



THE PHILIPPINE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Editor's Notes

In September 14–16, 2017, the Philippine Historical Association together with the Society of Indonesian Historians and the Malaysia Historical Society held an international conference on the theme of “The Malay World: Connecting the Past to the Present” held at the Manila Hotel and De La Salle University. The conference provided a venue for historians and scholars from the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia to look into their past from their own eyes instead of from Western lens.

This particular issue of the *Historical Bulletin* contains selected articles from the aforementioned conference.

Reynaldo C. Iletto's paper, “Decolonizing History in Southeast Asia: Revisiting the Manila and Singapore Conferences, 1960–1961” documents the role played by the Philippine Historical Association (PHA) in organizing a conference in November 25–26, 1960 spearheaded by then Professor Nicolas Zafra of the University of the Philippines, Department of History. This conference of PHA was the first the international conference of historians of Southeast Asia. The conference aimed to decolonize historical writing in Southeast Asia. Iletto's paper mentioned the persistent concern over colonial scholarship by presenting the views of four scholars who asserted the need to write the history of Southeast Asia from the perspective of the Southeast Asian. There was Teodoro Agoncillo's who mentioned that “the Filipino mind is still being held captive in a very captivating way and not been fully liberated from colonialism.” There was K. G. Tregonning who decried the “Europocentric” treatment of the history of Malaya and Southeast. There was as well the remark made by Sartono Kartodirjo of Indonesia who declared that “colonial ideology” survives to the present and finally Syed Hussein Alatas of Malaysia who decried the way European scholars handled the early history of Malaya and Indonesia and their failure to understand the role played by Islam in Southeast Asian history. Included in Iletto's paper was the suggestion of John Smail of an autonomous history. Smail thought that his proposal was a way out from the clash between the Euro-centric and Asia-centric perspectives and a move towards a universal history of Southeast Asia. His proposal would

have made light the colonial experience of Southeast Asia as well as ignore the existence of nationalist historiography. According to Ito, Smail's proposal of autonomous history would have allowed that scholars like him "to avoid combating Agoncillo and Alatas and continue dominating the field of Southeast Asian history in another way—the Third Way."

Ito's paper documents the role of the Philippine Historical Association in forging a collective effort of decolonizing historical writing in Southeast Asia which it pioneered in the decade of the sixties and continues to the present with the creation of the International Council for Historical and Cultural Cooperation—Southeast Asia (ICHCC-SEA). Composed of the Philippine Historical Association, Society of Indonesian Historians and Malaysia Historical Society. The ICHCC-SEA was created in August 2015 upon the initiative of the Philippine Historical Association.

The marriage of literature and history is the topic of the paper "Literary Recreations of History" by Muhammad Haji Salleh. Salleh's paper focuses on the *Sulalat al-Salati; The Malay Annals/Genealogy of Kings* written in Johore in 1612 and is presently more than 400 years old. The Malay Annals covers the history of the Malay Archipelago from the Alexandrian Period up to the Fall of Malacca. Though historical in nature, the Malay Annals has inspired contemporary Malaysian poets to use it as material for their literary pieces.

Evoking the idea of the "captive mind" as articulated by Agoncillo and S.H. Alatas, the article "Indigenous Epistemology and the Post-Colonial Discourse of Historiography in the Malay World," by Zaid Bin Ahmad stresses the need for native scholars to not only decolonize history but also to indigenize the educational system. For Zaid Bin Ahmad, it is imperative that "the indigenization process requires a return to our roots. It is a process of learning and formulating the native epistemology." He mentions the definition of "captive mind" given by Alatas as an "uncritical and imitative mind dominated by an external source [colonial] whose thinking is deflected from an independent perspective."

Viewing a colonial phenomenon from the eyes of a native scholar is the nature of the article of Andi Achdian entitled "Becoming an Urban Citizen: The Struggle for Rights and the Politics of Indonesian Nationalism in the Dutch Colonial City Surabaya in the Early Decades of

the Twentieth Century.” The paper discusses the establishment of a city council in Surabaya by the Dutch authorities in 1906. The city council composed of 23 seats provided for 15 seats for European citizens, 5 seats for indigenous people [Indonesians], and 3 seats for Foreign Eastern Groups. It can be gleaned from the distribution of seats, that the Europeans could easily outvote the native Indonesians and the Foreign Eastern Groups. According to Andi Achdian, the five seats were usually occupied by the native elite (*prijajis*) who were loyal to the colonizers and never articulated the interests of the native population. The emergence of the *Sarekat Islam*, the first mass-based social movement in the Dutch East Indies campaigned that the city council members be chosen through an election rather than through appointment. The article concludes that the struggle for equal rights for the native was coterminous to the struggle of a native urban citizen.

The last two articles are contributions of Filipino scholars. The article entitled “The Anti-Imperialist League and the fight for Philippine Independence” by Rowena Bailon tackles how the Anti-Imperialist League (AIL) of the United States helped shape public opinion in the United States. The AIL actively campaigned against the acquisition of the Philippines as well as condemned American actions in the Philippine-American War. Letters of American soldiers fighting in the Philippines were used by AIL to stoke the campaign against American Imperialism. Famous author, Mark Twain categorically condemned America’s imperialist designs over the Philippines. The article concludes by posing the questions, why is the Philippine-American War considered a forgotten war or why is there an apparent indifference in the anti-imperialist works of Mark Twain.

The last article is a process documentation undertaken by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) of a request to declare Oroquieta City as WWII “Capital of Free Philippines. The author, Ian Christopher Alfonso who is a researcher of the NHCP presented the process of working on the request which required checking both primary sources and secondary sources to support the claim that Oroquieta City served as capital of “Free Philippines. An expert on WWII in the Philippines was likewise consulted. In the end, after a thorough and rigorous process followed by the NHCP, the request was denied.



Decolonizing History in Southeast Asia: Revisiting the Manila and Singapore Conferences, 1960–1961¹

REYNALDO C. ILETO
Nanyang Technological University

This gathering of scholars from the Philippines and the region is a joint effort of the International Council for Historical and Cultural Cooperation-Southeast Asia (ICHCCSEA) and the Philippine Historical Association (PHA). What few of you may know is that the PHA's involvement with historians in the region goes back a long way, starting from when it hosted the first "International Conference of Historians of South-East Asia" in November 1960. At this Manila conference the issue was raised about how colonial scholarship was a hindrance to the development of a truly Filipino, Indonesian, or Malayan historical perspective. Is this issue still alive in this so-called age of globalization? In his earlier speech the PHA's president, Emmanuel Calairo, reminded us that "for centuries now, our Southeast Asian relationship has not been fully understood due to the western or colonial scholarship that covers [up] a vast array of regional indigenous perspectives operating in the Southeast Asian contexts." So, yes, the concern over "colonial scholarship" persists today. In this talk I shall attempt to place it within a deeper perspective by going back to its origins in the early 1960s.

Foundational Meetings of Regional Historians

The international conference held here from 25–30 November 1960 was organized by a committee led by Nicolas Zafra of the University of the Philippines (UP) history department, who was also the PHA's treasurer. President Carlos Garcia recognized the importance of the event, declaring the conference period as "History Week."² His welcome message stressed his support for the PHA initiative, noting that "this gathering should help

promote a spirit of closer understanding and unity among the nations represented here.”³ Enjoying thus the government’s blessing, the PHA was able to secure the session hall of the House of Representatives as the main conference venue.

The aims of the international conference are stated clearly in the December 1960 issue of the PHA’s journal. Here we note an emphasis on developing each country’s own historical “point of view”:

History as we know it today has been written from the view point of the western European nations. It therefore speaks of discovering the Philippines or China or Japan as though these places had not existed until Europeans came to know about them. There is a need today to reassess all of our history and rewrite it from the view of the people in the countries about which it tells.

The history of each country should tell what happened to the country from the viewpoint of the people who live in it and not from the viewpoint of the visitors who came to it for one purpose or another.⁴

The 1960 conference was clearly intended to put the Philippines, through the PHA, at the forefront of the decolonization of historical writing in Southeast Asia. Surely one would expect the PHA to be given credit in the many surveys we have had of the development of Southeast Asian historiography, but that is not the case. There is no mention anywhere of the PHA hosting the first conference of historians of Southeast Asia. This is understandable given that in the proceedings of that conference published by the PHA in 1962, the conference title has been changed to “First International Conference of Historians of Asia.” What happened, it seems, is that because there were also delegates and paper presenters from Nationalist China (or Taiwan), Japan, Korea, Pakistan and even the United States, who spoke about topics unrelated to the region, the conference could no longer be designated, in the published proceedings at least, as a gathering of historians of Southeast Asia.

The credit for hosting the first conference of Southeast Asian historians would instead go to Singapore. Ken Tregonning, the Australian historian

who taught at the University of Malaya (UM)-Singapore from 1953 to 1966 writes in his memoirs: “In January 1961 we broke new ground by holding the first ever international conference of Southeast Asian historians. There had been no international academic conferences of any kind in Southeast Asia before.”⁵ Nowhere in his memoirs does Tregonning mention the fact that he was at the Manila conference during the previous November. Instead he devotes a couple of pages to the historic Singapore conference of January 16–21, 1961, which he had organized himself.

What the Singapore organizers meant by “Southeast Asian historians” was not historians *from* or based *in* Southeast Asia but historians from anywhere writing *about* Southeast Asia. In fact, the delegates from Southeast Asian countries seemed to be in the minority. Or at least an equal number came from outside the region: India, Japan, Pakistan, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, Portugal, the UK and the Netherlands. The flags of all the countries represented flew beside the student hostel where they were accommodated. This was an international conference, indeed, with all the papers being related to Southeast Asia.⁶

There is a significant difference between the two conferences—one remembered, the other forgotten. Let’s go back to the PHA-sponsored conference. By “South-East Asian historian” the PHA was referring to a practitioner of history in the region itself and writing primarily for a domestic readership—more akin to the “home scholar” as we call them today. Moreover, as we saw earlier, the Manila conference had a more pronounced political agenda. This is expressed clearly in Vice-President Diosdado Macapagal’s message to the conference, where he pointed out that “the histories of the South-East Asian countries reveal the kinship of their peoples, the similitude of their cultures and the identity of their struggles for the recognition of their national aspirations and ideals.”⁷ By “identity of struggles” Macapagal meant that through history we can identify the common features of the struggles for independence and nationhood throughout the region.

Compare this with the UM-Singapore conference. This was funded by the Lee and Asia Foundations. Lee here refers to Dato Lee Kong Chian, a multi-millionaire businessman and philanthropist, who financed half of the conference. Tregonning writes that the other half of the funding came from the U.S.-based Asia Foundation, whose aim “was to strengthen the

indigenous elements in Asia opposed to communism.”⁸ This conference was meant, not to explore through history the identity in struggles for nationhood among Southeast Asians (as Macapagal put it), but to bring together scholars from all over the world engaged in the study of Southeast Asian history, and to develop this as an academic discipline—the forerunner of globalized scholarship in the region. The Singapore conference coincided with the birth of the *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, which five years later would become the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, still based today in the History Department of the National University of Singapore (NUS).

Writing History from “Our” Point of View: Four Proponents

A major theme of the 1960 Manila conference was the challenge to write history from the point of view of the inhabitants of the region. A strong case for decolonizing history was made by Teodoro Agoncillo of the UP History Department—who was also a founding member of the PHA—in his paper titled “Our Usable Past.” The 49-year-old Agoncillo was the author of two solid monographs, *The Revolt of the Masses* (1956) and *Malolos: The Crisis of the Republic* (1960) and his game-changing textbook, *A Short History of the Filipino People*, co-authored with Oscar Alfonso, had just been introduced into the UP curriculum six months earlier. Agoncillo was already a formidable scholar at that time and so his words carried authority. The following passages from his presentation effectively sum up his message as well as illustrate his rhetorical style:

Rewriting our history from our own point of view is difficult and fraught with dangers, for, as I have pointed out, there are powerful vested groups interested in maintaining the status quo, that is to say, in making us wallow in the delusion that we are free, independent, democratic, prosperous and such catchwords as would make us relax in sheepish abandon.

At the same time, however, our minds are being held captive in a very captivating way and without our knowing it. To free this mind and liberate its energies in a manner conducive to the national welfare is the supreme task of the Filipino historian today.⁹

Here Agoncillo is implying that having gained independence from the U.S. in 1946 should not delude us into thinking that we are free and independent. The Filipino mind is still “being held captive in a very captivating way and without our knowing it”; it has not been fully liberated from colonialism. And that is why, to get to Agoncillo’s main point, the Filipino historian’s task is to “free this mind and liberate its energies in a manner conducive to the national welfare.”

Agoncillo was a committed and articulate proponent of what we call “nationalist historiography.” At that time, this type of history was far from being accepted in the schools and was the constant butt of criticism. Agoncillo bemoaned the fact that “our minds have been so conditioned by a kind of ‘history’ that implicitly denies our capacity as a people that any modest attempt to interpret it from the Filipino standpoint is met with the gnashing of the teeth and pained cries of *ultra-nationalism*.”¹⁰ He gave the example of the fate of President Garcia at the hands of anti-nationalist critics:

And so it was that when President Carlos P. Garcia, the most nationalistic President we have ever had in post-war years, took steps to implement the “Filipino First” policy, he was ridiculed openly and secretly precisely by those who have not been emancipated from the kind of “history” I have been describing here. There cannot be ultra-nationalism in this country, for we have not, since the Revolution, been nationalistic enough to care for our interests first and foremost.¹¹

Here Agoncillo is referring to those who value above all else the special relationship between the United States and the Philippines, and the kind of history that buttresses this view.

In his paper, Agoncillo took pains to clarify what is meant by a “Filipino point of view” in history:

Now before some benighted souls twist my meaning let me hasten to say that by Filipino viewpoint I don’t mean distorting the facts of history to suit our national pride and prejudices. ... To have a Filipino point of view is NOT synonymous with “The

Philippines, my Philippines, right or wrong!" I trust I have made myself clear on this point. I stress this point because there are Filipinos, or alleged Filipinos, in our midst who, steeped in the distorted kind of "history," have made wild and illiterate accusations against the nationalists.¹²

To embrace nationalist historiography is nothing more than "to have a Filipino point of view," says Agoncillo, yet this simple proposition is being met with strong opposition in a supposedly independent nation!

Another paper delivered at the Manila conference echoed Agoncillo's concerns but pitched them in a different register: "The History of Malaya: A New Interpretation," by Singapore-based Ken Tregonning. This paper was much anticipated because Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil, also a PHA member and a committed nationalist historian, had written about it in her *Manila Chronicle* column of October 27, a month before the scheduled conference.

Guerrero-Nakpil's column announced: "EUROPOCENTRIC is the word Professor K. G. Tregonning of the University of Malaya uses to describe the orientation of most historians dealing with Malaya and Southeast Asia. It is also a good word to apply to most of the history works written about the Philippines." Nakpil was able to obtain an advance copy of Tregonning's paper, from which she quoted extensively for her article.

What is Europocentric history? According to Tregonning, "the bias in all the earlier works on Malayan history is a European bias. Nearly all the authors have been Europeans brought up in the late 19th and early 20th century historical attitude of surveying the world through Europocentric eyes." Nakpil quoted in full the following paragraph from Tregonning's paper:

I consider the time has come for a shift in emphasis, for an abandonment of these Europocentric glasses, and for a look without them at this section of Asia. The indigenous, Asian element in this story has been played down for too long, to such an extent that one searches in vain for a description of anything except what was the thin European crust. ... The history of the Malay States in the late 19th century is a story merely of the

British administration there ... It all seems unbalanced, out of date, and when we come to the 20th century it seems even more false.

An ecstatic Guerrero-Nakpil concludes: "These words will certainly warm the cockles of the hearts of a whole generation of Filipino historians who are preparing these days for the International Conference of Historians which will be held in Manila between November 25 and 30 ..."13

Although the Agoncillo and Tregonning papers were respectively about Philippine and Malayan historiography, there are themes that cut across them. One is the critique of Eurocentricism, although Agoncillo did not call it that because he was equally critical of north American as well as Spanish (i.e., European) misrepresentations of the Philippine past. Another common preoccupation is with the need to write history from a domestic point of view, be that Filipino or Malayan.

Two months later, Tregonning was hosting the conference of historians of Southeast Asia at the UM campus in Singapore. A number of PHA officers from the Manila conference were present, including President Esteban de Ocampo and governing board members Fr. Horacio de la Costa S.J. and Domingo Abella. These historians would organize the International Association of Historians of Asia (IAHA) at that conference. Teodoro Agoncillo, however, was notably absent.

Among the participants at the 1961 conference was 40-year-old Sartono Kartodirjo, an Indonesian sociologist-historian who would father the so-called "Sartono School of Indonesian history." His paper was titled "Some problems on the genesis of nationalism in Indonesia." From the title alone we can see how pervasive the topic of nationalism was at these two conferences. Nationalism was the "moving force" of Sartono's generation, for he himself was a veteran of the 1945 revolution against the Dutch; the same background of pro-independence activism and nation-building can be observed in historians elsewhere in the region. As Sartono put it in his paper, "Our generation has witnessed in a relatively recent past the almost simultaneous emergence of national states in Southeast Asia. These great events have been preceded by a historical process having nationalism as its moving force."14

Sartono viewed nationalism as the product of a history—not a simple chronology but a scientific study of the psychological, social, economic and other factors shaping events. For him, as for many of his generation who had just broken free from Dutch rule, the relationship between colonizer and colonized needed close study, for what he termed the “colonial ideology” survives in the present: “The colonial ideology in all its manifestations [is] proven to be influenced by a European-centric pattern of thought which in the terminology of colonial policy was expressed as Western leadership, the policy of moral obligation, the ethical policy, policy of guardianship, etc.”¹⁵

Sartono, although much influenced by the socio-historical framework for Southeast Asian history established by Harry Benda of Yale University, was just as concerned as Agoncillo and Tregonning were about “Europocentrism” and the need to develop an antidote to it. He did not state this strongly in his 1961 conference paper, though. In his 1966 monograph on the peasant revolt in Banten, he pointedly wrote that “quite essential for the Indonesia-centric point of view is the active role of the Indonesian in Indonesian history in contrast to the supernumerary role the colonial historians have them play in colonial historiography.”¹⁶

Our fourth and final example of the preoccupation with forms of Europocentrism in the 1960–1961 conferences is the paper read by Syed Hussein Alatas, one of the Malaysian delegates to the Singapore conference.¹⁷ Alatas was critical of the way European scholars handled the early history of Malaya and Indonesia. He particularly dwelt on their failure to understand the role of Islam in Southeast Asian history. The writing of Malaysian history, he said, “has been largely in the hands of Western scholars, unlike Islamic history in the near and middle East, which was covered by its own historians right from the very beginning, only later accompanied by Western scholars.” Chinese history, he added, likewise possesses a long-standing tradition of historical writing and respect for the past.

According to Alatas, since the first pioneers of Malaysian history have been “people with a different cultural and political background, the selection of methods and topics for investigation has been very much conditioned by their choice. A great deal of these conditioning factors are non-historiographical in nature but exert an influence on Malaysian

historiography.” Alatas gave the example of the late Professor Snouck Hurgronje who was “responsible for leading astray as many as he rescued from error.”

After discussing Hurgronje’s flawed treatment of the impact of Islam on Indonesian history, Alatas commented that it gets even worse with others: “The above idea, that Islam has no profound influence is shared by many missionaries and has even invaded the mind of no less a historian than Jakob Burckhardt. The expression of this idea by Van Leur is much worse so that I consider better to pay more serious attention to the version given by Snouck Hurgronje.”

It is not my intention here to discuss Alatas’ lengthy paper. I merely want to draw attention to the author’s preoccupation with Europocentrism, identical to what we have found in the Agoncillo, Tregonning, and Sartono papers. Alatas is closer to Agoncillo, though, in the combative spirit with which he pointed out the “erroneous historical reasoning” of the colonial historians who wrote about Islam.

A “Third Way”: Autonomous History

If all four papers we have briefly examined exhibit the same concerns with Europocentrism and the need to write history from “our” point of view, why is the 1960 Manila conference forgotten, and the 1961 Singapore conference remembered today? The reason is simply this: all of these four papers have actually been relegated to the dustbin of history. But the Singapore conference produced one, just one, paper that is still remembered today for being “seminal” because it changed the course of Southeast Asian historiography. This paper is John Smail’s “On the possibility of an autonomous history of Southeast Asia.”¹⁸

The 30-year old Smail, with a fresh PhD from Cornell, was addressing precisely the preoccupation at that time with Europocentrism and its polar opposite, Asia-centric history. He would have provoked the audience with the following assertion: “Can there be too much of this in our new Southeast Asian history? I think so. Too much of the colonial relationship, too much East-West, in our thoughts about modern Southeast Asian history is very much like too much Cold War in our thoughts about the contemporary scene.”¹⁹

According to him, Europe-centric and Asia-centric, “in their ordinary usage, represent a false antithesis.” They are two sides of the same coin. They ignore the domestic histories of both Europe and Southeast Asia. We can imagine the excitement (as well as dismay?) that would have been stirred up when Smail read the following lines from his paper:

Theory is mired in the sometimes platitudinous, sometimes acrimonious debate on the false antithesis of Europe-centric/Asia-centric history ... General practice is still plodding the long road from colonial to neo-colonial and anti-colonial history, still a long way from autonomous history. ...

We must displace our attention from the colonial relationship to the domestic history of ideas, shift it from historical sequences like the extension of colonial rule and nationalism-independence to sequences like the birth of Indonesia as idea-as fact, the growth of new classes by creative adaptation ... and I am using the term ‘autonomous history of Southeast Asia’ to refer to the general domestic history of the area.²⁰

Smail’s essay became a rallying point for students in the 1960s and 1970s seeking a “third way” out of the apparent dead-end reached by the clash between Euro-centric and Asia-centric historical writing. “Autonomous history” was seen as an opening up, a progressive development, towards a more objective and universal history of Southeast Asia. Actually, Smail’s call for more attention to be paid to the “domestic history of ideas” does not seem to be incompatible with the call to write history from “our” point of view. The problem is that his “autonomous history” was being posited as an alternative to the decolonizing thrust in domestic historiography from the late 1950s on.

