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## **From Mardicas to Filipinos: Ternate, Cavite, in Philippine History**

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**From Mardicas To Filipinos:  
Ternate, Cavite, in Philippine History**  
VICENTE L. RAFAEL

The writing of local history in the Philippines and in the rest of Southeast Asia remains as one of the most formidable tasks confronting scholars of the region today. Its very challenge stems partially from the scarcity of, and the difficulty in obtaining, both written and oral sources, and oftentimes, the need of applying data from other social sciences to the standard historical approach. Furthermore, traditional Philippine historiography has tended to play up the role of the urban centers and national elite in the formation of the Filipino nation. This has resulted in a tendency to neglect developments within the archipelago's various provincial and municipal units. Worse, it has led other historians to conveniently ignore local developments that do not "fit into" national patterns. As the late Harry Benda has pointed out, it has often been a case of the metropolitan-based movements (i.e., the "great tradition") overshadowing the rural-based movements (i.e., the "little tradition").<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the activities of a substantial number of Filipinos — those who are poor, often illiterate and rarely articulate by elite standards — are often bypassed as insignificant and of no lasting consequence. Peasant uprisings, for instance, are recorded as minor irritants of no lasting value. Religious cults and devotions are explained away as products of superstition, fanatical and irrational in character, hence, less human. There has even been a tendency to see local movements as nothing more than

The following abbreviations are used in the footnotes:

BR — Emma Blair and James Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, 55 vols. (Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur H. Clark, 1903-1909).

AAM — Archives of the Archdiocese of Manila.

AB — Pedro de Achutegui and Miguel Bernad, *Aguinaldo and the Revolution of 1896 — A Documentary History* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila, 1972).

1. Harry Benda, "Peasant Movements in Colonial Southeast Asia," *Asian Studies* 3 (December 1965): 420-34.

blind adherence to certain "immutable laws" of history or mere by-products of economic and social stress.<sup>2</sup>

What results is a kind of historical imbalance which distorts "the importance of urban centers viz-a-viz the rural areas and tends to give a misleading picture about progress toward modernity in the region."<sup>3</sup> The somewhat distorted historical picture which emerges fails to take into account the myriad creative responses offered by different communities confronting the challenges of change. All too often, the cultural uniqueness of a particular region is glossed over and swallowed up by vague abstractions of "national unity" and "cultural homogeneity." What is often forgotten is that in the study of history, cultural diversity is just as vital and important as cultural unity. Hence, the need for local histories which may help in illuminating the complexities of the past so as to cast better light on the development of the whole of Philippine history.<sup>4</sup>

With this in mind, an attempt will be made at tracing the role of the town of Ternate, Cavite in the nation's history from its beginnings in the mid-seventeenth century until the revolution in the late nineteenth century. Therefore, there will be no attempt to deal with the sociopolitical institutions or the economic development of the town. Of primary importance here is the role that Ternate's inhabitants have played in colonial society, and the manner in which this role underwent change and modification by the end of the nineteenth century. Hopefully, this brief historical sketch of Ternate can serve as a modest contribution to the future compilation of a much more comprehensive history of the all-important province of Cavite.<sup>5</sup>

2. See for example Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* (Quezon City: Tala Publishing Services, 1975), pp. 394-96.

3. John Larkin, "The Causes of an Involved Society: A Theoretical Approach to the Study of Rural Southeast Asian History," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 30 (August 1971): 783.

4. Some of the more stimulating works written along the lines of local history and peasant movements that have come out in recent years include John Larkin's *The Pangangans: Colonial Society in a Philippine Province* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), Rey Iletto's "Pasi6n and the Interpretation of Change in Tagalog Society, 1840-1912" (Ph.D dissertation, Cornell University, 1975), Benedict Kerkvliet's *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in Rural Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), and David Sturtevant's *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines, 1840-1940* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1977) to name only a few.

5. In 1943, Prof. Esteban de Ocampo undertook a similar task of piecing together bits of historical information and some useful ethnographic data on Ternate. The result was an unpublished manuscript, written in 1947, entitled "The Ternateños: Their

One of the main difficulties in attempting to reconstruct a local history of Ternate is the fact that there is a dearth of written, especially published, sources available. Unlike the towns of San Francisco de Malabon, Kawit, Imus or Maragondon, Ternate is off the beaten track, historically speaking. It was neither the site of a Katipunan convention nor the birthplace of a national hero. No major battles were ever fought in the area and the various political and economic crises of the past have barely dented Ternate's otherwise placid exterior.

What does set the town apart from the rest of Cavite are two interesting things. First, the fact that its original inhabitants were Moluccans, speaking a unique type of creole-Spanish; and second, its image of the Santo Niño that is said to be possessed with miraculous powers, and which attracts a considerably wide following from all over Cavite as well as parts of Batangas and Rizal provinces.

Where written sources were unavailable, information on Ternate's history and culture were drawn from oral sources consisting of myths, legends, folk tales, taped interviews with the town's inhabitants,<sup>6</sup> and from an oral history narrated by one of the oldest inhabitants of the town.<sup>7</sup> When used selectively, these oral sources were useful aids in checking the veracity of written sources as well

History, Language, Customs, and Traditions." Prof. Ocampo has been kind enough to permit me the use of some of the material from his manuscripts, while Prof. Isagani Medina of the University of the Philippines, Department of History, has generously allowed me access to a xeroxed copy of Ocampo's manuscript. Contained in Prof. Medina's copy are also xeroxed copies of Tomas Tirona's "An Account of the Ternateño Dialect," Alfredo German's "The Spanish Dialect in Cavite," and Victor Ramos Herrera's "Historia del Pueblo de Ternate desde su fundacion," all unpublished papers which have been helpful in tracing Ternate's historical development.

