

SULU UNDER THE EAGLE'S SHADOW, 1899-1948

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I. American Policies And Program

The policy of "benevolent assimilation" declared by President McKinley on December 21, 1898 was a very impressive expression of American colonial intention in the Philippines. It was subsequently expressed in various ways. The word "supremacy" appeared in the original draft of Jacob Schurman's report in 1899. This was later changed to "sovereignty" in the final draft. This indicated a shift from the temporary imperatives of militarism to the long range goals of colonialism. Reexpressed later by the President to the Secretary of War on April 7, 1900, the policy enjoined the Taft Commission,¹ to whom the task of establishing a civil government in the island was entrusted to observe that the government which they were to establish was designed not for the satisfaction or expression of their theoretical views, but for "the happiness, peace, and prosperity of the people of the Philippine Islands" and that "the measures adopted should be made to conform to their customs, habits, and even their prejudices. . . ."

However, benevolent assimilation was secondary to the subjugation of the colony. The Filipino-American war, which broke out on February 4, 1899, was an index of that benevolence. Apolinario Mabini to whom the Taft Commission gave the sobriquet "diminutive Rousseau" and "the chief of the irreconciliated" expressed the view that sovereignty must be the product of the natural consent of the people. He said this before the Commission in the afternoon of August 1, 1900. No amount of persuasion and promise of benevolence could soften him.

In their application to non-Christian areas, American policies were declared in a language so ambiguously benevolent and so profoundly misleading. The main premise had been the "backward" or underdeveloped character of the people. Hence, the non-Christians were regarded as lower in cultural category than the Christian Filipinos, their Islamic or native culture being considered as incompatible with civilization or Christianity. In this regard, Cameron Forbes remarked:

In the Moro country, where the population is Mohammedan, no so far advanced in civilization as the Christian Filipino, and exceeding-

ly hard and intractable, we have a government which is more paternal and military in form, . . .²

Consequently, what was believed to be necessary in the Muslim areas was a strong autocratic government. This was also underlined by Alleyne Ireland, a special commissioner of the University of Chicago to the Far East who observed in 1902:

. . . It is a universally recognized trait of tropical peoples that they yield their trust, loyalty and their best aid in governmental matters when there is at the head of affairs one man in supreme power, whether he be king, sultan, or governor.³

In effect, the rationale of American policies and programs in Sulu would be part of the overall "Moro Policy." It was anchored on the realization of American sovereignty in the Southern islands through conquest, colonization and integration.

However, the policy of conquest could not be pursued in relation to the Muslim South until about 1900 or 1901. The American forces were preoccupied with the Filipino resistance in the north following the outbreak of the Filipino-American hostilities in 1899. It was, therefore, necessary to neutralize the Muslim areas. The immediate focus was Sulu and the resulting Bates Treaty represented the first between the Americans and the Muslims.

Consequently, after the suppression of Filipino resistance in the Visayas and Luzon by about 1901, American conquest began the Muslim south, initially in Lanao in 1902 and then in Cotabato where armed disturbances were reported. In a sense, the Bates Treaty kept the Sulu Muslims uninvolved. It was not until 1903 that serious conflicts broke out. This coincided with the relative success of the American campaigns in Lanao and Cotabato.⁴

By 1903, the conquest of the Muslim south had become a major thrust in American "Moro Policy." The creation of the "Moro Province" in the same year was meant to enforce such a policy and the appointment of American militarists, with exemplary records in the Indian campaigns and the Cuban War was significant in this regard.

The military approach was underlined by some prominent American officials. Maj. Gen. George Davis favored a military approach to the "Moro Problem," although he cautioned Gen. Samuel Sumner "that any conflict should never be initiated by the troops."⁵ Gen. Nelson Miles also regarded the military thrust as a part of "civilization" just as

Gen. W.A. Kobbe looked at the military solution in the same manner that American officers regarded the Cheyenne Indians.⁶ Of course, the civil officials were not always in agreement with the military.

It was not until 1913 that a shift in policy was noted. American military rule in the south was abolished and civil authority was established. But American military involvement continued and was limited to providing direction to Filipino scouts, constabularies, and police forces which assumed the burden of maintaining peace and order. Thus, the Christian and Muslim Filipinos faced each other not as partners in nation-building but as enemies.

As a compliment to conquest, a second thrust in American policy colonization—was proposed as early as 1899. C.A. Muir suggested the sending of 1,000 Texas farmers to Mindanao.⁷ About the same time, W.G. Douglas of Baltimore also proposed the grant of lands to 200,000 American soldiers who would be settled in the area.⁸ Later in 1906, MacCarthy Williamson of San Francisco proposed the sending of Greek and Italian colonists to the Philippines.⁹

By 1909, talks of agricultural colonies in Mindanao had circulated in American circles. A proposal for the establishment of “American Plantations” was submitted to the Zamboanga Chamber of Commerce on January 30, 1910¹⁰ In 1913, Gen. Pershing sent 200 copies of the industrial issue of the *Mindanao Herald* (1909) to American firms to encourage investments in the Mindanao plantations. This was followed by the passage of Act 2280 establishing the Momungan Agricultural Colony in Lanao.

It is interesting to note that the policy of colonization was implemented in the Muslim areas of Lanao and Cotabato. Sulu was somewhat not involved until about the 1920s when Gov. Henry Stimson adopted the “small landholding” system as an approach to the Mindanao problem. The concentration of Christian settlements in Lanao, Cotabato, and Davao was partly, if not largely, brought about by the increasing concern with which the Filipino leaders viewed the growing Japanese interests in Davao. This became particularly apparent in the 1930s when the Japanese began to dominate the socio-economic life of Davao. That this phenomenon was related to the “co-prosperity sphere plan” of Japan was clear to the Japanese in the Philippines although it would remain ambiguous to the Filipinos until the outbreak of the Pacific War. It seems then that the movement of Christian settlers to Sulu

involved individuals or families, not groups. By 1941, Christian settlers had found their way into Sulu archipelago as far as Bato Bato in Tawi-Tawi.¹¹

But a more important thrust of American policy was integration; that is, the process of bringing the Muslim South within the effective range of American colonial control. In fact, the policies of conquest and colonization were related to this overall need to integrate the Muslims into the national society. This was necessary of the real recognition of American sovereignty in the archipelago was to be achieved.

