

**THE BIRTH OF THE FILIPINO
REVOLUTIONARY ARMY IN SOUTHERN
TALAGOG, LUZÓN 1898**

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The year 1898 marks the birth of the Filipino revolutionary army, forged out of many different armed bands which attacked and captured Spanish positions in the course of the revolution. The first phase of the revolution, also called the Katipunan secret society phase, involved «local irregulars and ill armed partisans» (Corpuz, 270). So how were these diverse forces organized into a «liberating army» commanded by *jefes* who recognized Generalissimo Emilio Aguinaldo's supreme command?

The focus of this paper is the southern Tagalog military command which came under the leadership of Miguel Malvar y Carpio, a native of Sto. Tomás, Batangas. Malvar is well-known in Philippine history books as the last Filipino general to surrender to the Americans, in May 1902. In fact, upon the capture of Aguinaldo in April 1901, General Malvar assumed overall leadership of the resistance to U.S. occupation. This paper traces the events leading to the formation of Malvar's command. It looks into the popular uprising in the southern Tagalog region, the defection of the local militia, the sieges of Spanish positions in Lipa and Tayabas, and the organization of the Battalion Banahaw in October-December 1898.

This paper also examines the social backgrounds of selected *jefes* in Malvar's command, and the bases of their leadership of a popular army. Morale, it is argued, was crucial in a situation where the enemy possessed superior weaponry and tactics, and resistance, therefore, was an immediate life-threatening affair. Filipino officers had to portray themselves as humble figures, appealing to their soldiers to lay down their lives to save

the Mother Country (*Inang Bayan*) from Spanish and U.S. oppression. These are the ritual of cultural dimensions absent in conventional military histories.

Before the Storm: The Loss of Spanish Legitimacy

The first phase of the revolution against Spain (1896-1897) is a complex phenomenon that is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that by the end of 1897, the Spanish establishment, centered in the church and convento, had lost its dominant position in southern Tagalog. In most towns the convento was either abandoned or turned into a fortress. Parish priests could no longer move about at will like lords of the realm. For example, the Dolores priest, Father Prieto, remained in Tiaong despite his father superior's encouragement to live among his rebel-surrounded flock. If the rebels enter Dolores again, he wrote his superior, «they won't kill or harm me, but nevertheless they'll take me along with them to the forest, and I'll die just the same of misery and lack of basic necessities». Father Prieto was only prepared to travel to Dolores on Sundays and feastsdays accompanied by soldiers, to say Mass and then return to Tiaong.

Meanwhile, the *principales* of the southern Tagalog towns were divided and ambivalent. For example Malvar, an *ex Capitán municipal* of Sto. Tomás, Batangas, was leading the rebel army until his departure for Hong Kong in January 1898, while his friend and counterpart in Tanauan, Captain Nicolás González, appeared to be loyal to Spain. But circumstances, such as abuses by the Spanish army, tended to push the majority of leading families to switch loyalties to the revolutionaries, or remain apathetic. As Father Méndez of San Pablo put it, «Through all the events that have transpired here and around us, we have noticed an overwhelming coldness on the part of the inhabitants of this town, to the extent that nothing, absolutely nothing, has been done by them, leaving us alone in everything...» One reason for the apathy of the *principales* in the poblaciones was their awareness of the shift in power from the «inside» to the «outside», the peripheries, of the towns. They had relatives in the barrios who by choice or otherwise had been swept into the revolutionary movement based in the jungles and foothills of the region.

The ultimate refuge of the revolutionaries in 1897 was Mount Banahaw. They could threaten or attack nearly all the towns in the Tayabas-Batangas-Laguna border area because the mountain itself belonged to the rebels.

One of its foothills, Mt. San Cristóbal, known to all as a haven of the Cololum sects, was also the base area of the Malvar-Banaad rebel army. Skirting the mountainside, the various rebel groups in Laguna and Tayabas could communicate with each other and coordinate their activities. And they could count on the various *cofradías*, and so-called *asociaciones ilícitas* based on the mountains to help them. The revolution of 1896-1897 made a deep impact in southern Tagalog because it connected with a deeper tradition of resistance that had thrived outside of the pueblo centers throughout the centuries of Spanish rule. What would later be called «guerrilla warfare» was already practiced in southern Tagalog long before it became official policy.

Even though Aguinaldo and his top officials had been exiled in Hong Kong since December 29, 1897, following the Pact of Biac-Na-Bató, fighting never really ceased in the southern Tagalog region. On February 14, 1898, the truce of Biac-Na-Bató was finally repudiated by the Hong Kong junta, making the situation in the rural areas even more critical for Spain. Provincial towns were garrisoned. Small detachments of *cazadores* and *guardias civiles* were constantly deployed against rebel groups which periodically descended from their mountain hide-outs to harrass the pueblo centers. But without Aguinaldo or even Malvar around, these groups acted without central direction.

The situation became radically altered by the entry of the United States into the picture. The Spanish regime was already disturbed by rumors of war with the U.S. since March. At the same time, the internal threat became worse by the defection to the rebels of the 74 th regiment of native soldiers stationed in Cavite at the end of March. Immediately, a Council of Defense was organized, headed by the Archbishop of Manila. On April 10, governor General Primo de Rivera was replaced by Basilio Augustín. How would he defend Filipinas from both the external and internal threats?

On 25 April, four days after the U.S. declared war on Spain, the *Junta de Autoridades*, advising the governor general, recommended the enlistment of native Filipinos into the militia. It also recommended setting up an *Asamblea Consultativa* of Filipinos, to win their support in the coming fight with the Americans. This militia of voluntaries would be made up of former insurrecto officers and their men. They would be armed, and given Spanish army ranks.

The Asamblea would be made up of Filipinos sympathetic to the goals of the reform movement (Corpuz, 277).