However, useful as Ocampo's manuscript may have been, he does not go into Ternate's participation in the revolution at all, nor does he attempt any kind of analysis of the town's role in Philippine history.

6. These interviews were conducted on 6 January 1978 and on 24 August 1978 among the common folk of Ternate as well as with some members of the local elite, two of whom were extremely helpful with regards to tracing Ternate's involvement in the revolution. These were Atty. Placido Ramos (76), and his daughter, Mrs. Lilia Ramos de Leon of the National Historical Institute. Both belong to the illustrious Ramos family who were among the seven original settlers of Ternate. (The others include the Pereiras, the Estaibars, the de Leons, the de la Cruzes, the Nigozas and the Niño francos). Atty. Ramos was especially helpful in allowing me to examine the private papers of his father-in-law Don Jose de Leon, a former gobernadorcillo of Ternate.

7. Eulalio Zapanta (92), taped interview conducted in Tagalog with the help of Prof. Medina on 6 January 1978 in Ternate, a transcription of which is in the author's possession.

as in filling in historical gaps where documentation was simply not available. These oral sources, furthermore, provided clues as to how the Ternateños perceived their own past, and the ways by which they continue to find meaning in their present.

Located some 60 miles southwest of Manila, Ternate hugs the coast of Cavite fronting the Manila Bay area. To the south, Ternate is bounded by the municipality of Maragondon whose river flows right into the town. To the northwest lies the island fortress of Corregidor and to the northeast are the neighboring towns of Naic, Rosario, and Cavite City.

Its population of approximately 6,000 thrives mainly on subsistence farming, fishing, and occasional employment in a nearby beach resort or the naval base located at Sangley Point. Ternate is presently rated as a sixth-classed town, thereby making it the poorest municipality of Cavite.<sup>8</sup> It is comprised of four barrios: Poblacion, the busiest part of the town with the densest concentration of population, San Juan, San Jose, and Zapang. Ternate formerly existed as an administrative appendage of Maragondon – hence, Spanish accounts have often referred to it as Barra de Maragondon (i.e., sandbar of Maragondon) – and became an independent municipality only in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The original settlers of Ternate came from an island in the Moluccas bearing the same name. They called themselves *Mardicas*, meaning both “free men” as well as “men of the sea” (i.e., *bihasa sa dagat*) since these island people were certainly no strangers to navigation.<sup>9</sup>

The *Mardicas* of the Moluccas dwelt in what was probably one of the most coveted areas of the world in the sixteenth century. As part of the Spice Islands, the island of Ternate was right in the center of a lucrative clove, pepper, and nutmeg trade. In 1513, the Portuguese, fresh from their conquest of Malacca, succeeded in establishing a foothold in the Moluccas by concluding treaties with the sultans of Ternate and the neighboring island of Tidore. In

8. *Census on Population and Housing: Cavite* (Manila: National Census and Statistics Office, 1970); Efren Yambot, ed., *Philippine Almanac and Handbook of Facts* (Quezon City: Philippine Almanac Printers, 1975), p. 87.

9. Francisco Colin, *Labor evangelica*, Pastells edition, BR 36: 237; Ocampo, “Ternateños” citing Pardo de Tavera and E.B. Rodriguez, pp. 3-4; Jose Montero y Vidal, *Historia general de Filipinas desde descubrimiento de dichas islas hasta nuestros dias*, 3 vols. (Madrid: M. Tello, 1887-1895), vol. 1, p. 237; Zapanta interview.

time, St. Francis Xavier founded a Jesuit mission station in the islands and managed to convert a sizeable number of inhabitants.

However, Portuguese traders became extremely harsh in their treatment of the natives so that even their Moluccan allies, most of whom had been Christianized, became dissatisfied, and led by their leader, Baabulah, rose up in arms. They laid siege to the Portuguese outpost in Ternate, forcing the Europeans to retreat to the island of Tidore in 1574, after which the majority of Christianized Moluccans apostatized back to their Muslim faith.<sup>10</sup>

Spain's active involvement in the conquest of the Moluccas did not start until the 1580s. By this time, Philip II had joined the thrones of Spain and Portugal, and in so doing, acquired jurisdiction over Portuguese possessions in Southeast Asia. Therefore, Spain outfitted a series of military expeditions aimed at conquering Ternate and establishing a Spanish outpost in the Spice Islands. In 1585, 1593, and 1603, Spain launched these armed expeditions from its colony in the Philippines. However, all of these attempts at conquest proved to be dismal failures.

Undaunted by Spain's previous set-backs, Governor General Pedro Bravo de Acuña organized a mammoth expedition in 1606 consisting of some 36 ships, 1,423 Spanish troops, 59 Portuguese soldiers, and 1,613 native auxiliaries, and headed for Ternate. In the ensuing battle, Acuña's well-armed troops handily won over the forces of Sultan Said Din Burkat (also known in some accounts as Sultan Zaide) who, together with his son, was sent off to Manila as prisoners of war.<sup>11</sup>

Acuña's victory enabled the Spaniards to set up a garrison in Ternate island. The Jesuits then took charge of attending to the spiritual needs of both the Castellans and the Christianized natives who had been left behind by the Portuguese missionaries, and sought to convert the other natives of the island as well.<sup>12</sup> It was from these native converts that the Spanish troops undoubtedly drew some kind of local support.

10. D.G.E. Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, 3rd edition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968), pp. 244-45, 249; Horacio de la Costa, *Jesuits in the Philippines, 1581-1768* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 129-30.