One way to do this was to allow some degree of Muslim participation in colonial rule. As early as 1903, the Legislative Council of the Moro Province passed Act No. 1 to authorize the employment of "subordinate employees" in the Muslim areas.¹² In 1904, several acts organized local governments in Jolo, Siasi, and Cagayan de Sulu. In 1906, the colonial administration encouraged tax consciousness among the Muslims and inspired them to participate in trade, education, law enforcement, and other activities. In the same year, Charles Cameron, Superintendent of Schools, proposed the establishment of a Datu School to educate the sons of datos, from 8 to 18 years of age, using Datu Mandi and Sheik Mustapha Ahmad for this purpose.¹³ But the plan failed because the datos were afraid that their sons would become hostages in case of conflict.

Although integration was difficult, it was nevertheless imperative. As of 1909, the Muslim-Christian ratio in Mindanao was about 10 to 1. This numerical superiority presented a problem to colonial aims and the Muslims viewed the influx of Christian settlers as a serious threat to their security and survival.

But the Americans differed in their perception. For instance, Mauricio Dunlap ascribed the problems to the Chinese monopoly of internal trade which hindered Muslim economic aspirations. The *New York Times* traced the situation to political agitations of local leadership which felt threatened by integration.¹⁴ Frederick Roth shared this view. He believed that the pretensions of the Sultanate were major obstacles to integration. Gen. John Pershing believed that the problems were related to certain Muslim practices such as pilgrimages, polygamy, and pandita influence, while Charles Brent, founder of the Brent Hospital in Zamboanga City, attributed the difficulties to the Pan-Islamic influences being brought into Mindanao by Arab missionaries.¹⁵

By the 1920s the perceptions had become more complex. In 1923, Gov. Gen. Wood linked the problems to the old Muslim-Christian animosity, while his successor, Gov. Gen. Henry L. Stimson, thought that the problems were agrarian in nature. So did Gov. Gen. Dwight Davis. Then, Edward Kuder and Frank Laubach, two specialists on the "Moro Problem," attributed the difficulties to lack of education, while Gov. Gen. Frank Murphy blamed the defects on the legal system.

Thus, the implementation of integration policies in Sulu, as it was in the rest of the archipelago, required political, economic, and socio-cultural reforms. However, this was hampered by mistrust which was evident in the series of meetings between Sulu datu and American negotiators. For instance, on August 26, 1902, General Wood conferred with Indanan and referred to him as "frightened and slippery."¹⁶ The same was also apparent in several other dialogues. He referred to members of the ruling class as wanting in moral character. He regarded the Rajah Muda as a liar although he referred to Datu Opaw as somewhat "friendly."¹⁷ Then, on August 23, 1903, when Governor Wallace of Jolo reported that there was "a large hostile feeling in the island," he warned that any practice marches in the area might be attacked because the people were prone to such violence. Thus, the psychological barrier created by the absence of that most vital element in diplomacy—thus—could only be reciprocated in kind.

Necessarily, the political program of American rule in the Muslim South began with the immediate need to neutralize the Sulu Muslims after the outbreak of the Filipino-American War in 1899. This was accomplished by the Bates Treaty which was concluded under great psychological pressures and reservations. The Treaty provided, in ambiguous terms, for American presence in Sulu and for financial benefits to members of the ruling class whose signatures appeared in the document. The Americans assumed that their sovereignty had been recognized in Sulu, unaware that in the native version the concept of sovereignty was never intended. Consequently, the two parties to the agreement proceeded from the mistaken notions that their respective political interests, which were as divergent as their cultural backgrounds, were recognized.¹⁸

As events showed, the Bates Treaty had remained at best an ideal. Political affairs continued in Sulu under the same old system, creating inconvenience for both the Americans and the local people. Un-

fortunately for the Sultanate and the local leaders, the Americans used the local disturbances and the unsettled conditions as justification not only for the unilateral abrogation of the treaty in March 1904 but also for the military enforcement of American aims.¹⁹

In the meetings on July 19, 20, and 26, 1904 between the Sultan and the Philippine Commission the former expressed surprise at the abrogation of the Treaty.²⁰ He claimed that he had helped in suppressing the Hassan uprising although he realized that American customs were different from those of the Spanish. He lamented the fact that his unsolicited gesture to put down the rebellion was not appreciated. However, the Americans belittled this claim and doubted his ability to "preserve peace and order" and to prevent what Major Hugh Scott called "outrages against the Americans." The latter pointed out that there existed "a condition among the Moros—of robbery and murder almost unchecked."²¹

To the Sultan, there was something ambiguous and unjust about the unilateral action. He expounded his idea of a treaty. He believed it was to serve as a "tie between two friends" and, in breaking it, the "tie of friendship would be broken." He likened the abrogation to the breaking of ties "between father and son." Therefore, "the love of the father ceases for the son." Thus he considered himself the "victim not the cause of the abrogation."

The Sultan tried to neutralize the American effort to weaken him by attributing his difficulties to local disputes. He recalled that earlier in 1901 he mentioned to Major Scott that he was troubled by Datu Julkanain and Datu Kalbi who were then building forts and acquiring guns. Consequently, he had to prepare for a possible confrontation with them. However, the Americans were not impressed and the subsequent outbreaks of violence were somehow tied to the Sultan's agitations.

