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The Jesuits During the Philippine Revolution

JOSE S. ARCILLA, S. J.

There were 164 Spanish Jesuits in the Philippines when the Bonifacio uprising occurred in August 1896: 84 priests, 12 scholastics in training, and 68 coadjutor brothers. Of these, 60 were in Manila, teaching at the Ateneo municipal or the Escuela Normal de maestros de instrucción primaria. The rest were in active mission work in Mindanao and Jolo, distributed among 36 residences or mission stations, from where they directed 265 *visitas* or settlements. The Jesuits' role during the revolution varied, depending on whether they were in Manila or in Mindanao and Jolo.

The revolution was not totally unexpected. More than a year before, on 17 January 1895, Fr. Juan Ricart, Philippine Jesuit mission superior, wrote to the Jesuit superior general in Rome that the situation in the Philippines was worsening and "those who know the country fear serious disturbances can occur." In the past few months, he explained, subversive activities had spread to the provinces, thanks to the masonic lodges tolerated by the colonial officials. On the other hand, the religious orders had become targets of a vicious hate campaign and it was not unlikely that friar parish priests would be beheaded in case anything was attempted while the government troops were away fighting the Muslim in Lanao.¹ One of the charges against Governor Ramon Blanco (1893-96) was his alleged softness if not downright sympathy for

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1. Juan Ricart to the Jesuit General, Manila, 17 January 1895: Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (Rome) *Phil.*, 1001-X, 24. For a brief summary of Blanco's Lanao campaign, see Pablo Pastells, *Misión de la Compañía de Jesus de Filipinas en el Siglo XIX* (Barcelona, 1916-17) III, 102-103.

various rumored separatist activities frequently reported to his office. On 19 August 1896, Fray Mariano Gil, the Augustinian parish priest of Tondo, Manila, discovered incriminating evidence on the *Kataastaasang Kagalangalang na Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan*, or simply *Katipunan*; but Governor Blanco hoped to minimize the danger lest radical measures polarize the people against the government. To Bonifacio, the founder of the Katipunan, however, the discovery left no other option but open revolt. And so, on 26 August, he dramatically destroyed his personal cedula as a sign he was repudiating his allegiance to Spain. The Philippine revolution had begun.

THE JESUITS IN MINDANAO

Away from these events, the Jesuits in Mindanao were quietly busy in their missions. From the first station inaugurated in Tamontaka, Cotabato in 1861, they had already spread all over the island. In the last thirty-five years, they had succeeded in Christianizing the northern half of the island, while the southern half was, in the words of an enthusiastic Jesuit, "awaiting" the missionaries to baptize them.² On 14 September, less than a month after hostilities had begun, the new Philippine mission superior, Fr. Pio Pi, wrote the Jesuit General in Rome that the missionaries in Mindanao were the "safest" since that island was "not yet so civilized as to re-echo the filibusterism" that had shaken Manila.³

As if to confirm Pi's report, Fr. Mariano Suarez wrote from Cotabato that, although he had spoken with only a few, he was certain the initial reaction to the news about the Manila uprising was negative. The people he wrote on 21 September, took it

very badly. Here the *indios* neither dream of such things nor understand what they mean. An old man from Zamboanga, several times *gobernadorcillo* here, when informed that the *indios* in Manila had revolted against the Spaniards became furious, calling them ingrates and people with no future.⁴

2. Jacinto Juanmarti to the Philippine Jesuit mission superior, Tamontaca, 4 February 1896: Archivo de la Provincia Tarraconense de la Compañía de Jesus (San Cugat, Barcelona), *Cartas inéditas* F (100); Pastells, *Misión*, II-III, *passim*.

3. Pio Pi to the General, Manila 14 September 1896: ARSI, *Phil*, 1001-XI. 17. Pi was appointed Mission Superior on 13 August 1896.

4. Mariano Suarez to the mission superior, Cotabato, 21 September 1896: ATa, *Cartas inéditas* F (100).

The same reaction was reported from northeastern Mindanao. On hearing of Manila's uprising, the Jesuit missionary in Surigao wrote that there was no appreciable movement for or against it among the people. It was the district governor who had announced the story on the "eve of the *fiesta mayor* and no one, it seems, paid any attention to it. The Honorable Governor himself had no other thought in mind than to enjoy the ball held at the provincial capitol the previous night, and at the Captain's residence last night."⁵

Given the distance from Manila, even if one discounts Pi's negative impression of Mindanao, this indifference to events in the Philippine capital is not surprising. This was not the first time that government officials had been notified of sporadic uprisings elsewhere in the country. Their reaction was to brush the latest report aside, for they thought the affair would soon burn itself out. Local indifference, however, could not continue. Volunteers had to be recruited. And in Misamis and Cotabato, small anti-government bands disturbed the peace of Mindanao.