11. Bartolome Juan Leonardo y de Argensola, *Conquistas de las islas Molucas* (Madrid: Alonso Martin, 1609) pp. 351-89; Cesar Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1973) pp. 119-20; Hall, *History of Southeast Asia*, pp. 249-50.

12. De la Costa, *Jesuits*, p. 307.

The Spanish garrison in Ternate, however, was more of an economic liability to the crown than an asset. Provisioning the Moluccan fortress from the port of Iloilo was an expensive affair, "made at great risk and at a heavy cost to your Majesty."<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, constant harassment from the hostile Muslim populace of Ternate plus the Dutch presence in the south seas necessitated stepping up the costly and unprofitable fortification of the garrison. Each year, it continuously drained the colonial government in Manila of financial and military resources which otherwise could have been put to better use.<sup>14</sup>

The Muslims and the Dutch, however, were not the only threats to the Spaniards in the Philippines. As the frontier region of an empire which stretched halfway across the world, the Spanish colony in the Philippines was constantly plagued by native revolts from within and foreign aggression from without. One such external threat which jolted the colony was the projected attack of a Chinese corsair named Koxinga (also known as Kue-Sing) in 1662. Having taken over the Dutch fort at Formosa, Koxinga sent an embassy to Manila accompanied by a Dominican friar, Vittorio Ricci, with strident demands for Spanish submission. This pronouncement sent shock waves among the Spaniards nestled in the walled city of Intramuros and galvanized the administration of Governor General Sabiniano Manrique de Lara into action.<sup>15</sup>

To meet Koxinga's intended attack, Manrique de Lara sought to reinforce the small number of Spanish soldiers in Manila with troops stationed in the garrisons of Zamboanga and Ternate. However, in the process of evacuating Ternate, the parish priest of the island, Diego de Esquivel, S.J., acting upon the request of Manrique de Lara, took along some 200 loyal Christianized *Mardicas* to Manila. The *Mardicas*, for their part, may have accompanied the Spaniards to Manila out of a desire to maintain their Christian ties, "preferring exile to the almost certain loss of their faith." Apparently, these *Mardicas* were closely attached to the Jesuits and, according to one Spanish account, regarded themselves as "spiritual sons of St. Francis Xavier to whom they were singularly

13. Juan Cerezo de Salamanca, "Letter to Philip IV," 14 August 1633, BR 24: 280.

14. Letter of Gregorio Lopez, S.J., to Claudio Acquaviva, Manila, 14 June 1612 in Horacio de la Costa's *Readings in Philippine History* (Manila: Bookmark, 1965), pp. 49, 51-52.

15. "Events in Manila, 1662-1663," BR 36: 219; Victor Herrera, "Historia del Pueblo de Ternate" in Ocampo, "Ternateños," p. 243.

devoted — a feeling inspired by their forefathers who had known him and witnessed his marvelous works.”<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, had these Christianized Mardicas stayed behind, they would have certainly risked facing persecution and even death from the hostile Muslim majority of Ternate.

The Mardican expatriates, together with a contingent of Tagalog and Pampangan troops were to form the Spaniards’ first line of defense in battling Koxinga. But as fate would have it, Koxinga died before the attack could materialize. Everyone in the colony breathed a sigh of relief — everyone, that is, except the Mardicas. What were to become of these expatriated Moluccans? To go back to Ternate would have meant persecution and punishment from the Muslims. Having thrown their lot in with Spain, their only recourse was to stay in the colony.

Manrique de Lara, in recognition of their aid, granted them a strip of land along the Cavite coast north of the municipality of Maragondon. Though the exact date of transfer is not clear, it is certain that the Mardicas had formed a settlement in that area no later than 1700.<sup>17</sup>

Oral and written sources indicate that the Mardicas’ new settlement was referred to at various times as Galala (the Mardican word for the dapdap tree which grew abundantly in the area), Wawa (meaning river mouth) and more commonly, Barra de Maragondon. Apparently, it was only in the latter half of the nineteenth century that the Mardicas settlement came to be called Ternate by its inhabitants, in memory of their island of origin.<sup>18</sup>

The racial features of these Mardicas could not have been very different from the rest of the Moluccan people:

The people of Ternate (island) are of the same color as the Malays, that is, darker than those of the Philippines, handsome visag’d and the men better shaped than the women. The great pride of both sexes is in decking their hair which they anoint with oil of ajonjoli, a certain herbe growing

16. Pedro Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesus*, BR 42: 123-24; Juan de la Concepcion, *Historia general de Filipinas*, BR 36: p. 237; Colin-Pastells, *Labor*, BR 36:237; Herrera, “Historia” in Ocampo’s “Ternateños,” pp. 243-44.

17. Murillo Velarde (*Historia*, BR 42: 124) unlike other sources for the transfer gives the name “La Estacada” to an area aside from Maragondon which the Mardicas had occupied. See also de la Concepcion, *Historia*, BR 36: 237; Colin-Pastells, *Labor*, BR 36: 237; Joaquin Martinez de Zuñiga, *Status of the Philippine Islands in 1800* (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild Series, 1973), p. 249.