As an anticipatory step, the colonial administration had already created in 1903 the Moro Province to consolidate American rule in the Muslim South. It was headed by a tested military man, Gen. Leonard Wood. A no-nonsense militarist with an exemplary record in Cuba as a part of the Rough Riders, Wood initiated what a present-day American historian-writer referred to as "American Mandate in Moroland."²² Where that mandate came from was not clear. The only thing certain was that it was derived neither from the "consent of the governed" nor

from Heaven's mandate. It was in reality co-substantial with "Manifest Destiny," some kind of a notion of divine sanction for American expansion beyond her geographic frontiers.

The newly-created Moro Province proceeded as expected to restructure the Muslim areas in line with American aims. The Legislative Council, which was the law-making body of the province, passed laws or ordinances for the political reorganization of Sulu. Tribal wards were established in Muslim areas and municipal governments were organized in Christian communities. On January 14, 1904, the Council agreed on a structure appropriate for Jolo, Siasi, and Bongao. Then on February 11, 1904, Act 38 was passed to organize Jolo, Siasi and Cagayan de Sulu, followed on February 19, 1904 by Act 39 to temporarily provide for the government of Moros and non-Christian tribes. Ten days later, the 2,500 inhabitants of Cagayan de Sulu were organized with Mariano de Leon as president, Santiago Eriyano as secretary-treasurer, Datu Dakula, Datu Hadji Amilbangsa, and Datu Hadji Gasan as councilors. Datu Dakula was earmarked for the position of Justice of the Peace to handle local disputes while local decision-making and security of records remained in non-Muslim hands with datus serving only as concurring members. The same type of political structure was to be imposed on communities as quickly as they were stabilized except in Jolo island and remote places where disturbance remained unchecked.

But in 1914, with the establishment of civil government, the tribal wards were reconstituted into municipal districts with presidents appointed by the Department Governor. The president was usually the leading datu or the powerful head of the district. In addition, vice-presidents and councilors from each sub-district were appointed on the basis of male adult suffrage.

In the provincial level, the political structure kept authority away from local leaders. The governor and the secretary-treasurer were either Christians or Americans. Only the third Board Member was a Muslim. He was chosen first by appointment and later by election participated only by the Vice-Presidents and Councilors. However, deputy governors were appointed from among the prominent citizens but only for certain designated areas in Sulu.

On February 20, 1917, the Philippine Legislature created, through Act 2674, the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes to bring the non-Christian communities into the national process. Consequently, the rationale for

the Department of Mindanao and Sulu ceased to be valid and Raphael Paima, Secretary of the Interior, drafted the bill on May 5, 1920 which abolished the Department. Frank Carpenter resigned and Teopisto Guingona, the Department Secretary, took over his position. Thus, the Bureau became a new integrative mechanism for the non-Christian areas.

At this point, it should be noted that national legislation was an important implementing measure of colonial policies. It provided the framework for the integration of local processes into the national pattern. It operated initially on the principle of respect for certain traditional practices and concepts. As early as 1903, the Philippine Commission already recognized the validity and/or necessity of Muslim customary laws when it organized the Moro Province. But in 1974, the Department of Mindanao and Sulu revoked the recognition, thus putting the Muslim communities within the purview of national laws which were based on the norms and principles of the Christian communities. Then in 1915, the Philippine Commission passed a law which allowed Muslim advisers to serve in Sulu Courts neutralizing the roles of the Sultan, Kadis, and Wakils (religious judges) in judicial matters.

The political restructuring of Sulu was, therefore, detrimental to traditional leadership and antithetical to the earlier concept advanced by the noted scholar, Najeeb Saleeby, which viewed the datanship or the Sultanate as vital to the success of colonial administration in non-Christian areas. Saleeby in the *Moro Problem*, clearly believed in strengthening the Datu's role in the political system. He said:²³

Let the government help him and strengthen his hand, and both he and the government will profit. The datu will endeavor to improve himself and at the same time carry out the wishes of the government. He would obey directions, adopt programs and policy and gradually reform his datanship.²³

He argued that this positive approach to the datu system would bring about the desired goals of colonial policies. He observed that

The people would feel kindly towards the American authorities, accept their examples and advice, and gradually imitate their ways and follow their ideas. And having obtained such an attitude of the people toward American authority and institutions, it merely becomes a matter of simple arithmetic to calculate what results the schools and American activities will produce in time in Moroland.²⁴

Contrary to Saleeby's suggestion, the Americans continued to discredit the traditional leaders and, consequently, the stability of the area was disrupted. This low regard for the ruling elite was best seen in the confidential opinions or views of some American officials. A memorandum to this effect had this assessment:

Formerly, sultan and datos received $\frac{1}{4}$ of plunders by piracy. When it ceased, they taxed the people. This has not decreased the loyalty of the people although there is no real security among them for property and consequently no sustained industry. As soon as an inhabitant acquires property his chief is apt to take it from him.²⁵

The effect of American efforts in Sulu was the subordination of the ruling class not only to the American officialdom but also to the Christian Filipino officials who, by this time, had already been integrated into the colonial system.

As already noted, the apparent success of the Moro Province in establishing the basis for civil government led to its abolition in 1913 and to the establishment of civil rule with Frank Carpenter as Governor. The civil administration organized native scouts, constabularies, and police under American officers to insure that colonial control was not jeopardized by native participation. The socio-economic developments in the area were also encouraged so that by 1921, Governor Carpenter had accomplished for the civil government what Generals Wood, Bliss, and Pershing had done for military rule.

The Department of Mindanao and Sulu, which replaced the Moro Province, marked the transition to the integration of Muslim areas into the commonwealth government with a national Commissioner appointed to take charge of Mindanao and Sulu affairs. This was more or less reinforced with the appointment of Sultan Kiram to the Philippine Senate.