On May 1, the Spanish fleet was annihilated by Dewey's armada. A desperate Governor General Augustín then decided to go ahead with his controversial plan to enlist Filipino support in the defense of Manila. A militia was organized. The *Asamblea* was also formed and many of its 18 members being Filipinos involved in the reform movement of the 1870s and 1880s (Corpuz, 278-9). By the end of May, 12,000-14,000 men had been enlisted into the militia and armed. Baldomero Aguinaldo, Artemio Ricarte and Mariano Trías, all veterans of the 1896 revolution, were appointed to the Assembly but preferred, and obtained command appointments in the militia. Augustín even sought Aguinaldo's support, offering him the post of chief of the armed forces of Filipinas with the rank of brigadier general in the Filipino army. Spain, in mid-June, offered the Filipinos a new regime which gave them most of what they sought in the 1896 revolution. But as Aguinaldo scribbled on his copy of Pedro Paterno's loyalist manifesto of 31 May, *Tanghali ca na-Magdalo* you are too late (see Corpuz, 281).

The Defection of the Militia

According to Sastron, the blockade of Manila and the rapid disruption of land communications by the revolucionarios, made the situation of the *españoles peninsulares* in Luzón most critical. «In many towns, in those where the Filipino militias had taken the place of our detachments of cazadores, the revolution took place without any resistance: there was no one to offer it». But the real signal for the general uprising of the towns of Luzón against Spanish sovereignty was the «disaster» in Cavite (Sastron, 529). On 24 March, the 74 th regiment composed of Filipinos and stationed in Cavite was ordered to fight against a rebel force but the soldiers refused to budge. Eight corporals were shot in front of the troops, and the regiment was again ordered to attack the rebels. But again they refused and were sent back to the barracks. The next day the troops of the 74th regiment deserted to the rebels with the regiment's arms and equipment.

(Corpuz, 275). The following weeks saw the defection of more militia units organized by Governor General Augustín. Totalling some 12,000-14,000 men and guns, the militia became the backbone of the revolutionary army that Aguinaldo would organize.

On May 19, Aguinaldo returned to Cavite and issued a proclamation of war against Spain. The fighting men at his disposal were not very different from the Katipuneros of the first phase of the revolution. The Katipunan, being a

secret society, did not provide for a formal military structure. Local groups called *sandatahanes*, under pueblo leaders and landlords, did the early fighting. Aguinaldo's organizational plans called for these local leaders to become *de facto* officers of a platoon or a company. Those who became majors and colonels or higher were men «who won their ranks through their courage and skill in the field or through their having joined the Revolution early, or through the confidence reposed in them by Aguinaldo» (Corpuz, 298-99).

Aguinaldo's decree of June 3 called for the implementation of a «state of discipline and good order». It contained provisions governing the handling of rifles, captured property and arms, the surrender of enemy detachments, and the democratic election of officers —corporals up to captains— by the soldiers. However, since there were no salaries for the soldiers, they elected those *jefes* who could arm, feed and protect them.

Aguinaldo's return gave the scattered revolutionary armed groups and ex-militia units a central leadership. On June 2, the Spanish commander of the Cavite forces, General Pefla, surrendered with 900 men to ex-militia leaders Ricarte and Trias in San Francisco de Malabon. Says Corpuz, «the Spaniards surrendered to the militia that they had organized and armed» (281). Soon thereafter the militia regiments of del Pilar and Buencamino defected.

Victory in Batangas

Upon the return of Aguinaldo and his resumption of the revolution, *Coronel* Rodrigo Navas, the commander of the Spanish forces in southern Tagalog, ordered the concentration of all the Spanish *destacamentos* in the capitals of Batangas, Laguna and Tayabas. But his plans were frustrated by the disloyalty of the indigenous forces. At a meeting in Sto. Tomás, Navas's rousing speech calling for loyalty to *madre España* could not keep the indigenous soldiers on his side. (Sastron, 530)

After a council of war in Sto. Tomás, *Coronel* Navas marched south towards the cabecera, Batangas city. But upon arriving at Lipa, where the last of the loyal Filipino militia defected at the order of the capitan municipal of Tanauan, Nicolás González, he was stunned by the news that *Teniente Coronel* Blázquez and his force of 600 cazadores in the capital had surrendered. So Navas decided to defend Lipa which came under siege by the insurrectos, who had 4,000 guns and 2 artillery pieces. Navas

was compelled to fortify himself in the convento of Lipa. In one of the fights, he was wounded in the arm, which had to be amputated (Sastron, 530; May, 68).

The siege of Lipa, from June 7 to 18, was initially directed by General Paciano Rizal, brother of the martyred Jose. After unsuccessfully urging the Spaniards to surrender, Rizal left for the Laguna front, handing over the command of the siege forces to Arcadio Laurel of Talisay. Eventually, Eleuterio Marasigan of Calaca and a veteran of the 1896-1897 battles arrived and took over. As more and more contingents arrived, the Batangueños besieging Lipa grew in numbers to several thousand. Eustacio Maloles y Chávez came with a large force from Sto. Tomás, Anastasio Marasigan arrived from Calaca, Brigido Buenafe from Batangas, Valentin Burgos from Lipa, and Nicolás González from Tanauan (Sastron, 530; May, 69).

Ultimately, the shortage of food and munitions, and concern for his 110 wounded and 80 sick soldiers, forced Navas to negotiate with Marasigan. Navas surrendered honorably.

However, Sastron claims that the revolutionaries did not honor the conditions of surrender in which it was stipulated that civilians and the wounded should not be taken prisoner (Sastron, 530).

After the victory in Lipa, the Batangueño forces marched on to Tayabas in the northeast. Leading the troops were Eleuterio Marasigan, hero of the siege of Lipa, and Miguel Malvar, who had just returned from Hong Kong and was by far the most able Batangueño commander of the revolution's first phase. Malvar's brother-in-law Maloles, and Arcadio Laurel, also led their respective armed groups to the Tayabas front.

The Siege of Tayabas

Sastron regards the defense of Tayabas as one of the most significant events of 1898 *La conducta de nuestros defensores de Tayabas fue tan esclarecida igual que aquellos héroes de Baler* (The conduct of our defenders of Tayabas was as illustrious as that of the heroes of Baler) (Sastron, 534) Much praise is heaped upon the *Gobernador Civil* and *Jefe Militar*, D. Joaquín Pacheco y Yanguas, who concentrated 443 men in the capital, fortified it, and held out for many weeks against a revolutionary force that reached 15,000 men.

