

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES TOWARDS THE MUSLIMS IN THE PHILIPPINES: A STUDY IN HISTORICAL CONTINUITY AND TRENDS*

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The term "conscientization" has come into common usage in recent years. It can be argued that national conscience must increasingly catch up with our national strategy in the matter of dealing with the Muslim situation in the Southern Philippines. Between Muslim Filipinos and Christian Filipinos there is at least a common awareness that Philippine ethno-religio-group relations must be dealt with in relation to the other problems confronting the nation. In the light of this consensus it becomes useful then to review and re-examine the direction of our administrative policy regarding the Mindanao and Sulu region.

This paper is primarily concerned with a survey of administrative policies towards the Muslims in the Mindanao and Sulu region. To attempt to abstract lessons from history is a delicate undertaking, since one cannot possibly cover within the scope of a brief paper all its ramifications. Still, it is possible to identify some historical continuities in our Muslim Mindanao policies. For our purposes, the term "Muslim policies" shall be defined as those government positions and actions pursued administratively at any given time by policy-makers in Muslim affairs in the Philippines.

Origins of Moro Identity

The three and one-third centuries that covered the Spanish colonization of the Philippines were years of struggle between Islam and Christianity for the allegiance of the native inhabitants of the archipelago, particularly Mindanao and Sulu. Historians reflecting back upon the moods of the time cannot fail to observe that this struggle was somehow a continuation of the *reconquista* which had begun in the Iberian

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Peninsula and the northern coast of the African Continent.¹ But, also, political analysts looking forward to the developments of our time cannot fail to note that this age-long struggle has come full circle in Muslim-Christian dialogues both in Spain and Tunisia.² It seems appropriate for us to proceed from this historic and contrastive Islamic-Christian encounter as we go along isolating elements of continuities and trends.

Historians inform us that about the same time that Islam was consolidating its new foothold in the southern islands of the Philippines, the last Moorish kingdom in southern Spain fell to Catholic arms. Given the spirit of *reconquista* and crusade, Catholic Spain would formulate her policies towards the Moros of Mindanao and Sulu from her own experience with the Moors. This brings us to the origins of "Moro" identity.

In the early colonial period there was a Spanish conciliatory policy influenced by Dominican theologians in the first half of the sixteenth century, notably Vitoria and Las Casas. It was Vitoria who posited that "the *Indios* were at least as rational as some of the people of Spain" and he developed the thesis that "certain rights inhere in them," which must therefore be respected by the Christian sovereign-patrons of Europe seeking to subjugate them. It will be recalled that the Vitoria position received support in the Papal Bull of 1537 which proclaimed the *Indios* to be persons "capable of understanding the Catholic faith." As such, these *Indios* and all other peoples who might rightfully be "discovered" by Christians were "by no means to be deprived of their liberty or the possession of their property, even though they be outside the faith of Jesus Christ."³

It was thus that the Spaniards first recognized the necessity to work out Christian laws to govern their relations with the natives they had "discovered." There is no doubt that the spirit behind this guiding principle was incorporated into the Spanish "Laws of the Indies," which were later applied in governing Spanish colonies. Partly due to the fact that the founding of her Philippine colony coincided with the adoption of this Dominican-led ideal of pacification, Spain determined that her Oriental Possessions should become objects of a new policy of conquest that sought to avoid repetition of the bloody conquests of

Mexico and Peru.⁴

The curious fact is that in what might be termed as Spain's first official policy statement towards the Philippine Moros, Philip II in 1566 instructed Miguel Lopez de Legaspi as follows :

We have been petitioned in your behalf concerning the Moro Islands . . . You are warned that you can make such Moros slaves only if the said Moros are such by birth and choice, and if they come to preach their Mohammedan doctrines or to make war against you or against the Indios, who are our subjects and in our royal service.⁵

It was here that the divisive element of identities for the indigenous inhabitants of the Philippines received its official stamp into "Indios" and "Moros." All throughout the Spanish colonial administration of the archipelago it would be carried into her policy statements concerning the Muslim natives and the Christianized natives.