Smail’s approach was introduced to me when I commenced by graduate studies in Southeast Asian history and anthropology at Cornell in September 1967. I must say that even if Smail’s proposal did point to exciting new areas of investigation, which certainly influenced the way I constructed my PhD project, I remained unconvinced that “nationalist historiography” was simply a developmental stage that would be superseded by a more objective “third way.” Smail, after all, was making

generalizations based on his familiarity with Indonesian nationalist historiography, which even then he tended to treat superficially.²¹

When Smail waxed lyrical about the autonomy of Indonesian domestic history only lightly affected by Dutch rule, I wondered whether this applied to the Philippines with its 350 years of direct Spanish rule and 40 years of American colonialism. Could the preoccupation with the colonial relationship really be brushed aside in the post-independence Philippines? For a Filipino student in the late sixties, colonialism was not dead; the Philippine revolution remained unfinished. When my PhD supervisor advised me not to write like Agoncillo, I took Agoncillo even more seriously.²² What I didn't realize at that time, because the literature in my field was dominated by pioneering Western scholars, was that historians writing and teaching elsewhere in the region were likewise grappling with the living issue of colonialism and developing a historiography labeled "nationalist" to counter it.

Smail's disparagement of nationalist historiography as a "closed system" brings to my mind a historiographical space that was being marked out and controlled by formerly colonized scholars in the 1950s and 60s, to which a universal historian (such as Smail fancied himself to be) might feel he was being denied access. Smail was reacting to what he called the "thoughtless hatred" and moralizing of anticolonial scholars. The "third way" he proposed would enable scholars like him to avoid debating with combative scholars such as Agoncillo and Alatas,²³ and so continue dominating the field of Southeast Asian history in another way- the Third Way.

In most accounts of the development of Southeast Asian Studies, the 1961 Singapore conference is mentioned as a foundational event—the first conference ever of Southeast Asian historians. In contrast, the 1960 PHA conference has largely been forgotten or ignored. I think it's time to revisit the 1960 PHA-Manila event and perhaps resurrect it as the grandmother of the present conference. The 1961 UM-Singapore conference can then be placed in its proper context—as a follow-up and partner of the Manila conference, with the local participants in both sharing a common goal of decolonizing history.

In this age of historical revisionism and the smashing of icons, we need not pull down the statue of John Smail. He deserves an honored place in the chronicle of Southeast Asian historical writing. But the time has come to erect beside Smail the statuettes of Sartono, Agoncillo, Alatas, Tregonning, and more, with a separate marker hailing them as pioneers of writing history from the Southeast Asian point of view.

Notes

1. This paper was drafted as a plenary lecture for the international conference on "The Malay World: Connecting the Past and the Present," sponsored by the Philippine Historical Association and held in Manila on 14–16 September 2017. Its original title was "The Southeast Asian Context of the Filipino Struggle for History and the Rise of the PHA."
2. Proclamation No. 719 by the President of the Philippines, in *Proceedings of the First International Conference of Historians of Asia*, Philippine Historical Association, 1962, p. 1.
3. *Proceedings*, p. 2. Garcia would have viewed the conference as an affirmation of his policy thrust of "Filipino First" in the economy, politics, and foreign relations.
4. *Historical Bulletin* IV, 4(1960), 107–08.
5. Ken Tregonning, *Home Port Singapore: An Australian Historian's Experience, 1953–1957*. Griffith University, Centre for the Study of Australia-Asia Relations, *Australians in Asia* Series no. 5, 1989, p. 29.
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11. *Ibid.*
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13. Guerrero-Nakpil's column in *The Manila Chronicle* of 26 Oct. 1960 is quoted in *Historical Bulletin*, p. 108. For a fuller account see "Mrs. C. Guerrero-Nakpil's Comments on Prof. Tregonning's Paper," in *Proceedings*, p. 121.

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15. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
16. Sartono Kartodirjo, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten in 1888*. Netherlands: Springer, 1966, p. 6.
17. Syed Hussein Alatas, "On the need for an historical study of Malaysian Islamization," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 4, 1(1963), pp. 68–81. A notes states that this is "a condensed version of a paper submitted to the First International Conference of South-East Asian Historians, Singapore 1961."
18. John R. W. Smail, "On the possibility of an autonomous history of Modern Southeast Asia," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 2, 2(1961), pp. 72–102. This was a special issue of the journal, "Being a Collection of Papers Submitted to the 1st International Conference of Southeast Asian Historians, Singapore, January 16–21, 1961."
19. Smail, p. 95
20. Smail, p. 100.
21. In an interview in 2008 with the late Indonesian historian Adrian Lopian, who had attended the 1961 conference, Lopian told me that Sartono was chided for being overly concerned about "colonialism" long after Indonesia had gained independence. Sartono's response was that as a Javanese he could not help but feel strongly about colonialism. The existential dimension of colonialism for Sartono's generation seems to have gotten lost in the debate over "isms."
22. See Iletto, "Scholarship, society, and politics in three worlds: Reflections of a Filipino sojourner, 1965–1995," in Goh Beng-lan (ed.), *Decentring & Diversifying Southeast Asian Studies*. Singapore: ISEAS, 2011, p. 110.
23. In a talk at the NUS in November 2004, Alatas shared his experience with D. G. E. Hall's formidable textbook, *A History of South-East Asia*, first published in 1955. He said, "To discuss that, to correct that, you must be combative. You should be able to say he made an error here, his sources are wrong, his conception is not sufficient (*sic*). You need that combative approach. If you do not develop that combative approach, then the hegemony will continue." (From a recording and notes by R. C. Iletto)

Literary Recreations of History: New Narratives and Interpretations of the *Sulalat Al-Salatin/The Malay Annals*

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History should not only have a meaning for its time of occurrence. Where the issues are important and having an impact on the people their meaning should transcend the times and the happenings. They should have a meaning over the generations or over the borders, in different spaces, from the original one.

History said Tun Seri Lanang, in his preface to the *Sulalat al-Salatin* is for the benefit of his descendants—so ‘that our descendants may gain therefrom.’

Readers and the general public retrieve meaning from situations and personalities and their actions. As they are repeatedly told and retold over time, they are cast with a background of the epochs, a backdrop of certain social upheavals, wars and change of kings—they continue to provide us with other interpretations and meanings.

For instance, Sultan Abdullah of Kampar, rejected Melaka and decided to cooperate with the Portuguese. As he was inspecting their vessel he was captured, tied up, taken to Melaka as a captive, and then on to Portugal. This was indeed a traumatic lesson for any raja and for the student of history.

In Malaysian literature, history and the past may be present in the distant days, or just around the corner, in the present—as it is retold and reinterpreted. History is seen to echo or to bring repeated lessons.

Literature, in its oral, written and performed versions, provides many avenues of retelling, reappearances and with them many interpretations. Unlike history, the truth of literature is not necessarily the facts, but of the meaning of the possible, of the experience and the description of human

life. It offers a universal meaning that may be shared not only with the people of one country but also those beyond its borders. A play, a poem, a novel, or a short story are channels to describe this literary truth and its possible interpretations.

In this paper I would like to argue my case basing on the 17th century *Sulalat al-Salatin*, *The Malay Annals/Genealogy of Kings* (or the Malay Annals) by Tun Seri Lanang, which describes the myriad events and people in hundreds of episodes and scene—from the inception of the first kings of the Malays to the early 16th century when the Portuguese wrested power over the Peninsula and the Archipelago.

An Introduction to *Sulalat al-Salatin*

Malay histories, also a major component of this literature, have been written quite early, some originating from genealogies, but later transformed into fuller narratives. Others still might have been begun as reports of incidents, or rose from the wish of different authors to communicate meaning of the passage of time and history, the personages who have contributed to the founding of a state, its expansion, or its downfall. Others are focussed on saints and holy missionaries. Others still give their focus to specific states like Pasai, Banjar, Kedah, Perak, Siak, Pahang and Patani. There are also others that deal with larger regions, for example, the Malay world as a whole, as in *Sulalat al-Salatin/Sejarah Melayu* or *Tuhfat al-Nafis (Precious Gift)*.

In the local definition of literature, works introducing rules and principles of administration are also considered as literary, as are fiction and poetry. Among the most famous, (and the essential roots of these are the legal codes of Malacca and states of the Archipelago, including Pahang, Johor, Kampar, Siak and even to some extent, Solo) are the *Undang-undang Melaka*, (The Laws of Melaka) and its *Undang-undang Laut*, the Maritime Laws.

* * *

There are at least 27 known manuscripts of the *Sulalat al-Salatin*, copied throughout the Malay Archipelago and now found in libraries in Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei and around the world. First written in Johor in 1612 it is now more than 400 years old and still referred to, by

both the historical and literary researchers. It is recognised as the first and primary source of Malay history, and often studied in school in the last decades, but now only as a text for courses in history and literature in the universities.

The *Sulalat* or *The Malay Annals* or *Genealogy of Kings* (the Malay Annals)

This historical work records the history of the Malay Archipelago from its beginnings in Alexandrian times, through the Palembang period, to the rise in the 14th century and finally, its fall in 511, but in some versions to the coming of the Dutch in 1624.

The impact of the work has been singularly strong on the writers, playwrights, cartoonists and scriptwriters so that we now read several interpretations of the different episodes of the work.

As the history is composed of well-thought out episodes, with a certain themes imbedded in them, it is easy for the writers to select and choose from among them. A plot usually comes with a story, thus helping artists or writers to recast them in their original attires or in the modern ones.

20th century interpretations

These may take the forms of

- Re-mention, repeat of a story in other words by other authors
 - Expansion of these or retelling of anecdotes.
 - Recreation and reinterpretation.
1. Re-mention is often mere retelling of an episode without much addition or with a new interpretation. It is often an attempt to draw the reader's attention to a certain story of note in the past, so that it is reintroduced in the mind of the reader.
 2. Expansion. Many of the stories are very basic in their plot or characterisation. Thus they challenge new writers to fill up the empty spaces and blanks—with more details, with other characters and a fuller presence of the main characters, where there was little. So the story is fuller, and more adequate.

3. Recreation of reinterpretation. Many of the new poems are a recreation—favouring certain characters or themes, for emphasis or focus. For example, Tun Fatimah, Tun Perak or Sultan Mahmud are characters of note. Added to this recreation may be a new take, or approach to the story or character. Among the most noticeable is the feminist or the stress placed on the need for justice, where there was none.

Films and plays based on the *Sulalat al-Salatin*

So popular were these stories from the *Sulalat* that we find an amazing number of films based on them. The Malay film industry was and is a small one. In the 1950–1960's when Indonesia also imported them from the Malay Peninsula and Singapore, these films spread far and wide. However, in the following decades it was essentially a Malayan enterprise, based in Jalan Ampas in Singapore and Ulu Kelang in Selangor, Malaysia, but the appetite for its stories did not diminish. Among the films are,

Dang Anom, 1962. Hussein Haniff. Skrip, Ali Aziz (The Story of Dang Anom), *Lakasamana Bentan*. 1961 Omar Rojik (The Admiral of Bentan), *Sultan Mahmud Mangkat Di Julang* (Sultan Mahmud, the King who Died Aloft), *Singapura Dilanggar Todak* (Singapura Attacked by the Swordfishes), *Badang*, 1962. (Badang, the Warrior), *Hang Tuah*, Phani Majumdar, 1956 (The Epic Malay Hero, Hang Tuah), *Hang Jebat*, 1961, Hussein Haniff (The story of Hang Jebat, the warrior and friend of Hang Tuah), *Puteri Gunung Ledang* (Roomai Noor, 1961), *The Princess of Ledang Mountain*, *Puteri Gunung Ledang*, 2004 (Saw Teong Hin).

And we can possibly guess, the stories also overflowed to the other mass media—especially television, comics, and the traditional literary ones—poetry and novels.

These works too were reread, and reinterpreted over the generations and decades. Old episodes were seen from new eyes, new times and new social surroundings. Thus episodes are given new interpretations according to the times and their thematic contexts.

Likewise stage plays borrowed and transformed these stories. Among them are 'Matinya Seorang Pahlawan' (*Death of a Warrior*, by Usman Awang), and *Jebat* with other three interpretations by Ali Aziz, Hatta Azad Khan, and Dinsman.

But it is important to note that before the films and the plays came into fashion the early semi-traditional stage drama, known as the *bangsawan*, that offered the following stories from the *Sulalat*, namely *Sultan Mahmud Mangkat dijulang* (Sultan Mahmud, the king who died Aloft) and *Laksamana Mati dibunuh* (The Dead Admiral) and *Laksamana Bentan* (The Admiral of Bentan).

* * *

This paper proposes to study the artistic description, reinterpretation and recreation of four poets. They are Zurinah Hassan in *Salasilah* (Genealogy, 2005), and Zaihasra (*Balada Tun Fatimah* (1986), Taufik Ikram Jamil (in several poems) and Muhammad Haji Salleh (*Sajak-sajak Sejarah Melayu*, The Sejarah Melayu Poems, 1981). It is difficult to avoid the reference to this writer's works as he may be seen a kind of pioneer in a fuller interpretation of the text and was the first to write a full book of poems based on its 34 chapters. So with some trepidation and an attempt at avoiding a sense of self-importance the author would beg your permission to include this work, as they reflect a history of the poetry that was written with reference to the *Sulalat al-Salatin*, later abbreviated as *SS*.

The area of influence and reinterpretation is wide indeed. Suffice it is to say that many genres of literature partook in the recasting, retelling, and also recreation of the anecdotes.

However, for this study I am limiting my focus my study to the poems that are shoots, as it were, of the old stem of the *Sulalat al-Salatin*. These are more compact and recast a prose narrative into a poetic structure—again quite dense, intense and with metaphors to carry the message.

Furthermore, many poems deal with characters and themes from the *SS*. Among them are those by Zurinah Hassan, Zaihasra and Siti Zainon. They have chosen to deal with the women characters especially The Queen of the Undersea World, Mahtab al-Bahri, Hang Li Po, Tun Teja, The Princess of Ledang Mountain and Tun Fatimah.

In the meantime, over the Straits of Melaka, the Pekanbaru poet, Taufik Ikram Jamil, presents his own readings of some of the episodes and characters.

But it is pertinent to note as a historical reminder that these poets, except Usman Awang, wrote after the publication of *Sajak-sajak Sejarah Melayu* (The Poems of the Malay Annals) 1981, by MHS, using the Shellabear version then.

Themes

The most important attraction of the anecdotes of the SS are the themes that are not only important but bear witness to the achievements, failures, values and character of the Malays.

Books, especially those used in schools, tend speak of the glory of Melaka and its kings. Usman Awang, a poet who grew up in the 1930's dreamt of going to Melaka after reading a description of the state in the 14th century. It was a world port, where the nations met to trade, and many of their citizens continued to live on in the city.

Usman wrote, "Robohnya Kota Melaka," (2016, vol. ii:68),

Zaman silamlah berlaku hilang
zaman merdeka ... lah lama tenggelam
hanya jadi riwayat kenangan selama hayat
dan kini jadi satu lambang perjuangan
"Di atas robohan kota Melaka
kita dirikan jiwa merdeka."

It is the past that is lost
Independence ... has long been dashed
Only to become a tale to accompany one's recollections
And now a symbol of the struggle
"Over the fall of Melaka's fort
We shall erect a free soul."

He said the glory of old is long buried, and is now a symbol of our struggle.
He concludes,

on the remains of the fort of Melaka
we will erect a free soul.

Even in its earlier years its *adat* and royal ceremony showed pomp and overflowing riches. This is how the *Sulalat* describes the early customs when receiving letters from kings,

In the ceremony of receiving the mission from abroad, the one who greets the letter in the audience hall is the chief herald on the right; and he who relayed the words of the Raja is the chief herald from the left. The letters of the arriving or departing missions are placed on the silver saucer and metal salver, borne by the servant from within. The silver saucer is then received by the marshall on the right, placed at the level of the Bendahara (vizier). And furthermore the shawl and tray are given to the bearer of the letter. If it is a letter from Pasyai, it is received with full state honours—with the various traditional musical instruments, the *nafiri* and *nagara*, and the twin white umbrellas side by side. The elephant is herded along to the end of the gallery, for the kings of the two states are of similar echelons, though they may be older or younger, they send their greetings of *salam*. However, if it is a letter from the other states' the ceremony of reception is reduced, only accompanied by drums and flute and a yellow umbrella. If it deserved an elephant then it was carried on an elephant, if it deserved a horse, then it was received at the outer door. If it was a raja of a higher standing, then he was accompanied by the flute and an umbrella, one of each of yellow and white; the elephant was made to kneel at the outer door on the outside, the elephant lowered its body outside the inner door.

In many modern works and poems this was the main background of the anecdotes. It was Melaka at its heights and the kings (some of them) were just and the country prosperous.

This present poet, wrote of Melaka then, green and prosperous, yet still was a state quite traditional. He based it on Chapter Thirty-two of the SS, which described it thus

“During these times Melaka was populous, all manner of merchants gathered here; markets lined the way from Air Lilih to Kuala Muar; and from Kampung Keling to Kuala Penajuh there was no longer any need to bring the fire, as whenever one stopped one found houses; from this side of the country to Batu Pahat, too, Melaka was well populated, because during these times the subjects of Melaka were one hundred and ninety thousand altogether.”

His rendition or redescription, with added details of the village sounds thus,

I

and in the season of fruits, flowers and mangoes
shower colours into the dark green of leaves,
all along the road of villages from melaka to the south,
fruit fragrance floats into fields and appetites,
doors and noses of children fishing in streams,
into memories of ancient women and young maidens pounding rice,
into the calculations of new merchants adding profits
for a harvest-time dowry.

Zurinah Hassan in her poem ‘Mukadimah Selat Melaka (‘A preface to the Melaka Straits)’ in *Salasilah* (2005:7) writes that as it was strategically located it became the favoured port of call, a place to fit the boats and:

demikianlah tanah Semenanjung
dan gugusan pulau Tropika tanah asal bangsa
kerana letak duduknya
menjadi pangkalan
untuk berehat
perhentian untuk merawat

pelabuhan tempat bersauh
berabad-abad ...

Thus the Peninsula
And the archipelago of the tropics, is the homeland
For its location
Its harbor
For respite
A dock to mend the boats
For centuries
A harbor to lay anchor.

For Zurinah history was a stage play in itself. And the role of Melaka, was to pull back the curtains over the drama of the state, (2005: 10),

dan Melaka pun membuka tirainya
seperti sebuah sandiwara
di tengah ombak dan gelombang samudera
namun takhtanya lebih bergelora.

And Melaka draws its curtains
As in a play
In the middle of the waves and breakers of the ocean
Yet its throne was all the more tumultuous.

The next theme seems to be the interpretation of the personalities who were portrayed as major players. They were scions of the various ancestors of the kings of Melaka, and then to their Bendaharas, nobles and warriors. Many were they who strutted on this large stage.

The parade began with Alexander the Great, through his descendants, the Chola King Suran/Chulan and then to reappear in Seguntang Hill—the magical mount where the emissary of the heavens were sent down to announce the coming of the first Palembang king.

Of interest was Raja Culan, king of the all lands he surveyed, who wanted to see what lie beneath the waters, which he has as yet no authority over. The SS describes his predicament:

Raja Chulan/Suran then fell to thinking, 'All the contents of the land I have now known. But the contents of the seas, how do they look like? As thus is the situation let me journey into the sea, so that I may know of it.' After thus thinking Raja Culan commanded that all the craftsmen and carpenters be gathered. He commanded them to fashion a glass cage, locked (with a contraption) from the inside.

... Soon Raja Chulan entered the cage. He could see all on the outside. His majesty secured it from inside. And men eased him into the sea; the cage sank to the bottom. His majesty feasted on the wonders of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala. In time as fate would have it, the cage fell on to the undersea world known as Dika.

Raja Chulan then exited from the cage, and began to survey and enjoy all that is beautiful around him. He found an underworld country, a comely and handsome place, an extensive one and extensively well built.

Bermahkota Iskandar
hingga Seguntang gemilang cahaya.
The crown of Alexander
shone to the Seguntang hill.

Of Tun Teja she notes her description thus, in 'Tun Teja Ratna Menggala,' (*Dewan Sastera*, August, 2009),

alah jua kepada takdir
menyerah kepada Sultan Melaka
bersayu hati menjadi suri urutan
...
membawa cinta hanya untuk raja.

At las she surrendered herself to her fate
surrendered herself to the Sultan of Melaka
unhappy she was to become a wife among wives
...
to bring a love just for the king.

She has lost to her fate, and surrendered to the Sultan of Melaka.

* * *

The next glittering natural show was in Bukit Seguntang, in Palembang itself. This was where with the coming of the emissary of the gods, the hill padi turned to gold, its leaves to silver and its stalk to bronze.

And they saw that the peak golden in colour... There they noticed three young men, they were extremely good-looking. All of them were wearing royal costumes, complete with crowns of gold and inlaid with jewels and gems... In their hearts, they thought, 'Perhaps it is because of the three young men that our padi has become gold, its leaves silver and the stalks bronze; and the earth itself similarly turned to gold.

MHS describes the beauty of the fields and in the end a breeze blows (1981: 8-9) to begin a gentle music of the mountain,

berklenang daun-daun perak,
bunyinya halus, nipis di dalam udara manis
lembut seperti loceng angin,
sayu dan sedih...
tiap kali bayu berubah arah
iramanya bertukar
lagu alam dimainkan gamelan alam.

The silver leaves jingle
Gentle are its tones, slight in the sweet air
As soft as the chimes
Forlorn and sad . . .
But each time the breeze changes direction
So does its tune
Nature's melody played on its own gamelan.

Zurinah, however, takes a different approach. She employs the skill of a grandmother who was made to sit cross legged before her grandchildren, to retell the story of Bukit Seguntang, of the wonder of beauty and riches.

