

# 5

## The Rise--and Fall (?)--of the *Ilustrada*, the 'Conservative Forces'

### A. *Puissance and Pouvoir*

The practice of mediation and resolution of conflicts of interest throughout Philippine political history followed two broadly different modes, namely, the 'constitutional' and the 'non-constitutional'. For our purposes, by *constitutional mediation* is meant that the settlement of political-legal conflict is done according to standards and rules which are not disallowed by law. It is thus that either they are expressly provided for by law, or they do not contravene the express policy in the law. Among other instances, such mediation may involve casting one's vote (e.g., during elections, plebiscites), or going on strike (by a labor union), or protesting peaceably against government policy, and so forth--that is, if not otherwise forbidden by law. The final resolution of the conflict is done by judicial findings; the protagonists become parties in interest and the court or tribunal which has jurisdiction the arbiter in the proceedings. Subject to all this, apparently, the most significant constitutional mediation in the Philippines had been *election* and *suffrage*. They refer to such questions as who were the electors and who could be the elected.

Be that as it may, any mode of mediation which resolves such conflict in proportion to--or by means of--the power or coercive force of some protagonist over another may be called *non-constitutional*. And this will be so regardless of whether or not it is disallowed by the law. We may readily cite, among others, such phenomena as mass protests and demonstrations, military takeovers (e.g., *coup d'etat*), and revolts and revolutions. The protagonists become class forces or intra-class factions; their conflict takes the form of the struggle for control of law-making (which is the essence of 'legal sovereignty'). All the same, in terms of political analysis, every protagonist's ultimate motivation in both modes (and

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

perhaps with sufficiently good fortune also the net result) remains formally invariable. Each side strives to obtain or retain its preponderance of power or maximum advantage over the other. Not illogically, it is the case that either the law became its means to given ends, or else it became obstructive; but with the latter mode, whichever side prevailed would also then be able to exercise political--*coercive*--sovereignty. Needless to say, however, when one failed or had become sufficiently weak, another (e.g., a class, faction) would always seek to take its place. As a result, then, as between the parties or factions, *ceteris paribus*, it would be a zero-sum relationship. One's gain varied inversely with the other's loss--and vice versa.

We may illustrate these modes further in the context of the Philippine experience. As mandated under the Philippine Bill of 1902,<sup>1</sup> the earliest national 'popular elections' were held in 1907 to constitute the National Assembly during the American Occupation. They were not an act of a politically 'sovereign people', however, but of a nation defeated in war and divided against itself. In fact, it is no less an imposition by a foreign power. Thus, its *cause-and-effect* significance would have been different from other indigenous revolutionary beginnings. In the United States between 1776 and 1787, for instance, such ideas as 'election' and 'representation' were some of the effects of the 'breakdown of confidence between the people-at-large and their representative governments'. With the early Americans, it was the thrust of Whig radicalism coming out triumphantly from the war of liberation against the English monarchy. In such a case, as Wood observes: 'Once the mutuality of interests between representatives and people that made representation what it was to most eighteenth-century Englishmen was broken down by the American atmosphere of suspicion and jealousy, the only criterion of representation left

---

<sup>1</sup> Agoncillo and Guerrero consider this as the 'first organic act of the Philippines'. A member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Henry Allen Cooper, had proposed a bill providing for the 'administration of civil government of the Philippines'. Having been passed by both the Senate and the House, it was signed into law by then president Theodore Roosevelt on July 2, 1902. Among other provisions, it laid out the mechanism for the establishment of a legislative body and the election of its members. See Agoncillo and Guerrero, *op cit.*, 295-299.

was election, which helps explain the Americans' increasing concern with the right to vote as a measure of representation'.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, with the Filipinos the emphasis might be expressed, more or less favorably, in terms of *means-to-ends* causation. For instance, according to the late Supreme Court Justice Jose B. Laurel in *Moya v. Del Fierro*: 'As long as popular government is an end to be achieved and safeguarded, suffrage, whatever may be the modality and form devised, must continue to be the means by which the great reservoir of power must be emptied into the receptacular agencies wrought by the people through their Constitution in the interest of good government and the common weal. Republicanism, in so far as it implies the adoption of a representative type of government, necessarily points to the enfranchised citizen as a particle of established authority. He has a voice in his government and whenever possible it is the solemn duty of the judiciary, when called upon to act in justiciable cases, to give efficacy and not to stifle it'.<sup>3</sup> Such is the case for constitutional mediation. Yet had it always prevailed? How could it have been sustained as against non-constitutional mediation? From a different perspective, the Marxist revolutionary Jose Maria Sison (referring to the more recent past) has this to say: 'The transition that occurred in the Philippines from 1983 to 1986 was one from a pro-US reactionary faction, ruling as an outright fascist clique, to another faction of the same kind, ruling with a bourgeois democratic facade. The same joint class dictatorship of the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class persists . . . for the intensified oppression and exploitation of the broad masses of the people'.<sup>4</sup> In sum, each form of mediation may then be said to have its own ends. With one (i.e., constitutional), it is, for instance, 'popular government' or 'good government and the common weal'; but with the other (non-constitutional), it is the 'oppression and

---

<sup>2</sup> Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1972), 387-388.

<sup>3</sup> 69 Phil. 199.

<sup>4</sup> Jose M. Sison, *The Continuing Struggle in the Philippines* (n.p.: New Progressive Review, 1988), 25-26. And see, e.g., Guerrero, *op cit.*, 132-156. The notion of 'class' is used here as an 'instrument of social and political conflict'.

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

exploitation . . . of the people'. In this chapter the historical basis of both types of mediation shall be discussed in the context of endemic social dysfunctions.

In over 300 years of Spanish domination, the Philippines had not been ruled constitutionally--that is, except for brief periods in the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> (By 'constitutional rule' is simply meant such rule or governance as limited by a written or codified constitution and according to its being deemed a 'fundamental law'.) True enough, various laws and codes were made to apply in the islands, among which were the *Recopilacion de las Indias*, the *Novisima Recopilacion*, *Siete Partidas*, and others. In fact, towards the end of the last century most of the codes and special laws promulgated after the Cadiz (Spain) Resolution of 1811 were also extended to the archipelago. Meanwhile, for administration purposes, the Philippines had been made a *gubernacion* under the vice-royalty of Mexico, even as the Filipinos were ultimately subject to the decrees of the king of Spain or the *Consejo de las Indias* acting in his name.

In spite of all this, the governor (who at the same time was captain-general) had long since exercised quasi-absolutist power and authority. As Agoncillo and Guerrero point out:

The integration of the Philippines with the Spanish Empire necessitated the establishment of a strong paternalistic and highly centralized government headed by a governor-general. Appointed by the Viceroy of Mexico and later by the Spanish king, the governor-

---

<sup>5</sup> After its promulgation by the *Cortes* (Parliament) in Spain on March 19, 1812, the Cadiz Constitution was proclaimed and made to apply in the Philippines until it was abrogated by King Ferdinand VII on May 4, 1814. Threatened with increasing unrest, however, he restored it on March 10, 1820, only to abolish it again on October 1, 1823 after securing the support of the French, Austrian, and other European monarchies. On both occasions when the Constitution took effect, the Philippines was represented in the *Cortes*. Finally, under the 'Royal Statute' of the Queen Regent Cristina, the *Cortes* was again convened on July 24, 1834; but under the Spanish Constitution, Philippine representation was rescinded on June 18, 1837, the *Cortes* having previously decided that 'the colonies should be governed by special laws'. See Zaide, *op cit.*, 2: 73-82. In general, however, the colony was governed according to what was called *cumplase* of the colonial governors. Agoncillo and Guerrero, *op cit.*, 78, 102.

general was the sole representative of the Spanish crown in the colony. As captain-general, vice-royal patron and president of the Royal Audiencia, he wielded vast military, ecclesiastical and legislative powers. The governor's overwhelming authority is indicated by his unrestricted use of the *cumplase* or the power to suspend the implementation of any royal order if, in his opinion, the conditions in the colony did not warrant its implementation. The use of the formula *Obedezco pero no cumplo* (I obey but I do not execute) rested on the assumption that the great distance between the colony and Spain circumscribed the king's, and his ministers', capacity to take into consideration the conditions obtaining in the colony in the enactment of any colonial legislation. Consequently, even the humane colonial laws, especially those that threatened to erode the powers of the governor, were not implemented. Indeed, in the hands of the governor, the *cumplase* was frequently used to enhance the selfish interests of the governor and his subordinates.<sup>6</sup>

Besides, the *peninsulares* (or Spaniards who came from Spain) monopolized the highest positions (e.g., as *corregidores*, *alcaldes mayores*) in the government. The ecclesiastical authorities exercised wide powers too--for instance, the control of the press, education, and municipal public works, supervision of the collection of taxes and taking of the census, and others. Finally, the native *principalia* were also allowed some political involvement but only in the municipalities and villages, even as they were circumscribed very narrowly by the Spanish civil and religious authorities.<sup>7</sup> They served as 'middlemen'--that is, as Agoncillo and Guerrero remark, by 'representing the will of the colonizers, making the latter's power and authority felt among the Filipinos and generally functioning as shock absorbers, protecting the colonial masters against the wrath of their own oppressed people'.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>7</sup> See Zaide, op cit., 2: 171-175; Constantino, op cit., 62-63; and Agoncillo and Guerrero, op cit., 81-83.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 81-82.