A Spanish observer writing in the mid-nineteenth century was at last willing to concede this point:

It has always been a fatal error to consider the Moros of the archipelago as an independent nation because its special constitution established an insuperable antagonism between them and the Christian civilized nation. The treaties and conventions that have been made with the Spaniards in different languages or written only to have been violated was hardly enforced or observed.⁶

But the disparate identities had to be so; for indeed, as Majul has correctly put it, the Spaniards were able to give the natives an identity which they effected not so much for the interest of the natives themselves, but rather for "interest of Spanish colonial and ecclesiastical superiors; interests that were often diametrically opposed to those of the natives."⁷

Inherited Colonial Dilemma

Admittedly, the basic character of Spanish colonization had to be prescriptive to sustain the colonial theory that evangelization and Hispanization were practically one and the same thing. In consequence,

this view becomes more meaningful when we read it in the light of what the natives were made to understand what becoming a Spanish subject meant. As a principle, the natives were to perceive that in becoming Christians they were becoming Spaniards, and that upon ceasing to be Subanos, Manobos, Maguindanaos, Tausogs, Samals or Maranaos, they were at one and the same time acquiring the status of wards of the Catholic Church as well as vassals of the Spanish Monarch.

Spanish colonialism thus presented a challenge to the Moros of Mindanao and Sulu. As far as the Moros perceived the situation, Spanish policy aimed at the undoing of such an organism as Moroism constituted. To the extent that there was a common identity by which the Islamized Philippine ethnic groups were given official recognition as *Moros*, they were people outside the Spanish national integrity and colonial hegemony. In the end, as the Jesuit Superior Pio Pi concluded at the beginning of the present century, Moroism subsisted as an element which insured "that race its cohesion and duration in the islands."⁸

There was a view long held by the Spanish missionaries and exemplified by Pio Pi that "Moroism constituted a nucleus of population, which is nationality or state within another sovereignty, systematically and obstinately opposed to the ruler's civilizing aims."⁹ In the opinion of the missionaries, the proper understanding of what constitutes "Moroism" was essential in overcoming this obstacle to the "reduction" (i.e., conversion) and civilization of Mindanao and Sulu. On this subject Pio Pi declared in a memorandum to the Papal Delegate Msgr. Placidus Louis Chapelle in 1900:

... it will be of great interest to the country, and something to which the Government ought to direct its political labors with decision, to proceed to the reduction of Moroism as it exists in the Philippines to a perfect assimilation with the remaining population under a common law, and this under the penalty of driving it out from the territory by means of war, unless, perhaps the Government should prefer to concentrate it in some specified spot (a particular island or group of islands, for example), where the Moros might live with more or less

autonomy and protection or with total independence. Otherwise the Mohammedan-Malay race will be ever in the Philippines, not merely in Mindanao and Jolo, a powerful element of disturbance.¹⁰

Let us note that the Spaniards cast the Moros as the outgroup. This fact marked their socio-political existence as a distinct minority group enabling the Americans, who took over from the Spaniards, to localize the Moros into a separate unit from the rest of the inhabitants of the Philippines. We have no intention of inquiring into how much the memorandum of the Jesuit Superior had influence American colonial strategy in dealing with "Moroism"; but it should be mentioned that Pio Pi's ideas caught the attention of the Americans and articulated for them the Spaniards' conditioned attitude towards the Moros. Some Americans regarded Fr. Pi's remarks as "replete with sensible observations."