But she lets the story stop there at the end, as in a surprise or open ending, so that they will seek the fuller history when they have grown up.

Zurniah develops the story further by describing the tale of the first Bendahara, Demang Lebar Daun. However, when the descendant of Alexander was introduced to the state he submitted willingly to him and agreed to a covenant that the Malay servant shall never go against his king and that the kings shall never humiliate their subjects.

Zurinah was adamant, about the surrender of the rights of the subject to his king,

Dan anak Melayu sejak zaman berzaman
terlalu patuh kepada perjanjian
tanpa mempertikaikan kesahihan
apalagi mempersoalkan keadilan
waadat adalah muktamad.

And all the Malays, over time
were too obedient to the covenant
without ever questioning its validity
the covenant was not for doubting.

The agreement was followed to the letter but its real essence in the second part was ignored. The monarch has taken power from the prime minister, but has forgotten his part of the covenant—that the kings should be just and not humiliate their subjects.

The test of this shall be seen later, on the island of Temasik when the king believed words of calumny by a lord who accused his queen of having committed adultery. Without demanding proof or examining the evidence he sentenced her to be impaled.

In this episode retribution came quick. Temasik was sacked by the Majapahit, because the father of the wronged queen had opened the gates of the fort for them to enter.

Also in Temasik the king's brutality and injustice were punished through the symbolic attack of the swordfishes that killed many of his subjects on the beach.

* * *

The 1980's and 1990's saw the rise of feminism in Malaysia. Women writers were given a voice, as it were, where there was none. They came into the scene describing the victims of kings and warriors, officers of state and male characters who had mistreated their women. History was repossessed by the women poets, who described the wrongs done to Hang Li Po, Tun Teja, and Tun Fatimah. The Princess of Mount Ledang was given a special place for she was successful in defeating the desires of the Sultan.

Of Princess Li Po, Zurinah rightly decries the fate of the princess, sent as a present by her father the Emperor to marry the Sultan of Melaka, an act insensitive to a daughter, in a clearly feminist approach, (2004:20, 21)

is this her fate her destiny
to be delivered as a gift, a commodity
shipped to Melaka
as a bride and a donation
that would strengthen the nation

... yes Li Po
look at what history has written
of empires and nations
built and strengthened at the sacrifice and tears of women.
...

MHS, earlier in 1981, wrote with testosterone as his ink! He describes the newlyweds' nuptials, albeit quite sensitively, but generally quite insensitive to the anxiety of the princess.

his consort, the bride elegant,
wrapped in cool northern silks
is warm with her maidenhood,
calmed by the moon,
large and looming,
witnessing over the straits.
the king brushes her ivory skin,
slipping his fingers into her tapering ones,

her shoulders and breast round and virgin.
ageless is beauty,
it's the full bowl of life.

This is how Zurinah described the Princess of Mount Ledang, when faced by the envoy of the King who wanted to marry her, (2004:34)

Let Mount Ledang stand tall, a reminder to all
of a flower that survived and remained free
untouched by royal fancy
even a woman can choose to disagree
even a king has his turn
at being defeated.

In time it was rumoured that Hang Tuah had an affair with one of the maids of the palace, an act of treason in the 14th century: "As is told by the sahibul hikayat, after a lapse of some time Hang Kasturi was in love with a lady of the king, in the palace."

MHS describes them together in the palace that Kasturi has seized from the Sultan. He says to her,

anum, i choose you from a hundred girls of the palace
because you soften my voice,
make me long for the evening,
extinguish my anger against the sultan.
anum, i choose you from a hundred villages.
now, in the translucent midnight,
only the two of us
rule over this palace.
i am sultan, and you my consort,
let the tide of life flow away now.
the moon that hangs over the masts
and throws its shadow on to the straits
certainly understands
how i love you.
and a passion this great

needs no tomorrow.
tonight
we shall gather
all there is in two human beings
in the great bowl of time.

Another episode that has captured many a feminist poet is when Hang Tuah sailed to Inderapura to persuade Tun Teja, the most beautiful flower of the land, on behalf of his king. As she was not interested in him, Hang Tuah used a love-potion to make her fall for him instead.

When he was successful in securing her, he returned to Melaka so that she may be wedded to the Sultan. This is deception and slave-like dedication to service on the part of Hang Tuah, while the princess was his innocent victim. In her poem, 'A Letter from Tun Teja to Tuah' (2004: 12–13) Tun Teja asked,

Have you no heart Tuah
I sent you the rose of my devotion
you took it to your calculation

This is a heart-rending poem about a lady who has done no wrong, but only followed her feelings towards a man.

Taufik Ikram Jamil, the poet from Pekanbaru, in Sumatra, addresses the two lovers—describing their tryst and affair, that must all be concluded before the sun rises. All in the darkness and in the cocoon of secrecy. He says in the poem, 'Percintaan Hang Tuah-Tun Teja' (The Love between Tun Tuah and Tun Teja):"

dan kalian membiarkan semuanya
terkurung dalam isyarat
yang terbasa-basi pada malam
dikunci dalam bilik kata-kata
dengan mendustai makna
tanpa sekat setia
atau sekedar tenggat pura-pura
menyetujui setiap khianat
pada tuju yang berbeda

lalu menyatu pada yang tak suka
menghidu keinginan lain
dari sisa-sisa gelap
ditinggalkan dendam dan geram
and you let everything be trapped

in the signs that are but clichés to the night
locked within a room of words
without a fettering loyalty
treacherous against their meaning
or merely the signs of pretense
agreeing to each treachery
then to unite with the one that is disliked,
to smell out the different desires
from the fragments of darkness
abandoning revenge and resentment.

Taufik also found an inspiration in the personality of Hang Jebat, who he has turned into a poet. So as to allay a mistaken identity, Taufik chose to follow the model from *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, where it was Hang Jebat who duelled with Hang Tuah, instead of Hang Kasturi in the SS. The following poem described the climax of the episode, when Hang Tuah was stabbed by his bosom friend. Ironically he repatriated to Hang Tuah's house, where he was helped to unloosen his bandage of words and cloth, considering the own particular tragedy and the tragedy of Melaka,

penyair hang jebat

penyair hang jebat
membalut luka kata-kata
setelah kisah
adakah tikam yang salah
atau mungkin batu asah keliru
menerjemah tajam keris
sementara silat dan gelut
memaknai diri sebagai uji
bukan tari menjelang mati
gerak yang terpatri dari hati.

the poet hang jebat
bandages the wound of words
after the episode,
is it a mistaken thrust of the blade
to translate the keenness of the istaken
while the fight and tussle
gives meaning to the self as a trial
not as a dance before the coming of death
a movement that is welded from the heart.

In an episode as heart-rending as Tun Teja's, is the story of Tun Fatimah. Again she was the most beautiful lady in Melaka, the daughter of the Bendahara Seri Maharaja, the wife of Tun Ali, is seen as perhaps one of the most tragic women in the *Genealogy*. Though she became the consort of the last king of Melaka, Sultan Mahmud (in Melaka), she again was a sacrifice to the desire of the sultan, who killed her husband and her father. She was asked to bear his children, which she initially aborted, but when he had promised to make her son king, he consented to have the child. This cruelty was in fact the beginning of the end of the state of Melaka, before its fall to the Portuguese.

While Zurinah has depicted her story in *Salasilah* (2005:56-57), it was as an interpretation of the episode. However, it was Zaihasra who composed a whole book of poems, *Balada Tun Fatimah* (1986) to put her on the tragic stage of Melaka's fall. In her preface she says Zaihasra confesses.

I choose this narrative as it is closer to my life, at least to my state (of Melaka) ... Tun Fatimah was raised to be the source of a story... and if we delve deeper we may see several factors—and indeed the cause of the fall of the Melaka is a 'Woman,' Tun Fatimah.

As woman of unparalleled beauty she was wedded to Tun Ali, who invited the Sultan to the feast on their wedding day. When the sultan laid eyes on her he was determined to have her as his queen. Fired up by the calumny that the Bendahara was planning to overthrow him, he killed the father and also the new husband.

In the Shellabear version of the Genealogy, she was described

Terlalu sekali eloknya, tiada tercela lagi, sedap manis pantas
bagus, seperti laut madu bercahaya-cahaya, berkilat seperti
bulan purnama ketika cahaya.

She was extremely beautiful, without blemishes, sweet and
delightful, like a shimmering sea of honey, glinting like the full
moon on a rainless night.

However, her beauty was both her prize and her curse.

The episode goes on to describe how all types of dresses enhanced her looks, as she was the daughter of a Bendahara, no restriction was placed on the clothes she could wear. This was what led to the flame of desire to burn brighter in the sultan:

Taufik also found an inspiration in the personality of Hang Jebat, who he has turned into a poet. So as to allay a mistaken identity, Taufik has chosen to follow the model from *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, where it was Hang Jebat who dueled with Hang Tuah, instead of Hang Kasturi in the SS. The following poem described the climax of the episode, when Hang Tuah was stabbed by his bosom friend. Ironically he repatriated to Hang Tuah's house, where he was helped to unloosen his bandage of words and cloth, considering the own particular tragedy and the tragedy of Melaka,

penyair hang jebat

penyair hang jebat
membalut luka kata-kata
setelah kisah
adakah tikam yang salah
atau mungkin batu asah keliru
menerjemah tajam keris
sementara silat dan gelut
memaknai diri sebagai uji
bukan tari menjelang mati
gerak yang terpatni dari hati.

The historian and the poet together place their finger on this as cause of Melaka's defeat.

Personally, Zaihasra herself was a beautiful woman and much sought after, thus the shadow of the confession in her introduction. It was her story too.

In his study of the poem, Hasni Abas, (2001) 'Puisi-Puisi Zaihasra: Satu Kajian Pesimisme' (The Poetry of Zaihasra: a Study of Pessimism,' he connects the historical and the personal,

Pesimisme yang terdapat dalam puisi-puisi Zaihasra banyak mempunyai perkaitan dengan latar belakang kehidupan dan peristiwa yang terjadi dalam kehidupannya. Hasil kajian ini juga menunjukkan walaupun puisi-puisi Zaihasra mempunyai sikap, perasaan, nada dan mesej yang pesimisme tetapi puisi-puisi beliau masih mempunyai estetika yang diperlukan dalam sesebuah puisi.

The pessimism in Zaihasra's poems shows a strong link with what happened in her own life. This research also shows that through her works reflect a pessimistic stance, emotions, nuances and messages, yet they bring forth the necessary aesthetics of poetry.

The pessimism in Zaihasra's poems, says Hasni Abas, is closely related to the context of her life. Her suffering at the death of her father and husband continues throughout her life in the palace. Mahmud's love for her was but a tree that bears fruits of isolation. She had to live with this suffering within her while surrendering to the sultan's desire. Thus the suffering is twice as hurtful (1986:27),

The young heart has grown old ...
it has been killed by its death,

and she could read the devastation on the mirror of history.

However, to survive she has learnt not to keep revenge in her heart and could find respite in a religious submission to God. Be that as it may, the keris that penetrated her father also penetrated her heart and life.

In the end came the Portuguese that ended the Melaka that prospered for more than a century on the Straits.

* * *

The last Sultan of Melaka, Mahmud, was a cruel and emotional man. He acted on his whims and fancies, on emotions which have not been approved by scrutiny or consideration. Once he was seemingly witnessing how his extremely handsome brother, Zainal, was causing a lot of chaos among the womenfolk, who fell for him. So he ordered that Zainal be slain. Muhammad Haji Salleh rewords the episode thus,

the author tells of melaka
swallowed by its shame,
the laws of the young
are written on dreams and passion,
cascading forth from the initial freedom,
no knots are left unloosened
when desire floods a country,
dreams are the streams of distraction.

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...
the commands of the king are obeyed
with a keris in the prince's breast.
the grace of body and voice,
the freedom of youth,
end with a sorrow that drips
in blood, as dark as night.

Tun Teja and Tun Fatimah—are indeed the real victims of men and their greed, desire and insensitivity.

And another instance is the amorous relationship between Hang Tuah and Tun Teja. Whilst the hero was Hang Kasturi in the *Sulalat al-Salatin*, in this poem again MHS follows the version of the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*.

The SS has touched on some of the more prominent characters of the history of the Malays. A series of Bendaharas, including the wise Tun Perak, and other sultans like the good king Alauddin and Muzaffar.

Space is limited and I have only given space on some, hoping to give samples of the themes, personalities and meaning of history as presented by the SS and Malaysian and Indonesian poets.

MHS concludes his series of poems speaking of the final chapter of Melaka, with its main dramatis personae: corruption, injustice and greed.

we are our own enemies.
laws were bent for the king's favourites—
that was the law.
without the enemy from the sea or the moat
we have already defeated
by that part of us left to rot.

In conclusion it is clear that the themes are interwoven into the characters and the characters with happenings in the anecdotes. While it is the themes are studied in their various chapters, it should be stressed that all of them were gathered together in the actions of the personalities and their deeds, to give the full historical or human meaning that the SS so very brilliantly brings out.

History is read, interpreted, reinterpreted, reinvented by the historians and the poets across the ages and generations.

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Indigenous Epistemology and the Post-Colonial Discourse of Historiography in the Malay World¹

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Abstract

This paper chiefly deals with the indigenization and post-colonial discourse of historiography in the Malay world. Epistemologically, knowledge is value-laden and historiography is no exception. The main assumption is that knowledge about Malay history and society is mainly derived from the works of colonial administrators and scholars which are strongly grounded on the western cosmology meant to serve the colonial interests. It was in the past three decades or so that the signs of contestation had been taking place among the native scholars, calling for decolonization and indigenization of knowledge. The major argument is that the current western-centric historiography does not carry the perspective and values of the native Malay cosmology; hence the need for indigenization. The colonial-biased interpretation of historical events requires a paradigm shift of the structure of its epistemology. Since the colonial knowledge had already been strongly rooted in the psyche of the historians including the native ones, the process of indigenization is not going to be simple. The process has to be preceded by decolonization of the current epistemological structure. This paper basically dwells on the current state of post-colonial discourse in the Malay world and the extent of which the process of indigenization take place among local scholars and historians.

Introduction

Contestation on what is now termed as colonial knowledge by a certain group of academia has already taken place in many former colonized nations and the Malay world is no exception. The rise of a new wave of academic movement has somehow posed a challenge to the long established colonial tradition, the tradition that has already engrained in the mind-set of the local academics. The mission is to encounter the syndrome of intellectual dependency and to detach themselves from the clutches of colonial mentality.

Until recently the debates i.e. the decolonization discourse are still relatively peripheral. Nevertheless, as we can notice that the voice seems to be getting louder particularly in matters related to knowledge and education. The basic assumption is that, i.e. knowledge and education system introduced and practiced during the colonial past was meant to serve the interest of the colonial masters. The local students who enrolled in the colonial system were educated and exposed to the curriculum that was designed to suit the colonizer's purpose. When they left, the education system and institutions remained. Even though the leadership and management of these institutions were taken over, replaced and implemented by the local population, the philosophy and the content of the curriculum were still the one inherited from the colonial system.³ There is no fundamental change in education.

For majority of the newly independent nations, the main agenda is to embark on the process of nation building that epitomizes the tradition and identity of that society. And one of the most important mechanisms to achieve this vision is through education. Therefore, the nation building vision would have to be the top priority in their education policy. The reason is that, this vision could not be achieved without a strong educational apparatus. The education system formulated for this purpose should be capable to carry out the mission. As we know the formation of nation building is complex. It involves the whole living ecosystem of human society. It includes the elements of identity, integrity, patriotism, pride of the nation, culture, and tradition and belief system among others. All these elements, plus the traditional or native values should be the underpinning philosophy of the native education system.

At tertiary level, the issue of knowledge orientation has increasingly become a matter of concern. Epistemologically, we believe that knowledge is value-laden. In most cases knowledge is very strongly and closely attributed to the values and tradition of a society that produce it. In this sense, knowledge is not neutral. It depends very much on who produce it and for what purpose? Colonial knowledge, as we might call it, is knowledge produced by the colonial officials about their colonized subjects. Understandably, colonial knowledge would carry the spirit, values and traditions of the colonial masters. So, it does not sound logical to expect education system established by the colonials to produce indigenous knowledge,⁴ hence the need for reform and reorientation. There is a necessity to reconstruct and derive the epistemological framework that is rooted on the native values and at the same time to launder the remnants of the colonial marks in the native education system (see among others, Shamsul, 2008 and 1999 and Alatas, 1977). In fact, some universities had even gone further in their nation building curriculum—to the extent of offering courses on indigenous epistemology.⁵

Since the colonial influence has already been deeply entrenched in the minds and psyche of the native intellectuals, this task is not going to be an easy one. It requires a widespread awareness. A prominent Malaysian sociologist, the late S. H. Alatas in the early 1970's used the concept of "captive mind" to describe the mentality of this fashion. By captive mind he meant uncritical and imitative mind dominated by an external source, whose thinking is deflected from an independent perspective (Alatas, S. H., 1974, see also, Alatas, S. F., 2005:228-241). Certainly, this move requires a serious and systematic deconstruction⁶ project as well as a strong commitment on the part of the academia. This endeavour goes beyond the mere mass movement and military battles for political independence. The struggle for intellectual independence is even more crucial. It entails a substantial deconstruction and reform of the basic epistemological principles that lays the foundation of "colonial knowledge."⁷

Why indigenous epistemology?

As indicated earlier that this paper is presented in quest for a native indigenous epistemology. It is about source' purpose and orientation of

knowledge that we acquire and practise. This is due to a couple of reasons, first, we believe that the main purpose of knowledge and science is to serve human purposes, fill human needs and to solve human problems; hence it is value-laden. Knowledge should be rooted and ingrained from within the value system and tradition of the society. Second, the current dominant orientation of knowledge and science are very much Western-centric i.e. colonial-centric and often incompatible with the native values and tradition.

Since our main concern is the study history of a society and to understand the epistemology through an indigenous mirror, it is crucial that we have to use the right tools. In the inquiry of this nature, the most important source of information is the documentation and reference. Therefore, to carry out this duty we need to look for the correct and authentic references. Equally important is the authenticity of the reference. We expect that the documents and references we gather would give us a better picture through an indigenous perspective and a proper understanding distinctive to our society. Most literatures and textbooks about our own society today do not really serve this purpose. These literatures and textbooks were produced and mostly belonged to the Western tradition, crafted by the Western academics, carried Western-centric models that reflect the experience, empirical studies, experiments, traditions and value systems of Western society. In view of this, we should now look for the literatures and thinkers whose understanding of the conceptual framework reflect the native understanding of our own society.

Indigenization process requires a return to our root. It is a process of learning and formulating the native epistemology. It is about the creation of knowledge that is based on native worldview. We need to look for native scholars and native literatures that represent the native outlook and the value inherent to native society. More importantly, their epistemology is firmly rooted in the indigenous values and traditions. We are in dire need of authentic sources that are profoundly rooted and developed within the indigenous value system. We seek for native scholars who can provide us with an indigenous perspective or a native epistemological framework for matters pertaining to knowledge and values (see e.g., Ahmad, 2018:240-258).

The call for decolonization means to detach from the domain of colonial mentality and cultural imperialism. Knowledge and curriculum developed during the colonial time was designed for colonial purposes. It is crucial to understand the context of this discourse. We need to put the right perspective as to why this discourse is important. The colonial does not come only in the form of military domination. They also enter the realm of the intellectual spheres. Knowledge and curriculum that were constructed by the colonial authority was to serve the colonial interest. Colonial knowledge eventually shapes the outlook and perspective on history, values and tradition of the native people that later creates a sort of dichotomy between the interest of the colonial masters and the interest of the native. The colonial-biased knowledge, by nature cannot serve the needs and aspirations of the native in the formation of identity and nation building.

Colonial knowledge had proven to be incapable of providing solutions to the native problems. We believe that human society is heterogeneous, unique and distinctive. This subsequently makes a society different from the other. It is this uniqueness that determines the character of that society, so as its problems. A society needs to be perceived and understood from a perspective peculiar to that society, as Battiste (2010) describes

“Today, indigenous peoples around the world continue to feel the tensions created by a Eurocentric educational system that has taught them not to trust indigenous knowledge, but to rely on science and technology as tools for their future, although those same sciences and technologies have increasingly created the fragile environmental base that requires us to rethink how we interact with the earth and with each other” (Battiste, 2010:16).

Notion that the West is the sole champion of knowledge advancement and modernity is not always agreeable. Amongst the native scholars, the jinx of the dependency theory is no longer bearable. Knowledge developed in the West might not be appropriate in the non-Western societies.⁸ This would leave a significant knowledge-gap in the way one analyses and understand his own society. The different nature, culture and value

systems of the indigenous society require an understanding from a native perspective. The knowledge frameworks developed in Western traditions might only be best applied in the Western social and cultural milieu, where it was originated.

As discussed above, knowledge and science are acquired and developed to fulfil human needs and solve human problems. The right epistemology would guide us to the correct understanding of peculiar human needs and problems. Assumptions constructed based on a specific cultural experience or tradition might be different from the other. The gap between indigenous and colonial knowledge needs to be practically addressed. The colonial education system would not be expected to produce a native-oriented knowledge. In my view, the native scholars need to carry out two things namely, decolonization and indigenization simultaneously. The established education system that is based on the colonial values requires a systematic process of decolonization. At the same time, the process of indigenization should take place.

In the Muslim world, this awareness has already taken place since 1970's and early 1980's. There was a movement propagating the idea of Islamization of knowledge i.e. the reorientation of knowledge to suit or be attuned to the principles of Islam. The term was initially used by S.M.N Al-Attas in his book *Islam and Secularism*, first published in 1978. This was followed by Ismail R al-Faruqi (1982) in response to what he believed to be the incompatibility of the principles, categories, concepts and tools originated in the secular West. Al-Attas approach is towards de-secularization and de-westernization of knowledge as he believes that the secular elements have corrupted knowledge and has diverted it from its original functions.

