

THE MOROS AND FILIPINO NATIONALISM: AN HISTORIOGRAPHICAL UPSTREAMING

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We read, heard or are even told that history is the product of individual historians. This statement has some validity because each historian is writing from a personal point of view on a subject he selects and investigates. The significance he develops and attaches to it is, therefore, a work of personal interpretation. As Teodoro Agoncillo said, the historian "sees things from the position he occupies" (Agoncillo: 1972, 3). Thus, any conclusion that a historian arrives at is tentative and will continue to be so until additional facts and new findings are found. In Agoncillo's own words, any conclusion is "valid only for the duration of his (the historian's) facts" (Agoncillo: 1973:, 5). In this connection, history will continue to be re-interpreted with the march of time, especially when we come to the idea that "history is primarily the search for meaning, and the search for meaning requires a formulation of patterns of human behavior in the past deduced systematically and logically" (Resurreccion: 1972, 9).

The meaning, purpose or goal that the historian attaches to history is relative as well as selective. According to Carl Becker, "The form and significance of remembered events . . . will vary with the time and place of the author." Or, as Charles Beard pointed out, "Any written history inevitably reflects the thoughts of the author in his time and cultural setting" (quoted

in Agoncillo: 1972, 2). The meaning of history can also be influenced among other factors by the selectivity of source materials. The historian writes with a purpose which defines his goal.

It is in this context that historians and other scholars writing about Filipino nationalism cannot be faulted for all their worth. In fact, different interpretations and perspectives are encouraged to enrich our existing literature on nationalism. History is and can never be complete, so is any discussion on nationalism. Specifically, nationalism in Philippine history is far from being complete without taking into consideration the role played by the Moros in preserving and maintaining their own freedom and independence and in fighting at the same time colonial rule (Casirao: N.d., 1-12 and Constantino: 1978, 28-29 and 1975, 25-27).

Nationalism in Philippine history seems to be reserved only for the Filipinos in the north in general but specifically attributed to the fighting Tagalog- and Pampango-speaking communities. In short, it was their monopoly not to be shared with the other equally fighting communities in other parts of the archipelago. The fights (revolts, uprisings, etc.) between the natives and the Spaniards were bloody and the causes (religious, economic, political, etc.) justified or valid but the identification of criteria for the analysis of Filipino nationalism is needed.

Along this line, I am quite intrigued and challenged by the seemingly deliberate exclusion of the Moros as nationalists in several studies conducted on nationalism by historians and other scholars from A to Z; that is, from Agoncillo to Zaide. Especially challenging is a statement, a footnote at that, in Usha Mahajani's study. It says: "Simultaneously with these campaigns against the Filipinos, the Spaniards were engaged in constant warfare with the Moros in the south. But since the Moro resistance cannot be called a part of the Filipino nationalist response to alien rule, the so-called Moro Wars are excluded from this book" (Mahajani: 1971, 25, n. 25). No explanation was offered.

Equally challenging is Renato Constantino's statement when he said that "Throughout the Spanish occupation, the Muslims were not considered part of the developing society and the Muslim region was treated as foreign territory" (Constantino: 1978, 28). He further went on to say that "Because it was the Christianized natives rather than the Muslims who eventually became the dominant force in the country, it is the shaping of their developing consciousness that must be our principal concern" (Constantino: 1978, p. 29 and 1975, p. 27).

The preceding statements above are understandable especially if we take into consideration the interest of individual writers along with their selection of research problem and source materials. This paper then will attempt to do a similar task and seek to explain Filipino nationalism from the point of view of the Moros. At the outset, however, it should be made clear that this paper does not claim any originality, only a new perspective, or a new interpretation, as a rejoinder to what appears to be an exclusive nationalism only for Filipinos in the north, especially during the Spanish regime.

Moros, Filipinos and Nationalism

The expression, "Moros, not Filipinos" (see Asani: N.d. Cf. Thomas, 1971), tells us that the Moros do really resist being called Filipinos. The islamized natives of southern Philippines were called by the Spaniards Moros, clearly a corruption of the word Moors, who together with the Arabs, invaded and occupied Spain for more than seven hundred years. Spanish experiences under the Muslim rule in Spain, their determination to win over the newly islamized natives in the Philippines and the determined Moro resistance against the Spaniards had all contributed to the negative Spanish perceptions of the Moros (see Tawagon: 1988). The Americans and the succeeding Filipino administrations have perpetuated to this day similar, if not the same, negative perceptions (see Gowing: 1977 and Tan: 1977).

Up to the late 1960's, the Muslims in the Philippines hated to be called Moros because of the negative meanings attached to

the word. The term's pejorative connotations are summarized under one statement: "The only good Moro is a dead Moro." The birth of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) at the end of the 1960's has given new meaning and perspective to the term (see Glang: 1969). The MNLF members prefer to be called Moros than Muslims because the term "Moros" is historical (that is, unconquered, and this makes the term acceptable nowadays) while the term "Muslims" is religious. In addition, the MNLF defines the word to stand, aside from the Muslims themselves, for those in Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan who resisted western colonizers; those who asserted their rights for self-determination; those who were being oppressed; and those who sympathized with the Moro plight and struggle for self-determination (see Tawagon: 1988).

At any rate, if you ask a Moro, "Are you a Filipino?," his immediate reply is "No." From his point of view, the word "Filipino" is by itself a negative answer to the question by simply separating the last syllable "no" from "Filipi." This Filipi or Felipe refers to the King of Spain. Moreover, the Maranao word *ino* is "why" in English. So the "*ino*" in Filipino is "why Filip?" Everybody knows that the name Philippines or Filipinos is derived from the name of the Spanish King, Felipe (Philip). A Filipino then is a colonial subject of the Spanish King. Since the Moros were not really conquered by the Spaniards, they could not then simply accept to be called Filipinos. Besides, the first Filipinos were actually not the natives of the Philippines. Rather, they were the Spaniards themselves, especially those who were born in the Philippines. They were called at that time the *insulares* or *creoles* to distinguish themselves from those *peninsulares* or those who were born in Spain. Thus, the Moros have every right not to consider themselves Filipinos.