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

In the decades before the onset of the *Katipunan* 'insurrection' (1896), there were already five main social-political classes in colonial society. They were the *peninsulares*, *insulares* or creoles and Spanish *mestizos*, Chinese *mestizos*, *indios*, and the Chinese. In terms of racial privilege (and often also of wealth) the *peninsulares* ranked highest and the Chinese least. But the native *principalia* (or upper class or elite) must be counted among the 'ruling classes'. On the other hand, the migrant Chinese were among the 'under-classes', having suffered continual persecution (even massacres), expulsion, and other forms of restriction (such as higher tax rates) from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. After 1850, however, restrictions on the Chinese were rescinded; and quickly enough they acquired much wealth out of coolie brokerage, opium monopoly, tobacco-purchasing, and other means. The net result was that the natives had been pushed down to the bottom of the socio-political structure.<sup>9</sup>

In such context who were the *ilustrados*? And what did they fight for--and had accomplished? In contrast to the peninsular Spaniards, they included the so-called creoles or *insulares* (Spaniards born in the Philippines), the Spanish and Chinese half-breeds (or *mestizos*), and urbanized *indios* (natives).<sup>10</sup> Culturally hispanized as well, many of them had descended from the *principalia* classes. They had studied in Philippine and European universities. And they had already prospered through the colony's economic upturn in the nineteenth century. Thus, they had also gained leadership in finance and education, owing much to European influences. Taking note of their 'education' and 'property', Constantino remarks: 'While it is true that some *ilustrados* were not as rich as others, it must be remembered that during this period education was almost exclusively the prerogative of wealth. The rich were wise and the wise were rich. Money and culture separated them from the masses'.<sup>11</sup> Open access to government bureaucracy would thus only make their middle-

---

<sup>9</sup> See Constantino, op cit., 124-127, 150-151.

<sup>10</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Renato Constantino, *Dissent and Counter-Consciousness* (Q.C., Phil., 1970), 114-118.

class ascendancy more 'secure and influential'--a recognition of their worth and achievement.

Emerging for the first time in the latter half of the century, they sought a role in the exercise of the powers of government. The inhabitants, however, had always been regarded as an 'inferior race' by the *peninsulares*; and before Augustin's governorship (1898), the *insulares* were even contemptuously called 'Filipinos' while the indigenous inhabitants were called 'indios', no less unflattering a cognomen.<sup>12</sup> Again Constantino says:

[T]he term *Filipino* started as an elitist concept with racial connotations. *Filipino* was used to designate the creoles or the Spaniards born in the Philippines in contrast to the *peninsulares* or those who were born in the Iberian peninsula. The natives were called *indios*. The real colonial elite was limited to the *peninsulares*--Spanish officialdom and the Spanish clergy--though the 'Filipinos' or creoles who were in the social and political periphery were considered as part of the broader spectrum of the ruling class because their race assured them social status just below the *peninsulares*. But it was subsequently appropriated by the sub-ruling class groupings--the Spanish and Chinese mestizos and the Hispanized native elite. The ilustrados imbued it with 'national' significance to include the inhabitants of the Philippines regardless of racial strain or economic status.<sup>13</sup>

They were thus rebuffed. And so as the importunities and excesses of the friars and *peninsulares* continued unabated, the Enlightenment-influenced *ilustrados* launched the unprecedented Reform or Propaganda movement (esp. 1882-1896).<sup>14</sup> Among their grievances were the Filipinization of

---

12 See Agoncillo and Guerrero, *op cit.*, 117, 130.

13 Constantino, *Dissent and Counter-Consciousness*, *op cit.*, 114-115.

14 According to Dr. Zaide, the Propaganda movement began in 1872 after the execution of the three Filipino priests, Frs. Burgos, Gomez, and Zamora; and ended in 1892 just as Andres Bonifacio, a plebeian revolutionary, had founded the *Katipunan*. Zaide, *op cit.*, 2: 199. However, since the agitation for reforms were largely done in Spain, it is noteworthy that it was in September 1882 when attempts were begun to unite various

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

the parishes, representation in the Spanish *Cortes* (or Parliament), and the reform of colonial administration. All the while, however, they stopped short of calling for complete separation from peninsular Spain.

Meanwhile, Andres Bonifacio, the so-called Great Plebeian, had founded the *Katipunan* movement in July 1892 along with other plebeians such as Teodoro Plata and Deodato Arellano (who was the first *Katipunan* president). Two years later, another plebeian patriot, Emilio Jacinto joined the movement. However, soon after the Revolution broke out (i.e., August 1896), the leadership changed. The schoolteacher Emilio Aguinaldo, Mariano Trias, Riego de Dios, and the elitist *Magdalo* faction eventually dominated the revolutionary forces and replaced the *Katipunan* with the Revolutionary Government and the *Biaknabato* Republic (November 1897). Thus, no sooner had the Propaganda movement failed than the *ilustrados* manoeuvred and intercepted the leadership of the *indio*-initiated *Katipunan* revolution (1896-1898). Thenceforth, the *indios* continued to battle government-conscripted soldiers, even as Emilio Aguinaldo and other *ilustrado* leaders still wavered between assimilation to Spain and independence from it. In sum, though, Aguinaldo's leadership of the Resistance was disastrous. He failed to win over the masses' support through, for instance, an ideology for social and economic change; instead, he 'restricted suffrage to the wealthy and the educated, and . . . placed municipal and provincial governments in the hands of the local magnates'.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, towards the end of the century, the *ilustrados* had virtually achieved two things after only two or three decades: they overthrew Spanish racist-colonial despotism; and they had gained undisputed, political leadership over the masses. In the case of the latter, most symbolically, the *ilustrado* leader Aguinaldo had first to

---

factions in Europe. And after the last issue of the Propaganda periodical, *La Solidaridad*, in November 1895, the foremost leaders of the Movement, Lopez Jaena and Del Pilar, died the following year. See also Leroy, op cit., 118-131.

<sup>15</sup> Glenn A. May, 'Why the United States Won the Philippine-American War, 1899-1902', *Pacific Historical Review* 52 (Nov. 1983): 353-377.



murder the foremost *katipunero* Andres Bonifacio.<sup>16</sup> When the Philippine Revolution ended, they set up the short-lived Malolos Republic in January 1899, even as Independence had been proclaimed on June 12 the year before. But within three years the Republic collapsed in the face of massive and sustained onslaught by the Americans. Thenceforth, constitutional mediation was to be done only with the sanction of the United States. But as might also be seen, the *ilustrados* had already set the terms--economically and then politically--of any viable mediation with the 'Filipino people'. In this regard, then, the appellation *clase ilustrada* collects into a functional grouping the former *ilustrados* (during the Spanish period) and the latter *ilustrados* (American period) both of whom were distinguished by wealth and education as well as leadership in constitutional mediation. It also includes those sectors whose unequal exchange value (that is, in power relations) put them in positions of privilege and superiority. The *ilustrada* may be said to have been dominated by the 'big landlords' and 'comprador big bourgeoisie'.<sup>17</sup>

Contrary to the *cumplase* of Spanish governors, American constitutional jurisprudence became the political-legal basis of twentieth-century colonial rulership and government. As the *Treaty of Peace Between United States and Spain* proclaimed, the 'civil rights' and 'political status' of the inhabitants of the Philippines were to be determined by the United States' Congress, and that, among others, '[the] inhabitants . . . shall be secured in the free exercise of the religion'.<sup>18</sup> As the territories thus passed to the United States, the political laws applied hitherto in the colony were abrogated; and new organic laws were passed, among which were President McKinley's instructions (1900), the Philippine Bill of 1902, Jones Law (1916), and Tydings-McDuffie Law (1934). The new 'constitutionalism' worked out far-reaching changes in state-oriented relationships including the

---

<sup>16</sup> See Apolinario Mabini, 'The Rise and Fall of the Philippine Republic', in *The Filipinos' Fight for Freedom*, ed.(?) Austin Craig (New York: AMS Press, 1973), 325-326.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Guerrero, *op cit.*, 130.

<sup>18</sup> See the 'Treaty of Peace Between United States and Spain' (signed at Paris, France, Dec. 10, 1898).

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

jurisdictional separation of church and state, doctrines of right and rationality (e.g., rule of law, etc.), a bill of rights, representative government, and the promise of eventual political independence.<sup>19</sup>

For our purposes, the importance of two politico-legal doctrines cannot be overemphasized. These are (1) the Sovereignty (Political) of the People, and (2) the Separation of (Interdependent) Powers. The first purportedly served to locate, in the sense of *puissance*, the 'supreme . . . power inherent in a State by which the State is governed'.<sup>20</sup> The second posited the distribution and division of powers of government and assigned the conditions of the exercise of power--or *pouvoir*. As Laurel innocuously put it, it was intended 'to secure action, to forestall over action, to prevent despotism and to obtain efficiency'.<sup>21</sup> Constitutionally legitimized, it supposedly applied to both colonizers and the colonized.

Accordingly, the *ilustrados* found 'fertile ground' upon which to consolidate their state-oriented leadership. A system of 'power-sharing'--or separation of powers of sorts--was worked out with the Americans; that is, the colonizers exercising 'sovereign' powers and they 'delegated' powers, but both acting interdependently on each other. On this basis they laid the groundwork of their *pouvoir constitue* (or constituted power). But they also became the colonial rulers' surrogates in *pouvoir constituant* (or the power to constitute).<sup>22</sup>

---

19 See McKinley's instructions (April 7, 1900) which included 'certain great principles and rules of government', e.g., 'no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law', etc., as well as 'the separation between state and church shall be real, entire, and absolute'. On the separation between church and state, see further President McKinley's instructions to the Second Philippine Commission (1900), the Philippine Bill of 1902, the Jones Law (1916), and the Tydings-McDuffie Act (1934). On the 'promise' of independence, see the Jones Law (1916), the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Law (1933), and Tydings-McDuffie (1934).