When the Americans assumed sovereignty over the archipelago they were ill-prepared to face the question of Moroism as it had existed under their Spanish predecessors. The geographical concentration of the Moro elements and the antagonism between them and the new colonial power prompted the Americans to regard the Moros as substantially different from the Christian population. The ambiguous terms "Christian Filipinos" and "non-Christian tribes" soon acquired official stamp in the population census. This ambiguity, however, provided the rationale for Americans to establish a somewhat different government for the Moros in the early part of their colonial administration.¹¹

In the first two decades of this century, American officials and Filipino nationalists argued over whether or not the inhabitants of the Philippines constituted a homogenous people. The Americans believed not, and held that therefore the Philippines was not ready to be governed or granted political independence as a single entity. Indeed, to the very end of the American regime the Moro problem persisted as a political factor in the Philippine Independence Question.¹² Critics of Philippine independence contended that Christian Filipinos could not establish a government of their own because of the existence of the "wild tribes," including the Moros, whom they had no right to govern or were incapable of governing. In short, a sense of nationhood had not

developed. This absence of national identity prompted the Thompson Mission which investigated conditions in the islands in 1926 to report to President Coolidge that the Moros were "a unit against independence."¹³

The inauguration of the Philippine Commonwealth Government in 1935 rapidly institutionalized a government of and by Filipinos. But it did not completely alter the pre-nationalistic situation. Nor did political independence in 1946 prove to be an integrative event eliminating the so-called Moro problem. In the post-independence period the problem of administering the Moros assumed merely new forms and strands inherited from the colonial dilemma.

The Spanish Reduction Policy

Having shown that a Filipino national identity had not yet fully developed before the achievement of formal independence, we shall now return to our central theme of continuity with past policies. It is important to note that until 1578 there was no thought at high Spanish policy levels of a coordinated administration of Muslim affairs. Spanish colonial policy was no more than continuing the "just wars" against all Muslim peoples (Moros) and expanding Spanish territorial conquest. But in 1578 Governor Francisco de Sande outlined a more precise Spanish policy toward the Moros. In a Letter of Instruction to the Figueroa Expedition to Mindanao and Sulu, he proclaimed a policy designed (1) to reduce the overlord of Sulu and his subjects to vassals of the Spanish King; (2) to reduce the overlord of the Great River (Pulangi) of Mindanao and his subordinates to subjects of the King of Spain; (3) to exercise control over trade and commerce in the islands and exact tribute from the inhabitants; (4) to stop the annual Moro raids against the Visayan Islands which were under Spanish dominion; and (5) to inform the Moro chiefs that Spain's aim was their conversion and to order them to allow the Spaniards freely to preach Christianity among the natives and to prohibit any further admission of preachers of Islam to their domains.¹⁴

This might be termed as the Spanish policy of reduction which was of historical significance for the development of subsequent colonial policy towards the Moros. It draws attention to the fact that the

establishment of Spanish sovereignty in the Islands also involved the propagation of the Catholic religion. It is undeniable that the Spanish governance of the Philippines was organically intertwined with the position of the Catholic Church in the Spanish State, and missionaries were included in all Spanish expeditions dispatched to the Philippines. Moreover, as a matter of policy, missionaries usually accompanied military expeditions within the Philippines, whether to the northern end of the archipelago or to the southern islands.

Now the historical continuity in which we are interested is that quite consistently the Catholic religion came to the Muslim south as an integral part of military expeditions and of the colonial government. This participation of the Church in the Spanish penetration of the Muslim south was perfectly consistent with Catholic mission theory and was also a concomitant of the union of church and state in Catholic Spain. Despite occasional strains and stresses, Church and State in the Philippines were mutually supportive. Toward the end of the Spanish regime, Governor Valeriano Weyler admitted in a confidential memorial:

Religion can and should be in Luzon and the Bisayas a means of government which is to be taken advantage of, and which justifies the necessity of the religious orders.¹⁵

This applied with equal force in Mindanao and Sulu, since the political and religious environment created by the Spanish colonial administration manifested a uniform pattern. What is consistent about this pattern was the way in which missionary activity had been interlocked with governmental authority.