On 27 September 1896, almost a month after Bonifacio's call to arms, between three hundred and four hundred deportees in the Spanish fort near what is now Iligan City took up arms and killed all the Spanish officers, except a medical officer who escaped. Then, armed with Remingtons and two hundred rounds of ammunition each, they proceeded on foot to Cagayan, capital of Misamis, to kill all the Spaniards there. A small government force intercepted them. Thwarted, the fugitives turned to the hills and up the Tagoloan river, stopping when they reached a place only two hours away from the Jesuit mission of Sumilao. Alarmed, the people fled, leaving the two Jesuit missionaries to fend for themselves as an eerie silence enveloped the mission. The local government reacted swiftly. By mid-October, a battleship steamed into Jasaan and, while soldiers covered the hills, it transported men and arms to wherever it was rumored the fugitives would be.

No one, of course, knew exactly what was happening. One rumor had it that in Davao, eight hundred rebels had landed and

5. Pedro Torra to the mission superior, Surigao, 12 September 1896. ATa. *Cartas inéditas* F (100).

massacred all the Spaniards, including the Jesuits. It was also said, with greater probability, that the mutineers were going to cross the mountains toward Butuan and Surigao, where they planned to cross over to Leyte and join the rebels in Luzon. What the Jesuits feared, however, was that these men in desperation would break up into rival factions and terrorize the area.

With no clear information or guidelines to follow, both priests and people were in a state of continued alarm. The missions in the upper Tagoloan region had just been decimated by smallpox, and the appearance of marauding armed fugitives did not help any. Even the most sanguine missionary resigned himself to the possibility that the new Christians would stay away from the missions, even at the risk of missing the sacraments. And what was happening in upper Tagoloan was also taking place in the Jesuit missions of central and northern Mindanao. They were becoming ghost settlements and the people could not be drawn back to them. This was the more serious problem to the Jesuits.

Then antigovernment reports came from Cotabato. The deportees in Iligan must have contacted their fellow prisoners in the south, and the latter plotted to kill all the Spanish population in southern Mindanao. By a stroke of luck, the necessary precautions, after what had happened in Iligan, had been taken and the military uprising was forestalled and its leaders summarily executed.⁶

For the Jesuits, the year 1896 was just like any other year of regular missionary activity. They continued their trips to the interior, opening virgin forests to civilization. The Baganga-Cateel Mission on the Pacific Coast, for example, established just two years before, had already developed into a community of six thousand Christians. Around the Davao gulf and all along the southern Mindanao coastal zones, even the Muslims had begun to welcome the missionaries and request Christian baptism. In the northwest, Christian towns were enlarged by the influx of Subanon tribes. One is not far from the truth in saying that the subsequent development of Mindanao would have followed a different course had not events in Luzon in 1896 disturbed the plans of the Jesuits.

6. Suarez to the mission superior. Cotabato, 26 November 1896: ATa. *Cartas inéditas* F (100).

THE JESUITS IN MANILA

In Manila, when the Bonifacio uprising erupted, the first excited reaction found a convenient scapegoat in the Jesuits who were accused of having been privy to the separatist movement, if not its principal cause. By educating the natives, it was said, the Jesuits had produced the enlightened class that spearheaded the revolution.

The situation is neatly summarized by Fr. Pi:

With regard to Ours, first, we have not been, thank God, in any special danger, either here in Manila or in Mindanao. Second, due to some unfounded accusation, we had some trouble with the Vicar General Third, the opinion of several, almost exclusively friars, has been already confirmed, not too openly, however, that we are less Spanish because, unlike the other priests, we are not the object of hatred on the part of the native population. Fourth, as with the others, nonetheless, we have offered our services and contributed to help defray the expenses of the war, without making much of it, for this too could have been misinterpreted, however. Fifth, at the request of the Governor General, we have agreed to support the loan being contemplated here by the Governor General according to the following shares: Dominicans, Augustinians, Recollects, ₱50,000 each; Franciscans, ₱40,000; Jesuits, ₱20,000. Seventh, at my suggestion and heartily endorsed by the Archbishop and the Provincials, we are, after several meetings, drawing up a manifesto for the Madrid government, detailing concrete remedies we ask in the hope that something be done. Eighth, apparently, this interchange of views with the Archbishop and the Provincials serves to disprove the charge against us of being less Spanish, while fostering mutual trust in one another.⁷

This is a lengthy quotation, and we shall try to analyze some of the points raised. Two weeks previously, on 14 September, Fr. Pi had already written to Rome that since the Jesuits were not hated like the other priests, they had been stigmatized as being less Spanish. "Already an old accusation," he indicated, "but in these circumstances revived with acrimony." But, he added, the Spanish lay community entertained no such suspicions, although there were some misgivings about the Ateneo and the Normal School. If classes there had been handled by other Spanish teachers, the students would have imbibed a deeper love for Spain, it was said.⁸

7. Pi to the General, Manila, 30 September 1896: ARSI, *Phil.*, 1001-XI. 18.

8. See note 3 above.

What was the basis for this anti-Jesuit bias? Considering how the laity, Spanish or Filipino, continued to hold the Jesuits in respect, could it be a question of intramural intrigue among ecclesiastics, or jealousy?