20 See Murphy et al., op cit., 24.

21 See *Pangasinan Transportation v. PSC*, 40 O.G., 8th Supp. 57.

22 These types of *pouvoir* are taken from Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1973), ch. 4. Referring to the American 'post-Revolution' period, Arendt comments thus: 'Those who received the power to constitute, to frame constitutions, were duly elected delegates of constituted bodies; they received their authority

Overreaching themselves, it is reported by a former Philippine Commission member that on August 28, 1905, leading *ilustrados* (including Sergio Osmena, Vicente Ilustre, etc.) even petitioned the U.S. secretary of war (then W. H. Taft) according to the following terms:

In spite of the unquestionable political capacity of the Filipino people, the result of their present degree of culture and civilization, that they are in a condition for self-government is denied in varying degrees and forms, though precisely the contrary is demonstrated by facts, experiences and considerations, among which the following deserve mention:

First. It is an irrefutable fact that the Filipino people are governable; the period of Spanish dominion and of the present American sovereignty bear out this assertion. The political condition of a country principally depends upon the degree of governableness of its people; the more governable the popular classes are the better the political condition of the country.

When a people such as the Filipinos give signal evidence of their capacity to obey during a period of over three hundred years, free from disturbance or deep political commotions, it must be granted, considering that all things tend to progress, that they possess the art of government; all the more so because, among other powers, they possess that of assimilation in a marked degree, an assimilativeness which distinguishes them from other people of the Far East.

Second. If the masses of the people are

---

from below'. Ibid., 166. In contrast, however, see, e.g., Owen, 'Philippine Society and American Colonialism', op cit., 38: 'the Americans legitimized the elite's *de facto* power at the local level by supplying it with a strong political identity through the holding of public office. By 1901 local governments were controlled by the *principalia*, and six years later a Filipino legislative assembly was organized, thus furnishing the elite with an important institution on which to consolidate its national authority. In seven short years of American presence the so-called "greedy politicians" were well on their way to establishing a nearly unchallengeable position within the government structure. Having acquired this position, there was little the Americans could do within the framework of their own commitments to impede the continued entrenchment of these politically articulate Filipinos'.

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

governable, a part must necessarily be denominated the directing class, for as in the march of progress, moral or material, nations do not advance at the same rate, some going forward while others fall behind, so it is with the inhabitants of a country, as observation will prove.

Third. If the Philippine Archipelago has a popular governable mass called upon to obey and a directing class charged with the duty of governing, it is in a condition to govern itself.

These factors, not counting the incidental ones, are the only two by which to determine the political capacity of a country--an entity that knows how to govern, the directing class, and an entity that knows how to obey, the popular masses.<sup>23</sup>

Such an arrangement was 'not fashionable', however, and the Americans ignored it. All the same, the *ilustrados* then emerged 'as popular leaders rather than as a directing class'--resting, purportedly, on the 'twin pillars of nationalism and independence'.<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless, no longer merely the 'middlemen' nor yet the 'directing class', they were much better off with their requisite *pouvoir constitue* than the old *principalia* had been under the erstwhile Spanish colonizers. In fact, almost as soon as the Philippines had been ceded by Spain to the United States, a rapprochement between the Americans and some leading *ilustrados* seemed to have been reached. This was so even as President Aguinaldo's revolutionary government continued its armed resistance in many parts of the archipelago. (Interestingly, the Negros elites had spurned Aguinaldo's leadership. And when U.S. Gen. J. F. Smith's troops arrived there on March 4, 1899, they 'welcomed the invaders with joyous festivities'.<sup>25</sup>) They were then co-opted at various levels of the colonial government. Indeed, through

---

23 Charles Burke Elliott, *The Philippines, To The End of the Commission Government: A Study in Tropical Democracy* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 405-406.

24 Usha Mahajani, *Philippine Nationalism: External Challenge and Filipino Response, 1565-1946* (St. Lucia, Qld.: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1971), 335.

25 Zaide, *op cit.*, 2: 321.

the Schurman Commission (1899-1900), as one historian observes, 'the Americans and the *ilustrados* had discovered each other, and found in each other familiar values; by mid-1899 a symbiotic relationship had begun that was to continue throughout the American period and beyond'.<sup>26</sup>

Before long, having held minor or lower-level positions early in the Occupation, they soon shared in centralized political mediation--including Muslim affairs--under the American governor-generals. Through the first elections and voting, they took control of the Philippine Assembly, which shared legislative powers since late 1907 with the American-controlled Philippine Commission. Specifically, with the Philippine Bill of 1902, the Philippine Assembly was to be the 'lower house' and the Philippine Commission, the 'upper house'; but they were to share 'the power of legislating for the Christian population of the country'.<sup>27</sup> Within ten years, under the Jones Law of 1916 (Philippine Autonomy Act), the Commission was replaced by a senate which together with the Assembly constituted an all-Filipino bicameral legislature. The executive power, however, remained with an American governor-general, and judicial power with the Supreme Court (and lower courts) whose members were all appointed by the president and confirmed by the senate of the United States. Finally, under the Tydings-McDuffie Law, a constitution was drawn up. It was approved by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt (March 23, 1935), and ratified by the Filipino

---

26 Owen, 'Philippine Society and American Colonialism', op cit., 4. The Commission was constituted by U.S. President McKinley on Jan. 21, 1899, to 'facilitate the most humane, pacific, and effective extension of authority throughout these islands, and to secure, with the least possible delay, the benefits of a wise and generous protection of life and property to the inhabitants'. It was composed of Jacob G. Schurman, George Dewey, Maj. Gen. Elwell S. Otis, Charles Denby, and Dean C. Worcester. Upon the arrival of the civilian members in March 1899, they found the causes of the Filipino-American War (which they called the 'Tagalog Rebellion') were due to 'the ambitions of a few and the misunderstanding of the many'; and that 'the peoples of the Philippine Islands . . . do not . . . generally desire independence'. According to alleged testimonies of witnesses, 'an independent sovereign Philippine state was at the present time neither possible nor desirable'. See the *Report of the Philippine Commission to the President*, vol.1, Jan. 31, 1900 (Washington Govt. Print. Off.), 3, 82-83 ff.

27 Zaide, op cit., 2: 351.

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

people (May 14, 1935). The first elections were held on September 17, 1935 in which the Quezon-Osmena coalition Party (*Nacionalistas*) won over the Nationalist Socialist Party headed by the former revolutionary president Aguinaldo and the Republican Party of former Catholic bishop Gregorio Aglipay's. With 'independence' in sight, they set up the Commonwealth government (1935-1946) with Manuel L. Quezon and Sergio Osmena as its first elected president and vice president. The American-approved Constitution, under which this government was constituted, took effect in May 1935.

The *ilustrados* had also become the foremost spokesmen or mouthpieces of the *tao* (or common man), even as from the mid-nineteenth century the masses had already looked up to them as their 'natural' leaders. In their relations now with the Americans, they 'represented' the whole Filipino nation; that is, whether they were revolutionaries (e.g., Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo and Dr. Pedro Paterno) or collaborators (e.g., Cayetano Arellano and Dr. T. H. Pardo de Tavera). Thus, after his capture in March 1901 Aguinaldo took the oath of allegiance to the United States, and called for 'the complete termination of hostilities'. Even more significantly, the *ilustrados* organized their political parties in order that, among other things, they might more credibly present their 'visions and ideologies' as the Filipino peoples' as well. They also headed eight 'Independence Missions' to Washington, D.C. from 1919-1934. The last mission headed by the then senate president Quezon resulted in the passage by the United States' Congress of the so-called Tydings-McDuffie Law, also known as the 'Philippine Independence Law'.

Contributing to their 'right' of representation were certain indigenous disvalues that had continued to keep the masses in abject dependence and powerlessness. Among other factors, there were widespread illiteracy, rapid population growth, and the demise of plebeian leaders like Bonifacio, Emilio Jacinto, 'Papa Isio', and others. Even as they had also desired 'independence' (a legacy of the *Katipunan*), the plebeian masses were haplessly at a loss over their class role--as well as about their expectations--in the new and different polity. Moreover, the expansion of educational facilities suffused in American values, the Filipinization of government

service, and other liberalization policies confirmed and reinforced their dependence consciousness. As a result of these veritable 'de-Filipinization' policies, Constantino claims, the United States earned 'the loyalty of millions of Filipinos whose sense of values was distorted, whose children were mis-educated, and whose tastes were conditioned to the consumption of American products'.<sup>28</sup> Thus, due to all this the masses' class consciousness remained feeble. And an effectual, constitutional plebeian leadership failed to take root.

In the long run these social classes--that is, the elites, also called the 'rich and intelligent' or the 'most enlightened', and the plebeians, the 'low people, vulgar'<sup>29</sup>--had co-existed in contrasting (though not dichotomous) relationship. Since the end of World War II, only the politicized, cosmopolitan-Western *ilustrados* had the undifferentiated 'prerogative' to exercise the Filipino people's putative sovereignty. But the largely folk-Catholic lower classes had had to be made docile and governable in their concerns and expectations; that is, mainly by means of the rationalized constitutional mediation (including, as Vernon Bogdanor says, a 'set of virtues amongst the ruled; and these virtues must include self-restraint, a willingness not to push the pursuit of one's aims beyond a certain point'.<sup>30</sup>) In this context the *ilustrada's* political role had undergone a change both in kind and by degree. But as much as in socio-economic relationships, there had only been a change by degree (but not in kind) among the *taos* or masses. In all the extent and degree of the former's power and authority varied inversely with that of the latter--in the same way as, eventually, that between the erstwhile colonizers and colonials. This, in most specific terms, had been the zero-sum relationship of the class forces.

---

28 Constantino, *A Past Revisited*, op cit., 314. When the ten-year preferential tariff under the Treaty of Paris had lapsed, the U.S. Congress passed the Payne-Aldrich Act of 1909 (partial 'free trade') and the Underwood-Simmons Tariff Act of 1913 (full 'free trade'). Among others, 'free trade' resulted in gross imbalance of *hacienda* production and unlimited duty-free exports by the U.S., but quota-restricted exports from the Philippines.