It is important for the native scholars to develop knowledge and science that would solve society's problems and to fulfil its needs. Similarly, knowledge or assumptions used to diagnose society's problems and to propose solutions, need to be strongly rooted in a specific social environment. This can be done in many way one of which is revisiting of the rich indigenous traditions and values which has long been unattended. This is where our present discourse is relevant.

Post-colonial historiography in the Malay world

In the Malay world, the discourse on historiography heavily carries the influence of colonial tradition. In fact, this is what happened in most former colonized nations. Shamsul A.B, a prominent Malaysian academic, admitted that most historians and other humanities scholars in Malaysia accept colonial knowledge as the basis of Malaysian history.⁹ We know that knowledge of history is one of the most critical elements in identity formation of a nation and it is part of a bigger agenda of nation building. A national identity cannot be constructed through colonial-biased knowledge framework. Therefore, the process of “purification” from colonial elements is crucial.

Although history is the actual record of certain important events, but the way it is presented and the manner it is portrayed always resonates the colonial outlook. History compiled by the colonial scholars/officers with a conventional colonial approach would record or focus on events that caught their attention and served their purposes. For events that do not give any advantage to them would intentionally or unintentionally be ignored, overlooked or left unnoticed. Even if they record those events, the imprint of colonial-biased can be traced quite obviously.

In the case of local history of Malaysia, we can take for example, the narrative portrayed in the British historical records on the history of Pahang War 1891–1895. The historical facts, were precisely recorded and well documented. Based on many historical literatures, the Pahang war was described as the Pahang “rebellion” or the Pahang “disturbance.”¹⁰ The record of this history is factually correct. We have no problems with the accuracy of these historical records in terms of time, place as well as the authenticity of the story. But, from historiographical point of view, we have the problem of historical interpretation. What sort of understanding can we expect from the narrative of this nature? The term “rebellion” was used to label those who took part in the conflict. This is what we describe as the colonial construct of local historical narrative. We know and understand the negative connotation of the act of rebellion. The narrative was about a group of local leaders who upon reacting against the colonial masters were described and portrayed as rebels. The black colour had already been painted on these historical actors. Of course for local society, these

leaders who fought against the colonial domination were considered as their great heroes.

Now, perhaps the bigger challenge is that, while attempts towards indigenization of knowledge (i.e. historiography) is taking place, the idea was not quite well received among the local academia. We presume the main reasons were that, most of these scholars and academics were the products of colonial system. They were very much attached to the colonial mindset and still think and work within the scope of colonial-biased framework. They were heavily influenced by the colonial epistemology which construct their outlook towards their own history. Again we refer to S. H. Alatas concept of captive mind when he describes the mentality of this fashion. He listed among the characteristics of captive mind were the inability to be creative and raise original problems, the inability to devise original analytical methods, and alienation from the main issues of indigenous society. The captive mind is trained almost entirely in the western (and colonial) science; reads the works of western authors; and is taught predominantly by western teachers, whether in the West itself or through their works available in local centres of education. The symptom of mental captivity can also be seen in the thinking they produce in the forms of suggestion, solutions and policies. Furthermore, it also reveals itself at the levels of theoretical as well as empirical works.¹¹

In fact, the failure of local scholars to be selective in their adaptation of imported ideas and techniques to the local setting is another sign of ongoing intellectual domination. The uncritical imitation of Western social science pervades all the levels of the scientific enterprise including problem-setting, analysis, abstraction, generalization, conceptualization, description, explanation, and interpretation. Such defects in the social sciences include the prevalence of redundant propositions, highly abstract and general statements, inadequate familiarity with local facts, and the neglect of pertinent problems.¹²

Such are the manifestations of the captive mind. Dominated by Western thought in a mimetic and uncritical way, the captive mind according to Alatas, lacks creativity and the ability to raise original problems; is characterized by a fragmented outlook; is alienated both from major societal issues as well as its own national tradition; and is a

consequence of Western dominance over the rest of the world.¹³ Another dimension of this Western dominance is academic imperialism which was also discussed by S. H. Alatas almost four decades ago (Alatas, 1969: 2000). Academic imperialism can be said to exist within the context of the structure of academic dependency. The result of the mental captivity and academic dependency is the perpetuation of what Shamsul A. B. refers as colonial knowledge. Using the example of Malay ethnicity, Shamsul demonstrates how colonial knowledge continues to be the most powerful form of knowledge in post-colonial societies, having been responsible for inventing the ethnic category 'Malay' which had since become internalized by Malaysians themselves (Shamsul, 1999).

Indigenization of historiography

Historical knowledge must undergo the process of indigenization to suit the values of the native society. Indigenous historiography means the historiography that is peculiar to a particular culture and social setup, characterized by locally oriented ideas, thoughts, and values which is a result of a particular social experience. It is imbibed by scholars who carry in-depth studies and develop an understanding of their own societies. Indigenization of historiography means to understand history through the native perspective based on the indigenous outlook of local culture, values and social realities. It is basically to develop and propose concepts and theories based on indigenous values, traditions, history, and culture to form alternative perspectives by which scholars and researchers with an in-depth understanding of indigenous cultural and historical experience.

As indicated earlier, this endeavour would require the native scholars to substantively carry out two things namely, decolonization and indigenization. The education system that is based on the colonial values requires a systematic process of deconstruction to eliminate the colonial elements. At the same time, the process of indigenization has to take place. In the context of history, the available historical literatures must be re-examined and re-evaluated. In fact, in most cases history needs to be rewritten in order to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of the contents. More importantly it should carry the values of the native outlook.

In historical writing, interpretation is the most crucial part. All historical narratives contain element of interpretation and this is agreed by theorists of historiography. This is due to the fact that, without interpretation, historical materials have no meaning. Therefore, it is the duties of the historian to interpret the historical objects and to shape how these historical narratives are to be understood and portrayed. This is where the role of historian is so paramount. The reason is that historical documents and records are always too full, ample and abundant. True enough, everything that happened in the past is history. Something that happened today will become history of tomorrow. In historical documentation, it is not possible to record every single event that took place in any given times or places. In this context, the historical narrative and documentation would have to go through at least three levels namely, 1) the process of selection, 2) the process of documentation and 3) the process of interpretation. It is the historian that picks and choose events and subjects that are historically significant in their view. Those events and subjects were then collected and documented in the forms of historical documentation and narratives. The next process is the interpretation of these documented subjects and narratives.

We learn that in the whole process, the role of historian is so vital to the extent that the historical materials that we can access today are documents that were shaped and constructed by these historians. It is the work of the historian to make sense of historical narratives through a legitimate methodology and a right research approach by examining, interpreting and drawing conclusion. The historians study the same historical subjects but often end up with different understanding. In certain cases, a historian is like a journalist. They write about the event or the same fact and evidence but with their own assessment and interpretations. These interpretations can vary distinctly, to the extent that the work of one historian may sharply contradict another. This is where the question of “who” were these historians arises. The understanding of historical narratives depends very much on who interprets it. This is in line with our earlier remark that the purpose here is to “clean-up” our own history from the colonial-biased of historical construct.

Concluding remarks

To conclude, several key points can be highlighted here. First, the re-appropriation of our historiography is essential as we believe that history repeats itself, but in different forms and conditions. Epistemologically, knowledge of the past is needed for the projection of the future. This is where history is important. We view the current economic, social, ecological and other problems to be a manifestation of the failure of current knowledge to provide solutions to human problems. The current economic catastrophe that hits the first-world countries, for example, is evidence that knowledge alone without the right sense of purpose and identity would not be able to provide effective solutions to these problems. This particularly supports our earlier argument of why an understanding of indigenous historiography is so vital in making sense of our own local history.

Second, the need for indigenization of historiography is also crucial as majority of the former colonized nations are in the midst of planning, developing, and more importantly filling the needs and solving society's problems. It is for this reason that indigenous historiography needs to be established as epistemological underpinning of the development of knowledge and sciences especially amongst the non-OECD nations.

Third, the widespread awareness is needed among the native scholars as this indigenization initiative must be carried out seriously and systematically. The process of indigenization and decolonization of epistemology should be an important agenda particularly in the developing countries and former colonized societies if they are to develop and progress with the sense of character and identity.

Finally, I should put a note here that despite all the enthusiasm and eagerness to decolonize and to indigenize our own historical knowledge, it does not mean to resort to a total anti-Western attitude. Indigenization does not mean a total rejection of the West/colonial or any other tradition. One must not run away from the fact that the West and the colonials have contributed tremendously to modernity, development and the triumph of human civilization. A lot more can be learnt from the West and the former colonials or even from the OECD nations. Thus, decolonization in

this context is meant to be understood as the development of knowledge and the establishment of its epistemology based on the native tradition, language and the belief and value systems of the indigenous society.

Notes

1. Paper presented in The Fourth International Conference of the International Council for Historical and Cultural Cooperation-Southeast Asia (ICHCC-SEA), Manila 14–16 September 2017.
2. Zaid Ahmad is professor of philosophy and civilization studies, Department of Government and Civilization Studies, Faculty of Human Ecology, University Putra Malaysia. He can be reached through email: zaid_a@upm.edu.my or zayyadal@hotmail.com
3. A good review of current debates on indigenous knowledge can be found in *Michael Anthony Hart*, “Indigenous Worldviews, Knowledge and Research: The Development of an Indigenous Research Paradigm” in *Journal of Indigenous Voices in Social Works*, vol. 1, issue. 1 (2010), 1–16. A prominent Malaysian scholar Shamsul A. B is also working on this topic. In his article “Colonial Knowledge and the Construction of Malay and Malayness: Exploring the Literary Component,” he speaks about how colonial perspective influenced the way Malay society is viewed and the impact on the construction of Malay identity (Shamsul, 1999).
4. Further discussion on indigenous knowledge, (see e.g. Mahia Maurial, 1999:62 and Joey De La Torre 2004:174–190).
5. An example, is a course on indigenous epistemology under the Department of Ethnic Studies (see, <http://www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu/graduate-studies/courses.html>) (visited 3 Ogos 2015).
6. In the discussion of similar nature, other terminologies are also employed such as desecularization, dewesternization, and indigenization, and in the Muslim world, the term Islamization of knowledge is widely used.
7. See, e.g in Shamsul A. B., “A history of an identity, an identity of a history: The idea and practice of “Malayness” in Malaysia reconsidered,” in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 32 (3), Oct 2001, pp. 355–366.

8. In fact, heavy critics have been initiated by many scholars. This can be found in some outstanding book of this nature, among them Edward Said in his masterpiece *Orientalism*, who concludes that it was Western knowledge of the Eastern World that has depicted negative characteristics of the Eastern societies (Said, 1978). Another scholar Arturo Escobar in his *Encountering Development* for example, has proposed an alternative discourse on development in the third world (Escobar, 1995).
9. See, Shamsul, "A History," p. 358.
10. For fuller account, see Linehan, R., "The history of Pahang," in *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of Royal Asiatic Society*, 14, 1, (1936), pp. 139–168. See also, Kalthum Jeran, (1986), *Hikayat Pahang*, Petaling Jaya: Fajar Bakti, A Talib Haji Ahmad, (1961), *Sejarah Dato Bahaman Orang Kaya Semantan*, Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Garuda, Gopinath, Aruna, (1991), *Pahang 1880–1933: A Political History*, Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS and Andaya, B & Andaya, L, (2001), *A History of Malaya*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
11. Alatas, S. H., "The Captive Mind in Development Studies," in *International Social Science Journal* (24) (1) (1972), pp. 9–25.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Alatas, S. H. "The Captive Mind and Creative Development," in *International Social Science Journal* (26) (4) (1974), pp. 691–700.

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Becoming an Urban Citizen: The Struggle for Rights and the Politics of Indonesian Nationalism in the Dutch Colonial City of Surabaya in the Early Decades of the Twentieth Century

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Introduction

This paper is an effort to elaborate an interesting but yet relatively neglected theme in the writing of urban history in Indonesia: the engagement of Indonesia's native intellectuals living in urban areas on the issue of urban governance. Yet, urban history itself is not a new theme in Indonesia's historical studies, but is still limited to the mode of analysis of city's built-environment, the ideology behind city's planning, as well as the nature of public policies in colonial and post-colonial situation in Indonesia. It leaves out the trajectory of nationalist politics on urban governance. By focusing its analysis on the political development in Surabaya—the biggest commercial city in the Dutch colony at the turn of the twentieth century—this paper tries to shed light on the importance of modern political citizenship in the narrative of anticolonial struggle in Indonesian modern history.

European Migration, Colonial Cities, and the Politics of Urban Governance

At the turn of the 20th century, a centralized system of government bureaucracy was the main feature of the Dutch colonial regime. The foundation is based on the constitution of the colonial state which is listed in the Regeering Reglement 1854 (RR1854). The constitution gave the Governor-General the authority to determine various governmental affairs, from central to regional levels. (Wignjosubroto, 2005: 4–10).

There is an article telling about the prohibition of conducting political activities—which also applied to Europeans in the colony. This policy definitely represents the colonial government’s view. Although since the mid-19th century the aspiration to carry out political reform i.e. giving the citizens, particularly Europeans, the right to participate in governing their neighbourhood. The Europeans in the colony and the colonial officials had a general view that the situation in the colony was not ready for such a changes. A letter from Governor General J. W. van Lansberge to the Minister of Colonies in the Netherlands in 1876 justified this prevailing view. To the question on the readiness of the colonial situation for an autonomous and democratically elected local government by urban citizens, Lansberge replied: “There is no urgency for public participation here.” He further stated that he didn’t see such aspiration among the indigenous population “since the people are underdeveloped.” He also saw the European citizens in the same manner. According to him Europeans in the colony have no concern for the government at the local level “since they are not citizens of this country.” They came “just to work in government service” and “earn a living taking advantage of the development of trade industry” (Bijdragen en Mededelingen van het Historisch Genootschap, 1968: 36). The core notion here relies on the expectation for the colony to be a new world sterile from the political struggle model in the parent country. Massive wave of the labor movement, modern socialism, and democratic political demands in 19th-century Europe was a frightening shadow that disrupted political peace in the colony since the colonial state’s political patronage hoped that the colonies to progress through European capital and techniques but at the same time, must be kept away from the political aspirations related to such progress.

The colonial government has tried to maintain their patronage for the better colonial life according to the vision of the bureaucrats in Batavia. However, with their old political views, the effort could no longer last by the end of the 19th century. The expectation about the free class conflicts, ideological contestation, and parent country-style political grouping was likely to represent the naivete of the colonial officials who have been accustomed to 19th-century political patronage in directing the progress of the colony based on their vision. The victory of the liberals in the Dutch parliament and the establishment of the 1870 Wet Agrarische has made

a way for the private entrepreneurs to participate in gaining profits in the colony through the opening of plantation crops and sugar factories (sugar was as the main commodity on the world market). Their presence has confirmed the development of the new political economy in the Netherlands Indies through the birth of colonial capitalism in the late 19th century. Furthermore, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1872 shortened the travel time from the colony to the mother country. So European citizens have a greater chance to travel to the colony for opportunities created by the opening a colony to private capital.

The description of demographic changes in Surabaya urban city from the beginning to the end of the century of the 19th century showed these developments. At the beginning of the 19th century, based on the re-register of European citizens in Surabaya under Britain's rule over the Netherlands Indies from 1811 to 1817, the number of Europeans in Surabaya was around 300 people. Most of them were colonial bureaucrats and colonial soldiers. By the mid-19th century, the number had risen to around 3000 people in 1850 and 4,500 people in 1870, and doubled to 10,000 people in 1890. A new profile of European urban citizens thus emerged. The European immigrants living in the modern city of Surabaya represented new professions such as lawyers, journalists, doctors, accountants, shop and restaurant owners, and other modern occupations outside the government. Von Faber called this group the *middenstand* (middle class) who "seeing themselves higher than the average person, but not included in the group of big industrialists and businessmen" (Faber, 1931).

A great number of European migrants not only arrived in Surabaya bringing with them modern capital, technology, and company organizations in the city but also the political tradition of their mother country which acknowledged the democratic rights of any urban citizen through an autonomous institution at the local level. By having them in this city, the ideas about the individual sovereignty of urban residents were growing well, as seen in a series of association activities, social club activities, and particularly newspapers. This series of activities served as the medium of socialization among European urban citizens as well as venue for discussion of topics of public interest. Also, such development was later the basis for a new culture of urban society. The public sphere

was formed independent from the state and served as the progressive civil society of the colony. We can identify such development with the emergence of voluntary associations to represent their interests. One of the earliest association was the Soerabaiasche Handelsvereniging (Surabaya Trade Association) in 1851 and later renamed Kamer van Koophandel en Nijverheid (Chamber of Commerce and Industry). This association played an important role as a pressure group who articulated the interests of their members.

Apart from associations formed by businessmen, there was an association named De Vereeniging tot Bevordering van de Belangen van Soerabaja (Association for Promoting the Interests of the City Residents of Surabaya) established by a famous lawyer Surabaya, Adriaan Paets tot Gansoijen.¹ As stated in the deed of its establishment, the purpose of the association is “to represent the interests of the Surabaya’s citizens by means of applicable law.” Soon after its formation, the first project of the association was the campaign to improve the city citation by regulating waste disposal, human waste, garbage and puddles in the rainy season. This campaign was an offshoot of an outbreak of cholera in the city (*Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, July 1, 1897, and August 7, 1897).

A number of associations sprung up as a new culture which represented the life of the public space. Since then, social clubs proliferated in Surabaya as a place for meetings, recreation, discussion as well as public activities and art performances in accordance with the background and social position of its members. City residents often came to get involve in long talks from evening until night. They discussed the most recent situation in the colony, the development of the literary world and advances in Europe. This was a “public space” which formed the core of European civil society of the colony and institutionalize the discourses of the public interest of equal individuals outside the state’s dominance (Habermas, 1991: 367). The club was a key institution that integrated the debate and conversation among city residents on the condition and city environment where they lived.

Due to these developments, the colonial government’s centralized power model of the 19th century could no longer relevant. At the beginning of the 20th century, there was a space for expression of the Europeans’ expectations regarding their role in the colony, and of how

the management of the colonies and its cities should be regulated after the ratification of Decentisatie 1903 (Decentralisatie Wet 1903) and the derivative regulations in Local Raaden Ordonantie (LRO) 1905. As a legal basis for local autonomy, the Law paved a way to the establishment of an institution where urban citizens participated in managing the local level government. In Surabaya, the law was initially implemented on April 1, 1906, (Staatsblad No. 149/1906) through the establishment of *Gemeente* (Municipal Government) and *Gemeenteraad van Soerabaja* (Surabaya City Council). Based on the mandate of the regulation, the city council at the initial stage consisted of 23 seats: 15 seats for European citizens, 5 seats for Indigenous people and 3 seats for Foreign Eastern groups.

The provision also stated that half of the 15 seats reserved for European citizens are for officials of the colonial bureaucracy and the remaining eight are for native and Far East representatives appointed by the government. In addition, before the appointment of the definitive official burgermeester (mayor), the assistant resident official would hold the position temporarily. He would be in charge of running the municipal government and at the same time leading the city council whose function was to establish policies carried out by the city government. This provision represents a concept of the transition process of democratic practice at the local level in the Dutch colonial cities. However, we need to underline the important fact that the political reform was primarily aimed at opening space for European citizens in colonial cities rather than being a universal political policy for all citizens in the colony such as Chinese, Arabs and Bumiputera whose involvement and seat quota were limited. For these groups, these reforms are only for people appointed by the government to sit in these institutions, not as a result of elections as they apply to European citizens. The principle behind this provision is a vision that city councils are a means of “political education” for non-European citizens about democratic institutions that are based on western values and traditions and are different from the colonial environment and habits.

The city council institutions have been initially built with a vision to give city residents the responsibility of their participation (medezegenschap) in taking care of issues that arise from their communities. One’s participation in government affairs requires “maturity and political awareness” in prioritizing public interests rather than personal or group and party

interests. Apart from these conditions, however, it was inevitable to see the colonial policy which prioritized the interests of Europeans as indicated by the majority seats of city councils and voting rights based on one's position as a taxpayer. However, after a decade of development, the central government realized that the majority of Europeans were not concerned with the problems faced by indigenous people as citizens of the same city (Wignosubroto et al. 2005: 24–28). For the European representatives, experience as an urban citizen within a democratic tradition in the mother country was clearly evident in a series of debates. They were considered citizens and were not reluctant to participate on issues being debated upon. However, this awareness only worked to the extent that the problems and interests of Europeans were the main discussion.]

Colonial Political Patronage, Feudalism, and Native Educated Indonesians

Although the government halfheartedly supported the political rights of European civilians, the colonial political reforms had at least provided what they demanded as their democratic rights as citizens of the colony as seen in the establishment of the autonomous city government institutions and direct election for representatives in the city council institution. However, it was applied differently to non-European citizens. The colonial government retained their political control over the city council by appointing “representatives” of native Indonesians for the 5 available seats, as well as representatives of Chinese and Far Eastern groups for 3 seats in the council. The government had several reasons for appointing non-European representatives rather than through an election. First, at their account, the democratic rights of citizens to manage their neighbourhood were traditions derived from the European specific historical experience, which is different from the historical experience of people in the colony. Secondly, the colonial government hoped that political reform could be carried out gradually and directed without causing turmoil in the lives of native Indonesians by making the participation of native representatives as a form of “political education.”

In this regard, those who later sat in the council to represent native groups were Raden Tumenggung Pandji Tjokro Negoro (regent of Surabaya); Mas Sastrowikromo (Patih Wedana of Surabaya); Raden

Djojotirto Ardjo (Assistant Attorney General of the District Court of Surabaya); and Mas Soemowidjojo (Head of the District Court of Surabaya). With the exception of Kario Sentono, a meat supplier businessman in Surabaya, the four representatives appointed by the government were indigenous high-ranking officials with a high noble background from the traditional feudal structure of indigenous life. This policy in some ways portrayed a general pattern of Dutch colonial policy in Indonesia, which made cooperation with loyal indigenous traditional leaders as an important element in maintaining colonial order (*rust en orde*) (Onghokham, 1975). Later, the same method—which represented the process of idealization in modern western political institutions in the colony at that time—was used again by the colonial government in the face of a massive anti-colonial movement spearheaded by leaders of new social groups to represent educated Westerners in the Netherlands Indies (Onghokham, 1985).