From the Filipino point of view, as well, the siege of Tayabas was highly important: it enabled the revolution's military forces to develop its capabilities and evolve into an organized army in southern Tagalog. Many groups of armed men and their leaders gathered together in Tayabas with the sole purpose of overwhelming the Spanish defenders, who symbolized the old order (several Franciscan frailes were among the defenders). These local chiefs came from the ranks of the ilustrados, principales, fanáticos and even ladrones. Those who had not done so before would now have to prove themselves worthy of being *jefes revolucionarios*. They would have to follow orders from the military hierarchy. From their ranks would emerge the officers of the Battalion Banahaw. Basic concepts of warfare would also be taught to the soldiers during the 56 days of the siege.

The defense of the cabecera of Tayabas was a purely Spanish affair because the inhabitants had abandoned the place completely. And among the native soldiers who formed part of the Tayabas detachment, 43 deserted to the *ejército revolucionario* during the time of the siege. Five Spaniards (*peninsulares*) also went over to the revolutionaries, enticed by the native deserters and having been promised positions in Aguinaldo's army if they came with their firearms (Ría-Baja, 300). *Comandante* Pacheco, undaunted by all this, fortified the convento, ermita, tribunal, Gobierno civil and carrera publica. He destroyed the rest of the población because of the impossibility of extending the zone of defense. Within the defense perimeter he gathered up rice and cattle that he could get hold of. Sastron notes admiringly that Pacheco followed all the rules for defending a position.

June 8 is claimed by Ría-Baja as the first day of the defense of Tayabas when the revolutionary forces attacked the buildings of the cárcel and *Gobierno Civil* which were less secure than the convento. But the Spaniards defended those buildings so fiercely that the attackers abandoned their efforts. Henceforth, day after day, there were fights of greater or less importance. Pacheco was forced to construct covered or hidden passages which connected the buildings in which the Spanish forces were scattered, so that they could help each other without danger from enemy bullets (Ría-Baja, 295).

Sastron, on the other hand, dates the start of hostilities on June 20, when a force of 300 well-armed insurrectos aided by the inhabitants of the barrio of Muntingbayan, stormed the Spanish positions. Pacheco personally led a bayonet counterattack which dispersed the attackers. But hundreds more insurrectos divided into two groups mounted a fresh attack on the población on the 22nd. Again they were repulsed (Sastron, 534-5).

On June 24, an augmented revolutionary force stormed through all the streets and avenues of the cabecera, completely encircling it. They set up four pieces of artillery and thus formally began the siege of Tayabas. At this point, the Filipino forces were commanded by Eleuterio Marasigan and Melecio Bolailos. The following battle orders Bolailos issued on June 26 gives us an insight into the tactics used by the Filipino besiegers:

Instructions

Kung magkaroon ng labanan ito maquiquilala kung sa Konvento ay may bandera española ay ganito ang gagau-in:

- 1.º Mag-aantay ng putok ng kañon na itatayo sa bandang Ylaya ng Monting bayan.
- 2.º Pagkaputok ng kañon ay gaganti ng isang Bombaso ang nasa Ybaba ng Monting bayan susunod ang nasa Camposantong luma bago ang nasa Compañía sa loob ng bayan ng Tayabas, at saka susunod ang nasa bahay ni Juez na Silvestre Sandoval, at kung may lugar ay puputok din ang nasa daang Lukban.
- 3.º Pagnakaraan ang dalauang minuto na makaputok ang katapusang puesto ay sabay sabay mag rarapido na pipilitin ang lahat ng bala ay pumasok sa Konvento at sa loob ng Simbahan; ngunit, kung may mapupurohang Kastila ay isiguro ang punteria.
- 4.º Pagkaraan ng limang minutong putukan ay ang gagau-in ay ito: aataki ang nasa bahay ni Pedro Orias, at samantalang ito, naputok ay magtibay ng trinchera ang kolumna ni Kapitang Esteban sa Taysan. Pagkatapos ay ito naman ang puputok at aataqui ito ay ang kolumna ni General Mariano Castillo ay aabance at hahanap ng mabuting lugar upang magkaroon ng efecto ang kaniangfuego.
- 5.º Ang lahat ng puno sa Kolumna ay magbibigay parte ng anomang novedad tuwing kalahating horas samantalang nagpuputukan.
- 6.º Y ultimo, Gayon mang kadalas ang putukan ay dapat ninyong tandaang na ang ating acción ay sitiar samacatuid ay cubkubin lamang at huwag aabance ng hindi siguro.

Ingatan ng Dios tayong lahat ng mahabang panahon, *Cuartel General* sa Malaoua, 26 ng Junio ng 1898, Bolailos (PIR SD 974.14, Box 33, folder 974).

The above document, in Tagalog, shows us the extent to which the movements of the various groups of combatants were coordinated. Note that although there is mention of «columnas», suggesting a military organization, the fact is that the names of the leaders of such columns Mariano Castillo,

Captain Esteban are more important. The Spaniards in the convento, church and other fortified places, flying their flag, provide a central focus for the activities of the various groups of armed men, a «them» against which «we» soldiers can establish an identity as Filipinos, rather than merely followers of Castillo, Esteban, etc. We note, also, the use of cannon and dynamite explosives in addition to rifles. The final order is interesting: it reminds the soldiers that despite all the shooting, bombing and cannonades, the aim of the operations is to *sitiar*, to closely surround and besiege the enemy, rather than to wantonly advance against them. The inculcation of self-discipline and the coordination of armed groups appear to be the focus of Bolailos' orders.

The Spanish chroniclers agree that the first serious assault by the revolutionaries did not take place until July 17. Perhaps this is because General Malvar did not arrive to take overall command of the operations until July 2. And before Malvar unleashed more assaults from his forces he sent the Spaniards an ultimatum to surrender. This, however, was not answered. On July 5, he reported to Aguinaldo that the Filipino forces were so close to the Spanish-defended buildings that the enemy could not go downstairs or even stick their necks out from their hiding places. He was awaiting a Krupp cannon used in the siege of Lipa that G. Aniceto Oruga was transporting to Tayabas (Malvar to Aguinaldo, 5 July 1898, PIR- P3).