18. Zapanta interview; de la Concepcion, *Historia*, BR 36: 237; Manuel Buzeta y Felipe Bravo, *Diccionario Geographico-Estadistico-Historico de las islas Filipinas* (Madrid: Jose-C. de la Peña, 1851), vol. 2, p. 305; Ocampo, “Ternateños,” pp. 10, 290.



in the Indies . . . The men wear their hair down to their shoulders . . . and wear a doublet of several colours, a sort of breeches down to the knee and a girdle; all, even among the best of them, go barefooted and bare legged.<sup>19</sup>

The group of Mardicas who settled in Cavite eventually intermarried with the people of the surrounding towns. This process of intermarriage, it should be pointed out, was a slow and protracted one, lasting many years. In the eighteenth century, a Spanish writer indicated that the Mardicas had not yet fully intermarried with the surrounding indio population of Cavite so that the former was still racially and culturally distinct from the latter.<sup>20</sup> Another Spanish writer who had visited Ternate in 1863 also wrote of the distinctive racial features of the Mardicas which set them apart from the other inhabitants of Luzon but noted that an increasing number of them were starting to take on the characteristics of the lowland Filipinos.<sup>21</sup> But by the early 1920s, a student of linguistics who visited the town noted that the younger generation of Ternateños no longer bore the distinguishing physical features of their Moluccan ancestors.<sup>22</sup>

The Mardicas who settled along the Cavite coast spoke a variety of creole-Spanish with notable strains of Portuguese. This dialect, known as Ternateño chabacano, continues to be in wide usage today, and though closely related to the chabacano spoken in Cavite, is quite distinct from that which is spoken in Zamboanga and Cotabato.<sup>23</sup>

Among the different types of chabacano spoken in the Philippines, Ternateño has undergone the longest period of development. An analysis of sound changes in Ternateño indicates that it was the first Spanish-creole dialect ever to be spoken by any community in the Philippines. Furthermore, sound shifting in Ternateño also shows the existence of Portuguese elements in the dialect underneath its predominantly Spanish, Tagalog, and (more re-

19. Giovanni Carreri, *A Voyage to the Philippines* (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild Series, 1963), p. 167.

20. Martínez de Zuñiga, *Status*, p. 249. Interestingly enough, he refers to the Mardicas as "Judios."

21. This Spaniard wrote under the pen-name "E.V." and published his account of Ternate in *Revista de Filipinas*, vol. 1, no. 20, 15 April 1876. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate a copy of this article and therefore have had to rely on the quotations provided by Ocampo, "Ternateños," pp. 8-9.

22. Tomas Tirona, "An Account of the Ternateño Dialect," in Ocampo, "Ternateños," pp. 296-97.

23. Maria Isabelita Riego de Dios, R.V.M., "A Composite Dictionary of Philippine Creole Spanish (PCS)," (Ph.D. dissertation, Ateneo de Manila, 1976), pp. 1-12.

cently) English elements.<sup>24</sup> Linguistic analysis therefore, points to the fact that the Mardicas had had considerable trade and culture contact with the Portuguese in the Moluccas prior to the arrival of the Spaniards in 1606. By the time the Spaniards had succeeded in establishing a foothold on the Spice Islands, the Mardicas, aside from having been Christianized for over a generation by the Portuguese Jesuits, were already speaking a type of pidgin-Portuguese. The existence of a community of Christianized Mardicas speaking a type of creole-Portuguese doubtless had the effect of facilitating Spanish-Mardicas contacts so that a sturdy alliance of sorts eventually emerged between the two groups – the Spaniards, on one hand, who had to rely on some form of local support, and the Mardicas, on the other hand, who sought Spanish aid and protection from an otherwise hostile Muslim populace. Prolonged contacts between the two groups consequently gave rise to a creole-Spanish variant overlaying the Portuguese and Malayan elements of the Mardican language and developing over the years into the Ternateño dialect in use today.<sup>25</sup>

Aside from its long period of development, Ternateño chabacano is distinct from other Spanish-creole variants in that it draws its new vocabulary heavily from Tagalog. Apparently, borrowings from Spanish have declined drastically since the turn of the century and Tagalog has since become the major source of loan words in Ternateño.<sup>26</sup> This linguistic phenomenon is reflective of the Mardicas eventual absorption into the mainstream of Tagalog culture and society via intermarriage with the inhabitants of the surrounding areas.

However, prior to their assimilation into Tagalog society, the Mardicas had traditionally allied themselves with the Spaniards in quelling various disturbances within the colony. Written and oral sources have constantly cited Mardicas bravery and fierceness in battle. Small wonder then that the Spaniards made them respon-

24. Carol Molony, "Sound Changes in Chabacano," *Parangal Kay Cecilio Lopez*, edited by Andrew Gonzalez, F.S.C. (Quezon City: Linguistic Society of the Philippines, 1973), p. 38. In contrast, linguistic evidence shows that chabacano variants spoken in Cotabato and Zamboanga developed independently from Ternateño only as late as the nineteenth century. Caviteño chabacano, on the other hand, represents an offshoot of Ternateño. See Riego de Dios, "A Composite Dictionary of Philippine Creole Spanish," p. 31.

25. Keith Whinnom, *Spanish Contact Vernaculars in the Philippines* (Hongkong: Hongkong University Press, 1956), pp. 8-10.

26. Molony, "Sound Changes," p. 50; Riego de Dios, "Dictionary," pp. 5, 12.

sible for defending the Cavite coast from the periodic raids of the Muslims from the south.<sup>27</sup> Oral tradition, in the form of legends, myths, and folk tales, attests to the great pride and zeal with which the Mardicas regarded their battles against the Muslims. Major victories are recounted and the Mardicas' valor constantly extolled. An elaborate war dance called the *sakeleli* was performed by the Mardicas to the beat of drums prior to doing battle against the Muslim raiders. Even the town's patron saint, the Santo Niño de Ternate, is presented as a valiant, stern-faced warrior, fighting side by side with the Mardicas to repulse the Muslims. Interestingly enough, three fingers of its left hand are missing, believed to have been cut off by a Muslim sword.<sup>28</sup> So effective were the Mardicas in warding off the Muslim raiders that they were recruited in 1845 to fight in Balanguingui, Mindanao.<sup>29</sup>

Aside from repulsing Muslim coastal raids in Cavite, the Mardicas were also employed by the Spanish colonial government in subduing a number of uprisings in the seventeenth century. Like the Tagalogs and the Pampangans, the Mardicas were often used as auxiliary troops to crush the sporadic revolts in the colony. However, it is worth noting that the Mardicas had been employed by Spain for such a purpose even before they had chosen to settle in Cavite. This perhaps helps to explain the relative ease with which they had chosen to abandon their homeland and settle in the Philippines by 1662.