29 Owen, 'Philippine Society and American Colonialism', op cit., 4, citing contemporaneous testimonies before the Schurman Commission (1899).

30 Bogdanor, op cit., 3.

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

### B. Centrifugal Tendencies: Zero-Sum Relations of Class Forces

#### a. Constitutional Mediation

The *Partido Federal* (Federal Party) was the first *ilustrado* political party to have been formed. It was founded in December 1900 by Pardo de Tavera and some other former supporters of Aguinaldo's with the approval of the then U.S. governor-general W. H. Taft. These were the conservative *pacificos* (or 'autonomists') who had accepted the Schurman Commission's offer of autonomy under American sovereignty.<sup>31</sup> While the more uncompromising revolutionaries continued to fight for independence, they now called for 'statehood' of the Philippines within the American Union. (It seems this was the first public campaign for such a humiliating policy. But it also showed to what extent American initiatives were quickly influencing Filipino leadership. In fact, over the years this anti-nationalistic, pro-American stance had won many more Filipino adherents. The most recent campaign was launched in the early 1970s; it was broken off, however, when martial law took effect in September 1972. Meanwhile, the issue of 'independence' had figured in all nationalist-oriented movements. From the 1970s down to the mid-1980s, the extreme Left had set it up against the so-called US-Marcos Dictatorship.)

At any rate, as early as 1901 three *Federalistas*--all of them distinguished, educated, and wealthy<sup>32</sup>--then became the first Filipino members of the American-controlled (Second) Philippine Commission.<sup>33</sup> But after restrictions on nationalist movements were lifted a few years later, the *Partido Independista Inmediata* (Immediate Independence Party) and

---

31 See *Report of the Philippine Commission*, op cit., 3-5.

32 They were Dr. Pardo de Tavera, Jose Luzuriaga, and Benito Legarda, all of whom were members of the Federal Party. Other *ilustrados* were also appointed to high offices including Cayetano Arellano, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 1899.

33 The Second Commission was dispatched by McKinley on March 16, 1900. It was headed by then Judge William Howard Taft (who later became U.S. president). Unlike the Schurman Commission (whose function was merely advisory), the Taft Commission had mainly legislative powers.



the *Union Nacionalista* (Nationalist Union) merged into the *Nacionalista* Party which had since continued the campaign for independence.<sup>34</sup> Led by political leaders Quezon and Osmena, Rafael Palma, and others, the *Nacionalistas* then swamped the *Federalistas* in the first elections for the Assembly in January 1907. Earlier, however, the latter had already changed into the *Partido Nacional Progresista*, and likewise called for what it termed 'ultimate independence'. In 1917, after suffering yet another defeat by the *Nacionalistas* the year before, the *Progresistas* combined with another minority grouping, the *Partido Democrata Nacional* (National Democratic Party), to form the *Partido Democrata* (Democratic Party), the main opposition party until 1931. But it ceased to be effective when they joined with *Nacionalista* leaders in 1926-27 to form the Supreme National Council under Quezon's presidency. All the same until the Second World War, the *Nacionalistas* with both Quezon's and Osmena's factions had continuously dominated electoral political mediation in the colony.

Constitutional politics ceased after the Japanese Imperial Forces had invaded the Philippines (December 1941) and were not restored until the Second World War (1941-1945) had ended. During the interregnum there was only one 'legally'-sanctioned 'political party', the Japanese-controlled *Kapisanan sa Paglilingkod sa Bagong Pilipinas* (KALIBAPI--Society for Service to the New Philippines) which came into being in December 1942.<sup>35</sup> Within a year its members ratified a new 'constitution' and elected half of the members of the New National Assembly (the other half being incumbent provincial governors and city mayors). In September 1943, the Assembly elected Dr. Jose P. Laurel as president of the Japanese-sponsored 'Republic'. But by the middle of 1944 the liberation of the islands by the Allied Forces had begun; and as the war ended the next year, the Commonwealth government under President Osmena was finally re-established in Manila in February 1945.<sup>36</sup> The first Congress met for the first time on

---

34 See Zaide, op cit., 2: 347-348.

35 See *ibid.*, 500-501.

36 See *ibid.*, 523. President Quezon had died in New York on August 1, 1944. He and Osmena had previously won the first election and again in

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

June 9, 1945 since the national elections in 1941. And U.S. Gen. Douglas MacArthur, the USAFFE commander, proclaimed the liberation of the Philippines on July 4, 1945. In the presidential elections the following year (April 23, 1946), the Filipinos were faced with the unenviable choice of electing a 'collaborator' during the Japanese Occupation (i.e., Roxas) and the once 'Spanish loyalist' during the Revolution (Osmena). Backed by MacArthur, the former won. And so he became the first president of the Republic when 'independence' was granted by the U.S. on July 4, 1946.

Since then and after Republican government had been re-established (July 1946), two *ilustrado*-controlled groupings immediately took dominant positions in constitutional-legal political mediation. One was the old *Nacionalista* Party. The other was a new breakaway grouping, the *Liberal* Party, which was formed in 1945 by then senate president and subsequently first president of the Republic, Manuel A. Roxas and other former *Nacionalistas*. These parties had since alternated in holding and exercising government power. And, as a result, they also shared in the 'spoils system' from the national and local elections. In such case, according to one analyst, 'to be with the party in power means pork funds, fat concessions, jobs for proteges, aid and support during elections, relative immunity from political vendetta, and, of course, opportunities for making money'.<sup>37</sup> To be sure, some other groupings had at times appeared, for instance, the 'Modernist Party' (1946), Jose Avelino's rebel 'Liberals' (1949), and others. Among these minor political parties, however, the most ambitious was the Progressive Party which was led by Raul Manglapus and Manuel Manahan. They fielded candidates, among others, for president and vice-president in the elections in 1957 and 1965. But the party lost both elections and folded up. In fact, all

---

November 1941; and on both occasions, he was the president-elect and Osmena the vice-president-elect. Quezon also beat Abad Santos in 1941.

<sup>37</sup> Napoleon Rama, 'A History of Political Infidelity', *Philippine Free Press*, Oct. 20, 1962, 3. And see M. Aurora Carbonell-Catilo, Josie H. de Leon and Eleanor E. Nicolas, *Manipulated Elections* (n.p., 1985), esp. ch. 2, which discusses the 'electoral manipulation' by the parties in power, e.g., the *Liberal* Party under Quirino in 1949 and the *Nacionalista* Party under Marcos in 1969, in the form of pork barrel money and funding from government financing institutions.

these 'third forces' failed to break the monopoly of post-war presidential and congressional elections by the *Liberals* and *Nacionalistas*. Accordingly, the *Liberals* won the elections in 1946, with Roxas as president, Elpidio Quirino vice president, and in 1949, with Quirino as president and Fernando Lopez vice president; the *Nacionalistas* in 1953, with Ramon Magsaysay as president and Carlos P. Garcia vice president, and in 1957, with Garcia as president but Diosdado Macapagal (*Liberal*) was elected vice president; the *Liberals* again in 1961, with Macapagal as president and Emmanuel Pelaez vice president; but the *Nacionalistas* in 1965 and 1969, with Ferdinand E. Marcos as president and Fernando Lopez again vice president.

Consistent with these practices, not a few scholars and writers have noted the existence of 'what has become a lively yet remarkably united and stable democracy' in the 1960s, basing its development on the competition of the two virtually similar political parties. These were, as mentioned above, the *Nacionalistas* and the *Liberals*. Unexceptionably, for instance, Carl H. Lande, an eminent American scholar, describes it thus:

The fact that competition in Philippine politics is restricted to parties and politicians with programs which differ but little from each other and to candidates who are alike in seeking to represent all regions of the country, all social strata, and all organized and unorganized interests does much to mitigate the potentially divisive consequences of the existence of differences in the needs of diverse regions, social strata, and interests.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Carl H. Lande, *Leaders, Factions, and Parties: The Structure of Philippine Politics* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Southeast Asian Studies, 1964), 119. According to James C. Scott, Lande was 'the first to apply explicitly the patron-client model to Southeast Asian politics, [who] found it an indispensable tool in explaining the absence of class-based voting and the alliances between "big people" and "little people" that characterized Philippine parties'. Scott, op cit., 169 n. 18. Grossholtz claims that 'inequality is no longer an issue', and that 'in any survey of the prospects for democratic development of emerging nations, the Philippines stands out as a success'. Grossholtz, op cit., 3, 13. Cf. David Steinberg, 'Tradition and Response', in *Crisis in the Philippines: The Marcos Era and Beyond*, ed. John Bresnan (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1986), 53-54, on the 'possible interpretations about the old order, the period from 1946 to 1972'. And see also Ruby R. Paredes, 'The Origins of National Politics: Taft and the

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

Thus, a 'clash of interests and the exacerbation of hostility between diverse regions and social classes' are avoided at election time. The two parties foster 'national unity', that is, between various sectors of society. They also foster unity between politicians of opposite parties as well--which we might call 'ideological unity'--due to lack of intraparty unity and discipline. Finally, Lande belittles some perceived 'serious disadvantages for the country', including the fact that such 'competition . . . being a great waste of the nation's resources', although feebly moralizing to us all that 'these shortcomings hardly seem too high a price to pay for the preservation of individual liberty and economic opportunity under . . . democracy'. In other words, the so-called unity between the parties and candidates represented or was equivalent to the unity among the people--or rather the social classes. And without this unity, what he calls 'individual liberty and economic opportunity under . . . democracy' might not be preserved.

