

# philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

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## **Angry Days in Mindanao, by Schreurs**

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*Philippine Studies* vol. 36, no. 3 (1988) 392–394

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Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

censorship and suppression. The board of judges cited its comic treatment of the relevant theme of reconciliation. Controversy attended its first staging, however, since some charged the production with an overly sympathetic treatment of the deposed Marcoses, to the disadvantage of the new president.

The published edition (which is accompanied by an English translation), although revised from the contest entry, leans to neither side, but is sympathetic to both and, the playwright says, was only meant to draw forth laughter, a bit of thought, release, and understanding: "Ibig lamang ng may- akdang matawa tayo sa mga talaga namang nakakatawa sa atin, kahit totoo na minsan, mapaisip nang kaunti, magkalabasan ng ilang sama ng loob, at magkaunawaan bago magkaisa" (p. 179).

"Sana'y maaliw tayo," Noriega ends, and indeed the play amuses and entertains. It is welcome comedy, especially since not too many contemporary playwrights—and indeed comparatively few in the history of Philippine drama—have devoted their talents to the comic genre. And it is welcome laughter, since it comments lightly but pointedly on the world of "pelikula't politika"—on the mores and manners, on the pulsing and possible lives within Philippine media and politics.

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ANGRY DAYS IN MINDANAO. By Peter Schreurs, M.S.C. Cebu City: San Carlos Publications, University of San Carlos, 1987. vi + 147 pages, maps, photographs, glossary, index.

Father Peter Schreurs, now living in his native Holland, is the kind of historian who knows his subject not only from archival records but also from first-hand acquaintance with the land and the people who inhabit it. He became interested in the history of northeastern Mindanao during the years of missionary work he spent in that region.

The "angry days" of the title refer to the turbulent period of the Philippine Revolution following upon the declaration of Philippine Independence in June 1898 and ending with the American occupation of northeastern Mindanao in 1901.

The book begins with a discussion of the source material (to which we shall return presently) and then proceeds to give a bird's-eye view of the Philippine Revolution. That account (entitled "The National Scene") occupies only four pages, but it would be difficult to find any summary of the Philippine revolutionary period as good as this one. It is brief, perceptive, masterly.

The main body of the work is not divided into chapters (which might have been helpful) but is one continuous discussion divided into unnumbered sections.

Mindanao was at first not much affected by the Revolution in Luzon that began with the Cry of Pugad Lawin in August 1896 and ended with the Pact of Biak-na-Bato in December 1897. It was after Aguinaldo's proclamation of Philippine Independence on 12 June 1898, and in particular after the start of hostilities in the Philippine-American War in February 1899, that Mindanao was drawn into the conflict. Among those who felt the brunt of things were the Catholic missionaries (Spanish Jesuits in most of Mindanao, Spanish Benedictines in parts of Surigao and the offshore islands). Their imprisonment, the confiscation of their church funds, and their eventual liberation—together with the political background—is the main story told in this book.

Father Schreurs bases his narrative on two kinds of material: archival on the one hand and two published accounts on the other. The archival material includes the letters and other documents in the Jesuit archives at Sant Cugat (Barcelona), with supporting material elsewhere (notably the Philippine National Archives and the Benedictine records).

But much of Father Schreurs's material comes from two published accounts. One of these is the three-volume history of Jesuit missions in the Philippines by Father Pablo Pastells (Barcelona 1916). The other is a fictionalized account (Barcelona 1903) by one of the Spanish Benedictine priests who had been imprisoned in Surigao.

Pastells had been a missionary in what are now the provinces of Surigao del Sur and Davao Oriental. Later he became Superior of the Jesuits in the Philippines. Earlier (as is well known) he had been Jose Rizal's spiritual adviser when the latter was a student. Years afterwards Rizal in Dapitan and Pastells in Manila carried on a remarkable correspondence. While staunchly Spanish in loyalty and sentiment, Pastells was in many ways sympathetic to the Filipinos (though not with their political aspirations). He certainly loved the Philippines and in particular Mindanao, in which he had spent some of the best years of his life.

Pastells of course was not in Mindanao during the Revolution. On this point therefore he is a secondary source. But the lengthy detailed letters of his fellow missionaries who were on the spot and on which he based his narrative are excellent primary sources and are available at Sant Cugat.

The Benedictine priest's account, on the other hand, is in many respects a primary source when he recounts events of which he was an eye-witness. The book, however, is in the form of a novel with "embellishments" (*con visos de novela*): this fact makes it necessary to distinguish carefully between fact and embellishment, and this Father Schreurs tries to do.