Criticism of government policy towards the political mechanism for native groups emerged since the beginning of the process. An article published in *Bintang Soerabaja* in April 1906 revealed a problem that arose with the appointment of the traditional nobility representatives:

If you sit on the battlefield of Gemeente raad meeting, the language used among the members is certainly Dutch. Other than the Regents, we think that among the members, no one fairly knows Dutch to understand negotiations in that language when the European gentlemen are speaking. ("Lid-Lid Anak Bumi," *Bintang Soerabaja*, April 1906)

The article underlines the low competency of native representatives in their ability to express opinions within an institution that made Dutch the working language for the debate. Except for Regent Raden Tjokro Negoro who had Dutch educational background, all native representatives in the council were people with no facility in the Dutch language. Regardless of language skills (since translators were later provided in the council), the more important issue regarding representatives of the native elite was to what extent did they represent the interests of the native people. Undeniably, with their position as employees in the colonial government

bureaucracy, they were in no way able to present themselves as a group that expressed their views openly in the forum, let alone criticize the position of the government. Openly criticizing fellow government officials, particularly the resident assistants with their higher status within the formal hierarchy as European officials at the local level, was clearly beyond the imagination of native representatives sitting in city councils who were accustomed to the “*prentah alus*” mechanism in carrying out their work (Onghokham, 1975).

If the participation of Indonesians at the beginning of the formation of a city council was to simply provide a place for “modern political learning,” then the question is how Indonesian educated people other than the *priyayi* group have responded to these political developments. This theme is indeed relatively neglected in the study of modern Indonesian history. A number of scholars have provided a number of interesting views regarding the role of activists of the movement such as the role of Western-educated intellectuals such as Robert Van Niel (1984) and Akira Nagazumi (1989) who initiated Indonesia’s national awakening, followed by other works such as Ruth McVey (2007, reprint) and Takashi Shiraishi (1990) who paid attention to the development of a radical anti-colonial movement that has carried the ideology of nationalism and Marxism with urban workers as the main supporters of the movement pioneered by intellectuals and journalists throughout the early two decades of the 20th century. Regardless the interesting views of earlier studies which highlighted the development of main figures in the movement, i.e. parties and trade unions, concerns about how urban governance and nationalists worked in the colonial cities have been ignored. The existing literature places the main anticolonial political opposition as a mere contradiction between nationalists dealing with the machinery of colonial power represented by bureaucracy, prosecutors, intelligence, police, soldiers and prisons.

A more in-depth study of how the urban governance worked in the colony—in this case, Surabaya city—provides an interesting clue that the educated Indonesians from the very beginning did pay attention to the importance of this institution in the development of welfare and democratic practices of native people’s lives as quoted from Dutch language newspaper:

If in the near future Europeans will elect their own representatives, it is regrettable that the existence of native councillors remains the result of government appointments.

Why do we native people, remain to have no vote to elect representatives of ourselves?

We have the ability to make our own judgments on what is best for our interests. We also have a number of native people with extensive knowledge and the ability to speak in Dutch, at least understanding what is conveyed in the council.

Native members—who can only speak Malay—sit on the council without any contribution ...

Perhaps now is the time, for the government to make changes to the members in question, and let the native people in Surabaya, choose their representatives who can really voice the interests of the population (“Inlandsche leden in den gemeenteraad.” *Het Nieuws van den Dag*. October 17, 1908).

An anonymous letter illustrated an interesting view. First, criticism and awareness of the importance of the city council as an institution with its capacity to channel the native population interests confirmed the growing voices of native intellectuals related to local political affairs in Surabaya city. For the educated Indonesians, the city council gave them the opportunity to voice the political agenda of the native people by voicing their demands. It is no coincidence that the criticism came out shortly after the medical students at Stovia proposed the formation of Budi Utomo in May 1908 and at the same time, with the busy activities of its activists, who prepared to establish a branch in Surabaya.

The idea is consistent with the main theme launched by Budi Utomo as an organization which became the mouthpiece of a rising native population who went through a modern educational system. In addition, this organization had a general principle to criticize the “silent” native representatives from the priyayi group in the decision-making process. In this case, it represented the organisation’s perspective which regarded the priyayi’s conservatism as an obstacle to the progress of the indigenous population in the Dutch East Indies (Nagazumi, 1980).

An important overview from the letter is the dual criticism voiced by Indonesian nationalist politics at that time—namely the weak position of traditional native officials in articulating their community's interests and the political patronage of the colonial government which only provided space for their collaborator native officials. At the same time, the colonial government ignored the expectation of the educated people as a new social group with their critical view toward the feudal culture of the elite traditional indigenous officials of the period. Here is an interesting picture of the development of the modern concept of citizenship politics through participation in city councils. It is an important theme when discussing the early development of the anti-colonial movement in the first decade of the century.

However, despite the fact there was a political obstacle for Indonesian nationalists to surmount in the emerging urban governance practices, it did not mean that the educated ignored the council as a key political institution within urban society. This is shown through their effort to raise a petition that encouraged the development of primary schools for native students in Surabaya. The petition was signed by 110 native people in Surabaya and addressed to the Surabaya city council. They were asking for the establishment of an elementary school for native students. As stated in the petition "There are around 50,000 native people in the Surabaya able to spend 10 cents a month for their children's education." With that amount, it is estimated that in a year there will be a total of 60,000 guilders to build two school buildings for native students. Yet, the funds did not meet the operational needs of paying teacher salaries. Therefore, the signatories of the petition who consisted of "high-ranking" native people in the government and "high-paid private citizens" conveyed a request for government support to subsidize the teaching staff for the school. "Hopefully the noble members of the council will be willing to help their citizens in this very important matter," concluded the petition ("Een gemeentelijkschool School Voor Inlanders," *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*. October 20, 1908). The Dutch press comment on the petition provided an interesting picture of the support for this initiative. As stated by the editor of *Soerabajasch Handelsblad* "The people who are speaking here are no longer just ordinary villagers, but the educated Javanese who have benefited [western] education" the editor wrote. "They now realize that to

reach a position higher than just a clerk, foreman, or apprentice worker, European education is an asset for the native to acquire greatly important for more native people to have.” The petition in this regard showed the awareness of the educated Indonesians of Surabaya about the important aspects of the city council as a new political institution in seeking the emancipation of native citizens at the local level.

The Early Mass-Movement and the Struggle for Political Rights

Throughout the decade after its formation, city council institutions have become new institutions in the colonial political system that have influenced the development of the Surabaya is an urban environment, in the light that the European community had doubled in number into the early 20th century (Verslag 1917). City residents were keep abreast of any discussion in the board, read the arguments and positions of each member, and followed the debates before decision was made which was translated as a public policy of the council’s regular meeting which fell every Wednesday on the first and third week of each month. This council’s decision published as well as minutes of council hearings were published the following day in the city’s newspapers.²

However, during the first decade of its formation, the participation of Indonesian nationalists in these institutions remained limited due to the unequal seat quotas allotted between European and non-European citizens. Moreover, the government adopted a policy of appointment rather than election—which disadvantaged the traditional officials. This became another factor that caused the institution to remain sterile from the context of broader political improvements for the native citizens. In the middle of the second decade of the 20th century, several new developments took place. In 1914, the government began to plan a series of changes in the composition of the board. Council representatives of the European community would all be determined based on direct elections by the city’s population, while representatives of the native people, totalling five seats will be filled through a joint mechanism for the elected representatives and appointed by the government. It was quite clear here that the government continued to half-heartedly open up the participation of native people in the city council. They gave some of the democratic political reforms to native people, while at the same time maintaining the balance by

appointing representatives who could voice the government's interests within the institution.

Apart from the half-hearted reform effort, the government's decision to open participation for indigenous people through direct elections was interesting to observe. In this connection, it was inevitable that the emergence of the Sarekat Islam (SI), a first mass-based social movement in the Dutch East Indies, became an important factor that helped influence government policy to open the doors of city council institutions through the mechanism of direct elections for indigenous citizens. Efforts to accommodate demands borne from the development of the movement indirectly become an important factor behind the government's plan to open a space for democratization within the city council. This fact was demonstrated by the appointment of the Surabaya branch of the Sarekat Islam leader, Raden Achmad, as a member of the council in the Surabaya city council shortly after the government introduced changes in the election mechanism for indigenous people within the city council.

From the government's perspective, providing democratic space at the local level for the leadership of the Sarekat Islam movement was an experiment expected to be a political channel that can direct the movement in the direction that the government wanted or in accordance of the wishes of the government. At the same time, such political space increasingly provided opportunities for activists to voice their political position within the official institution. Firstly, the proportion of representatives in the city council continued within a discriminatory framework and provided a greater proportion of seats for Europeans. With 8000 European citizens having voting rights,³ there was a proportion of 15 seats for them. While of 105,000 native people, had only 5 representative seats in the council.⁴ Secondly, the cause of the unbalanced proportion has been calculated based on the provisions of suffrage which requires voters to be city residents and had a minimum monthly income level of f 600. This minimum limit caused only 5 per cent of native people in Surabaya to exercise the right to vote and disenfranchised 95% native population ("Kiesrecht aan Inlander." *De Tribune*. September 4, 1915).

Faced with this racial inequality within the board, SI activists voiced an alternative system to make the city council more democratic. As stated by Raden Achmad, the chairman of SI Surabaya in the Fifth Decentralization

Congress which took place on May 23–24, 1915 in Semarang, instead of assigning voting rights based on minimum income, he voiced that the voting right should be based on taxes paid. This statement undeniably was reasonable given that there were various types of taxes that must be paid by native people in Surabaya which varied among households. On record the types of taxes paid by native people were the following: business tax of 4 percent of business income, tax for cuke or for eigendom land use which was 10 percent of land rent, tax on land rent ranging from 25 cents to f 5 or 15 to 30 cents per month, and village security tax (*wachtdiensten*) which must be paid in the amount of f 6 per year (“Derde SI-Congres.” *Bataviasch Nieuwsblad*. 1918).

In reality, these native people were also taxpayers for the benefit of the city government, Achmad in his speech called for the model of election to be determined based on the amount of tax payments with a minimum of 10 guilders for each citizen. He said in this occasion that “Why people only have little trust in their leaders (*prijajis*) is other than their level of education, it was also because they did not pay a cent of tax.” His speech at the Congress won praise even in the Dutch press which clearly illustrated the inequality in the ideal of colonial democratic practice. He not only protested about the non-Dutch speaking *priyayi* and the absence of their obligation to pay taxes for remaining seated on the council but also the reluctance of the government to spend more money to conduct a voter census.

A moderate voice responding to the demand for the improvement came from a Theosophical figure in the Indies, D. Hinloopen Labberton. He was seen to have sympathy with the problems of the native population in regards their voting rights. He proposed that it was time for native citizens to have the voting rights and it should be applied in the election of the city council deputy. By showing the seriousness of the colonial government to advance the lives of people in the colony through understanding “public interest” among native people, it is a right measure for the government to show each group in the city that “all have equal rights” to take care of their own interests and “justice” for every citizen. Labberton added that each group consisting of European, Chinese and Far East representatives, and native people, had “the same number of seats.” Labberton also proposed women to have voting rights. Moreover, Labberton also stated that the

appointment of Wethouder Burgermeester (Mayor) by the government would only put a brake on the pace of democracy in people's lives in the colony ("Vijfde Decentralisatie Congres." *Bataviasch Nieuwsblad*. May 28, 1915).

However, Labberton's moderate stance in extending the right of suffrage to the native population was still not an alternative electoral system without racial division in it. Achmad stated that giving the same number of seats for each of the three representative groups means "killing" the voting rights of the native people since their voices were easily defeated by the combination of European and Chinese representative seats. What Achmad conveyed in his refusal emphasized a clear picture of colonial practice in the democratic experiments in the colony. Basically, he has described veiled racism behind any initiative of colonial reform, for example in several requirements for following the steps of progress and "democratic education" for native citizens. By setting the number of seats based on different racial categories, the colonial policy not only perpetuated racial structures within colonial institutions but also eliminated the opportunity for native people to benefit from colonial-style democratic experiments. In addition, he also underlined the stagnation in native society due to the position of *prijajis* with all privileges which ultimately became the main obstacle for native people to progress.

Epilogue

The demand for equal rights in political participation in city councils i.e. universal suffrage provides an interesting picture on the political development in the Netherlands Indies in the early decades of the emergence of the anti-colonial movement. The growing modern cities in the Netherlands Indies and the anti-colonial movement have also led to the modern political aspirations among activists in the anti-colonial movement regarding the matter of universal suffrage as part of citizenship. The author called the politics of the anti-colonial movement which was evident in the city council of colonial Surabaya. This conception refers to the fact of colonial modernity which presents a political practice relying on the conception of modern citizenship as seen through city councils which guarantee citizen autonomy and sovereignty as basis for the government's policy (*medezegenschap*). However, the structure of the

colonial society which placed racial differences as the main element of the social, political, cultural and economic relation patterns has made the democratic tradition of the mother country lose its main spirit (hollow). This situation contradicted development characteristics of the modern conception of citizenship (modern *burgerschap*) in the colonial city environment. Theoretically, the native representatives were invited to be actively involved as modern citizens, but at the same time, their position as a citizens was negated. The struggle for equal rights for the native was therefore the struggle of a native urban citizen.

Notes

1. Adriaan Paet tot Gansoyen had a doctorate in law at the University of Rijks in 1891 before leaving for the Netherlands Indies and established a successful law office in Surabaya. His personal life and his own biography are quite controversial. As a board member, he was famous for having a strong opinion in criticizing government policies. However, for his work in spearheading the formation of the Pes Eradication Committee in Surabaya, he was awarded the honour medal of Order van Oranje Nassau from the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1908. He was known as a quiet person with “aristocratic” and impulsive character which often clashed with his fellow colleagues’ board member. He resigned in 1913 from his position as a member of the council due to his firm opposition towards the corruption scandal at the institution which had distanced him from his colleagues, even though the charges he made were considered wrong.
2. Dutch presses such as the *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, *Soerabaja Nieuwcourant*, *Indische Courant* and the Chinese Press such as *Bintang Soerabaia* have a special column that publishes a summary of the council members’ debates every two weeks on Thursday.
3. This figure represents the population of European men who have the right to vote while women at that time had no right to vote.
4. William Frederick mentions that the number is about 75 per cent of all Native people living in Surabaya (Frederick: 12). However, this figure is an approximate number given that the city government until the end of colonial rule had no official account of the exact number of native people living in the municipal jurisdictions.

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The Anti-Imperialist League and the fight for Philippine Independence

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“Every American has a voice or a pen ... let every American who still wishes his country to possess its ancient soul—now that it seems in danger of perdition—do what little he can in the way of speech and writing, and above all let him give his representatives and senators in Washington a positive piece of his mind.”¹ In his letter to the editor of the *Boston Evening Transcript*, William James, a leading Anti-Imperialist League (AIL) member, denounced the Philippine-American War. He also enjoined the American public to take part and voice out their opinion in opposing the militaristic, chauvinistic, and racist imperial policy of the McKinley administration. James invitation to his fellow Americans was to save the “ancient soul” of the nation that was tarnished by the war of criminal aggression. During the Philippine-American War, many writers and thinkers came out to voice their opposition to the American government. They joined hands to form an organization that questioned the lust for power of the imperialists. Hence, this paper examines the role of the Anti-Imperialist League in the Philippines fight for independence. It will look into the speeches and writings that stirred public opinion and put pressure on the American policy makers to discuss the Philippine Independence issue in the legislative arena.

Introduction

Public opinion played an important role in building the American empire. Public pressure spurred President William McKinley’s decision to wage war on Spain. American public clamor also prompted the President to take the whole Philippine Islands. The President listened to the report of Senator Henry Cabot Lodge who informed him that, “the general sentiment among the people ... is in favor of holding them (the Filipinos).”² The

favorable response from the public had granted the President support for his imperial policy.

The Anti-Imperialist League (AIL), the most vocal dissenting voice to the imperial decisions of President McKinley, tried to influence the American public in opposing the expansionist policy of the government. The AIL used the power of the podium and the pen to stir the minds of the people, informing them about the effects of the administration's Philippine agenda. The anti-imperialists organized meetings where they proclaimed their objections against America's lust for empire through powerful speeches. Notable personalities such as Andrew Carnegie and Samuel Gompers drew crowds from the business and labor sectors. They presented the threat to American workers and the competition which Filipino nationals would pose. William Jennings Bryan, Carl Schurz, George Hoar, and Grover Cleveland were just some from the political group. They talked about the preservation of the most treasured documents of the land such as the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution. College and university professors and presidents such as William James, Graham Sumner, David Starr Jordan, and Felix Adler represented the best educational institutions. Their concerns were primarily the preservation of the Anglo-Saxon race and the fear of military conscription. W.E. Du Bois, William Lloyd Garrison, and Moorefield Storey denounced the subjugation of other races. Edward Atkinson focused on the financial and social cost of the Philippine-American War. Jane Addams represented the female community, relating the anti-imperialist cause to the issue on education and women's rights.³ They all voiced their grievances in front of thousands of American people. They revived the memory of the historical sites such as the Faneuil Hall. They used every opportunity such as club meetings and other famous gatherings to air their ideas. They also made use of the church pulpit to reach out to American Christians.

The Role of the Anti-Imperialist League (AIL)

The main responsibility of the AIL was to "educate the minds and awaken the consciences of the voters and to teach them that the principles of the Declaration of Independence apply to Malays in the East as well as to Anglo-Saxons."⁴ In order to accomplish this, the AIL started to enlarge its membership. The AIL targeted in particular, persons who

will “write articles for the local newspapers and to secure public lectures and debates.”⁵ The members were required to answer specific questions such as “how could we have avoided getting into the present situation? And “how can we get out of it?”⁶ In these questions the member needed to persuade the audience that “the Americans should have not taken the Philippines” for the first question and “the Americans must give immediate and complete independence to the Filipino people,” for the second question.⁷ It was therefore imperative for members to be articulate and be knowledgeable about the situation in the Philippines. David Haskins Jr, the treasurer of the AIL, believed that the organization “should redouble its activities as to convince the most skeptical that imperialism is and always will be a burning question until the undemocratic, un-American heresy is stamped forever.” Haskins then enjoined everyone to consecrate himself/herself to a “life-long struggle,” which he believed to be a “great cause.”⁸ It was evident in the campaign of the AIL that the ability to express and to defend the cause was crucial in the success of the organization.

Aside from speeches, the AIL also utilized the mighty pen to win the sentiments of the people. Although William Lloyd Garrison was AIL’s laureate, it was Mark Twain who made the most impact. Susan Harris in *God’s Arbiters*, considered Twain as the embodiment of American conflicting identity at the turn of the nineteenth century.⁹ His belief that the United States had no business to colonize and to subjugate distant nation and people while maintaining and supporting American exceptionalism, characterized the American imperial culture. Through satire, speeches, prose and poetry, Twain showed to the American people the effects of imperialism and the annexation of the Philippines. Other luminaries such as Ambrose Bierce, Finley Peter Dunne, William Vaugh Moody, Ernest Crosby and many more joined Twain in lambasting the government’s quest for empire abroad. Through their pens, these anti-imperialists began to use parody, satire, and other ironic means in attacking the hypocrisy and insincerity of the administration’s agenda towards the Philippine Islands.

The Goal of the Anti-Imperialist League

The Anti-Imperialist League’s goal was “to oppose by all proper means the extension of the sovereignty of the United States over subject peoples.” It was clear from their constitution that the group would use

any means that was “proper,” and in this case, they used the mighty power of the pen and the podium. The AIL thought that the American people must be consulted in relation to the Philippine question. In his address as President of the AIL, George Boutwell said, “Let the American people decide whether we will have them [the Filipino people].”¹⁰ Boutwell had assured the audience that if that would be the case, “the probability is that the American people shall decide that they do not wish to have them (the Filipinos).”¹¹ Boutwell was confident that those adherents and those who were still true to the Declaration and the Constitution would vote for the granting of self-determination to the Filipino people. Thus, in its Second Annual Meeting in November 1900, Erving Winslow emphasized the importance of educating the American public about the government’s war of conquest. He said, “If we keep up our campaign of education, the eyes of the people will be opened, their sense of justice quickened, and the enemies of the republic will be forced to abandon their ambitions and iniquitous schemes.”¹² The AIL was able to accomplish its first two aims, however, concerning the last, it seemed that the organization failed.

The AIL even stated in its constitution that “it will withhold its support from any candidate or party that stands for the forcible subjugation of any people.”¹³ Thus, during the 1900 Presidential election, the AIL supported William Jennings Bryan and the Democratic Party in its bid. The defeat of Bryan had created a great blow to the membership of the AIL, but it did not hinder the AIL’s fight for the independence of the Philippines. In the AIL’s Second Annual Meeting, AIL President George Boutwell, told the audience that “the presidential election has not changed the opinions of the body of anti-imperialists, and it may be assumed that the League is to continue in their work in which they have been engaged systematically since the month of November 1898.”¹⁴ He went on to say that, “We are to address the body of the American people, and in the hope that in the next two or four years a change of opinion may be secured, to be followed by a change in policy and in representative men.”¹⁵ The four-year prediction fell short since the Jones Law would only be passed in 1916.

Thus, it was not surprising that in the very venue where the sense of nationalism, freedom, and democracy began would also be the venue for American public dissent against the colonial policy of the United States government. It was in this site, the Faneuil Hall, was where AIL was born.

The organization believed that the acquisition of the Philippines meant the death and curtailment of freedom and the death of republican ideals. Through numerous speeches, pamphlets, poems, broadsides, newspaper articles, and other literary forms, the AIL exerted tremendous effort to stir the consciousness of the American public. In their formation of anti-colonial discourse, the soldiers' letters played an important role. The soldiers' accounts of their gruesome and horrific experiences as well as their disillusionment of their role as agents of the government's colonial policy, created an alternate discourse that revealed the ruthlessness of empire and challenged the expansionist rhetoric of the state. By demonstrating how soldiers' letters revealed the dilemmas and paradoxes of American Empire, these narratives provided a crucial foundation for the anti-colonial discourse that paved the way for legislation that placed the Philippines on the path to independence and self-determination.

