces in Pilar (July 18, 1898) but had to flee. Effectively, this reduced Spanish presence in the province of Capiz to the garrisoned towns of Capiz and Calivo. Punitive forays continued to haunt the towns surrounding Capiz, resulting in the burning of several towns by both Spanish and revolutionary forces until the Spaniards were finally dislodged from Capiz towards the end of 1898.⁵

In Iloilo, the progress of the revolution started with the organization of secret conspiratorial committees in the towns surrounding the city in the first few months of 1898. There were also sporadic clashes between *agraviados* and the Spanish forces in areas near the border with Capiz.⁶ By October, there were uprisings in various parts of the province of Iloilo, especially the areas adjacent to the province of Capiz. The principalia was still not in open rebellion. Leaders met to form a secret provisional revolutionary government in Santa Barbara in August 1898. It was only towards the end of October that the voluntary militia under Martin Delgado turned against the Spaniards and declared an open revolt. The move quickly gained adherence. By the middle of November, Iloilo City was under siege on the landward side. The Spanish lines lay at the outskirts of La Paz and Jaro, Mandurriao and Molo. General Delgado became the leader of the locally organized forces called the Regional

Forces of the Visayas. By November 17, a Provisional Territorial Council was proclaimed in Santa Barbara.⁷

If the Revolution was progressing in Panay, why did General Emilio Aguinaldo decide to send an expeditionary force to the Visayas? A plea for aid came in August 1898 requesting assistance from the revolutionaries in Luzon⁸ and Aguinaldo took the opportunity to install trusted men in the Visayas. The Visayas was too important to lose. There were rumors that the Spaniards would sell the Visayas and Mindanao to other powers, possibly Germany, Japan, or Great Britain, or the Spaniards might evacuate the islands in favor of the Americans. An immediate revolutionary presence in the Visayas would make it difficult for the Spaniards to dispose of the islands.

Iloilo City was the second largest settlement in the country at the close of the 19th century, and after the Spaniards surrendered Manila to the Americans on August 13, 1898, the Spanish administrative center was transferred to Iloilo. The Revolutionary Government, seeing Iloilo as the center from which all other Visayan provinces would be won over to the revolution, intended that the city be taken by Filipinos. Commissioners were appointed to establish the local government in that province and from thence establish similar governments in the towns and villages of the Visayas.⁹ An established revolutionary government in Iloilo would go a long way in facilitating the revolution in the Visayas as well as in Mindanao.

However, to secure Iloilo, Aguinaldo had to deploy men of his trust and confidence. Aguinaldo had no sufficient men in Capiz, Iloilo or anywhere else in the Visayas. Most of the revolutionary leaders in Panay, for example, were either *katipuneros* instructed by Andres Bonifacio or were militia leaders with little or no dealings with Luzon. The immediate organization of an expeditionary force was then necessary to establish a presence in the region as well as provide direction to the revolution there. Even if there were some form of indigenous force in Panay, it would still be necessary to send trusted lieutenants as well as material aid from Luzon.¹⁰

On August 31, 1898, Aguinaldo sent the Batangas expeditionary force to liberate the province of Capiz. Led by Ananias Diocno, the 200-man expedition was composed mainly of Tagalog volunteers but also

included some from Bicol, Masbate and Romblon.¹¹ Sources are scant on the expeditionary forces but they proceeded to liberate the two remaining garrison towns in the province: Capiz and Calivo. Diocno took hold of the forces then surrounding the town of Capiz and reduced several other settlements that refused to cooperate with the expeditionary forces. The town of Ivisan and several other towns surrounding Capiz were allegedly burned upon the orders of General Diocno. The expeditionary forces, together with other revolutionary groups, succeeded in capturing Calivo sometime in November or December 1898.¹²

But the Tagalogs were refused allegiance by several insurgent towns, among them Dumalag, Ibajay, etc., all of which had been viably functioning as insurgent settlements outside the official sphere of the Philippine revolutionary government. And again, in reprisal for the refusal to accede to the government in Luzon, Diocno burned the intransigent towns. The memories of this policy survive in the folk histories of towns in Capiz and Aklan.¹³ While the policy ensured that Diocno was to be recognized as supreme military commander in Capiz, it also bred a fear among the revolutionaries in neighboring Iloilo that he would similarly reduce them.

In September, another expeditionary force was sent from Luzon to liberate Antique and was headed by Leandro Fullon, a native of that province. On September 21, Fullon's party disembarked at Pandan, near the northern end of Antique, to begin the liberation of the province from the Spanish government. Despite some routs, Fullon's forces were able to take San Jose de Buenavista on November 25.¹⁴ In December, Fullon's forces were deployed, together with other revolutionary forces, to Iloilo.

With the military engagements in Panay as a backdrop, the government for Panay was slowly taking shape. It must be stated that although there were urgent pleas for assistance, by and large the revolution in Panay was home-grown and self-sufficient. They had organized the conspiratorial committees without the assistance or the intervention of Luzon-based revolutionaries and had won skirmishes with the Spaniards with what little arms they got. It surprises no one that the government of Panay was, from the very beginning, autonomous of the main body of the revolution.