On 29 November 1896, an article appeared in a Barcelona weekly, *La Semana Católica*, written by Bishop Martínez Vigil of Oviedo, Spain. In it he explained how easy and at the same time how hard it was to keep the Philippines. The native *indios*, he wrote, "tenderly" loved the Catholic Faith taught them by the friars, who had been their "fathers." They cherished the king of Spain with affection, and they paid his tribute devotedly. But now this religious, although "uncultured" people have tasted some of the modern liberties which divided, instead of uniting them. To continue to keep them loyal, force was needed. Even then, there was no guaranty it would be enough. The people would answer force with force, as was already happening:

Rather, only partly for there are still surprises awaiting us. We also know something of the influence of the brilliant *Escuela Normal de Maestros de Filipinas* on the insurrection . . . if God and the gallant Polavieja do not apply the remedy, there already will have surfaced several hundreds of teachers, as well as *gobernadorcillos*, justices of the peace, and other personages lately recruited, lest the friars monopolize the government.⁹

Earlier, Fr. Miguel Saderra Mata, Rector of the Ateneo, had written that the Jesuits in the Philippines could not have been the cause of the revolution because of their academic program considered not Spanish enough, but "cosmopolitan." Sent as a private letter, it found its way into print, appearing in a Madrid paper, *El futuro siglo*, on 10 December 1896, as though it was written to answer the Bishop of Oviedo, and offending not a few persons alluded to.

If the accusation was true, argued the Ateneo rector, why did the Manila government blame the masonic lodges and not the Jesuits? Openly, in the pulpit and through the press, as well as in private, the latter had been warning against that "sect of symbols." Sometime late in May or early June, before the discovery of the Katipunan, a Jesuit had offered to write a series of

9. *La Semana católica de Barcelona*, No. 371, 29 de noviembre de 1896, paginas 757-60: Ata, E-II-a-3.

articles against freemasonry. But when it was presented, the government official who had received the plan answered that he doubted whether there were masons in the Philippines.

Speaking of the Ateneo, Saderra Mata questioned what "cosmopolitan" education meant. Was it the teachers? The subjects taught? The method of teaching? The student population? Except for Philippine history, a subject taught extensively only in the colony, *all* the subjects offered were cosmopolitan, i.e., they could be taught "everywhere, but "perhaps more extensively in the Philippines in order to carry out one of the purposes of the Ateneo, namely, to spare the people from having to travel abroad to complete their schooling" What was wrong with that? ¹⁰

The Jesuit Ateneo did not offer a program that was not "Spanish enough"? Only the ignorant would say that, Saderra Mata retorted. Which students studied there? Only the sons of Spaniards, of Spanish mestizos, of foreigners! Native-born boys were accepted only if their family situation and the boys' individual "conduct was not appreciably different . . ." While in the Ateneo, the students dressed in the Spanish style, spoke Spanish, ate food that suited the climate (as did other Spanish families in the country). The list of annual academies presented at the Ateneo since its inauguration would show that the students imbibed nothing but elements of the glorious Hispanic sociocultural tradition. In 1867, an academy on the "Discovery and Civilization of the Philippines" was presented; in 1868, on "Pius IX, Pontiff and King"; in 1877, on the "Conquest of Granada"; in 1879, on "Faith Triumphant in Covadonga"; in 1882, on "The Apostle of the Indies"; in 1890, on "The Glories of the Spanish Marine"; in 1895, on "The Crusades"; and in 1896, on "Religion and the Fatherland."¹¹

10. Miguel Saderra Mata, S.J. to Joaquin Sancho, S.J., Manila, 28 de Octubre de 1896: Archives of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus (Quezon City, Philippines), V-2033. There is a draft of an essay dated at Manila, 11 January 1897, clearly written as an answer to the Bishop's article. Perhaps because of its sharp tone, superiors decided not to publish it. See "De estadística y sentido comun . . . y de actualidad," Ata, *Cartas Inéditas*, F. 1897.

11. Sadeira Mata to Sancho, APP, V-2-033. See also the letter of Eustaquio de Salcedo to the editor of *El Comercio* praising an academy presented by the Ateneo students in December 1896 and which he describes as "*simpatíco y conmovedor*" and because of its "*espritu esencialmente patriótico que lo informaba, merece ser conocido por todos los buenos hijos de España*" APP, I-3-290/291

Which school prided itself more on its “*españolismo*”? Everyone in the Philippines was aware that many were disgusted with the professors at the university and left the country to finish their studies abroad where they picked up separatist ideas. The most notorious example was José Rizal. But how many continued the rector, of those young men left the Philippines at the suggestion of the Jesuits? No one would deny that many of them acted on the advice of other priests. A well-known Visitor of one of the Friar Orders came to the Philippines in 1887 and was known to have urged several young men from Batangas to study in Europe, even volunteering to act as their guardian there. The pernicious results of his plan forced him to take his words back. Who tried to stop Baldomero Roxas, the Manila representative at the Masonic Congress in Madrid in 1894, from attending it? Who urged him to return to his country? ¹²

THE ROLE OF THE JESUITS

The polemic on the Loyalty of the Jesuits and their graduates was actually a debate on the education policy for the colony. In the words of Martínez Vigil, the revolution aimed at the “root of the tree, destroying corporate and individual conscience, for it erases from those simple, scarcely enlightened souls the very last traces of religion and love of the King of Spain.”¹³ In other words, if the schools could help preserve the Roman Catholic Faith and the friars were at least consulted on matters relating to the colonial government, the Philippines would continue to be loyal to Spain.