The name Philippines came to be used for the first time when Bernardo de la Torre, commander of the ship *San Juan de Letran* under the Villalobos Expedition (1542-1546), named Tundaya or Kandaya (Leyte) in 1543 as Las Philipinas in honor of then crown-prince Philip II. The name stuck since then. But the name Filipino was not used until probably the last quarter of

the nineteenth century. Mahajani stated that it was Ruy de Villalobos (she used Villabose) who named the archipelago Filipinas. She wrote that:

The Villalobos expedition unwittingly marked a milestone in the national development of the Philippines, by giving the cluster of islands an identity. Villabose collectively called all the islands in the archipelago Filipinas, after the crown prince Don Felipe. The nomenclature was subsequently modified into the Philippine Islands and finally the Philippines. (Mahajani: 1971, p. 18)

When the Spaniards came, they classified the native inhabitants of the archipelago into moros, pagans/animists and indios. The first two were for religious distinction and the last for class distinction, meaning "inferior." However, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the term Filipino began to take shape as a class or as an elitist concept with racial connotations. As Constantino pointed out:

"Filipino" was used to designate the creoles or the Spaniards born in the Philippines, in contrast to the peninsulares or those who were born in the Iberian peninsula. The natives were called indios. The real colonial elite was limited to the peninsulares - though the creoles who were in the social and political periphery were considered part of the ruling class because their race assured them social status just below the peninsulares. (Constantino: 1969, p. 5).

Although the term was originally applied to the creoles or insulares, it was very much later that it included the principalias and ilustrados, Spanish mestizos, Chinese mestizos, and wealthy indios. Common elements of class qualifications among them were race, property, education and Spanish culture (Constantino: 1969, 5-9). The latest edition of Agoncillo's history textbook has this to say, too:

But the Spanish authorities looked down upon them (middle class, composed of Spanish and Chinese mestizos), for they did not belong to the inner circle of peninsulares...whose prerogative it was to rule and govern. This attitude was not surprising, for the Spanish society in the Philippines was a sort of caste consisting of two well-defined classes: the peninsulares ...and the insulares.... The contempt with which the former dealt with the latter arose from a feeling that anybody born in the Philippines was ipso facto inferior. Thus, to show their contempt for the insulares, the peninsulares called the former Filipinos. The "natives," on the other hand, were invariably called Indios. It was not until Governor-General Basilio Augustin called for the loyalty and aid of the "Indios" in 1898 that the latter were called Filipinos. (Agoncillo: 1990, p. 129- 130).

By implication, it was only when the native inhabitants broke through racial, educational, economic and social barriers imposed upon them that they attained to a certain degree of what might be termed national identification as one people vis-a-vis the Spaniards. Hence, the birth of Filipino nationalism.

The term "nationalism" has been variously defined and dated from country to country, from writer to writer and conditioned by a number of factors.

Generally, the dating, the definitions and the factors that conditioned nationalism set some limits for the inclusion of some but at the exclusion of others. This is selectivity in history and selectivity implies a choice of something over the others. The emphasis does not necessarily reflect or stand for the entire country or people but, at least, an attempt is made and to be made or a point of view is expressed and to be expressed.

The *Encyclopedia International* (1979) defines

nationalism as "a state of mind, a sense of belonging to a larger group sharing a common language, history and aspirations. It includes a feeling of responsibility for the destiny of a nation and a willingness to help shape its future." The *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (1986) defines it as "loyalty and devotion to a nation; especially an attitude, feeling or belief characterized by a sense of national consciousness, an exaltation of one nation above all others, and an emphasis on loyalty to and the promotion of the culture and interests (as political independence) of one nation as opposed to subordinate areas or other nations and supra-national groups." In *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (1982), nationalism is defined as: "1) Devotion to the interests of a particular nation; 2) The belief that nations would benefit from acting independently rather than collectively, emphasizing national rather than international goals; 3) In countries under foreign political or economic domination, aspirations for national independence." Louis L. Snyder defined nationalism as: "a condition of mind, feeling or sentiment" of a group of people living in a well-defined geographical area, speaking a common language, possessing a literature in which the aspirations of the nation have been expressed, being attached to common traditions, and, in some cases, having a common religion. ... (Quoted in Agoncillo: 1990, p. 115)

A definition quoted in Agoncillo and Guerrero states that nationalism is "devotion to or advocacy of national unity and independence." However, they defined nationalism to mean "a feeling developed in a people living within a contiguous geographic area, a sentiment forged by a common history, language and literature, customs and traditions and even by a common religion" (Agoncillo and Guerrero: 1977, p. 126).

More definitions can be cited (see Mahajani:1971, Cruz: 1975 and Naqavi: n.d.) but some common denominators can already be drawn from the definitions just presented above. They are: 1) a state of mind, feeling, devotion and loyalty; 2) people; 3) geographical area; 4) language; 5) literature; 6) history; 7) traditions and customs; 8) religion; and 9) aspirations such as

interests, national unity and independence. The common thread among these denominators (which the Moros have) is the sense of belongingness which can be considered as a prerequisite for national consciousness. According to Constantino, "National consciousness means that sense of oneness which comes from a community of aspiration, response and action" (Constantino: 1978, p. 25). Sense of belongingness and national consciousness are closely linked with an external force (that is, colonialism or imperialism). In short, nationalism in the context of Philippine history is always associated with foreign rule. Nationalism is a dependent variable. Remove Spanish colonialism or American imperialism and we shall no longer be talking of nationalism but rather of regionalism or of ethnolinguistic centrism. Hence, nationalism, especially active nationalism, is actually a response or reaction to colonial rule (Mahajani: 1971, p. 5-6).

Criteria for the Analysis of Nationalism

Historians, scholars and other social scientists have one thing in common insofar as their views on Filipino nationalism are concerned: That the nationalists were the indios (meaning, the christianized and hispanized natives) who broke through the racial, educational, economic and social barriers and were later called Filipinos. But did we ever consider the concept of shared nationalism with the Moros? Perhaps, the true nationalists could even be the Moros. Now, let me present and reinterpret some selected elements, new dimensions or criteria for the analysis of nationalism without, of course, losing track of the common denominators cited earlier.