The political changes in Sulu resulted in the emergence of two factional patterns. One was colonial and the other, traditional. In 1927 James Fugate became governor. His policies were aimed to bring the government to the people and to create a balance between Muslim and Christian interests. Consequently, he initiated a mobile meeting of leaders in the six districts of Jolo. He worked closely with two figures in local politics, Arolas Tulawi, a Muslim, and Mariano de Leon, a Christian. In 1928, he replaced Dandan Ututalum and appointed Akuk

Sangkula as Deputy Governor for Eastern Jolo, the former being associated with the Sultan's faction.

In his 1928 annual report, Fugate summed up his political principles of administration as one of simplicity, humanity, and respect for the people.²⁶ This was somewhat contrary to the Saleeby concept which underlined the importance of the *datus* in the colonial system. In 1931, Fugate took a leave for the United States and Ubaldo Laya was appointed Acting Governor. Immediately, Akuk Sangkula was replaced by Ututalum tipping the political fulcrum to the pro-Sultanate faction. The arrival of Arthur Spiller in 1932 as Governor did not change the situation because he relied more on Laya, Angeles, and the Sultan than on the Fugate men. By this time, the three had formed a triumvirate against Fugate and the political process began to harden along the two lines with roots ultimately traced to the conflict between traditionalism and modernism.

The instability in political administration which was created by the uncertainties of local politics had hampered the material improvements of the archipelago. Even public works, which was given priority in development, showed a marked decline. Only 7.3 kilometers of hard road was built between 1915 and 1928. The efforts of Governor Fugate to accelerate developments was hindered by the activities of his opponents. His departure for the United States only aggravated local factionalism. On February 21, 1934, the Cabinet reappointed him back to his old position and Governor-General Frank Murphy removed Laya and Angeles from their responsibilities. But the damage to political stability had been made and Sulu politics had acquired a complex character which persisted up to the post-colonial era.

It should be noted at this point that in the political alignment, Captain Leon Angeles (PC Commander in 1930), Ubaldo Laya (provincial treasurer from 1927-34), William Shuck, and Dandan Ututalum, who were prominently linked with the sultanate, had their own interests in traditional leadership. Conversely, those who supported Fugate came from the lower level of traditional leadership and, therefore, saw the opportunities for a rapid political rise in colonialism. Briefly Arolas Tulawi worked as an interpreter for the Spaniards and the Americans. He was of lowly origin. Likewise, Akuk Sangkula came from the lower level of the ruling elite: He was not of the *datu* class. He was a public school teacher and a civil service eligible. He served as the Deputy of

Governor Carl Moore before he became associated with Fugate in 1931. Gulam Rasul was the son of Hadji Butu and was not of the datu class either. But his liberal leaning, due to western education, brought him closer to the Fugate faction. Thus in 1934, Rasul, Tulawi, Sangkula, and Fugate formed an opposition group against the Sultan who was supported by Dandan, Dayang Dayang Piadao, and the datu. It seems then that the conflict developed into a confrontation between the traditional ruling class and a new emerging leadership from the lower levels supported by the American administration.

In this respect, it is necessary to recall that the Sultan's attitude to Fugate could be traced to the earlier American efforts to the Sultanate following the series of political compromises which divested the Sultan of his political authority and prestige. Tarhata's return from the U.S. in 1924 only confounded the situation. She was alienated from her people, having shown evidences of acculturation somewhat incompatible with her traditional background. Her elopement with Datu Tahil further weakened her political status and contributed in a sense to Tahil's predicament. Discredited, she went into self-exile until 1931 when she emerged again in local politics neither aligned with the Sultanate nor with colonial interests. She attempted to synthesize modern and traditional interests in a new political alignment. In a sense, this emerging "Third Force" sought to draw support from those not aligned with the Sultan or the colonial administration. Likewise, Hadji Butu's family veered away from the Sultan and moved towards the American policy of attraction. After serving as *wazir* since 1894 and as Senator from 1916-1931, his replacement by Sultan Jamalul Kiram in the Senate somehow led him to Fugate.

In this regard, it may be necessary to point out that the American colonial government or officials were not ignorant of the Muslim South. As early as the beginnings of American rule, they had already initiated studies of the Muslim South. In fact, the works of the Syrian-born Najeeb Saleeby, a Christian scholar and a school superintendent assigned to the Moro Province, have remained one of the best sources on Sulu Muslim history and culture. His *History of Sulu* (1913) provided valuable historical, political, and cultural data for American administrators. In the same manner, his other two works, *Studies in Moro History, Law, and Religion* (1905) and *The Moro Problem*, contributed to the understanding of the Muslims. The translation of *tarsilas* and

codes enabled American administrators to probe into the value systems of Muslim societies. The same was true of the collection of folklore materials by American soldiers, which were valuable for the study of local customs and traditions. In fact, the myths and legends recorded in 1905 by Cephas Bateman, a U.S. chaplain, were taken with the assistance of Arolas Tulawi of Jolo and a certain Bandia of Lanao,²⁷ who understood their people's traditions.

Equally important in equipping American officials with a working knowledge of Muslim affairs were the field reports of American travelers, local officials, and military officers stationed in different areas of the archipelago. The latter were embodied in the U.S. Military Post returns from 1899 to 1916 and in individual papers, some of which are found in the files of American administrators such as Leonard Wood, Tasker Bliss, John Pershing, Hugh L. Scott, Joseph Hayden, and others in the National Archives and other U.S. depositories.

Thus by the very nature of Muslim societies and cultures, American response and/or approach to problems of administration, conflict, and trade had to be evolved from research which has always faithfully served the aims of colonialism. The consequent establishment of such institutions as the Moro province (1903), the Bureau of non-Christian tribes (1917), and the Department of Mindanao and Sulu (1920), the Indanan school (1916), and the local police were offshoots of research and studies.

II. Colonial Impact and Local Response

The political reaction of Sulu to American rule was complex and varied. One attempt was to cooperate with colonialism simply for reasons of political expediency. Under this motivation might be included the sultanate, the datus aligned with the Sultan, and the socio-economic sector composed of foreign elements including Chinese and Christians. The datus might have been anti-Sultan but they were not necessarily anti-American. In fact, some found the American presence an opportunity to gain advantage in local disputes.