This was a one-sided view that regarded the Philippines as essentially a mission and that Spanish presence in the islands was justifiable only in virtue of the papal delegation to the Spanish crown to spread the Gospel to the new world, i.e., the *Patronato real*. The need, therefore, was to strengthen the Church, for any danger to the faith of the Filipinos threatened the Spanish political hegemony in the new world. Political developments in the nineteenth century in the Peninsula petrified this mentality into almost irrational intransigence highly suspicious of every

12 Saderra Mata to Sancho, APP, V-2-033.

13 Martínez Vigil, *op. cit.*

modern or liberal idea from which the colony had to be quarantined at all costs.

A second view found expression in the Filipino daily, *La República Filipina*, on 3 December 1898. Though late, it is a good indication of the popular feeling during the critical days of the revolution.

The primary concern of the state should be the individual freedom of its members, the author of the article wrote, as it is "the only means by which the citizen's capacity to judge is free . . . undisturbed by empty ideas or errors, or the power of emotions." People emancipated from "unreasonable fears, low instincts, and coarse choices" begin to love freedom and civil order. This would be impossible unless they have learned to think maturely. Precisely, the revolution would not have occurred without an antecedent growth in intelligence among the Filipinos. And this is the point of the article:

. . . to what do we owe such a notable improvement in such a short period of time? What light guided us? What loving hand took hold of ours to lead us? . . . one is forced to conclude that this visible change took place when the enlightened corporation of the sons of Loyola took charge of the education of our youth, when that illustrious Society established the *Ateneo municipal* and the *Escuela Normal*.¹⁴

This is high praise, but that was exactly what the Jesuits had set out to do when they took charge of the education of the Filipino youth. As explained to the Governor General of the Philippines in 1861, the Ateneo was meant to "lift it from the prostration or rather nothingness in which primary education in this challenging colony lay."¹⁵ Interestingly, early in the year 1896, all the students of both Jesuit Schools stayed on. It was only when the movement spread all over Luzon and the Normal School building was occupied by government troops that families "changed colors," unable to resist the promise or battle-cry of independence.¹⁶

14. *La República Filipina* (Mandaluyong) 3 Diciembre 1898: APP, V-2-033.

15. José Fernández Cuevas to the governor general of the Philippines, Manila, 12 February 1861: ATa, E-II-a-7.

16. See Pastells, *Misión*, III, chapter XVII; *Cartas edificantes de los Misioneros de la Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas. 1898-1902* (Barcelona, 1903), Sección IV. "Noticias de Manila."

On 12 March 1897, the Auditor of War, Nicolás de la Peña, surprised the Jesuit mission superior with a request to initiate a peace conference with the rebel party. It was easy to win the battle, the auditor explained, but "there will be no end to hatred and recriminations if we continue on a war of extermination."¹⁷ The Jesuit, therefore, was being asked to arrange an interview between Aguinaldo and any government representative, except the governor general, during which grievances would be aired and solutions discussed. Peace terms would be signed accordingly and the rebels could be granted a "generous" indemnity.

The Jesuit hesitated. Ought not the Archbishop be first consulted? No, replied de la Peña, for he would consult his advisers and the plan would be divulged, or he might want to intervene personally, a negative factor to consider since he was not too well liked by the Filipino rebels. But, the Jesuit answered, once the plan was known, it would be just another proof that the Jesuits were "*menos españoles*" and "*entremetidos*," always wanting to do things by themselves alone, acting separately from the friars.

The following day, on the advice of his council, the Jesuit superior called on the auditor to tell him he was ready to do what was being asked of him. It was a chance to do much good, he said. Even if ugly rumors could never be completely stifled, provided the Jesuits acted prudently, they would be less than honest to themselves if they allowed that opportunity to pass.

Meantime, unknown to the other Jesuits and the authorities, Fr. Antonio Rossell had also been approached by one of the Luna brothers, the physician, just out of jail for lack of evidence against him. He was asking, the Jesuit's advice about a request made to him by two rich entrepreneurs, Comenge and Ricoy, to invite Aguinaldo at Imus to "begin peace negotiations with the Captain General."¹⁸ Not finding his superior, Rossell and Luna went to the Archbishop, who warned that there seemed nothing official about the idea and it would be better to check it first with the Governor General.

17. "Diario de los sucesos ocurridos durante la guerra de España con los Estados Unidos, 1898," ARSI, *Phil.*, 1001-XIII, 20. This diary opens on 21 April 1898 and continues to 7 February 1899. It was written by the Jesuit scholastic Miguel Saderra Masó on orders of his Rector, Fr. Miguel Saderra Mata. Later, after his priestly ordination in Spain, Fr. Saderra Masó became a member of the Observatory in Manila.