A. The Historian and Nationalism. Since the Muslims who came to the Philippines had in general no historical sense - that is, left no writings about themselves and their relations with the natives as well as with the colonizers for the sake of historical posterity - the task to do the writing was left for the Spaniards. As such, history favors those who had the knowledge and control of writings and information. This problem is compounded with the Moro practice of not keeping historical

records. Even if they had such records, these may not have survived through the course of time.

In addition, the number of Muslim historians in the country today is numerically negligible or insignificant compared to their own Christian counterparts who incidentally happen to have very limited knowledge of the role of the Moros in Philippine history. This limitation is quite glaring in almost all of their writings about the Moros and these writings are generally tainted with biases and prejudices (see Bula: 1990). This is understandable because the Spanish source materials used by Filipino historians are replete with those attitudes and value orientations (see Tawagon: 1989, 20-117). In this regard, Eliseo Mercado said that:

The long history of colonialism and its consequent cultural imposition on subject peoples have created a lacuna between Christians and Muslims. The former look at the latter not only with the air of superiority but also with condescension. This attitude which is best described as "Filipino" or "Christian" chauvinism is a heavy burden saddling the Moro people's struggle. This chauvinism, the mentality and practice of discrimination and isolation of the Moro people was engineered by the Spanish colonizers, nourished by the American colonialists and passed on to and perpetuated by the post-independence republic under the auspices of American imperialism (Mercado: 1982, p. 1).

In our attempt to rewrite Philippine history in general and nationalism in particular from the point of view of the Filipinos, we cannot avoid being biased for one group against the another. Constantino said that "By training, Filipino historians were captives of Spanish and American historiography, both of which inevitably viewed Philippine history through the prism of their own prejudices" (Constantino: 1975, 1). When pro-Filipino historians write, the Moros were seen as the devil's advocates.

Yet, they tell us that "No Philippine history can be complete without a study of Muslim development" (Constantino: 1975, 27). Nobody can deny that the Moro struggle against colonial rule is a part of the entire Filipino struggle for freedom and independence. Consider the following statement:

But since it was on the social structures of the communities of Luzon and certain parts of the Visayas that the Spanish colonizers successfully superimposed their own system, a study of their state of development is of primary importance. The evolution of the national community proceeded from these geographic sectors. Among these groups, the Tagalogs and Pampangos had attained the highest level of development prior to Spanish conquest (Constantino: 1975, p. 27).

But Constantino recognized that the Moros "had the most developed social organization" at the time of the Spanish conquest (Constantino: 1975, 26). He stated further that:

It should be a source of pride for the Filipinos to point out that the Muslim South was never fully conquered by Spain. This sector of the archipelago remained free by virtue of its higher social and economic development and its better organized and more tenacious resistance (Constantino: 1975, 26).

Yet, despite the fact that the Moros continued to fiercely resist and stubbornly confront Spanish colonialism, they were still ignored when they should be saluted and celebrated for their love for freedom and independence from colonial rule. Historiographically, they were being treated in their own homeland as if they were from another planet. Again, Constantino said that "Throughout the Spanish occupation, the Muslims were not considered part of the developing society and the Muslim region was treated as foreign territory" (Constantino:

1975, 26). The Moros cannot help but express their frustration that history is only for the conquered, not the unconquered, and that Philippine history is the history of the colonizers and the colonized. Filipino historians are not being kind and fair in their treatment of nationalism in the Philippines vis-a-vis the Moros.

Filipino historians are greatly influenced by both the Spanish and American historiography. As such, precautions in dealing with colonial documents may be relevantly stated here. According to Charles Wilkes, "Many statements have been made and published relative to the piracies committed on these seas, which in some cases exceed, and in others fall short of the reality" (Blair and Robertson: Vol. XLIII, 18). In short, there was a "tendency to conceal the fact and to emphasize the worst." James A. Leroy in his *The Philippines, 1860-1898: Some Comments and Bibliographical Notes* dated 1907 in Durango, Mexico, wrote:

Most of the Spanish writings in this line (i.e., ethnology) are, speaking strictly from the scientific point of view, unreliable or, in some cases worthless. Blumentritt, who has written most voluminously on the subject, was never in the Philippines, but drew largely from these sources, and he has confused the subject rather than shed light upon it. The German and French scientists who visited the islands were, in most instances, not primarily ethnologists, and have done but fragmentary work in the field. Needless to say, all these sources must be consulted, especially for the historical side of the subject. ... (Blair and Robertson: Vol. LII, 161, N. 106)

Not only that the Americans perpetuated the Spanish negative perceptions and stereotypes of the Moros, they even coined for the Moros epitaphs that "The only good Moro is a dead Moro" and that the Moros were wild and "incapable of self-government." Certainly, from the point of view of the

colonized Filipinos today, the Moros do not deserve to be included in the annals of Filipino nationalist struggles. But the more than 400 years of Moro struggle to preserve and protect their freedom and independence from external forces prove otherwise. Perhaps, it is worthwhile to reconsider the statement of Will Durant that "The 19th century discovered nationalism and corrupted almost all historians" (quoted in Naqavi: N.d., 66).

B. The Concept of Minority-Majority Relations. The making of minority-majority relations took place only at the coming of the Spaniards who brought with them the Catholic religion. This idea was not conceptualized when the Muslim traders and missionaries introduced Islam and the sultanates to the Philippines. Sources indicate that the Muslims did not define that the non-islamized natives belonged to the minority or the islamized natives to the majority.

The encounters between the Moros and the Spaniards, between Islam and Christianity, for more than three hundred years had led to the making of minority-majority relations in the Philippines. These relations were, unfortunately, defined not along numerical or ethnolinguistic lines but along the religious line. The catholicized and hispanized natives became the majority and the Moros together with the other tribal Filipinos the minority (see FFI: 1976). In fact, minus this religious definition, all natives of the Philippines belonged in one way or another to the national cultural communities (variously labelled ethnic minorities, tribal Filipinos or ethnolinguistic groups) but, regrettably, they were considered second class citizens.