By the beginning of November, the form of government of the Visayas was already a serious question. Should it maintain its autonomy from the

central government? The Territorial Council of the Visayas was formed at the instigation of various prominent men of Iloilo and Negros. This council, together with the provisional revolutionary forces under Martin Delgado, was formed in Santa Barbara in November 1898. Allegedly, prior to the open defiance of the revolutionaries, the council had already been meeting as a shadow government since July.¹⁵ However, some form of contact had already been established between the revolutionary government in Cavite and the regional government in Sta. Barbara. Commissioners from Luzon, for example, had been appointed to supervise the establishment of local governments throughout the Visayas. The Cry of Sta. Barbara also featured the raising of a Filipino flag.

At the onset, despite the declared adhesion of the regional government to the central government, Malolos had nominal control over Iloilo. The regional government was autonomous in essence and in fact. The ambiguous nature of the regional government as well as its relationship with Luzon was a breeding place of secessionist sentiments later on.

The set-up for a federal system was not incorporated into the draft of the Malolos constitution. It was a unilateral decision of the Visayans to establish such a government.¹⁶ The inspiration to establish an autonomous regional government may have come from the Cantonal Republic of Negros, which was organized on November 26, 1898. The Negros government was organized following the Swiss cantonal system, which incorporated the western and eastern halves of the island. The Negros Cantonal Republic declared its adhesion to the Visayan regional territorial government as well as to the national Philippine government in Malolos.

On December 12, the Federal State of the Visayas was inaugurated. In the state's declaration, they cited their imitation of the system of government of the United States of America. They called for equal status among the three component groups, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Despite avowed adherence and subordination to the government in Luzon, the definitions of the relationship with Malolos remained vague. In a series of decrees after the establishment of the federal state, the president of the state still continued to define the relationship with Luzon.

To a certain extent, the ambiguous nature of the relationship between Luzon and Panay was also due to the hesitance of Malolos to

define the relationship. In November 1898, Mabini wrote to Aguinaldo about the situation in the Visayas but it was remarkably devoid of any opinion on the matter of an autonomous regional government. He merely endorsed the undertakings of the commissioner for the Visayas, Francisco Villanueva.¹⁷ President Aguinaldo was, himself, silent over the question, and it was not until he came out with his decree abolishing the federal government in April 1899 that he wrote at length about the problem.

Why would the Visayans want to establish a separate system of government? Two things come to mind. One, they wanted autonomy because they resented the control of Malolos and two, they wanted freedom to define relations with the United States. It must continually be stressed that the Panaynons had been conducting their fight against the Spaniards free of Luzon's control before the advent of Diocno's forces. Thus Diocno's expedition was viewed more as some sort of invasion rather than liberation. Diocno actually demanded that the revolutionary forces in Capiz adhere to his military command. Those who refused were forcibly disarmed or attacked, causing a great deal of ill-feeling.

The Visayans were not at all comfortable with the prevailing set-up within the Revolutionary government where the Tagalogs, in general, and the Caviteños in particular, were getting more than their fair share of the positions in government. Diocno, for example, was sent on an expeditionary mission to liberate Capiz. He was a Tagalog from Taal and had no links with the Visayas. Iloilo, as a second city at that time, may have resented the impositions or dictates of Cavite and may have wanted to have control over their choice of leaders. The conflict between the expeditionary forces and the regional army is rife with ethnic antagonisms.

In the second case, it may be important to note that the Philippine government had already declared its independence and established its structure through a constitution. Neither of these endeavors were recognized by the United States. It was also apparent that the United States intended to stay in the Philippines following a series of military deployments in August. Even clearer was that after the signing of the Treaty of Paris ending the Spanish-American War, the United States gained the right to govern the Philippines, subject to the concurrence of the American Senate.

The Federal State of the Visayas was inaugurated several days after the Treaty of Paris was signed. It was patterned after the federal system of the United States where states had considerable power of policy making. In the aftermath of the revolution, and with the relations of the federal state vis-à-vis the central government still unclear, the policy-making potentials of a federal state were enormous; the federal state, for instance, could even contemplate secession. This potential was not lost on the Americans. In a series of consultations with Visayan leaders based in Manila, the Military Governor, General Elwell Otis, sounded them about the American intentions to occupy major Visayan ports. It was also made clear that the Americans wanted to deal with Visayans directly. Again, after the Americans took Iloilo, the peace commissioners wanted to conduct peace negotiations with the Visayans in March 1899. However, the talks bogged down after General Delgado insisted that the Americans agree to two conditions: one, that Filipino independence be recognized, and two, that negotiations be cleared with Luzon.