It is noteworthy, however, that these political groupings were by and large not without class-based ideological agreement and purpose. Their visions and narratives were, in fact, all in keeping with the *Weltanschauung* of the *clase ilustrada*; and, most specifically, they were as much pro-American as they were all professedly anti-communist. And in both principle and policy (such as on labor and agrarian issues), their thrust had been consistent almost by the book; that is, they sought to keep the country agrarian in its economy, and to maintain the *ilustrada's* hegemony.<sup>39</sup> Non-ideologically, then, their conflict and rivalry, especially between the *Nacionalistas* and *Liberals*, revolved around the question as to which ruling-class faction or combine should at

---

Partido Federal', in *Philippine Colonial Democracy*, ed. Ruby R. Paredes (Quezon City, Phil.: Ateneo de Manila Univ. Press, 1989), 41-69, for an interesting account of the roots of patron-client relations in terms of what we have called 'constitutional mediation' during the American Occupation.

<sup>39</sup> The largely agrarian (*hacienda*) economy had been the main basis and dynamic of inequality in elite-plebeian social roles, while the elites' hegemony circumscribed the constitutionalization (i.e., in terms of 'narratives') of folk-charismatic relationships. A world-view based on this would link both relations--charismatic and state-oriented--in terms of 'origination' and 'functionalization'.

given times exercise the *pouvoir constitue*. It is thus not surprising that their 'programs . . . differ but little' and 'candidates who are alike . . . represent all'. True enough, for these purposes they were founded upon tiers or clusters of alliances (though unstable and shifting) and were dependent on certain practices (such as vote-buying, warlord terrorism, and legal privileges).<sup>40</sup> All this was, however, over-determined by prevalent folk-charismatic values and relationships; that is, in sum, by 'property' and 'patronage'. As a result the *ilustrados* had sustained and continued their leadership--that is, as the 'foremost spokesmen or mouthpieces of the *tao* (common man)'. Parenthetically though, we may mention some rudimentary but notable exceptions. Between 1945 and 1948 a number of elite-class 'liberals' joined with militant labor and peasant leaders--including the wartime *Huks*--to form the 'Democratic Alliance', and to seek, among others, agrarian and industrial reforms. And in 1957 Senator Claro M. Recto, a brilliant nationalist politician, became the presidential candidate of the anti-American 'Nationalist Citizens Party'. Much as they had tried, but not unlike all their more radical predecessors (including the pre-war Communist and Socialist Parties), they could not succeed against the conservative-oligarchic, *ilustrado* mainstream leadership.

Meanwhile, the lively competition of these political groupings and their alternate control of the government based on voting had been of the essence in many a Filipino's understanding of what such ideals as 'freedom', 'democracy', and other related notions meant. Even if imperfectly, they were a testimony that at least constitutional rights doctrines were in effect. By offering a choice of candidates, the *ilustrados* had also worked out a way by which the masses would understand and abide by the prevailing 'liberal-democratic' political system. And so especially among reform-minded idealists but by no means less so with folk-Catholic 'groundlings', awaiting 'peaceful or non-violent reforms' by honest and sincere political messiahs overbalanced the need for

---

40 See, e.g., Jose Veloso Abueva, 'What are we in power for?: The Sociology of Graft and Corruption', *Philippine Sociological Review* 18 (July-Oct. 1970): 203-208; and Meliton C. Salazar, 'Comment on the Abueva Paper', *Philippine Sociological Review* 18 (July-Oct. 1970): 209-210.

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

them to resort to desperate or violent changes or take 'the law in their hands'. Hardly encouraging to those who subscribed to this, however, would be the practical effects of such policies and goals which, following Lande, should have fostered 'national unity', but which *ilustrado*-dominated political parties and the *ilustrado*-controlled government worked out merely to mediate social issues. Among these issues the one that magnified the classes' conflict of interest the most was the problem of 'land or agrarian reforms'. This was only to be expected since the Philippines, like most underdeveloped countries, had had a widely agricultural economy; and a great proportion of its population--70% more or less--lived in the rural and farming areas. Vastly oppressive agrarian conditions had constantly kept the masses, especially in Central Luzon, Negros Occidental, and Mindanao, in continual ferment and instability.

To be sure, government efforts at socio-economic reform could be traced back to the 1930s and 1940s. President Quezon originally launched his so-called social justice program after the *Sakdal* revolt in the Tagalog provinces (May 1935), and in the face of continuing social unrest in the countryside. Among others, reform legislation was undertaken in order to create new owner-farmers (e.g., Commonwealth Act [CA] 20, CA 260, etc.) and to improve tenancy and agricultural conditions (e.g., CA 4113, Republic Acts [RA] 34 and 44, etc.). The former 'generally authorized the President to "acquire portions of large estates" through expropriation, negotiated purchase or lease and to make them available at cost to small farmers'.<sup>41</sup> The latter purportedly sought to protect the rights of tenants and, among others, to establish fixed rental payments.<sup>42</sup> They were no more than mere narrow reformist attempts, however, which had no hope of benefiting the lower, laboring classes significantly. Their scope was generally exceptional, and enforcement provisions were inadequate. Even with the much-vaunted Agricultural Land Reform Code of 1963, textual loopholes were also insurmountable (e.g., sections 4, 8, etc.). On top of all this

---

41 Hung-Chao Tai, *Land Reform and Politics: A Comparative Analysis* (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1974), 145.

42 See *ibid.*

Congress allocated a measly 'less than a million pesos for its first year of implementation but which could have needed at least P200 million and P300 million more in the next three years to be successful'.<sup>43</sup> In all, as Kerkvliet observes, the singular purpose of these initiatives was simply 'to undercut existing or potential unrest'.<sup>44</sup>

And so besides keeping the economy agrarian and strongly maintaining their grip on the government, the *ilustrados* made out a semblance (even if flimsy and ungainful to the masses) of 'democracy' and 'national unity'. And while the landed oligarchy and foreign interests also maintained their hegemony and ascendancy, there had been the grossest 'government neglect of socio-political issues and planning'. It is thus on the agrarian issues that the 'battle lines' between the classes would have been drawn. The *clase ilustrada* had, however, camouflaged itself in many ways. Among others, as educational facilities expanded and literacy spread, *ilustrado* values had continually seeped into the consciousness of the masses. (In many ways such values could not but make them more conscious of their 'inferiority' because they were not able to emulate the *ilustrados*.) And if such processes failed, the armed forces--with recruits from the masses as well--would be unleashed upon them. Sectors of the masses, especially those who were now either educated or conscripted, would thus find themselves at the frontlines to confront plebeian leaders themselves. Indeed, we may recall what Constantino has observed with the *ilustrada* towards the end of the last century: 'They were joined by some who by Philippine standards were already considered affluent and by others who though quite poor, had economic and social aspirations akin to those of their better situated countrymen because of the nature of their

---

43 Renato Constantino and Letizia R. Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past* (Quezon City, Phil.: Foundation of Nationalist Studies, 1978), 320.

44 Benedict J. Kerkvliet, 'Land Reform in the Philippines Since the Marcos Coup', *Pacific Affairs* 47 (fall 1974): 288. See also Joaquin Bernas, 'Prospects for Effective Constitutional Land Reform', *Philippine Sociological Review* 18 (July-Oct. 1970): 175-177; and Basilio N. de los Reyes, 'Can Land Reform Succeed?' *Philippine Sociological Review* 20, Jan.-April 1972): 79-92, for a discussion of the Code of 1963 and the Code of Agrarian Reforms of 1971.

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

employment, their education and their urbanization'.<sup>45</sup> The effect is that the *ilustrada* remained as it had been while appearing to have transformed itself--that is, as including those whose interests were compatible to it 'because of . . . their employment, their education and their urbanization'. Thenceforth, the weapons of oppression (by the *ilustrada*) and of liberation (by the masses) would 'lock in battle' at both levels. Yet for the masses, with what values and what arms could they succeed? In Gottschalk's terms, it was about questions of 'leadership' and a 'program of reform'.

### b. Non-Constitutional Mediation

In contrast to several centuries of abortive and often tragic armed uprisings, a different political development--an incipient, radical *plebeian leadership*--began to take root shortly after the United States had annexed the country. This was the radical offshoot from the struggles for national independence, and a backlash to the growing dominance of the conservative *ilustrados*. Incidentally, the concept of *plebeian leadership* presupposes the existence of 'plebeian groupings' or 'people's organizations'. These organizations are not like other groups which are mainly program-oriented. They focus on issues such as what one writer (writing in the 1970s) referred to, namely: 'The people are organized to get involved in issues which require urgency. Issues like the land problem in Tondo; the recent demolition of urban slum dwellers in Tanong, Malabon; landgrabbing case of Mangyans in Paitan, Mindoro; the land case in the forest reserve areas of Kibawe, Bukidnon; the Philippine Veterans Development Corporation (PHIVEDEC) project in Villanueva, Misamis Oriental; the *batilyos* of Navotas; the urban poor of Tatalon . . .'<sup>46</sup> On the whole, they include the organizations which prepare to grab the reins of political power.

Long after the Malolos Republic had already collapsed, the revolutionary fervour for independence did not dissipate among certain numbers of the masses. In fact, even after

---

45 Constantino, *A Past Revisited*, op cit., 159.

46 Teresita S. Palacios, 'People's Organization: An Instrument Against Poverty', *Philippine Sociological Review* 25 (July-Oct. 1977): 152.



Aguinaldo's capitulation and increasing collaboration by the *ilustrados*, the masses still supported 'ragtag' resistance movements like the *New Katipunan*, *Tagalog Republic*, and others.<sup>47</sup> Their constraint and agitation, confused and ill-fated, in political terms, took various forms. Besides short-lived nativistic and fanatical risings, some plebeian sections also began clamoring for long-needed social and economic reforms. Some of them, for instance, were more interested in immediately securing better working conditions for their members, although within the limits of the colonial order. Others would link up their economic protests with the demand for political independence. Both peasant and urban working-class groups were involved in this politico-economic activism which intensified in the 1920s and 1930s.