Closely related to the making of minority-majority relations is the polarization of power centers between the north and the south (see Casinó, 1974). The north was being identified as Christian, developed, advanced and oriented to the West while the south was Muslim/Moro, relatively backward, traditional/conservative and oriented to the Middle East. This alone spells out the difference between the two. In addition, there existed a contest for or control over territories and territorial jurisdictions

or influences between the sultanates in the south and the colonial government in the north. Again, the role of historians here was partial to the majority and the West but historically blinded to the minority and the Muslim world. These relations could not be defined along the numerical or ethnolinguistic line because they may change the picture; hence, the accepted or imposed meaning of nationalism in the context of the majority. In this connection, Ali Muhammad Naqavi had this to say:

Self-glorification becomes the rule and no sympathy or tolerance is shown to others Nationalistic sentiments in one country usually leads to prejudice (one among the greatest dangers of nationalism and a violent affective state where the individual or the group, became ego-centric, leading them to ignore reality and be harsh and inflexible in their judgments) against other nations, and sociologically speaking, it encourages the "we-group" or "in-group" feeling and the people to love and praise their own nation and regard all those outside this "in-group" as contemptible enemies. (Naqavi: N.d. 65)

C. Sustainability of Struggle. In Southeast Asia, the most sustained and the longest struggle against colonialism and imperialism is the Moro struggle in the Philippines. It is more than 400 years since the Spanish period to this day (see Ahmad: 1982 and George: 1980). The phrase "Moro struggle" calls for two basic questions: Against whom or what? and for whom or what? The first question calls for a struggle against any form of tyranny, aggression, oppression, exploitation, colonialism, imperialism, ignorance, dictatorship, corrupt leadership and administration, etc. The means to counteract them is the Islamic concept of jihad which is liberally construed to mean struggle but commonly understood as "holy war."

There are two kinds of jihad: Jihad al asghar (lesser jihad) and Jihad al akbar (greater jihad). Jihad al asghar is directed against those representing external forces of evil.

Physical reaction to these forces is a manifestation of this kind of holy war. Jihad al akbar which is more important and a higher form of holy war is directed against oneself. Hence, it is a form of self-discipline, self-control. It is an inward striving for self-awareness against temptations - an inner struggle.

The second question calls for a struggle for Islam as a religion and as a way of life. It is also for homeland and people. In addition, the Moro struggle is for self-determination. Self-determination loosely implies autonomy, federalism or independence. Whether it be autonomy, federalism or independence, self-determination is believed to be for freedom, justice, peace, democracy and development. The Moro struggle has a long history to reckon with from the Spanish arrival to the present.

All throughout the Spanish period, the Moros defended their freedom and maintained their independence from the Spanish colonial administration. The Spaniards never really succeeded in subjugating or in incorporating the Moros or the sultanates into the Spanish colony. In 1898, when with the Treaty of Paris, Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States the Moros found themselves "cede" too. From the American period to the present, different government offices or agencies were created for the eventual integration of the Moros into the national body politic. In addition, from 1905 to 1936 Mindanao and Sulu had been proposed for at least eleven times to be separated from the rest of the Republic (see Tawagon: 1988, p. 65-85).

Under the Spanish rule, the relations between the Moros and the Spaniards were characterized by bloody and popularized by historians as the "Moro Wars" (Majul: 1978, p. 107-316). They were bloody indeed because no years passed without bloodshed and no lands gained, recovered or defended without also bloodshed. The wars which lasted for more than 300 years had created for the Moros and Spaniards negative perceptions of each other, real or imagined. These had greatly influenced the thinking and behavior of the Filipinos today. There is still that

invisible wall dividing the Moros and the Christians and our attempt to analyze Filipino nationalism is affected by that wall. Unfortunately, we only see the other side of the wall.

Existing literature and source materials on Filipino nationalism, biased and subjective as they are, point to the christianized, hispanized and colonized natives. This is, of course, partiality in history because it excluded the Moros. All *indio* revolts were local in nature and did not last long. With the exception of the Moro struggle, the longest revolt was Dagohoy's in Bohol which lasted for eighty-five years from 1744 to 1829. Unity among the *indios* could not be expected because of the geographical character of the Philippines, language problem and the causes of the revolts differed from one group to another. The Philippine Revolution (1896) which lasted only for a couple of years was also local and led primarily by the Tagalogs and Pampangos. It was only the historians who interpreted it to be national in scope. Besides, the Philippine Revolution broke out because the eight provinces, after centuries of colonial rule and control, wanted to regain their freedom and independence from Spain.

The Moros did not constitute provinces but sultanates and groups of people protecting their freedom and independence from colonial rule. Territorially, the sultanates were bigger than the eight provinces that first revolted against Spain combined together and, numerically, the Moros comprised a much bigger population than the Tagalogs and Pampangos and their satellites combined. In short, they were not conquered or subjugated. They did not revolt to regain their freedom and independence. They just defended, maintained, and preserved them. They were christianized, hispanized nor colonized. According to Constantino, "only the decolonized Filipino is a real Filipino" (Constantino: 1978, p. 11). The pattern here is that one should be colonized first then to be decolonized to be a Filipino and to be a Filipino is to be a nationalist. This implies that since the Moros was not colonized, then he could not be decolonized. This means further that he was not a Filipino and, therefore, not a nationalist. Perhaps, he was not a Filipino after all, but certainly

he was a true nationalist. Consider the following 17th century nationalistic speech of Sultan Kudarat (Corralat in Spanish) to the Lanao sultans and datu:

What have you done? Do you realize what subjection would reduce you to? A toilsome slavery under the Spaniards! Turn your eyes to the subject nations and look at the misery to which such glorious nations had been reduced to. Look at the Tagalogs and the Visayans! Are you better than they? Do you think that the Spaniards consider you better stuff? have you not seen how the Spaniards trample them under their feet? Do you not see every day how they are obliged to work at the oars and the factories with all their rigors? Can you tolerate anyone with little Spanish blood to beat you up and grasp the fruits of your labor? Allow yourselves to be subjects (today) and tomorrow you will be at the oars; I, at least will be a pilot, the biggest favor they will allow a chief. Do not let their sweet words deceive you; their promises facilitate their deceits, which, little by little, enable them to control everything. Reflect on how even the minor promises to the chiefs of other nations were not honored until they become masters of them all. See now what is being done to these chiefs and how they are being led by a rod. (Quoted in Majul: 1978, p. 141).