Undoubtedly, the collaboration in the early years of American rule continued to mark the subsequent response of Sulu to colonialism. This was exemplified by the role not only of the Sultan but also of Dayang Dayang Piandao, Princess Tarhata, and Hadji Butu Abdul Bagui in seeking American support against local rivals. In 1915 the Carpenter-

Kiram Agreement divested the Sultan of his political sovereignty, retaining only his spiritual lordship over his people.²⁸ This concession was given in exchange for some financial considerations in the form of annuities and promise to preserve the local religion. In 1920, the House of Kiram relinquished all its political prerogatives to the colonial government.²⁹ In 1922, the legislature granted to the Sultan a certain amount of land, thus limiting his politico-economic resources. But this land grant was not effected until 1934. Then In 1940, the Sultan yielded his rights over North Borneo.

Meanwhile, Hadji Butu, who had served as Prime Minister since the turn of the century, was encouraged not only to profit from the new political alignment but also from the educational opportunities offered by the colonial government. His children became the first tangible results of his partnership with colonialism. In fact, Hadji Gulam Rasul was sent as a "pensionado" to the University of Maine. He returned to the Philippines not only with an American education but also with an American wife. In 1924, he led a pro-independence movement in Sulu and started a new political ferment which contributed to the further erosion of the Sultanate. In 1930, he was appointed Justice of the Peace and served in the new capacity outside of Jolo, thus giving him opportunities to expand his political base. This new process divested the Sultan of his judicial functions and the local datus of their *agama* prerogatives.

The same was true of Princess Tarhata whose sojourn in the University of Illinois undoubtedly made her more liberal and responsive to modern changes. Her educational attainment had kept her in a unique position as a modern spokesman of Sulu until her death in 1979.³⁰

In a sense, the alignment of Sulu leadership with American colonial rule served as a mechanism through which Christian Filipino leadership was able to penetrate into the otherwise close structure of Muslim polity. By its own policy, the American administration, since the assumption of the governorship of the Philippines by Francis B. Harrison in 1913, was reluctantly committed to the Filipinization of the government. Although the immediate context of this was the political processes in the Christian areas where opposition to American rule was more organized and rationalized, the broad application of the principle to non-Christian areas was seen by such leaders as Teopisto Guingona and Manuel L. Quezon as necessary in the struggle for independence. Hence,

the Filipinization of the Muslim areas became one of the vital aims of political reorganization under the Commonwealth.

Consequently, by giving support to Christian Filipino leadership, the Americans sanctioned the incorporation of Muslim leadership into the national structure, although in private and confidential circles American officials, like Patrick Hurley, encouraged the anti-independence movement among the Muslims. He obtained hundreds of signatures from datus and local leaders favoring the retention of American rule in Muslim areas. The cooperative or collaborative posture of local leaders created a new pattern of political behavior with uncompromising elements seeking leadership in the lesser members of the ruling class or in the lower levels of society. That is, the anti-colonial reaction, which erupted into a series of armed disturbances during the first decade of American rule, were led by such men as Panglima Hassan of Siit, Datu Usap of Luuk, Pala of Bud Dajo, Paruka Utig of Maimbung, Maharajah Andung of Taglibi, and Kikiri of Patian.³¹ Except for the latter, the leaders were considered a part of the ruling elite.

Thereafter, the movement assumed a new character with the masses gradually taking the cudgels for their own struggle. A great deal of the datus had remained either signatories to American-sponsored agreements or were uncommitted to any cause or process whatsoever, thus relinquishing the active leadership of movements or revolts to men from the masses.

By the second decade of American rule, which coincided with the termination of military rule in the South, the anti-colonial struggle erupted in Jolo island. In 1915, a battle took place in Talipao between government troops and local residents expanding the popular struggle to the central part of Jolo island and leaving only the southwestern part somewhat freed from the violent clashes. In 1919, Aukasa led a sizeable number against the government at Kulay Kulay,³² followed in the following year by a disturbance in Pata island under Hatib Sihaban and in 1923 under another local leader.³³

But it was not until 1927 that a leader of the stature of Datu Tahil became involved in a mass armed movement against colonial rule.³⁴ Of course, Datu Tahil was already involved earlier in the Battle of Bud Bagsak (1913), although his role then was secondary, being young and subordinate to Sahipa or Nakib Amil, two lower rank spillovers from the Bud Dajo resistance and the Pala uprising of 1906. Tahil was the

son of Datu Julkanain of Patikul who earlier, with his brother Datu Kalbi, briefly defied the Americans.

In the 1930's, the popular character of the armed struggle reappeared. On October 16, 1931 a revolt erupted in Patikul. It was led by Edjasani whose kris was confiscated in Danag by a PC Lieutenant who embarrassed him before his followers. Before resisting, he conferred with his brother, Jailani, a district councilor of Kamuntayan, Talipao. Then in 1936, reports in the Laubach papers indicate that a major disturbance threatened Jolo.³⁵ It was led by Imam Saccam and was caused by a number of factors. One was the conviction of Saccam's relatives for murder and their imprisonment in Bilibid. Saccam could not understand the government action because the killing was part of a local feud. Unsatisfactory economic conditions also contributed to the tensions, aggravated by rumors of independence for the Philippines which caused anxieties about the future of Sulu under a new political order.

The disturbance began with the ambush on October 8, 1936 of 20 constabularies by 50 Moros at Kulay Kulay, about a year after the inauguration of the Commonwealth. Subsequent negotiations for surrender failed and the disturbance continued until Saccam's followers were decimated one by one. By the time of his surrender, his followers had left him with only 5 rifles without ammunitions. Although suppressed like all others before it, the Kulay Kulay incident had an effect on the neighboring area of Talipao which saw another armed outbreak in 1937.