18. *Ibid.*

By 14 March 1897, a letter to Aguinaldo had been prepared by Fr. Pi, and two pairs of couriers had been hired to make sure the communication reached its destination.¹⁹ Governor Polavieja had moved his war office to Parañaque, the Spanish counterattack was gradually hemming in the rebel strongholds in Cavite.²⁰ Imus is not too far from Manila, but by 18 March, no word had yet been received from Aguinaldo. Then, the following day, Peña showed a letter to the Jesuit superior sent from Aguinaldo, but so "haughty and full of demands that they had decided to drop the whole thing."²¹ That was the end of the plan. Nothing came of it, nor of the other Comenge-Ricoy initiative. But they are not without importance, for they give an added dimension to the story of the revolution. The truce was later mediated by Paterno and signed in December 1897, but the whole episode still waits detailed study by our historians.²²

DISTURBANCES IN MINDANAO

Back in Mindanao, things remained relatively quiet. On 10 January 1897, the fugitives from Iligan reappeared unexpectedly in Odiungan, a settlement not far from the present Gingoog City. They were led by a native datu named Suba, had rifles, a trumpeteer, and their number had grown with the addition of several unbaptized hill people. At Odiungan, they killed two Chinese retailers and a Christian. They burned the victims' houses, butchered their cows, and held their traditional victory banquet. Next day, they moved on to the town of Medina, but found no one to kill, although they still had another banquet.

Instead of disappearing, then, the fugitives had found a new lease on life. Fr. Ramon Ricart in Butuan reported a month later that they had been sighted in upper Agusan and certain points of Surigao. He believed the group now included fugitives from other detention points in Mindanao, frighteningly healthy,

19. Letter of Fr. Pi to the provincial, in the form of a diary. ATa, F (97), in the box *Cartas inéditas* 1897.

20. *Diario de los sucesos*.

21. See note 19 above.

22. There are many preliminary studies on the pact of Biaknabato, but I would suggest, for an initial reading John R.M. Taylor (ed.), *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States* [Eugenio Lopez Philippine History Series] (Pasay City, Philippines: Eugenio Lopez Foundation, 1971) I, Ch. IV.

adept at rustling cattle and horses, the first for food, and the second to transport their sick. When attacked, they resorted to the "Cuban style, fleeing when struck, but reappearing on the same spot the next day."²³

A more serious incident occurred in Surigao. In 1895, an indult had been granted to the towns of Tandag and Tago, and Fr. Valentin Altimiras, Jesuit missionary in Cantilan, was seeking the same exception from the cedula for his people. They had suffered bad harvests, although they managed to sell corn to pay for the first installment of the tax. The local government was adamant. Not only that, the leaders of two other towns, Lanuza and Carrascal, had been thrown into jail for failing to collect the full quota. Unfortunately, the leaders were innocent and could not have been expected to collect any money, since their people were not only penniless but had escaped into the hills and forests. Worse, the district governor had imposed a 20 percent surcharge on all unpaid cedulas. Reporting to his superior in Manila, Altimiras predicted that the people were in an ugly mood and would rather resort to "much falsehood, loans and usurious credits" than go to jail. "I believe," he cautioned, "I will not be the only one who will expose these scandals, for the people of Tandag will be in even more straitened circumstances."²⁴

That was early in 1896, before the Bonifacio uprising in Manila. Two years later, Dewey annihilated the decrepit Spanish fleet off Cavite. In Baganga, Davao, a certain Prudencio Garcia took matters into his hands and installed himself as the head of a new government. The people had by this time been disaffected toward the authorities, the militia had not been paid, and bad weather had ruined the crops. Just before Garcia's coup, petitions had been presented to the government for an amnesty or a rebate on the unpaid cedulas, but they were unheeded. Whether it was due to the victory of Dewey or not, the documents do not say, but in the second half of September 1898, Garcia, aided by Manuel Sánchez, a Cuban expatriate, surprised the military garrisons on the middle Pacific coast of Mindanao. Sánchez proceeded to Caraga apparently to rally the town against the Spanish govern-

23. Ramón Ricart to the mission superior, Butuan, 13 February 1897: ATa, *Cartas inéditas*, box 1897.

24. Vicente Altimiras to the mission superior, Cantilan, 20 January 1896: ATa, *Cartas inéditas* F (101).

ment and confiscate the arms he could find there. He not only failed to win over the people, but antagonized them completely by imprisoning the Jesuit missionaries. Fr. Manuel Vallés managed to buy his freedom for ₱50, instead of ₱500 as Sánchez demanded, but the Jesuit brother was ordered to watch the mission compound. The next day, the Jesuit priest was taken prisoner to Baganga, but García disapproved the Cuban's high-handed action and had him executed.

Fr. Vallés was received in Baganga with unconcealed joy. Even García went out of his way to show he had nothing against the priests. He raised the Spanish flag above his headquarters and assured the Jesuit he had been forced to act that way in order to forestall any untoward incidents. He had already reported everything to the commanding officer in Mati, but, he added, he had not the least intention of laying down his arms until the earlier demands for a reduction or a total cancellation of the cedulas were granted.

For the moment, therefore, García's move ended on a not unpleasant note. On the one hand, the military officer in Mati readily acquiesced in this assumption of authority over a territory which he had neither the time nor the resources to attend to. On the other, the self-made president was still claiming loyalty to Spain.