The whole system of Spanish colonial administration depended upon the religious orders who were in actuality the direct transmitters of government policies among the Filipino villagers. In an era when the colonizers were no more than a handful of Spanish civil officials and soldiers, the practicability of utilizing the clergy in administrative matters was understandable enough. It became an implied principle of Spanish administrative control over the colony. But it was often abused and triggered an anti-clerical movement in the closing years of Spanish rule. The Moros, reacting against the imposition of a monolithic co-

lonial administration, nurtured throughout a psychological attitude of associating colonial domination with missionary activities. Thus, if anything was imbedded in the mind of the Moros it was the fact that they became acquainted with Christianity through the methods of Spanish reduction and pacification campaigns. Spanish attempts at the colonial subjugation of the Moros resulted in a variety of responses, all of them based on a deeply unfavorable impression of the transmitters of Christianity. Moreover, the Moros made no distinction between the Spanish colonists and the hispanized natives who were in the colonial administrative and military service. For all that, the task of subjugating the Moros proved futile and not surprisingly. Moro cultural sub-national tendencies came to be centered on fear against alienation from Islam and not just on all forms of domination.

The Civilization Policy

We have seen thus far that the Spaniards used Christianity as a symbol of social cohesion and political allegiance with the colonial administration. We shall not take the time here to recount the Spanish missionary activities in Mindanao and Sulu; it properly belongs to the history of the Church. However, we should emphasize the tremendous influence which the religious mission had on Spanish strategies in dealing with the Moro population. The coming of the Jesuits to Mindanao in the mid-nineteenth century was, for instance, a significant event in itself, and coincided with the period when the colonial government was implementing a specialized political organization of Mindanao and its adjacent islands.

Phelan in his *Hispanization of the Philippines* makes the point that in the second-half of the nineteenth century the Spanish government had begun to distinguish between the adoption of Catholicism and the acceptance of political control.¹⁶ The Spanish decision evolved from a complex of motives. It was only in 1860 that by royal order the Politico-Military Government for Mindanao and its adjacent islands was organized, and its structure was to become the forerunner of the administrative organization of the region into territorial units and political sub-divisions. By the same royal directive the Society of Jesus was assigned "to look after the spiritual wants of the Island" and at the same

time it was commissioned to "secure the conversion of the races which have not yet been subjected."¹⁷ Spain's determination to assert itself in the Mindanao-Sulu region was partly in response to the claims of other colonial powers, and it marked a new policy toward the Moros. Both Spanish administrative techniques and religious measures were aimed at an expansionist drive which included the "emancipation" of other natives from Moro domination. Moreover, the Spaniards were convinced that the region must be opened to "civilization" and its natural resources exploited. A policy was implemented which looked to the systematic occupation of Mindanao by Christians from the North, and the development of the natural resources of the region. Spain aimed at accelerating the increase of "Christian souls" in the region and at assimilating the whole of Mindanao.¹⁸

At first the "Moro Wars" rendered ineffectual the settlement and colonization of Mindanao. But in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, Spanish missionaries began successfully to utilize the colonization policy and brought large numbers of Christians from the overpopulated and poorer islands of the Visayas and Luzon to Mindanao. The first enclaves of Christian native colonists from Bohol and Siquijor were resettled at northern coastal points on Mindanao. The project was well advanced but far from complete by the end of the Spanish regime.

The Americans, possibly drawing ideas from the Spaniards or inspired by their own history of westward expansion, continued the colonization strategy to full advantage. In 1914, the first "agricultural colonies" were set up in Pikit, Cotabato, under the administration of Governor Frank Carpenter. The previous year, the Philippine Legislature enacted Act No. 2254 to provide the sum of P 400,000 for the establishment of such colonies as a means of affording "opportunities to colonists to become landed proprietors and to bring under cultivation wild public lands" as well as to "equalize the distribution of population."