The censorship imposed by the military and the government on the news relating to the military activities in the Philippines deprived the American public of information about the real situation in the islands. The military scrutinized even the official correspondents' accounts about the war. It was during this period when the letters of soldiers became very crucial. Newspapers would publish these letters with or without the consent of the soldier. Most often, those that had been published contained the brutalities and the discontent of the soldiers in the battlefield.¹⁶

The Philippine-American War¹⁷ and the Soldiers' Letters

The Philippine-American War had inspired much of the anti-imperialist writings and speeches during the height of their campaign against the expansionist policy of the government. The anti-imperialists tied the war to their own advocacies such as the abolitionists to African-American rights, the feminists to education and women's rights, the labor unionists to better condition and opportunities. Since the military and the government had implemented strict censorship, the anti-imperialists looked for an alternative source of information. They found the soldiers letters sent to family members as the most viable alternative. The letters narrated the soldiers' experiences of torture, massacre, and burning during battles. These also contained their hatred to the cause and conduct of the war, their perception about Aguinaldo's forces, and the Filipinos in general.

Their disgust as to their role as agents of the government in its imperial pursuit was instrumental in providing information from the Philippines needed by the anti-imperialists. The anti-imperialists used these letters in formulating a discourse that criticized the United States government's imperial pursuit.

Spearheading the agitation, the AIL found in some of the soldiers letters important facts, figures, and realities that would support their cause. The soldiers' letters gave accounts of the killing of civilians including women and children in their pursuit of the Filipino revolutionaries, the wiping out of villages after the search operations, and the carrying out the order of no prisoners. An example was the letter of E.D. Furnam of the Washington Regiment, who participated and witnessed the first days of battle. He narrated how they looted and burned Filipino abodes saying, "we burned hundreds of houses and looted hundreds more."¹⁸ Another was that of Anthony Michea who said, "We went in and killed every native we met, men, women, and children."¹⁹ A more intense description was the letter of one private member of the First Washington Regiment who mentioned, "our fighting blood was up, and we all wanted to kill 'niggers.' This shooting human being is a 'hot game' and beats rabbit-hunting all to pieces." He continued, "we kill them like rabbits, hundreds, yea, thousands of them ... we will soon round them up and kill them all off. No more prisoners." Towards the end of his letter, he gave the reason why they need to do what they did. He explained, "the weather is intensely hot, and we are all tired, dirty, and hungry, so we have to kill niggers whenever we have a chance, to get even for all our trouble."²⁰ Although in the last letter the writer blamed the weather and their pathetic situation, in the letter of J. E. Fetterly of Nebraska Regiment, he directly criticized the United States government for the situation they were into, asserting, "I do not approve of the course our government is pursuing with these people [the Filipinos]. If all men are created equal, they have some rights, which ought to be respected."²¹ Thus, invoking the Declaration of Independence, the soldier's memory of his own tradition had kept him thinking about his country, especially the image that the war had created that tarnished the very essence of its existence. The soldier turned to the inalienable rights that every person possessed including the Filipinos.

In some cases, the letters proved to be an exaggeration just like the letter of A.A. Barnes, but as Frank Freidel had stated, "Though the soldiers may have exaggerated or indulged in tall tales, the fact was that the insurrection was turning into a cruel war, shocking in its savagery."²² The vivid representation of the slaughter of children and women showed the intensity and the cruelty of the war, which the AIL conceived as "war of criminal aggression." The war to liberate Cuba had ended into a war of conquest, which cost a great toll for both the United States and the Philippines, financially, materially, and mortality. Nonetheless, although some of the letters were being questioned for their authorship, some scholars had used these correspondences from the front to show the brutal means of establishing an empire.

However, reading these letters between the lines, said letters provided a discourse that questioned the very institution they were protecting. Most evident in the correspondences sent to parents, siblings, and friends, was the invocation of the past and the adherence to the democratic principles as well as the concept of race, which coincided with the AIL's main contentions. The AIL saw in these letters credibility and authority over the situation in the Philippines, in particular the Philippine-American War. The clamor for an investigation of the allegations against the misconduct in the Philippine affairs prompted the government to organize and form a committee for this purpose. Although its head was a devout imperialist, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, he could not act on his own volition. He could not ignore the testimonies and the narratives and letters that the anti-imperialists had presented to the committee. Public opinion had been very important during this period. It must be remembered that, it was public opinion that had led President McKinley to declare war with Spain. Public opinion also had guided the president in his decision to acquire the Philippines.

Meanwhile, when the Philippine-American War erupted, different sectors of the American society joined hands to contest the use of force in relation to the imperialistic policy of the government. The AIL, which became the voice of the American people extended its membership that resulted to its nationalization. Born in Boston, known as the "cradle of liberty," the AIL grew and as part of its nationalization effort. It became

the American Anti-Imperialist League with its center in Chicago. Erving Winslow, the organization's secretary reported that there were around a hundred centers scattered around the country. After its numerous liberty meetings held in various venues, the AIL's membership rose to around ten thousand.²³ This was due to the effectiveness of the anti-imperialists in voicing out their grievances and causes through public speeches and written works. With the speakers and writers coming from the different sectors of society mostly from the academic, economic, and political spheres, the people found authority in them because they were also leaders in their own fields. Their mastery of the word enabled them to translate and explain to the American people that the penchant for empire of the government was an abrogation of the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution. It also enabled them to translate that the annexation of the Philippines would surely affect the ecological balance in the society and would affect the well-being of the American people with the presence of other races such as the African-Americans and the native Americans.

The Anti-Imperialist League's Publications

Although records did not show the connection between the increase in number of the AIL and the Philippine-American War, the number of publications about the military campaign in the Philippines manifested the impact of the war on the organization. The AIL had published "a grand total of 1,184,188 printed items in pamphlets, leaflets, broadsides, books, poems, newspapers, cards, circulars, and letters," during its existence.²⁴ Nonetheless, Erving Winslow believed that it reached up to five million publications.²⁵ Among those published were the soldiers' letters containing the experiences, thoughts, and sentiments of the soldiers about the war. Most of these letters had agitated the anti-imperialists because of the numerous instances of looting, killing, burning, and torturing that the soldiers had written. Moreover, these publications contained notes on the soldiers' disillusionment and disgust and on how they reacted to their role as agents of empire.

Whereas during the American Revolution, the Revolutionaries had created a number of liberty symbols such as the Liberty Tree and Liberty Pole, the AIL had created numerous liberty publications named

“Liberty Leaflet,” “Liberty Tract,” and “Liberty Pamphlet” as well as liberty gatherings called “Liberty Meetings” and “Liberty Congress.” Just like the liberty symbols of the Revolution, the liberty publications and liberty gatherings of the AIL became sites of memory, reminding the American people of their fight for freedom. It reminded them of their founding father’s nationalism and patriotism. It reminded them of the ideals of the Declaration of Independence such as liberty, equality, and the pursuit of happiness. It also reminded them of the importance of the republican ideal of self-determination and a government governed by the consent of the people. In the second article of the AIL constitution, it stated that the League was formed “to aid in holding the United States true to the principles of the Declaration of Independence. It seeks the preservation of the rights of the people, as guaranteed to them by the Constitution.”²⁶ The AIL members held that self-government was its fundamental principle.

The Anti-Imperialist Writers and their Works

In addition to the letters printed in the newspapers, the AIL also published a pamphlet that contained around fifty letters of soldiers. The *Soldiers Letters: Being Materials for the History of a War of Criminal Aggression*, became a very important publication of the AIL that it was printed twice. After the publication of the pamphlet, The James West Company of Boston later had published a book entitled *Liberty Poems* in June 1900. It was a collection of poems written by notable anti-imperialists such as William Lloyd Garrison, Ernest Crosby, William Vaughn Moody, James Dooling, Clarence Hawkes, W. A. Croffut and many more. Some were published in AIL newspapers such as Boston Evening Transcript, Sunday Republican, Springfield Republican and many more while some were published for the first time. Inscribed on the cover of the book was “inspired by the crisis of 1898-1900” and was “made for the New England Anti-Imperialist League,” through the efforts of the “supporters of the cause of freedom.” What was noticeable on the poems were some of the words used by the soldiers in the AIL publications. Included in the rhetoric of the writers were words like “jack-rabbit,” “goo-goos,” “Injun,” “nigger” in referring to the Filipinos and orders like “take no prisoners,” and “spare no one” and some soldiers terms like “war is hell,” “war is fun.” In addition, the anti-imperialists wrote about the experiences of the soldiers in the

field as narrated by the soldiers to their loved ones. In particular was, Ernest Crosby's *The Pirate Flag*, which talks about the soldiers accounts about the war as fun, about the looting, about the burning of villages, and about the manslaughter. He wrote,

And then around me fore and aft
The guns began to roar,
And flames sprang up and soon enwrapped
A village on the shore.
I took my glass, and clearly saw
Women and children run,
While soldiers in the palms behind
Were potting them for fun.

In the following stanzas, Crosby wrote about the orders of officers, who despite the waging of white flag of the revolutionary forces, they still killed them because of the "no prisoners" policy during the war. Crosby also alluded to the looting and the plunder that the soldiers, whom he called as "Blue-jackets and marines" in the Philippines.

Far to the left some dusky men
Fought bravely on a knoll;
But, overcome at last, they raised
A white rag on a pole.
Yet still the soldiers shot them down;
And I could almost hear
Their laughter as they seemed to shout,
"No prisoners wanted here!"

Then, when the last defender fell,
The men rushed in with glee;
And from each house they came with loads
Of plunder, sad to see.
And soon we sent a boat ashore,
Blue-jackets and marines,
To get our share of loot and swag,
And spoil the Philippines.

In one stanza, Crosby parodied the men who did the lootings and the killings mistaking them as pirates where in reality, “they were Dewey’s men.”

I turned and asked a sailor lad,
For now they stood at ease,
What pirates we might chance to be
Who plagued these summer seas.
“Oh, we’re no pirates,” he replied.
Don’t ask me that again.
This is a ship of Uncle Sam,
And we are Dewey’s men.”

And as Crosby moved on to the following stanza, he talked about how the “Old Glory” became black. And Crosby asked, ‘where are your stripes and stars?’ and if the flag belong to “honest tars,” Crosby was alluding to the glory during the 1776 Declaration of Independence and the honesty of men, who truly adhered to the principles of the American tradition. He then went on to criticize the loss of such tradition because of the imperial pursuit of the government. He said:

“But how is that?” I said once more.
“Where are your stripes and stars?
And does that inky flag up there
Belong to honest tars?”
“To tell the truth, it’s rather queer,”
Replied embarrassed Jack.
“But something in the climate here
Has turned Old Glory black.²⁷

The work of Francis Ellingwood Abbot entitled “Old Glory”—“New Shame,” was more intense in accusing the government of “filthing the flag with mud” due to its imperialistic desire. Abbot wrote,

Are we wild wolves, then,
Gorged in our den?
Look to your flag, O Freedom’s men!

Tis filthy with mud,
Soaked with innocent blood,
Loathed of the free and abhorred of God.

Shame on this lust
For the golden dust,
For “commerce” and “markets” in which fools trust!
Shame on this wars
Of Plutus and Mars-
Stripes and Dollars, not Stripes and Stars!

Drunken and gory,
Damn not the proud story
That shines in each stripe and each star of “Old Glory”!
The great Declaration
That made us a NATION-
‘Tis hissed but by vipers of this generation.
Shall cant, murder, greed,
Blacken Freedom’s bright creed?
Look to it, men of Freedom’s breed!
Wash clean your aim,
Wash your smirched name,
Wash from “Old Glory” the foul “New Shame”!²⁸

Calling the government as wolves because of the bloodshed caused by the war, Abbot accused the government’s lust for gold for giving shame to the American flag. It was this economic greed that led to the loss of “old glory.”

Another poem was Corporal John Mulcahey’s *In the Trenches*. As the title suggests, it gave a vivid picture of the soldier’s situation in the field through a poem. Mulcahey related the price of having an empire to the sacrifices of the men in the battleground. He wrote:

Fighting in a blazing sun, in thickets,
With a grim foe who well knows how to fight
Standing in the rain when all our pickets
Are destitute, and clothes are “out of sight”;

Firing from the trenches hot and sizzling,
And standing where the water's to the knees;
Fighting when the rain is pouring, drizzling,
And parched troops are dying for a breeze;
This is empire.

As the war in the Philippines continued to escalate and the number of deaths and brutalities rose to hundreds of thousands, the American public began to question the moral principles behind the war. The Anti-Imperialist League (AIL) came to the fore and took the lead in opposing what they called the war of criminal aggression. The anti-imperialist writers helped popularize the war in the Philippines through their poems, satire, and prose. Some of them got their ideas from the soldiers' letters. An example was William Lloyd Garrison's *To Our beloved Allies*, a poem inspired by the accounts of burning towns and hunting down enemies in a mountainous and swampy terrain. He said,

O men and brothers in Luzon
Through swamp and forest hunted down
by brute invaders driven on
from burning town to town.²⁹

Only the soldiers from the field would know what and how the actual battle was being conducted. Thus, these information and representation did not come from the official military reports. They came from accounts of ordinary soldiers that came out in the newspapers and through their letters that went into the hands of the anti-imperialists.

Grayson's numerous writings about the Philippine-American War did not only present the conduct of the war, but also present who was to blame. He wrote a poem entitled William McKinley stating, "no empty words can justify the slaughter of the brave, battling for freedom and a freeman's grave ... murdered to satisfy a nation's greed," which was accusing the president of murdering people in order to attain its lust for empire.³⁰ However, while Grayson accused McKinley of butchering people, he comforted Aguinaldo in his work saying, "take heart and comfort if thy should be sad. Not vain nor wasted thy heroic stand: Thou has unmasked

a nation falsely clad in altruistic garb ... blind to distinction between good and bad, and smiting Liberty with ruthless hand.”³¹ William Grayson’s other works revealed much about the war in the Philippines and about the soldiers in the field.

Using rhetoric known to the people, the anti-imperialists writers translated some of the contents of the soldiers’ letters into popular media creating a discourse questioning the imperialistic and militaristic policy of the government. Rhetoric played an important part in stirring the minds of the American public. Anti-imperialists started to talk in the streets, to distribute pamphlets, and to organize meetings. And in their campaign, some used humor and satire as weapons in questioning the quest for empire of the American government. As Roger Bresnahan had pointed out, “the Spanish-American War and its Philippine sequel are unique in American history, for no other war has been treated both humorously and satirically by gifted writers.”³² He explained that this was possible because in these wars, “the suffering for the Americans was not great” unlike in Vietnam or in World Wars.³³

Mark Twain was the most celebrated writer opposing the imperialistic policy of the administration. Although he supported the Spanish-American War at first, he became a staunch anti-imperialist, who had been true to the cause of the AIL until his death. His return to the United States on October 15, 1900 after ten years of stay outside the country, had made him a celebrity because leading newspaper interviewed him not because of his experiences abroad, but more of his new views on the America’s venture in the Philippines. Before he left London, the *New York World* asked Twain about his opinion on the word “imperialism.” Twain answered, “Well, I have formed views about that question. I am at the disadvantage of not knowing whether our people are for or against spreading themselves over the face of the globe.”³⁴ As an example to prove his point, Twain insinuated the affairs of the United States in the Philippines. He said, “There is the case of the Philippines. I have tried hard, and yet I cannot for the life of me comprehend how we got into that mess.”³⁵ Twain saw the subjugation of the Filipinos as a “quagmire.” He also presented his disillusionment about the real intention of the government in the islands. In relation to the tension between the American and Filipino soldiers, Twain assayed,

“I thought we should act as protector- not try to get them over our heel. We were to relieve them from Spanish tyranny to enable them to set up a government of their own ... it was not to be a government according to our ideas, but a government that represented the feeling of the majority of the Filipinos, a government according to Filipino ideas.” Twain had been one of the staunch anti-imperialists who had fought for the termination of the war and who had supported the granting of immediate independence to the Filipinos.

Mark Twain and the Philippine Independence

According to Jim Zwick, Mark Twain or Samuel Langhorne Clemens was “the most prominent opponent of the Philippine-American War.”³⁶ But his works inspired by and about the war were the “least known” among his writings. Moreover, Twain’s involvement in the AIL “has received less attention.”³⁷ Although he was not one of the original members of the AIL, he had done tremendous efforts in pursuing the objectives of the organization, in particular the investigation of the brutalities committed by American officers in the Philippines; the ending of the Philippine-American War; and the granting of independence to the Filipino people. Before becoming a staunch anti-imperialist, Twain supported the Spanish-American War.

Mark Twain was vocal about his sudden change of views. When the New York Tribune interviewed him about his new beliefs, Twain answered, “once I was not anti-imperialist. I thought that the rescue of these islands from the government under which they had suffered for three hundred years was a good business for us to be in.”³⁸ A thorough reading of the Treaty of Paris had changed Twain’s mind. After studying its content, Twain saw that the United States had to protect the friars and their properties, thus, the change of view.³⁹ Twain then became a staunch anti-imperialist. He said, “It should, it seems to me, be our pleasure and duty to make those people free, and let them deal with their own domestic questions in their own way. I am anti-imperialist. I am opposed to having the eagle put its talon on any other land.”⁴⁰ Hence, Twain became one of the most bitter opponent of the government’s imperialistic pursuit.

Meanwhile, Amy Kaplan observed that Twain’s international travel to “imperial routes” molded him as an “American writer and his complex

representation of race.”⁴¹ It was Twain’s actual contact with the people in the places he visited that he experienced the complexities of the issue on race. Thus, even if he was one of those who opposed the Philippine-American War, his main concern was mainly the possible annexation of the Philippines to the United States. This was attested when media men interviewed him upon his arrival in the United States after his travels to different countries in Europe, Africa and in Asia.⁴² In his works, Twain valorized the American culture and idealized the American tradition. However, his main anxiety in annexing the Philippines was the fear of possible merging of the Filipino race to the American race. Instead of focusing on race, he focused his opposition to the acquisition of the Philippines through the Philippine-American war. During the remaining days of his life, Twain had devoted his time on the Philippine cause.

Mark Twain’s first anti-imperialist work that created impact was his work entitled *To the Person Sitting in Darkness*, published in the *North American Review* in February 1901. It parodied the United States imperial policy in the Philippines hidden in the guise of Benevolent Assimilation. Twain questioned the real aim of the government in spreading “Civilization” to the “person sitting in darkness.” Obviously, the “person sitting in darkness” referred to the Filipinos and “Civilization” meant the Benevolent Assimilation policy of McKinley. Twain argued that, “extending the blessings of Civilization to our Brother who Sits in Darkness has been a good trade and has paid well, on the whole; and there is money in it yet, if carefully worked- but not enough ... to make any considerable risk advisable.”⁴³ During this time, the war between the American and Filipino forces had already caused a lot of death among the Filipinos. Thus, Twain presented a reality wherein “the People that Sit in Darkness are getting to be too scarce-too scarce and too shy.”⁴⁴ Because of the death toll that the war had caused reaching to around more than half a million, civilian, Twain opined that the aim of the government of subjugating the Filipinos was not worth the risk. Also, the civilizing mission was not needed, Twain reasoned out that, “The most of those People that Sit in darkness have been furnished with more light than was good for them or profitable for us.” Hence, he concluded, “we have been injudicious.” He even considered the benevolent mission as a sugar-coating for the real intention of the American government. Twain said, “The Blessings-of-Civilization Trust,

wisely and cautiously administered, is a Daisy."⁴⁵ Twain insinuated that commerce and trade were still the main reason for the acquisition of the Philippines. He believed that the subjugation was a mistake. He talked about two Americas, "one that sets the captive free, and one that takes a once-captive's new freedom away from him, and picks a quarrel with him with nothing to found it on; then kills him to get his land."⁴⁶ It was a clear representation of what the government had done in the Philippines.

Twain had known the history of the Filipino people. From the time Twain joined and became an active member of the AIL, he had been aware of what was happening in the Philippines. He was equipped with the necessary information especially about the war that was going on in the colonial possession between the American and Filipino forces. The information from Dewey's victory to the start up to the end of the hostilities between the American and Filipino forces was well-presented in his essay. He called Dewey the "Master of the Game" who was playing the European game of imperialism. Because of Twain's opposition to the Philippine-American War, he exposed the cruelties as well as the military excesses in the Philippines such as the water cure, the reconcentration, massacre, and the merciless killing of innocent people. In order to give authority to his account about the war, Twain used a letter of Iowan soldier to his mother, which was written in bold letters, telling, "WE NEVER LEFT ONE ALIVE. IF ONE WAS WOUNDED, WE WOULD RUN OUR BAYONETS THROUGH HIM."⁴⁷ Once more, the soldiers' letters became valuable in presenting the case of the anti-imperialists. It was the authority of the soldier writing about his experiences during the battle.

Twain believed that the United States government had betrayed the Filipino people through the war. They not only betrayed the Filipinos by forcing them to be at war with them, but also by not granting them their freedom. In relation to treachery, Twain wrote another satirical essay entitled "A Defense of General Funston," where he detailed and parodied General Frederick Funston's capture of Aguinaldo. According to Twain, the method was treacherous and was not part of the principles of war. He coined the term "Funstonism," "Funstonian example" and mentioned that it was the model of the water cure, reconcentration, and the merciless killings. However, towards the end of the essay, he was not blaming Funston for his action, but the innate disposition that molded him to act

like a cruel person. Twain wrote, "He did not make his own disposition, it was born with him."⁴⁸ In order to intensify the effects of the Philippine-American War, Twain used the famous order of General Jacob Smith in Samar during the retrieval operation, which stated, "*kill and burn—this is no time to take prisoners- the more you kill and burn, the better—Kill all above the age of ten-make Samar a howling wilderness.*" Twain even italicized the words in order to emphasize his point. His intense resistance to the Philippine-American War went on even until after the official ending of the war on July 4, 1902. In his essay entitled *Comments on the Killing of 600 Moros*, Twain wrote about the massacre of the Muslims in the southern part of the Philippines where most of the fighting occurred after 1902.⁴⁹ He blamed the military leaders like General Leonard Wood for the horrendous slaughter of innocent people and accused the government of misrepresentation of the actual battle in the Philippines.