The situation did not last long. Early the next year, on 12 January 1899, two brothers arrived in Surigao, the sons of the last elected president of the town. Simón and Wenceslao González had been exiled the previous year for alleged subversion, but they were now returning, as they claimed, with orders from Aguinaldo to head the government in Mindanao, Simón as lieutenant general of the Armed Forces in Mindanao, Wenceslao as the acting president of northeastern Mindanao. Wenceslao lost no time and arrested the Jesuits, and confiscated the church property in Surigao. Faced by a hostile populace, Wenceslao reluctantly allowed the priests to continue to exercise their spiritual ministry within the town, but the other Jesuits he summoned and brought to Surigao as prisoners of war.

In Misamis, the district governor had already handed over the government to a local council at the end of 1898. On 12 January 1899, this body summoned all the Jesuits in the area to the capital, Cagayán. The missionaries did not know they were being summoned to their prison. On arrival, they were told that Aguinaldo

had ordered their detention before being shipped to Manila, while the church funds and money from the sale of church property would be sent to a central bursar for the needs of the war.

Somehow, (the records are not complete on this point) the Cagayán Jesuits were released not long after. On 25 January Fr. Pedro Torra arrived and obtained the release of the confined Jesuits in the capital, some of whom decided to go with him to Manila. Six others opted to stay behind, to be of service to the people. In vain. Three weeks later, Simón González arrived and ordered the Jesuits back to prison, although he allowed them freedom during the day to minister to the people in the town.

Unexpectedly, soon after 1 May, the prisoners in Cagayan were all released. One of them later reported to the mission superior that the local council had wanted to "anticipate this act of humanity" before the Americans arrived, to make sure the "glory of liberating the captive missionaries was not attributed to the enemy forces."²⁵

In Surigao, the situation had worsened. The González brothers had abused their authority and the people had appealed to Garcia in Baganga. On 24 March, he arrived in Surigao and had a talk with Simón. At the end of the interview, Garcia proceeded to the town hall and, at a signal, all the local leaders and soldiers converged at the hall, signifying their support of Garcia. Only four guards stayed with Simón. Fr. Alberto Masoliver, one of the imprisoned Jesuits, describes the end of their detention:

Clearly sensing victory, Don Prudencio sent a personal note to the General González asking him to appear and answer the charges against him The latter blustered, "Who are the people to demand an accounting from the General of Mindanao?" But soon he received a formal summons to present himself within the hour, or his house would be attacked. At first Simon refused to come; later, however, hearing the order to advance, he went to the town hall, of course armed to the teeth and accompanied by his four escorts. There, in the presence of the entire council and part of the *principalia*, they accused him of various misdeeds which he was unable to justify. He was finally ordered to surrender his weapons, as he did in fact, . . . and, . . . finally, having resigned his post, he was imprisoned together with his father, Juan Gonzalez.²⁶

25. Miguel Guardet, S.J. to the Provincial, Manresa. 28 de Diciembre de 1800: *Cartas edificantes* (Barcelona, 1903) 108.

26. Alberto Masoliver, S.J. to the Provincial, Manila, 8 de Mayo de 1898: *Cartas edificantes* (Barcelona, 1903) 33; Leo Cullum, S.J., "Notes on the Revolution in Surigao." *Philippine Studies* 9 (1961): 488-493.

The Jesuits were duly released and García was soon proclaimed commander of northeastern Mindanao.

In southeastern Mindanao, nothing unusual occurred until the order was received to vacate the area. To take the place of the departing Spanish officials, Fr. Saturnino Urios suggested that the *gobernadorcillos* and other local magistrates should form an interim government to make the change as peacefully as possible. A few, however, wanted a completely new government modelled on Aguinaldo's system. When the Spaniards left Davao in mid-January 1899, a new council of government was installed, but others refused to abide by it. For about a month, Davao was "given up to anarchy," in the words of a Jesuit. Commercial houses were sacked, residences were burnt, people shot at one another. By some unexplained logic, the Muslims contrary to what everyone expected, offered themselves to Urios, promising to defend "their" priests and accepting no other authority than that of the Christian missionaries.²⁷ Only after repeated urgings did Urios succeed in reestablishing order. He had managed to confiscate all the loose arms around and distributed them to a volunteer patrol unit.

On 9 March, a boat docked at Davao. On board were the Jesuits from the Pacific missions on their way to Manila, and they were stopping by to pick up their brethren at Davao. The Jesuits had originally wanted to stay, but the uncertain political future of the country forced the mission superior to recall his subjects to Manila. Thus, hardly had some semblance of order been restored in Davao when the Jesuits left the town, whose fate seemed to be hanging in the balance.

The Jesuits in Tamontaca, Cotabato left their mission with less drama, but with no less emotion. They also had hoped to stay on, but with the evacuation of the Spanish authorities, they felt it was more prudent to leave.