Led by their master-of-camp, Cachil Duco, the Mardicas were recruited along with a company of Japanese from Dilao (now Paco) and a group of "creole negroes" to aid the Spaniards in quelling the Malong rebellion which raged in Pangasinan from late 1660 to early 1661. The Mardicas figured prominently in the campaign at Binalatongan as they aided the Spanish troops of General Francisco de Esteybar in pursuing Malong's forces, forcing the latter to retreat into the mountains. The Mardicas were then assigned, along with a lean contingent of Spanish soldiers to fort-

27. Martinez de Zuñiga, *Status*, p. 249; Letter of Fr. Pedro Bertran, S.J. to the governor general, Manila, 24 December 1870 in John Schumacher, ed., *Jose Burgos: Priest and Nationalist* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 1972), pp. 271-73; de la Costa, *Jesuits*, p. 475.

28. Interviews with Mr. Zapanta, Atty. Ramos and Mrs. Ramos de Leon; Ocampo, "Ternateños," pp. 35-36, 55.

29. Buzeta y Bravo, *Diccionario*, p. 305; Herrera, "Historia," in Ocampo, "Ternateños," p. 244.

ify the same town while de Esteybar went off to repulse still another uprising in Ilocos led by Pedro Gumapos.<sup>30</sup>

In 1663, the Mardicas were again used by the Spaniards under the direction of Admiral Pedro Duran de Monforte, to aid the combined Pampangan-Spanish forces in controlling the religious movement of Tapar in Panay.<sup>31</sup>

During the frequent Chinese purges conducted by the anti-Chinese Spaniards in 1686, the Mardicas lent their services in tracking down so-called "Chinese criminals" from Fookien who were plundering Manila and its environs. Under the command of General Tomas de Endaya, they succeeded in cornering this group of Chinese in Pasay, killing eleven and sending the rest to jail.<sup>32</sup>

The Mardicas were likewise part of a Spanish-Pampangan force assigned to suppress a group of headhunting Zambals who had been harassing and killing travelers to and from Tarlac and Pangasinan in 1688. This expedition, however, failed to put a stop to the Zambals' activities. Confronted by dense forests and bogged down by an influenza epidemic which had decimated their ranks, these troops were forced to retreat to the relative safety of Guagua, Pampanga.<sup>33</sup>

Being sea-faring people, the Mardicas also served on board Spanish vessels and helped the colonizers in "cleansing the islands of pirates."<sup>34</sup> Mention is made of these people who, together with a detachment of Pampangan soldiers and Zambal bowmen, manned the cannons of a Spanish galleon-turned-warship assigned to repulse the pirates preying on the galleons and plundering the coasts of Cagayan and Ilocos provinces in 1686.<sup>35</sup>

It is also highly probable that though no direct reference was made to them by contemporary sources, the Mardicas may have figured in the Dutch-Hispano war in the seventeenth century and perhaps even in aiding the Spanish resistance against the British in 1762.<sup>36</sup>

30. Casimiro Diaz, *Conquistas de las islas Filipinas, segunda parte*, BR 38: 167-69, 177, 203. A Spanish historian, Fr. Manuel Merino, O.S.A., has recently shown, however that the "Segunda Parte" of the *Conquistas* was actually composed by Gaspar de San Agustin. See his edition of San Agustin's *Conquistas de las islas Filipinas (1565-1615)*, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 1975).

31. Diaz, *Conquistas*, BR 38: 220.

32. Ibid., BR 42: 251.

33. Ibid., BR 42: 269-270.

34. Letter of Fr. Bertran, in Schumacher, *Burgos*, pp. 271-73.

35. Diaz, *Conquistas*, BR 42: 245.

36. Letter of Fr. Bertran, in Schumacher, *Burgos*, pp. 272-73.

Thus, the picture one gets of the Mardicas during their first two centuries of residence in the Philippines is one of a brave people, racially and linguistically distinct so as to stand outside of — though by no means in isolation from — the mainstream of Tagalog society, and staunch allies, not merely mercenaries, of Spain to whom they were linked by the bond of Christianity. But by the last decades of the nineteenth century, this situation of the Mardicas was to undergo a qualitative transformation.

The last three decades of the nineteenth century was a watershed period in Philippine history as it marked the rise of nationalism and the eventual outbreak of the revolution in 1896. The revolution was particularly widespread in the province of Cavite where General Emilio Aguinaldo led the people to a startling string of victories from late 1896 to the early months of 1897.

In spite of their long-standing practice of rendering military aid to the Spaniards, the people of Ternate, like many other lowland Filipinos all over the archipelago, participated in the fight for national liberation. That the Mardicas joined the nationalist struggle is indicative that they had been profoundly drawn into the mainstream of Tagalog society, owing to their continuous contact and intermarriage with the people of the surrounding areas. The breadth and depth of the Mardicas' assimilation into the dominant Tagalog culture is further evidenced by a number of things.