From a geo-political perspective, the armed response of Sulu to American rule largely involved the island of Jolo. This may be seen from a geographic distribution of those who led the resistance. Hassan was from Siit with an early beginning in Pata Island, south of Maimbung. Usap came from Luuk, a traditional hotbed in Eastern Jolo. It was here that the aristocratic Buranuns established the seat of their power which is believed to be the root of Sulu's royal line. Andung was from Sinu-maan, a popular hiding place in northern Jolo because of its proximity to Bud Bagsak. He was sometimes associated with Patikul, the second seat of the Sultanate. Saccam and Aukasa were from Central Jolo while Pala and Paruka Utig came from Taglibi, another traditional center of resistance in northern Jolo whose shores were frequented by Ilanun raiders or pirates seeking a place to hide. It is vitally linked to Patikul from where Datu Tahil came and where the ancient settlement

of the Tagimaha was established. Hatib Sihaban came from Pata, an island closely related to Maimbung, the oldest seat of the Sultanate. It was here where the ancient Baklaya community was founded.

Although Jolo island has been the center of disturbances throughout Sulu's history, the pattern of armed response, to a certain extent, included some areas outside Jolo. In fact, the causal motivation could ultimately be traced to the island except, perhaps, in Tawi-Tawi, the southernmost part of the Archipelago, where some disturbances might be definitely associated with the Samal ethnic group. A good example is Silungan who led a roving band of "sea pirates" in the first decade of American rule. Jikiri of Jolo enlarged his "piratical attacks" to include not only Basilan but also the rest of the Sulu Archipelago spilling over northward to Zamboanga and southward to Borneo. Then, in the second and third decades, Central Sulu, represented by Siasi and the surrounding islands, saw the appearance of Sariol who was earlier involved in the Pala uprising. He was publicly hanged in 1920, for his murderous activities.

It was apparent that the popular uprisings, with beginnings in Jolo island, spread to various portions of the archipelago and were generally led by men below the datu class. In fact, until the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941, the armed movements were led by men who were eventually labelled by the authorities as "Mundus" or bandits. But the way they were regarded by their own people could be gauged by the extent to which they have been immortalized or glorified in the *parang-sabil* which has been preserved to this day in the collective memories of Sulu society.

Hence, it can be said that notwithstanding the acquiescence of the Sultanate and the ruling class, the armed struggle in Sulu had some common foundation in the grievances against colonial rule. But unlike, perhaps, the contemporaneous situation in northern Philippines, in which the Filipino ruling class was actually integrated into the American colonial system, the Sulu datu merely served as a sort of intermediary between their people and the colonial government. It was not unusual for the Sultan or datu to serve in some capacity in the colonial government or even participate in actual campaigns against resisting bands, while, also, at the same time, maintaining intimate relations with the "rebels" or "Mundus." This was to be expected of a local society in which kinship had remained the basis of political organization. In

fact, even the Sultanate, which was an external institution brought about by Islam, had to reckon with the nature of the datanship whose head was as much a political leader as he was a patriarch of his people or subjects. It was, therefore, this type of political leadership and kinship that prevented the development of an anti-datu and anti-Sultan character in the armed struggle. The datu and the Sultan had become to their subjects protectors of their future, leaders who would insulate them against the impact or imposition of a new political order. They were the spokesmen and interpreters of their aspirations and their sentiments. They were also their eyes and ears. Consequently, this kind of dichotomy improved the political influence of the ruling elite and strengthened the anti-foreign nature of popular reactions.

But, in a sense, the political program of American rule had to be complimented by socio-cultural reforms, otherwise, the effective integration and Americanization of Sulu would be difficult to achieve. In the economic aspect, American rule encouraged the development of agriculture, trade, and commerce between Sulu and other areas of the islands. It is in this respect that the roles of the local Chinese communities, the Christian Filipinos, and foreign merchants, including Americans, had to be encouraged. But the economic development of Sulu would not have been difficult to achieve if the Sulu natives were not preoccupied with conflict, subsistence agriculture, and traditional trade. However, a breakthrough in the economic approach came with the restructuring of customs regulations and taxation which improved revenues for local and regional administration. The revenues did not only ease the financial burden of colonial administration but also provided some resources for improving socio-economic conditions.

Perhaps, more crucial in the ultimate analysis was the socio-cultural approach of American rule because it aimed at change in traditional values and orientation. As several American officials, writers, and travelers observed, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to effect political or economic reforms essential to colonial interests without the fundamental changes in native psychology. It was in this context that the establishment of educational, social, and cultural institutions became imperative. There was no doubt in the American mind that the native mind would not be able to resist the technology of western civilization. This was already perceived by the American negotiators as early as 1899 when no less than the Sultan and the Sultana showed fascination,

bordering on unbelief, at the wonder of the machine gun and the phonograph which were largely responsible for concluding the Bates Treaty on the part of the Sultanate. Thus the vulnerability of Sulu to American cultural and social influence, being more opened than other Muslim societies, was quite evident and the establishment of schools was crucial. This would receive the full support of American officials who were quite unanimous in their conviction that education was the only appropriate tool of civilization that could bring the effective integration of the non-Christian societies into the colonial structure.

In Sulu, education received strong emphasis. The specific aims were to promote English throughout the archipelago, to propagate universal literacy, and to achieve vocational efficiency. Bernard Moses gave this rationale:

The European contribution to the cultivation of the Filipino constitutes the only basis the American have on which to build for the future. In this view it appears that the only language of cultivation available to the Filipinos is an European language. Therefore, with English as the language of the government of the islands and the language of trade in the East, it follows inevitably that the Filipinos will find greater advantage in its use than in the use of Spanish, its only real rival.³⁶

It seems that while the learning of English and the promotion of literature exposed the Filipinos to a new world, it also exposed them to the subtle influences of American culture. This came at a time when the search for a strong national identity became a nationalist imperative after 433 years of Spanish rule. In a sense, this was not a fulfillment of the policy of "benevolent assimilation" or satisfaction of Filipino aspiration. Otherwise, the promotion of a truly Filipino language, however ethnic in character its beginning might be, would have been initiated.