Noteworthy among them were, for instance, the *Union de Impresarios de Filipinas* (1906) in which non-workers were excluded from membership, and the *Congreso Obrero de Filipinas* (1913) which demanded an 'eight-hour working day, child and women labor laws, and an employer's liability law'.<sup>48</sup> The latter became 'the biggest and best-organized labor federation in the country for nearly two decades until the momentous labor split of May 1929'.<sup>49</sup> Both had been at different times headed by Hermenegildo Cruz (who later became Bureau of Labor director). Before them, the development of working class movements started with the *gremio* (guild) in the second half of the nineteenth century.

---

47 The First Republic (also called the 'Malolos Republic') was inaugurated on January 23, 1899 with a constitution in which the Assembly of Representatives (Legislature), the President (Executive) and Supreme Court (Judiciary) had separate mandates. It had Aguinaldo's. The capture of its first and only president--Aguinaldo himself--on March 23, 1901 marked the fall of the Republic. See, e.g., Zaide, op cit., vol. 2: chs. 14 and 15 on the rise and fall of the Republican Government (1899-1901) and the Filipino-American War (1899-1903). See also Constantino, *A Past Revisited*, op cit., ch. 14; Richard E. Welch Jr., 'American Atrocities in the Philippines: The Indictment and the Response', *Pacific Historical Review* 43 (1974): 233-253; and D. H. Smith, 'Notes and Documents, American Atrocities in the Philippines: Some New Evidence', *Pacific Historical Review* 55 (May 1986): 281-283.

48 Constantino, *A Past Revisited*, op cit., 364.

49 Alfredo B. Saulo, *Communism in the Philippines: An Introduction* (Quezon City, Phil.: Ateneo de Manila Univ. Press, 1990), 8.

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

The earliest of them were mutual aid and benefit associations whose activities were largely concerned with the celebrations of Catholic feast days. But the earliest labor union was the *Union de Litografos y Impresores de Filipinas*; it was organized by Cruz in the Pampanga printing plant owned by the Revolutionary Government. In February 1902 the first labor federation was founded by Isabelo de los Reyes, an *ilustrado* writer, with the help of Cruz. De los Reyes soon after went to jail, and so did his successor, Dr. J. M. Dominador Gomez (one of the propagandists in Spain). Both of them retired after being released. Two years later, Lope K. Santos attempted to regather the remnants of the *Union* and form the *Union del Trabajo de Filipinas* (UTF). In 1906, however, Crisanto Evangelista, the so-called father of Philippine trade unionism, organized the printers affiliated with the predecessor federation into an independent movement, the *Union de Impresarios de Filipinas* (UIF). Cruz became its first president and Evangelista the general secretary. Santos's *Union del Trabajo* (UTF) broke up the following year.<sup>50</sup>

Among the peasants, Jacinto Manahan formed the *Union de Aparceros de Filipinas* (1919), which in its First Tenant Congress (1922) denounced 'usury and the evils of tenancy and urging the amendment of certain laws to alleviate the plight of the peasantry'.<sup>51</sup> In the same year, the *Union* was re-named *Confederacion Nacional de Aparceros y Obreros Agricolas de Filipinas*, and in the Second Tenants' Congress in 1924, it became the *Katipunang Pambansa ng mga Magbubukid* (KPMP). According to Jose Lava (official historian of the old Communist Party), the basic aims of this and other less known peasant organizations were the following: '(1) struggle against usury; (2) confiscation of friar lands and distribution to landless peasants; (3) struggle against the harshness of landowners; (4) struggle for independence of the Philippines; (5) passage of laws to improve the economic conditions of the peasants; (6) establishment of economic cooperatives; and (7) establishment of rural banks and

---

50 See *ibid.*, ch. 2.

51 Constantino, *A Past Revisited*, *op cit.*, 365.

irrigation systems'.<sup>52</sup>

A full-fledged political party was organized in 1924 by some activist labor leaders, including the disillusioned *Nacionalista* politician, Crisanto Evangelista. Calling themselves the *Partido Obrero de Filipinas*, the party was meant as a counterpoise to the *ilustrado*-led mainstream political parties. It was also Marxist-oriented, and was led by some die-hard communist cadres. Some foreign communists met with them incognito, such as the Indonesian Tan Malaka and Harrison George (?) of the U.S. Communist Party; and they had links with communist agencies abroad (e.g., the Profintern). They also served as the core or nucleus of a new political movement when the rudimentary Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was founded in August 1930. In organizing the latter, sixty leading representatives of various organizations along with representative Chinese workers participated and elected thirty-five from among themselves to the Central Committee. Among those elected were Evangelista, Mariano Balgos, Manahan, Juan Feleo, Guillermo Capadocia, Cirilo Bognot, and Norberto Nabong.<sup>53</sup> Evangelista became the general secretary. Unprecedented as this occasion was, Kerkvliet maintains that the PKP (or the CPP) on the whole was less important than the 'communist-influenced participants' themselves. Apart from official doctrine, they sought not so much a revolution as reforms, for instance, in terms of 'share percentages, loan guarantees, etc.'<sup>54</sup>

Meanwhile, in 1929 the *Congreso Obrero* had split. Its extremist members then formed the *Katipunan ng mga Anak-Pawis ng Pilipinas* with Evangelista as the executive secretary and Manahan the vice president in charge of the peasant movement. Most of its officers also became the foremost leaders of the Communist Party. But within two years and after a series of workers' strikes and other disturbances had occurred, the Party and the *Katipunan* were declared illegal

---

52 Gregorio Santayana [Jose Lava], *Milestones in the History of the Philippine Communist Party*, (n.p., n.d.), 7.

53 See *ibid.*, 10.

54 Benedict John Kerkvliet, 'Peasant Rebellion in the Philippines: The Origins and Growth of the HMB', Pt. 1 (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Wisconsin, 1972), 180.

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

organizations by the Supreme Court. A number of its leaders and organizers were arrested and imprisoned. A few years later the mass-based *Sakdalistas* rose in arms and met the same but much bloodier fate.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, the militant sectors continued to agitate for changes. And as other peasant-worker organizations sprang up, other intellectuals and activists continued their liaison with them, including the Socialist Party (SPP) which was founded in 1929 by the 'renegade' landlord Pedro Abad Santos.<sup>56</sup> Thus in the face of continuing agrarian and labor agitation vis-a-vis coercive measures by landlords and employers, the political *Weltanschauung* of many a Filipino was increasingly marked by the polarization between the powerful 'Right'--including the Commonwealth government, the Catholic Church's hierarchy, *caciques* or *hacenderos*, and others--on the one hand; and on the other, the hapless 'Left'--the Popular Front--including 'a coalition of left-wing unions, peasant organizations, the merged Socialists and Communists, the Aglipayan Church, and a few professional and white collar groups'.<sup>57</sup> This was the starkly unhappy situation of elite-plebeian conflict of interest towards the close of the 1930s and just before the Second World War broke out.

In March 1942 the Communists and other left-wing groups in Central Luzon organized the *Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon* (HUKBALAHAP--People's Army against Japan) in order to resist the Japanese invasion of the Philippines. Its membership was drawn mainly from various pre-war aggroupments of peasants and workers, and also from the CPP and SPP which had merged in 1938. But with the

---

55 The *Sakdal* (to accuse) peasant organization was formed in 1926 by Benigno Ramos, later a pro-Japanese agitator. It became a political party and won three seats in the Lower House of Congress, as well as municipal offices in the Tagalog provinces. Opposing the plebiscite on the Commonwealth Constitution, the *Sakdalistas* rose in arms on May 2, 1935 and overran several municipalities in Bulacan and Laguna. But the next day the revolt was crushed. See, *inter alia*, Zaide, op cit., 2: 406-409.

56 See Constantino, *A Past Revisited*, op cit., 379. But according to Saulo, citing Luis Taruc, the SPP was founded in April or May 1932. See Saulo, op cit., 101.

57 Constantino, *A Past Revisited*, op cit., 387; and see, generally, ch. 17. Also see Luis Taruc, *Born of the People: An Autobiography* (New York: International Publishers, 1953), 38-54.

execution of Evangelista by the Japanese and Abad Santos near death from illness, other leaders had taken command--Luis Taruc, Casto Alejandrino, and others. They now offered to coordinate their operations with the USAFFE and the government forces. But they were rebuffed out of hand. Widely called the *Huks*, they nonetheless enjoyed grass-roots support in some Central Luzon provinces, where they also had a strong and dominant armed force. They were even able to set up a shadow government and a local peacekeeping force. At the end of the war, however, the American liberation forces and the Commonwealth government began to move against them. With General MacArthur's 'restoration' program, they were now deemed a menace, or, more realistically, a nuisance to the new political order as the Americans and the traditional ruling classes sought to restore the *status quo ante*.<sup>58</sup> In 1945 their leaders including Taruc, Alejandrino, Silvestre Liwanag, and others were arrested and thrown into jail. Squadrons of *Huks* had also been disarmed by the American Military Police, and some (e.g., Squadron 77) were afterwards executed or murdered by rival guerrilla units. Except for the *Banal* group of Bernardo Poblete's, no other *Huk* guerrillas were recognized by the United States Army or inducted into the service with pay. 'Thus, Taruc's guerillas', concluded one Filipino writer, 'who were first to offer their services to the Commonwealth and who probably suffered most, ended the war unrewarded and in disgrace'.<sup>59</sup>

Nevertheless, before the 1946 presidential elections, leaders of the pre-war 'Popular Front' had joined the

---

58 See Constantino and Constantino, *The Continuing Past*, op cit., 161 et seq. Cf. the Constitution of the Communist Party of the Philippines (1946): 'To defeat the U.S. imperialists, the comprador bourgeoisie, the landlords and the bureaucrat capitalists, the Party wields the weapons of protracted people's war and the national united front. The Party upholds working class leadership, builds up the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry; . . . and relies mainly on the mass support of the peasantry, especially the poor peasants and farm workers'.