First, the absence of Spanish references to the Mardicas as such after the 1840s suggests that they were no longer racially distinct from the rest of the Tagalogs and that they had all but ceased their traditional practice of rendering military assistance to the Spaniards. Secondly, linguistic evidence shows that it was about this time that Ternateño chabacano started to rely on Tagalog as its main source of loan words, while borrowings from Spanish had drastically dropped off.<sup>37</sup> Thirdly, the image of the Santo Niño de Ternate was attracting by mid-nineteenth century a considerable number of devotees from all over Cavite as well as the surrounding areas of Batangas and Rizal. They flocked to Ternate on the Santo Niño's feast day, drawn by the miraculous powers that the image was said to possess. The popularity of the Santo Niño cult indicates that the barriers which had previously separated the

37. Molony, "Sound Changes," p. 50.

Ternateños from the rest of the Tagalogs had largely disappeared by this time. The people of Ternate were drawn into closer contact with other Tagalogs precisely in so far as the bonds of a common religious devotion were forged between the two groups.<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, by late-nineteenth century, culture contacts through intermarriage and language borrowing, along with the spread of the Santo Niño cult, led to the increasing absorption of the Ternateños into the matrix of Tagalog society. By the 1890s, the Mardicas/Ternateños had become, by-and-large, part of the Tagalogs and, by extension, part of the emerging Filipino nation. In this process of cultural transition, the town's local elite played an instrumental role. Because of the economic and social prominence they enjoyed, Ternate's elite were in a position to forge advantageous marital alliances with the elite of neighboring towns. Furthermore, like the elite of other Tagalog municipalities, those of Ternate had long been active participants in the colonial bureaucracy, filling out the positions of *cabeza-de-barangay* and *gobernadorcillo*. As such, they were subjected to the same legal and bureaucratic procedures as the elite of other towns. It is therefore conceivable that by the 1890s, the more prominent Ternateños had come to share with the rest of Cavite's local elite a common set of grievances against the decadent Spanish regime as well as an awareness of a common stake in an emerging national community. As in the case of the elite of other Tagalog *pueblos*, some of the more prominent families of Ternate would eventually transmit this surging spirit of nationalism to the rest of the townspeople.

It was for these reasons that when the revolution struck in 1896, the Ternateños – or at least a substantial majority of them – readily identified their interests with those of other Filipinos, took up arms and fought against the traditional allies of their Mardican ancestors, the Spaniards.<sup>39</sup>

38. Ocampo, "Ternateños," pp. 16-17, 20-22; Zapanta interview. In fact, the image continues to this present day to attract a fairly large following from the surrounding towns of Southern Luzon, an area which to start with, is noted for being a nerve center of various religious cults and "churches."

39. This transformation from Mardicas/Ternateños to Tagalogs and eventually to Filipinos was probably much more complex, involving various phases of development. However, it is at the moment impossible to map out this process of cultural assimilation due to the dearth of historical data presently available.

Ternate was grouped together with the towns of Noveleta, Kawit, San Francisco de Malabon (now General Trias), and Maragondon to form the Magdiwang faction of the Katipunan. Like the other towns of Cavite, its name was temporarily altered to Katuata and later on to Molukas. Apparently, this practice of drawing up new names for the various towns of Cavite (none of which eventually stuck) was done by the revolutionary leaders in an attempt to break off from the vestiges of their colonial past.<sup>40</sup>

Responding to the first manifesto issued by Aguinaldo to the municipal captains of Cavite from his base in Kawit, Ternate rose up in revolt "almost simultaneously" with the other towns of the province shortly after initial Filipino victories in Imus and Silang during the early part of September 1896.<sup>41</sup> However, some of the Ternateños who supported the struggle did so initially with great reluctance. This was particularly true in the case of some members of the local elite. Ricarte, for instance, mentions that some of the well-to-do Ternateños had to be harassed into contributing funds for the revolutionary movement. But it should be noted that this occurred not only in Ternate but in other towns of Cavite as well.<sup>42</sup>

However, in so far as the majority of the Ternateños were concerned, written and oral sources attest to the fact that their participation in the first phase of the struggle ran high. For instance, the Ternateños are mentioned to have responded enthusiastically to the "patriotic speeches" delivered in the town by members of the Katipunan during the feast day of the Santo Niño on 6 January 1897.<sup>43</sup> Troops from Ternate, together with those from Maragondon, Naic, and Magallanes were on hand at Aguinaldo's inauguration as president of the revolutionary government in Tanza. These troops were then dispatched to aid Aguinaldo's brother, Crispulo in defending Pasong Santol in March 1897.<sup>44</sup> These soldiers from Ternate were probably the very same who together with troops from Maragondon arrived in San Francisco de Malabon

40. Artemio Ricarte, *Memoirs of General Artemio Ricarte* (Manila: National Heroes Commission, 1963), pp. 4, 7. Emilio Aguinaldo, *My Memoirs*, translated by Luz Colendrino-Bucu (Manila: 1967), p. 108; also in AB, pp. 164-65.