However, the Moro struggle, the indio revolts and the Philippine Revolution have one thing in common: They were all directed against colonial rule. So, if nationalism was a reaction to colonial rule, then the Moros were the true nationalists because they were not conquered, their territories not occupied or incorporated into Spanish Philippines. They adamantly refused to acknowledge Spanish sovereignty and protected their freedom and independence. The unsubjected and the unconquered must be the true nationalists rather than the subjected and the conquered.

D. The Problem of Unity. There were more than 200 pockets of resistance throughout the Spanish period. Resistance to Spanish rule was put up not only by the christianized natives but also by the tribal groups from the northern mountains in Luzon and the Moros from the south. The latter two were described by Mahajani as "irreconcilable Filipinos" and the revolts, uprisings or rebellions which occurred from time to time, from region to region were collectively thought of as "divided nationalism." According to Mahajani, "the frequency of Filipino uprisings were indicative of an inchaote form of nationalistic awareness of ancestral patrimony as one's own possession" (Mahajani: 1971, 35). The natives had no doubt "nationalistic sensibilities" but what they lacked was unity. Thus, with the exception of the Moros, what happened was that:

In the confusion of divided nationalism, the entire archipelago was brought into a common status of subjugation to the alien power. This unification under common political power, religion, culture, and language in turn fostered a unified nationalist struggle of the Filipinos from the mid-nineteenth century onward. (Mahajani: 1971, p. 34)

A similar idea was offered by Constantino when he stated that "The history of the Filipino people and hence the growth of their consciousness and the attainment of national awareness is primarily the history of their struggles against colonial oppression. These struggles constitute the connecting thread in the history of the people" (Constantino: 1978, 37 and 1975, 9).

Very often, we speak of national struggle or national revolution. But, is it really national? How national is national? The pockets of resistance that Agoncillo (1990, 117-126) referred to were local and the causes were categorized into personal, led by former political (*datus*, *maginoo*s and *maharlika*s) and religious (*babaylan*s or *katalonan*s) leaders; resistance to oppressive Spanish-imposed institutions of taxations, forced labor, *galleon trade*, *indulto de comercio*, and monopolies

(tobacco and liquor); and land problems or peasant unrest coupled with tributes and forced labor. What made these revolts national in scope was that they were all directed against Spanish rule.

In this regard, Rolando N. Quintos said that "Certainly, a prime factor in the awakening of our national consciousness was the consciousness of a common grievance against the oppressive nature of the Spanish officialdom, both clerical and lay" (Quintos: 1971, 84). However, he remarked interestingly enough that "When people rose against the regime, they thought of themselves as members of their regions; when they were defeated, they thought of the revolution as national struggle" (Quintos: 1971, 96).

Of course, the native inhabitants of the archipelago faced some problems of unity. First is the problem of geography because the Philippines is archipelagic. With the exception of the Moro sultanates, the other maritime provinces had still to overcome this geographical problem. This is coupled with the question of transportation and communication. The second is the problem of language. The Philippines has quite a good number of cultural communities, each with its own respective dialects (more than 80) which pose as a hindrance to the development of a common language intelligible for all. Even today, there is a strong resistance to the "imposed" national language - a language identified as Tagalog, but purportedly an all-embracing Filipino language representing the major dialects in the country. And third, there is also this problem of religion. Aside from Islam and Christianity, there are also these different indigenous belief systems, practices and rituals. In this connection, Agoncillo and Guerrero wrote that:

The insular and mountainous character of Philippine geography limited social contact and communication. The dismal state of transportation and communication facilities rendered these natural barriers much more formidable. Moreover, the Spanish medieval practice of

requiring passports for travel from one province to another virtually estranged regions from one another. The Filipinos in different parts of the country, therefore, failed to realize the similarities of their grievances and the existence of a common source of suffering and misery. Linguistic differences and the absence of a common language, aggravated by the deliberate refusal of the Spaniards to propagate the Spanish language, weighed heavily in fomenting regionalism and prevented the people from developing a national language that would have unified them. (Agoncillo and Guerrero: 1977, p. 126-127)

Again, like the disjointed revolts, the problems of unity were overcome only insofar as they were directly related to an external threat. However, in practically all the discussion of Filipino nationalism, the role of the Moros was never given due credit and attention. In other words, the sustained Moro resistance to colonial rule was given no place in the history of Filipino nationalism. It is no wonder why the Moros today keep on crying for self-determination and independence. But every time they do that, they are told that they are Filipinos and, as such, citizens of the Republic. Again, Agoncillo and Guerrero had this to say:

To be sure, the different ethnic groups in the country shared the same basic elements of nationalism such as similarities in racial and cultural features, but Spanish colonial policy as well as certain national barriers retarded the development of nationalistic feeling among the Filipinos. (Agoncillo and Guerrero: 1977, p. 26)

There are two important events popularly emphasized by historians to have greatly unified the Filipinos, namely: The unjust execution of the three priests Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos and Jacinto Zamora (Gomburza) in 1872 and the 1896 Philippine

Revolution. The first helped trigger the other factors (Agoncillo and Guerrero: 1977, p. 127-138. See also Cruz: 1975) in the rise of Filipino nationalism. According to Agoncillo and Guerrero, the execution was a "turning point in Philippine history, for it ushered in a new era - the reform movement" (Agoncillo and Guerrero: 1977, p. 139). (Take note that the reform movement which started in 1882 was assimilationist. It was not anti-Spaniard or anti-Spain but rather anti-friar. It was not for independence from Spain but rather the Philippines be made a province of Spain. Do we call this nationalistic?) In a Professorial Chair Lecture Series, Agoncillo who believed that the 1892 event was only a prelude of 1896 wrote that:

"...the execution of the three priests acted as a catalyst in the formation of Filipino nationality. Tribal since pre-Spanish times and encouraged in their tribalism and regionalism by the Spanish authorities in order to divide them and so make them easier to manipulate, the natives began to develop their sense of oneness precisely since 1872, for the execution of the priests furnished them a symbol and a rationale for thinking as a people. The significance, then, of 1872 lies in this: that it laid the foundation of the nationalist movement which culminated in the Revolution of 1896. (Agoncillo: 1974, p. 8)

The impact of Gomburza execution on the future development of nationalism was also pointed out by a French writer, Edmond Plauchut. He said:

These mass convictions of Creoles, mestizos and natives were a very great mistake. Up to then, the different Philippine races had lived in distrust of one another; but in their common fate they learned the solidarity of their interests. Future generations will be able to say that the old differences must completely disappear so that they can be one in accord and someday

ably fight the common enemy - that is, the colonial master. (Quoted in Agoncillo and Guerrero: 1977, p. 138)

The 1896 Philippine Revolution exploded as a reaction to Spanish oppressive policy and exploitation. The hospitality and patience of the native inhabitants who exhausted all possible peaceful, reform and propaganda measures had reached their own tolerable limits. Armed revolution was their only and last option. Started by the eight provinces in Luzon, the revolution spread to other nearby provinces. They revolted to regain their freedom and independence from Spain. This revolution could be loosely termed "a war of liberation and independence." Agoncillo said:

The Filipinos began to fight the Spaniards the moment they settled permanently in 1565 and continued their resistance to the end of their rule in 1898. All these pockets of resistance for various causes burst into a national struggle as the Filipinos fought to liberate themselves from Spanish domination in the Philippine Revolution of 1896-97. (Agoncillo: 1990, p. 102)

With the exception of the Moros and the hill tribes, it was during this Revolution that the term "Filipinos" was used for the indios and gained their national identification. According to Mahajani, Emilio Aguinaldo's nationalist leadership was "immediately brought out when on 31 October 1896 he issued two manifestos significantly addressed to 'the Filipino people' ... Now, for the first time a nationalist Philippine leader exhorted the people as a Filipino nation to defend their country" (Mahajani: 1971, p. 70). In one of his works, Constantino wrote that the word "Filipino" was used when the Philippine Revolution erupted and "finally embraced the entire nation and became a national identification" (Constantino: 1978, p. 122). We have to take note that this Philippine Revolution (first phase, 1896; second phase, 1898) was considered by our historians as "the first national action of the Filipino people" (Constantino:

1978, p. 85, n. 31). In the words of Nick Joaquin:

Though the Philippine Revolution was the uprising chiefly of the Tagalog-Pampango principalia, now at last withdrawing consent and support from the (Spanish) Empire, they did so not as a tribe ...but in the name of the nation.

At Biak na Bato as in Kawit, the Republic proclaimed by a handful of Tagalogs and Pampangos is for the whole of the archipelago, not just for this region, and Malolos was a congress where Tagalogs and Pampangos represented not only the Christian provinces outside the heartland but also the pagan and Muslim provinces (Quoted in Matuan: 1989, p. 7).

But historians and other Filipino writers never considered the sustained Moro resistance and struggle as national. The Moro resistance and struggle were not local but rather national because they were directed against colonial government and because the Moros fought and threatened colonial authorities throughout the archipelago. Rather, it was the native conscripts and their colonial masters who betrayed the Moros of their nationalism and unity.

Nonetheless, unity between the Moros and the indios was still a problem because the latter were regularly conscripted by the Spaniards for the wars against the former (Constantino: 1978, p. 28). With this fact in mind, the Moros did not join or support the revolutionaries when the Philippine Revolution broke out. The Spaniards in the Philippines numbered only several thousands and had the indios and others joined the Moros in their fierce resistance, they could have easily defeated them and Spanish rule would not have lasted the way it lasted.

Even the Gomburza execution, local as it was, could not have triggered national unity had it not been sensationalized. There had been executions involving more than just three innocent people. The difference lies, however, on the issue of secularization allowing native priests to perform religious rites

in their respective parishes rather than have that as a monopoly of the Spanish friars. Without the secularization issue, the Gomburza execution was just like any other ordinary execution. This 1872 event falls under one of the historical interpretations: the personal, biographical or "great man" theory. This theory holds that the great personalities are taken only as a culmination or an intersection point of great social movement in history. But were the three priests really that great? They were great because historians made them great. In short, the power of the pen can make and unmake heroes, can make local issues national, can make something out of nothing.

E. The "Goberno a Sarwang a Tao" Concept. "Goberno a sarwang a tao" is a Moro expression of resistance as well as an attitude towards the colonial and Philippine government (see Tawagon: 1989). This concept developed as a reaction of the Moros who had been subjected to the severity of wars; religious intolerance, biases and prejudices; economic deprivation and survival; and territorial dislocation. Despite all these, they had withstood the challenges and rigors of time and changes - a period of more than four centuries from the Spanish period to the present (see Ahmad: 1982).

Since the American period, the Moros have been administratively governed separately because they were considered to be "wild" and "incapable of self-government." Special offices and agencies were created as training grounds for their eventual integration into the national body politic (see Tawagon: 1988). The recent political events such as the creation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (1990) bear this out but other situations such as bombings, kidnappings, betrayal, etc. have produced some adverse effects against the Moros. Consequently, the Moros who may be innocent or ignorant of what actually was going on are generally condemned, damned, lambasted, abhorred, hated, feared. Thus, the colonial expression "The only good Moro is a dead Moro" has re-surfaced. All these have given birth to the concept of *goberno a sarwang a tao*. In other words, the different regimes and administrations from the colonial to the present are all perceived today by the Moros as

gobierno a sarwang a tao. The concept is specifically Maranao but it generally stands for any expression of Moro resistance. Gobierno means "government" and sarwang a tao refers to "non-Moros" or "non-Muslims." Literally, gobierno a sarwang a tao means "government of, by and for the non-Moros." Thus, this phrase simply refers both to the colonial and present Philippine government and that this kind of government is Christian.