Mark Twain had gained praise from the anti-imperialists, but had added enemies from the imperialist group.⁵⁰ But Mark Twain's role in the Philippine campaign did not end through his writings. He participated and spearheaded the petition to investigate the atrocities done by the military in the Philippines as well as the over-all conduct of the Philippine affairs, which resulted to the establishment of a committee to attend to the call.⁵¹ Although he was not able to see the Philippines gain its freedom, he was one of the ardent fighters and writers who demanded to free the benighted people whom he believed was "sitting in darkness."

The Power of the Podium

It was explicitly stated by the AIL that the members qualification must be the ability to articulate and speak well and be able to explain the programs and objectives of the AIL. During this period, town meetings had been the most common means of gathering people. It was an easy way of disseminating ideas in a community. Since public debate was one of the major venue for airing grievances, the AIL members used the podium in enlightening the people about its campaign. It was through the meetings that the AIL members were able to speak and to elaborate their main objectives in questioning the government policy.

It was through the meetings that the different sectors converged and presented their own protests. The center stage of the meeting was

important because it revealed the different sectors being represented, since the speakers sit on the stage. Prominent people representing the different sectors of the society delivered speeches to sympathize or to emphasize with the AIL's campaign to end the war and eventually place the Philippines on the path of independence. Most of the speakers were eloquent speakers and the most vocal among the sectors such as Jane Addams for women; Samuel Gompers for labor; Andrew Carnegie for business; and Carl Schurz, George Hoar, and William Jennings Bryan for the policy makers to name a few.

It was in these gatherings that the AIL members discussed and debated different aspects of the imperial policy of the government and important topics in relation to their claim that the policy was questionable. People were able to participate by attending these gatherings and listening to the speeches of the AIL members. It was through these meetings that the American public was given information about the real situation in the Philippines. It was through these speeches where the AIL presented the brutalities and the extent of the militaristic policies of the government. Sometimes, using the soldiers letters and the soldiers accounts, the AIL was able to arouse the consciousness of the people about the brutalities of the war and the consequences of the imperialistic policy of the government. This was attested by the increase in number of attendees in the succeeding meetings after the outbreak of the war. This encouraged the AIL to recruit more members to join the group. This was reflected in the attendance of the AIL—from a mere twenty at the start, to a soaring ten to thirty thousand attendees in just a matter of months.⁵² This was a manifestation of how great and how effective the words and speeches of the AIL members. Sometimes, they used the letters of the American soldiers in the Philippine campaign.

An example was the address of J. Laurence Laughlin, who was reacting to President McKinley's speech in Atlanta on December 15, 1898, wherein he said, "the flag has been planted in two hemispheres, where it remains the symbol of liberty and law, of peace and progress." Laughlin stated, "In the Philippines, we are not hounding colored natives with the blood-hounds of anti-slavery days, but mowing them down with rapid-fire guns—"nigger hunting" ... to the Filipinos, [the flag is] the emblem of tyranny and butchery." Laughlin used the letter of Charles Brenner of

Minneapolis, Kansas to his parents that narrated about their regiment's attack at Caloocan, wherein they had four prisoners whom they had no idea what to do. When they asked Captain Bishop on what to do, the officer answered, "you know the orders, and four natives fell dead."⁵³ Laughlin even showed another correspondence that corroborated Brenner's letter. In a letter of Harry Todd of Company M, 20th Kansas Regiment dated February 24, it narrated, "at 4 o'clock yesterday morning, and by daylight the inside guard marched out toward our lines with ORDERS TO GIVE NO QUARTER TO ANY FILIPINO, and the guard marched straight along, killing every insurgent that poked his head in view."⁵⁴ The orders to let no prisoners alive had touched the sensibilities of Laughlin that he even wrote it in bold letters. By including the soldier's letter, he gave importance to the soldier writing the correspondence. The letter reinforced the anti-imperialist claim about the cruelties of war. Since the letter became a valuable source of information for the American people about the situation in the Philippines, it gave authority to the AIL's position in opposing the Philippine-American War.

Female Members of the Anti-Imperialist League

While some of the male anti-imperialist writers and their works were not given enough attention, the fate of the women anti-imperialists writers was more tragic. They were not only neglected, they were totally forgotten. In the *Liberty Poems* that the anti-imperialists had published, there were at least seven women writers: Annie Diggs, Frances Bartlett, Pauline Wesley, Cecile Joyce, Julia Goldwin, Grace Ada Brown, and Aella Greene.

Most touching was Cecile Joyce contribution entitled "*Give Me My Son*" and "*A Mother's Prayer*."⁵⁵ In "*Give Me My Son*," Cecile Joyce presented the plea of a mother longing to have her son back whom she entrusted "to set men free," but instead used by those whose "lust of blood and greed of gain, and passion snare" to accomplished their ends.⁵⁶ The strong words used such as "the faith and trust I gave to you, you have betrayed, Stand forth, and face a woman's heart! Are you afraid?" showed the mothers discontent over the betrayal of the military institution and the government. In the poem, Cecile Joyce seemed to be answering the plea of many soldiers in the fields wanting to be relieved. One instance was the letter of Tom

Crandall of the Nebraska Regiment who said, "We all want to come home very bad ... The people of the United States ought to raise a howl and have us sent home."⁵⁷ Joyce presented also the sentiments of the mothers who let their sons join the war because they thought that it was for the glory of the country. She wrote, "No greater boon a mother's heart can ask nor give/ than that her only child should die for men to live."⁵⁸ But, on the other stanzas, Joyce blamed the greed and the imperialistic passion of those in power by saying, "O lust of blood and greed of gain/ and passion's snare, in all your reeking scarlet guilt/ at last laid bare."⁵⁹ Joyce kept on appealing to the conscience of those in power through her words, "To fight your fight I sent him out; and I demand/ No wrongful blood shall stain his soul/ nor soil his hand ... Alive or dead: oh bring him back an honest man!"⁶⁰ These strong words of Joyce showed the disheartened mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters of the soldiers in the field, who were receiving the letters containing the discontentment and disillusionment of the men on the field.

Likewise, in *An American Mother's Prayer*, Cecil Joyce also represented the feelings of the mothers who treasured their sons very much, but with the call of duty, they cannot do anything but to send their sons to the "country's call." Nevertheless, she reminded those who were in charge of the sons that "to thee it may not seem as much: He was my all."⁶¹ Thus, in the Mother's prayer, she asked the Lord God of war to hear her plea to remember the ones to blame on the day of reckoning. The intensity of the war affected the sentiment of the writers towards the feelings of the soldiers love ones. Women writers showed sympathy more to the mothers and to those who were left behind, who happened to be the recipients of soldiers letters.

While Cecile Joyce wrote about the war in relation to the grieving mothers, Jane Addams spoke about the war in relation to the American society in general, connecting it to the different problems of the country such as labor and even to the city prison. She said, "there is a growing conviction among workingmen ... whatever may be accomplished by a national war, there is one inevitable result—an increase standing army, the soldiers of which are non-producers and must be fed by workers."⁶² Addams saw the war as additional burden for the workers. Nonetheless, although Addams saw the connection between the war and the

workingmen, she was one of the most notable public speaker among the women anti-imperialists who also spoke about the rights of women. In the Central Music Hall meeting of the AIL in Chicago, Addams implicitly showed the position of women in American society by saying, “to protect the weak has always been the excuse of the ruler ... of the white man.” American society viewed women as weak and just like the Philippines, portrayed sometimes as feminine, the American white female also experienced discrimination among white males.

Conclusion

Whereas the American Revolution left traces of memory in different forms such as monuments, memorabilia, literatures, numerous archival documents, and some visuals, the AIL had only its members’ literary works and personal papers to transmit the memory of the organization’s battle. While the AIL took part in remembering and reliving the ideals of the American Revolution, the organization as well as the members’ works are buried with them in their grave. The various works of the AIL was not given much importance in the consciousness of the ordinary American. Moreover, even some Filipinos were unaware of the presence of the organization.

One important means used to erase the memory of the Philippine-American War was through rhetoric. Rhetoric played an important role in the forgetting of the Philippine-American war. Word such as “imperialism” was changed to “expansionism.” Instead of calling it “Philippine-American War, imperialists called it “Philippine Insurrection.” Finally, the “military occupation” became known as “benevolent assimilation.” This word game helped in conditioning the minds of the American public and even the Filipinos to forget about the event.

The Philippine-American War was one of the events that marred the United States “benevolent” and “exceptional” images. It somehow created an indelible ink that blotted America’s “superior” image that was difficult to erase, no matter how some tried to deny its existence. The Americans and the Filipinos had enjoyed a continuous good relation since after the war. Hence, the Philippine-American War, which cost from half a million to a million lives, had become insignificant in both Philippine and United

States histories. Reynaldo Ileto mentioned several reasons for forgetting the war on the Filipino part such as textbook writing, amigo warfare, benevolent programs, and new set of memories of war and occupation.⁶³ On the part of the Americans, it was justified because of the “myth of the splendid little war;” and the belief that the United States had the authority over the islands.⁶⁴ This was why the American government considered the Philippine-American War as an insurrection. For Richard Welch, the Philippine-American War was “our most quickly forgotten war, the war least celebrated in legends or songs, least marked by cenotaphs and monuments.”⁶⁵ The reason behind this according to Welch was that the war did not affect much the country during that time. It did not result to military defeat, and it did not caused inflation and recession in the economy.⁶⁶ It might not affect the economic and military aspect of the homefront, but it definitely affected the social aspect of the country. It spurred division among the people and reaction among various sectors of the American society. While it divided the country between those who favored and those who opposed the colonial policy of the government, it united the different marginalized and advocacy groups such as the women, labor, abolitionists, and other groups within the American society.

Consequently, it was not only the war that was forgotten, but also the works of those who were known to oppose the war at that time. Most famous was Mark Twain, who had become a staunch anti-imperialist towards the end of his life. He was one of those who signed the petition for the investigation of the atrocities during the war. Jim Zwick, who compiled most of the satires written by Twain during his anti-imperialists days lamented,

Mark Twain’s involvement with the anti-imperialist movement was one of the longest and most significant political affiliations of his life, and was widely recognized during his lifetime, inspiring editorials and political cartoons from California to London to Bermuda to Canada, and probably further afield. But, like the Philippine-American War itself, and turn-of-the century imperialism more generally, this part of Mark Twain’s career is rarely recognized today.⁶⁷

Indeed, Mark Twain's contribution to the AIL's literature was significant, but even Twain's biographers, such as Albert Bigelow Paine, did not include any in their accounts.⁶⁸ This part in Twain's life was forgotten. Thus, it was not surprising that while the other works of Twain was popular to American public such as the *Huckleberry Finn*, *the Prince and the Pauper*, and *the Tom Sawyer*, his anti-imperial works were seldom mentioned nor studied or given importance in literary circle. According to Zwick, the reason for forgetting Mark Twain's anti-imperialist writings was due to the "nation's inability to deal with that part of its past."⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Mark Twain devoted his final days to the cause of the Anti-Imperialist League, specifically the fight for Philippine Independence. Although he joined the AIL late, Twain was one of the faithful members of the League who continually stood for the aims and objectives of the organization. Nonetheless, the Anti-Imperialist League like the Philippine-American war remained forgotten in the minds of most American and Filipino people.

After the ratification of the Treaty of Paris and the end of the Philippine-American War, the Anti-Imperialists greatest and final battle shifted to the granting of independence to the Filipino people. Through the written works and speeches of the members of the Anti-Imperialist League, the Philippine issue was presented to the public. Because of the zealotry of the AIL members in prodding the government for an investigation of the conduct of the affairs in the Philippines, the future of the Philippines was placed in the halls of the US Congress and became the topic of debate among the policy-makers.

The Anti-Imperialists League and their works relating to the Philippine-American war may have been forgotten, but the passage of the Jones Law that promised the Philippines its independence memorializes their endeavors which will remain to be their greatest legacy.

Notes

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28. Francis Ellingwood Abbot, "Old Glory"- "New Shame," *Liberty Poem*, 63–64.
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44. *Ibid.*
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47. *Ibid.*, 174.
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Review and Evaluation of Sources on Oroquieta City as WWII “Capital of Free Philippines”

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Abstract

This paper is an exercise of corroborating and criticizing internally the primary texts to test the credibility of a claim; in this case, the factuality of a alleged surrogate guerrilla government in Mindanao known as “Free Philippines” and the verisimilitude of its purported sovereignty over Mindanao during World War II. This is submitted for publication for the *Historical Bulletin* with the permission of the Research, Publication and Heraldry Division of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines.

Introduction

In a letter dated 28 September 2015, former National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) Chair Maria Serena I. Diokno dismissed the request of Jesus Epimito O. Suico of the Misamis Occidental Provincial Government in declaring Oroquieta City as World War II “Capital of Free Philippines.” Having no mandate to declare such trivial title, the NHCP ruled that:

There is no doubt that there were local civil governments for several years in Mindanao. The point of contention here is the legality or legitimacy of the so-called “Free Philippines,” since it presented itself as a national government of “liberated territories” owing to the absence of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, the legally constituted government.

Research shows that the “Free Philippines” was *mainly* the product of Wendell Fertig’s ambition and illusion, whose authority was limited to that of the USFIP-10th Military District commander, yet he assumed he was leading a sovereign state. Neither the Commonwealth of the Philippines nor the Southwest Pacific Area command in Australia recognized Fertig’s government. The title, “World War II ‘Capital of Free Philippines,’” is thus questionable.

We, therefore, cannot recognize or declare Oroquieta City as the “Capital of Free Philippines” during World War II.¹

Judging the claim based on a compilation of 22 sources Suico furnished the NHCP and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) on 25 May 2015, only two (of ten sources considered as primary, i.e. memoir, letters) mentioned “Free Philippines:” Fr. Edward Haggerty, S.J.’s *Guerrilla Padre of Mindanao* and a guerilla map² (The rest of the materials are secondary sources and loose tertiary sources, including Wikipedia, blogs, and online articles, whose reliability is questionable.) In addition to the primary sources, the NHCP found another Jesuit memoir that mentions “Free Philippines,” that of Fr. John A. Pollock, S.J.³ Three secondary sources relevant to the study were also found which discuss the Free Philippines Guerrilla postage stamp.⁴ Akin to this is an excerpt from a 1950 article about this stamp included in the Suico Compilations.⁵

Although not included in his compilation, Suico mentioned in his previous letters to the NCCA and the NHCP the book, *They Fought Alone*, a biography by John Keats of Lt. Col. Wendell Fertig, founder of the so-called “Free Philippines” and commander of USFIP 10th Military District (Mindanao, henceforth referred to as “USFIP-10MD”).⁶ (1st ed. 1963, 2nd ed. 1964 with updates). Classified as secondary source, *They Fought Alone* contains information on “Free Philippines” but lacks dates to serve as markers of the events. In 2003, however, Lt. Col. Clyde C. Childress, guerrilla commander of the 107th Division, USFIP-10MD,⁷ warned the readers that Keats’ book was actually written by Fertig himself:

They Fought Alone contains grossly untrue representations of the history of the Tenth Military District and, therefore, must

not be accepted as the authoritative chronicle of the Mindanao guerrillas. Despite the passage of many years, I have decided I cannot continue to sit idly by and allow the reputations of those who served in Mindanao to be tarnished and their contributions diminished before posterity by Wendell Fertig, the true author of this flawed narrative of a real World War II operation ... The full title of the book reads *They Fought Alone: A True Story of a Modern American Hero*. But it also says on the book's dust jacket, "For while this story is told in the form of a novel, it depicts real events and real people." Which is it, a true story or a novel? It must be a novel because it is not a true story.⁸

The sources in the Suico Compilation were compared with existing primary sources and relevant secondary sources and studies about World War II in Mindanao, such as the personal accounts of Childress and Juan A. Rivera,⁹ two guerrilla commanders under Fertig, the works of Robert Ross Smith,¹⁰ and Fernando Reyes and Leonardo Nuval.¹¹ These sources, however, failed to acknowledge the veracity of "Free Philippines." The *Guerrilla Unit Recognition Files, 1942–1948* of the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration through the retrieval project of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Offices (PVAO) yielded no result.

Four primary sources in the Suico Compilation were then used as corroborating accounts: [1] the memoir; [2] undated letter (both ca. 1989) of Jesus J. Montalvan,¹² a guerrilla captain who worked closely with Fertig in Misamis Occidental;¹³ [3] account of the civil affairs in Misamis Occidental of F. D. Pacana, Misamis Occidental Provincial Treasurer, dated 3 January 1967;¹⁴ and [4] the undated memoir of Fr. Martin J. Noone, S.S.C.¹⁵

What is revealing about Montalvan, Pacana, and Fr. Noone's accounts is that these sources fail to recognize "Free Philippines" but mention the establishment of a number of civil governments in Mindanao. It appears that none of these civil governments were connected to the so-called "Free Philippines." Montalvan's memoir is exceptional for it actually mentions the title "Free Philippines" once, in reference to Fr. Haggerty and Keats' books who called it such ("We constituted practically the FREE Philippines from Sept. 1942 to October 1945"¹⁶). In fact, Montalvan was already familiar with the term "Free Philippines" as early as 1947.¹⁷

Textual Analysis

There is no contention about Oroquieta as the capital of the “Free Philippines,” as Fr. Haggerty and Keats claim that.¹⁸ The only problem is the nature of the so-called “Free Philippines,” which can be ascertained by answering the following questions:

1. Who created it?
2. When was it created and up to when did it function?
3. Who headed it?
4. What makes it a government?
5. Who recognized it?

WHO CREATED IT? While Fr. Haggerty and Fr. Pollock failed to mention the founder of the “Free Philippines,” Keats disclosed that it was Fertig who founded it.¹⁹ Fertig was an American mining engineer who later became a military engineer in Bataan.²⁰ During the Defense of Corregidor, he was flown off the island en route to Lanao.²¹ (A report said the airplane he boarded crashed in Lanao.) In Lanao, Fertig “evaded capture and ‘headed to the hills,’” according to Childress. Rivera’s account corroborates this: “[Fertig] remained quietly for some time under the care and protection of friends,” particularly the Ozamiz family of Jimenez, Misamis Occidental.²²

Various scholars of World War II history in the Philippines are familiar with Fertig’s amazing story in Mindanao—that he had made himself the “Commanding General” of the *bogus* USFIP Mindanao-Visayan Force (not to be confused with USFIP 10-MD). He decorated himself with “five stars of a brigadier general shaped and hammered out of coins by a Moro silversmith” so that people in Mindanao would recognize him.²³ **Keats justified the importance of this deception (“brilliant ... fantastic propaganda”) in Mindanao affairs “because it was absolutely essential for the Filipinos to believe they had an American general leading them.”**²⁴

Fertig claimed that “both the Philippine Commonwealth and the United States government” had delegated to him that authority over Mindanao making him “the de facto military governor of the island, if

not of all the Philippines” (cf. Keats). However, no official war record or mention is made by Fr. Haggerty, Fr. Pollock, Childress, Rivera, Montalvan, and other accounts of World War II in Mindanao to support these claims. Not even the letter of Quezon to Fertig, dated 25 July 1943,²⁵ asserted as evidence by the Suico Compilation, confirms this.²⁶

Even before Fertig sprang out of Jimenez, there were already efforts by Filipinos to stabilize life in Mindanao and sustain guerrilla movements against the Japanese. Montalvan mentioned that in September 1942, a “Guerrilla Organization” was formed in Lala, Lanao by Filipino-American P.C. Station Commander Capt. Luis P. Morgan. Because Fertig presented himself a five-star general, this “Guerrilla Organization” offered its command to Fertig, making it the forerunner of USFIP-10MD.²⁷

Montalvan added that on 16 September 1942, this “Guerrilla Organization” was responsible for liberating the provinces of Misamis Occidental, northern Zamboanga, and part of Lanao. On 18 September 1942, the “Guerrilla Organization” organized the civil government in these territories, the Civil Affairs Office of Misamis Occidental and Zamboanga, with Saguin as Director of Civil Affairs. This is corroborated by Pacana, who attributed its establishment to Fertig.²⁸ From Lala, the headquarters of the “Guerrilla Organization” was transferred to Misamis Occidental, particularly in Oroquieta, perhaps upon Fertig’s insistence (for his own comfort).