By July 17, Malvar's preparations were ready and the Krupp had arrived. The revolutionaries had constructed trenches, made from parts of dismantled houses, in front of the cárcel building and now proceeded to bombard it. When the walls were breached, a «bloody combat» ensued. The defenders would have succumbed had not the *primer teniente* D. Carmelo Pérez (following Pacheco's orders) at 2 pm moved out with his forty men and set upon the Filipino trenches on both flanks. After some bitter fighting, the trenches were captured, including three revolutionary flags, a canon, and eleven rifles abandoned in flight. But the revolutionaries soon returned and tried to surprise the Spaniards who had captured the trenches. Their considerable numbers could have overwhelmed the Spaniards had not the Comandante emerged from the Gobierno civil building and counter-attacked, causing numerous casualties (52 killed) among the besiegers. Only two losses were incurred on the Spanish side, but *Comandante* Pacheco was seriously wounded (Rfa-Baja, 295-6; Sastron, 535).

August 10 saw another significant battle: the Filipinos returned to attack the cárcel, again breaching the walls with canon fire. This time they were bold

enough to use bamboo ladders (*escaleras*) to scale the walls. The *cárcel*, however, was «brillantly defended» by the captain of the *Guardia Civil* D. Constantino Pérez, although he was wounded.

As days passed the revolutionary army continued to grow as contingents from other towns in the region arrived to join the fray. In the meantime the Spanish defenders began to weaken through hunger and sickness. Their supplies of medicine and ammunition began to dwindle. After the August 10 attack Pacheco received three messages inviting him to surrender because it would not be possible to definitively resist the attacks of the revolutionaries, who would force the capitulation of Tayabas *por hambre*, by cutting off food supplies. Still Pacheco refused to surrender. He had all the animals, even horses, killed for food. But the meat soon ran out, and there was nothing left to eat except rice cooked without salt, two handfuls per day.

Finally, for humane reasons the defenders decided to surrender. They sent the secretario *señor* Sainz de Robles to the revolutionary camp to negotiate an unqualified but honorable surrender on August 16. (Ría-Baja, 298; Sastron, 535). The surrendering Spaniards were treated with dignity by the revolutionaries. They were allowed to march out of their positions carrying their firearms (Sastron, 536). The day before the surrender, Malvar circulated an order to the troops concerning their treatment of the Spaniards: don't leave your positions in the line. Treat the Spaniards decently, don't make fun of them:

«Ang mga castila ay tatratohing maigui, huag bibiroin ni tatangcain ng tankang gahasa at lubos na ipaquiquilala ang mga pagmamahal sa canila upang maipaquilala nating lahat na catagalugan na magagandang loob tayong lahat sa mga caauay na itoy carangalan at bihis ng ating mga catapangan at bisang ligaya ng pagcalalaqui. Ang magculang sa cautusang ito ay magcacamit ng dusa na ilalapat ng capangyarihan ipinagcaloob sa aquin ng nasabing Mag na Gral nitong operaciones.»

The Spaniards should be treated well, not made fun of, and not be the object of violent acts. Instead we should show our affection for them, so that we Tagalogs all can show that we have a good heart (inner being) towards the enemy; this being the distinguishing mark of our bravery and the happy effects of manhood.

Those failing to follow this order will be punished in accordance with the authority vested in me by the most honorable General of these operations (Castillo to Kapili, 15 Aug. 1898, PIR roll 236 frame 335).

In Malvar's speech praising his soldiers for the valor they showed in the capture of Tayabas, he added that «the heroism of its defenders was admired by the revolutionary army» (*el heroísmo de sus defensores era la admiración del ejército revolucionario*) (Sastron, 536). Malvar's behavior towards the surrendering Spaniards reflects his adherence to Aguinaldo's July 30 decree concerning the Army, in Article 18 of which is stated.

The commanding officer shall above all things see to it that the honor of the Filipino army is raised to a high standard. Great courtesy and cordiality toward peaceful and reputable citizens, great generosity toward the vanquished, and great discipline and respect for the law, constitute the duties of honor of any army, in whose history courage and heroic self-denial stand out in unfading characters (in Corpuz, 301).

After the surrender, the Spaniards discovered that the besieging forces had numbered some 15,000 men, armed with 7,500 Mauser y Remington rifles. The *Jefes* said that they had fired 500,000 cartridges of various calibers, and consumed seventeen cases of gunpowder. They had used 17 dynamite bombs, some of which had caused self-inflicting casualties because of their crude manufacture. They had been made by an artillery sergeant in the Spanish army who had deserted to the revolutionaries (Rfa-Baja, 300). The significance of these facts is that it reveals the concentration of men, guns, munitions and chiefs in the cabecera of Tayabas during the siege. The next logical step for the top leaders was to turn these ingredients into a proper army.

The Batallon Banahaw

Aguinaldo's July 30 decree shows that despite his and his fellow generals' desire to forge their fighting force into a regular army, the «Liberating Army» could never be a militaristic institution. The captains, lieutenants, sergeants, and corporals were supposed to be elected by the troops. According to Corpuz, the army «could never have a life apart from that of the people and the pueblos». Aguinaldo, for example, ordered that troops should be given leave for them to return home to tend their crops (Corpuz, 302). In what other ways did the army have an existence that harmonized with the society at large?

According to the American scholar Glenn May, in the organization of the southern Tagalog revolutionary army Malvar was allowed by Aguinaldo's decrees to choose his own corps of officers. These appointments, nevert-

heless, had to be confirmed by the Secretary of War. So most of Malvar's top officers were local *capitanes* and wealthy patrons who became Malvar's fellow revolutionaries in the sieges of Lipa, Batangas, Tayabas and other places. Thus Santiago Rillo, Arcadio Laurel (Talisay), Nicolás González (Tanauan), Melecio Bolailos (Rosario), Gregorio Catigbac (Lipa) and Cipriano López (Balayan) received appointments as Lieutenant Colonels (May, 76).