In fact, the separatist tendencies of the Federal State of the Visayas were recognized by many revolutionary leaders. Julio Ynfante, who was in Iloilo in November 1898, spoke of the dangerous tendencies of the Visayans in favor of annexation and warned of the severe consequences arising from the loss of the Visayas to the young republic. General Arcadio Maxilom, police chief of Cebu, wrote to Malolos concerning the suspicions he had about the government in Iloilo, which he termed as annexationist.¹⁸

To understand the motivations of the annexationist leaders of the Federal government, one must see who they were. Most were landed *hacenderos* of Iloilo and Negros. One clear motive was the search for a market for sugar. Another was the search for a reliable security cover. The United States represented the biggest single market of Philippine sugar and that fact was not lost on many *hacenderos*. Annexation to the U.S. would facilitate the entry of sugar into the American market. The Americans were also in the best position to provide security for the Philippines, compared to either the Spaniards or the Filipino revolutionaries. As astute businessmen, the annexationist leaders also recognized that a war with the US would be devastating economically. Not only would the sugar fields be destroyed, the American market would also be lost. The choice then became clear.¹⁹ As it turned out, this decision fueled the animosity between Diocno, who stood unwaveringly for independence, and the Visayan annexationists.

On other hand, it cannot be denied that the national government was concerned about the conditions in the Visayas despite the seeming lack of a defined policy towards the Visayas. But the national government admitted that it was beyond its power to impose a political solution to the problem in Iloilo. When Mabini received the recommendations of the commissioner, it was an act of resignation to an act already done—a fait accompli. To challenge or to revise the autonomous government of the Visayas was to participate in counter-productive talk, and the prime goal in December 1898 was to capture the city of Iloilo.

What the national government did was to limit the spread of the power base of the Visayan government. The Visayan federal government was strongest in Iloilo and Negros. Capiz and Antique adhered to it because of proximity and because of the continuing indecision of Luzon. However, outside the Ilonggo-dominated provinces, there was clearly little support for the Federal government,²⁰ a point I will return to in this paper. From the original concept of revolution emanating from Iloilo and radiating to the other Visayan provinces, the national government began communicating directly with local revolutionary movements or sending forces and leaders from Luzon to these provinces. They were markedly successful in the case of Samar and Cebu, both valuable components of the Visayan group. Two military generals became loyal lieutenants of Aguinaldo, Arcadio Maxilom in Cebu and Vicente Lucban in Samar.

In Iloilo, which could be described as the center of the Federal government, the national government did try to undermine the effectiveness of the Federal government. In a letter to General Delgado, dated February 2, 1899, Apolinario Mabini explained that all structures set up under the Federal government had to be considered provisional until the national government was able to fulfill the mandate of the constitution. Mabini stressed that the true repository of sovereignty was the Filipino people as represented by the Congress.

It appears that the national government looked upon Delgado as a rival leader. Diocno, despite his ascerbic complaints against the Visayan Federal leaders, chose to view Delgado as being misled by his companions. Mabini appealed to Delgado to recognize the national government when he wrote directly to the Chief of the Regional Army in February 1899. Hence, it was no surprise that despite Aguinaldo's close ties with Fullon (he was operations chief for the Visayas) and Diocno (the chief of the

expeditionary forces), it was Delgado who was hailed the general in chief of the forces on Panay island by virtue of the decree of April 27. It may also be noted that appended to the appointment of Delgado as general in chief was a letter from Apolinario Mabini, in which he pledged the support and cooperation of General Diocno in the move to dissolve the Federal Government.

Delgado, however, would not cooperate in the move to dissolve the Federal government. His career thus far as the head of military force, he had not exercised any political office. He continued to consult with the Federal government, which was fast being decimated by defections to the American side,²¹ and hesitated to take direct orders from Luzon. His hesitation, in part, was due to the conflict between Tagalogs and Visayans. While staunchly committed to independence, he was also very loyal to his own regional government.

Delgado's dilemma was shared by many of Iloilo's military leaders like Juan Jalandoni, Quintin Salas and Ambrosio Mondejar. It seems that the military elite in general was not particularly ambitious and contented themselves with playing a secondary role in the formation of policy within the Federal State of the Visayas. Roque Lopez, the first president and a military general, for example, resigned as president of the Federal government in favor of Raymundo Melliza. But with the neutralization of the political elite, the military took up the role of leading the revolution and led the resistance movement against the Americans.

It was on the occasion of the American threat to the city of Iloilo that the regional and expeditionary forces came into close contact. All forces were concentrated in the city of Iloilo in anticipation of a naval landing. The Capiz-based expeditionary forces of General Diocno, the Antique expeditionary force of General Fullon, the Regional forces under General Delgado, and the forces of General Pablo Araneta were in close enough proximity in the city to try to prevent the landing of American troops. But the problems of harmonizing the chains of command soon became evident. The expeditionary forces took their commands directly from the Revolutionary Government in Cavite, while the regional forces took their direction from the Territorial Council of the Visayas. The existence of two forces under two directions clearly marked the beginning of a struggle for supremacy.