Government-sponsored organized land settlement, with very little concern for the Moros' rights of prior possession or for their landholding concepts, thus became a pattern. The first law was followed in the Commonwealth period by Act 4197 of the Philippine Legislature, commonly known as the Quirino-Recto Colonization Act, and it soon

became the organic charter of organized land settlement work. This was to be followed after World War II by the LASEDECO, NARRA and the EDCOR programs.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the increase in the Christian population in Mindanao and Sulu gave the Jesuit missions a new impetus for the "liberation" of the hill and pagan tribes from Moro domination. It was calculated that the tribal groups were more 'docile' and susceptible to Christian conversion. Fr. Pablo Pastells, S.J. arrived in Mindanao in 1876, and began the work of organizing the highland tribes into townships (*pueblos*), enlisting the co-operation of their chieftains. In some instances, the *pueblo* scheme enabled the missionaries to separate the Moros from the pagan groups.¹⁹

The strategy of gathering scattered people together into *pueblos* was also designed for application to pacified and submissive Moro elements. The *modus operandi* called for a census of the Moros so as to determine who were subject to taxes and personal cedula, successful collection of which was an indication of Moro recognition of Spanish sovereignty. The executive of the plan was to proceed after placing the Moros under their own chosen *governadorcillo* (petty governors). According to Pastella, afterwards:

. . . gently and by means of their own justices, will follow the grouping of their settlements, district *pueblos* being raised among them, the obligation being placed upon themselves of planning the streets and squares, with their corresponding public buildings, tribunal, schools, convent, and a small church. In this manner, a new form of government and of justice, our legislation and codes would continue to be observed, and moral culture are fomented and established, and impulse given to the advancement of agriculture, industry, commerce, primary instruction, and solid maxims of the gospel.²⁰

This is an early statement of the concept of assimilation of the Moros into the body politic, under a structure and law common to the mainstream of Spain's Philippine colony. In bringing this about, it was the idea that through the habit of obedience to law "learned from a peaceful Christian education which it was the missionary's task to provide,"

it would be easy to transform the lives and change the customs of the Moros.

Of special interest is the fact that Catholic missionaries were encouraged to revise their conventional techniques of conversion and of socio-economic penetration without hinting at Christianization. Once this was attained, it was hoped that there might be planted among their *pueblos* a system of leadership similar to that in other parts of the archipelago. This point needs emphasis, for the fact is the role of the traditional and religious leadership in Moro society has provided considerable continuity between the different periods of Moro history.

The Spaniards long recognized that the success of their colonial objectives as applied to the Moros required the alienation of the Moro peasantry from their traditional and religious leaders. The inability of the Spanish missionaries to infiltrate the Muslim power structure led them to identify the *-panditas and datos* as the real obstacles to Christian reduction and Spanish civilization, precisely because they were the real guardians of tradition and repositories of traditional authority. The key ideas were suggested as early as 1885 by F. Quirico More, S.J. who recommended to his Jesuit Superior that Spanish control of the Moros required at least the following.²¹

- (1) Eliminate the offices of dato and pandita, implanting in their stead in the Moro villages the legislation in force in the Christian villages by naming municipalities with which the government will deal directly.
- (2) The exclusion from holding offices of those who have been datos or panditas, and their children.
- (3) Absolute prohibition to the datos to continue collection of tribute from their own people and the heathens of other races.

The hostile disposition of the Moro aristocracy toward Spanish "civilizing aims" moved the missionaries to attempt to undermine the traditional authority. Their effort was a concomitant of the type of colonial rule favored by the Spaniards — that is, direct rule.

The Direct Rule System

Unlike the British system of indirect rule (applied in Malaya) which kept traditional authorities in their positions of influence, the Spanish colonial system of direct rule required the elimination of native socio-political structures and the traditional power elites functioning in their customary roles. The rationale of this policy was that the system of direct rule hastened the implantation of Christian or Western principles and institutions. In short the system of direct rule served the Spanish objective more effectively.