59 Eduardo Lachica, *HUK: Philippine Agrarian Society In Revolt* (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing, 1971), 117. See also Constantino and Constantino, op cit., 163-169. The resistance movement under Taruc was, however, recognized belatedly by President Marcos 'as elements of the underground forces of the Commonwealth Government'. See Presidential Decree no. 1207, October 7, 1977.

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

'Democratic Alliance' led by Judges Jesus Barrera and J. B. L. Reyes, J. Antonio Araneta, and others. Setting up themselves as the 'spokesmen of the common people against the conservative classes', this Alliance then forged a coalition with the *Nacionalistas* whose candidate for president was the incumbent Osmena. They won six seats in Congress from the Alliance's strong support by Central Luzon peasants. Those elected were Luis Taruc and Amado Yuson (Pampanga), Jesus Lava (Bulacan), Jose Cando and Constancio Padilla (Nueva Ecija), and Alejandro Simpauc (Tarlac).<sup>60</sup> They were, however, blocked from their posts due to the machinations of Manuel Roxas, who was the Right's candidate, was supported by MacArthur and now the newly elected president. It is Saulo's claim that the ousted members of Congress were against the 'parity' proposal of Roxas's government; namely, that, 'American citizens should be granted parity or equal rights as Filipinos in the exploitation and development of Philippine natural resources and in the operation of public utilities'. Had they been allowed to take their seats (together with a few other anti-parity solons likewise expelled), the three-fourths vote required by the Constitution for a plebiscite to amend it would not have been complied with.<sup>61</sup>

As a result of this as well as the murder of peasants' leader Juan Feleo and barrio officials and other grievances, the *Huks* rose in arms and engaged government troops in running battles. The landowning Lava brothers--from Vicente to Jose and Jesus<sup>62</sup>--had meanwhile risen to the highest positions in the CPP. And the *Huks* had now reorganized themselves into the *Hukbong Magpapalaya ng Bayan* (HMB--People's Liberation Army). As in its 1946 Constitution, the CPP now

---

60 See Saulo, op cit., 37.

61 See *ibid.*, 41. See also the case of *Mabanag v. Lopez Vito*, 43 O.G. 2079; and, *inter alia*, Agoncillo and Guerrero, op cit., 451-452.

62 All three of them 'became' secretary-general, the top post in the hierarchy since 1942, one after the other until the collapse of the *Huk* rebellion in the mid-1950s. See Lachica, op cit., 105 et seq. A so-called troika leadership was, however, elected in 1944 after Vicente was ousted from his position. It did not last long--and Pedro Castro (up to 1947), Jorge Frianeza (to 1948), and nominally Balgos took turns as secretary general. Having succeeded in expelling the first two's faction, Jose became the actual general secretary. See Saulo, op cit., 42-43.

resolved to fight 'for the immediate and basic wants of the workers, peasants and all elements exploited by capitalists . . . for the democratic rights won by the Filipino people and . . . against enemies desiring to crush democracy and all national freedoms . . . against Imperialism, exploitation of colonial and semicolonial countries, division of classes and nations, and all forms of chauvinism'. And in the HMB Constitution and bylaws of 1950, they declared thus: 'The [Philippine] government is a fascist dictatorship of feudal landlords, *comprador* capitalists, professional political lackeys and bootlickers of imperialists propped up by the American imperialist-trained and supplied mercenary army. Terrible persecution or death comes to any militant citizen who resists this tyrannical and farcical "democracy". "Independence" is a gross insult. Central Luzon, Southern Luzon, Negros, Lanao and many other parts of the country lie prostrate under the iron heels of the Liberal Party's Wall Street-backed fascist dictatorship'.

In 1950 the Party had declared a 'revolutionary situation', and had 'formulated a two-year plan, or timetable, for the seizure of state power'. They wrought havoc in some parts of Central and Southern Luzon--raiding towns and barrios, military camps and garrisons, and resulting in enormous losses of life and property. They were active even in some provinces near Manila, like Laguna, Cavite, Batangas. And they also tried to expand to the Visayas. However, in October 1950 high-ranking members of the CPP hierarchy were captured, including Jose Lava, then general secretary. By 1951 they started to lose ground against a revamped government military force under the command of Ramon Magsaysay, then the national defense secretary, and with the involvement of JUSMAG-CIA's Col. Edward Lansdale.<sup>63</sup> Psychological warfare (e.g., showing up Communism's godlessness), economic incentives (such as distribution of landed estates to *bona fide* tenants), and frontal military operations were under way.

The *Huk* rebellion virtually ended in 1953 after a

---

<sup>63</sup> Lansdale was then the head of the CIA's Office of Policy Coordination (OPC). See Constantino and Constantino, *op cit.*, 235. Also see *ibid.*, 231-232, on the JUSMAG's role during the anti-*Huk* campaign.

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

sustained and massive counteroffensive by the government. At about this time too, the HMB-CPP leadership was breaking up. The Tarucs fell out with the group of the Lava brothers. Within a few years, *Huk* leaders were giving up; or they had been killed or captured. And Dr. Jesus Lava, who had become the Communist Party chief and *Huk* supreme commander, finally fell in May 1964. Thus, the remnants of the dissident movement, in diminishing numbers, passed into oblivion. By 1965 they were nearly extinct. Anticlimatically, they also split into feuding camps with the two most powerful chieftains, according to Lachica, eyeing each other with 'homicidal intent'.<sup>64</sup> These were Faustino del Mundo (Commander Sumulong) in Pampanga and Cesareo Manarang (Commander Alibasbas) in Tarlac. The latter, his three sons, and others were killed in February 1966; the former was captured in 1970. And Pedro Taruc (a distant cousin of Luis), who apparently took over the decimated *Huk* movement in the early 1960s and who was allied with Sumulong's faction, was killed in 1970. Meanwhile, the *Huks* had dwindled from about 12,800 in the early 1950s to 'about 75 diehards and a few hundred cadres and contact men in 1965'.<sup>65</sup>

Nevertheless, the 1960s were to be a watershed towards the revival of non-constitutional mediation. Mainstream *ilustrado* politics had not changed and would likely not, and the same 'concerns and expectations' of the masses remained unmet. But unlike the 1950s and earlier, new 'interest groups', (i.e., the activist students) were coming on in droves. Many militant peasant, urban labor, and student movements were springing up. Even the Muslims in the Southern islands, notably Mindanao and Sulu, were beginning to stir. The *Huks* were again gathering strength; and this time in ominous alliance with radical student intellectuals and organizations. All in all the Filipino people, as it were, had come unawares at the crossroads--that is, whether to remain on the side of 'constitutional mediation' which hitherto had been dominated by the *clase ilustrada*, or to adopt 'non-constitutional mediation' that could be anywhere to the 'left' of the *ilustrada*,

---

64 Lachica, op cit., 143.

65 Ibid., 137.



## *Towards Polarization of the Class Forces*

communist or not.<sup>66</sup> In late 1968 the Tarlac *Huks* led by Bernabe Buscayno (alias Commander Dante) joined up with young, uncompromising Maoist ideologues spearheaded by academic Jose Maria Sison. And in January 1969 the Communist Party was 're-established', effectively supplanting both the Socialist and Communist Parties of the 1930s-1950s. They also formed the so-called New People's Army (NPA) as the military arm of the new CPP early in the year. The Tarucs and Lavas were mercilessly condemned. And a new non-constitutional leadership emerged. More importantly, what had been for many years in the 1940s and 1950s a regional insurrectionary phenomenon--the *Huks* of Central Luzon--was now transformed in the late 1960s and into the 1970s a nationwide Marxist alternative to the exclusionary regimes of the *ilustrados*. In its Constitution the new Party declares, *inter alia*:

To defeat the U.S. imperialists, the comprador bourgeoisie, the landlords and the bureaucrat capitalists, the Party wields the weapons of protracted people's war and the national united front. The Party upholds working-class leadership, builds up the basic alliance of the working class and the peasantry and further attracts the urban petty bourgeoisie and the patriotic national bourgeoisie into the fold of the people's democratic revolution.

### **C. Towards Polarization of the Class Forces**

#### **a. Scattered Forces of Protest versus the Powerful Forces of Reaction**

Towards the end of the decade and increasingly through the early years of the next, unprecedented urban-based challenges stalked post-war political institutions. For the first time too, the *clase ilustrada's de facto* domination appeared at least distantly vulnerable--even as radical activists

---

<sup>66</sup> At the risk of appearing simplistic, the choices could be reduced to either supporting reform proposals, e.g., through the revision of the colonial Constitution (1935), or aligning with non-constitutional movements, e.g., the extreme Left.

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

had marked off the so-called big landlords and the comprador big bourgeoisie as their chief targets.<sup>67</sup> Needless to say, quite a number of the recognized issues were scarcely new; neither did they suddenly break out without forewarning. Anyhow, among the more central and persistent of these 'causes' were rooted in the still unabated growth of the population, a stagnant *laissez faire* economy, the corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy, and unfulfilled election promises. Other alienating conditions included the rising costs of living, depressed wages, deteriorating peace and order, and so forth. Meanwhile, escalating demands for social amenities such as health, housing, employment, and others aggravated pressures on the government. Add to all this the havoc wrought by the worst typhoons and floods in July and August 1972 in over a decade, and through which hundreds of millions of pesos worth of property had been lost. All the worse, what made these disvalues and dysfunctions particularly portentous was that the quasi-feudal inequality in the possession and distribution of wealth and power had sharpened over the post-war years. And it was common thinking and belief that 'the rich were becoming richer, the poor poorer'.