On February 11, the Americans began the naval bombardment of the city. The revolutionaries held their positions until the troops under General Araneta retreated, setting the town on fire. Seeing that their comrades were in retreat, Fullon's forces, which held the important station of Fuerza San Pedro, also fell back. Diocno's forces likewise retreated to Jaro. The Americans took Iloilo, which was nothing more than ashes.²²

The Americans advanced on Jaro, La Paz and Molo. The insurgents quickly quit these positions after minor skirmishes and after setting several villages on fire. After establishing the fronts, the Americans were unable to push out of the vicinity of the city. The revolutionaries dug trenches to fortify their positions. The American knew they did not have the troops to hold on to any new conquests and kept Iloilo only through superior arms. The Federal government retired to the town of Sta. Barbara, while most of the troops manned the fronts surrounding Iloilo and its environs. The forces of Fullon retreated to Antique. The Americans made no further advances, and save for the failed Balantang advance in March, the fronts were unmoved until November 1899.

The failed defense of Iloilo exposed the divisions within the revolutionary forces in Panay that had been simmering since December. The military leaders blamed each other for the failure to defend the city from the Americans. Each leader sent word to Malolos of the other's failures. The Visayans accused Diocno and the Tagalogs of setting fire to the city and of indulging in looting.²³ Diocno, on the other hand, was particularly critical of the conduct of the Visayans in trying to exclude Tagalog participation in the defense of Iloilo. Although he faulted Fullon's forces for initiating the retreat, he attributed this action to the atrocious conditions the Tagalogs were forced to endure during the long expectation of the American bombardment. He intimated that the Visayans had no intention to fight the Americans and they wanted the Tagalogs out of Iloilo so that they could deliver the city to the foreigners.²⁴ His criticisms were not left unanswered.²⁵

The division came to a dangerous juncture in April when the local government of Cabatuan accused members of the expeditionary forces based in that town of abducting several women and of stealing food from the people. Relations between the Tagalogs and the Visayans grew so bad that members of a demoralized Tagalog force could not attempt to

move out of their camps for fear of being ambushed by disgruntled Visayans. In truth, a number of Tagalogs were killed when they ventured outside their camp. Nor were they allowed to carry arms for fear that they might shoot upon civilians. The Tagalogs complained about the relative speed with which the case was brought to the attention of the government in Luzon. The complaints of harassment and the reluctance of local leaders to provide food and provisions for the expeditionary forces were, however, ignored. In contrast, the Consejo de Tagalos noted that equally or even more brutal incidents done by Visayans were ignored. In a note concerning a document in which local leaders denied that their towns were burned by Visayan troops, James Taylor issued an opinion that the incident may have been true because the Federal government was so bent on disproving it. The leader of the troops was the famed Visayan colonel, Quintin Salas.²⁶

In March 1899, the state government asked General Diocno to surrender his arms to representatives of the Regional forces. Rather than accept the demands made by the state government, Diocno retired to Capiz where he remained incommunicado as far as the state government was concerned.²⁷ Left to defend part of the fronts and the revolutionary capital in Sta. Barbara, his men were harassed and ordered to accede to the demand to disarm. This demand was refused, but it greatly demoralized the Tagalog forces. In April, Tagalog forces stationed in San Miguel were withdrawn to Capiz, because of the increasingly difficult relations between the two forces.²⁸ Diocno further complained that the agents of the Federal State were encroaching on his jurisdiction, undermining his administrative control over the towns near the border with the district of Concepcion.²⁹

The central government, burdened by its own concerns in defending Luzon, tried to mediate a settlement. Apart from the April 27 decree abolishing the federal government, Aguinaldo tried to work out a compromise that would allow the Tagalogs to return to the fronts in Iloilo, without having to disarm themselves. The events are sketchy but by September, a certain settlement brought about a reconciliation between the contending forces, and the Federal government lost its champion. According to Gregorio Zaide, the last President of the Federal State, Jovito Yusay, signed a decree dissolving the Federal republic on September 23.³⁰ According to sources in the Philippine Revolutionary Records (PRR), it was upon the instigation of the Consejo de Luzon, the Tagalog faction,

that the Federal government was finally brought to an end.³¹ A coup had always been feasible since they had the military capability and the legal right to mount one. However, the Tagalogs also knew they had no support from the Visayans. Delgado was still necessary in the move to dissolve the Federal government.

By September 21, Delgado agreed to form the Politico-military government of Iloilo through the help of military leaders of the province, without the blessings of the civilian Federal government.³² On October 5, he dissolved the Federal government by virtue of the April 27 decree of President Aguinaldo.³³ On October 20, he appointed his delegates to the provincial council.³⁴ He now recognized the direct control of Luzon over the government of Iloilo. In the military council that formalized his ascendancy as the new Politico-Military governor of Iloilo and General in Chief of all Panay-based forces, the forces under his control agreed to recognize the commissions and ranks approved by the Department of War, rather than those issued by the Federal government. In return, Diocno took a secondary role to Delgado, in spite of the fact that he had the better-armed force.