Ironically, the exposure of the Filipinos to American culture was not premised on a preparation for American citizenship or statehood. There was evidently a gap between the theory and practice of colonialism. It was, in effect, unfair to give the people an American orientation without the concomitant rights and privileges of citizenship. It was playing with their destiny and their sentiments. Consequently, the educative process created a persisting type of mentality that was Filipino or ethnic in form but colonial in content, a phenomenon that has continued to the present day.

So that, in the non-Christian, particularly in the Muslim areas where the same process was introduced, the establishment of schools began with a boarding school for Muslim girls in Cotabato in 1913 and the Indanan school in Sulu in 1916. This was followed by a literacy program in Lanao in the 1930s under Frank Laubach. Perhaps, very few were aware that Laubach's overall aim, as his confidential communication to Governor Carpenter shows, was to develop the Muslim areas of Mindanao as a springboard for the Christianization of Southeast Asia using Muslims as missionaries. But the main problem, as noted by the school superintendent for the Moro Province in 1913, was the lack of teachers. There were only 17 qualified and unqualified Muslim tutors in the province. Hence, the burden of teaching was left to the 84 American and Christian teachers.

However, the lack of teachers did not hamper educational plans. Twenty schools were planned for 1914 and Governor Carpenter recommended that 1/3 of the insular budget for education be devoted to the Moro Province. In 1915, the schools were placed under the Department of Mindanao and Sulu and, later, the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes in line with the policy of integration. In 1916, James Fugate, who would figure significantly in local politics in the 1920s, was appointed principal of the Indanan Agricultural School. He remained in this position until 1926 when his involvement in local administration became necessary from the standpoint of colonial aims.

One of the significant steps taken to enhance educational progress in Sulu was the sending of Sulu girls from the ruling class to schools in Manila and abroad. In fact, the sending of Princess Tarhata Kiram, niece of Sultan Kiram, to the University of Illinois was part of the effort to introduce fundamental changes in Sulu society and culture. Governor Frank Carpenter revealed in his letter to Acting Secretary of Interior Teodoro M. Kalaw on January 27, 1919 the motivation for such a policy (BIA Tarhata File):

It was expected as a result of the proposed social service, planned appropriate to conditions, by this group of young women community leaders to give such impulse to education and thereby general continuing improvement of the situation of women among the Sulu people - - - as to bring these most recalcitrant of the non-Christian elements more quickly into amalgamation with the Christian elements of population, than could any other method.³⁷

Governor Carpenter noted that earlier experience with Muslim girls in Manila showed that "polygamy will cease to exist in Sulu through that most effective of means—intolerance on the part of the women." Thus, the education of women became an important means in achieving social change. This optimism was anchored on the premise that the women, by virtue of their domestic roles, could influence the values of their children and the attitudes and interests of their menfolk.

By the time of the establishment of the Commonwealth, American programs, including hygiene and sanitation, had succeeded, at least, in attracting the Muslim ruling elite to American culture without necessarily acquiring the intellectual and psychological capacities to benefit from it. It was not uncommon to see a Sulu datu tucking an American revolver and accessories on one side and his betel nut box on the other; or, a Muslim schoolboy on his carabao whistling "The Star-Spangled Banner"; or, a Muslim girl in heeled shoes promenading in her "batawi" or "sablay."

The colonial impact on religious life was limited to the introduction of the Protestant element. The new ingredient, which encouraged capitalist values and modernization, was anchored on the ideals of American civilization and on biblical standards. In this effort, the Christian and Missionary Alliance became the first Protestant mission to assist in the Americanization or Christianization of Sulu.³⁸ "Missionary" or "evangelistic work," which began in a personal way in 1913, received tremendous boost in the 1920s from a group of C & MA missionaries who established their base in Tetuan, Zamboanga from where the eventual establishment of evangelical churches throughout Mindanao was effected and coordinated. Conversions were difficult among the non-Christians although they were encouraging among the Christian settlers. It was through the Christian converts in Sunday schools and extension classes that a core of "Filipino" workers was finally established to bring the "Four-Fold Gospel" to the Muslim populace.³⁹

As expected, the work of evangelism among the Tausugs and Samals was extremely slow. It did not bring result until about the late 1930s when converts like Anuddin, Bahulluk, Adjarani, and Tama defied local sanction to become the first Muslim preachers among their people.⁴⁰ But these converts were from the Samal group, a quiet and non-violent people whose love for peace was as real as their love for the

sea. The so-called Tausug converts were more nominal than real, being products of intermarriages and convenience.

In effect, folkislam continued to be the dominant religion of Sulu. The subsequent growth of the Christian Church, Catholic or Protestant, largely came from the Chinese and mestizos of Jolo, Siasi, and Bongao although efforts were exerted to establish a foothold in the interior communities as far as Bilaan, Luuk, and Parang in Jolo and as far as Tabawan in Central Sulu. But the Christian thrust in the region had remained at best a success among the non-Muslim populace and American religious influence resulted only in the establishment of a religious dichotomy in which the Christian Church and the Langgal-Mosque system co-existed. It was to the credit of the Sulu Muslims, by virtue of their openness to foreign influences and their long history of free trade, that the dichotomy has been allowed to continue. Today, the many faces of Sulu culture show that extent of its integration.