The Benedictine account is also marred by a strong emotional bias. The young priest (28 years old) had not been long in Mindanao when the Revolution broke

out. He had probably not yet gotten over the inevitable culture shock, having been transported from Europe to the entirely different culture of northeastern Mindanao in the late nineteenth century. With doubtless only an imperfect knowledge of the local language, his dealings with the people could not have been extensive. He apparently disliked the people, their villages, even the vegetation. The landscape that Pastells thought "enchanting" seemed to the young Benedictine merely "ugly." One could not of course blame him; his imprisonment at the hands of the Filipinos could not have endeared them to him. This emotional bias must be kept in mind in using him as a source. On the other hand, his testimony is doubtless trustworthy when he narrates verifiable facts.

In the use of this twofold material—archival and published—Father Schreurs applies a critical judgment born of his Germanic-Dutch instinct for accuracy and precision. There is a danger here, however, which the book does not entirely succeed in avoiding: when one is over-critical, one can give an impression not so much of objectivity as of cynicism.

Perhaps "angry days" is not altogether an apt title for this book. There were indeed some angry days, but anger did not seem to be the prevailing atmosphere. In any political or military upheaval, it is the common people who are likely to suffer most. They suffered under Spanish officials before the Revolution. (A Spanish Jesuit missionary, Father Nebot, wrote to the Spanish Governor of Surigao on 3 April 1897 protesting against the conduct of Spanish governors who, "because of their abuses are worse filibusters than even Rizal" (p. 25). The people suffered again under Filipino revolutionary leaders: the Gonzalezes in Surigao and the Calos in Agusan. Then the Americans came, inflicting further suffering. The arrival of the Americans in Surigao in March 1901 was peaceful. But two months earlier, their arrival in Butuan on 27 January of that year did not do credit either to the people or to the armed forces of the United States. The residents of Butuan, led by the Jesuit missionary, had flocked to the landing place, waving white flags, to welcome the Americans. The gunboats came in, the soldiers disembarked, and then—here is Father Schreurs' brief account:

That afternoon the Stars and Stripes flew over Butuan for the first time. The reception at the pier had been very humble and dignified. That was more than could be said of the behavior of the disembarking soldiers who broke into the empty houses and ransacked them for the few household things inside. Soon after the return of the people from the backwoods where they had fled, the scandalous behavior of the soldiers became such a public nuisance that most of the families stayed away from the town, especially to protect the women . . ." (p. 136)

Such scenes as these are the real story of that troubled period of the Revolution and its aftermath. Perhaps more of this kind of detail could have been given to depict the *true* plight of the people during those painful years. But what is in this

book makes an excellent beginning. This is an important book, interesting to read, a valuable contribution to Philippine regional historiography. To the University of San Carlos in Cebu, congratulations are due for making this book available to the public.

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THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION AND OTHER REFLECTIONS. By Miguel A. Bernad, S.J. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1986. 141 pages.

This small book contains the author's spiritual and cultural reflections on the occasion of visits to historical sites and the contemplation of various works of art. There are three main parts entitled Reflections in Foreign Lands, American Monuments, The Native Sky.

In the first essay, "In the Shadow of Borobudur" the author graphically describes his visit to the ancient Buddhist temple in Indonesia. The ascent of the eight terraces whose walls are decorated with bas reliefs, evokes the sense, as it was meant to, of a spiritual ascent. Near the top the walls are bare and the statues of Buddha are half hidden in small shrines or stupas. Then one comes to the top "to the great Stupa which encloses Nothingness. Nirvana" (p. 12). At the time the author sees in this empty room the difference between the concept of God according to the Christian tradition, as the Plenitude of Being, and that of the Buddhist tradition; the negation of being. After subsequent reflection and study, he concludes that the ideas are not so dissimilar, in that the Buddhist notion may actually be more "nothing- in-this-world" or "nothing-that-we-know."

The other essays in this section describe paintings in the London Art Gallery, or reflect on the Talking Crucifix of Assisi, the porcelain army buried in the grave of the Chinese Emperor Hsi Huang-ti, and some sites in Spain connected with the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

In the second part, American Monuments, the essay entitled "Neptune and the Torch" presents a comparison between the Statue of Liberty in the New York harbor as the symbol of freedom and democracy, and the Dewey Monument in San Francisco commemorating the U.S. naval victory in Manila Bay as the symbol of imperialism. It is an apt comparison and this contradiction in ideals and policies continues in the U.S. till today.

In the essay, "Among the Cherry Blossoms" the author describes the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials in Washington, D.C. in seeming contrast. He notes that while Jefferson wrote the inspired words of the Declaration of Independence, he could hardly be said to have practised them fully, as he was a wealthy man living off the labor of his slaves. As a matter of fact he was an aristocrat, as were many