With the demise of the Federal government, the military had to reorganize resistance against the Americans. During the meeting of the Panay forces in Sta. Barbara, they effected the unification of the command structure. The federal forces agreed to accept the hierarchy and the commissions from Luzon to effect the union.³⁵ The politico-military governor of Iloilo immediately set out to assume supervision over the provincial government. Municipal militias and police forces were taken into account, the collection of the war tax and contributions of war were mandated and supplies stockpiled. But like the experience of Diocno, Delgado ran into the problem of lukewarm support for the revolution. On October 24, Delgado wrote to Aguinaldo complaining about the indifference and apathy of the local officials in supporting the cause of the revolution.³⁶ Contributions were gathered only upon the threat of punitive measures. Delgado's problems may have emanated from his relative inexperience in dealing with civilian officials.

On October 27, 1899, General Diocno informed General Delgado of the docking of the USS Concord at Iloilo with as many as 3,000 troops and 200 horses. On November 2, two American gunboats bombarded the town of Banate. On the 5th, American forces began their advance

outside the frontlines toward San Miguel. Landings were made in Banate on November 25, in Capiz and Calivo in December, and in San Jose de Buenavista in January 1900. Unable to resist the American advance, the Filipino revolutionaries retreated to the mountain vastness of Panay. Delgado retreated to the mountains of Lambunao, Diocno to the hills of Aclan and Fullon to the vicinity of Mt. Madias. By July 1, 1900, the Panay defenders opted to shift to guerrilla tactics.³⁷

By the beginning of 1901, the disenchanting revolutionaries were out of men, out of ammunition and out of food. In February, Delgado surrendered to the Americans. On March 1, Fullon followed suit and on March 21, Diocno signed the Paz de Aclan. Colonel Salas continued the fight until October.

How are we then to view the conflict within the revolutionary forces in Iloilo? Can we conclude that what transpired actually suggested a division based on ethnicity? Perhaps it would be best to separate the various possible motivations for the feud in the Visayas.

It could well have been personal. From accounts of the revolution, it seems that Diocno was a difficult person who disliked opposition and had no aptitude for negotiations. He was able to take hold of Capiz because he ruthlessly crushed opposing forces, be they Spanish or Filipino, and he had the arms and ammunition to effect this. Hence, on the personal level, yes, there could have been cause to dislike him. However, as has been pointed out, several Visayan officers also exhibited similarly harsh tendencies. Quintin Salas was a particularly good example. After being refused aid and succor, Salas allegedly ordered the burning of Dumangas and other towns. But rather than castigate Salas, the Federal government came to his aid with vigorous denials of the foul deed. In this sense, then, personality traits alone did not explain the cause of the feud. Indeed it does appear that more than a hint of regionalism played a role in aggravating the division in the Visayas.

What about the politics of the leaders? Diocno was an unrelenting nationalist who was committed to the cause of independence. Within the government of the Visayans, there were annexationists who favored American occupation. In January and February 1899, these men were in a preponderant position in the federal government. They viewed Diocno with great fear because his forces were well-armed and autonomous of

their control. Thus they worked to isolate Diocno and make him give up his base of power which was, in all reality, his military strength. However, other Visayan nationalists were also opposed to Diocno. Delgado was also firmly committed to independence but Diocno and Delgado were mutually antagonistic before September 1899. It was Delgado who actually stood as the most formidable opponent of Diocno and the annexationists knew that. Delgado was hugely popular in Iloilo and controlled the regional forces. But he resented the interference of Diocno and made common cause with the annexationists in wanting Diocno's forces neutralized. The two generals later made peace but maintained civil, never warm, relations after that.

Could class distinctions have separated most Tagalogs from their Visayan brethren? Again, this possibility runs aground because, although the majority of the expeditionary forces were Tagalogs of lowly origin, their leaders were from the elite. Opposition to the expeditionary forces included references to the leadership's intransigence and cruelty. The complaints that the Tagalogs themselves expressed were also directed by their leaders against the perceived biases of the Visayan leadership.

So now we come to the question of ethnicity. The *Comite de Tagalos* presented a most vivid identification of their exclusion from avenues of power within the Federal Government based in Iloilo. The complaints specified the gripes of the leadership of the Tagalogs against what they perceived as a regionalist bias against them. They spoke of being unrecognized by the Visayans and left out in promotions. Diocno also spoke of being denied aid and succor in villages and towns controlled by the Visayans under the direction of the *Consejo de Estado* in Iloilo as well as being made to feel unwanted in the region by elements of the Federal government.

The Visayans, on the other hand, complained of the high handedness of the Tagalogs in trying to force their agenda in the region, despite the delineation—however vague—of jurisdictions. The experience of Capiz under Diocno was marked by severities in the quest to place the province under his control. There was fear that he would likewise reduce the rest of Panay. The Visayans therefore insisted that the expeditionary force integrate with the regional command. The Visayans also assailed the penchant of the expeditionary forces to resort to looting and pillage.