Furthermore, the concept means "alien or foreign government." The Philippine government is being considered as an extension of a foreign power. So from the Moro point of view, there is no difference between the Philippine government and a foreign government. They are all Christian as far as the colonial regimes to the present are concerned. The meaning of the concept may or may not change under other forms of government other than Christian.

The same concept may have been used by the writers of nationalism to exclude the Moros as also nationalists. When the Filipinos fought the Spaniards and the Americans, they called themselves nationalists. When the Moros fought the Spaniards and the Americans, the Filipinos called them names except nationalists. When the Moros fought the hispanized and americanized Filipinos, they similarly branded them other labels except nationalists. When the Moros fought the government as an extension of colonialism and imperialism, they were called rebels, terrorists, secessionists, etc.

The *gobierno a sarwang a tao* is expressed in many ways. Among others, they are as follows:

1. **Moros, not Filipinos.** The Moros did not consider themselves as Filipinos for reasons explained earlier. It is probably for these very same reasons that the Filipinos did not also consider them partners in nationalist struggles. Like religion, nationalism here is divisive in nature. In this regard, Naqavi wrote that "the aim of nationalism is the creation of unity' but instead, it created division such as minorities" and majority nationalism was right and minority wrong (Naqavi: n.d.,

p. 61-62). He went on further to say that nationalism "divides human society into limited and independent units according to geographical boundaries or factors of race, language, history, political organization, etc. and considers all others outside these units as aliens, and very often encourages hostility between them" (Naqavi: n.d., p. 77). In another statement, he said:

Nationalism is accompanied by a fanaticism which considers others inferior, and boasts only of its own history and ancestors. This extreme sentiment causes one to love one's country and nationality, and discourages one to be benevolent towards others. One feels that one is perfect, while others are imperfect. (Naqavi: N.d., p. 103)

In addition, Naqavi remarked that nationalism was used as a tool by colonizers and imperialists. It was "a Western commodity" (p. 18) and "the root of imperialism" (p. 19). In relation to Islam, he said that nationalism was "a new plot hatched by the imperialism of the cross to deal Islam a blow" (p. 12). To explain this statement, he stated that:

Nationalism attempts to break up the unity and solidarity of the world Islamic Ummah which endangers imperialistic interests, and which is a potential threat to colonization in internationalistic politics. With the progressive spread of nationalism, imperialism was able to divide the world of Islam into small pieces, and swallow them one by one. (Naqavi: n.d., p. 12)

Also, since the Moros were not Filipinos, they did not feel obliged to pay their taxes or secure their residence certificates. For them, paying taxes meant acknowledgment of the sovereign power, submission to the authority of the government, and surrender to the Christian government. Again, this might be the same reason why they were not taken into consideration as nationalists. Securing residence certificates also implied that one

was still a vassal of the Spanish king, a subject of the government and a Filipino citizen.

2. Graft and Corruption. The practice of graft and corruption is rampant in the country penetrating all levels of government employment services. The Moros are no exception. However, they viewed graft and corruption through public office as "legal" and "moral." Historically, the Moros had no time for development. Their time was devoted to the making of bladed weapons and defending themselves, their energy for wars and their money for purchases of firearms. Consequently, they became warlike and relatively backward. Speaking of this relative Moro backwardness, the 1972 letter by a certain Commander X of the ILAGA (Rats), an anti-Moro terrorist group, addressed to a former Muslim senator, is worth citing here. This letter expressed a widely held view of the Christians, said the late Peter G. Gowing. Partly, the letter states that:

If the Muslims in the Philippines are poor and backward, it is because of their wrong religion and ideology, Islam. You will understand the meaning of what I am saying by just seeing the difference in progress between a Christian and Muslim Filipino. This holds true with regard to their communities. The entire nation would have been united, peaceful and progressive were it not for the mistake of the Muslims in resisting the implementation of the Cross in Mindanao at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards. You and your people should not compound your grievous historical mistake by clinging on to the religion that has only brought poverty, ignorance and darkness to you and your communities. (Quoted in Gowing: 1979, p. 42)

This is reminiscent of Governor-General Francisco de Sande's letter of 1578 to Captain Esteban Rodriguez de Fegueroa instructing him to order the Moro chiefs not to admit any more "preachers of the doctrine of Mahoma, since it is evil and false,

and that of the Christians alone is good" (see Blair and Robertson: 1903-1909: Vol. IV, p. 174-181).

At any rate, to make up for the time lost, the energy wasted and the money being misspent, not to mention the lives lost and the properties destroyed, the Moros perceive graft and corruption through public office as a means by which they can catch up with development in par with their Christian counterparts.

3. Islamic Resurgence. There are several factors that helped trigger Islamic resurgence in the Philippines (see George: 1980 and Gowing: 1979). Among others is the rise of post-war nationalism among Muslim countries which, to a certain degree, has influenced the Moro quest for self-determination. This quest is further influenced by the present situation in the Middle East which can be generally described in terms of the conflict of interests between the East and the West, between traditionalism and modernization, or between Islam and western imperialism. The ripples of this conflict have reached other non-Arab Muslims throughout the world including the Moros.

The conflict has also fully awakened Islamic consciousness particularly among the Moros and this consciousness articulated through the strengthening of the Ummah (international Islamic community) and the defense and preservation of Dar-ul Islam (Household of Peace) is undoubtedly a response to Zionism and imperialism which, in turn, threaten the very existence of Muslims everywhere. This Islamic consciousness is furthermore strengthened, instead of weakened by the waves created by Salman Rushdie and his book *Satanic Verses* - a book believed to be intended against Islam and the Muslims.

Another factor is the Jabidah massacre on the island of Corregidor, off the coast of Bataan, in March of 1968 when a group of Moro military trainees was massacred (Manila Times: 1989, p. 4- 11). Also known as the Corregidor incident (a government phrase), the massacre among other cases had

subsequently led to the official formation of the MNLF the following year. The 1968 massacre and other massacres before and after the declaration of Martial Law in 1972 became the rallying points against the government, which the Moros allegedly claimed or accused of trying or planning to exterminate them and their religion from the archipelago. The more the Moros entertained the idea of genocide (real or imagined), the more their Islamic consciousness was strengthened and the stronger their ties with the Muslim world became. In fact, the issue of genocide had accelerated the islamization process among the Moros themselves as well as the expansion of Islam throughout the country, a country which has earned a distinction of being "the only Christian country in Asia."