Yet in the presidential polls in November 1969, fraudulent practices, violence, and overspending reached massive proportions--precipitating the peso's 'floating rate' and further weakening the financial position of the government. *Nacionalista* re-electionist president Marcos had won an unprecedented second term by 'overkill' tactics against the hapless *Liberal* standard-bearer Sergio Osmena Jr. And in doing so he aggravated the nation's woes.<sup>68</sup> Criticisms, protests, and violence were now especially focused upon the notorious, landlord-controlled Congress, the president's Malacanang Palace, as well as the United States' 'imperialist' interests. But the elite classes, long inured to their social hegemony and political leadership, failed--or refused--to see any urgency in their implications or possible consequences.

---

67 See Guerrero, op cit., 132-136, 183.

68 See, e.g., Petronilo Bn. Daroy, 'On the Eve of Dictatorship and Revolution', in *Dictatorship and Revolution: Roots of People's Power*, ed. Aurora Javate-de Dios, Petronilo Bn. Daroy, and Lorna Kalaw-Tirol (n.p.: Conspectus, 1988), 9.

Resulting from all this, the perception of the state-oriented relationships among the masses was increasingly turning cynical but desperate: only the rich and powerful could be truly free and were becoming even more rampantly prosperous; whereas for the poor--the vast majority of the masses--it was more or less a bleak struggle for survival. Setting all this in context was what Carlos P. Romulo calls 'the social cancer in Rizal's time: the agrarian problem'.<sup>69</sup> And not a little too ominously, one foreign observer compares the extravagance of the elite classes with the *ancien regime* just before the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789.<sup>70</sup>

Since the emergence of militant groups and mass organizations in the early and mid-1960s, students in Greater Manila had been drawn to a host of socio-political issues and controversies. Carrying banners and shouting slogans--in throngs by the hundreds and by the thousands--they marched on the Congress, the Malacanang, the United States embassy, and other sites. These were carried on more and more frequently and persistently. Many of them also worked with the *dumaans* and *sacadas* of Negros and Panay, with the poor peasants of Central Luzon and elsewhere. Meanwhile, urban workers, peasants, and similar groups had become conspicuous and militant as well; oftentimes, they were in collaboration with the student demonstrators. Teach-ins, protest marches, and mass demonstrations spread to other parts of the country. But the emerging activism--imbued though it was with a common sense of 'nationalism'--disjoined between the 'radical' and 'moderate' movements. And within each stream there was hardly any lack of divisive dissension. Anyhow, the main thrust of these protests (like those of the 'National Union of Students of the Philippines') was to reform--but abide by--the socio-political system. Indeed, the moderates or reformists were far greater in numbers and were largely anti-communist in orientation. The crystallization of issues and strategies (whether on constitutional revision, peaceful protest, etc.) followed the formal drift of these sub-groupings and their

---

<sup>69</sup> Romulo, *Identity and Change: Toward a National Definition* (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing, 1965), 14-15

<sup>70</sup> See Frank N. Tragar, 'Alternative Futures for Southeast Asia and United States Policy', *Orbis* 15 (spring 1971): 400.

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

leadership. The radical thrust, however, was spearheaded by such militant movements as the *Kabataang Makabayan*, *Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan*, *Lapiang Manggagawa*, and others. Clashes with the police, destruction of property, and loss of lives--as well as the 'tragicomic' bombings in the early 1970s--became frequent and got increasingly 'worrisome'. The 'flames of change' seemed to lead the nation to the threshold of reformism or to the brink of revolution.<sup>71</sup>

In spite of all this, however, the constitutional-legal order was as yet hardly in danger of being immediately overpowered. The elite and governing classes, though divided and fractious in their factional rivalries, were not demoralized; nor were they about to lose the support of their principal ally and benefactor--the United States. Further yet, they had the unswerving allegiance of the American-supported Armed Forces. And the lower bourgeoisie were not radically alienated. Upward mobility was at least generally seen as still open and accessible to the 'deserving' and 'hardworking'--even if in fact and to a large extent, this was merely *pro forma*. Meanwhile, mainstream *ilustrado* politicians remained ensconced within the 'liberal-democratic' sub-culture, which still had a strong holdback or restraint on the public imagination. Apart from this, despite the growing notoriety of many politicians and bureaucrats (more than others, members of the Congress), there were some who appeared willing to make common cause with the reformist-activists. In June 1971 the Constitutional Convention began its task of revising the 1935 Constitution. It was to play a crucial role in that period of fateful non-constitutional changes--but not in the way most electors and others intended it. 'The Constitutional Convention', former senator Raul Manglapus (who was also a member of the Convention) recalls, 'was pressed upon Congress and the president by the Filipino people themselves, to solve the problems of the country which demanded far-ranging, peaceful, and fundamental structural change and the free choice of ideological alternatives'.<sup>72</sup> As a result, political

---

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Steinberg, *op cit.*, 54, in which he says that 'Philippine society has usually opted for evolution over revolution'.

<sup>72</sup> Raul S. Manglapus, *Philippines: The Silenced Democracy* (New York: Orbis Books, 1976), 17.

interest groups polarized more distinctly; and the activists sallied forth even more boldly. But despite all, by June 1972 Manglapus continues, 'there was no longer any doubt that President Marcos controlled it'.<sup>73</sup>

## **b. Intercepting the Forces of Change**

In the midst but not necessarily because of these conditions a number of 'revolutionary' groupings had separately formed, avowedly to change the political structuring of Filipino society. Seemingly, they all had broadly similar causes and grievances, magnified in the long-standing limitations of the government. But they also had specifically different goals and were antagonistic to one another's modes of action. Among them was the radical Left: the new Communist Party and the New People's Army as well as other co-opted movements. They sought to overthrow the existing social-economic-political structure and set up what Guerrero calls 'national democracy'.<sup>74</sup> There was also the 'right-wing' clique of President Marcos. He would usher in the 'New Society' and remain at the helm of what came to be the 'constitutional-authoritarian regime'.<sup>75</sup> Finally, there was the Muslim secessionist movement: the *Moro National Liberation Front* (MNLF) and its military arm, the *Bangsa Moro* army and other armed groups. Fighting for self-determination of Filipino Muslims, they were to declare an independent Islamic state in Mindanao, Basilan, Palawan, and Sulu--called the '*Bangsa Moro Republik*'--separate from the rest of the archipelago.<sup>76</sup> (This movement started with the call to

---

73 Ibid., 20.

74 According to the author, as a 'national revolution' their movement 'seeks to assert national sovereignty'; and as a 'democratic revolution' they sought 'to fulfill the peasant struggle for land . . . and . . . uphold the democratic rights of the broad masses'. Guerrero, *op cit.*, 129.

75 Some clarification of this notion may be gathered from his book, *The Democratic Revolution in the Philippines*, esp. pp. 160-161, 243. For a critique of the book, see chapter 6, *infra*.

76 See, e.g., Lela Garner Noble, 'The Moro National Liberation Front in the Philippines', *Pacific Affairs* 49 (fall 1976): 405-424; and Peter Gordon Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos--Heritage and Horizon* (Quezon City, Phil.: New Day Publishers, 1979), 186 et seq.

## THE RISE--AND FALL (?)--OF THE *ILUSTRADA*

'independence' by Datu Udtog Matalam, and the founding of the Mindanao Independence Movement [MIM] in 1968 and the *Ansar el Islam* in 1969.) Other minor movements also had a run for the political sweepstakes, notably, the Christian Social Movement headed by Manglapus and ex-*Huk* supremo Luis Taruc (who subsequently was to support the New Society, according to Marcos), and the CIA-funded Philippine Statehood-USA Movement which called ludicrously for the annexation of the Philippines to the United States. Most of them, however, effectively ceased to exist or were otherwise transformed upon the imposition of martial law. That was September 21, 1972.

Most significantly, the leftist and Muslim revolutionists had in effect repudiated both the folk-charismatic social structuring and state-oriented constitutional-legal order: the former 'centrifugally', that is, by forcibly breaking away from the 'bureaucrat capitalist' State, and then afterwards 'centripetally', by seeking to transmute the 'semi-colonial and semi-feudal' relations of production; and the latter doubly 'centrifugally', by rising in arms against the 'Christian-colonial' government and then removing themselves into a separate socio-political order. Marcos did neither; or rather, his was a doubly 'centripetal' strategy. Changing alliances when it suited him, he found the composite cause of nationalist 'reform' and 'revolution' a promising political issue. Yet he was early on in his first term deeply committed--in Professor Stauffer's terms--to 'orthodox forms of dependent development, firmly imbedded in continued acceptance of U.S. guidance and support'.<sup>77</sup> Accordingly, he put the blame for the country's ills and troubles on the so-called oligarchs, some of whom (like the Lopezes and Jacintos) had been his close allies in the past. Setting them up as if they were the 'government', he seized the initiative from the critics-oppositionists to his administration. In a sudden reversal of roles, Marcos was now *the* revolutionary; and revolutionary issues had become his munitions. Thus, he manoeuvred to co-opt (or pre-empt) the revolutionists, even as he retained a firm grip on the

---

<sup>77</sup> Robert B. Stauffer, *The Philippines under Marcos: Failure of Transnational Developmentalism* (Sydney: TCRP, Univ. of Sydney, 1986), 86.

*Towards Polarization of the Class Forces*

government. Eventually, he would impose 'martial law' and would bring both folk-charismatic and state-oriented institutions within reach of his regime. Several years after, Marcos could say in triumph: 'Martial law, together with the New Society that has emerged from its reforms, is in fact a revolution of the poor, for it is aimed at protecting the individual, helpless until then, from the power of the oligarchs. Martial law was therefore a blow struck in the name of human rights'.<sup>78</sup> And so did the *ilustrada* finally fall?

---

78 Marcos, op cit., 1-2.





# **PART THREE**

**The Struggle for Sovereignty  
and Beyond**