With the advent of the American colonial adventure in the Philippines this policy was reversed initially with respect to the Moros. American pluralistic background at first impelled the United States to draw from her Federal American Indian policies in dealing with Moro affairs. Features of American Indian Policy were applied in the Philippines by President McKinley in his Instructions to the First Philippine Commission in 1900:

... in dealing with the uncivilized tribes of the Islands, the Commission should adopt the same course followed by the Congress in permitting the tribes of our North American Indians to maintain their tribal organization and government and under which many of these tribes are now living in peace and contentment, surrounded by a civilization to which they are unable or unwilling to conform.²²

The American version of "indirect rule" seemed to recognize ethnicity as a valid basis for an administrative unit. Early American policy, negotiated through a "treaty," enhanced the position of the ruling datus as in the case of the Bates Treaty of 1899. Between the abrogation of the Bates Treaty, in 1905, and the passage of the Jones Law in 1916, the American authorities concerned themselves with establishing an administrative system for Mindanao and Sulu. The system they devised seemed torn between a policy of indirect and a policy of direct rule. In 1903 the Moro Province was created; it gave an important administrative role to "tribal wards" and permitted traditional authorities to carry out certain administrative tasks under government supervision.

Moreover, the structure of the Moro Province with its own Governor and Legislative Council provided for a time (until it was abolished in 1913) a considerable *de facto* autonomy for Mindanao and Sulu.

In an essay on the history and solution of the problems of the government of the Moros of the Philippines, Najeeb Saleeby declared:

By the Moro problem is meant that method or form of administration by which the Moros and other non-Christians who are living among them, can be governed to their best interest and welfare in the most peaceful way possible, and can at the same time be provided with appropriate measures for their gradual advancement in culture and civilization, so that in the course of a reasonable time they can be admitted into the general government of the Philippine Islands as qualified members of a republican national organization.²³

Echoing President McKinley's statement of American mandate in the Philippines that the United States came not to exploit but "to develop, to civilize, to educate, to train in the science of self-government,"²⁴

Saleeby considered the government of Moroland a sacred trust. He insisted that the principle of "the Philippines for the Filipinos" was meant to apply to Mindanao and Sulu in the same sense in which it was applied to the Visayas and Luzon.²⁵ Underscoring the value of a policy of indirect rule in Moro affairs, Dr. Saleeby concluded that "Well organized datuships properly provided with Moro courts and datuship councils mark the main basic structure on which rests the whole solution of the Moro problem." He added that "a Moro community thus organized can be admitted into the general family of civilized Filipino tribes and may in a short time occupy a fairly respectable position in the fellowship of nations."²⁶

But Saleeby's advocacy of indirect rule for the Moros was not heeded as the central administration in Manila geared all its efforts in preparation for national self-government. In 1914 the Philippine Commission replaced the Moro Province with the Department of Mindanao and Sulu and it became conscious policy to weld the culturally diverse elements of the population into a Filipino nation. This objective can be perceived in the following sentences from the act creating the Depart-

ment of Mindanao and Sulu:²⁷

Whereas it is the desire of the people of the Islands to promote the most rapid moral, material, social, and political development of the inhabitants of said department in order to accomplish their complete unification with the inhabitants of other provinces of the Archipelago; and

Whereas for the accomplishment of this purpose the extension thereto of the general laws of this country and of the forms and procedures of government followed in other provinces, under certain limitations in harmony with the special conditions now prevailing in said department, is among other measures advisable and necessary, but always with the understanding that such limitations are temporary and that it is the firm and decided purpose of the Philippine Commission to abolish such limitations together with the departmental government as soon as the several districts of said region shall have been converted into regularly organized provinces;

In effect this constituted a structural approach to the Mindanao and Sulu situation. There has been no set of ideas more influential in providing the direction of policies and objectives in the government of Moro affairs than the above sentences from the preamble to the Department of Mindanao and Sulu Act. For instance, the Commission on National Integration (established in 1957) was profoundly indebted to the thinking which had been behind the Department of Mindanao and Sulu in 1914. The C.N.I. assumed the identical objective "to effectuate in a more rapid and complete manner the economic, social, moral and political advancement of the national cultural minorities" and also "to render real, complete and permanent the integration of all said national minorities into the body politic."²⁸

The Wardship Policy of the United States

There was another feature of American government of the Moros

which is often overlooked: the wardship policy. The marked difference in culture and civilization of the Moros and the Christianized Filipinos made it difficult to govern them alike in the beginning. Two forms of government thus developed along parallel lines, one for the Moros and the other for the Christianized Filipinos, although it was expected that the structure employed in Moroland would eventually evolve into the structures common to the rest of the Philippines.