May further posits that what mattered even more than revolutionary credentials, elite status and their background in bandit suppression, was these officers's personal relationship to Malvar.

A dozen or so of them were his classmates in the secondary school run by maestro Malabanan in Tanauan. Others were his *compadres*, debtors, friends, etc. In other words, Malvar's officer corps-in the absence of military schools and a tradition of a standing army-was nothing but his personal clientele, «responsible to and dependent on him alone». This made for a deeply flawed situation, a collection of «private armies» whose warlord leaders were beholden o Malvar alone (May, 77).

One problem with May's view is that it puts the southern Tagalog army of Malvar in the category of the «primitive» or «pre-modern» dominated by personalistic rather than rational, institutional ties. Implicitly, May posits the opposite of the Filipino army, namely the U.S. army which clashed with the Filipino forces beginning in 1899. May can thus explain the Filipino defeat in terms of lack, failure, and internal problems, rather than the obvious superiority of north American military might.

Perhaps a close examination of the formation of one of Malvar's military units can clarify or dispel some of May's contentions about the nature of the Filipino army. Not long after the concentration of weapons and men after the Spanish defeat at Tayabas, the provincial forces were organized into the Battalion Banahaw, composed of six companies and a general staff. There are some details about the officer corps that should perhaps be noted: Malvar's personal hold over the Battalion is evidenced in his pharmacist brother-in-law Eustacio Maloles' appointment as Colonel and overall *Jefe*. But granted that kinship was important, the Battalion's records refer repeatedly to Maloles' participation in armed combat, from the «first revolution» (1897) in which he played a crucial role in the liberation of Lipa, to his position as interim *Jefe* in the successful assault on the Tayabas garrison in 1898.

Next in the line-up of the Battalion was Lt. Col. Buenaventura Dimaguila, 28, a native of Liliw, Laguna, and a «propietario» by profession. Then come two Majors: Mariano Castillo, 32, of San Juan, Batangas, another propietario; and Antonino Magsino, 35, of Unisan, Tayabas, also a propietario. Age, obviously, was not much of a factor at this level. But the «old school tie» posited by May cannot be determined here. The most we can say is that these officers were all experienced in combat, knew Malvar personally, and that their towns of origin represented the western, northern, southern and eastern sectors, respectively, of the Battalion's domain. The 21 other officers from Captain down to 2nd lieutenant ranged in age from 22 to 35, with 27 being about the mean. The provinces of Laguna, Batangas, and Tayabas were about *equally* represented. Aside from a *Notario y Profesor* and a *Professor y Agrónomo* assigned as aides to the top brass, and two *Maestros* at the Company level, the rest are described as «propietario».

One thing about all these officers is that they had all tasted war, most having met each other in the siege of Tayabas. Out of their fairly comfortable pasts as landowners and professionals they were now becoming «militar» and in 1899 and 1900 would face the real test of confronting vastly superior U.S. forces or, even more severe, playing a waiting game in the malaria-infested foothills of Mt. Banahaw. On December 13, 1898, the newly installed officers of the Battalion Banahaw recited an oath, in Tagalog, to defend to their last breath the flag that symbolized the independence (*kasarinlan*) of the land of their birth. They swore to live up to the ideals of being a military officer (*paga Militar*) with a «full loob,» and to work for the redemption of the honor (*pagbabangong puri*) of their country. The language of the oath cannot be treated lightly. The act of swearing before God and country cannot be subordinated to matters of self or factional interest in explaining the behavior of this elite, as Glen May is wont to do. Their eventual surrender came at different phases of the war and one must first look for the pain and the suffering before concluding that U.S. promises lured them out of the hills. Captain Victor Alfonso's bride of one month was beginning to be familiar with that «fanatical» devotion to *paga Militar* which she was up against when she wrote to her beloved *dueño*.

Even though I realize that it is very far from your heart (*loob*) to come into the town (and join me here), because of your genuine and wholehearted sacrifice for the Motherland; nevertheless, my *dueño*, isn't your slight body begging for a little bit of rest? Get some proper medical attention so that there won't be a relapse, and as long as you aren't getting well don't move

about too much and too fast... That's why if you have true love for me, listen to my words; take them seriously, for your well being, so that I in turn will not be so deeply worried, Yes, yes, I do know, my master, that you are in the service, and that is the life of a *militar*.

An *Ilustrado* Jefe: Norberto Mayo

One young man who took the life of a *militar* seriously was Norberto Mayo y Atienza, who was 25 years old when the Battalion Banahaw was organized in October 1898. He is described as being of medium height and ordinary complexion, with a face unmarked by scars, and wearing the small moustache and parted hair that seems to have been the fashion among the educated or upper class youth of his time. Mayo's background is consistent with the general picture of 18th century Philippine elites. He was a mestizo, and an unusual one at that. His great grandfather, apparently, was a former British cavalry officer who married a Batangueña named Michaela and settled in Lipa. Presumably, the family made its fortune in coffee production. Norberto Mayo was in a position to acquire an education, and thus he attended the *Colegio de «San Juan de Letrán»*. He is described as «quite accomplished for a Filipino» and *con instrucción*, able to speak and write in both Tagalog and Spanish.

Originally from Lipa, Mayo came to live in Tiaong at the age of 10, or around 1883. This is not surprising, for the rolling and still extensively wooded terrain around Tiaong was Lipa's «frontier» in the late 19th century. Was it the severe cholera epidemic of 1882-3 that drove his family to emigrate? Despite his origins («I really belonged in Lipa», he says), Mayo looked on Tiaong as his hometown. His brothers and sisters all lived there: Epifanio settled in sitio Mangahan, and Luis in barrio Bula; both provided refuge for Norberto and his armed force at various times. Martin was the town *Maestro* (schoolteacher) and was elected municipal councilor in 1901; naturally, he lived in the poblacion and was Norberto's immediate contact in the municipal government. Sisters Michaela (mother of the famed nationalist politician Claro Mayo Recto) and Amanda also lived in the poblacion and received letters quite often from their brother in the field.