41. Aguinaldo, *Memoirs*, p. 80; AB, pp. 18-20.

42. Ricarte, *Memoirs*, p. 20.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

44. Aguinaldo, *Memoirs*, pp. 137-38.

en route to Imus to aid Aguinaldo's forces in repulsing the Spanish advance on that town.<sup>45</sup>

Oral sources show that several prominent Ternateños did in fact serve as officers in the revolutionary army. These Ternateño officers came mostly from the ranks of the local elite. They included Major Basilio Ramos, the highest ranking Ternateño in the revolutionary army who had conducted operations as far south as Batangas. His cousin, Ciriaco Ramos served as a captain, and was noted for his allegedly powerful *anting-anting*. Two former members of the *guardia civil*, Ignacio Dinglas and Clemente Dirian both defected to Aguinaldo's side and assumed the ranks of captain and lieutenant respectively. Nicomedez Ibañez and Florencio Catalasan both served as sergeants, the former being one of the founders of the Aglipayan church in Ternate in 1903, and the latter seeing action as far north as Muntinglupa. Lieutenant Benito Catalasan, the brother of Florencio, was also noted for leading a contingent of Ternateños in the battle of Caylatme, a sitio of Ternate, against the Americans in order to protect the retreating General Mariano Noriel in 1899. Then there was the audacious Julian Ramos who, along with a handful of Ternateños, continued to resist American rule as late as 1905, hiding out in the hills of Cutad near the Pico de Loro mountains.<sup>46</sup>

One of the most active participants in the revolution in Ternate was the town's parish priest, Fr. Esteban del Rosario, a Filipino diocesan priest. Although originally from Caridad, Kawit,<sup>47</sup> Father del Rosario was nonetheless instrumental in rallying the Ternateños around the nationalist cause. Such was not unusual, for as a recent study has shown, the local clergy of Cavite played a vital role in encouraging the people to take up arms against Spain.<sup>48</sup> Father del Rosario in his capacity as parish priest of Ternate exhorted the people to support the struggle, calling the revolution a "holy war" against Spain. In his various sermons not only in Ternate but in neighboring towns as well, he urged the people to

45. Telesforo Canseco, "Historia de la insurreccion filipina en Cavite," AB, p. 282.

46. Interviews with Atty. Ramos and Mrs. Ramos de Leon.

47. Atty. Ramos interview. Atty. Ramos was actually baptized by Father del Rosario himself in 1902 and his mother-in-law was also the niece of this same priest.

48. John Schumacher, "The Religious Character of the Revolution in Cavite, 1896-1897," *Philippine Studies* 24 (1976): 399-416.



uphold the revolutionary cause, "kindling in them the love for reconquest of long-lost liberty."<sup>49</sup> On one occasion, so stirred were the Ternateños by his sermon that they immediately proceeded to fortify the trenches they had dug along the beach in order to repulse possible Spanish offensives.<sup>50</sup>

Because of Father del Rosario's part in encouraging the people to revolt, the Archbishop suspended him on May 1897, and he was subsequently detained in Manila. However, this suspension was eventually lifted on March 1898, and upon the insistence of Generals Ricarte and Trias, Primo de Rivera had the priest released from Manila and allowed to go back to Ternate.<sup>51</sup> Upon his arrival in the town, the priest was enthusiastically greeted by many of the town's inhabitants led by no less than the justice of the peace crying "Viva la patria!"<sup>52</sup> This warm reception accorded to del Rosario is but a fair indication of his key role in encouraging the Ternateños to support the nationalist movement.

The truce of Biak-na-Bato in December 1897 ended the first phase of the revolution. Not until May of the next year did Aguinaldo return from his exile in Hongkong to resume the fight against Spain and later on to extend the campaign against the Americans in 1899. In Ternate, however, the revolutionary spirit among the people seems to have waned by late 1897. To be sure, Ternate continued to participate in the second phase of the revolution, having been grouped into the same zone as the towns of Maragondon, Naic, Rosario, and Santa Cruz under the leadership of General Tomás Mascardo.<sup>53</sup> Some Ternateños continued to pursue the struggle, as in the case of Lieutenant Catalasan and Julian Ramos. But what is more obvious is that by late 1897,

49. Ricarte, *Memoirs*, p. 28.

50. Telesforo Canseco, "Historia de la insurreccion filipina en Cavite," typed copy on microfilm, Rizal Library, Ateneo de Manila, p. 56.

51. The order for del Rosario's suspension and its subsequent lifting may be found in the section "Varios asuntos reservados, 1896-1900 - Parroco de Ternate," AAM; Ricarte, *Memoirs*, pp. 89-90.

52. Letter of Felipe Romero to the Bishop, Ternate, Cavite, 15 May 1898, AAM. I am very grateful to Fr. John Schumacher for lending me a xeroxed copy of this and other pertinent documents from the AAM as well as to Mr. Eddie de Guzman of the Ateneo Spanish Department and to Angie Z. Herras for translating this and other documents dealing with del Rosario.

53. Decree from the office of the Presidential Government, 20 June 1898, exhibit 37, in John R.M. Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection against the United States*, 5 vols. (Pasay City: Eugenio Lopez Foundation, 1971), vol. 3, p. 126.

Ternate's participation in the struggle progressively dwindled as more than half of the Ternateños who had been involved availed themselves of the amnesty offered by Primo de Rivera.<sup>54</sup> Heeding the advice of their former municipal captain, Don Vicente de Leon, "not to take great interest in the revolt," many Ternateños laid down their arms.<sup>55</sup> Even the return of the indefatigable Father del Rosario in May 1898, while greeted with great rejoicing by a number of Ternateños, nonetheless met only with a very cold reception among the more influential people of the town.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, while Ternate undoubtedly participated in the revolution, one must nevertheless be cautioned about overemphasizing the extent of its role. Sources indicate that the Ternateños as a whole may not have been as enthusiastic about the second phase of the revolution as the other Caviteños.<sup>57</sup> After 1898, Ternate's actual participation in the battles against either Spain or the United States was probably limited — far too little and dispersed in time to have made any lasting impact on the town's populace.