The phrase "wards of the Government" was first used by Chief Justice Marshall in the Supreme Court of the United States when describing the Federal-Indian relationship as analogous to that between a guardian and his ward. As the legal status of the Moros was tied up conceptually with the American policy of federal responsibility for the welfare of the American Indians tribes (as shown in the Instructions to the Philippine Commission), the Moro elements were thought as being in a position analogous to the Indians. This had the effect of making inhabitants subject to certain legal constraints. We should note that it was the various Moro ethnic groups, officially labelled "non-Christian tribes," and not the *individual* Maguindanaon, Maranao or Taosog which were contemplated under "wardship."

Evidently, wardship applied not to individual *persons* as the Government did not mean to assume responsibility over Moro individual activities. But it was felt necessary to exercise trusteeship over the territorial possessions of Moro *groups*. This distinction becomes significant when we consider that in the conduct of Moro affairs the United States acknowledged the possessory rights of the "tribes" of the geographic areas which they occupied, but it regulated eventually "the right of alienation" by requiring government approval. The differential legal status of the Moros was thus symptomatic of their segregation in keeping with the extent to which they were culturally different from the Christianized elements.

One result of this situation was that "wardship" made a contribution to the growth of Moro cultural sub-nationalism. Indeed, the idea was seriously proposed by some Americans and Moros that the grant of political independence to Filipinos should not include Moros. This notion culminated in the proposal under the Bacon Bill of 1924 which sought to remove Mindanao and Sulu—homeland of the Moros—from

the Philippine national government. It would seem however that this proposal was tied to the projected development of rubber and other resources in Mindanao and Sulu. There was a brief period from 1920 to 1928 when foreign economic interests supported Moro apprehensions about Christian Filipino rule as a rationale for the retention of American jurisdiction over Mindanao and Sulu.

The Japanese seemed to have developed commercial interests in the southern Philippines even prior to the Second World War. During the Commonwealth era there was a continuous influx of Japanese settlers into Davao. Soon after the Japanese occupation began, the Imperial Research Commission considered a plan to divide the Philippines by severing Mindanao and Sulu from it. But at the January 6, 1943 session of the Commission, Murata Shozo, the chairman, registered a remarkable objection:

I know there is a plan to detach Mindanao from the Philippines and develop it into a base for southward expansion. The navy is interested in some such plan. General Tojo has no such plan. It is indeed preposterous for us to declare we are in favor of granting independence to the Philippines, on the one hand, and then to detach Mindanao from them and hold it as a Japanese territory. I am opposed to such a plan . . . ²⁹

Mindanao has remained a tempting lure to foreign nations and it can still be said that — as historian J. R. Hayden once remarked — “Mindanao is either a treasure-house of national wealth or an island of national peril for the future Philippine Republic.”

Concluding Remarks

Against the historical perspective presented in this paper, we can see that beneath the ferment of unrest in Mindanao and Sulu today are issues brought forward from the past. The current demands for secession — or for autonomy within a federal framework — are but familiar responses to an historical situation little changed. The dichotomy between policy demands and policy formulations, and even between strategy and implementation, should be viewed in the light of history. The

welter of complex problems in the Southern Philippines is in part a legacy from the colonial experience.