Mayo apparently first joined the revolution in 1897, but nothing is known about this phase of his career. In 1898, upon the return of Malvar from Hong Kong, he and Epitacio Martínez, led by the *juez de paz* Ladislao Masangcay, took care of whatever Spanish authority was left in Tiaong, and

then went off to participate in siege of the cabecera of Tayabas. «I was only considered as a soldier at that time», he says of his career prior to the Spanish surrender in August, 1898. Malvar remembered Mayo and Martínez participating in the Tayabas siege. In recognition of the young Mayo's role in the fighting, and as a sign of his increasing confidence in him, Malvar appointed Mayo one of his commissioners in late 1898 to collect firearms. The significance of this will be discussed later. Mayo's family background and education, ie. His. «ilustrado-ness» did not make him any less a fighting man, and all these contributed to his steady rise in the ranks.

Mayo appears in the first roster of the Battalion Banahaw (published in October) as a 1st Lieutenant (Lt.) and Adjutant of the 2nd Company (Co.) commanded by Captain Víctor Alfonso. Mayo and Alfonso were neither townmates nor «provincemates», and one wonders if it was mere administrative fiat that brought them together. Alfonso, a graduate of the Ateneo Municipal, hailed from Santa Cruz, Laguna, and prior to participating in the siege of Tayabas was the Maestro of the town of Pagsanjan. During the time they served together, Mayo not only respected and obeyed his Captain but related to him as a dear friend to another. While in Tiaong recovering from a thigh wound he wrote to Alfonso, «the end of my leave of absence is fast approaching, and ever more I dream of the time when together we will be sharing... the delights offered by the good ladies of that pueblo» (Sariaya, where the 2nd Co. was based). How, he asks, can one still live the life of a friar in his convent after having lived in Sariaya?

Mayo the junior officer was also the personal emissary, delivering love letters from and obtaining *lanzones* fruit for his Captain as well as reporting on his missions to other towns. The chief of the Western Zone, Mariano Castillo, was too distant to be approached directly, although in October 1899 Mayo sent the family of «our good Lt. Col. Castillo» some *lanzones*—one of those ubiquitous gifts from subaltern to superior that signified not only respect for rank but also an expression of *utang na loob* (inner debt) for some act of kindness rendered in the past. Between Castillo and Mayo stood Alfonso. The latter was responsible to superior authority for his junior's actions. Once, Mayo made a request of his Captain: «If you won't become too compromised to our *Jefe* (Castillo)», how about extending my leave so that I can finish some work in the fields, and could you send over my salary for the month? A few lieutenants had direct access to higher authority. Hermenegildo Nadres, having carried out an order to gather some head of cattle in Candelaria (east of Tiaong), requested from Colonel Maloles leave to allow him to attend to his wife and newborn baby: «Respected

sir, would you grant me a few days leave to stay at home, and I will consider it a great *utang na loob* to you». *Utang na loob?* —the solidarity of the officer corps cannot be understood apart from this.

In June 1899, two sections of the 2nd Co. under Lt. Mayo were sent together with the entire 3rd Co. to participate in Malvar's defense of the Muntinlupa line against the advancing U.S. forces. In the unsuccessful Filipino attempt to halt the U.S. drive on the Laguna capital of Calamba, Mayo was wounded in one or both thighs. He was sent to Lipa and Tiaong to recuperate, not rejoining his Captain until the end of October. Mayo's battle experience, his wounds being the proof of his valor, eventually affected his ranking in the batallion. By the time the U.S. Cavalry invaded Tayabas in mid-January, 1900, both Mayo and Alfonso held the rank of Captain. Alfonso still had the command because, he says, he was the older of the two. By the end of January, Mayo had left the 2nd Co. to command the 4th Co. in an ambush on the Americans at sitio Taguan, jurisdiction of Tiaong, conducted jointly with the local forces under Masangcay.

When the Batallon B anahaw fell apart in early 1900, Mayo returned to Tiaong to command one of its two revolutionary columns, the *Columna Independista*, which among other tasks was assigned to protect Malvar's headquarters in the nearby Lipa mountains.

A Non-Ilustrado Jefe: Ladislao Masangcay

Not all of the revolucionarios who liberated the southern Tagalog towns in mid-1898 went on to join the various sieges of Spanish strongholds. Those who stayed behind to protect the home front against bandits and loyalist elements later formed the corps of local volunteers and the town police force (*cuadrilleros*) which operated side by side with the Battalion Banahaw. Hence the importance of figures like Ladislao Masangcay, who started out as revolutionary mayor of Tiaong in late 1898, defended his town against the U.S. cavalry in 1900, and later headed his own guerrilla army, the Columna Zona Oriental of Tiaong.

There is no indication that Masangcay was a mestizo. Masangcay is an old Tagalog name, which may indicate datu origins. If he owned fairly extensive lands but was not mestizo and did not achieve status through education, chances are that he was of «aristocratic» lineage. He was headman of his barrio before becoming gobernadorcillo («petty governor») in 1890 and juez de paz («justice of the peace») at the outbreak of the revolution. In

June 1898, Masangcay once again became *Jefe Local* of Tiaong in an election verified by General Eleuterio Marasigan. However, after intervention by the Republican government at Malolos, another election was held in August in the presence of a special Commissioner, Manuel Argüelles. Malolos had been flooded with complaints of incompetence, factional strife and a lack of commitment to independence on the part of elected officials. He now insisted on strict conformance to article 2 of Aguinaldo's decree of June 18: elected officials should be men of «learning (*ilustración*), social standing, honorable conduct, devotion to independence.» Masangcay won again, by a smaller margin. Apparently his lack of *ilustración* was an increasing liability in the new order, just as it had been for the founder of the Katipunan, Andrés Bonifacio.

It is striking that Masangcay could neither write nor speak Spanish. In fact, all of his correspondence and communications, in both his civil and military careers, was handled by a secretary, Gabino Quizon (also from an «original family» of barrio Pury). Masangcay may not have known Spanish, but he was a proficient Tagalog speaker and writer and probably used this facility in the crucial matter of sustaining the morale of his men.