Perhaps, one important result of colonial rule was the enrichment of Sulu oral traditions. The traditional forms represented by the *parang sabil* (epic), the *kissah* (stories), and the *katakata* (myths and legends) continued to incorporate elements from American rule. This type of oral literature, which represents a sort of popular protest or glorification of the ruling class, gave a rational commentary on the unsuccessful uprisings and rebellions. It immortalized the roles of both the ruling class and the ordinary man.⁴¹

The *parangsabil* glorifies the exploits of men like Jikiri, Panglima Hassan, and Silungan. Seldom is the hero in the *parangsabil* a datu or a Sultan since the narrative usually ends in the death of the hero after killing several of the enemy. It is, therefore, a form of popular reaction to established colonial or non-Muslim authority in society. In effect, the *sabil* (juramentado to the non-Muslims) has for his victims only non-Muslims, usually Christians and foreigners. The narrative is told in popular gatherings and generally receives animated responses from spectators including children. The datu or Sultan, who collaborated with colonial authorities, were not treated in this literary form but in another literary vehicle called the *kissah*.⁴² This will be discussed later in this essay as a distinct type of popular literature.

As distinguished from the *parangsabil*, the *katakata* carries an anti-feudal type of protest but in a somewhat veiled, hilarious manner. It is a non-historical, mythical, or fictional criticism of the Sultanate

system. Although it is sometimes used interchangeably with *kissah* in areas like Campo Islam or Campo Muslim in Zamboanga, it seems that the migration of the narratives from Sulu elsewhere might have developed the terminological change. In the traditional sense, the *katakata* has for a hero an ordinary person whose exploits and wits usually neutralizes or outmaneuvers the Sultan. The datu is seldom the victim of the hero confirming the view that the datuship is generally regarded as an important part of popular resistance. The Sultanate on the other hand, is viewed as external to the indigenous tradition, somewhat in the same category as Christianity or colonialism although in a much lesser negative light as the latter. Examples of the narratives are the *Abunawas*, *Pusung*, and *Pilandok* stories in which the Sultan usually ends up being outwitted or losing his daughter's chastity or paying the trickster or hero some unexpected rewards.⁴³

But somewhat different in character is the *kissah* which has for its hero the Sultan, the datu, the prince, or the princess. The extraordinary exploits of the hero are vividly portrayed, creating the unmistakable impression that the datu class is the embodiment of virtue, power, courage, and everything that is good. This narrative form thus helps in the preservation of the favored status of the ruling class and, in a sense shows the extent to which it has become an accepted institution in Muslim consciousness.

Although the *parangsabil* is sometimes referred to as an expanded *kissah*, the latter has so far failed to develop an anti-colonial character. Whatever conflict of interests or purposes is found in the narrative usually involves members of the ruling class but seldom or never between the datu and his subject. In fact, in the narrative, the people or followers of the datu are shown not only as willing servants of the ruling elite but also as happy enforcers of the datu's plans and purposes. They even offer their own lives for his protection and benefits.

III. Conclusion

This paper will not be complete without relating American rule in Sulu to the general patterns of Philippine history. Although the Muslims of Sulu were definitely not a part of the coordinated Filipino war against the United States in 1899 because of the Sultan's rejection of Aguinaldo's invitation to join the Revolution, there is a sense in which the Sulu struggle could be viewed as part of the national resistance. In

fact, even the isolated responses of the other non-Christian groups could be viewed in the same perspective. This fact may be seen in two ways:

First, there are evidences from social science studies that the Philippine communities, whether Christianized or not, shared a common heritage and direction. The various revolts and disturbances from 1565 to 1940 were definitely based on the longing to retrieve the lost "ancient liberties" which were rooted in the ecology, cultures, and ethnohistories of those communities. The alleged anti-Christian attitude of the Muslims during the colonial period was actually a product of colonialism itself. The Spanish and American regimes never failed to encourage the Christianization of the Philippines, thus creating the inevitable shift in the nature of Muslim responses from political or economic to religious and cultural. There was no doubt that, in the case of Sulu, the datus and Sultan regarded the Christians as enemies but they did so because the latter were used by both Spanish and American administrations as pawns in the anti-Muslim campaigns except, perhaps, in the initial years of American rule when American troops had to be used for obvious reasons.

But in all the Muslim struggles, the keen sense for that "ancient liberties" was never lost. In fact, it was heightened by the intensification of colonial efforts to subdue them. The anxieties and prospects of losing their freedom provided local movements with the strongest motivation for resistance. Even the internicine conflicts were anchored on the desire of the local datuships to preserve their independence which could be endangered by other datuships, the Sultanate, and the colonial powers.

Consequently, the anti-American or anti-government or anti-Christian character of Sulu's reaction was in reality anti-colonial. It was a continuation of the Spanish rationale. Unfortunately, the Muslims failed to see this underlying foundation of their struggles. The colonial system had succeeded in preventing the ideological unification of the various ethnic struggles in the archipelago through the cooperation of the local ruling elites and through the subtle Americanization of consciousness. The American tradition of religious toleration, which became the guiding principle of American rule in Sulu, only served to reinforce the religious dichotomy in the area. The development of a strong secular ideology was somewhat hampered and has remained to

this day a problem.

The colonial consciousness which we inherited from Spanish and American influences and which we have preserved since then will be a great challenge. It will be the main problem the Muslims will ultimately have to tackle. It will also be the one single issue that should confront the whole nation. No Filipino today, regardless of his religion and ethnic origin, can ignore the 425 (1521-1946) years of colonialism in the Philippines. No people can go through that long period of time without being affected orientationally or otherwise.

Today, the vanguard of this colonial heritage is Christianity, the third factor in the socio-cultural development of the Filipino people, the first two being Islam and the indigenous religions. The presence of these three elements can either lead to the disintegration of the Filipino State or its metamorphosis into a unified structure, contingent on how these elements of culture are finally integrated, unified or synthesized without meaningful loss to ethnicity. Perhaps, serious consideration should be given to the development of a very strong secular ideology which subordinates these three elements of culture. This represents an alternative to integration which, by its very nature, might lead to the erosions of our ethnic traditions on which the strength of our people has depended since the dawn of our history.

*The use of 1521 as a point of departure in computation is not in contradiction to the earlier point of reference. There is a difference between the establishment of Spanish rule in 1565 and the beginning of colonial contact which began in 1521 on the basis of record.

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