But let us refine the problem further. Rather than merely ethnic biases at play in the dynamics of the relationship between the Visayas and the Tagalogs, perhaps we should consider the concepts of group identification or the categories of *taga-loob* (insider) and *taga-labas* (outsider). Filipinos in general are a clannish lot. Kinship plays an important part in defining relationships with other people. Kinship opens doors, which would otherwise be closed to an “outsider” or a stranger. This is almost reflex among Filipinos. There are varying levels of the *taga-loob* and *taga-labas* categories but they usually extend to ethnicity. Ethnicity is an extension of this clannishness, since we somehow view a person who comes from the same town or speaks the same language as an extension of kin. A person refers to another person who hails from the same town, province or speaks the same language as *kababayan* or *kasimanwa*. In the Philippines, this identification usually stops at the ethnicity level. Filipinos living abroad identify with each other as *kababayan*, but preferentially form sub-groups based on ethnic or regional identification.

This reality is not exclusive to the Visayas for in a sense, ethnicity or perhaps the identification with in-groups and out-groups has dictated the course of the revolution in other areas. Take the case of the execution of Andres Bonifacio in 1897. Bonifacio was identified with the Magdiwang faction in Cavite while Emilio Aguinaldo was identified with the Magdalo faction. Bonifacio, although a Tagalog, was an outsider and although related to Mariano Alvarez by marriage, was not viewed as Caviteño. That is important in light of the failure of the Magdiwang to defend him in the face of persistent Magdalo persecution and the seeming collusion between the two factions in dividing the spoils of war between them. The bonds of kinship united the Caviteños and although at times they were in conflict with one another, their conflict was tempered by the recognition of kinship bonds that united them. Bonifacio, the urban Tagalog, had no business to be in provincial Cavite.

The lukewarm support that the revolution received in areas such as the Visayas and Cagayan Valley could also be attributed to the perceived out-group categorization of the “liberating” forces of the Revolution. American authors like James LeRoy and Dean Worcester point to the ethnic identification of the Revolution with the Tagalogs as a central theme of the period 1898-1901. They insist that the revolution was essentially a Tagalog enterprise which was imposed on other regions and people. In one, perhaps limited, sense this thesis is true. We must realize

that Tagalogs made common cause against the Spaniards because they were most commonly affected by the friar estates, which sprawled in Cavite, Bulacan, and Laguna. They were also under the severest hold of Spanish colonialism. Outside the Tagalog region conditions were different. Nonetheless, there was support for the revolution, though in relative intensities and with varying motives. Thus the Philippines should be viewed as being in varying degrees of politicization in 1896.

The revolutionary movement in Panay found a wide degree of support from the people. But the revolutionary fervor, the expeditionary forces suffered from a lack of supplies and support more than the Visayan regional forces. For while the regional government regularly sent supplies to their troops, the expeditionary forces had to scrounge for food and ultimately plundered the communities in which they operated. The Visayan forces would suffer from a similar lack of support only after the Americans began operations outside the city of Iloilo, cutting old supply routes and bases of support.³⁸

Clearly there was a failure to identify with the expeditionary forces as their own. It has been said that bonds of a shared experience are what unite a nation. The deeper the sense of sharing, the stronger the feelings of nationalism. At the time of the Revolution, nationhood was only beginning to be felt in the Visayas. What was stronger was the keen sense of shared experience with other West Visayans. Negros shared both kinship and ethnic ties with Iloilo and Capiz. Antique also shared a deep connection with the Negrenses and Ilongos because of economic and historical ties. This regional identification was far stronger than what was then a developing sense of nationhood that encompassed about a dozen main ethnic groups and a hundred smaller ones.

This could explain why the Iloilo revolutionaries decided to form a Visayan Federal State, rather than accede to what could well have been a foreign government in Luzon. The Tagalogs and the Visayans shared very little in the form of experiences that bound them together. There was also mutual distrust. The ruling group in Malolos viewed the government in Iloilo as secessionist, and rather than appoint an Ilonggo, it insisted on sending a Tagalog to lead an expeditionary force. On the other hand, the Panay revolutionaries resented the impositions of Malolos and instead of acceding to a unified structure of government, persisted in creating a rival government in the Visayas.

It must also be recognized that the Panay revolutionaries had already formed a governmental structure autonomous of the Malolos government. The existence of a functioning government would have made it more difficult to impose another structure that was to the taste of Malolos. And Malolos was not as representative as it would have wanted to appear. Fewer than a third of the delegates were elected and the majority of those who were appointed to represent provinces in the Visayas and Mindanao came from Manila or Cavite.

On the other hand, even within the Visayas region there was some disunity. As pointed out earlier, outside of Iloilo and areas it controlled, parts of the Visayas did not support the Federal government. Cebu, in theory, should have acceded to the Visayas State but direct communications with Malolos were conducted. This could also suggest an ethnicity-related tension between Cebuanos and Hiligaynons, with Cebu refusing to play a subordinate role to Iloilo. In addition, Samar and Leyte were clearly outside the hold of the Visayan federals.