In the eyes of some educated Filipinos, Masangcay was not a legitimate military officer. Ateneo-educated and former Captain of Engineers Honorio Lanuza, for example, regarded Masangcay as «a colonel of tulisans and not of insurgents». When Lanuza was chided for looking down on Masangcay, he simply replied, «I am more instructed than he is». To the *ilustrados*, learning brought with it the right to influence or lead the rest of society. Age and military rank (which Masangcay had), to a person like Lanuza could be more than matched by a university degree. But he was speaking after the war, after his own humiliation at the hands of the *insurrectos* for his lack of commitment to his revolutionary assignments. Masangcay, on the other hand, had the talents required in a time of warfare. He lacked *instrucción*, but he had wealth, the prestige of being *capitán (gobernadorcillo)*, valor, and a commitment to his revolutionary oath.

The title *capitán* in the nineteenth century could also mean «ringleader of a band of robbers». We spoke of personal qualities such as valor and courage, essential to the success of a military leader. In the early stages of the republican period, there were many with wealth and education who commanded troops, but only a few like Norberto Mayo survived the trials of the American invasion in 1900-1901. Perhaps class interests led to the capitulations of 1900. But the language of the exchanges between the pro-Ame-

rican Federalistas and *los jefes insurrectos* suggests the importance of courage and a strong will, which the ilustrados had no exclusive right to. Masangcay's career is consistent on the subject of his daring and defiance. There are several stories of Masangcay's defiance of the Spanish lieutenant of the Guardia Civil in Tiaong, details of which need not be detailed here.

An aspect which is sometimes overlooked in discussions of local officialdom is the opportunity Captains had of controlling an armed force. Tiaong was situated in the midst of tulisan or «bandit» territory, the scene of animal stealing and murders. Indeed, descriptions of this part of southwestern Luzon rarely fail to mention its endemic crime problem. Around 1878, Álvarez Guerra reported an unusual situation there: «the criminality of Tiaong has produced a disconsolate outcome: thirty three criminal cases [this year] have been registered in court». The reasons for this are best treated in a separate study. To cope with the situation, Tiaong in 1878 had a force of 39 cuadrilleros in addition to a garrison of the *Guardia Civil* commanded by a lieutenant. The cuadrilleros, the precursor of the barrio patrols and «ron-das», were native-led.

In 1890, Captain Masangcay was in charge of the cuadrilleros when he challenged the lieutenant of the Guardia. At most his men were armed with a couple of primitive arquebuses, but the experience of leading an armed unit would prove valuable in later years. Masangcay, in fact, would later transform the local police force into the core of his guerrilla column. Even more significant is that the propertied class, particularly those who raised cattle and horses, were dependent on men like him for protection against tulisanes. Captain Masangcay could deal with tulisan chiefs on their own terms. The description of him manhandling the Spanish lieutenant, and later dodging the bullets of the Guardias, is a virtual repetition of the many stories of daring tulisan chiefs with their magical amulets. The *Jefes Insurrectos* simply took over on two counts: by protecting the propertied class through their intimidating posture or incorporation of «lawless elements» into the revolutionary ranks; and by appropriating the tradition of personal valor and «inner» power represented in Masangcay and his tulisan/iadron counterparts.

May has noted Malvar's ability to incorporate so-called tulisanes and fanaticos into his army. An example is Aniceto Oruga, from Tanauan, who was well-educated at the *Colegio de «San Juan de Letrán»*, but had gotten into trouble with the authorities and become a ladron. He was captured and

sentenced to 20 years in prison for robbery and cattle rustling, but in early 1897 he escaped with 25 other prisoners and soon afterwards appeared as the commander of a column in Malvar's forces (p. 63). It was common for revolutionary commanders to forge alliance with bandit chiefs, many of whom were not really criminal elements but had merely fled from the town centers due to conflicts with the parish priests or guardia

Masangcay's career as a civil official lasted barely a year and a half. On the night of January 15, 1900, the U.S. drive into Tayabas met its first obstacle in Tiaong. According to the diary of the Battalion Banahaw, «the police force and *Fuerzas Perseguidores* (Pursuit Forces) of Tiaong engaged the U.S. Cavalry composed of more than 100 men». The next morning, as the Cavalry crossed Quipot bridge on the way to Rosario, «they were ambushed by the same Tiaong police and *Perseguidores*». On the 20th, the rear guard of another force of around 800 U.S. Cavalry «was attacked by the Police and *Perseguidores* of Tiaong».

It is hard to find an adjective for such hit-and-run fights (there were several more). Masangcay and his policemen had only 16 guns, and the *Perseguidores* under Esteban Hernández could count for not many more. But they were giving the Americans a run for their money, and attracting followers in the process. In the succeeding weeks and months, as the regular Batallón Banahaw disintegrated, more guns and men would come under Masangcay's wing. By March, he would be a full-fledged Jefe Insurrecto with the rank of Major.

Morale: The *Jefes* as Exemplars of Selflessness

In trying to understand why Filipino soldiers joined the siege of Spanish strongholds and later the resistance to U.S. occupation, it is not enough to allude to patron-client ties, as Glenn May does. In particular, we want to understand why the revolutionary armies held out so long despite a string of defeats at the hands of the Americans. The ritual transcript must be taken seriously. From the very inception of the war, the Republican government and many officers with literary talent produced a stream of speeches, letters, manifestos and the like which transposed *real* events and figures to another key, one in which resistance and the possibility of death made sense.

America, for instance, wasn't just depicted as an imperial power. In early manifestos, America was seen as a redeemer helping free the Philippines

from Spain. But apparently the «inner being» (*loob*) of this friendly power could not resist temptation. Her desire to take the Philippines was interpreted in public proclamations as the insidious triumph of greed over honour and brotherly compassion. Just before the outbreak of the war with the Americans the newspaper *Ang Kaibigan ang Bayan*, published in the republican capital at Barasoain, Malolos, explained the imminent threat of war in such terms:

«Ang casaquiman: Itoy isang masamang hangad nang puso na nagdudulot sa tauo nang sarisaring casaman. Pag ito ang naghari sa loob nang tauo ay mauaualang agad sa ating dibdib ang mga banal na nasa; mauauala ang pag ibig puno at mula nang dilang cagalangan; lilisanin ang mga caibigan; lalagutin ang mahihigpit na tali nang pagcacamaganac at hahacbangang lahat cahit mahalagang bagay...»