Education is another factor contributing to the resurgence of Islam. In response to the western type of education which was believed to be irrelevant, corrupting not only the traditional, cultural and religious values of the Muslims but also drawing them to western values and orientations, the Moros, particularly the religious, had opened up more Arab-Islamic schools (madaris; sing., madrasah) (see Boransing: 1988 and Pandapatan: 1982); organized more religious associations/movements; secured scholarship grants for Moro students from the Middle East colleges and universities; sought financial assistance for the hajj, an annual pilgrimage to Mecca (in 1989, there were 2,400 pilgrims; in 1990, 3,000); and invited some Arab and other Muslim missionaries to the region.

In addition, some Muslim missionaries were sent out to some parts of the country, established mosques (there are 54 mosques built by the Maranaos alone outside the Lake Lanao region) and opened up some madaris in those areas. Research centers were also established, new agencies or offices were created for the Moros, publications and researches were encouraged and supported, local Moro newspapers and magazines attempted to come out regularly, academic degree-granting institutes on Islamic studies were also established, and local and national Muslim political parties formed. All these moves indicate a resistance to western educational, political, economic

and cultural values already acquired or in the process of being acquired (see Barra: 1989, p. 101-116). Muslim communities were also established in Christian-dominated towns, cities and provinces. All of these are indicative of Islamic resurgence in the country today.

At any rate, the *gobierno a sarwang a tao* has been viewed to be oppressive, repressive and exploitative in nature. It is biased against the Moros and does not have any concern or full trust in them. In short, the Moros are given the least priority and attention. Expectedly, Moro perception of the concept finds its way into some uneasy atmospheres inviting either active or passive resistance, or both. This concept itself as an expression of Moro resistance speaks well of the present problems between the north and south; between two cultures, two religions, two types of educational systems; and between advanced/modern (West) and backward/traditional (East).

Concluding Remarks

In Islam, there is no such thing as nationalism. Islam is internationalistic, universalistic. It transcends racial, geographical, linguistic and political boundaries. This universalism is what is commonly understood as *Ummah*. Of course, this claim for internationalism is not a monopoly of Islam alone but it can also be said to be found among other world religions such as Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.

In particular, Islam charges that nationalism is divisive in nature. Instead of the *Ummah* as a symbol of international unity for all the Muslims, one finds Pakistani nationalism, Egyptian nationalism, Indonesian nationalism, etc. This has led Naqavi to state that nationalism is used by colonizers and imperialists as an instrument to divide and rule people. They cannot afford to have the people being united.

In the Philippines, nationalism has also divided the Filipinos; that is, between the conquered and the unconquered;

among the christianized natives themselves; the islamized natives and the non-Muslim, non-Christian natives; and even among Filipino historians/scholars. Unfortunately, we produced some sort of divided nationalism or a polarized nationalism: the Christian north and the Muslim south. Furthermore, the north was emphasized but the south was relegated to the background as a footnote only, so to speak.

Although the Moros are Muslim and therefore do not deserve to be called nationalists by reasons of religion, they must be considered here as such for the following reasons: First,, by virtue of their being natives of the country; second, as a product of Philippine history; third, as lovers of freedom and independence; and fourth, as fighters against colonial rule.

At any rate, Moros believe that they have been constantly oppressed and exploited; reduced to second class citizens in their own country; negatively portrayed and facts about them distorted or twisted; and their role in the history of Filipino nationalism totally neglected. On the other hand, colonial leadership felt threatened by the cohesiveness, unity, determination and leadership of the Moros. The love of the Moros for freedom and independence cannot possibly be allowed by a too centralized national leadership for a number of reasons or factors. Politically, they may influence other national cultural communities to fight for the same goal and that the national leadership could not afford to share the Luzon monopoly of nationalism with the others. Economically, the national leadership recognizes that the development of the entire country depends on the development of Mindanao. Religiously, the national leadership has to proudly maintain its claim of the Philippines as "the only Christian (Catholic) country in Asia" surrounded by non-Christian countries.

In addition, the greatest potential threat that is now sweeping around the world, especially the West, is the rise of Islamic resurgence. It looks then that the West and its allies feel threatened to be swept away by the waves of this resurgence. In response thereto, the West may have already conceived of

arresting or stunting the rise of Islamic resurgence.

If we accept that history is not the study of the past but rather the study of the present in the light of the past, then the history of the Philippines in general is no exception, particularly in relation to the Moro struggle for self-determination. Now, with the increasing volume of literature about the Moros coupled with our growing interest and knowledge about them, it is perhaps about time for historians and other scholars to look into and re-examine the history of Filipino nationalism vis-a-vis the role of the Moros. Whether we like it or not, there are sectors among Filipino scholars who believe that we do not really have a truly national history. So unless we take into consideration the nationalist struggle of the Moros as an indispensable part of our national heritage, the so-called Filipino nationalism will remain local in character and, as such, cannot be rightly termed nationalism but rather regionalism.

However, since most historians and scholars are Manila-trained and Western-oriented, they are expected to be historically blinded, culturally overlaid and psychologically corked. In addition, the data found in the literature cover only a very small percentage for the Moros and a fraction of this percentage is not only biased and prejudiced but also distorted and inaccurate. Perpetuation of these biases, prejudices, distortions and inaccuracies would not only divide and alienate the Filipinos but also defeat the government's purpose of integrating the Muslims and other cultural communities into the national body politic. This can be explained by the biased perceptions of Filipino historians today who are a product of biased perceptions of colonial administration. Most accounts about the Moros have been written by people hostile to them or authored by their enemies. All these prevent an objective as well as impartial scholarship in the country today vis-a-vis the Moros.

This is a challenge posed for individual historians to reflect upon and to delve deeper into what lies behind and ahead of Moro history in the Philippines. For undoubtedly, the Moros have a longer history of nationalist struggle than any

ethnolinguistic group or national cultural community in the country.

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