On 19 January 1899, the Sisters who had been in charge of the girls' orphanage in Tamontaca left on foot for Cotabato, where they were joined by the Jesuits for the trip to Zamboanga. A second group of orphans followed later, and when the people

27. "Relación de lo ocurrido a los Padres y Hermanos de las Residencias de Mati y Davao después de haberse retirado las autoridades españolas" Manila, 7 de Abril de 1899: ATa, F - 97.

saw what was going on, they too hiked to Cotabato, determined to share the lot of the Jesuits, whatever that might be. Two days later, the last Jesuits who had stayed behind to close the mission, finally sailed for Zamboanga, "abandoning for now these missions where God our Lord had poured down so much goodness and grace during the 37 years of our stay there. God be praised for all these things."²⁸

The Jesuits were the last Spaniards to leave Mindanao. The government had ordered all Spanish subjects to leave the Philippines on 4 January 1899, but the Jesuits had decided to ignore the order until it became clear their presence in Mindanao was risky and unnecessary. They did not depart all at once but in groups, the first leaving Zamboanga on 10 February, the last on 17 April 1899.

TWO JESUIT PRISONERS OF WAR

Because of the pact of Biak-na-bato, the country was "at peace" when Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet off Cavite on 1 May 1898. There had been rumors of war between Spain and the United States, but the Philippine colonial government could not put up the necessary defenses.²⁹

On 20 May, at the Archbishop's request, two Jesuit priests, Frs. Antonio Rossell and Fidel Mir, left Manila to provide the traditional priestly services for the people in Central Luzon. They first went to Iba, Zambales, from where they planned to proceed to Pangasinan and Tarlac. They never reached there, or at least in the manner they had planned. For more than five months, they were detained as war prisoners by Maximino Izon, an insurgent leader in Pampanga. They returned to Manila only on 8 November 1898.

The story itself we can gloss over. From Iba, the two priests went on to Dagupan, armed with the proper safe conduct. There they learned of the upsurge of hostilities and, on 20 June, prepared to take the trip back to Manila. They stopped at Victoria, Tarlac on 3 July and, to their surprise, they were detained, taken to a

28. See the last entry in the *Diario de Tamontaka*: ATa, E-II-b-71.

29. It was only with the return of Aguinaldo from Hongkong to the Philippines that there was a marked resurgence of active anti-Spanish feelings. See, for an initial reading, the second volume of John R.M. Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection*.

barrio for ten or twelve days before being transferred to a private house in the town again - with no charges made against them, or any explanation why they were being kept as prisoners. Baldomero Aguinaldo, War Minister of the Filipino government, declared they were free, but doubts were raised until, on 25 July, an order came to have them brought to Bacoor, Cavite. Bad weather delayed their trip for eleven days. Finally, they were in Bacoor on 8 August and were told they could stay in any town in Cavite, preferably in Cavite Puerto or San Roque. To make sure the Americans did not harrass them, they asked for a safe conduct from Emilio Aguinaldo. They were never able to see him: first, because he was sleeping when they arrived at his residence; second, when they came back, Izon had taken care to closet himself with the revolutionary leader and, on coming out, gave the priests sealed orders taking them back to Pampanga. Baldomero Aguinaldo admitted he could not countermand the order.

The merry-go-round and red tape then began. Back at San Fernando, Pampanga by 14 August, they were kept "under the strictest vigilance and without (being allowed) to go out" of their prison.³⁰ At one time they were mixed with the friars; at another, they were kept incommunicado in a private house with neither furniture nor food. Food was not always enough or palatable. But, although moved from place to place, they received better treatment than the friars or the other Spanish civilian prisoners. Many, including Gregorio Aglipay, interceded with Emilio Aguinaldo to release them.³¹

In Manila, the first inkling of trouble was the absence of any communication between the two priests and their superior. Finally, on 25 August, the latter received a letter written from the prison at San Fernando, where the two priests had been kept. Besides summarizing their forced travels and adventures, the letter explained that they could not understand their detention since no charges had been made against them. On the contrary, people received them warmly wherever they went. Families of their former students at the Ateneo or the Normal School

30. See note 17 above. See also the "captivity letters" of Mir and Rossell, ATa, *cartas inéditas*, boxes 1898 and 1901

31. Gregorio Aglipay to the Philippine Jesuit mission superior, Binondo, 1 November 1898: Ata, *Cartas inéditas*, Cajon 1898 y 1901.

volunteered to provide them food and their other needs. Their only anxiety was their total ignorance of the reason for their confinement.

A few days previously, on 22 August, someone who had seen Aguinaldo about the release of the two Jesuits admitted to Fr. Pi that he had received the revolutionary leader's assurance that the two would be released, but immediately after, Aguinaldo's "*ad-latere*, Mabini, came into his office, and the whole thing was nullified."³² Interestingly, General Wesley Merritt, commanding officer of the American forces in the Philippines, refused to intercede for the Jesuits because it did not "enter his plans to act as though Aguinaldo ever existed."³³

Rumors about the imprisoned Jesuits were not lacking. Some said they were apprehended because Polavieja had been sent to the Philippines on the recommendation of the Jesuits; others that they were responsible for Rizal's death; or that in Dagupan, the two had helped some Dominicans escape to Hongkong or that, finally, sent by Archbishop Nozaleda of Manila to Central Luzon, they were actually government spies.