(Greed: this is an evil tendency of the heart that leads man to various wrongdoings. If Greed is allowed to triumph in the inner being [*loob*] of man, virtuous intentions will quickly disappear from our hearts; that love from which all good things spring will vanish; friends will be abandoned; the tight cords of kinship will be severed and everything, even the most sacred matters, will be trampled upon...)

Then follows a summary of Spain's descent into greed in the course of her rule and, in particular, the friars' repudiation of the true faith through their rapacity. The end result was a fracturing of the relationship with Spain, the rise of contending parties leading to armed conflict and total separation. The same pattern is being replicated as war with America looms:

«Ito rin namang casaquiman ang siyang naguiguig tanglau nang America sa caniyang paglacad, at caya marahil ay magbubo siya nang maraming dugo nang caniyang mga anac pag di pinatay ang caniyang tanglau. Malasin mo America ang nangyari sa Espana, salaminin mo ang caniyang quinaratnan at ito ang aabutin mo, pag pina-yagang umusbong sa iyo ang casaquiman...»

(This very same greed is becoming America's guiding light in her recent actions, and if this lamp of greed is not extinguished her children will be shedding a lot of blood. America, look at what happened to Spain, imagine what has happened to her and this will be your very same fate if you allow greed to multiply further...).

If Americans are seen to be motivated by greed in pursuing the war, Filipinos who resist the better-armed enemy are seen as having an inner

being (*loob*) dedicated to caring for the suffering mother country and promoting love and sharing among her children. This self-perception is what the string of manifestos encouraged. Leaders like Malvar, Masangcay and Mayo—or any successful military chief for that matter—were known for having a whole (*bu'ò*) inner being, selfless, humble, and thus able to endure hardship, as well as inspire others. In order to keep up the morale of the soldiers, officers regularly reminded them that the war was a kind of moral event, a sacred mission, in which leaders were helpless without the active outpouring of the inner being of each common soldier. In his famous manifesto of April 12, 1901 General Malvar likens himself to a pilgrim-beggar, a familiar Christ-figure, who hopes for the generosity of others:

«Natantu co ang aquing di carapatan caya nga nararamdaman cong culang aco sa lacas sa pagtupad nitong mahirap na catunculan na minamatamis cong isalin sa iba, cungdi sa pag-asa sa tulong ninyong lahat, sapagca't cung uala ito, ay ang magagaua co ay hindi lalampas sa magagaua ng cahuli-hulihang sundalo. Dito sa mahirap na calalagayan ay gagauin co ang inuugali ng isang magpapalimos na masqui may saquit ay lumalacad, hangang catapusan.»

(I am aware of my unworthiness, that's why I feel that I lack the strength to assume this difficult post, which I would willingly hand over to others, if not for the help that I hope to receive from you all, because without it, I can accomplish no more than the lowliest soldier. In these difficult straits, I will take the attitude of a beggar who, in spite of illness, walks on until the end).

Malvar's proclamations continually stressed the need for inner resolve. It isn't money that counts, nor superiority in weaponry, nor the bright ideas of the educated gentry, he often reminded his army. In his final order of November 11, 1901 in response to the enemy's new scorched-earth policy, Malvar enumerates some of his army's successes in battle, despite the great odds against it, particularly the Americans' superiority in numbers and firepower, then reminds his soldiers of where the army's real strength lies:

«... uala sa mga marurunong uala sa caramihan ng gastosin ng Gobierno at uala rinaman sa maraming bilang ng baril ang ipagtata-gumpay natin at icatotoclas ng ninanasang Kalayaan condi sa buhay namang pag asa natin sa isang Dios na catuid tuiran at pagcacaisa nating magcacapatid at sa tulong ng ating Patron ng Hocbo na si *señor José* at ano ang pasimula naman ng ating pagcabangon hangan sa mapalayas natin ang mga Castilla...»

(... Our victory, and our attainment of the Liberty we hope for, will be accomplished not through the efforts of the educated men, not through heavy Government expenditures, not through large numbers of guns, but through our fervent hope in our most righteous God, in our unity as brothers and sisters, and through the help of the *Patrón* of our Army—for what else made us rise up in the first place and eventually cast off the Spaniards?...).

And so, continues Malvar, the soldiers should take advantage of their victories and the demoralization of the enemy and, with faith in God and in the Patron of the Army, attack American garrisons on the 7th or 8th of the coming month (December 1901). Faith, inner strength, morale these are doubly important because of the lack of guns and ammunition; Malvar, in fact, calls for the use of any weapon at hand, including bows-and-arrows and old arquebuses.

Conclusion

Did the events of 1898 truly lead to the birth of a Filipino national army? Scholars like O. D. Corpuz (1989) and Luis Dery (1995) say «yes», alluding to the stream of circulars and decrees from Aguinaldo's government concerning the organization of the army, the founding of a military academy, the victories against Spanish strongholds, and even the dispatch of expeditions to «organize» the Visayas and Mindanao. Others like Glenn May, however, claim to have looked beneath the surface and recognized not a national army but a myriad of «private armies» whose chiefs were personally beholden to regional «warlords».

The events narrated in this paper can be read in both ways. However, perhaps it is selfdefeating to work within the paradigm of the national versus the local, the institutional versus the personal, and the public versus the private. There can be no doubt that in 1898 an army took shape in southern Tagalog under the leadership of General Miguel Malvar. It was an army born out of warfare and a great loss of lives, and it straddled at least three regimes Spanish, Filipino and American. Rather than seek to know the nature or essence of this army, or what it *really* was, we can instead try to understand how those who played a role in it, as officers or foot soldiers, perceived the meaning of their actions. This paper has only sketched the outlines of the birth of the southern Tagalog army; there are many more biographies out there, more documents out there particularly in the vernacular, that can give flesh to the story.

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