By the turn of the century, revolutionary activity in Ternate was restricted to the mountains and, with the notable exception of Julian Ramos, involved only the forces of neighboring towns, not the Ternateños themselves.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, so popular a hiding place was Ternate's mountains among the tenacious guerilla bands during the early 1900s that the Americans had to reconcentrate Ternate's population in 1905 for the purpose of cutting the guerillas off from their sources of supply. But again, these guerilla bands, though possibly receiving occasional support from some Ternateños, consisted of troops mostly from Naic and other neighboring towns and did not involve the people of Ternate.<sup>59</sup>

54. Canseco, "Historia," p. 105.

55. Ibid. It is worth noting that Vicente de Leon was himself involved in the revolution, serving as an officer in the army but eventually giving up after the Truce of Biak-na-Bato (Ramos interview).

56. Letter of Felipe Romero, AAM.

57. I have not been able to come across a single reference to Ternate in various revolutionary documents after 1898. Also there seems to be nothing in Ternate's oral tradition that makes any reference to the revolution.

58. Diary of Jose de Leon (Placido Ramos collection). Don Jose de Leon was the father-in-law of Atty. Ramos and served as gobernadorcillo of Ternate from 1892-1894, justice of the peace from 1894-1896, municipal captain of Ternate by appointment of Aguinaldo in 1898. However, he signed an oath of allegiance to the U.S. in 1901, and by 1910 was the local Nacionalista Party representative of Ternate. His diary consists of some 70 handwritten pages, half of which are unpaginated while all entries are undated.

59. Ibid.

What accounted for Ternate's eventual loss of interest in the revolution after 1898?

The limited nature of Ternate's participation in the second phase of the revolution may partly be attributed to the fact that the town was not as well organized as the surrounding towns of Cavite. It was never a revolutionary nerve-center the way Maragondon, San Francisco de Malabon or Kawit were, and was geographically isolated from the main lines of battle.

Furthermore, years of war had disrupted Ternate's economic activities and caused considerable loss of Ternateño life and property.<sup>60</sup> As Ternate entered the twentieth century, its inhabitants were doubtless tired of war and were eager to see it end. Confronted with the demands of the town's survival, the Ternateños eventually had to withdraw from the struggle.

The limits of Ternate's revolutionary involvement were largely drawn, from the very beginning, by the local elite. It was the local elite who, in joining the struggle against Spain, most probably urged the ordinary Ternateños to support the revolution as well. As mentioned earlier, the local elite played an important role in transmitting the ideals of nationalism to the rest of the townspeople. This is not to disparage the efforts of the local clergy, in this case, Father del Rosario, in enlisting the people's support for the nationalist cause. But it was the support and example of the local leaders that provided some kind of direction for Ternate's participation in the struggle. Ternate's local elite, like the elite of other Philippine towns in the nineteenth century, acted as intermediaries, linking up the town's interests with those of the province and ultimately with those of an emerging nation.

However, by late 1897, the local elite, fearing possible reprisals from the Spaniards and later on, from the newly-arrived Americans, gave up the struggle and advised other Ternateños to do so as well. This attitude was possibly reinforced by the retreat and successive defeats suffered by Aguinaldo from 1899 onwards. Thus, in spite of the continued activities of Father del Rosario, the people's involvement in the revolution gradually subsided so that they eventually withdrew from the fight. The town's relative isolation from the major scenes of conflict further facilitated Ternate's withdrawal from the struggle.

60. *Ibid.*

That the ordinary Ternateños followed the political preferences of their local leaders is perhaps indicative of the strength of traditional class ties existing among the inhabitants of the town at that time. Common cultural roots plus the presence of a profound devotion to the Santo Niño further consolidated these traditional ties. The people adhered to their leaders' decisions therefore, not merely out of blind obedience but out of a genuine respect for the local elite's decisions which they felt were made in the town's best interests.

In the end, Ternate's role in the Philippine revolution was not very different from that of other towns in Cavite in so far as local interests eventually took precedence over national concerns. When victory was apparent, as it was in 1896, in early 1897 and in mid-1898, it was relatively easy for the Ternateños to ally themselves with the nationalist cause. This alliance was further facilitated by the existence of common bonds of culture, language, and religion with the Tagalogs. But once defeat was imminent, as it was in the latter half of 1897 and again by late 1898 onwards, local survival became much more imperative than nationalist goals. This does not necessarily imply the total break of bonds between the Ternateños and other Filipinos who continued to fight, but rather a re-assessment of the townspeople's interests. Their choice to eventually withdraw from the struggle was but a means of recovering the town's previous tranquility and restoring a semblance of order into their lives. In this sense, Ternate's reaction to the events between 1896-1901 was rather consistent with those of other Tagalog communities whose participation in the armed struggle rose and fell with the advance and retreat of the revolutionary forces. As the resistance in the other towns of Cavite broke down, so too did Ternate's involvement wane and ultimately cease.

Though the Ternateños' involvement in the revolution was limited and relatively short-lived, the central fact remains that they did participate. Their participation in the nationalist struggle was, in turn, the climax of a transformation that had been going on for generations, as the Mardicas transcended their Moluccan origins to become part of the Tagalog society and ultimately of the emerging Filipino nation. In this regard, the local elite of Ternate occupied a pivotal position in determining the shape and direction of this transition. Their proximity to the townspeople made their decisions to either join or withdraw from the national-

ist struggle a legitimate expression of the town's sentiments and aspirations. Such an observation should make one pause before describing the revolution of 1896 as purely a "revolt of the masses," for in Ternate, it was certainly the making of the local elite as much as it was of the common folk. By the same token, its subsequent cessation in the face of Spanish and later of American advances, was as much the result of the townspeople's decision to give up the armed struggle as it was of the elite's desire to recover a semblance of economic and social stability within the town. Indeed, it was this close identification of interests between the elite and rest of the people, not only in Ternate but in many parts of the country as well, that made possible the emergence of a Filipino nation in the dying years of Spanish colonial rule.

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