The division within the revolutionary movement in Panay was a real danger to the survival of the movement. As a case in point, the defense of Iloilo could have been better coordinated if a single command structure were in place. At that time, there were four generals commanding differently sized and enabled forces. The two strongest forces refused to come under the command of the other. In March of 1899, Diocno retired to Capiz after being hounded by representatives of the Federal government to disarm his troops. In Capiz he enjoyed a certain level of support. Diocno's troops were pulled out of Iloilo in April and were absent until August. Their absence would have exposed the revolutionary capital to certain peril had the Americans sent the troops to mount an offensive against Sta. Barbara. It was only in October that the forces agreed to cooperate in a single command structure, thereby facilitating the defense of the island. By then, however, American reinforcements were on their way to break the landward siege of Iloilo.

The divisions within the revolutionary movement in the Visayas also disabled the Iloilo-based revolutionaries from exercising their leadership in the region. A move to revive the revolution in Negros to be directed from Panay was abandoned because of the lack of arms. At the same time, the government in Luzon, viewing the Iloilo-based revolutionaries as a

threat, also undermined their effectivity in other provinces of the Visayas by directly communicating with these component provinces.

However, although the problem of ethnicity was real, it was not insurmountable. There were several cases of effective governments run by Tagalogs in regions dominated by non-Tagalogs. Let us view the case of Samar. The force on the island was organized under General Vicente Lucban, who had no roots in the province. But despite the handicap of being entirely unfamiliar with the people and the territory, Lucban led one of the more successful guerrilla movements in the country. There was widespread support for his government in all the towns of the province, so much so that the infamous massacre of Balangiga could be organized and carried out. In recognition of this support, the Americans retaliated against Lucban by harassing the Samar citizenry, who supported Lucban, despoiling the province in the process. To Lucban's credit, he was personally affable and easy to like. He also had great sensitivity to the needs of the people of Samar, addressing civilian issues that other politico-military governors left to the care of town presidents. Lucban also had the foresight of conducting his business in the local language and became fluent in Waray. One must note, however, that unlike Panay, the revolutionary movement in Samar had not taken off before 1898. Hence there was little in the form of indigenous resistance to an outsider.

Ethnicity and group identification are part of human experience. We categorize between those who belong and those who do not. These classifications are necessary to identify those we bestow favors on, extend aid to or confide in, knowing that they share the same biases, the same culture and the same interests as we do. The course of expanding this classification was very abrupt for many Filipinos in 1898. The republic was proclaimed and local leaders were called to adhere to the new nation. While it may have been easy to proclaim adherence to the state, it was more difficult to find commonalities with ethnic groups with which a group is hardly related to. That may have been the root of the problem in Panay.

There are reasons other than group identification that may have played a more significant role in the divisions that wracked the revolution in Panay. But it has always been easiest to dismiss these other reasons and categorize them as being part of the ethnic differences. Thus Diocno's harshness was not seen as a personal trait but a group trait. The annexationist tendencies of many landed Visayan planters was not seen

as sectoral interests but as ethnic predisposition to abandon the revolutionary cause. This penchant to see things as simply a flaw of ethnicity engenders ethnic tensions that, in the case of Panay, burdened the movement and affected the ability of the revolution in Panay to confront the American threat. They saw a greater threat among themselves.

Endnotes

- 1 Felix B. Regalado and Quintin B. Franco, *History of Panay*, (Iloilo City: Central Philippine University, 1973), p. 174.
- 2 There are varying opinions on this matter. The more popular view is that the revolution came to Panay from Luzon, via the efforts of del Castillo and Iban and spread from the coast to the interior. Another view, which was presented in the Third Conference on the Revolution in Western Visayas, holds that the revolution was appropriated by the disgruntled elements of Panaynon society in the interior where it gained a strong following and a redoubt against Spanish attack. This would explain the strong nativistic character of the initial phase of the revolution in Panay.
- 3 Historical Data Papers (HDP): Province of Capiz, National Library.
- 4 HDP: Province of Aklan, National Library.
- 5 Regalado and Franco, *History of Panay*, pp. 176-177.
- 6 Folio 886/12, Report on occurrences in the town of Banate from 1898 showing how the town was taken possession by the members of the revolutionary party. Selected Documents, Philippine Revolutionary Records (PRR), National Library.
- 7 Exhibit 1190, Establishment of the Provisional Government, John Taylor, comp. *Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*, Volume 5, (Pasay City: Eugenio Lopez Foundation, 1973).
- 8 Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *Malolos, Crisis of the Republic*, (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1960), p. 420.
- 9 Folio 311/1, Francisco Soriano reports situation in Iloilo, December 1898, Selected Documents, PRR, National Library.
- 10 A comment appears in Taylor's compilation that Pablo Araneta was initially considered as the head of the expeditionary forces to Panay but because Aguinaldo was unsure of his loyalties, Diocno was sent in his stead. However, Araneta was still sent to Iloilo as titular head of an expedition which had little armed capabilities. See Taylor. *Philippine Insurrection*, Vol. 2, p. 377.
- 11 Folio 310/1, Appointment papers of Ananias Diocno, August 30, 1898. Selected Documents, PRR, National Library.
- 12 There are conflicting sources as to where Diocno landed. Most are sketchy. However, conventional wisdom would have placed him near Calivo, because it was nearest Luzon. However, his main task was to secure the telegraph line which was laid near Capiz.
- 13 HDP: Province of Capiz, Municipality of Dao, National Library.
- 14 HDP: Province of Antique, National Library.
- 15 Taylor, *Philippine Insurrection*, Vol. 2, p. 376.
- 16 It is alleged that the government in Malolos proposed the formation of a federal set-up for the Philippines. However, there was never any attempt to distinguish the existence of a Federal State for Luzon or for Mindanao. In the communications of Apolinario Mabini, it appears that it was commissioner Francisco Villanueva who suggested the formation of a Federal State of the Visayas.
- 17 Folio 1046/, Announcement of the arrival of a commissioner who is to establish the rule of the Filipino Republic. Cabatuan, November 20, 1898, Selected Documents, PRR, National Library.

