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**History of the Philippine Revolution**

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***The Katipunan Revolution***

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       The Philippine Revolution, the first against western colonial rule in Asia, was directed against Spain which had colonized the Philippines since 1565.  The Revolution against Spain had two phases: the first from the declaration of defiance against Spanish rule on August 23, 1896 till the conclusion of a truce in December 1897; the second from the return till the outbreak of the Filipino-American War in February 1899.

       After over three centuries of Spanish colonial rule characterized by unenlightened government, outright exploitation of the Indios (the term used to apply to the indigenous population of Filipinos), bleated and half-hearted attempts at reform, and on the part of the governed, countless sporadic and isolated revolts and other forms of resistance, the Philippine Revolution exploded on August 23, 1896, in the event that is  commemorated as the “Cry of Pugadlawin.”  Located in the outskirts of Manila, there assembled on that day members of a secret revolutionary society known as the Katipunan (Kataas-taasan Kagalang-galang na Katipunan nang mga Anak ng Bayan — Highest and Most Respectable Society of the Sons of the People, founded in July 1892), led by its founder, Andres Bonifacio, and there tore up their cedulas (identification receipts issued for payment of taxes) as a symbol of their determination to take up arms against Spain.

       The seeds of revolution were, in fact, sown earlier in the nineteenth century when Spain’s enforced isolation of the Philippines was shattered with the opening of the country to foreign commerce and the resulting development of an export economy by non-Spanish foreign enterprises (British, American, Chinese).  Revolutionary and liberal movements in Europe and elsewhere, in addition to the persistence of friar autocratic rule, brought winds of change in the political climate in the Philippines.  The most important event which possibly made the Revolution inevitable was that of February 17, 1872, when three Filipino secular priests, leaders in the movement for the secularization (in effect, nationalization) of Philippine parishes, were executed publicly by garrote for their supposed complicity in a military mutiny at a Cavite arsenal on January 20, 1872.  By linking them with the mutiny, the Spanish administration, with the instigation of Spanish friars, found a convenient way of doing away with the troublesome priests, considered by them as filibusteros (anyone who showed any radical tendencies) for demanding clerical equality with the Spanish friars.

       The first manifestation of Philippine nationalism followed in the decades of the 1880s and the 1890s, with a reform or propaganda movement, conducted both in Spain and in the Philippines, for the purpose of “propagandizing” Philippine conditions in the hopes that desired changes in the social, political and economic life of the Filipinos  would come about through peaceful means.  The propaganda movement failed to secure the desired reforms, especially the expulsion of the friars  and their replacement by Filipino secular priests and equality before the law between Spaniards and Filipinos, largely because the Spanish friars used their power and resources to thwart the activities of the Filipino ilustrados (educated Filipinos who led the movement.

       The revolutionary society, Katipunan, was established, on July 7, 1892, by Filipinos who had given up hope that the Spanish government would administer the affairs of Filipinas in the interests of its subjects — with justice and dignity.  A secret association patterned after Freemasonry and the Liga Filipina (a mutual-aid society founded by the ilustrado Jose Riza on July 3, 1892), it recruited members in the suburbs of Manila and in the provinces of Central Luzon.  By the time of the outbreak of the Revolution in August 1896, membership in the Katipunan has soared to about 30,000, which included some women.  The Revolution broke out prematurely on August 23, 1896 because of the untimely discovery by a Spanish friar, on August 19, of the existence of the revolutionary society.  The immediate result of the outbreak of the Revolution was the institution of a reign of terror by the Spanish authorities in an attempt to frighten the population into submission. Hundreds suspected of joining the **Katipunan** and the Revolution were arrested and jailed; prominent Filipinos were shipped to exile to the Carolines or the Spanish penal colony in Africa (Fernando Po); and still others were executed, including Jose Rizal, who was shot by musketry on December 30, 1896. The Revolution spread from Manila and Cavite to Laguna, Batangas, Bulacan, Pampanga, Tarlac, and Nueva Ecija represented as the eight rays in the Philippine flag.

       Andres Bonifacio led the Revolution in its early stages,  although he did not excel in the field of battle. Internal rivalry led to the division of the ranks within the Katipunan organization and with the execution of Bonifacio in May 1897 (charged with sedition and treason), leadership of the Revolution fell into the hands of another Katipunan member from Cavite, Emilio Aguinaldo, who distinguished himself in the battlefields in Cavite, at that time the heartland of the Revolution.

       The first phase of the Revolution ended inconclusively, with both Filipino and Spanish forces unable to pursue hostilities to a successful conclusion. Consequently, between November 18 and December 15, a truce (in Biak-na-Bato) was concluded between the two sides which resulted in a temporary cessation of hostilities. Aguinaldo agreed to go on temporary exile to Hong Kong after the Spanish government compensated him and his revolutionary junta with P400,000. The truce failed as both sides entered the agreement in bad faith — neither was really willing to abandon hostilities but were biding time and resources to resume the armed conflict.

       Recent historiography on the Philippine Revolution, looking from a perspective of history “from below” sees a religious dimension in the Katipunan revolutionary movement and a continuity to the many illicit gatherings and proscribed groups that operated against the colonial state in some towns and in the hinterland of Luzon and the Visayas towards the latter half of the nineteenth century. In explaining this view, Reynaldo C. Ileto writes that “In exhorting the lower classes to participate, the Katipunan leadership juxtaposed events of colonial history with biblical images of the Fall from Eden; joining the rebellion was interpreted as a redemptive act; the rallying cry of kalayaan (liberty) reverberated with meanings of a return to a condition of wholeness and prosperity.” These illicit associations of the 1860s in the peripheries re-emerged after 1897 to fight the Spaniards, and later the Americans — witness the Katipunan of  San Cristobal in Mount Banahaw, the Santa Iglesia of Felipe Salvador, the Papa Isio movement, the Guardia de Honor, the pulahanes of  Samar-Leyte, among others. Movement such as these, led by prophets, saints and babaylan saw the war years as part of the great cataclysm that would signal the end of the world. At the turn of the century, religio politico of the earlier decades had largely reappeared as nationalist movements but distinct from the mainstream revolutionary war against American rule.

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