Several factors born of history, can be usefully kept in mind when reading contemporary developments in Mindanao and Sulu, some of which have contributed to Muslim cultural sub-nationalist tendencies: (1) the artificiality of Muslim-Christian relations forged by the Americans under a hasty scheme of mixing diverse groups in "agricultural colonies" in Mindanao, particularly in the Muslim-inhabited areas; (2) the colonial technique that encouraged ethnic groupings as an official basis for administrative units and anxiety over possible loss of such "autonomy" under an increasingly centralized government; (3) the rapid Filipinization of the government service which gave important administrative roles to Christian Filipinos but ignored quantitative and qualitative Muslim participation; (4) the glaring social, educational and economic imbalance as well as disparity in regional development which increased the frustration of the national minorities; and (5) a combination of factors and elements which delayed the full development of Filipino national identity even after the achievement of formal political independence.

FOOTNOTES

¹ For a fuller view of the Spanish interpretation of the characteristics of the **reconquista** tradition see John Phelan, **The Hispanization of the Philippines** (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), pp. 4-8.

² Reports on the "Declaration of Cordova" and the Tunisian Islamic-Christian Meeting can be found in **Encounter** (Documents for Muslim-Christian Understanding), Rome, No. 15, May 1975.

³ See Lewis Henke, **The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America** (Philadelphia, 1949), p. 45.

⁴ *Ibid.* see also Phelan, p. 9.

⁵ Blair and Robertson, **The Philippine Islands**, II, p. 156.

⁶ Quoted from Agustin Santayana, **La Isla de Mindanao: Su Historia y su Estado Presente** (Madrid, 1862), p. 41.

⁷ See Cesar Adib Majul, "Cultural Diversity, National Integration and National Identity in the Philippines," paper read in Hongkong in October, 1971, mimeo.

⁸ It was a Spanish theme to consider the Moros as a distinct "rasa." See Pio Pi "The Moros of the Philippines" in **Annual Report of Major General George Davis, U.S. Army Commanding Division of the Philippines October 1, 1902 to July 28,**

1903 (Manila, 1903), Appendix V.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ The American population census officially used the term "Christian Filipinos" and "Non-Christian Tribes" for want of a better term. According to Dean C. Worcester it had been found difficult to find a single word which would satisfactorily designate the latter.

¹² Sidney Glazer, "The Moros as a Political Factor in Philippine Independence," *Pacific Affairs*, March 1941.

¹³ The leading Filipino weekly, *The Independent* charged that Colonel Thompson's visit was to all indications for the purpose of paving the way for a proposed legislation to separate Mindanao from the rest of the archipelago. Actually two years earlier Congressman Bacon filed a bill in the U.S. Congress (1924) to dismember the archipelago. Rubber corporations seem to have taken an interest which thereafter culminated in Thompson's very controversial report.

¹⁴ For the full text see Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, Vol. IV, pp. 174-181.

¹⁵ I have used here the translation by John Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement: 1880-1895* (Manila: Solidaridad, 1973) see footnote on page 91.

¹⁶ Phelan, *op. cit.* p. 144.

¹⁷ See Circular of 1860 found in Najeeb Saleeby, *The History of Sulu*, (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, Inc., 1963), p. 114.

¹⁸ The same circular under Article XVIII called for the appointment of two special agents for the purpose of studying means of developing the resources of the island and, as a cornerstone of the policy, for settlement by Christians.

¹⁹ See *Cartas de los Padres de la Compania de Jesus de la Mision de Filipinas*, Appendix to Vol. IX.

²⁰ Letter of Pastells dated April 20, 1887. I used the translation by Jose Arcilla found in *Philippine Studies*, 19/4 (1971), p. 647.

²¹ Letter of More to Father Superior dated January 20, 1885; see also Letter of Gisbert dated December 24, 1886 in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, Vol. 43, p. 251.

²² For the full text of the Instruction, see Appendix B of Jose Aruego, *The Philippine Constitutional Sources; Making, Meaning and Application* (Manila: Philippine Lawyer's Association, 1969) pp. 236-243.

²³ Najeeb Saleeby, *The Moro Problem* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1913), p. 16.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

²⁷ Act No. 2408 of 1914.

²⁸ Republic Act No. 1888 of 1956.

²⁹ Takeuchi Tatsuji, *Manila Diary*, January 6, 1943 (Wednesday).