WHEN WAS “FREE PHILIPPINES” CREATED AND UP TO WHEN DID IT FUNCTION? Believed to be considered putative evidence of the “Free Philippines,” Montalvan’s memoir narrates the organization of the civil governments of Agusan, Bukidnon, Davao, Lanao, Misamis Occidental, Misamis Oriental, and Zamboanga upon the establishment of the USFIP-10MD on 21 February 1943. He, however, did not acknowledge any government called “Free Philippines.”²⁹ It is historically risky to assume that the organization of these civil governments implies the establishment of the “Free Philippines.” Even Keats’ book and other primary sources fail to bolster its establishment. The dates do not even jibe: Montalvan’s memoir reports that the organization of the civil governments in Mindanao occurred on *21 February 1943*; while other sources on “Free Philippines” mention no exact date, or even month, of establishment. Keats’ book claims it already existed as early as *25 December 1942*.³⁰

The date when the “Free Philippines” ceased to exist is also uncertain. What is clear is that in June 1943, Oroquieta, the capital of the so-called “Free Philippines,” was captured by the Japanese without any resistance. “The civil government with its huge relief projects, controlled trading posts, volunteer guards, school libraries, work projects, was scattered,” wrote Fr. Haggerty. He continued: “Oroquieta, capital of the Free Philippines, fell into Jap hands. Headquarters of the USFIP (10MD) ... was captured and, after various shifts before probing Jap patrols, moved over into Lanao.”³¹ A reading of the accounts of Fr. Haggerty and Fr. Pollock show that after the capture, they no longer mention “Free Philippines.” On the other hand, Keats wrote that the “fugitive Free Philippines Government”³² (also described as “shadow civil government”³³ and “Fertig’s organization”³⁴) was still functioning around mid-July 1943 up to late December 1943 in the mobile headquarters of Fertig. The dealings of this “Free Philippines” were unknown. Its name, nonetheless, was stamped on a rare map of Southeast Asia and Australia dated 4 March 1944. It reads “Posted in the Free Philippines, M.D. No. 10, Mindanao Guerrilla Area, 4 Mar 1944?”³⁵

Montalvan’s 1947 *Philippine Free Press*’ article gives a projected period of the existence of “Free Philippines” 16 September 1942 (the date when the Civil Affairs Office of Misamis Occidental and Zamboanga was established, to be discussed further) to October 1944 (recalling MacArthur’s Leyte Landings and the restoration of the Commonwealth authority over the Philippines).³⁶ In his ca. 1981) memoir, Montalvan’s timeframe was changed to September 1942 to October 1945.³⁷ In this memoir, however, Montalvan does not refer to Mindanao as “Free Philippines.”

WHO HEADED IT? Fr. Haggerty and Keats attributed the directorship of the “Free Philippines” to Judge Florentino Saguin.³⁸ Fr. Haggerty acknowledged Saguin as “Civil Administrator for Mindanao,”³⁹ while Arnold H. Warren (secondary source found by the NHCP), calls Saguin the “Director of Civil Affairs.”⁴⁰ Saguin’s jurisdiction, as Keats’ book claims, encompassed Misamis Occidental (“actually in possession of the Government of Free Philippines”)⁴¹ and the “unsurrendered territory” of Mindanao;⁴² Fr. Pollock’s account, on the other hand, claims that it was the whole Mindanao that was “free of Japs for about twenty months.”

NI-ICP, however, discovered contradictions between Montalvan's account and those of Fr. Haggerty and Keats. Montalvan's account specifies there were actually four Directors of Civil Affairs in Mindanao, created through the help of the USFIP-10MD, which served as civil governments for Japanese-free provinces: Pantaleon Pelayo for Agusan and Davao, Salvador Lluch for Lanao, Atty. Jose Valdehueza for Misamis Oriental, and Saguin for Misamis Occidental and Zamboanga peninsula.⁴⁴ The ca. 1989 letter of Montalvan acknowledges the USFIP-10MD's role (not necessarily Fertig) as "the best Guerrilla (area) because behind their lines there is always a Civil Government functioning."⁴⁵ In these two accounts, Montalvan failed to name these civil governments as "Free Philippines."

WHAT MAKES IT A GOVERNMENT? Keats' book describes the "Free Philippines" as "undefeated, sovereign government."⁴⁶ It had its own army and navy which Fertig credited to be of his "Free Philippines" government. (It is no surprising that Jesuit fathers Haggerty and Pollock who subscribed to idea of "Free Philippines" failed to distinguish "Free Philippines" with USFIP-10MD area of command.) Fr. Pollock and Keats' works report about this "little fleet" called "Free Philippines Navy" or "Navy of the Free Philippines,"⁴⁷ with a flagship named *General Fertig* (Fertig never became a general).⁴⁸ Montalvan's memoir corroborates the existence of a fleet in Mindanao, not as "Free Philippines Navy" but of USFIP-10MD.⁴⁹

Aside from an army and navy, Keats' biography described "Free Philippines" as having its own money printer. Months before Fertig appeared in Oroquieta, the local government was already printing emergency currency. According to Pacana, the Misamis Occidental LGU "had no money derived from the taxation"⁵⁰ to comply with [1] Quezon's order of 8 December 1941 "to pay all [government] employees' three months advanced salaries, and to continue to pay them thereafter as their salaries became due," and with [2] MacArthur's order of 13 February 1942 "to give cash advances to Army Finance officers, any amount they needed for the military operating expenses."⁵¹ Hence, the Misamis Emergency Currency Committee was established and chaired by Pacana under the auspices of the then government-owned Philippine National Bank.

Pacana furthered that on 1 April 1943, Fertig (already recognized by MacArthur that time as USFIP-10MD Commander) received an order

from Quezon (meaning, Fertig had to be loyal to Commonwealth, not to his “Free Philippines”) creating the Mindanao Emergency Currency Board. Although busy as Civil Affairs Director and “of frequent cases of conflict and misunderstanding between military and civil government personnel,”⁵² Saguin chaired the board. Contradictory to Fertig’s claim, this board was independent of the USFIP-10MD but had a responsibility to give cash to the latter when needed.⁵³

The printed emergency notes reveal the real authority in Mindanao: “Treasury Emergency Currency Certificate by Authority of the President of the Commonwealth of the Philippines.”⁵⁴

WHO, RECOGNIZED “FREE PHILIPPINES”? Neither MacArthur nor Quezon recognized “Free Philippines.” The status of “Free Philippines was uncertain, if it was really a “sovereign government” or it was simply subordinate to the Commonwealth.

In March 1943,⁵⁵ Lt. Cder. Charles Thomas “Chick” Parsons, Jr.⁵⁶ arrived in Mindanao from Australia to present MacArthur’s appointment to Fertig as the USFIP-10MD Commander, with the rank not as a “five-star general” (which the people of Mindanao believed) but “Lieutenant Colonel” (his rank in Bataan).⁵⁷ On why MacArthur decided not to promote Fertig, Childress pointed out that “General MacArthur had become aware of Fertig’s insufferable attitude.”⁵⁸

Parsons actually informed the SWPA of Fertig’s insistence in pushing “Free Philippines.”⁵⁹ Parsons referred to “Free Philippines” as that “civil government of yours (Fertig)” and criticized Fertig: “You know that MacArthur brought the President out with him,” hence “[o]fficially, the Philippine Government is in exile, waiting to return ... But here you’ve set up a Free Philippine Government in the Islands.” Fertig answered Parsons: “The Free Philippine Government is loyal to and obedient to the Commonwealth Government in exile.”⁶⁰

Keats alleged in the revised edition of his book that Gen. Morimoto, Japanese commander of Mindanao, acknowledged “Free Philippines:”

It is incredible that here on an island that we have captured and control, we find a city brightly lighted at night, where trucks move normally, *where forts fly American flags*, where there is

a thing called the Free Philippine Government, and where the military commander happens to be a United States Brigadier General named Wendell Fertig.⁶¹

NHCP notes, however, that if Morimoto's statement were true, why on earth would the said "Free Philippines" fly the U.S. flag instead of the Philippine flag?

Meanwhile, MacArthur seemed to mock Fertig's "Free Philippines" following his landing in Leyte Gulf in October 1944, with the dissemination of his newspaper *Free Philippines*.⁶² Keats's biography of Fertig has a sarcastic remark on this: "MacArthur wanted these distributed throughout the island for propaganda purposes ..."⁶³

* * *

Dr. Antonio I. Montalvan II, a grandson of Montalvan, an anthropologist, and ethnohistorian, defends Fertig's "Free Philippines" with the statement **"that Quezon and Osmeña's subsequent departure from the Philippines on March 23 ... signified the fact that we had no formal government, bolstering the fact of the 'Free Philippines' based in Oroquieta."**⁶⁴ Montalvan II's statement is actually the heart of Oroquieta and Misamis Occidental LGUs' claim as "World War II Capital of the Free Philippines" is being presented to the NHCP and the NCCA.

NHCP believes Montalvan II description to be quite sweeping because the Philippine Commonwealth still exercised authority over the country despite its "in exile" status. Quezon had to leave the country for the saving the government from being abolished. Together with his family, Vice-President Sergio Osmeña, some cabinet secretaries, and Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos, Quezon was transported out of Corregidor on 20 February 1942 for Negros Occidental. On 17 March 1942, MacArthur left for Australia from Del Monte Airfield in Bukidnon and immediately sent Quezon a message to transfer to Australia. On the very same day, Abad Santos decided to remain in the country. As the highest official, Abad Santos was given by Quezon the full authority to exercise power on his behalf as per directive of 17 March 1942.⁶⁵ Quezon and his party then proceeded to Mindanao, landed at Oroquieta, and days later were transported from Del Monte Airfield in Bukidnon to Australia.⁶⁶

Conclusion

There is no doubt that there were local civil governments for several years in Mindanao. The point of contention here is the legality and legitimacy of the so-called “Free Philippines,” since it presented itself as a national government of “liberated territories” due to the absence of the Commonwealth government.

“Free Philippines” was only a product of Fertig’s ambition and illusion (“I feel that I am indeed a Man of Destiny, that my course is chartered and that only success lies at the end of the trail ...”), and that his authority was limited to being the USFIP-10MD commander.” Therefore, the slogan “World War II ‘Capital of Free Philippines’” is a total misnomer.

Dr. Rico Jose of the UP History Department, upon consultation of the NHCP on 14 April 2015, said “Oroquieta may have been a capital of the ‘Free Philippines’ for a while, but the concept of ‘Free Philippines’ was not a legally binding one, unless you consider the one day Quezon was there in March 1942 (which cannot be). Neither was it a nationwide capital, since it was only applicable to the 10th MD. ‘Free Philippines’ was in fact more of a generic phrase and many places used it simultaneously.⁶⁷ One must note that the glossy publication of SWPA directed at the Philippines was titled *Free Philippines*.”⁶⁸

Another follow up comment was sent to NHCP by Jose on 4 May 2015; “My main point is that there was no single ‘free Philippines’ government—there were many free civil governments but not one. And Oroquieta was just one of the centers, which was later captured by the Japanese;”⁶⁹ and on 27 June 2015: “My main observation is that the phrase ‘Free Philippines’ was loosely used by Fertig and did not represent a fully functioning civil government representative of the whole Philippines or of the Philippine Commonwealth government.”⁷⁰

On 18 November 2013, the NHCP Board of Commissioners approved the historical marker for the Oroquieta Church. The approved marker text highlights the historical connection between Oroquieta and Quezon. The installation, however, was not allowed by Archbishop Jesus Dosado. Perhaps the Oroquieta and Misamis Occidental LGUs can persuade the church hierarchies of its importance and value to the community. Way

back in the late 1980s, Capt. Jesus J. Montalvan had already suggested a marker for this arrival of Quezon he proposes to be installed in Loboc. “If we, the veterans can not (sic) do it,” Montalvan noted, “we will work that the City Council (Oroquieta) will do for it.”⁷¹

Notes

1. Cf. Dr. Maria Serena I. Diokno’s reply to Mr. Jesus Epimito O. Suico, Misamis Occidental Province’s Committee Chair on the Formal Declaration of Oroquieta City as World War II “Capital of Free Philippines,” 28 September 2015. *NHCP Records Section*. Suico wrote the NHCP and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) three separate letters dated 11 June 2014, 11 March 2015, and 25 May 2015 on the matter. The NCCA National Committee on Historical Research already dismissed the claim prior to the Dr. Diokno’s official reply.
2. Annex 10 of Suico compilation: Edward Haggerty, *Guerrilla Padre of Mindanao* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1946), 108, 128; and Annex 17: Mindanao Guerrilla Area map, stamped with “Posted in the Free Philippines.”
3. John A. Pollock, “War Experiences and Recollections,” *Philippine Studies*, 1973, Vol. 21, 1s. 3, 375–6, 382/360–87.
4. Walter H. Adler, “From the Allied Intelligence Bureau to Mindanao: The ‘Free Philippines’ Guerrilla Stamps,” *Philippine Philatelic Journal*, 1991, Vol. 13, No. 1, 12–9 and Vol. 13, No. 3, 12–20 (both reprinted from *The American Philatelist*, 1982); Pablo M. Esperidion, “Philippine Guerrilla Stamps,” *The American Philatelist*, 1949, Vol. 62, 768–74; and Arnold H. Warren, “The Philippine Guerrilla Postage Stamp of 1943: A Research Report,” *The American Philatelist*, 1961, Vol. 75, 25–30.
5. “Philippine Postal Slogans by Pablo M. Espiridion, in Philippine Journal of Philately, September–October 1950,” in *Suico Documentation*, Annex 20, 2.
6. John Keats, *They Fought Alone: A True Story of a Modern American Hero* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1963).
7. For Clyde Childress, cf. Jesus J. Montalvan, “Memoirs of the Guerrilla Organization in the Tenth Military District Mindanao,” in *Suico Compilation*, Annex 15, 5.

8. Clyde Childress, "Wendell Fertig's Fictional 'Autobiography': A Critical Review of *They Fought Alone*," *Bulletin of the American Historical Collection*, April–June 2003, Vol. 31, No. 2(123), 41–2.
9. For Juan A. Rivera, cf. "Mindanao, 1941–1945: A Philippine Account," *Bulletin of the American Historical Association*, April 1976, Vol. 6, No. 2.
10. Robert Ross Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2005).
11. Fernando Reyes and Leonardo Nuval, *World War II in the Philippines: The Visayas, Palawan, Mindoro, Masbate, Mindanao and Sulu* (Manila: Veterans Federation of the Philippines, 1996).
12. Jesus J. Montalvan, "Memoirs of the Guerrilla Organization in the Tenth Military District Mindanao," in *Suico Compilation*, Annex 15; "Original letter of Don Jesus J. Montalvan with the account of President Quezon's Party in Oroquieta," *Suico Compilation*, Annex 13.
13. About Fertig and Montalvan, cf. Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 188.
14. F. D. Pacana, "A Brief Account about the Printing of Emergency Currency Notes in Misamis Occidental during the Last Pacific War, 3 January 1967," in *Suico Documentation*, Annex 19, 2. Also published in Ramon N. Daomillas, *Rizal at Dapitan and Some Historical Bits on Misamis Occidental* (N.P.: Ramon N. Daomillas, 2003), 163–89 (cf. *Suico Documentation*, Annex 18).
15. Martin J. Noone, S.S.C., "World War II Memories of Misamis Occidental," in Daomillas, *Rizal at Dapitan*, 190-5 (cf. *Suico Documentation*, Annex 18).
16. Montalvan, "Memoirs of the Guerrilla Organization," 13.
17. Jesus J. Montalvan, "What About Our Notes?" *Philippines Free Press*, 19 April 1947, 28A; "What About Our Notes?" *Philippines Free Press*, 19 April 1947.
18. Haggerty, *Guerrilla Padre of Mindanao*, 128; Cf. Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 136–7.
19. Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 179.
20. Rivera, "Mindanao, 1941–1945," 60.
21. Childress, "Wendell Fertig's Fictional 'Autobiography,'" 44.
22. Rivera, "Mindanao, 1941–1945, *ibid*; cf. Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 120–4.
23. Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 88–9, 96–7.

24. Fertig's biographer Keats disclosed that his (Fertig) actions were actually motivated by the belief that he was the only "senior United States officer alive and free on the island, and possibly in all the Philippines" and that the Philippines was a U.S. territory, "in a way, that is why [he] can tell the people what to do." Childress commented disapprovingly to this as incorrect assumption: "The belief that the Philippines was owned by the United States was a misconception on the part of many Americans, who either weren't aware of or had forgotten about the island's commonwealth status, which made the Philippines independent in all but name by the time war had begun." Cf. Childress, "Wendell Fertig's Fictional 'Autobiography,'" 46-7.
25. Cf. "A message transmitted to the brave men and women of Free Philippines by Radio Network to Col. W. W. Fertig' from President Manuel L. Quezon dated 25 July 1943," in *Suico Compilation*, Annex 12.
26. It was perhaps these outrageous, unconfirmed claims that served as basis of the 1956 report of the U.S. Congress House Committee on interstate and Foreign Commerce, the *War Claims and Return of Enemy Assets*, which says that MacArthur had authorized Fertig "to act as his personal representative" and that Quezon ordered that a "civil government of the Free Philippines [be] organized in the areas as liberated." Cf. U.S. Congress House Committee on interstate and Foreign Commerce, *War Claims and Return of Enemy Assets* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1956), 36.
27. Montalvan, "Memoirs of the Guerrilla Organization," 1.
28. Pacana, "A Brief Account," 2.
29. *Ibid.*, 5-7.
30. Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 135-6.
31. Haggerty, *Guerrilla Padre of Mindanao*, 128.
32. Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 322.
33. *Ibid.*, 342-3.
34. *Ibid.*, 237.
35. Cf. *Suico Compilation*, Annex 17: Mindanao Guerrilla Area map, stamped with "Posted in the Free Philippines."
36. Montalvan, "What About Our Notes?" *ibid.*
37. Montalvan, "Memoirs of the Guerrilla Organization," 13.

38. Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 139, 161; Haggerty, *Guerrilla Padre of Mindanao*, 197; Esperidion, "Philippine Guerrilla Stamps," 27.
39. Haggerty, *Guerrilla Padre of Mindanao*, 197.
40. Warren, "The Philippine Guerrilla Postage Stamp of 1943," 27.
41. Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 136.
42. *Ibid.*, 165.
43. Around July 1943, a month after the fall of Oroquieta but not the entire Mindanao. Cf. Pollock, "War Experiences and Recollections," 376.
44. Montalvan, "Memoirs of the Guerrilla Organization," 5-7.
45. "Original letter of Don Jesus J. Montalvan," 1.
46. Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 165.
47. Pollock, "War Experiences and Recollections," 375; cf. Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 112, 137.
48. Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 221.
49. Montalvan, "Memoirs of the Guerrilla Organization," 3.
50. *Ibid.*, 1.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. Although Pacana failed to acknowledge in an unknown reason, there was a "Mindanao Emergency Currency" before Saguin. It was headed by Teofisto Guingona, Sr., Commissioner of Mindanao and Sulu of the Commonwealth. Cf. Gilbert S. Perez, "Philippine Guerrilla Currency," in American Numismatic Association, *Selections from the Numismatist: Modern Foreign Currency* (Racine, Wisconsin: Whitman Publishing Company, 1961), 288-95; Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 165.
54. Cf. Emergency notes specimens in *Suico Compilation*, Annex 19.
55. Childress, "Wendell Fertig's Fictional 'Autobiography,'" 52.
56. M. Hamlin Cannon, *War in the Pacific: Leyte, Return to the Philippines* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954), 16.
57. It somehow disheartened Fertig because it would affect his leadership over "Free Philippines." Fertig accused General Headquarters of the Southwest

- Pacific Area (SWPA) in Australia “idiots” and “thick heads,” arguing “it was absolutely essential for Filipinos to believe they had an American general leading them” (an underestimation of Filipinos’ character). Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 168.
58. Childress, “Wendell Fertig’s Fictional ‘Autobiography,’” 69.
 59. Cf. Larry S. Schmidt, *American Involvement in the Filipino Resistance Movement on Mindanao during the Japanese Occupation, 1942–1945* (Master Thesis, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1982), 105.
 60. Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 180.
 61. This statement appears in the second printing of John Keats, *They Fought Alone: A True Story of a Modern American Hero* (London: John Keats Secker & Warburg, 1964), 127.
 62. Keats, *They Fought Alone*, 298.
 63. *Ibid.*, 306.
 64. Cf. “Letter of Dr. Antonio J. Montalvan II to Carmen Barredo Montalvan, Oroquieta City, 6 May 2014,” attachment in Nanieth Maerl B. Acosta, et al.’s letter to NHCP “[putting] in place a verification process of the claim that Oroquieta, Misamis Occidental became ‘Capital of the Free Philippines’ during World War II, 11 June 2014.” *NHCP Records*, 3.
 65. Ramón C. Aquino, *A Chance to Die: A Biography of José Abad Santos, Late Chief Justice of the Philippines* (Quezon City: Alemar-Phoenix Publishing House, 1967), 197–9.
 66. This is a widely accepted fact in Philippine history. Cf. Nicolas Zafra, *Philippine History through Selected Sources* (Quezon City: Alemar-Phoenix Publishing House, 1967, 302; Vicente Albano Pacis, *Founders of Freedom: The History of the Three Philippine Constitutions* (Manila: Capitol Publishing House, 1971), 276; Delfin Flandez Batacan, *The Supreme Court in Philippine History: From Arellano to Concepcion* (Manila: Central Lawbook Pub. Co., 1972), 18.
 67. Aside from that organ by MacArthur, the term “Free Philippines” was not exclusive to Fertig. It was also the name of a Camarines Sur-based guerrilla unit known as Free Philippines Patriots-KKK. In late January 1942, members of the Civil Liberties Union established “Free Philippines” as underground civil group of intellectuals, professionals, and middle class people who were against fascist Japanese. This was composed of the journalists, government

officials, and professionals like Lorenzo Tañada and Rafael Rocas, Jr. It was also the name of the Manila-based radio station operated by the socialists and communists broadcasting anti-Japanese programs; this caused the arrest of leading socialist and communist leaders Pedro Abad Santos and Crisanto Evangelista in 1943. Cf. Free Philippine Patriots, Katipunan or Free Philippine Patriots (KKK). *Guerrilla Unit Recognition Files, 1942-1948*, File No. 117, Box No. 368, NAID 1431235, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration; Luis Taruc, "The Radical Guerrillas' Contribution to the Philippine Resistance Movement," paper read during the National Seminar on "The Guerrilla Movement and Its Impact on National History," 17-19 September 1981, The National Library, Manila, 99; Jose B. L. Reyes, "The 'Free Philippines' Group During the Japanese Occupation," paper read during the National Seminar on "The Guerrilla Movement and Its impact on National History," 17-19 September 1981, The National Library, Manila, 9-12; Benedict J. Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: The Regents of the University of California, 1977), 99.

68. Ricardo Trota Jose to Ian Alfonso, email exchange, 14 April 2015.
69. Ricardo Trota Jose to Ian Alfonso, email exchange, 4 May 2015.
70. Ricardo Trota Jose to Ian Alfonso, email exchange, 27 June 2015.
71. "Original letter of Don Jesus J. Montalvan, *ibid*.

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**Philippine Historical Association
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