There are, however, a few indications why the two Jesuits were imprisoned. On 28 August, the American Catholic chaplain, Fr. William McKinnon, reported a talk he had had with Emilio Aguinaldo. On being pressed for a reason for not releasing the Jesuits, he said that

. . . in Mindanao the Jesuits are undoing what is being done in Manila. As proof, he related how on a certain occasion a missionary in Mindanao had gone up the pulpit and played a phonograph for the people, but telling them it was the work of the devil.³⁴

If true, the Jesuit chronicler remarks, this episode would negate what the Jesuits in Manila were trying to do.³⁵

32. See note 17 above.

33. See note 17 above.

34. See note 17 above.

35. The *Diario*, several times cited in these footnotes, quotes Fr. McKinnon's opinion that "the only thing that Aguinaldo seeks is to get rich quickly . . . that the misunderstandings between Merritt and Dewey have no other origin than Dewey's having advanced some sums to Aguinaldo, a matter which has disgusted Merritt who wants to avoid dealing with the insurgent leader." Merritt left the Philippines around 29 August 1898 to join the American negotiators at the peace conference in Paris, but, the *Diario* continues, "someone affirms that his going to Paris is merely a pretext, although in reality his departure is due to his disagreements with Dewey

By September, Tomás Tirona, one of the men close to Aguinaldo, reported he could not see the leader personally because the latter was always busy. Then Manuel Peypoch, Uruguayan consul to the Philippines, went to Pampanga, but he, too, failed to free the Jesuits. He reported to the mission superior, however, that in a letter intercepted by the insurgents the superior had insulted Aguinaldo, referring to him only as "*Este*," a word which, when used alone, implied lack of respect for such a personage as Aguinaldo. That was the reason, Peypoch said, why the Jesuits were still in prison.³⁶

On 15 September 1899, the first Philippine congress opened at Malolos, Bulacan. Peypoch, as well as Jose de la Viña, a Spanish physician in the Philippines, had been trying to contact the delegates to the congress. They reported that from their talks with the congressmen, they had the impression that the real reason was the strong and open stand of the Jesuits against freemasonry, although cloaked under the pretext of their being Spanish. The occasion was the publication of Fr. Francisco Foradada's *La Soberania de España en Filipinas*, a book which denied any legitimacy to the Philippine struggle for independence because the Filipinos did not have the means to assure the victory.³⁷ Peypoch was told by Aguinaldo himself that a member of his cabinet had grievances against the Jesuits. But, the consul added, one of the men at the Malolos Congress, Gregorio Rianzares, felt certain "in this matter there is an evil genius."³⁸

On 23 September, Mariano Escalante, a father of one of the Ateneo students and a generous benefactor to the two imprisoned Jesuits, wrote to the mission superior that he expected Fr. Rossell would be preaching at the novena in the Binondo church. With Mabini's expected fall from the Aguinaldo government, the Jesuits would soon be released. Two weeks later, however, because of objections from Buencamino, Cayetano Arellano threatened to

36. See note 17 above.

37. Francisco Foradada, S.J., *La Soberania de España en Filipinas; opúsculo de actualidad destinado a popularizar en el país las salvadoras ideas relativas a esta materia . . .* Barcelona, 1897. 302 p.

38. See note 17 above. Fr. McKinnon reported to Fr. José Algué, director of the Manila Observatory, that Aguinaldo had once received a cablegram from an unnamed mason in London urging the revolutionary leader to imprison as many priests as possible and later to decide what to do with them. *Diario*.

resign from his cabinet post if the Aguinaldo government continued to keep the two Jesuits in prison without any real cause.

The two Jesuits finally were back in Manila on 8 November 1899. They had taken the train from Pampanga, accompanied by the Uruguayan consul. Why they had been released then, or why they had been in the first place taken prisoners available documents do not clearly explain. But there is enough information to induce a much more thorough study that has been attempted here.

CONCLUSION

It might be good, as a conclusion, to quote an excerpt from a Jesuit's letter, describing a more fortunate experience during the war:

During the blockade and siege, all the foreign officials from the boats in the bay came to the Observatory for a visit . . . The German, Japanese, and French admirals went through all the departments in admiration . . . Practical result of these visits: a strongly favorable recommendation on behalf of the Observatory presented to Dewey, the American admiral, who decided to inform himself in great detail about the location of the Observatory, and gave orders that it should in no way be harmed during the bombardment. I don't think we should regret the tremendous expenses and sacrifices which the Observatory has cost the Mission. In the opinion of many, it has redounded to the glory of all the works of the Mission . . . As soon as the Americans came to know the place, they asked that we do not deny them our observations, above all our typhoon warnings. We are in good relations with the Captain of the Port and for the greater facility and timeliness of the despatch of our announcements, the Americans have set up for our exclusive use a telegraph station with an American operator in our house. We are in direct communication with the Cable Station, the Captain of the Port, and the government offices.³⁹

In other words, both as messengers of the Gospel and as men of learning and science, the Jesuits in the Philippines were ready to serve not just the Spaniards or the Filipinos, but everyone willing to avail himself of their help.

39. José Algué to the provincial, Manila, 4 November 1898: ATa, *Cartas inéditas* F 1898.