- 18 Folio 311/10. Julio Ynfante tells Emilio Aguinaldo that Iloilo is about to surrender and that the annexationist feeling is strong. November 6, 1898, and Folio 405, Negros, PRR.
- 19 The Republic of Negros surrendered to the Americans, without any resistance, thereby saving the island from a devastating war. However, there were revolutionaries who kept up the fight.
- 20 Bohol, for example, allegedly refused to receive the commissioners sent from Luzon and styled itself a canton of the Federal State of the Visayas. It is possible that the inspiration for the government in Bohol originated from Negros because Cebu was organized following the instructions of Aguinaldo.
- 21 In a scathing criticism of the Federal government, the Consejo de Tagalos remarked that Sta. Barbara was being evacuated by residents who felt that it is safer to be on the other side of the frontlines. Leaders of the government like Raymundo Melliza, Vicente Franco, and Juan Araneta were also taking up posts in the American government. Folio 52/4, Letter From the Tagalog colony to Emilio Aguinaldo, Sta. Barbara, August 1, 1899, Selected Document, PRR.
- 22 Taylor, *Philippine Insurrection*, vol. 2, pp. P. 388, Regalado and Franco, *History of Panay*, pp. 187-188, and John Foreman, *The Philippine Islands*, reprinted, Mandaluyong: Cacho Hermanos, Inc., 1985, pp. 512-517.
- 23 Taylor, *Philippine Insurrection*, vol. 2, pp. 388-389.
- 24 Folio 52/1, Letter reporting Americans are in possession of town of Iloilo, March 14, 1899, Selected Documents, PRR.
- 25 Folio 117/2, Letter of Leandor Fullon to E. Aguinaldo, May 31, 1899, Folio 52/1, Letter reporting that the Americans are in the possession of Iloilo, March 14, 1899, Selected Documents, PRR.
- 26 Folio 1160/7, Selected Documents, PRR.
- 27 Folio 52/5, Letter showing the feeling between Tagalo and Visayan forces in Panay, Selected Documents, PRR; and Folio 52/4, Letter From the Tagalog colony to E. Aguinaldo, Sta. Barbara, August 1, 1899, Selected Documents, PRR.
- 28 Folio 117/2, Marella informs Delgado of his intentions to return to Capiz, San Miguel, April 9, 1899, Selected Documents, PRR.
- 29 Folio 311/1, Diocno's complaints against the Federals, Capiz, August 25, 1899, Selected Document, PRR.
- 30 Gregorio Zaide, "The Patriots of Panay," in *Filipino Heritage* (Manila: Felta Book Sales) vol. 8, p.2165.
- 31 Folio 1094/10, Federal government displaced by force. Sta. Barbara, September 25, 1899, Selected Documents, PRR.
- 32 Folio 881/9, Martin Delgado announces that at the request of his troops he has taken command of the province as P.M. governor. Kabatuan, September 21, 1899, Selected Documents, PRR.
- 33 Folio 881/3. Martin Delgado issues proclamation to the Visayans announcing that he has assumed command as governor president. Kabatuan, October 5, 1899, Selected Documents, PRR.
- 34 Folio 881/6, Martin Delgado announces his council of government, October 20, 1899, Selected Documents, PRR.
- 35 899/10, Martin Delgado elected military general in chief, October 22, 1899, Selected Documents, PRR.
- 36 Folio 886/7, Politico-Military Governor says Iloilo province is indifferent in the present situation, Kabatuan, October 1899, Selected Documents, PRR.
- 37 Folio 886/11, Francisco Jalandoni describes formation of the guerrilla bands in Iloilo Province, July 1, 1900, Selected Documents. PRR.
- 38 It is curious that Delgado immediately claimed lukewarm support after he took the reigns of government from the Federal government. Could it have been caused by his perceived alliance with the Tagalogs who engineered the ousting of the Council of State of the Federal government?